

Selected Bibliography on the Definition of "Existence"

Index of the Section: The Vocabulary of Ontology"

PAGES AVAILABLE - In parenthesis the Greek / Latin original term

- Actuality (*Energeia, Actus*)
- Being (*Einai, Esse*)
 - Selected bibliography on the definition of "Being"
- Existence (*Hyparkein, Existentia*)
 - Selected bibliography on the definition of "Existence"
- Power (*Dynamis, Potentia*)
- Substance (*Ousia, Substantia*)
 - Selected bibliography on the definition of "Substance"
- Truth (*Alétheia, Veritas*)

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Index: Costantino Esposito & Vincent Carraud Premessa IX-XIII; Vincent Carraud: L'invention de l'existence. Note sur la christologie de Marius Victorinus 3; Jean-François Courtine: Essenza, sostanza, sussistenza, esistenza 27; Jérôme Laurent: Sur des modalités d'existence du non-être. Du vide démocratéen à la matière plotinienne 61; Isabelle Olivo-Poindron: *Ousia os energheia*, ou de l'existence chez Aristote 71; Olga Lizzini: *Wugud-Mawgud/Existence-Existent in Avicenna*. A key ontological notion of Arabic philosophy 111; Costantino Esposito: Existence, relation, efficience. Le noeud suarézien entre métaphysique et théologie 139; by Jean-Christophe Bardout: Causalité ou subjectivité: le développement du sentiment d'existence, de Descartes à l'"Encyclopedie" 163; Jocelyn Benoist: Jugement et existence chez Kant. Comment des jugements d'existence sont-ils possibles? 207; Giusi Strummiello: "Das, was das Seyende Ist". L'esistenza e l'essente nel tardo Schelling 229; Philippe Grosos: L'existence impossible 265; Pierre Carrique: L'exigence d'exister. L'éveil éthique selon Kierkegaard et Heidegger 281; Emmanuel Housset: Existenz und existentia im Denken Heideggers 299; Mienneté et existence selon Heidegger. Le § 64 d'"Être et Temps" 327; Claude Romano: Existent et néant. Autour de la controverse Carnap-Heidegger 351; Óscar Barroso Fernández: La existencia en la filosofía española del siglo XX: Unamuno y Zubiri 371; by Pascal Ludwig: Référence et existence: une défense de Frege 391; Stéphane Chauvier Existence et ilyance 413; Jean-Yves Lacoste: Plus qu'existence et être-en-danger 433; Jean-Luc Marion: Le phénomène et l'événement 449; Varia. Note Cronache Recensioni 463-555; Indice dei nomi 557-566.

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"In Islamic philosophy, in particular, with Ibn Sina (Avicenna), there appears, in quite explicit form, a view of predication at odds with many current interpretations of Aristotle and views of predication. That view is that the simple affirmative categorical proposition 'S is p' is to be read as 'S is (existent) as a p', and that for its truth it is required both that S be existent and that S be p. This paper sketches out the development of that view. It then shows how this view resolves such vexing problems in interpreting Aristotle's logic and ontology as the existential import assumption and his view of First philosophy."
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"The framework of this paper is a defense of Burnet's construal of Apology 30b 2-4. Socrates does not claim, as he is standardly translated, that virtue makes you rich, but that virtue makes money and everything else good for you. This view of the relation between virtue and wealth is paralleled in dialogues of every period, and a sophisticated development of it appears in Aristotle. My philological defense of the philosophically preferable translation extends recent scholarly work on éinai in Plato and Aristotle to gígnesthai, which is the main verb in the disputed sentence. When attached to a subject, both verbs make a complete statement on their own, but a statement that is further completable by adding a complement. The important point is that the addition of a complement does not change the meaning of the verb from existence to the copula. Proving this is a lengthy task which takes me into some of the deeper reaches of Platonic and Aristotelian ontology, and into discussion of whether Greek ever acquired a verb that corresponds to modern verbs of

existence. I conclude that even when later authors such as Philo Judaeus, Sextus Empiricus and Plotinus debate what we naturally translate as issues of existence, none of the verbs they use (*eínai*, *úpárkhein*, *úphestekénai*) can be said to have existential meaning."

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"Both Kant and Frege maintained that existence is a second-level predicate or property. And, broadly speaking, each tried to establish this conclusion in the same way. However, their arguments differ at crucial places. I believe that a close look at these differences will uncover major obstacles to the success of the project itself."
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"In rejecting Descartes's ontological proof for the existence of God, Gassendi maintained that existence is not a property and Kant said that it is not a "real predicate". It is commonly supposed that both are making the same claim. Some have even thought that they advance essentially the same argument for that same claim. I believe none of this is correct. Gassendi and Kant offer different arguments. And they are arguing for different conclusions. These differences stem from a more fundamental one: they mean different things by existence."
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 "Das Wort existentia erscheint erstmalig im Lateinischen in den theologischen Werken des Marius Victorinus, in denen es fast immer zur Übersetzung von hyparxis; dient, im Gegensatz zu dem Wort substantia das ousia übersetzt, und zu subsistentia, das hypostasis wiedergibt. (1) Existentia ist abgeleitet von existere, das in der philosophischen Sprache oft für esse eintrat, zumal in der Form des Partizips. (2) Existere seinerseits wurde auch zur Übersetzung von hyparkein verwendet, wie aus der Timaios-Übersetzung des Calcidius ersichtlich. (3)
 Für das Verständnis der Vorgeschichte des Begriffes Existenz ist es daher unerlässlich, sorgfältig die Bedeutung zu präzisieren, die das Wort hyparkein innerhalb des technischen Wortschatzes der griechischen Philosophie aufweist, und die vorliegende Studie möchte einen Beitrag zu einer derartigen Untersuchung liefern. Zunächst soll zu zeigen versucht werden, daß das Wort hyparkein innerhalb der Stoa eine Seinsweise bezeichnet, die dem Geschehen, dem Akzidenz, dem Prädikat zukommt und der Seinsweise des Subjektes gegenübergestellt wird. Danach soll diese Bedeutung des hyparkein einerseits mit dem aristotelischen, andererseits mit dem neuplatonischen, Gebrauch dieses Wortes verglichen werden." p. 115
- (1) Marius Victorinus *Adversus Arium*, III, 7, 9, Henry-Hadot (Sources Chrétiennes, Paris, 1960); deutsche Übersetzung, Bibliothek der alten Welt, Artemis Verlag, S. 244-245, Hadot-Brenke); *Adversus Arium*, II, 4, 48-57 (S. 221, Hadot-Brenke); *Candidi Arriani (= Marii Victorini) ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem*, I, 2, 18 (S. 74, Hadot-Brenke).
- (2) CICERO, *De officiis*, I, 30, 107: "Ut in corporibus magna; litudines sunt, sic in animis existunt maiores etiam uarietates " *Marius Victorinus, Adversus Arium*, I, 33, 7: "In potentia existens ad id quod est esse."
- (3) Calcidius, *Timaeus*, 50, 23, Wasznik: "In reputatione quidem et consideratione, uere existentis uereque per uigilis naturae." Cf. Plato, *Tim.* 52 B.
35. Hadot Pierre, "L'être et l'étant dans le néoplatonisme," *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*: 101-115 (1973).
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 "This paper examines the widely accepted contention that geometrical constructions serve in Greek mathematics as proofs of the existence of the constructed figures. In particular, I consider the following two questions: first, whether the evidence taken from Aristotle's philosophy does support the modern existential interpretation of geometrical constructions; and second, whether Euclid's *Elements* presupposes Aristotle's concept of being. With regard to the first question, I argue that Aristotle's ontology cannot serve as evidence to support the existential interpretation, since Aristotle's ontological discussions address the question of the relation between the whole and its parts, while the modern discussions of mathematical existence consider the question of the validity of a concept. In considering the second question, I analyze two syllogistic reformulations of Euclidean proofs. This analysis leads to two conclusions: first, it discloses the discrepancy between Aristotle's view of mathematical objects and Euclid's practice, whereby it will cast doubt on the historical and theoretical adequacy of the existential interpretation. Second, it sets the conceptual background for an alternative interpretation of geometrical constructions. I argue, on the basis of this analysis that geometrical constructions do not serve in the *Elements* as a means of ascertaining the existence of geometrical objects, but rather as a means of exhibiting spatial relations between geometrical figures." (Abstract)
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 "One of the characteristic features of contemporary logic is that it incorporates the Frege-Russell thesis according to which verbs for being are multiply ambiguous. This thesis was not accepted before the nineteenth century. In Aristotle existence could not serve alone as a predicate term. However, it could be a part of the force of the predicate term, depending on the context. For Kant existence could not even be a part of the force of the predicate term. Hence, after Kant, existence was left homeless. It found a home in the algebra of logic in which the operators corresponding to universal and particular judgments were treated as duals, and universal judgments were taken to be relative to some universe of discourse. Because of the duality, existential quantifier expressions came to express existence. The orphaned notion of existence thus found a new home in the existential quantifier."
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"In the extended discussion of the concept (or concepts) of Being in Greek philosophy from Parmenides to Aristotle, the theme of existence does not figure as a distinct topic for philosophical reflection. My aim here is to defend and illustrate this claim, and at the same time to suggest some of the reasons why it is that the concept of existence does not get singled out as a topic in its own right. Finally, I shall raise in a tentative way the question whether or not the neglect of this topic was necessarily a philosophical disadvantage." p. 7

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"I wish to conclude with a brief summary of the results. The aim of the paper was to analyse rather than criticize. I started by examining two inferences which appeared to disprove the validity of the rules of universal instantiation and existential generalization in application to reasoning with empty noun-expressions. Then I distinguished two different interpretations of the quantifiers and argued that under what I called the unrestricted interpretation the two inferences were correct. Further arguments in favour of the unrestricted interpretation of the quantifiers were brought in, and in particular it was found that by adopting the unrestricted interpretation it was possible to separate the notion of existence from the idea of quantification. With the aid of the functor of inclusion two

functors were defined of which one expressed the notion of existence as underlying the theory of restricted quantification while the other approximated the term exist(s) as used in ordinary language.

It may be useful to supplement this summary by indicating some aspects of the problem of existence which have not been included in the discussion. I analyzed the theory of quantification so far as it was applied in connection with variables for which noun-expressions could be substituted and my enquiry into the meaning of exist (s) ' was limited to cases where this functor was used with noun-expressions designating concrete objects or with noun-expressions that were empty. It remains to explore, among other things, in what sense the quantifiers can be used to bind predicate variables and what we mean when we say that colours exist or that numbers exist. These are far more difficult problems, which may call for a separate paper or rather for a number of separate papers."

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62. Morscher Edgar, "Was existence ever a predicate?," *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 25/26: 269-284 (1986).
 "The question "Was 'existence' ever a predicate?" in a way already suggests its own answer, that this is really the wrong question to ask, because 'existence' has always been a predicate. Even those, such as Kant, who supposedly opposed this view, in fact held it. They merely denied that 'existence' is a "normal" first-order predicate. Not only Kant, but also Bolzano, Frege and Russell claimed that it is a second-order predicate. There is substantive disagreement between Kant and Bolzano on the one hand and Frege and Russell on the other over two issues: the former claim that this second-order predicate applies to no concept analytically and that it can be properly ascribed to a singular concept, whereas the latter deny both of these claims."
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 "Ajdukiewicz noted that singular existentials were regarded as meaningful in the Lesniewskian -- existentials as copula claims -- tradition but as meaningless within the Frege-Russell -- existentials as quantifier claims -- tradition. By utilizing identity ("=") in the Frege-Russell tradition and noting that it shares features with the Lesniewskian copula (both are sentence forming functors that take nouns as arguments), one can criticize the arguments for meaningfulness that were originally given. Nowadays it is quite common to use identity to express singular existentials. The paper's conclusion is that neither identity nor the copula provide the right basis for understanding existentials, but some feature they share in common."
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"1. *Is Existence a Univocal or an Equivocal Conception?*

There is no denying that many different sorts of things exist.

And there is also no denying that they exist in many different sorts of ways. But is the *existence* at issue in these different contexts always the same? Is *the same idea* operative when we say different sorts of things 'exist' do they 'exist' in the same *sense* of this philosophically crucial terms?

The issue comes down to this: Can one give a strictly *uniform* account in explicating wherein the existence of different sorts of things lies? Or does the meaning-analysis of the notion of existence lead to different destinations in different settings? Is existence a univocal conception or is it equivocal, so that the different uses of 'exists' are unified only by a 'family resemblance'? These questions define the problem-area of the present discussion." p. 57

(...)

"8. Consequences. Our analysis thus indicates the lack of any workable uniform conception to provide a covering umbrella for all these modes of existence. The philosophical study of existence -- ontology -- emerges from these considerations as a complex and internally diversified issue. No simple synoptic formula--such as Quine's well-known thesis 'to be is to be the value of a variable' -- is adequate to this ramified and variegated issue.

Despite this diversity, the logical analysis of the modes and modalities of existence is nevertheless a useful undertaking. For unless one becomes clear as to the composition of the concepts at issue, it is not possible to explore profitably their philosophical ramifications and interrelationships. Insofar as philosophy is a matter of the cost-benefit analysis of the pros and cons of various theoretical positions--as indeed it is, in large measure--the exploration of logico-conceptual distinctions of the sort we have dealt with here can play a useful role in the philosophical enterprise.

Nominalism is a particularly straightforward case in point. For the nominalist (or at any rate the most prominent sort of nominalist), universals are no more than collection-principles for the assembling of suitably resembling *actualia*. Now the present deliberations have made it clear both what the commitments of this position are and what difficulties they encounter. For if universals are no more than points of resemblance among actually existing things, then it follows at once that the only properties that exist (really and genuinely exist -- in the solely here -- appropriate sense of the term) are those properties which are actually exemplified by reals. The consequences of the position abolish the line of distinction between property *existence* and property *exemplification*. An analysis

of the consequences of the position make it easy to see what difficulties it encounters. Think again of such examples as Hume's missing shade of blue, the toothy smile of the Cheshire cat, or the unrealized values of parametrized properties (like height, weight, or temperature). All these now disappear as real (i.e., existing) properties. An analytical scrutiny of existence concepts shows that such a nominalism proposes on philosophico-ideological grounds (e.g., 'economy' or 'simplicity,' etc.) to legislate a narrower range of alternatives than 'the logic of the case' strictly requires. The present considerations suggest that this doctrine enjoins upon us an ontological posture that is in fact *smaller than life*." p. 65-66.

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"1. *Nominalism and Necessity*. The differences between medieval nominalists and realists, which foreshadowed current philosophical disagreements, concerned existence. But the issues were not simple: realists postulated essences or real natures in order to explain the regularities in the actual world. Thus the nominalists, abhorring the existence of such abstract entities, found themselves also in a dispute over necessities: whether some things must, and others could happen, and whether these modal facts do, or are needed to, explain what actually happens.

The firm standpoint taken by the nominalists, as I understand them, was the one that became characteristic of the British empiricists later: the only necessities are those which derive from the connections among terms. As Nicholas of Autrecourt formulated it: there can be no inference from the existence or non-existence of one thing to that of another. In that case, realists held, there is no explanation to be had of the regularities in nature—they are one and all coincidences. This realist criticism was later sharply formulated by Peirce, especially in his remarks on Mill. (1)

The appearances are certainly all against the nominalists. For we do say that some things must, and others could happen, and in this way explain what does happen. Scientists, far from having a Quinean canonical idiom, speak just that way. The nominalists' first and basic move in this game is to say that all natural necessities are elliptic for conditional verbal necessities. This sheet on which I write must burn if heated, because it is paper-yes. But the only necessity that is *really* there is that all paper must burn when heated. This is so, but means only that we would not call something 'paper' if it behaved differently. (This is a naive formulation, but I shall not here present the process of sophisticating it.) There are technical difficulties for logicians in making sense of this move; but when sufficiently refined, the position that all non-verbal necessities are ellipses for conditional necessities *ex vi terminorum* can be held. (2)

There is however, a special problem, as Quine pointed out very early on, about necessities *de re*. In the above example, the nominalist really *denied* that this sheet must burn if heated. He replaced the necessity of the consequent by the necessity of the consequence, to use their inimitably concise jargon. What is true only, he asserted, is that this sheet *is* paper, a contingent fact, and that any paper must burn if heated, a necessary universal conditional which is not peculiarly about this sheet at all. So he denies the necessity *de re* asserted.

But we are very accustomed to assert necessities and possibilities *de re*, and are a bit suspicious of any philosophical position that accuses everyone of habitual and systematic logical error. Could we ever follow the nominalist on this issue and really feel comfortable-at home in the world of Antoine Roquentin, protagonist of *La Nausée*, who perceives every natural fact and connection as radically contingent?

In the remainder of this essay I shall examine what I believe to be the main philosophical and logical puzzles in the history of this problem." pp. 1-2.

(1) C. S. Peirce, "Uniformity" in his *Essays in the Philosophy of Science*, ed. by V. Thomas (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957); see especially p. 157; compare also "The Reality of Thirdness" in the same collection, especially pp. 166-167.

(2) See my "The Only Necessity is Verbal Necessity," *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 74 (1977), pp. 71-85.

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"An initial consideration is given of the tensions involved in the perspective of the historian of philosophy. Thereafter, Greek, medieval and early modern positions on being or existence are discussed. Beginning with Parmenides and terminating with Plotinus, the dominant refrain of Greek philosophy is that being is form. With Avicenna, an aspect of being beyond form is isolated -- the existential dimension. However, metaphysics still focuses on the formal; existence remains untapped. In a singular departure from tradition, existence for Thomas Aquinas is no longer a "topping off" of an autonomous essence. It is the primordial, most basic dimension of anything that is "really other than and different from essence". However, this has always been interpreted with Avicennian or Aristotelian spectacles on. This has led to the position of Suarez affirming the identity of essence and existence. The stage is set for appreciating the concept of existence as completely empty and vacuous."
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Last updated: Friday, November 25, 2011