

**OUR INCORRIGIBLE
ONTOLOGICAL RELATIONS
AND CATEGORIES OF BEING**

**To my dear Celia
and in memory of my beloved parents**

Julian M. Gálvez

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ONTOLOGICAL RELATIONS AND
CATEGORIES OF BEING**

**Causal and Limiting Factors of
Objective Knowledge**

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CONTENTS

PREFACE	11
INTRODUCTION	13
1. The Incorrigible Ontological Relations and Categories of Being	27
<i>a. These relations and categories are distinctions</i>	31
<i>b. Universality.....</i>	47
<i>c. Incorrigibility.....</i>	60
<i>d. They are A Priori Proper</i>	66
<i>e. Irreducibility</i>	82
<i>f. Not sensible</i>	83
<i>g. Primary premises of judgment and ultimate factors of explanation.....</i>	85
<i>i. They are the most fundamental premises of judgment</i>	85
<i>ii. They are our ultimate explanatory resources</i>	87
<i>h. They constitute an Ontological Scheme</i>	91
2. Causal Factors of Objective Knowledge.....	93
<i>a. True in all possible worlds</i>	94
<i>b. Truths of fact necessary for knowledge of objective reality</i>	105
<i>c. They are both truth of facts and factors of objective knowledge</i>	106
3. Limiting Factors of Objective Knowledge.....	109
4. What They Force to Presuppose.....	113
<i>a. These relations and categories must be assumed to stand for an explainable reality.....</i>	113

b. Their unexplainability forces to presuppose the objective existence of an explanatory order of reality or of a different manner of existing 113

FINAL WORDS 123

BIBLIOGRAPHY 125

PREFACE

Although the subject matter of this short book may seem to be alien to the philosophical debate of our days, it addresses an issue sidestepped since Hume and Kant, and which due of its broad consequences, requires of philosophy to make a pause in its march and reconsider the same before proceeding any further.

As shall be seen with the observations here made, the topic of the nature of the most abstract relations and categories is so basic that, depending on the resulting conclusions, the philosophical consequences and final 'world view' that derives will be radically different.

The fact is that these relations and categories, to which the most universal concepts refer, constitute the structure of thought and language, and thus too, what enable meaning, judgment and knowledge of objective reality.

Moreover, they seem to stand for the structure of an aspect of objective reality of a non-empirically accessible nature, which constitutes epistemic content of all our knowledge, but set a limit to all possible cognition.

The impossibility to explain the world according to them is a valid logical ground for presupposing the existence of a higher or hyper ontological order beyond our intellectual reach. Hyper or higher order, whose want bars and distorts our cognition of reality beyond a mere aspect of what actually exists.

Buenos Aires, September 26, 2017

JMG

INTRODUCTION

This book is about certain ontological relations and categories that are both causal and limiting factors of objective knowledge. Causal factors, because they are essential to cognition, and bridge the gap between the mind and the world; and limiting factors, because they constrain our cognition of the objective world to a minimum aspect of what there is, and in a manner that delivers a total misconception of the rest of reality.

Since, in my opinion, the last is one of the interesting conclusions arrived and presented in this work -though not the most significant- allow me to illustrate how our cognitive faculties can restrain and alter our world-view.

a. Perceptual Constrain

Imagine taking a Flatlander cosmologist out of the fictional two-spatio-temporal world, of only height and depth, where she exists¹. The idea is to move her along

¹ Abbott, Edwin A., *Flatland, A Romance of Many Dimensions*, First Edition 1884, reprinted by Classic Fiction Series, Digireads.com Publishing, 2016. According to what the Flatlander scientists could tell us, Mr. Abbott gave a false report about Flatland and Flatlanders; because they do not have a geometrical shape of a square, circle, triangle, or of pentagons, but in depth profiles for a head, a belly and the feet, very much as ourselves. Women do not move their backs from right to left, as there is no width; they all have two eyes –one above the other- so as to have in-depth vision, and, most importantly,

the side of her flat reality, so that she sees her universe from the outside and to have her take a look around our world that, upon her return, report to her fellow Flatlanders what she has observed.

Although we assume, that once back in her universe, she would astound her Flatlander colleagues with the account of our higher order reality, the truth is that she will inform them that their flat reality from the outside is like Flatland seen from the inside, except that one cannot recognize anything in it. The major difference, she would say to have noticed, is that Flatland appears to be just a mere *one-spatio-temporal universe*, and not two spatio-dimensional.

One-spatial, because her vision of Flatland would be limited to a depthless vertical line. To a vertical line because Flatlanders cannot perceive the spatial dimension of width, and, depthless, because their universe, seen from the side, lacks depth (unless it be a universe in the surface of a sphere, which we shall assume is not).

Her interpretation of our spatial dimension of width as a mere temporal dimension would follow from the incapacity of Flatlanders to conceive and perceive other spatial dimension besides the ones of height and depth, as such capacity would be a hindrance to their successful adaptation to their flat reality. In other words, this incapacity of her would be due to the Flatlanders natural

they cannot conceive width, so –in her opinion- the romance of Many Dimensions, would be a total fiction.

inability to mentally recording the perceptions of the vertical lines as co-existent in space with the previously perceived vertical lines. This is a consequence of Flatlanders being unable of mentally organising the succession of the mental representations of lines of reality one beside the other to form a continuous idea of surface (Alternatively, if she were moved laying horizontally, she would see her world just as one line, but not temporal).

Moreover, though the visual sections of the surface that passes away for our Flatlander will continue to be objectively existent to us, each of these linear sections would be a past reality no longer existent to her. This would be so, to the point that if she were moved back, she would deem the supposed 'past' line as 'resurrecting' from the past, but not as co-existent with the lines that she had already perceived. Such misconception would be a consequence of her intellectual incapacity of having awareness of the relations that constitute a surface.

Then, when asked about what she saw and is like our three-spatio-temporal realm, they would be surprised with her answer. If shown a chair she would not recognize it, and if moved to be shown a person she would conclude that people, as well as things, in higher dimensions are and not-are, that is, as temporal and one dimensional, that they changed their looks all the time and cannot be recognized. She would see the things of her world in Flatland as they are, so a table in Flatland would correspond (not necessarily match) with how a

table in her reality is; but she would perceive of the objects in ours a minimal aspect of the same at the time, as she would perceive them one or two spatio-dimensional temporal realities. Consequently, she would not find any reasonability or logic in how they appear to be. She would be unable to grasp any functionality in our objects based on the shapes she perceived, such as tables and chairs at times with legs and then without them. If she were to describe how we look like, she would depict us in the weirdest manner, or, simply, as totally illogical or unexplainable one or two-spatio dimensional entities.

As should be expected, her fellow Flatlander scientists would deem her observations entirely inconsistent with science and common sense. They would deny her claims of having left Flatland, something that, in their opinion, is impossible. Unable, as they are, to conceive higher spatio-temporal dimensions- they would judge Flatland to encompass all possible reality. Still more, they would point out that it is contradictory that a one-dimensional temporal universe encloses two spatial dimensions, or that a temporal world of one dimension could enclose a temporal realm of two. Moreover, they would not accept that entities of a greater number of spatial dimensions be just one or two dimensional or more subject to change, than the lower dimensional. Empiricists, naturalists and physicalists in their universe would argue that the sole fact that they appear to her as one or two spatio-dimensional would be a proof that she never left flatland,

and that there is no such a thing as another reality beyond theirs.

It is worth noting, that Flatlander scientist as much as we would, would be right in considering her conclusions about their reality and ours to be mistaken, although on different grounds from ours. However, her observations would be correct, for nothing that she claims to have seen is not objectively true from her perspective. Her observations would correspond with what she distinguished of the reality shown to her according to her intellectual resources.

Because of this, we could say that she has a limited and wrong conception of reality: of both her reality from the outside and our reality from the inside.

Though this example only applies to our cognition of spatial dimensions and time, it illustrates how our conception of reality, depends on our cognitive capabilities. The experience of time² and space might just be the end result of a limited perceptions of reality, if not, a simplified manner of perceiving a higher order of spatial dimensions or a more complex reality³, as might

² I do not agree with Bergson's (neither did Russell) explanation of time neither with his idea that '*the human intellect distorts the nature of time representing it to itself in spatial terms*' (Timothy L.S. Sprigge, *The God of Metaphysics*, OUP, 2005, Chapter 3, p. 96/97); actually, I think it is the inverse.

³ For example, we represent ourselves two-spatio-dimensional geometric figures as if space were perfectly plane, though space in-itself is curved. This might be the reason why the theoretical diagonal of a square and Pi, can correspond to no irreducible fraction p/q .

the perception of the unfolding of a spatial dimension that was folded⁴ in itself.

It can be thought, that with our cognitive faculties, – in addition to being unable to perceive a higher spatio-dimensional reality, the greater the number of spatial dimensions, the lesser we would perceive and understand what there is. We would probably reach a point where nothing is detectable, and things can be judged like hidden in a myriad of hyperspaces and among a plurality of different temporalities.

The point is that our worldview can be substantially altered by the lack or addition of a mere cognitive capability. Our idea of reality, as in her case, would well be the result of ascribing our mental structures, naturally intended for the minimal perception of reality necessary to our worldly survival, to a reality of greater number of spatial dimensions, or even, to a reality of a different or more complex ontology or manner of existing.

b. Ontological Constrain

The other main limit to the inferential potential of judgment that I see, and which is the main subject of this book, is not one derived from the impossibility of conceiving realities under higher order of spatial dimensions, or from lacking other sensory organs and forms of representation. It is about the impossibility of

⁴ Hawking, Stephen. *The Grand Design*, Bantam Books, NY, 2012

having awareness of other basic ontological relations and categories of being, to those with which we judge. As shall be explained, the most basic ontological relations that we distinguish –that is, the most abstract and universal- are those of difference, similarity, property and causality; these relations determine our most universal categories of one and plurality, particular pluralities (classes, sets, etc.) and instances, property and subject of attribution; cause and effect. The limit derives from the fact that all our judgments are ultimately grounded on the same, as they constitute the most primary premises of all our conclusions, whether logical or mathematical, scientific or not.

Such constrain can be understood imagining what would be our situation if, for example, we lacked awareness of the relation of causality or, simply, had a different conception of it. If this were the case, there would be no science nor knowledge, nor any interest in furthering it, and we would not relate past and present events to infer the future possibilities. Further still, we would have a totally different conception of what there is than we now have.

For example, an idea of reality without causality would not just constitute a diminished conception of the content of the world, but an idea different from what it is like. It might be the case that what rationally is contradictory based on causality would not be such. For example, that if one does or does not do something required to avoiding a catastrophe, would be the same.

Moreover, it would lead to odd linguistic interpretations between people lacking and having awareness of causality. Imagine that after an intergalactic flight, astronauts from earth arrive to a planet inhabited by people like us. The main difference is that the inhabitants there cannot have conscious awareness of causality, though their behaviour presupposes it, which allows them to thrive on their world by mere instinct. When asked for why, or what for, or simply, for how, they do not understand what they are asked about. Their many languages would lack such interrogative concepts. They would not be able to give us any reason for whatever happens in their reality.

Let us assume that our galactic travellers do not realize that these people ignore what is causality, nor that they cannot ever understand what is such relation. In that distant world, the scientists –if any- dedicate their time to identify physical properties of the different things, and even to class them according to the first; for them, identifying physical properties not-involved with causality, and classing things according to them, is all there is to cognition.

Suppose that our astronauts ask them if they have religion, and if they believed in God. They would say that they do not know of any such things in their world; that they have no registry of them. In order to make themselves better understood, one of our astronauts would explain that God is said to be the creator of the whole universe, and insist to know if they believe there

is a God. Unable as are the people on such galaxy, to distinguish casualty, they would insist that there is no God, as there is no reason for a creator (not understanding what this means), since to them things simply are or are not, not realizing that they owe their existence to their parents, and their survival to feeding and their bodily functions.

To be sure that they are having the right answer, the astronauts would explain them more carefully that God is supposed to be the all-powerful and the supreme good. Since both these terms imply causality, the aliens would insist that there is no God. They would check their registers and it would not be there; moreover, they would not find any such properties.

Incapable to realize that there can exist beings unaware of causality, the astronauts on their first message to earth would report that they have discovered alien life, and that they are people exactly like us; they have no religion and do not believe in the need for a creator; they are all atheist. They were categorical in that there is no God.

I do not want to say that many philosophers on earth would be delighted with the news, and argue that Hume was right in denying causality –which actually he never did - and some would conclude from this report, that the universe originates from nothing.

In contrast, in parallel to this, an alien ship lands on earth. They are very intelligent and their technological achievement far surpasses ours. We ask them were they

come from, and they explain to have left a couple of terrestrial hours ago from a galaxy that for us is located in deep space. Inquired about it and how do they manage to travel faster than light, they would say that no, that they had a very slow ride, that they just cut across the innumerable spatial dimensions structuring the universe. When asked if there is God, they might reply with surprise. For example it would call their attention that we cannot be aware of what is obvious to them; or else, they might say that what we understand as such, cannot exist, but that there is a Fundament of All (to give it a name) of a totally different nature than we think. In sum, whatever ultimate explanation they gave us, it would not be understandable at all, as it would be grounded on ontological relations and categories (if not in something else) that we have no idea to exist and cannot grasp.

What would be their report to the people in their world? Would they judge us equally intelligent to them? They would inform, that unfortunately for us, we are one of those kinds of very primitive creatures lacking –as their pets at home- awareness of all there is, except of a minimal of spatial reality, and that we are unable to grasp the many manners in which the nature of the universe is split and explainable. They would also say that we lack materiality, that we are practically a nothing, like a chair without legs; that we have very scant content. The news in their world would be, that they had to do a technical feat to make themselves visible to us, for we can only see things in three spatial dimensions, but that their new

technology made it possible for them to adopt a three spatio-temporal shape like ours, without losing their superior cognitive faculties.

Though they may try to make us understand that we all exist in a myriad of spatial and temporal dimensions, (as well as, for example, in a reality of many higher ontological orders to ours, one higher to another) we would still think such reality to apply only to their world. The problem would be that we could not think of our reality in an alternative manner to how we conceive it, as happens to our Flatlander in conceiving our world. Further still, we would not be able to imagine how is 'their' reality, at least, the one that they distinguish, nor how they truly look like.

Let me consider another case; to better contrast our ontologically constrained view of reality with one possessing a superior intelligence; that is, an intelligence that can distinguish realities of higher ontological orders .provided that these exist. From such a higher ontological perspective, that is, from an intelligence that can grasp orders of relations and categories of things that complement or encompass the few we judge with, it might be the case that –as said- what rationally is contradictory to us, is not so, to such superior order of intelligence. It might also be that what seems different be similar because of the difference, to the point, that the rational be almost irrational to those with awareness of orders of categories higher to ours. To give an example, let us suppose that, according to a higher order of

intelligent being, it is to the benefit of Joe to suffer a series of problems in this life. How would Joe interpret the difficulties he has to undergo?

Since Joe cannot access nor understand the logic of the higher reality because he lacks the ontology or the manner of cognition required, he will judge his situation and the outcomes of his life according to his cognitive faculties. He would not be in condition of understanding or appreciating what the higher order being did for him. Joe would judge the situation he has to go through to be negative to him.

This is very similar to what would happen to a man who is given the right advice not to bath because there are dangerous sharks around, but does not believe in the recommendation. He does not believe, because he lacks the information that the other person has. However, the difference with Joe's ontological constrain, is that the information and evidence that Joe has, that his hardships in the world are harmful for him, is true, but is contradictory with the true knowledge delivered with an intelligence operating with higher ontological orders, which judges them good for Joe. This contradiction is a consequence, that according to the lower categories under which the judgment of Joe operates, there is only one explanation at hand, which is the forces of nature. He cannot understand that there is a reason, beyond his possible intellectual grasp of how, what is terribly bad to him can be good.

What this shows is that our world-view, in this case, about where we come from, who created us, if there was something or nothing, etc. depends on the ontological relations or categories that we distinguish, as well as on how we distinguish them to be.

In sum, in the same manner that we came to accept that we are not the center of the universe, it is about time that we intellectually mature and meekly acknowledge that our epistemic powers –and excuse the comparison– are closer to those of an oyster than to those of an angel. Our intellect is unable to cognize but a minimum of reality, and least still, to explain or understand the whole universe. The human mind, unable to free itself from the shackles of its system of cognition, has no other choice than to be humble about its cognitive powers, and adopt a more flexible conception of the world.

Though for most philosophers today, the issue about our categories does not merit any significant attention, it is here shown the tremendous relevance it has in our conception and understanding of the world. The importance of this study resides in the conclusions that are arrived at. We go our way in life with a naïve and incomplete view of reality, and never ask ourselves more than about the business we have at hand. Moreover, we cannot explain why we exist or why we exist as we do. We judge this ignorance of the most fundamental reasons, as something natural –which it certainly is– and seek an explanation of it in religious beliefs, or though

the natural sciences; but at most we are only seeing or studying the very shadows reflected in the wall of Plato's cavern. Though most suspect that there is more to the world than those umbrageous images, some think, as did Hume and Kant, that this is due to not being able to attain knowledge of the objective world, or –as others, today– because we arbitrarily construct our worldview based on our conventions, convenience, or culture.

In my opinion, the significance of the study that I here present is that it show that we are subject to an amazing epistemic constraint determined by the ontology we can conceive; this is, by the ontological structures of our conceptual scheme.

Our situation is such, that if given the opportunity to have a glimpse of what is barred to our intellect by said ontological structures, we would not be in condition of becoming aware of it. And this would be so, to the point that, if allowed to come out of Plato's cavern, contrary to what he held, we would not realize to be free nor able to see the light and the world outside of the cave.

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J.M.G

1. The Incorrigible Ontological Relations and Categories of Being

This chapter refers to the most abstract relations and categories that can be distinguished and constitute our incorrigible Ontological Scheme.

What is primarily argued for in it, is that there are certain relations that our judgment operates with, which are incorrigible; that is, which cannot be denied to be objectively holding in our mind independent reality, without having to presuppose the mind independent objective existence of what they stand for.

These relations are those of difference, similarity, property, and causality. They constitute the categories⁵ of: one (thing, entity, being, particular, thing, etc.) and alterity (plurality, another, else, etc.); particular plurality (such as classes⁶, collections, types, kinds, sets, and wholes) and members (instances, examples, components, exemplars, parts, sections, etc.); property (qualities, traits, attributes, predicates, etc.) and subject of attribution (of predication, of distinction, etc.); and cause (factor, agent, determinant, author, creator, etc.) and effect (result, determination, consequence, creation, etc.).

⁵ For systems of categories, see Westerhoff, Jan, *Ontological Categories*, Clarendon Press – Oxford, 2005.

⁶ It is a class only if it comprises as members all the subjects of distinction with the same property and not just some of these.

As shall be further explained, these relations and categories constitute the most basic or primary ontology that we can conceive. In fact, they are our highest order of abstractions of relations and categories, prior to our abstraction of 'Being'. Though the concept of 'Being' refers to the most abstract, its referent is neither a category nor a relation, as it is a concept that stands for everything and anything that exists, deprived of whatever can differentiate or assimilate it to.

These relations and categories are the ones inferable from the fact that every subject of thought, language and knowledge, must be presupposed different, as otherwise, there cannot be distinction of it. However, since difference cannot be absolute, difference, in turn, forces to entail, the existence of the relation of similarity, in addition to the relation of difference. This is so, because even what is different must be assumed to share certain elements, such as being subject of thought; and I say 'in addition', because one cannot talk of similarity if difference is not preserved.

Now, from the relation of similarity it is possible to infer the other most basic relations and, from these, the other most basic categories that these relations constitute. Indeed, difference and similarity compel to take as a fact the relations of property and of causality that determine them. The relation of property or, simply, of quality, can be inferred from the fact that it is required for judging a subject of distinction different or similar to others. The property, if 'unique' (or presumed so), delivers

difference to the subject of distinction and, if ‘universal’, similarity. Regarding the relation of causality, it is inferable from the fact that there must be an explanation of why a subject of distinction bears certain properties and not others.

Consistent with this, while the relation of difference constitutes one of the relata into a single or unique, and the other relatum into ‘all-others’, the relation of similarity makes of one relatum a particular plurality, such as a class, and of the other relatum, an instance or member of the said plurality. And, while the relation of property makes of one relatum the subject of attribution or predication, and of the other relatum, a property, the relation of causality constitutes one relatum into a cause and the other into an effect. These are the basic relations and categories to which is reducible what is asked for with the question of: ‘Which’, ‘What’, ‘How’ and ‘Why’⁷, and according to which relations and categories, is sought to answer the same.

It could be said that there are ‘categories of relations’ as well as there are ‘categories of ‘Being’. Nevertheless,

⁷ It can be said, that with ‘Which?’ is asked of the individual or the particular class; that ‘What?’ serves to inquire less specifically for an individual, and mainly for a class; while by ‘How?’ is asked for a property and causal factor. The property can be of the factor of causality—such as ‘his strength’- or that of something else ‘the power of the engine’, or, even, a property of a property the ‘the cut of her red dress’. With ‘Why?’ is asked of the causal factor of an effect, whether it was already caused or may take place. Other terms, such as ‘with’ if constitutive of a question, can refer to an inquiry about an individual, a class, or a property or a cause.

to avoid confusion I will omit to class relations as a category proper though under them instantiate all the lower orders of relations, because each of them do not comprise all the particular relations, as is expected of a category proper. As shall be seen, each of the ontological relations do not comprise each and all possible relations under each of them, while the categories of Being that they constitute, do so.

It might be argued that space, time, reality, existent, necessity, possibility, substance, property, mind, matter, states, facts and events, are categories. I agree that it is correct to consider these being such under a less comprehensive definition of category.

I also agree that other proposed categories hold, such as Frege's concept and object but, anyhow, none of these is as universal and incorrigible as the ones to which this work refers, and this is also the reason I do not include time nor space nor the other just mentioned. Time, because we can certainly conceive a triangle without presupposing it; though the causal action of its conception presupposes time, the triangle itself does not. The same regarding space, for we can conceive spaceless ideas, regardless of the fact that we cannot represent them without it.

What is here held is that these, that I call incorrigible, are the most universal and absolute relations and categories, and the ones which are presupposed in all our thoughts, but which cannot be judged to be just categories of thought as they must be assumed to match

with an aspect of objective reality, as shall be explained below.

These relations and categories are universal, *a priori*, incorrigible true factual distinctions. They are our most fundamental premises of judgment as well as our ultimate factors of explanation. They constitute identity, as well as the very grounds of our ontological scheme. Allow me to explain the reasons I say this.

a. These relations and categories are distinctions

The subject matter of thought, language and knowledge are distinctions. Distinctions are the building blocks of our conception of reality⁸. By ‘distinction’ must be understood what we become aware of as being different, such as of a new sensation or idea; that is, of a sensation or idea holding a relation of difference to all other sensations or ideas. There cannot be thought or speech of what is not distinguished from all other possible subjects of thought and language⁹. Distinctions

⁸ That the immediate subject matter of thought and judgment are ‘distinctions’, was ‘the main issue of metaphysics in early Chinese philosophy’ Chad, Hansen, *Metaphysics in China, A Companion to Metaphysics*, p. 315/316, edited by Jaegwon Kim and Ernest Sosa, Blackwell Reference, Blackwell Publishers, 1995.

⁹ Western Philosophy remained the study of the thing in itself as late as the XVII century until it turned over to ‘ideas’ with Descartes. Although in the XX century with the ‘linguistic turn’ philosophy moved over to the analysis of language, this move was because it is through language that reference to ‘things’ is made. From language with Michael Dummett philosophy veered to ‘thoughts’, and as of late, to ‘concepts’ (Williamson, Timothy, *The Philosophy of*

are the most fundamental kinds of mental entities of which we are consciously aware.

Distinctions presuppose a relation between relata. All distinctions are of a relational nature. Every distinction presupposes a relation of difference between relata. The relata are, on one side, the subject relatum -the subject of thought or speech, or simply 'of distinction' or of 'possible distinction'- and, on the other, the object relatum (though it not necessarily an object properly speaking) or object of distinction, to give it a name, which is the distinction to which the subject relatum relates. As to the relations that determine the distinctions, these are what a relatum is to another. The ontological relations are the basic relations between relata in a distinction.

Distinctions can be classed as *primary* and *secondary* based on the relation holding between the relata. The *primary* is the one of mere difference, such as of a bare sensation; while the *secondary* is that of similarity. *Therefore, the said difference of a subject of thought, language and knowledge, is between the relata (as shall be seen, actually, between that for which the relata stand).* A relation can also be a relatum when it is taken for a subject of distinction; that is, only when it is object of our judgment or language.

Philosophy, Blackwell, 2007, Introduction, Chapter I, and *The Linguistic Turn and the Conceptual Turn*, p. 11 and 14).

The content of the relata in the distinctions originates either in sense experience or in the intellect (in the mind). According to this, distinctions are classable as *empirical* or *not*.

Empirical distinctions are classifiable into *properly empirical* and *inferentially empirical*. Though in all cases there cannot be distinction without judgment, it can be said that a distinction is *properly empirical* if both relata are sensations or sensorial¹⁰ distinctions; that is, if the premises from which it is inferred are sensations that we have distinguished to be different from other sensations. An example of this is ‘I saw that the vase with my own eyes and it is white’. On the contrary, a distinction arrived at is *empirically inferential* when one of its relata is not a sensation or a *sensory* distinction, as would be ‘I can’t see the horse that was grassing here, but because of the hour, it must be in the barn’. Most of the conclusions of science are *inferentially empirical*. The existence of protons or the calculation of galactic distances are all of an inferential nature made from the empirical. One can further distinguish between those *empirically inferential* distinctions that eventually can become *empirical proper* (as was the case of the hypothesis of the existence of the planet Uranus, which was later validated with direct sense experience) from those that are not verifiable

¹⁰ A sense perception is an awareness of the external world that is non-inferential; classification is a form of inference, inferential and sense perception must precede the inference if the classification is of empirical inference.

through the senses, such as practically all historical events. Even predictive assertions, until there is direct sense experience of what was claimed to exist, are inferential.

Non-empirical distinctions can be fictional or *a priori proper*. The *fictional* are constructs of fancy, made with elements of sensorial representations or of the sensorial and mental. The *a priori proper*, -as shall be explained below, only this *a priori*- is the case of these ontological relations and categories, which are distinguished based on an innate predetermination;

Non-empirical distinction can be *inferential*, as when intending to make of a fiction a credible tale about the Middle Ages, it concluded, that if the imaginary candidate is participating in a just, he must have been wearing an armour. The attribution of an armour is an inference made from the fact that in the middle ages warriors protected themselves with it when jousting.

Please observe that inference, whether *deductive* or *inductive*, as shall be further explained, is the process of classing and property attribution for determining identity; that is, the process of identifying the classes, properties and causes and effects, with which the subject of distinction relates in order to differ and be similar. While, from a realist perspective, inference by way of ‘deduction’ from the empirically verifiable, generates true knowledge, by way of ‘induction’ inference in all cases delivers hypotheses, if not conjectures, whose validation requires of other empirical distinctions or

inferential distinctions. It is through inference that is discovered, e.g., that a certain experience is a new sensation or has been caused by a particular factor or that there are neutrons in the nucleus of an atom. ***

By way of inference, either a relatum or a relation is identified. Moreover, it is through this process that expands knowledge. This happens when, by way of inference ‘from’ experience, the identification of either an unknown relation or unknown relatum is made. For example, how sensorial objects are in-themselves is not sensed, but inferred ‘from’ the mental constructs that constitute our sensations¹¹; such is the case of how we acquire knowledge about colour, temperature, or motion. From the experience that a, b, and c are white and hold the properties that make of them members of Y, one can infer that ‘d’, being white, might also hold the properties that would make of it a member of Y. Though some properties are very common and do not enable much specification, for the purpose of classing one can recur to other properties associated to them, such as ‘is white, but being a liquid and milked of a cow’, ‘d’ belongs to the class ‘milk’.

Regardless of whether they be objectively *true* or not, distinctions stand for things in the world or just for

¹¹The first to hold the indirectness between objects and phenomena was Heman von Helmholtz, as he says in his, *Handbuch der Physiologischen Optik*, published in 1867, where he explains that the sensations are sort of mere signals of reality, that our cognition of the objective is indirect; through mental constructs.

themselves. Those that stand for things in the world, stand for relata and relations as being in the objective world, are distinctions *of facts* or *factual*; those supposedly devoid of total or partial ‘objective’ reference –whether of a relatum or the relata, or the relation, are *non-factual*, and only stand for themselves. Though dreams, feelings, negations, fictions, false beliefs, falsities, the impossible, as well as the inexistent or nothingness¹², or a mere possibility with no actual exemplar, are *non-factual* distinctions, not all the distinctions originating in the mind, such as those of our basic relations and categories, are non-factual. The negation of the distinction between the *factual* and *non-factual* carries with it the negation of the difference between the subjective and the objective.

¹²‘*The Platonic riddle of nonbeing, that nonbeing must in some sense be, otherwise what is it that there is not*’ cited by Willard Von Orman Quine, *On what there is*, Review of *Metaphysics* (1948). Reprinted in 1953 *From a Logical Point of View*. Harvard University Press, who arrives to the conclusion that then, nothingness, is an objective existent and that there is no difference between the objective and the subjective. This also serves to understand why Quine’s relativism is not possible. As E.J Lowe in his *The Four Category Ontology*, Oxford University Press, 2006, Chapter 12, Section 12.3, p. 195/198, ‘Quine is in favour of a minimalist ontology, or rather of a no-category ontology, not a one-category’ ontology as pure trope ontologists are.’ Quine is, in E.J. Lowe’s opinion, an anti-realist, nihilist metaphysician, jointly with Dummett and his ‘amorphous lump ontology’. Quine’s relativism, for Prof. Lowe, is a contingent matter determined by cultural and psychological factors, according to which it is not possible to know what the content of reality is, for there is no privileged way of doing so independently of language.

The distinction of *non-factual* distinction of other minds (such as of a dream dreamed by someone else or a fairy tale) are *factual*. This is due to the assumed objective externality of the other minds and their content, relative to our mind. However, since the distinctions made by other minds may stand for things in the world or not, if the distinction of the other mind is *non-factual*, as is the distinction of ‘nothingness’, the distinction made of the distinction of the other mind is a *factual* distinction of a *non-factual* distinction. In other words, a factual distinction of another mind, is a distinction of an objectively existent that is in-itself a subjective distinction; and this will be so, regardless of the name assigned to the subjective distinction of the other mind. An example of the later is the distinction of ‘nothingness’, since the objective *factual* distinction of it is not of nothingness proper, but of a *non-factual* distinction that, as such, lacks an objective referent in the world. Likewise, the distinction of thoughts of fictional minds (such as of a character in a novel) do not follow the nature of the ‘fictional mind’, and the *factual* or *non-factual* nature of the same, is given by the supposed objective existence or non-existence of that for which they stand.

Distinction in turn, can be said to be *true* or *false* regardless of the nature of the relata (such as a mere sensation or a distinction already made) exclusively depending on whether the relata and relation constituting what the distinction stands for, respectively correspond

and, or, matches with what they represent as objectively existent or the mental, or not. If *non-factual*, a distinction is a *true* distinction if its relata correspond, and its relation matches, with the relata and relation of the mental or ideal distinction for which they stand –and which must be of a mental distinction already made. If *factually true*, the relata of the distinction must correspond with the objective relata (whether sensed or inferred) and the relation –as will be explained- must match with the relations holding between the objective relata¹³.

True factual distinctions would then be the ones that if *true*, constitute knowledge of objective reality. Based on what they stand for, a *true factual* distinction would be a non-subjective distinction of who makes it; this is, one that –although a mental entity, as are all our distinctions- is a distinction of an objectively existent, whether it be of something in itself or a thought of someone else’s mind. (As shall be seen it does not make sense to question this distinction between *true* and *false* on the grounds that it cannot be proven if a distinction corresponds or matches with the objectively existent, because, as will be explained, true distinctions correspond or match –depending on their nature- with external reality.)

¹³ There has to be something in common with reality for the distinction to be representative of it. Likewise, Wittgenstein, Tractatus.....

We also have to distinguish between the nature of the true *factual* distinctions and of the objective that they represent. The nature of the *factual* distinctions, as of any distinction, is made of subjective elements; these subjective components are the ‘forms’ with which the intellect constructs the representations of the objective (and with which, too, it can construct non-factual and fictitious distinctions). The ‘forms’ of our sensations are not the objective; the nature of the objective is what, supposedly, the factual distinctions stand for; that is, the relation and the relata existent in objective reality. In this sense, it can be said that these ‘forms of distinction’ shape the distinction of these relations and categories, as with them the mind gives form and structures the same, but not that which they represent.

In *factual* distinctions, the distinction of the relations between the relata (or of the more specific relations reducible to these) -as shall be seen below- is supposed to be the structure of the objective reality for which such distinction stands. As to their relata, they are what, supposedly, stand for the related objectively existents, and what -according to the relation that they hold- the different categories comprise under them. In consequence, if true, the relational ‘form’ of the *factual* distinction should match or correspond (actually, as will be explained, it has to match) with the relation holding in objective reality between the things objectively existent for which the relata of *factual* distinction stands. (However, the structure of the objective reality might

include other elements for which we have no ‘forms’ to represent them with, such as properties that confer membership to other fundamental categories of which we have no knowledge, if not something else, also unknown to us.)

Furthermore, we have to differentiate between the concept, the distinction, and that to which the distinction stands. If *factual*, the distinctions refer to something other than themselves. The nature and property of the concept or words referring to a plurality are not the same than those of the distinction that they name or signify; nor are the properties of the distinction itself those of whatever the distinction and its constituent relata and relations stand for. A consequence of this is, that the properties -the qualities- of the distinctions referred to by the concepts expressing these relations and categories, are not those of the objectively real that these distinctions stand for. In *non-factual* distinctions, due to their lack of an objective referent the nature and properties of the distinction are identical to those of its distinction. In other words, this is due to the lack of correspondence of their relata with anything in the objective world, or if the relata correspond with things in the world, but carry a different relation than the one constituting the distinction. ‘Nothingness’, for example, is -as any *non-factual* distinction- a mere mental construct. This explains why, neither what the *factual* distinction of nothingness stands for is the distinction itself nor the concept that denotes it.

Based on the referred different ontological relations, a distinction can be said to be of difference, similarity, property and causality. For a distinction to be the case, it is necessary that the subject relatum be something other than the object relatum, or that each stand for different relata.

One can distinguish something that seems different to be the same, and so, that one relata –for example- refers to the same idea or thing than the other. Nevertheless, if the relata are the same distinctions and stand for the same thing, there would be no possibility of distinguishing. Venus is Venus does not constitute a distinction, but Venus is the morning star, is a distinction, because it refers to the planet Venus also being what appears as the morning star: a property of Venus is distinguished.

In the same manner, the distinction of the referred ontological categories demands that we avoid mistaking that thing from which the category must be distinguished by way of the ontological relation. We must not mistake the subject relatum of a distinction of a category with its object relatum; a cause is not the effect, nor the subject of attribution its properties, nor a plurality its members.

Moreover, the nature and property of the plurality are not those of its instances. Contrary to the old *Dictum de Omni*, the universal properties of a plurality (class, set, collection, etc.) are not necessarily those of its members. For example, the ‘extension’ of a plurality –which is a property of the class or set or plurality, as a whole- is not necessarily that of its particular instances nor it is made

of the same ‘kind’ of subjects of distinction. The ‘extension’ of the content of a box of chocolates can be twenty bonbons, but neither each bonbon carries twenty other bonbons nor the box of chocolates is a bonbon itself. Still further -as shall be seen- while the concept of class (which is a plurality encompassing all that has one or more particular kind of properties in common) is an abstraction and, thus, *a priori*, its instances can be *a posteriori* and represent concrete objects. Furthermore, a plurality does not share the same properties that characterize an instance as a member of it: the class of cars does not have wheels, nor the class of triangles is itself a three-sided figure.

Distinctions are the subject matter of propositions and concepts; sentences and words (signs) refer to distinctions. A proposition is a distinction referred to by a sentence. The referent of language are distinctions, and meaning is the distinction conveyed by the expression¹⁴.

¹⁴ Though meaning and reference are generally not judged to be the same since Frege, my opinion is that they are the same. There are many theories of meaning. The earliest definitions of meaning defined it as a relation between signs and objects. See, Modrak, Devorah, Aristotle's Theory of Language and Meaning, CUP, 2001. An alternative position is that meaning is a relation of the sign with ideas, or thoughts, whether these be mental representations or mental acts of some kind. Truth-theories of meaning, which considered meaningless the expressions that are not true, prevailed at the start of the xx century, and lead to Quine attacking the very notion of meaning in ‘Two Dogmas of Empiricism’. The problem with the truth-theories of meaning is that expressions referring to fictions are considered meaningless, which though necessary to defend empiricism, is an absurd. What I point out here is that the meaning

Contrary to the doctrines prevailing in most of the XX Century regarding meaning –including Quine’s- a meaningless expression, as explained here, is just one that does not convey a distinction, whether it be under the form of a name, such as a word with no meaning or a sentence that does not refer to the relation or the relata.¹⁵

It should be noticed, that language in its structure, reflects the structure of distinctions. The language of logic, reflect it through premises or signs standing for the relata, and logical constants standing for relations. In the language of mathematics, this structure reflects itself in the expressions of numbers, sets, and geometrical figures, standing for the relata, and the mathematical and geometrical signs, for the relations. In ordinary language, sentences¹⁶ mirror the structure of distinctions, with names standing for relata while prepositions, conjunctions and verbs representing relations.

The rephrasing of names into a description shows that they refer to distinctions. However, language is more than propositions; all the expressions of a language, whether propositional or not, refer to distinctions, and it is the distinction to which they refer that gives them

of words, concepts and propositions, or any other expression, are the distinctions to which these refer depending on the language use.

¹⁵ One could say that the difference with a tautology, is that the tautology is not meaningless, but just states of a subject relatum to be what it is, thus providing no information about it.

¹⁶ For a view of current and new theories on propositions, see *New Thinking about Propositions* by Jeffrey C. King, Scott Soames, and Jeff Speaks, OUP, 2014.

meaning. Even commands and interjections refer to distinctions; in ‘give me that!’ an instruction to constitute the giver of the order into a holder of a general kind of relation to a particular object relatum is made. This is the case in greetings, exclamations or interjections; but these operate like ‘names’ of actions, feelings or attitudes. Thus, it is wrong to say that only propositions have meaning.

In fact, though names can be explained out as being instructions to recall distinctions that can be identified by the language speakers with a sign or word, propositions are sort of instruction for the addressee of the speech act to mentally construct a distinction with the relations and relata pointed at by the terms in the expression. In propositions, it is the words or names what point to the particular relata and the relation holding between them; this enables the hearer or addressee of the expression, to mentally recall the distinction that these words or names stand for. Through this ‘pointing at’ it is possible for the addressee of the speech act, to identify the relata and the relations of the distinction to which the speaker refers; and, thus, to make with them the distinction the speaker sought to generate in the mind of the addressee. Indeed, in sentences (the propositional), names or pronouns refer to the subject and object relata, while to ‘positive’ relations point: verbs –as the verbs ‘*to be*’ and ‘*to have*’ in any of their grammatical forms; prepositions –such as ‘*by*’ and ‘*through*’, and ‘*here*’, ‘*on*’ and ‘*now*’; and connectors, as are ‘*and*’ or ‘*or*’. For example, the verb ‘*to*

be refers to the relation that determines class or plurality membership¹⁷ of the subject of distinction; the verb *'to have'*, to the relation of property; and the preposition *'by'*, to the relation of causality. *'Here'*, *'on'* or *'now'* also refer to properties; while *'and'* or *'or'* to class membership; that is, to a relatum respectively being under the same particular plurality than another or not, or that it has the same or different property or cause.

As to 'negative' relations, they point to the denial of these verbs, prepositions or connectors, and, with the affirmative assertion of nothing, to 'nothingness'. Negations are instructions given to the addressee, not consider a certain subject relatum as holding a particular relation to another relatum, or that a particular relation is not standing between two particular relata -such as a distinction not being a property or causal factor of a certain thing, or not being a class or member of it¹⁸. It is in this manner, through reference to distinctions or to their constitutive elements, that language (any language) has meaning and meaning is made.

¹⁷ Wittgenstein is wrong in Prop. 3.323 of the *Tractatus*. It is clear to me that the word 'is' has only one established meaning. It points to plurality membership, such as, class.

¹⁸In other words, contrary to Hume and Logical Positivism (Heath, P.L., *Logical Positivism*, The Concise Encyclopaedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers, edited by J.O. Urmson & Jonathan Rée, Routledge, 1995, p.183/184) the relations are referred to by what are called logical terms, as this is the function played by verbs, prepositions and grammatical connectors in propositions.

In mathematics numbers or other signs standing for a quantity, are distinctions that refer to pluralities of a certain –known or unknown- extension. The possible relations of these pluralities is based on what may take place between the same -such as being added, reduced, divided, squared- and how this affect the extension of the same or of a particular plurality¹⁹.

In sum, irrespective of one’s own position on the major issues and doctrines of epistemology, while reference to one’s own subjective reality is direct, reference to objective reality is always indirect; and it is indirect, regardless of whether reference is made to facts, states of affairs, events, things or objects, or to the mental content of other minds. Reference to objective reality will²⁰always be indirect, through the ‘distinction’ of it; that is, by way of what the constitutive elements of the distinction represent.²¹

¹⁹ It could be said, that mathematics is the science that studies the relations between pluralities based on the extension of its instances, or of spatial entities based on their spatial relations; as well as their use the same in the determination of reality based on how one entity relates to another based on its constituents.

²⁰ Chomsky, Noam, *Nouveaux horizons dans l'étude du langage et de l'esprit*, Stock, 2005, p. 110, that there is no relation of reference between words and things.

²¹ Mediated reference terminates with the issues and incongruence that derived from directness of reference, such as to a factually non-existent, as in the example ‘the present King of France’ which is a reference to a non-objectively existent, and which lead some to the conclusion that only propositions have meaning (e.g., L. Wittgenstein, *Tract.*, Prop. 3.3, 3.314).

As to the ontological relations and categories, as said, they are distinctions. As will be explained, they are universal, incorrigible, and factually true distinctions. They are *a priori proper* distinguished, since their distinction is not possible from experience nor inferable, without an innate pre-determination to distinguish the same. The relata and the relation that constitute the same are unknown.

Consequently, too, these ‘forms’, the ones with which our judgment operates, reflect the manner in which we conceive the constituent elements of reality in-itself. In other words, they reflect how we conceive the building blocks of our worldview. However, as shall be explained in the next chapter, our ‘ontological forms of distinction’ do not include all possible relations and categories, or whatever it be that constitutes the nature of the objectively existent, and thus too, they are not the ultimate possible ontology.

b. Universality

These relations and categories must be judged to be the most universal and, thus, our most basic and general relations and categories of Being. By most universal I mean, *universal proper*. That is, that all subjects of distinction must be assumed to hold these ontological relations with other distinctions or possible relata. Not the same relation with all, but, e.g., that of causality between the father with his daughter, and of effect of his

daughter with the father. In consequence, by universality proper is meant that all distinctions are under all and each of these basic categories that such relations determine; that each and all relata are a subject of categorization under one and all of these basic categories based on the different ontological relation to which can be reduced each particular relation. This degree of universality is not a property of lower orders of classes –or pluralities- as these do not comprise all distinction but some. Only these very relations and categories themselves, and a higher order reality that be a condition of some, do not respectively hold them or instantiate under them.

So too, the very concept of ‘Being’ is not comprised under them, because it is of a higher order of abstraction, and is abstracted of any trait that would enable it to instantiate under them.

By universal, I do not refer to a trait that the concepts that express these categories and relations themselves carry, but to an attribute that is common to the relations and categories for which they stand. The distinctions of these relations and categories themselves are not universal proper, but particular distinctions; they are mere representations of the same and not of the categories and relations themselves, as only what these distinctions stand for, are these categories and relations.

The ‘distinction’ of these relations itself, can be under these categories as a mere mental construct, as when -as I am doing now- the distinction of relation becomes the subject of judgment. However, they cannot be judged to

be mere distinctions under the categories for what they stand for and comprise in objective reality, since that for which they stand are relations and not relata, but that which constitutes relata as such. Anyhow, while any of the distinctions of these basic relations can instantiate under the most basic categories as mere representation and not what they stand for, the distinction of these categories cannot instantiate under a most basic relation, because relations, as mere distinctions, are of a lower order to the categories; the categories are more encompassing, that is, more generic. While the categories comprise all possible distinctions (except those already mentioned of complementary nature or condition of the same) and all our relata instantiate under all of these categories, each particular relation can only be reduced to a single ontological relation.

Indeed, contrary to lower (less abstract) orders of classes of relata, which are members of all the basic (supreme and most abstract) categories, depending on the basic relation (to which their particular relations can be reduced), each of the lower orders of relations only instantiate under one of these universal relations. Thus, a relation of particular causality (such as causing a scandal) is not reducible to a relation of property²² or of difference or similarity.

²² Although it can be used as a property to identify who made the scandal.

The argument for their all-comprising universality (from now on, simply ‘universality’) –that is, for their application to all the distinctions that we make- is that we cannot conceive the existence of a subject of distinction if it does not hold all the referred relations that determine it. The reason for this is that the distinction would lack properties and causality, and consequently, would not be different nor similar. Since, in consequence, the other relations that we can distinguish do not comprise all particular relations as these do -nor the categories or classes that they constitute are all-encompassing as these-, it can be held that these relations and categories are the most universal relations and categories of Being that we can conceive.

From this entails, that these categories cannot be said to be a property of any particular subject of distinction²³. Due to their universality, these categories do not provide distinction to an instance of the same, as they cannot act as exclusive properties, nor as causal factors, of any of their members. If one says that something is a causal agent or a property, or a member of one of these categories, one is not attributing to it a unique trait that enables its distinction as something different (though the trait does enables their distinction as similar to all those that hold such relation). When one says that something is the cause or the property, the question that follows is ‘of

²³ If it be the case that higher orders of categories beyond these do exist, then, these categories and relations of ours, would be a property of the reality that we distinguish with them.

what?' as reference is assumed to be made to a particular property or factor, such as that it is the author of the book or the beauty of the painting.

Indeed, without these relations there cannot be distinctions nor relata. The hypothetical (as it is not effectively possible) suppression of a single of these most abstract relations carries with it the disappearance of the other universal relations (as well of all the particular relations that instantiate under them), inhibiting the distinction of a subject, and further still, of distinctions in general, and thus, of thought and language. In fact, the suppression of causality deprives of properties, and this, in turn, of difference and similarity.

These relations are what a subject of distinction must hold to be an individual; that is, to be different and also similar, with both the unique (tropes) and universal properties necessary to the effect, as well as with the causality relations to other subjects of distinction that the relation of property requires. Thus, an individual is a subject of distinction holding these relations to innumerable different object relata, such as of causality with B, and of property with A.

It cannot be argued that some of these relations constitute the subject of distinction while others do not, as all must be deemed constitutive of it. Non-constitutive relations can only be predicable of a non-relationally constituted entity -if any- since the relations it would hold to other subjects of distinction (according to our

ontological relations and categories) would not be essential to it; that is, would not constitute its nature.

The relations held between the relata to which all other relations can be reduced, are these universal relations. While these relations constitute the relata into instances of the said categories of 'Being', the particular relations constitute the relata into particular categories or classes; these in turn are reducible to the referred categories of 'Being'.

In other words, under these ontological relations instantiate, and to them are reducible, the different particular relations. Under the categories that these relations enable to determine, all possible relata are comprised, exception of those that constitute the condition of their existence.

These incorrigible relations are the highest order of relations that we distinguish, because the categories that they constitute comprise all possible distinctions that we can make.

Indeed, in like manner to what the distinction of 'Being' refers, each of these categories supposedly encompasses 'all existents'. However, they only comprise those existents structured by one of the incorrigible relations. While under 'Being' all things that we distinguish instantiate regardless of the relations that they hold to other existents -for the concept of 'Being' refers to a reality deprived of what enables distinction-under each of these categories everything participates based on the relation that each subject of distinction

holds towards other distinctions, including between the factual and non-factual. Therefore, while ‘Being’ is universal relative to all existents, whether these be objectively existent or not, these categories and relations are universal only relative to what holds the universal relation that determines it. However, since all our distinctions hold these different relations –exception made of those mentioned that might be a condition for them- they are universal regarding all the referred distinctions (even the concept of nothingness instantiates under them, but only as a non-factual true distinction, because of its lack of objective existence of that to which it refers).

In effect, under the category of cause, instantiate all the possible subjects of distinction based on the relations of causality that each holds to a particular object relatum; and causality comprises all the particular relations that bring about an effect (or a determination of properties) such as writing a book, running a marathon or doing one’s duty).

Each of these categories comprises all possible distinctions, and every subject of distinction is under all and each of these categories. In consequence, no subject of distinction can be thought to be just a member of one of the categories alone, such as only a ‘one’ or an ‘other’, nor solely a plurality, or merely a property or subject of attribution, or barely a cause or an effect. Thus, too, each subject of distinction is supposed to hold *all* the basic relations; but, this last will be depending on the basic

relation to which is reducible –abstractable- the particular relation holding between the subject relatum and its object relata. This will be so, in the same manner that the relation of painting towards a portrait is reducible to that of causality. Thus, it is wrong to say that ‘a subject of predication cannot be a predicate’.

For example, Juana and Belen are unique individuals each, and members of the plurality (class) of ‘girls’; but they are also two different pluralities, each respectively constituted by the history of her life, ideas, concerns, etc. And though they are subjects of attributes (holders of properties) such as of beauty and intelligence, Juana and Belen are also qualities of other subjects of distinction, as with them it is possible to individuate their respective schools or families, as when one says: ‘the school to which Juana assists’ or ‘the brothers of Belen’. Moreover, they are both causal factors and effects, such as the cause of their grandparents love, and the end-result of their respective genes and upbringing²⁴.

For example, when one says that number is the extension of sets and, thus, a property of a kind of plurality, one is not precluding that number is under the other categories. The distinction of ‘number’ –as all distinctions- is, first, a distinction that it is something different from all other things; and then, that it is also

²⁴This applies to objects, which cannot be excluded on the argument held by the advocates of the Causal Redundancy Theory, that they cannot be categorized as causes, as Annie Thomasson observes in her book *Ordinary Objects*, OUP, 2007, p. 4.

similar, and thus, a class of things, such as an instance of the class abstractions of pluralities. So too, is a number a property of pluralities, as well as the cause of mathematical judgment, and the effect of pluralities being constituted by more or less instances. The reason we generally judge numbers as merely being properties, is their unique trait of referring to the extensions of pluralities.

In sum, all subjects of distinctions are classable under all these categories, regardless of the particular relation or category emphasized or taken into account, to distinguish the same. For example, we are selective as to what constitutes a set in our distinction of number, such as in what is constitutive of the extension of the box of chocolates, are the chocolates and not the lining of the box.

Allow me to clarify that what number stands for is not a convention, as think some of the holders of the idea that these kinds of relations and categories are hypotheses or conventions on how to split reality. Extension cannot be negated of pluralities, for the simple reason that plurality –as shall be explained below- is an incorrigible concept, as well as it is so, that of different pluralities; that is, of classes, sets, kinds, types, etc. What is a convention is the name or sign that can be assigned to refer in language to a number. In those pluralities that comprise a diverse collection of members, it is also a convention what is taken to constitute the number. For example, of a box of bonbons, what is taken as an instance to determine the

extension of its content are the bonbons, and not the small paper cases in which they rest.

As a consequence of the last, these highest relations and categories, are the most abstract distinctions that we can intellectually access before the abstraction of the distinction of 'Being' is arrived at. 'Being' is the ultimate or highest possible abstraction that we can make. The abstraction of 'Being' stands for what is deprived of all properties. There are no other categories or relations that we can make or conceive between the abstraction of these categories and that of 'Being'. While these relations are our highest abstractions, because they relate the relata of all our possible distinctions, the categories are such because they comprise all possible subjects of distinctions.

This explains why these universal and most abstract relations and categories are ontological proper, in the sense that they apply to all beings, except to those that are complementary to them or are the condition of the same.

As a result, a subject of distinction is what we become aware of as holding said ontological relations with other subjects of distinction and falling under these categories; and therefore, that these relations and categories determine the most basic kinds of distinctions that we can make, as there are no other more generic classes of pluralities than them.

It also follows, that these basic relations and categories being universal, can be deemed to be the

structure of all our distinctions -exception made of those already mentioned that be complementary or a condition of the existence of that for which they stand- for they are what all our distinction share in common, and somehow appears to support them.

Because of this universal nature, these ontological distinctions provide a unified vision of the world. If only lower orders of categories or classes to these where the highest order we would have no manner to correlate and link the particular classes or categories into a whole, and we would lack knowledge of what is common to them all. Moreover, there would be no remedy to this, since these ontological relations and categories –as will be explained- are *a priori* and cannot be inferred from the empirical if judgment has not previously contributed them to the distinction.

All the theories that deny these ontological distinctions, in all or in part, or which hold that some are subsumable into other, will certainly contest what I here hold. However, as will be shown in the next subsection, they are incorrigible. One of the objections to this trait of universality will derive from a mistaken conception of cause and causality, which asserts that abstractions lack causal powers, that only objects can hold this trait. However, all our distinctions, regardless of their nature, are a cause, to those other subjects of distinction that they relate by way of causality. Causality is not an energy that a subject of distinction has to have. The energy can be in the mind of an observer, as when one says his love for

philosophy, or the beauty that inspired the poet. Causality is simply something *sine qua non* something else does not obtain. We cannot deny causality of anything that exists. It is ridiculous to hold that abstract objects have no causal powers.

The issue of abstractions being acausal originates in Locke, who held that causality has an empirical basis and that the empirical basis for it comes ‘from our own felt powers as agents’²⁵. Locke is wrong in this. Causality is a distinction that we make because we are programmed to make it (our physical traits and organs, presuppose it) that a particular exist because of the existence of other particular things). This theory is due to a mistaken conception of causality.

Berkeley²⁶ adopted it, which Hume accepted and used, as it served his theory. Berkeley attacked the doctrine of ‘abstract ideas’ as existing in themselves, on the argument that ideas are inert, and thus, cannot act on our senses (he held that only spirits are active). To him, perceived ideas are individual entities with no power or agency included in them. So that one idea or object of thought cannot produce an alteration in another, as no power or activity is perceived in them; they are causally inert (so there must be some other cause for their continual succession, arising and disappearing, which is

²⁵ Cit. opus, pag. 24

²⁶ Grayling, A.C, *Scepticism and the Possibility of Knowledge*, Berkeley’s Argument for Immaterialism, page 8 onward, Continuum UK, 2008.

God, the ultimate source of ideas and their connections).
27

It is surprising that this theory of the acausality of abstractions is still held. However, as just explained, it is totally unfounded²⁸. It is grounded in the wrong understanding that a cause has to have a power to bring about an effect, so the argument goes that abstractions lack powers (they are abstractions) and they cannot bring about effect. Cause is simply what results from a relation, where one of the relata cannot exist without the other. There cannot be love for mathematics, if there is no such discipline, but it is not necessary for numbers to be a causal factor, that they be endowed with a power to cause you to love mathematics. It just suffices that mathematics cannot exist without numbers.

Nonetheless, it is correct to say that abstractions do not act on our sense organs, that they are not sensible. However, this cannot be interpreted in the sense that what is not sensible is causeless. Besides, though it can be said that objects act on our senses, the truth is that, it is not them what bring about the sensation, but the photons that act on our nerves. The immediate external factor of the experience is the photons impinging on the cells. The objects are in the order of causes prior to them. In tactile sensations, the object may not do anything actively to

²⁷ Cit. opus, pag. 21

²⁸ Berto, Francesco; Plebani, Matteo (2015-01-29). *Ontology and Metaontology: A Contemporary Guide*. Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle, (Position 220)

cause it, as the sensation results from the electric charges originating in the nerves of the skin, as they are pressed by an object. The theory that some things, like abstractions are causally inert is contrary to the most elemental common sense.

c. *Incorrigibility*²⁹

The prevailing stance today is to consider these kinds of distinctions, and thus, these relations and categories, hypotheses or conjectures about the structure of the world, if not just fictions, rather than descriptions of facts. That is, not absolute, but rather as social constructs or advantageous manners -for a class or group- of splitting reality, if not posits of theories about reality (Putnam), or just helpful conceptions for deriving verifiable scientific statements or norms.³⁰

In other words, their objective reality is rejected and they are regarded as one of the many possible manners in which the mind puts together or constructs a phenomenal reality. However, these relations and categories are incorrigible. Even the just mentioned proposed

²⁹As Simon Blackburn explains (Blackburn, Simon, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, OUP, 1996, definition of incorrigible) '*A proposition is incorrigible if it cannot be corrected, that is, it is not possible that belief in it should be found to be mistaken...*'

³⁰ Here applies the instrumentalist conception proposed by Pierre Duhem in *La Théorie physique. Son objet et sa structure* (1906). According to it, science does not describe reality beyond phenomena, but it is an appropriate instrument for prediction.

explanations of the ontological relativist, that these ontological relations and categories are conventions, cultural posits, hypothesis, conjectures, conceptions, fictions, imposition of power groups, etc., presuppose them; for example, conventions presuppose causality and effect, properties, classes of things, pluralities, individuals; the same all the others, for all our judgments presuppose them.

By incorrigibility, I do not refer to these distinctions being undeniable, as this is a property common to all distinctions once made. In fact, of a distinction one can deny that it is factual or not, true or false, new or old, or who made it, but not whether it exist or not. By incorrigibility, I mean the impossibility of questioning without contradiction that their distinction matches with that which they stand for in objective reality. In other words, that in true factual distinctions, the structure that they represent as being held by something in objective reality, cannot be held not to be the structure of what they represent as existent in the objective world. Thus, by incorrigibility is meant, that these basic relations and categories cannot be denied to 'match' with the structure of the objective world that we distinguish. It is also meant that this matching is a fact of these relations, even if the perceived objective 'things' for which the relata stand, merely corresponds with how they are perceived or represented (such as sound with sound waves).

Moreover, each of these categories and relations, whether consciously or unconsciously, complement the

others in a manner that not a single one of them can be, neither in part nor in their entirety, altered, subsumed into another, reduced or suppressed, without negation of the others and the very possibility of distinction. Nor are there any possible gradients of them for us, as would be the case if, through maturation from birth, the intellect started with a partial or incomplete conception of these and over time they become the specific ones we think with³¹. Indeed, neither relations are suppressible without terminating with the distinction of these categories, nor these categories without implying the negation of relations. Still further, if one could suppress these categories and yet preserve the lower orders of classes, which is not possible, as already explained, the unified vision of the world that they provide would be lost³²; as we would distinguish the highest particular orders of classing, as unconnected plurality realities, unable to distinguish the elements in common among them.

It might be contested, that both property and causality are different constitutive elements of the subject of distinction since a subject can be distinguished by the causal factor of its existence –such as in, Francis and Marc are sons of Florence- and so, that both cause and

³¹ The instinctive behaviour of new-borns as in breast feeding, forces to presuppose that causality, difference and similarity, and so, too, properties are innately determined.

³² This, too, would be the consequence of suppressing the distinction of 'Being' or 'existent', as then, the world would be conceived as a plurality of different disconnected realities, each under a different category, holding no relation in common among them.

property could be reduced to one category, or each subsumed into the other. However, the relation of causality is not that of property because each of these relations relates a same subject of distinction to different object relata. Although the subject of distinction is the same for each relation, the object relatum is different for each type of relation. This explains why Russell was wrong in holding that there are no such thing as classes, simulating discourse about them by contextual definition, reducing them to attributes³³.

Besides, none of these relations and categories, as any plurality that they are can be instantiated or classed under itself, for it would be both the subject and object relata. In such case, the subject relatum would not be different nor similar, since in what regards difference, the object relatum to which it has to be different would be identical to it; and, as to similarity, the object relatum to which it must be similar, would be identical without the least content of difference with the subject relatum. Consequently, there would be no possible difference nor similarity if a subject relatum is its own object relatum. The nature of what the concepts of plurality refer to, is not identical to that of its members. Thus, contrary to what has been held, a plurality cannot be a member of itself (and so too, neither a property its own subject of attribution, -that is, of distinction- nor a cause an effect

³³ W.V. Quine, *Ontological Relativity and other essays*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994 (reprint), p.101.

of itself) as is assumed in Russell's Paradox. Distinctions imply alterity and the categories only refer to what a subject of distinction is relative to others, and not respect to itself.

From this entails that by incorrigible must be understood the impossibility of denial of the existence in objective reality of entities, classes of things, properties and causal factors; and that these relations and categories obtain in the objective world. However we can only assume that they obtain, as a mere aspect of reality; as the aspect of reality with whose relations and ontological categories they match (if these match, the particular relations of the distinction can be reduced to the ontological relation, and so too, the particular categories into the ontological categories). However, it cannot be assumed that they match with a complementary reality of the same, or with the one that be a condition of their objective existence (and conception).

It might be argued that there are other incorrigible distinctions, such as that of the 'ego'. However, these are only unquestionable relative to certain particular distinctions, so not truly incorrigible as the basic relations and categories are. These relations and categories are incorrigible in all possible worlds. By possible worlds, I mean any reality, regardless of how it is structured, and not just to what Lewis defined by

such³⁴. By being incorrigible, I also mean undeniable in all possible worlds. It is not meant that all reality is as the distinction of these relations and categories structure it for us, but that all subjects of distinction—exception made of those already mentioned to be a complement or condition of them—can be attributed these basic categories and relations, without contradicting the nature of the objective world. Not all our categories are incorrigible proper. Although ‘number’ is undeniable relative to pluralities, it is not undeniable relative to all possible distinctions, since not everything is an extension of a plurality, and neither causality nor property, are themselves a number, so number it is not properly incorrigible (nor a basic ontological category proper).

It might still be argued, that the distinction of ‘time’ is incorrigible, as there cannot be efficient causality without it; or else, that is incorrigible but not objectively existent—that as argued St. Augustine of Hippo—because the present is the passage from what non-is to what non-is or from a non-existent to a non-existent. In the *first* place, time is not ‘incorrigible’ proper, as it is only undeniable relative to our sensorial representations and not so regarding the most basic abstractions, irrespective of it being presupposed by efficient causality. In the *second* place, it is wrong to say that time does not objectively exist; as it suffices that, its distinction, match with a part

³⁴ Lewis, David, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p. 2.

or minimum of objective reality, to be a factually true distinction relative to that with which it matches. Moreover, time could be an aspect of a higher spatial dimension, of which we can only perceive a minimal part; that is, an interpretation of a more complex spatial reality unperceivable by us.

d. They are A Priori Proper

This is a trait of both the distinction of these ontological relations and categories, and of what they stand for. Of the distinction, because it originates in an *a priori* determination to make it; and of what they stand for, because they stand for what is of a non-sensible nature (not accessible by the senses) and appears to be non-relationally constituted, as happens to the relation to which they refer.³⁵

In fact, these ontological relations and categories can be said to be knowledge of the world which is not possible to access via sense experience; that is, which – due to its non-sensible nature- is neither acquirable through the senses nor inferable from experience, and yet essential for true distinction of objective reality to be possible. The knowledge that they provide and constitute, actually derive from a pre-set disposition to distinguish according to them.

³⁵ Konrad Lorenz, *cited opus*, holds that the concepts *a priori* of understanding (for example the representation of space) originate in the mechanisms of natural selection.

I will call this *a priori* the ‘*a priori proper*’ or ‘*the true a priori*’ to differentiate it from the common traditional conception of the *a priori*, which omits to consider that the inferred from experience, though ‘prior’ to experience, is *a posteriori* of it; as without experience it would not be possible. Such is the case of the example ‘*Bachelors are unwedded men*’, which, properly speaking, is based on empirical knowledge of language and inferred from it, and, thus, though anterior in time, is not *a priori proper* but *a posteriori*.

Although empiricism has denied the Kantian fixed and universal *a priori*, it accepts today that there are certain principles and rules, which must be available to the intellect prior to judgment. However, empiricism attributes them to conventions (Logical Empiricism) or deems them, as does Putnam, a relativized *a priori*; or the core of a holistic net of purely empirical knowledge (as suggests David Stump³⁶ regarding Quine’s empirical holism); or constitutive empirical elements³⁷. However,

³⁶ David J. Stump, *Conceptual Change and the Philosophy of Science, Alternative Interpretations of the A Priori*, Routledge, Francis and Taylor Group, New York and London, 2015, Introduction. This also applies even to Jean Piaget theory of how the structure of the intellect evolves and constructs these ontological structures (as well as others).

³⁷ As Jean-Michel Besnier explains in ‘*Les Théories de la Connaissance*’, Presses Universitaires de France, 2005, Paris, p. 81, 82, 87, empiricism must accept a sort of a Kantian *a priori* or a constructivism in the manner of Piaget’s. He cites Gerard Edelman, *Biologie de la conscience*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 1992, who holds that

that knowledge requires of innate *a priori* structures, as argued, among others, Chomsky and Konrad Lorenz³⁸, cannot be negated.

An *a priori proper* is necessary for judgment, and is necessary that it be innately set. In fact, we are born with an enormous amount of *a priori proper* information. It ranges from the one that determines biological functions to the one which predisposes to a particular social conduct in particular as well as to certain beliefs, such as in the existence of external reality and in the ego, in the stability of nature, and -according to Diego Colombek³⁹- in the existence of God. Our physical structure alone, such as our limbs, hands and fingers, imply the existence of a reality independent of our body and mind, constituted by individuals, pluralities, classes of things, properties, and cause and effect. This *a priori* makes available information essential for judgment and behaviour, and includes other orders of categories and relations of a non-sensable nature. It, in turn, includes lower order of classes and relations (of lesser universality) such as ‘number’, and ‘forms of sensitivity’

learning is possible because we are hard wired to the effect; that is, genetically conditioned to it.

³⁸ Chomsky, Noam, *The Principles and Parameters approach* (P&P); and Konrad Lorenz, *L'envers du miroir : Une histoire naturelle de la connaissance*, Flammarion, Paris (1975) ; Peter Carruthers, Stephen Laurens and **Stephen Stich**, *The Innate Mind*, Oxford University Press; 1 Volume (2005) and 2nd. Volume (2007).

³⁹ Golombek, Diego, *Las Neuronas de Dios*, Siglo XXI Editores Argentina S.A., Bs. As., 2014.

with which the mind ‘shapes’ sensations, and the succession of experiences, as change and motion⁴⁰.

This *a priori proper* appears to be given in a pre-established manner, at the level of the unconscious, as instructions for sensation and judgment, and most likely, is genetically determined. It consists of instructions to interpret what sensorially is given and to infer from the distinctions to which its interpretation gives place, new distinctions. We become consciously aware of these distinctions by way of abstraction, through rational-discursive judgment of what judgment has already put into the distinction that it makes.

The *true a priori* character of the relations and categories results from the fact that:

i. *They cannot come along with experience or be derived from it:* it is not possible to have experience of them, nor that they be inferred from experience. *Firstly*, because they are abstractions and abstractions cannot be sensed. *Secondly*, because abstraction is made classing a subject of distinction into a higher class (more abstract one). Therefore, in order to infer them it is necessary that they be available for classing before their inference. However, these relations and categories are the highest possible orders of relations and classes that we can

⁴⁰ We can include the universal innate rules or grammar to which Chomsky refers (Chomsky, Noam, *On Language, Reflections on Language (reprint)*, The New Press, 2007, p.135 onwards, and Chomsky, Noam and Mukherjee, Nirmanlangshu, *The Architecture of Language*, Oxford India Paperbacks, 2006, p.50/60).

distinguish, so they could not be available through inference from experience if they are not available *a priori*.

ii. *The sensible (and this includes any kind of convention, core of empirical network, or relativized a priori) cannot be distinguished without them*, so they must be prior to possible experience, and, consequently, given *a priori*. It might be held that, initially, they may be constituted in a provisory manner in our mind, and gradually adjusted with the feed-back derived from experience –as could be a relativized *a priori*. However, what might be adjusted is only their application (such as better determination of what is a property and what a cause), and not the basic manner of splitting reality that they determine. Bear in mind what I said above, about the consequences that a minimal alteration of these relations and categories brings about.

iii. *We can ask for which, what, why or how*, before we become aware of these relations and the categories that are necessary to answer these basic questions. This, too, is an indication that we are innately and ‘unconsciously’ *a priori proper* pre-ordained to inquire for these relations and categories, and, thus, to recur to these question-concepts, in order to infer them. Let me observe that if we lacked the possibility of appealing to these ontological relations or categories, these questions would not be possible with the lower orders of categories alone.

In effect, these relations and categories are only identifiable by way of deduction from what is contributed by judgment in the act of abstracting. Their deduction is based on the implicit premises *a priori* constituted by these very relations and categories on which judgment is established. Without these premises, these distinctions cannot be made, and least of all their abstraction arrived at, as there is no manner to become aware of these relations and categories prior to their deduction, for they cannot be inferred without an innate predisposition to do so according to them.

In fact, their abstraction is not reached by way of suppression of unique and universal properties from the sensorially distinguished, as is usually held. This would be an almost endless process and, even so, impossible to conduct without *a priori proper* instructions. Otherwise, how would we know what to suppress of distinctions, in order to class them into a higher order of pluralities? Abstracting is to bring a subject of distinction under the higher order class into which it can be instantiated. However, as just said, this classing requires that both the properties and the higher order plurality or category be pre-determined or determinable for the classing to be possible. It is the same in reduction.

The deduction of these relations and categories usually starts with the search of what can be said of all things, asking of the thing that is the subject of our act of abstraction '*what it is*', or '*why*' or '*how*'. That is, seeking either to class the subject of distinction into a

more general and more encompassing class or, else, trying to specify the class or properties of its constituents, until the constitutive elemental particle or causal factor is arrived at. While it is actually arrived to the ultimate constituents of matter when an elemental simple particle (though this is certainly questionable) is identified, it is arrived to the most abstract categories when further abstraction only delivers the distinction of 'Being'. An example of the last is when, to the questions of '*And what is this?*', the sole possible answer is: '*It is Being or existent or entity*'. This is so, because we lack the higher classes, basic elements or causal factors to proceed and progress with the abstracting. In like manner, we can deduce the most basic relations when one cannot further identify a relation under which the particular relations are reducible other than as 'Being'. The *a priori* determination is also a requirement for our conception of 'Being', that is, to our idea of unity of reality; it too, cannot be inferred without predetermination to deduct the same, as it is the ultimate abstraction that can be attained.

The *a priori proper* nature of these relations and categories further results from the fact that they cannot be (i) defined nor (ii) empirically negated. In effect, to define is to put in propositional form a distinction according to the different ontological relations held by what the relata of the distinction stand for; thus, to define is to specify the difference and similarity, and thus, the properties and factors that determine identity. Now, the

distinction of these basic *a priori proper* relations and categories is not classable, nor their constitutive elements or factors –if any- identifiable. They can only be stated in a proposition, as a subject relata holding a relation to relata of an equal or lower order to that of their referent. For example, it can be said of ‘cause’ that it is a factor (for there is no available higher order to them under the concept of ‘Being’, and the same happens when we seek to define these relations) or it can be said that a cause is what brings the tree down. In the first case, we have a tautology because the words cause and factor have the same meaning; and, in the second, what we have is just an exemplar, that is, an ‘example’ of an instance of a cause. However, a relation to a relatum of a higher order of abstraction to them, as is needed to define their class, cannot be identified and thus, is inexpressible, which impairs the completion of the definition of their class. The same impossibility is the case with the definition of causal factors and constitutive elements of what they stand for.

Consequently, these relations and categories, as all the *a priori proper*, can carry a name, but its distinction cannot be stated in propositional form, which makes them indefinable and, thus, too, unexplainable⁴¹. *They constitute the structure of our pictures of the world; what the picture must have in common with the world to be a representation of it, which itself, ‘cannot be*

⁴¹ Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, cit. edition, A245

*represented*⁴²-where ‘representation’ can be identified with ‘define’, as we cannot have an idea of what they are, that is, to what class they belong. This is exactly the opposite of what happens with *a posteriori* distinctions, which have to be definable or propositionally expressible, if true.

As to (ii) above, there is no manner to negate the *objective nature* of a distinction whose *constitutive* relation and object relata (being of a higher order) are not identifiable, as happens with what being *a priori proper* is by its nature not grounded in experience, and is universal and incorrigible. Only the sensible or the fictional (which is shaped with memories of ‘forms’ – component elements- of former particular sensations and relations, without the supposed proper external sensorial stimuli) can be questioned and deemed false; for this very reason, these *a priori proper* relations and categories, cannot be judged to be fictional nor originating in social conventions. It could be argued, that if these categories are tautologies⁴³, -as results from any intent to explain or define them- that they are meaningless⁴⁴, and do not constitute knowledge; or that, if at best they can be

⁴² Wittgenstein, Ludwig, cit. op., prop. 2.172 ‘*The picture, however, cannot represent its form of representation; it shows it forth*’.

⁴³ Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, cit. edition, B302.

⁴⁴ Carnap, Rudolf, *The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language*, 1932, trans. Arthur Pap, in A. J. Ayer (ed.), *Logical Positivism*, The Free Press, NY, 1966, 60–81.

exemplified, that they are indefinable proper, and so too, meaningless.

However, they are not meaningless as they refer to a distinction that we cannot deny to be objectively true. Their tautological and apparent unexplainable nature results from their undefinable character ‘*with our Ontological Scheme*’. Otherwise, even the postulates and laws of the natural sciences would be meaningless, as there is no manner to explain the basic premises and the relations that constitute the structure of the ontological distinctions on which they, ultimately, are grounded. It is wrong to think ‘that *a priori* reasoning cannot establish anything about the nature of reality’, as was held by logical positivism and analytic philosophy⁴⁵. These categories and relations, though *a priori* contributed by the intellect, carry cognitive content of reality that is neither experienced nor inferable from experience. Experience alone only enables sensations of which we cannot have conscious awareness without these *a priori proper* relations, as it is these relations what make distinction possible, and without them, there is no knowledge.

Indeed, the source of our knowledge is not just the senses; it includes the *a priori proper* given. What is called empirical knowledge –as the one constituting the natural sciences- carries an enormous *a priori proper*

⁴⁵Hancock, Roger, *History of Metaphysics*, Gale’s Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, p.299.

content, as much in the forms of sensitivity that shape our sensorial experiences, as well as in the relations that judgment determines is held between the same. The *a priori* forms of sensitivity are those of our sensorial representations -such as colour, tact, taste, smell, sound and time and space⁴⁶. The relations and categories are forms of judgment, as it is it these that judgment contributes with to the sensed, subject to how the sensations are given. Kant is right that it is ‘synthetic *a priori* judgments’ what make up our experience⁴⁷.

Following the Scholastic *Dictum de Omni*, it could be argued that if what is predicated of a class is predicable of its members, and that if the distinction of ‘Being’ and of these categories is *a priori*, that then, all that we distinguish is also *a priori*. However, as has been already explained, this principle is wrong. Therefore, though the categories will be determined and predicated *a priori*, since all our distinctions are comprised under them, the categories will include more than the *a priori proper* relations of the distinctions. This is so, because the sensations that constitute the relata of the *primary* distinctions are also under them, and these are a

⁴⁶ Time and space are inferences from our record of sensorial impressions. Nonetheless, their distinction is *a priori proper*, and *a priori proper* determined. None of these are perceived, but, upon the inference of difference, such as between succession of sensations, the feeling or sensorial representations of change, time and space is triggered.

⁴⁷ Caygill, Howard, *Introduction* to the cited edition of Kant’s *Critique*, p. xvii.

posteriori. In fact, one can predicate of a class or plurality to hold particular relations of difference and similarity, and of property and causality, but the predication of difference of a *primary* distinction is a *posteriori* of the mere sensations.

Because of their *a priori proper* nature, our knowledge of these relations and categories is direct or intuitive. What is *a priori* given to us is not conceptualized knowledge of them. We are not born with conscious awareness of these ontological relations and categories. These have to draw from what judgment puts into distinctions; that is, not from what is of sensible nature of the distinctions that we make. What is *a priori proper* given is the potential of judgment to identify when they apply to the sensorially given, or in the inference when missing, and in the construction of fictions of reality, such as falsities and fantasies. This faculty of judgment follows a pre-set or pre-established program to the effect. For example, In the distinction of 'Being' what is *a priori* given is a certain innate predisposition to judge that whatever we can sense or think of, has something in common with all other possible subjects of distinction. From this we can infer that the multiplicity of sensations and distinctions constitute a plurality under which all distinctions participate. The same applies to the *a priori proper* relations and categories.

Such pre-set *a priori* program is a Criterion of Judgment that follows the *a priori proper* nature of these

relations and categories, and neither originates nor is derivable from experience. This program provides the intellect with information regarding the structure of reality. The information it delivers makes possible interpreting sense experience in a manner that enables knowledge of the objective reality, structured according to these relations and categories. This is, as what is it that constitutes difference, or of what constitutes a class, or when the relation is of causality and when of property. This program leads our intellect to ascribe these relations and categories to all the reality that we distinguish, excluding the one that might complement it or be a condition of it –if such higher order reality exists.

This pre-set program primarily refers to the principles that apply to the determination of these ontological relations. This program includes, not only the principles of ‘proper’ judgment, that we know of, such as that of identity and non-contradiction, but other too, that –as yet- have not been formalized⁴⁸, and which –at the unconscious level- apply to pluralities, properties and causality. These other principles set a limit to the application of the principle of identity and, in consequence, are appropriate to explain out some old paradoxes. Without these other principles that of identity leads to monism and other incoherencies, such as Hegel’s

⁴⁸ These principles serve to avoid that it may be wrongly concluded that a subject of cognition be judged to be that from which it differs or that to which it holds a relation of similarity, such as respectively being the other things, or a class or cause or the property of itself.

denial of the principle of non-contradiction, or to the belief in the possible existence of ‘nothingness’; or that a class can be an instance, or a property a subject of attribution, of a cause an effect, of themselves, as happened to Parmenides.

Because of this, said Criterion of Judgment constitutes the Ontological Scheme on which our Conceptual Scheme is grounded. In other words, such Criterion sets the principles and rules that apply for a true determination of the relata to which a relation holds, or for the true determination of the relation that is held by the relata, and, thus, in the very process of reasoning. This criterion prescribes, among other things, ‘*what is to count as objective in our experience*’⁴⁹. On it are based the principles and rules of logic and mathematics. The relations and categories that constitute the same, are the fundamentals of the logical forms in propositions and so, too, the foundations of the numerical relations in mathematical operations. The principles and rules of

⁴⁹ Walsh, William H, *cit. op.*, p. 303; Wolfgang, Carl, *Frege’s Theory of Sense and Reference*, Cambridge University Press, 1994 - the truth of empirical judgments requires an appeal to facts, while the *a priori* judgments appeal to laws that neither need nor admit of proof. Another conclusion that I hold that we can make is, that due to the incorrigible nature of the *a priori proper*, lack of possible empirical validation does not deprive true character, nor admits to judge the inference from it hypothetical or conjectural, by means of strict logic or mathematics. This confirms the value of philosophy as a science about the nature of reality whose object of study is the information about the world, available in, and through, the *a priori proper*.

mathematics and logic are just inferences, conceptualizations, and systematizations of the principles and rules of this innate Criterion of Judgment that respectively apply to each of these manners of distinguishing. The disciplines of logic and mathematics are rules and principles of this Criterion. They are the rules and principles so far identified and conceptualised, for a process of judgment that leads to true distinctions.

Let me add that the *a priori proper* difference between mathematics and logic is in what is taken as subject of distinction, and the kind of properties that are related. While in mathematics the relating of spatial and non-spatial pluralities (classes, sets, collections, etc.) is based on extension -which are properties of the '*pluralities*' themselves, not of its members- in logic, the relating is based on the universal properties of the '*members*' of the plurality. So while logic generates knowledge based on the nature of the instances of pluralities –such as those of the members of a class-, mathematics delivers cognition, based on the property of extension of the pluralities as a whole. These properties of extension of the pluralities are not the same properties of its instances (examples of properties of pluralities is the case of number being cardinal, or a class having a limited extension of members). Therefore, while the first is based on the attributes and causal factors of the instances, the second is only grounded on their extension. Ultimately, knowledge requires a combination of both. Knowledge of the mere extension is useless if the content of the

plurality is ignored; and knowledge of the content is of no value, without awareness of how the extension determines the content and the particular relations. It is in this manner that other differences and similarities are made; that unknown causal factors and properties of the content are discovered.

The problem with logic, is that the conceptualization of the principles and rules of judgment so far made (primarily those of identity, contradiction and third excluded) omits considering the principles that rule the application of all the ontological relations and categories⁵⁰ besides that of individual, and which derive from the application of the principle of non-contradiction to these basic distinctions. This has led to most of the

⁵⁰Properly speaking, the principles are rules of judgment needed by the intellect to be capable of delivering sensorial distinctions and conclusions (distinctions) about the world corresponding with objective reality. Being rules, the first one should be that of non-contradiction, which forbids conclusions contrary to identity, and is, what the principle of identity and third excluded refer to. However, the principle of non-contradiction applied to the denial of the basic categories, shows that they cannot be in any manner denied (as has been said, they are as much incorrigible as the distinction of 'Being'). From the application of non-contradiction to our categories, other principles can be inferred, which not only show the truth character of these categories and relations, but also what must be understood by each of the same; for example, that a class cannot be a member of itself, nor a cause, its own effect, nor a property its subject of distinction. This alone solves most of the paradoxes in philosophy, and enables a definition of change not contradictory with identity.

paradoxes of philosophy, and thus, to these principles being judged questionable.

e. Irreducibility

There are two ways one could say that something is reducible. The first, referring only to its constituent parts or factors, which is by way of identifying its causes of Aristotelian philosophy. The second, by classing the subject of distinction into a higher class, which is called 'abstracting'.

Now it happens that regarding the basic ontological relations and categories, for the first to be possible it is necessary that the relations, and thus, too, the categories, be reducible to their components; but they lack such or we rather ignore them, so reduction via their components is not possible.

As to reduction by way of classing, it is necessary that the higher class or category into which a subject of distinction is to be reduced, be identified prior to the act of classing. This is not possible with these basic relations and categories, because there are no higher orders to them. Though they may be placed under 'Being', this is not classing, since Being is not a class. A class is a plurality that comprises some distinctions. Though an ontological category comprises all possible subjects of distinction, it does not comprise all possible distinctions, but only those constituted by a particular ontological relation.

It might be argued that they can be reduced to the relata and relations that constitute them. However, as already explained, any intent to this effect derives in tautologies. For example, if we want to define the constituents of relations, the most we can say is that relations are what we distinguish to exist among relata, or that a relation is what one entity is to another. The same happens with the categories: there is no manner to reduce them into something other; we might class the distinction but not that for which they stand.

These ontological relations from our perspective, are non-relational; so even if the relata falling under them are relational in nature, they cannot be explained but saying that they are all the things that they comprise holding a relation that is not reducible to anything else. Of the ontological relations, we only know when they apply but not what they are.

f. Not sensible

The referred ontological relations and, in consequence, the categories of Being that they determine, cannot be accessed by experience. They are of a nature not conveyable by way of sense-impressions. There is no capacity in us to sentience the same nor the particular relations comprised under these; relations are not sensed, but inferred. Moreover, they are not inferred from what is sensory given, but from the distinctions that

we make of sensorial impressions; that is, from what judgment itself contributes with to the distinction.

The point is, that if they were not given to us *a priori*, there would be no possibility of making distinctions. Moreover, we would not be capable of distinguishing the same. From an evolutionary perspective, it could be held that there was a natural selection that gave those who could distinguish these, the clear competitive advantage of effectively and economically acting in the world, not depending on chance for their actions to correspond with mind independent reality. In other words, there would be no knowledge if nature or evolution had not endowed our intellect with information about reality that cannot come or be extracted from experience, and which is necessary to complement our sense-impressions to have a valid picture of the world.

In fact, regardless of these basic ontological distinctions, being abstractions, neither they nor the particular relations that we can distinguish are by their nature experienced. One does not sense the relations of the sides of a triangle, but infers it from the nature of the triangle; one can observe that A is in a different position in space than B, but this does not define the relation holding between them. In fact, it is the major task of science to discover the relations holding between the subjects of their study, such as the relation of sounds in music, or points, lines and bodies in geometry. It is a result of this study that it is discovered that there is a

certain relation that demands that something be in relation to something else that is, as yet, ignored.

g. Primary premises of judgment and ultimate factors of explanation

These relations and categories being the most basic relations and categories that we can conceive, constitute the most elemental manners in which a subject of distinction must be judged to be relative to another; this is, based on the kind of basic relations to which is reducible the ones it holds with it. They also are our ultimate explanatory factors. These relations and categories are primary determinants of the process of judgment and our most basic premises, those on which all our judgments are grounded; they refer to the different manners of co-existing that we can identify, and so too, they are our ultimate means of explanation, and, consequently, our limit to understanding.

i. They are the most fundamental premises of judgment

A premise is a distinction taken by judgment as a relatum to relate with another distinction, based on the properties or causal factors of the same (for the purpose of identifying a third relatum or relation). These ontological relations and categories work as our most primary and fundamental premises of all our judgments. All our judgments presuppose them.

Any reasoning regarding a particular distinction implies a previous judgment about it. This is reached through the successive questioning of 'Why?'; that is, of what judgments fundament each successive premise, until one arrives to the premise on which the entire line of reasoning is grounded. It is then that one reaches the basic judgment that is based on these relations and categories.

These fundamenting premises are not concepts held at the unconscious level. They are rather set as mental structures of some kind. Any judgment can be reduced to these basic premises, ending up in the principles of judgment that govern our thinking, and ultimately, in the principle of non-contradiction and identity. Judgment is structured and operates –that is, distinguishes- according to them (for example, that an effect is not the instance of its cause, as this is what characterizes a plurality, but not something that does not exist without the first).

Judgment serves the purpose of identifying the relations and categories in what is given to us as sense impression, or to infer from it, what is not experienced, such as a relation or a, as yet, ignored possible subject or distinction. These basic relations (and categories) are, thus, essential conditions of experience; without them, there is no possible thought nor judgment. Both logical and mathematical thought, are established on them (and not mathematics in logic, as was mistakenly believed by

Logicism⁵¹, nor logic and mathematics reciprocally in each other).

These relations and categories cannot be suppressed without terminating with the possibility of thought, language and knowledge⁵² and its acquisition. Even empirical knowledge requires of them, in particular, of the relations with which judgment constructs their distinction, as these are reducible to the ontological ones. Moreover, first, judgment expands knowledge through property attribution, which enables distinguishing difference and similarity, and, second, by way of causality attribution, that explains to what owes its properties and existence a subject of distinction.

In classing, this is done by way of ascribing to the subject of distinction that is classed, other properties and causal factors shared by the instances of the plurality under which it instantiates, or of the very plurality in mathematics; and this is so, both in deduction or induction, in generalizing or particularizing.

As through causal determination, it is made identifying that to which owes its composition the subject of distinction and its composites.

ii. They are our ultimate explanatory resources

⁵¹ The theory of Gottlob Frege adopted by Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead, that mathematics is grounded in logic and thus, in part, if not entirely, reducible to it.

⁵² Observe that, one of the main themes of Ludwig Wittgenstein *On Certainty*, is that there are some things which must be exempt from doubt in order for human practices to be possible.

These ontological relations and categories comprise all the kind of things we can say about something. They are our ultimate explanatory resources. They refer to all the kinds of things we can know of reality. They are, also, the most that we can think or say about these very ontological relations and categories.

Moreover, if we arrive to the conclusion that our perceivable reality is incomplete and a higher order reality exists, we have no manner of saying anything about its nature besides what these ontological relations and categories enable us to distinguish, and so, cognize.

These ontological distinctions comprise all that we can become aware of. Even of things people feel very familiar with -as is for the vast majority a deity, space and time, or even matter- we cannot know their properties nor their causal factors. In fact, of most of our distinctions we cannot discern the ultimate causal factors, nor all their unique and universal properties. We cannot ultimately know what we are, why we exist and why existence is as we experience or distinguish it to be.

There are two possible sources of explanation, and all end with the knowledge provided by classing under these categories, and thus, to what classes the subject of distinction belongs and which are its causal factors in the Aristotelian conception (substantial, formal, efficient and final cause).

The first, is defining the class or classes to which the subject of distinction belongs, based on its universal

properties; the other manner of explanation, is by way of causality, determining the causal factors of the properties that make it a unique individual and those that enable its classing. Our system of cognition generates knowledge and understanding through the identification of the relata (actually of the object relatum), but also requires identification of the relations. Moreover, the identification of the relata is not possible without awareness of the relation that constitutes them in subjects of distinction. To explain something is akin to define it. Explaining is analogous to determining the relations and relata that constitute the difference and the similarity of a subject of distinction; it is identifying the unique and universal properties and the higher classes to which the distinction belongs, as well as the constitutive elements of the same (the efficient, and even the final, causal factors of its properties). Moreover, I say ‘of its properties’, as it is these that as a whole constitute the subject of distinction; that is, which, in turn, are the causal factor of the individual object (very much as trop theorists hold). It is the joint or collective effect of its properties, or rather the end-result of the relations between all its properties among themselves and the world what ‘makes’ the individual. A thing is not just its internal properties or the composition of its parts, but also the result of the relations it holds with the rest of the things in the world, and even with the record of past events (for example, a material object must hold spatial

relations that enable judging it something separate from the other objects).

These ontological relations and categories, being the highest possible order of abstraction to which we have intellectual access before we arrive to the abstraction of 'Being', are our ultimate factor of explanation. They are such by way of classing, and thus too, by way of causal determination, as ultimately, causal determination is employed to class the subject of distinction, in order to know what it is.

As in all disciplines, and so too in mathematics, knowledge (whether it be by generalization or specification, or by deduction or induction) is partially achieved classing an individual or a plurality into a higher class. Through classing, it is possible to conclude, that the individual or plurality also carries, or might carry (hypothesis), the other universal properties held by members of the higher order plurality. For example: 'this metal is melting at about 900° so it must be bronze; the colour of bronze once cooled is yellowish, so this metal if bronze, should be yellowish when it cools'). This is done primarily, based on those properties that are known to be a condition or an effect of said property, or properties of the properties (such as 'if a cow is producing milk, it probably has a calf, and if the calf is healthy, the milk is most likely nutritious'). The least related the attribution to the properties that constitute the class, the more hypothetical is the knowledge it generates, as in 'the picture in the living room is in black

and white, so most likely, all the pictures in the house are in black and white'. Another example is that matter is made of atomic particles held together by different atomic forces, so matter, can be classed under what is the effect of such forces.

As to knowledge by way of the determination of its constituent factors, or rather by determination of its properties, these ontological relations and categories are, as just said, the ultimate explanatory source. In fact, there are no higher orders to causality that can provide an explanation of what causality is, and least of all, the possibility to identify the ultimate efficient and final cause.

h. They constitute an Ontological Scheme

Due to the above-mentioned traits, these relations and categories, jointly with the distinction of 'Being', constitute an Ontological Scheme of which they are its fundamenting elements. This Ontological Scheme comprises other categories and relations (such as those of the objective or of the necessary and contingent) that, though judged universal are not precisely so. These are relations and categories that only hold some of the traits here listed of the most basic relations and categories. This Ontological Scheme, in turn, constitutes the fundament of, and is the most primary determinant of what can be included under our Conceptual Scheme, as there are

OUR INCORRIGIBLE ONTOLOGICAL RELATIONS AND CATEGORIES

other factors that shape the same, such as social and cultural.

2. Causal Factors of Objective Knowledge

This chapter explains that the ontological relations and categories are themselves true factual knowledge of the world, and make possible true *a priori* and objective empirical knowledge of reality.

These relations and categories constitute the different basic kinds of distinctions, and thus, the common elements that conform our overall worldview. All knowledge, including the one generated by the hardest natural sciences, such as mathematics and physics, is constricted by, and presupposes, them.

However, the incorrigibility of these relations and categories transcends experience, and constitutes a transcendental argument that fundamentals our knowledge of the objective world; in spite of all the reasons given since Hume and Kant to hold that such transcendental argument is not possible. By objective reality, I refer to reality independent of our perception of it.

Their factually ‘true’ nature is such that they cannot be in any manner denied to stand for categories and relations existent in objective reality. If we had direct knowledge of reality, we would still split the world (or rather –as shall be seen- the aspect of the world to which we have intellectual access) as things holding said basic relations and under the categories of Being that these relations determine. Furthermore, due to their role in distinction, it cannot be denied that they enable knowledge from

sensory impressions or sensory distinctions, which was the role attributed to them by Kant.

a. *True in all possible worlds*

Because of the incorrigible nature of that to which these ontological distinctions refer, the factuality of the distinctions standing for these relations and categories must be judged true in all possible worlds. *In other words, not the distinctions as an act or creation of our intellect, but that for which the distinction of these ontological relations and ontological categories represents as existent in the objective world.*

We cannot think a reality devoid of the same, that is, with a structure differing or contrarian to the one that they constitute (exception made of a complementary one or a condition of it). Since it must be then assumed that all reality hold these relations and is under these categories, the structure that they constitute, must be judged true and ontological proper, and applicable to all entities – exception made of those that are a condition for the same.

As a result, ontological relativism in any of its kinds must be rejected⁵³. Their incorrigible nature, forces to

⁵³ Quine may be right in believing in the possibility of new ontologies, whether these be delivered by science or not, because in his opinion, the conceptual scheme -and, thus, these categories and relations- are cultural posits, that serve as a tool for predicting future experiences in the light of past-experiences. (W.V. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View, Nine Logico-Philosophical Essays*, Harvard University Press, Revised edition (1980), *Two Dogmas of Empiricism*) However, –in my opinion- due to their incorrigible and

exclude the possibility of an ontological order of a same level, differing from the one they stand for, nor a culturally dependent ontology not reducible to it. It is, a trait of these relations and categories to be, properly speaking, ontological. In effect, this incorrigibility only applies to the aspect of reality that is not a complementary or higher order reality, if any, (more abstract or more encompassing of reality, nor to any reality that be the condition for the objective existence of what they represent).

Although the true factuality of what is referred to by the concept of 'Being' has not been denied or put in doubt in philosophy but by strong scepticism, the objective existence of these categories, and, so too, of the relations that determine them, is still questioned, if not outright negated, since Parmenides. Among others, Nominalism denied the factuality of universals; Hume rejected the objective reality of causality⁵⁴; Kant disaffirmed our possibility of asserting their objective nature⁵⁵; and

a priori nature, science cannot deliver anything other than ontologies of a lower order, such as of stuff or its constituents. In no manner science can identify or invent an ontology as that of our Ontological Scheme; nor can science deliver a diverse ontology which acts as 'form of judgment' or one playing the other essential roles in cognition played by it.

⁵⁴As to Hume's negation of substance, it is not precisely a denial of the 'subject of attribution' but rather of its nature; that is, as the immutable within things, with which Aristotelian and Scholastic Philosophy sought to explain variance.

⁵⁵Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Translated by Norman Kemp Smith, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007 and, *Prolegomena*, Open Court Publishing Company, 1996

Bradley argued for the negation of relations⁵⁶. However, as held by Konrad Lorenz⁵⁷ and Chomsky it is *a priori* structures what make possible knowledge of the world. As I here say, contrary to Kant, it is these *a priori* structures what make possible true empirical cognition of the world and are themselves knowledge of a structural aspect of the reality that is accessible to us.

Though some adopt a realist approach regarding these ontological distinctions, without discriminating between worlds with identical or different manners of existing, they often reduce or subsume their factuality into properties, or deny one or more of these categories, going to the extent of pure trope ontologists⁵⁸ proposing a one category ontology⁵⁹ for the world in it-self. However, although it could be accepted that objective reality is sort of one, and that what is distinguished of it depends on the observer's cognitive capabilities, we cannot conceive an objective reality outside of our Ontological Scheme, without falling in contradiction.

⁵⁶ F.H. Bradley, *Writings on Logic and Metaphysics*, edited by James W. Allard and Guy Stock, Section 1, Appearance and Reality, Relation and Quality, p. 124, point 21 (relations are appearances).

⁵⁷ Konrad Lorenz, cited op.

⁵⁸ Williams, D. C., 1997 [1953], *On the Elements of Being I*, Mellor and Oliver, 1997, 112–124: 3–18; Mellor, D. H. and A. Oliver (eds.), *Properties*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; Maurin, A.S. 2010, *Trope Theory and the Bradley Regress*, *Synthese*, 175(3): 311–326.

⁵⁹ L. A. Paul, *A One Category Ontology*, UNC-Chapel Hill: lapaul.org/papers/Paul-OneCategory.pdf · PDF file

The main argument for their incorrigibility is, that it cannot be thought or said that there are no properties in the objective world, without having to appeal to the use of a distinction standing for properties in thought and speech in the objective world; nor, that there is no causality, without having to presuppose an objectively existent causal factor of the negation of their factual existence. It cannot be thought or said that they are not objectively existent, without having to suppose the objective existence of the relations whose existence is questioned; if the presupposed relations were false, the questioned relations would be true, as we would be thinking or formulating a false negation.

Additionally, since these relations and categories determine all our distinctions, the assertion that they are non-objectively existent would imply that the particular relations (such as that of the particular properties), as well as the particulars under these categories, are fictions of the intellect. This would carry with it the denial of the objective existence of the mind –which relates according to these relations and also is under these categories. This would imply the very denial of the non-factual that it delivers, and therefore, to the contradiction of the fictional character of these basic distinctions, being rejected.

Further still, it can be said that the denial of the objective existence of what their distinction stands for, is a proposition empty of cognitive content, neither true nor false, nor hypothetical nor conjectural, but meaningless,

as it cannot follow from the basic premises of judgment that these ontological distinctions determine. These premises, can be inferred ⁶⁰from these relations and categories as principles of judgment; that is, as principles that there is difference and similarity, property and causality, and that in no way they are fictional or questionable. Though their negation may agree with more immediate premises, their negation cannot be deemed meaningful, as it is in disagreement with these fundamenting primary premises of relations and categories, on which all the following and more immediate premises must be grounded to be meaningful.

Still more, the denial of the true factuality of these ontological distinctions, delivers a worldview not admitting of alterity or co-existence in objective reality. Thus, as happens to Parmenides, the rejection of their truth character relative to the nature of objective reality, leads to the absurd that even the mental is outside all possible reality and, consequently, is alien to the mind itself; so it becomes necessary to attribute to it a special intermediate nature between ‘being and non-being’, which is also contradictory.

⁶⁰ Personally, I do not think Parmenides denied sensible objective reality; as he says in Fragment 9 (Scott, Austin, *Parmenides, Being, Bounds and Logic*, Yale University Press, 1986, Appendix, *On Nature*.) sensible things are not contrarians to ‘Being’, as they do not carry along ‘nothingness’. He just probably denied them the same status as ‘Being’, as somehow did Spinoza, and held that it was a general mistake to use the same words to denote ‘Being’ and the existents in speaking of physical reality.

I am not saying that these categories and relations exist in the objective world as abstractions, separately from the particular relations and the objects that instantiate under them, and, least of all, that they are concrete objects. What I say is, that there are particular relations in the objective world, and that if we could have direct knowledge of the same, we would be able to mentally abstract from the particular relations and particular things, these ontological relations and categories. That is, from the particular relations held between objective things, these basic ontological relations; and, (ii) from the particular pluralities of things or objects that these relations constitute in objective reality, the ontological categories.

In other words, that if such hypothetical direct abstraction of the objective reality were possible (e.g., through experience), it would be so because there are distinctions that we would be able to make, which are like those of the representations that we shape with our indirect knowledge of the world in itself.

Allow me to add, that when the relation of class is attributed to a factual subject of distinction, what is being said is, that in the objective world, there is a plurality whose instances are those that hold one or more of the same relations of property to one or to many particular object relata. For example, that all triangles hold a same or similar relation to three sides, or, that all cats hold the same relation to a certain segment of their Genome, or that red objects have a relation to a particular degree of wavelength of light.

Because of this, the objective existence of classes cannot be denied, as it would mean that there are no such things in the objective world as subject relata holding a same relation to a particular relata, which would make of objective reality an indeterminable infinite; there is no possible distinction of determination, without shared qualities. This attribution -in particular of the subjective relation to the factual or objective relation- cannot be interpreted as if all the kind of reality that we attribute to objective reality is all the reality that objectively exists, or that the objective reality is just as results from our ascription to it of our ontological relations. If there are other higher orders of reality, it would be the case that what we truly distinguish as a class or property, constitutes the view of a minimal extent or aspect of something more complex.

In this attribution, what in order to be true has to match with the objectively existent, are the ontological relations and categories to which the particular relations and the particular relata can be reduced. This must be so, even if the particular relata or the distinction, only correspond with that for which they objectively stand, as happens with colours, which only correspond to light waves.

At the expense of being repetitive, let me say that because of the above mentioned traits, these ontological distinctions enable the intellect to generate true

knowledge of the world; of the sensed and of what is not sensed⁶¹.

In the *first* place, they make possible to bridge the gap between the mental and objective reality. They thus, overcome the problems, that:

- (i) if the mind contributes to cognition with essential *a priori* elements, as Kant held (Critique of Pure Judgment, B312), we can have no certainty on how the world is in-itself (that is, as it is independently of what we distinguish of it); and,
- (ii) that if knowledge exclusively originates in the senses, as held positivism, verification in any of its manners, does not suffice to fully validate the objective existence of what is sensorially given, as there is no way to validate verification as an unquestionable basis for knowledge of reality. In the *second* place, these relations and categories make possible inference, and thus, enable knowledge of what is sensible but not yet sensed, and from it, and from the *a priori* given, of what is not sensible.

Indeed, it is the incorrigible objective factuality of these relations and categories, what enables the mind to construct true factual representations corresponding with the objective reality from the sensorially given.⁶² The

⁶¹ Lorenz, Konrad, cit. op.

⁶² For arguments for knowledge of objective reality see Lowe, E.J., *The Four Category Ontology*, Oxford University Press, 2006,

sensorial relata constitute ‘appearances’ – that is, ‘phenomena’ in Kant’s words- due to the fact that the sensible forms (colour, motion, taste, sound, tactile feelings, odour) are *a priori* set responses to stimuli on our sense organs. But contrary to Kant, they are ‘appearances’ only in the sense that these sensorial responses -though corresponding with their mind-external factors- do not match –that is, are not identical- with the properties of the objective factors themselves. Nonetheless, these sensorial constructs representing objective factors of the stimuli, are part of a distinction whose relation, in its most abstracted form, must be supposed necessarily coincident or, rather, identical (due to its incorrigible character) with the relation held by such objective factors.

Consequently, the factual distinctions represented by the relata –thought not matching with that for which they stand, but only corresponding with it- constitute an image of objective reality, and are not, properly speaking, ‘phenomena’. Wittgenstein observed this⁶³. In fact, it is the sharing of the same relation by the representation or image of the factual with the objectively distinguished, what makes possible to have a true picture of the world.

Indeed, for ‘a picture’ to be a true representation of reality, it is necessary that there be identity between the

Chapter 1, p. 4; and Putnam, Hilary, *Reason, Truth, and History*, Cambridge University Press, 1981, Chapter: *Brain in a Vat*.

⁶³ *Tractatus*, Prop. 2.16, 2.161, 2.17, 2.171, to 2.2 but I suggest reading from 2.1.

ontological relations and categories to which are reducible the relations and the relata of the representation with reality. And, secondly, that there be certain similarity between the particular relata and particular relations of the picture, with those of the objective world; that is, that the particular relata and relations of the picture have some traits in common -as could be the colour or the form of an object, or the distance between the personages. For example, a representation of Romeo and Juliet in the balcony would not correspond with the objective world if Romeo is depicted as being alone or drinking wine with his friends, or loving someone else, or Juliet being the mother (The first two refer to relations, and the second to a relatum).

In other words, the fact that these ontological relations (and, thus, too, the ontological categories that they determine) match with objective reality (with reality in itself), makes possible knowledge of the sensible world by way of correspondence; that is, by way of similarity, such as of the particular relation of its material components. In correspondence, what is perceived is not what is in itself as is sensorially represented by our intellect, but what our intellect constructs with its sensorial response to the stimuli -stimulating factors- of mind independent reality.

It is through inference that difference and similarity of what is sensed is determined, and it is through it, also, that from the classes and properties of the sensed, inference to the non-sensible can be made. Moreover, it is by way of inference too, that the correspondence between the

conclusions on the non-sensed and objective reality can be 'logically' validated based on the incorrigible nature of these relations and categories. This is what makes possible to know that what appears as a star in the night sky is actually a galaxy.

It is also through inference from their incorrigible nature, that we can transcend the 'forms of sensitivity', and acquire from the sensed, knowledge of what the forms of sensitivity that constitute the sensible relata, stand for. That is, it is by way of inference that knowledge of the factors of the external sensorial stimuli, such as of a particular colour being the effect of the action of a certain degree of light wave, is made. If it were not for this capacity of judgment to transcend what is distinguished in experience, we would not be capable of predicting what is not observable; whether it be the existence of atomic particles, or the presence of an animal hidden in a cave. Further still, it is also by way of inference, that it is possible to acquire additional *a priori* knowledge from the one that the *a priori proper* directly provides. Such as, that the ontological relations (and ontological categories) stand for the structure of objective reality.

This capacity of inference to yield true knowledge of the factual that is not sensed but is of a sensible nature, or of what is of a non-sensible nature, consists, as already said, in identifying from two relata the relation holding between them, or from a relation and a subject relatum, an object relatum.

This capacity of inference is such, whether the inference be made through induction or deduction, either from experience or from the *a priori* proper, or from both.

In sum, these *a priori* ‘forms’ are neither an obstacle to objective knowledge nor mere linguistic or social conventions whose supposed factuality is fictional, if not just senseless. They themselves constitute objective knowledge of the world. They make possible the generation of knowledge from sensory impressions, or through inference from these and the *a priori*. Because of this, anti-realism –such as Kantism, Verificationism, and Idealism- must be left for whatever lies beyond the reality that these ontological distinctions enable to cognize.

b. Truths of fact necessary for knowledge of objective reality

Contrary to what has been thought since Kant, that these categories do not yield knowledge of the objective world, but only serve to put order in the manifold of our experiences, they do generate knowledge of the world in itself, and are, themselves, factually true. In other words, that what these ontological relations and categories stand for, is objectively true, and, as distinction that we make, truths of facts of objective reality.

Now since this knowledge is knowledge of relations, it is knowledge of truth of fact of the relations holding between the things for which the relata of true factual distinctions stand in the objective world. It is also

knowledge of how the objective world can be split under the categories of 'Being' that these relations determine.

Now, if one considers that relations are not sensed, and must be deemed information about the world that cannot come along with experience it must be said, that if not *a priori* given, we would be totally blind to objective reality, regardless of the sensorial-impressions we could have. Without such knowledge it is not possible to distinguish, and thus to interpret the sensorialy given.

In fact, they are *a priori proper* information about the world that is necessary to complement what is provided of it by sense experience. Sensations are incomprehensible, without capacity to distinguish one sensation from another, and what the sensations stand for and things can relate to each other.

c. *They are both truth of facts and factors of objective knowledge*

As already said, these ontological distinctions are factually true of a non-sensable aspect of objective reality, as well as factors of objective *a priori proper* and empirical knowledge. They provide *a priori proper* knowledge of elements of identity, matching with aspects of objective reality; that is, of that of which they are identical; and they enable from the empirical knowledge by correspondence, that is, knowledge of similarity, by way of sharing some properties in common with the objectively existent. Furthermore, they can be factors of

objective *a priori* knowledge by way of inference from *a priori* proper premises, or from a synthesis of *a priori* and empirical premises.

In fact, because of their incorrigible character these ontological distinctions constitute direct knowledge of the world, as they must match with an aspect of reality that is not of a sensorial nature; as happen to be the relations to which the ontological relations refer; that is, what something is to another at the highest level of abstraction. It must be assumed that the knowledge they convey is of a non-sensable aspect of the world, which can only be known if given *a priori*.

Now, this *a priori proper* knowledge also constitutes the means by which it is possible for the intellect to generate knowledge from sensorial impressions. As Wittgenstein well observed in order for a picture to correspond with reality, it is necessary that it have some element in common with it. These ontological relations are such element in common. However, the correspondence of the relata with whatever they stand for of objective reality, and the correspondence of the particular relations holding among the sensorial relata, are determined empirically; so, their validation as objectively being the particular relata and relation that holds, requires of empirical verification.

Without these categories, as Kant already explained the sensorial-impressions would be a manifold of incomprehensible visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory sensations. Thanks to the relations constituting what the

empirical true distinction has in common with objective reality, it is possible to acquire objective knowledge by correspondence of what has brought about the sensorial impressions, that is, of the physical relata. It is knowledge by correspondence, because our sensorial organs assign a manner of representation to the impression that is not that of the sensed object, but shares certain relation with it that makes it similar, e.g. the relation between the intensity of the light wave and the colours. For example, our intellect assigns to a sound wave of a particular degree, a particular sound, and so too, an image to the action of light waves in the visual nerves, etc. (Observe that in all cases the sensorial-impressions are nothing but the action of electric charges; that is, of photons in our sensorial organs).

3. Limiting Factors of Objective Knowledge

This chapter refers to the fact, that the knowledge of the world made possible by these ontological distinctions, is limited in both nature and extent. While the distinction of these relations and categories is under these categories, and thus, explainable by them –though to the extent that they enable- that for which these ontological distinction stand is not comprised under them, and there is no higher order that we can access, to explain them.

In fact, although these ontological relations (and the ontological categories that they determine) enable knowledge of the world, they do not suffice to explain ‘what is reality’ and how it is possible, nor what they themselves are. They constitute an epistemic constrain to our possible knowledge, though not necessarily the sole one, as there could be other factors that obstruct our distinction of other orders of spatial dimensions and of time, or that could hinder awareness of other non-sensible existents. Chomsky and McGinn⁶⁴ are right in holding that there are cognitive constrains and that the problems of philosophy are due to limits set by our mental structures. As Wittgenstein observed, logic (what

⁶⁴ Both McGinn, in his *Problems in Philosophy, Limits of Inquiry*, Blackwell Publishers, 1994, p.2, and Noam Chomsky, whose *Reflections in Language*, NY Press, 1975, p.25.

these *a priori* proper distinctions constitute) limits our possible knowledge of reality. They leave out of our cognitive reach the Fundament of the world, of which we can say nothing, except that it is the subject of the Mystical⁶⁵. That is, what the logical structure of language forces to presuppose to be an inexpressible reality beyond logic, which fundamentals the world and constitutes the mystical. This was the ultimate subject of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*⁶⁶. They certainly constitute a limit to a possible explanation of the problems of philosophy, and others, such as '*Why is there evil, if God is all powerful and the Supreme Good?*' However, not all the problems of philosophy mentioned by McGinn are due to this epistemic limitation, nor is nature hiding its true character to us, for we do access a true reality with them.

These ontological distinctions make possible different kinds of knowledge depending on the nature of the reality being distinguished. In fact, true knowledge can be of mere difference or mere similarity, or of difference and similarity. Knowledge of mere difference is the one that can be had of what can be distinguished as existent but

⁶⁵ *Tractatus*, Prop 6.41 to 7

⁶⁶ *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Routledge, Reprint of 1992, Prop. 2.18, 5.61, 6.124, 6.41, 6.42, 6.432, 6.44, 6.52, 6.522, 4.12, 6.42, 6.4312, 6.44, 6.522). According to Bertrand Russell -last part of his Introduction to the *Tractatus*, p. 23- '*...the part upon which he himself would wish to lay most stress*' was to fundament the inexpressible, that Wittgenstein considered to be what gave sense to the world, moral and ethics.

not what it is – that is, to what it is similar- very much as happens with primary distinctions; such would be knowledge of something ‘noumenal’, as for example, the existence of a higher order reality. As to knowledge of mere similarity, it is, e.g., the one we can have of space, of which we cannot (as yet) distinguish a particular section of it from another, as we can only distinguish all of it to be similar. In what regards knowledge of both difference and similarity, it is the one that we have of the physical, since we distinguish of it not just its differences but its similarities.

However, we cannot have this last kind of knowledge of anything constituted by something other than the possible relata and relations that we can distinguish under our categories. We can only have knowledge of difference, of a reality of a higher ontological order. It would be a noumenon, to use Kant’s terminology. A noumenon to us would be a subject of distinction whose existence we know of, but which we also know not to be related according to our ontological relations, nor classable under our ontological categories. It would be totally unknown, if it were not a subject of distinction. We know of this Mystical or Fundamenting Reality, from what we infer to be the necessary conditions -according to our Ontological Scheme-, for the existence of our basic relations and categories and what instantiates under them. Attribution of these relations and categories to the noumenal makes of it a phenomenon, but would not

make of it a ‘phenomenon’ in reality in itself, as in no manner these ‘forms of judgment’ correspond with it.

In sum, these ontological relations and categories are not explainable with our system of cognition nor with the worldview that they structure. As has been already explained, we cannot reduce them to their constituent, nor class the same into a higher category.

It might be contested that these ontological distinctions can be explained classing them under ‘Being’, which is a higher order of abstraction to our categories. But, by reason that ‘Being’, as already said, is the ultimate abstraction of all, it does not provide distinction, as there is no attribute added with its predication other than that of mere existence; so ‘Being’ is not a higher class nor an explanatory order.

As a results of all this, our system of cognition cannot explain the world past the scant understanding that these relations and categories deliver; there is a limit to the extent and kind of reality whose cognition they make possible.

4. What They Force to Presuppose

The subject matter of this chapter is that a higher order of explanatory reality must be assumed to be the case.

- a. *These relations and categories must be assumed to stand for an explainable reality*

Though from the perspective of our Ontological Scheme it is not possible to conclude that reality is a cause of itself or uncreated, nonetheless, we cannot conceive that reality lacks a reason for its existence.

Though the ontological relations and categories themselves are unexplainable to us -since being *a priori* given they are not *relationally* constituted- they cannot be judged to lack an explanation. Besides, though these categories are non-relational to us, as said, all the reality comprised under them is relational, and thus, presupposes an explanation in order to exist; so it cannot be assumed, according to our Ontological Scheme, that our relational reality lacks an ultimate explanation.

- b. *Their unexplainability forces to presuppose the objective existence of an explanatory order of reality or of a different manner of existing*

These ontological relations and categories determine a relational reality⁶⁷. As said, an explanation of the same, that is, of that for which they stand -and thus, of all that we comprise under them- theoretically requires of a non- relationally constituted or non-structured reality. According to our Ontological Scheme-, a relational explanation would logically demand, for example, an infinite order of successive higher classes that never end up explaining anything, or else, would require of an infinite of lower orders of composites and causal factors that, for the same reason, would not explain anything⁶⁸.

⁶⁷ In Wittgenstein's words: an accidental world, which needs of a non-accidental reality (let's call it so) that gives sense to it but lies outside of the world, and of which propositions cannot express anything higher (Prop.6.41, 6.42). The argument for such higher order reality is the existence of the structure that cannot itself be put into words. The inexpressible –says Russell, in p. 21 of the *Tractatus-* ‘contains, according to Mr. Wittgenstein, the whole of logic and philosophy’, and in p. 19 ‘the metaphysical subject does not belong to the world, but is a boundary to the world.’ In P. 18, he says that the boundaries of language to Wittgenstein indicate the boundaries of my world. For Wittgenstein it is not possible to say anything about the world as a whole. Whatever can be said, has to be about bounded portions of the world (P. 17); and, P. 16, there is no way by which we can describe the totality of things that can be named, of what there is in the world.

⁶⁸ There is a general tendency in science to seek reduction of phenomena or events as a way to explain reality, since knowledge acquisition is in all cases by way of classing. However, neither reductionism into a higher order class nor into elemental constituent, will explain reality. In order for reductionism to be of value as a final explanation of all, a non-reducible reality and manner of cognition is required.

Moreover, not everything can be deemed to be of a relational nature, as this would presuppose –from our constrained perspective- that reality as a whole is dependent on a relation to something that is a mere distinction without objective referent, and thus non-existent. In fact, if all reality were relational, it would not be ultimately explainable. The relational nature of the Worldview that these relations and categories determine, demands that reality be explainable; and this is so, because whatever is relational, presupposes particular relations to which it owes its existence. Nevertheless, since the relational cannot be ultimately explained by a relational reality, its explanation requires of a non-relational or non-structured explanatory reality, which is not available to us nor understandable with our Ontological Scheme. Thus, though we can infer the objective existence of such explanatory reality as a condition for the existence of these relations and categories, and of the reality comprised under them, we can only infer its existence.

Our concept of the world and the system of cognition, being relational, cannot provide understanding of what the very Ontological Scheme demands for something to be understandable. Thus, although through inference mere sensation can be transcended, it is not possible to transcend any reality with whose structure our Ontological Scheme does not match.

It could be argued that these relations and categories need not be explainable; that, as Nelson Goodman says,

they are ‘self-explanatory concepts’; or standing for ‘self-explanatory’ primitive constituents of the world, such as the concept of person, according to Strawson⁶⁹; or of ‘meaning’, to Kripke⁷⁰. Nevertheless, we cannot conceive these distinctions to be true if self-explanatory. If self-explanatory, it would force to presuppose that they lack causality, which must be assumed being incorrigible. What is more, since they force to presuppose to be standing for objective existents, we cannot assume that the objective reality that they stand for is also self-explanatory, and so, too, uncaused, when we know that the immediate objective reality that we distinguish with these relations and categories is subject to causality, and thus, dependent on objective causal factors. According to our Ontological Scheme, a self-explanatory objective reality would be a member, a property, and a cause, of itself, and, in consequence, it would not be a possible subject of distinction to us. It would not be an individual, as we understand individuals to be, as it would lack similarity, it would just be different from the other existents. A self-explanatory reality could only be a reality that is not objectively relational; that is, which does not owe its objective existence to components of it, that is, to others.

⁶⁹ Strawson, P.F., *Individuals, An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, Routledge, 1993, Chapter 3.

⁷⁰ Kripke, Saul Aaron, *Naming and Necessity*, Wiley-Blackwell; 1991; first published by Harvard University Press, 1980.

Therefore, regardless of whether these ontological relations and categories match with the objective reality or not, their explanation requires of an order of reality or manner of existing, which must be judged to be of a higher order of ontological relations and categories or of a different manner of being and cognizing.

I refer to the logical need of an order of reality, as would be the plurality of what David Lewis excludes from his multiple world thesis, and calls, worlds with a categorical difference. That is, '*differing in the manner of existing*'⁷¹. In other words, to a plurality of realities structured by relations and categories of a higher order to them (more abstract and more encompassing) or not relationally constituted.

In other words, a higher order reality that be a condition for our manner of seeing the world, or the world as we see it, is of a logical necessity according to our Ontological Scheme. This higher order reality is inferential knowledge derived from the *a priori proper*, which does not admit our conception of anything that does not owe its existence to something else, except to what is a condition of it.

On the same grounds, such explanatory order would not have to be in disagreement with our basic ontological relations and categories of 'Being', but in no in need of matching in any aspect with these ontological relations and categories.

⁷¹ Lewis, David, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p. 2.

In the same manner that we came to accept that we are not the center of the universe, it is about time that we intellectually mature and meekly acknowledge that our epistemic powers –and excuse the comparison- are closer to those of an oyster than to those of an angel. Our intellect is unable to cognize but a minimum of reality, and least still, to explain or understand the whole universe.

To begin with, it seems necessary to presuppose the existence of such intellectually inaccessible immediate higher order of reality. A higher order might explain many events of which, as yet, we have no explanation⁷². An example of these unexplainable events are those that take place against all odds, or seem to be contradicting the laws of physics and logic, as are judged to be some quantum events.

An immediate higher order of reality could explain many of them and not just the quantum mechanical. It could be conjectured -extrapolating what is observable in geometrical figures of one, two or three spatial dimensions-, that an almost infinitesimal number of higher orders of spatial dimensions, and so too, of a higher order of ontological structure, could shorten the distance from one point of space to another, to practically nil. If this were the case, it could explain phenomena apparently faster than the speed of light. Moreover, one could conjecture that, because of no extension, there are

⁷² Hudson, Hud, *The Metaphysics of Hyper-Space*, OUP, 2005.

no objects at the ultimate highest order of spatial dimensions, or at least, objects with physical dimensions, though they would exist under lower number of spatial dimensions, and thus, too, under a different ontological structure or a different kind of space.

Our Ontological Scheme is appropriate for our adaptation and survival in our three-spatio-temporal dimensional reality as ours; they are means to distinguish reality from the given in sensation, ‘within’ this world. Nevertheless, they do not serve to interpret a higher order reality nor to explain why our three-spatio temporal reality exists. To give a poor example –for it is given according to our Ontological Scheme- it could be the case that in a higher realm of spatial dimensions, a cause is as much the factor of its effect as the effect the factor of the existence of its causal factor.

Nonetheless, our perceivable reality cannot be assimilated in any manner to a higher order reality. The so appalling cosmos of billions of galaxies that we perceive is probably insignificant relative to all that exists outside our intellectual grasp. It suffices to suppress the mental conception of a sole one of our ontological relations or categories to realize the exponential loss of content brought about to our worldview, and how much this ‘view’ is altered in nature. From this reflection, it is possible to collate how much an additional order of basic relations and categories to the ones we have, could enrich, expand and modify our idea of reality; only, then, we can come to realize how much

is missing of our worldview, and have a minimal idea of how much more reality must truly exist.

The possible knowledge that the *a priori proper* and the senses, with its help can deliver, seems to be restricted to one of many kinds of realities that objectively exist. Taking from the example of the Flatlander, it seems that reality might be just one, but far more complex and rich in content than can be thought by us, of which different aspects of it are observable depending on the cognitive capability of the observer. So while we can only perceive a fleeting three spatio-dimensional reality originating in a ‘singularity’, a better endowed observer, might distinguish it, e.g., as being a static reality in five-spatial dimensions, without beginning nor end. An alternative to this is to think that what determines the content or richness of reality of which the observer can have awareness, is exclusively dependent in the cognitive capacity of the observer: of what the observer can put into it. In the first case, objective reality would be of an incommensurable content –not to say infinite-. With the other alternative, the objective content of the same could be minimal and there could be more or less reality, depending on the epistemic powers of the observer. If the last were the case, what to us is a minimum and incomplete relational world, to an observer of much higher orders, could appear as a complete, non-relational reality. Moreover, to such an observer, it could appear as a reality of a wealth of content not the least imaginable and credible by us.

Anyhow, what matters is that, not just the common sense conception, but the very scientific idea of the world is intrinsically faulty and deficient.

Via inference from the *a priori proper*, our intellect commands a view of reality with a plurality of objectively existent higher orders of reality of different manners of 'Being'. This is a view of worlds with 'categorical differences' -that may or may not include higher number of spatial dimensions- in order, for our reality, to be explainable. Further still, it demands a radically different manner of cognition to ours, such as of a non-relational nature. In consequence, our idea of the world must include a condition of all, what, in Wittgenstein's words, gives sense to the World -the Mystical⁷³; I prefer to call it a Fundamenting Reality, which -according to our categories- must be a causal factor of non-relational nature. However, this Fundament must be a 'corrected' version of what is generally considered such, as its values and powers must be well beyond those that are attributed according to it with our Ontological Scheme. This Fundamenting Reality would have to be a reality of which we are in no condition to make any judgment about, and least still, of which we be in condition of putting in doubt its existence, that is, of not accepting as possible.

⁷³ The inexpressible was a consequence of Wittgenstein's conclusion that the picture or language of the world, can only have sense if there exists an inexpressible reality which fundamentals the same, which is the mystical (See Tract. 6.41, 6.42, 6.4312, 6.44, 6.522).

The sole fact that we are forced to presuppose such Fundamenting reality to be of a non-relational nature – that is, non-existent by other-, and in no manner according to our categories- so far exceeds the nature of anything that we can conceive, that it far surpasses what we can think is possible. However, it has to be possible and constitute a reality, simply, because we exist.

FINAL WORDS

The point is that we are extremely naïve regarding our cognitive faculties. We must meekly acknowledge that our epistemic powers are minimal. Among other possible factors of limitation, there are the mental structures imposed by our ontological distinctions, which constrain our possible knowledge to what cannot be but a merely insignificant aspect of what exists. Our intellect constructs our knowledge of the world, and it does so in a manner, that though matching in the relation and corresponds with it, does not match with said perceived aspect of which it yields knowledge.

This constraint is such, that if we had the metaphorical opportunity of getting out of ‘Plato’s cavern to see reality at its fullness, we would be totally unable to observe it. We would not notice in it a difference with the shadows reflected in the wall; and we would still believe ourselves shut in the same, unaware of being out in the open.

Due to the epistemic constraint to which we are subject, it does not make any sense to aspire to attain an ultimate explanation of reality⁷⁴. It makes no sense to seek an answer to the question of *‘Why is there Being*

⁷⁴ Such as Lowe, E. J., ‘*Why is there anything at All?*’ *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1996, 70: 111–120; and Rundle, Bede, *Why is There Something Rather than Nothing?* OUP, 2004. Inwagen, Peter, *Being, Existence and Ontological Commitment*, *Metametaphysics*, edited by David J. Chalmers et al, p. 473.

*rather than nothing?*⁷⁵, or ‘*Why is there evil and suffering if God is supposed to be good and almighty?*’ Such answers are outside the reach of our intellect and in no manner achievable by the natural sciences, regardless of the naïve belief of many cosmologists and physicists.

What matters is that our ontological distinctions force to presuppose an unconditioned condition of all, and that we have to think this condition to be so unconceivable by us, that to attribute unlimited intelligence and supreme powers to it, or even its unconditioned nature, is probably akin to predicate of it the most insignificant and secondary of its faculties. Its powers must be assumed to be such, that in spite of the miseries of life, the most reasonable attitude towards these, is to judge that our existence obeys to a knowledge and values infinitely loftier than the most sublime we can ever dream of.

⁷⁵ Heidegger, Martin, *¿Qué es metafísica? / What is metaphysics?* Editorial Alianza, Spain, 2014, question for closing sentence; originally by Leibnitz in *Essais de théodicée* (1710).

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