

“Ontology is prescience.”

It may seem a bit eccentric, but I tend use “ontology” as a synonym for “philosophy.” “Ontology” is intended to emphasize a especially scientific intention. The ontologist is a researcher into “how it is” in the largest and most inclusive sense possible.

The ontologist, as I mean the word, doesn’t offer worldviews. Instead the ontologist might discuss the necessary or essential structure of any worldview. The ontologist prefers a lab coat to a pulpit. The laboratory of the ontologist is often just an armchair, for ontology is largely the explication or unfolding of basic concepts.

Ontology is also “first philosophy,” and, as such, it must be self-explicating. Critical or scientific thinking is autonomous or self-legislating. It is understood immediately (as an inheritance) *as* self-defining. This is the source of the priority or “firstness” of ontology. Explicating basic concepts also includes explicating the concept of science in the more familiar, narrower sense. So ontology is also “prescience” or philosophy of science.

Scientific discussion presupposes some ideal or concept, however blurry, of “scientificity” itself. In other words, ontology, as the most general and radical form of science, presupposes the authority of logic, without, however, knowing exactly what that logic or that authority is.

So ontology is founded on an ideal which is effective, so that ontology is possible and intelligible, and yet indeterminate. This founding ideal or concept itself (of autonomous or scientific rationality) must be explicated in its own “light”. Within the ever indefinite constraints of rational norms, these same rational norms are themselves further explicated, so that they become more definite.