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Artículos

Concept of Idealism philosophy in islamic education According to Imam Al-Ghozali

Concepto de filosofía del Idealismo en la educación islámica según el Imam Al-Ghazali

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Abstract:

The philosophy of Idealism is a philosophical system that emphasizes the importance of the superiority of the thoughts (mind). A mind is a form that can realize the world, even as a catalyst and driving force of all human behavior. Throughout history, the philosophy of idealism is related to religion because they both focus on the spiritual aspect. Thus the study of the flow of philosophical idealism towards Islamic education includes issue objectives of Islamic education, Islamic education curriculum, the teaching methods of Islamic education, the learning material of Islamic education, learners' position in Islamic education.

Keywords: Idealism Philosophy, Islamic Education, Mind, Religion.

Resumen:

La filosofía del idealismo es un sistema filosófico que enfatiza la importancia de la superioridad de los pensamientos (mente). Una mente es una forma que puede realizar el mundo, incluso como catalizador y fuerza impulsora de todo comportamiento humano. A lo largo de la historia, la filosofía del idealismo está relacionada con la religión porque ambos se centran en el aspecto espiritual. Así, el estudio del flujo del idealismo filosófico hacia la educación islámica incluye objetivos temáticos de la educación islámica, el plan de estudios de la educación islámica, los métodos de enseñanza de la educación islámica, el material de aprendizaje de la educación islámica, la posición de los estudiantes en la educación islámica.

Palabras clave: educación islámica, Filosofía del idealismo, mente, religión.

1.INTRODUCTION

Education is a planned process that has a function to develop the potential that exists in humans to be used for the perfection of his life in the future. If it was seen in the perspective of Islam is to form human beings into a fully human and create a form of an ideal society in the future. Philosophy, as the Master of Science, can answer any questions and problems. Ranging from problems related to the universe until the human problems and all the problems of their life, including the world of Islamic education. The role of philosophy in the educations world is to provide a reference to the field of educational philosophy to embody the ideals of education expected by society or nation.

Idealism is an ideology that the highest knowledge and truth is an ideas or sense of human thought. So that is something that can be realized based on human thought. In the context of education, idealism is an ideology that significantly contributes to the advancement of education. The following will be discussed further how the implications of idealism in the world of education in general, but more particularly on Islamic education.

2.METHODS

Seeing the implicit meaning of the title and the matter that examined, this research is including the kind of literature research with a qualitative approach, which is research that does not hold the calculation data quantitatively (Moleong: 2000). According to Muhadjir (2002) Methods of data collection used as literature, research is a method of documentation, is about data variables in the form of books, notes, transcripts, newspapers, magazines, journals, and so on. While the data analysis technique is chosen is descriptive analysis by using a series of logical thought that can be used to reconstruct several concepts into propositions, hypotheses, postulates, axioms, assumptions, or to construct into theory.

3.RESULTS

A. Biography of Imam Ghozali

Since childhood, Al-Ghazali was known as a child who loves science and the truth seekers, then it no wonders that since childhood, he has studied with several teachers from his hometown. His childhood begins with learning Fiqh (Al-Ghazali: 2003). One famous scholar named Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ar-Razakani, learned from Abu Nasr al-Ismaili in Jurjan, and finally, returned (Nata: 2015).

As an illustration of his love of science will be told in one day on his way back to Thus, he and his friends were confronted by a herd of robbers who then seized their property and needs they bring. The robbers seized Al-Ghazali bag, which contained the books that he loved, and then with great tolerance, he asked the robbers to return his bag because he wanted to get a wide range of sciences contained inside. The robbers felt so sorry, pity him, and returned the bag. Furthermore, he became more and more diligent in studying and understanding the content of his books and trying to practice them. Even the always keeps the books in a special safe place (Nata: 2015).

After studying at Thus, he then continued his studies at Naysabur, where he was a student of Al-JuwainiImam Al-Haramain until his teacher died. From him, he learned Kalam Science, Ushul Fiqh, and the other religious sciences. During this period, he worked hard to finish his studies briefly. His teacher boasts and entrusts his position to him. He guides the students to represent his teacher while writing a book. With his outstanding intelligence and willingness to argue everything that is not in line with clear reasoning, Al-Juwaini then gives the predicate bahrun mughriq (Abdullah: 2002).

From Naysabur, in 478 H / 1085 M, Al-Ghazali then headed to Mu'askar to meeting with Nidzam al-Mulk, who was the prime minister of the Sultan Bani Saljuk (Nata: 2015). With the more Al-Ghazali's name rising, Nidzam al-Mulk then ordered him to go to Baghdad to teach in Al-Madrasah An-Nidzamiyyah, where everyoneadmired his opinions that eventually became the Imam of the population of Iraq, after becoming an Imam at Khurasan. However, in the middle of his fame as a scholar, on the other hand, at this time, he experienced a phase of skepticism (Abdullah: 2002), which makes his situation upside-down. He then left Baghdad with all the positions and the luxury facilities given to him to concern himself with piety (Al-Ghazali: 2003).

The journey then continues towards Damascus where he spent a lot of time on his mission, worship, and religious retreat. From here, he then headed to Baitul Maqdis to perform the pilgrimage. Afterward, he then returned to Naysabur at the insistence of Fakhrul Mulk, the son of Nidzam Al-Mulk, to teaching again. It is just that he became a professor in another field of study, unlike the old one. During his second period of teaching, he was also religious scholars and the Sufism as well as expert advisor especially in the religious field (Nata: 2015)

After teaching in various places such as Baghdad, Syam and Naysaburi, In 500 H / 1107 M, Al-Ghazali then returned to his yard, profoundly devoured, instilled fear in his heart while filling his time by teaching the madrassas he founded next to his home for the students of science and placed khalwat for the Sufis. And

on Monday, 14 jumadal akhirah 505 H / 18 December 1111 M, Imam Al-Ghazali passed away in his birth, Thus at the age of 55 years (Daudy: 1989).

B. The Essence of Idealism

Etymologically, the Idealism word comes from the English language that is Idealism. This term was first used philosophically by Leibniz in the early 18th century. Leibniz uses and applies this term to Plato's thought that contradicts Epikuros materialism. Idealism is the key to get into the true nature of reality (Lavinel: 2003). From the 17th century until the beginning of the 20th century, this term has been widely used in the classification of philosophy.

The philosophy of Idealism is a philosophical system that emphasizes the importance of the superiority of the thoughts (mind), soul, or spirit rather than other material things. The nature of humans is a soul, a spiritual, that was called "mind". A mind is a form that is able to realize his world, even as the catalyst and driving force of all human behavior.

The doctrine of idealism has deep roots in the history of human thought. The first roles play of Idealism in the tradition of philosophy was in Plato's hands, who suggested a certain theory about the sense and human knowledge. This theory is known by the name of "the theory of Platonic forms", Plato's idealism does not mean to abandon the empirical knowledge and objective realities which is not dependent on the region's conception in knowledge. However, Plato confirms the objectivity of rational knowledge that transcends empirical, asserting that the rational knowledge of general forms, such as knowing the idea of human, water, and light has an objective fact that does not rely on the process of sense (Falsafatuna: 1991).

The existence of the idea does not seem outwardly in the form of the original image that can only be taken by a pure soul. According to the view of idealism, nature is an image of the world of ideas caused by its non- permanent position, while the idea is a pure and genuine essence where the existence is absolute and its absolute perfection that cannot be reached by material (Jalaludin and Abdullah Idi, 2009).

The flow of idealism is identical with nature and the environment that it gives rise to two kinds of reality, first seen, that is what we experience as living beings in this environment as there are coming and going, some living and dying, and so on. Second, the true reality, which is the eternal and perfect nature (idea). The whole idea and thought in it have pure and original values, and then its absoluteness and arrogance are higher than it looked because the idea is a substantial form.

Thus, Idealism is the flows of philosophy that considers or views the idea primary and secondary materials is, in other words, consider the material from an idea or created from an idea. Idealism is called the idea, whereas the world is considered mortal without any ideas that become the purpose of life.

C. The Philosophy of Idealism in Islamic Education According to Imam Ghozali

The influence of Idealism philosophy in Islamic education can be seen from the various aspects related to Islamic education, including educational purposes, curriculum, learners, educators, educational materials, learning methods, and Islamic educational tools based on idealism philosophy that embraced by Imam Al-Ghazali.

1. The Purpose of Islamic Education According to Imam Ghozali Perspectives of Idealism Philosophy

Education is an effort by giving various influences to children so that they will help in developing the cognitive, affective and psychomotor systems of children, which will then lead children to an estuary, the estuary referred to here is the achievement of educational goals. Enhancing the values of morals to reach the level of morality of al-karimah is the main goal in education. This goal is congruent with the goal to be achieved by the apostolic mission, which is to guide people to a noble character. Then the noble character is reflected in the attitudes and behavior of individuals in their relationships with God, themselves, fellow human beings,and fellow creatures of Allah SWT and their environment (Jalaluddin: 2002).

Al-Ghazali in an effort to educate children has a special view. He focused more on efforts to draw children closer to Allah SWT. So that any form of activity, education must lead to the introduction and approach of children to the creator (Sanaky: 2003). The road to achieving these goals will be more comprehensive when children are equipped with knowledge.

The intended knowledge is obtained through teaching, then the principle of learning that is instilled in mastering a knowledge according to al-Ghazali to strengthen religion with tafaqquh fiddin, it is one way to deliver to Allah SWT. Many of the virtues of tafaqquh fi ad-din, he explained in the book of ihya ulumuddin as a suggestion that tafaqquh fi ad-din is a noble work (Salim: 1986). Thus the process carried out by al-Ghazali in forming children's character, which is focusing on efforts to get closer to Allah SWT in the purpose of science, this is done because on the basis of Aqeedah and Faith in Allah SWT then noble morals are built, not created noble morals without being based on the foundation.

Here is clearly visible the difference in principle between the views of Western philosophers in general with the view of Imam al-Ghazali in seeing human nature. Western philosophers view humans as beings that are anthropocentric, while al-Ghazali views humans as creatures that are theocentric (Syafi'ie: 1992) So that in education the purpose of education is not only to educate the mind but also to try how-to guide, direct, raise and purify the heart to draw closer to God. Furthermore, in studying science, al-Ghazali said that the primary purpose of learning science is to achieve excellence and virtue. Perfection and virtue in question are perfection and primacy of fields in the world and achieve the hereafter (Safroni: 2013).

In detail, the educational purposes of idealism are based on three things, the goals for the individual, the goals for society, and the purposes related to God. The education of idealism for the individual aims so that students become rich and have a meaningful life, have a harmonious and colorful personality, live happily, be able to withstand the life pressures, and in the end, expected to help other individuals to live better.

The goal of idealism education for social life and society is the necessity of human fellow fraternity. Due to the spirit of brotherhood, there is an approach of one person to another. One does not merely appeal to one's personal right, but one's human relationships with one another are framed in the relationship of humanity with each full understanding and mutual affection while the synthesis purpose is intended as a combination of individual goals with social as well, which is also expressed in life-related to God.

It is also reinforced by Al-Ghazali regarding the purpose of Islamic education that should lead to the realization of the religious and moral goals, with the point of emphasis on the acquisition of virtue and taqarrub to God. Not to seek a high position, or gain the glory of the worldAl-Ghazali divides the goal of Islamic education into two, namely: the long-term goals and short-term goals (Nizar: 2002)

1. The Short Term Purposes of Islamic EducationThe short-term purpose is the achievement of the human profession in accordance with talent and ability. Requirements to achieve that goal, human beings must utilize and develop knowledge in accordance with the talent he has.
2. The Long Term Purposes of Islamic EducationThe long-term purposes are to get closer to Allah SWT, not to seek the position, splendor, grandeur, or get the position that makes money. If the purpose of education is not directed to get closer to God, it can lead to envy, hatred, and hostility (Muhammad Athiyyah Al-Abrasyi, 1975: 273).

   The thought of Al-Ghazali's education does not ignore the balance between the world and the hereafter. It can be seen from the purpose of education, that is, to be learned human, not just learned, but they also practiced in daily life. Learning science is not merely for the knowledge itself, but as a form of worship to God. It also aims for the purposes of Islamic education today.

   So it can be concluded that the purpose of Islamic education according to the flow of Idealism is: (1) Purpose of studying knowledge solely for science itself as a form of worship to God. (2) The main purpose of Islamic education is the establishment of akhlaq karimah. (3) To deliver the learners how to reach the happiness of the world and the hereafter.

2. The Learner's Rankings According to Idealism Philosophy of Imam Ghozali

Students are people who are not yet mature and have several basic potentials (fitrah) that need to be developed (Suharto & Shaleh: 2006). Students are "Raw Materials" in the process of transformation and internalization, keeping a very important position to see their significance in finding the success of a process. Students are individual beings who have personalities with distinctive features that are in accordance with their growth and development. The growth and development of students are influenced by the environment in which they are located (Ramayulis & Nizar: 2011). Students are members of the community who are trying to develop their potential through a learning process that is available at certain levels, levels, and types of education. Students as a component cannot be separated from the education system. So that it can be said that students are the object of education. In the paradigm of Islamic education, students are people who are immature and have a number of basic potentials (abilities) that still need to be developed (Nizar: 2002). So simply students can be defined as children who do not have maturity and need others to educate them so that they become adults who have a spiritual soul, their own activities and creativity.

Thus, students are individuals who have the potential to develop, and they try to develop their potentialthrough the education process in certain paths and types of education. In the development of these students, they have needs that must be met. Meeting the needs of students to grow and develop to reach physical and psychological maturity. According to Ramli (2015), The needs that must be met by educators include:

First: Physical needs; physical student guidance, such as physical health; in this case, sports become the main material; besides that, other needs such as eating, drinking, sleeping, clothing, and so on, need attention.

Second: Social needs; fulfillment of the desire to interact with fellow students and teachers and others, is one of the efforts to meet the social needs of students. In this case, the school must be seen as an institution where students learn, mingle, and adapt to the environment such as associating with peers of different sex, ethnicity, nationality, religion, social status, and skills. The teacher, in this case, must be able to create an atmosphere of cooperation between students with a hope that it can give birth to a better learning experience.

Third: Intellectual needs; not all students are the same in terms of interest in learning science; there may be more interest in learning economics, history, biology, or others. This kind of interest cannot be forced if you want to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

In the Islamic education paradigm, students are people who are immature and have several basic potential (abilities) that still need to be developed. The paradigm explains that humans/students are subjectsand objects of education that require the guidance of others (educators) to help direct them to develop their potential and guide them towards maturity. (Ramli: 2015). Students are subjects and objects of education that require the guidance of others (educators) to help develop their potential and guide them towards maturity. Potential is a basic ability possessed by students, and will not grow or develop optimally without the guidance of educators (Yasin: 2008)

Al-Ghazali against learners uses the terminology, such as al-shoby (children), al-mu'alimin (students), and Thalabul al-ilmu (students of science). Thus the intended learners (students) are people who are experiencing growth and physical and spiritual development.

At least some traits, tasks, responsibilities, and steps must be met and implemented for learners in Islamic education. It described Al-Ghazali in Ayyuhal Walad, are (Nizar: 2002):

1. Learners should stay away from abusive, evil, and immoral acts;
2. Learners should always try to get closer to God, and that will not be materialized except by purifying the soul and performing worship to God;
3. Learners or students should focus their attention or concentration against science that is beingexamined or he learned; he should reduce his dependency on worldly problems;

4. Learners should not boast themselves with their knowledge and not against their teachers;
5. The learners should not engage in debate or discussion of all worldly or the hereafter knowledge before their first study and reinforce the basic view of the sciences;
6. The students should not abandon any subjects of praiseworthy knowledge, in addition to looking at the purpose and purpose of each of them;
7. Maintain the mind from the arising opposition of various flows.

Thus, the flow of idealism sees learners as a personal being, as a spiritual being. Those who adhere to idealism always show that what they do is an expression of their beliefs, as the central center of their personal experience as a spiritual being.

3.The role of the educator of Philosophy Idealism according to Imam Al-Ghozali

The word educator comes from students, which means maintaining, caring for, and giving training so that someone has the knowledge as expected (about manners, reason, morals, etc.) then by adding the prefix to becoming an educator, meaning someone who educates. In the Indonesian General Dictionary, educators mean people who educate. (Poerwadarminta: 1954). Etymologically in English, there are several words that are close to the meaning of the educator, such as the word teacher, meaning teacher and tutor, which means private teacher, in training centers referred to as trainers or instructors. Likewise, in Arabic we have the words al-mualim (teacher), murabbi (educate), mudarris (instructor) and uztadz.

In terminology some education experts argue, according to Tafsir (1992) those educators in Islam are people who are responsible for the development of students with efforts to develop the full potential of students, both the potential for affective (taste), cognitive (copyright), and psychomotor (intention). While Abdul Mujib & Mudzakkir (2008) argues that educators are spiritual fathers for students, who provide soul food with knowledge, foster noble morals, and correct their bad behavior (Ramayulis & Nizar: 2011). Educators can also mean people are responsible for the development and maturity of the spiritual and physical aspects of the child (Maragustam: 2010) In general, also explained by Maragustam Siregar, namely people who provide knowledge, experience, skills, and others both in the family environment, community as well as at school.

From some of the above opinions, it can be concluded that educators in Islam are people who have responsibilities and affect one's soul and spirit. Namely in terms of physical growth, knowledge, skills, and spiritual aspects in an effort to develop all the potential possessed by a person in accordance with the principle and the value of Islamic teachings so that people have morality (Subkan: 2015).

According to Al-Ghazali the role of educators in Islamic education is someone who tries to guide, improve, refine, and purify the heart so that it becomes closer with his Khaliq. This assignment is based on the view that humans are noble creatures. For that reason, educators from the Islamic perspective to implementing the educational process must be directed to tazkiyah an-nafs aspects (Hulawa: 2018).

The philosophers' idealism had a high expectation from the teachers. Excellence must exist from the teacher, either morally or intellectually. There is no one else that is a more important element in the school system in addition to the teacher. Teachers should be "cooperate with nature in the process of combining human, are responsible for creating an educational environment for students, while students are free to develop their personality and talents".

The same way of thinking with the philosopher's idealism over Al-Ghazali describing the duties and responsibilities of professional teachers, are: (1) Teachers are the parents for their students, (2). Teachers as the heir of knowledge of the prophet, (3). Teachers are guides and mentors of religious for their students, (4). Teachers are figures for students, (4). Teachers are motivators for students, (5). Teacher as a person who

understands the level of the intellectual development of students, (6). Teachers should understand talent and the psychiatric their students according to the level of difference of age.

Al-Ghazali as follower a flow of idealism, the educational characteristics that may implement Islamic education are (Syar'i: 2005):

1. Teacher has to love his students like loving their own children;
2. Teacher does not expect material (wages) as the main goal of the work (teach), because teaching is the inherited task by Nabi Muhammad SAW. While the wages are in the formation of learner who raises the science that is taught;
3. Teacher must remind disciples for its goals in demanding science, not for self-pride or seek personal benefits, but get closer to God;
4. Teacher should encourage his students to seek useful knowledge, which is the science that brings to the happiness of the world and the beyond;
5. In front of his students, teachers must provide a good example, such as fine, polite, gracefully,generous and other praised trees;
6. Teacher should teach lessons that suit the intellectual level and the power of the students;
7. Teacher had to practice teaching because he became an idol in the eyes of his students;
8. Teacher must understand the interests, talents, and souls of students, so the addition would not be wrong in terms of educating, will also be familiar and well-known between teacher and students;
9. Teachers should be able to instill the faith in the personal student so that the minds of the students will be imbued the faith;Thus, the role of the educator did not enough to teach students how to think; it's very important that what students think reality indeed. Teachers here should have the moral and intellectual superiority.

4.The Islamic Education Curriculum According to Philosophy of Imam Ghozali's idealism

Simply put, the curriculum means that the subjects given to the students to instill a certain amount of knowledge in order to be able to adapt to the environment. The curriculum is structured in order to achieve the objectives that have been determined (Samaeng: 2008).

The curriculum, according to the flow of Idealism is based on this principle: first, rich curriculum materials, sequential, systematic, and based on specific targets that could not be reduced as a whole of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that apply in a democratic culture. Second, the curriculum emphasizes proper mastery of the content or material of the curriculum (Syam: 1988)

Of the principles created the guidelines in formulating curriculum of idealism that basically should be in accordance with the needs and abilities of the child, priority on "essential studies" scientific method, whichincludes world and organists an-organic human environment (human, cultural, environmental and nature), as well as appreciation against art.

Furthermore, in the curriculum of the school is considered as the Centre of his intellectual training and character building, who are formally trained and developed existing soul power (Mohammad Noor sham, 1988:). Idealism education curriculum contains a liberal education and polytechnic education/practical (Usiono: 2011) liberal education intended for the development of the capabilities of rational and moral. Polytechnic education is intended for the development of the ability of a life/job.

Al-Ghazali's views about the Islamic education curriculum can be understood from his views aboutscience. He divided science into the forbidden, and that must be learned by students into three groups, namely (Nata: 2015):

1. The science that is deplorable, with much or little. This science has no benefits for the people of the world and in the hereafter, such as witchcraft, astrologers, and quackery. When science is learned will bring evils principle and would cast doubt on the existence of the truth of God.
2. Science that is commendable, a lot or a little. For example, we have the science of monotheism and religious knowledge. This science, when studied, will bring a person to the soul of the sacred, of humility and ugliness as well as it can be closer to God.
3. Science that a certain level on the laudable, that should not be deepened, because this knowledge can bring riot faith and ilhad (negate God) such as philosophy.

The third group of the science, Al-Ghazali divides the science into two groups again, science is seen in terms of importance, namely (Syar'i: 2005):

1. The science that must be known by all, namely the science of religion, science is predicated on the book of God.
2. science that studies the law of obligatory kifayah, namely the science used to facilitate worldly affairs such as medical sciences, engineering sciences, agricultural sciences, and industry.

All can be summed up in formulating curriculum of education according to the flow of Islam idealism. It should correspond to the needs and abilities of the child, priority on "essential studies" curriculum used in the education of British idealism should be focusing more on training and development resource that already exists on the child as rational capabilities and morals as well as the ability of a life/job.

5.Learning Material According to Imam Ghozali's Idealism Philosophy

According to Usiono (2011), knowledge is taught in the school must have the quality of the intellectual. Philosophy, the logic of language, and mathematics will obtain a big portion of the school curriculum. That is, the concept of education be based on the idealism view.

In line with the above opinion, according to Al-Ghazali declare that the knowledge became a learning material in the education of religion be divided to several points of view that is (Muhaimin & Mujib: 1993):

1) Based on the knowledge sector consist become as two-sector:

a) Knowledge of syari'at as valid knowledge, that knowledge of Ushul (knowledge of principal): knowledge about Al-Qur'an, Sunnah Nabi, opinion of companion and ijma'. Knowledge about Furu' (subdivision branch): Fiqh, knowledge about the spiritual and morals. Knowledge about introductory (mukaddimah): knowledge about the language and grammar. Knowledge about complement (mutammimah): knowledge about Qira'at, Makhrij, al-Huruf wa alAlfads, knowledge about tafsir, Nasikh, and Mansukh, lafaz according to general and specific, lafaz nash and zahir, and biography and history of the struggle of companion.
b) Knowledge of not syari'at consists: excellent knowledge: knowledge about medical, knowledge about calculate, and dan knowledge about the company. knowledge be allowed (does not adverse): cultural, literature, history, and poetry. Ignoble knowledge (adverse): knowledge about enchantment, magic, and specific part from philosophy.

2) Be based on object; knowledge be divided become as three groups:

a) Ignoble knowledge by absolutely, fewer or many as magic, azimat, nujum, dan knowledge about enchantment.
b) Admirable knowledge, few or many, but if more admirable, as knowledge of religion and knowledge of the pray.

c) Knowledge in a specific degree have an admirable point, but if understood, it is with ignoble points, such as from naturalism philosophy. According to Al-Ghazali, the knowledge that if be exhausted, will give rise to mental confusion and hesitation, and eventually tend to encourage a human to atheist and reluctant.
d) Based on the status of law to learn to be connected with useful value and can be classified become as two-point first, Fardhu'ain must be learned by each individual. For example, knowledge about Religion and subdivisions and second, Fardhu kifayah, the knowledge it is not be obligated to each Muslim but, must there are among Muslims for learning it.

According to the flow of idealism, Mathematic becomes a very useful instrument for understanding the knowledge or logical abstract. History and literature have a high position because of this group's value of morals, culture style, and heroism, or about life. It represents the knowledge of nature and science because it explains the relation of cause-consequences. The student understands literature; idealism regard needs a good human configuration. For that, the student not only is encouraged to expand a skill and mind but instill goodness values by instinct inside a soul. (Usiono: 2011).

About the material of religion education, Al-Ghazali declared that Al-Quran with content is knowledge. This Context is useful for life, clean of soul, improve moral and close up to God.

6.Islamic Education Methods According to Imam Ghozali's Idealism Philosophy

According to Plato's best method for learning is dialectic. Basically, Plato believes that we can expand our ideas with the manner to reach a synthesis and universal concepts, method of dialectic tries to integrate a various learning process that conceived a sense (Ozmon & Craver: 2008).

The teacher is not enough to teach students about how the manner of mind, based on important, that iswhat is student's think become as reality within the behavior. Method of learning advisable of encourage for expand a firmament, encourage of reflect mind, encourage a choice of self-character, give a performance skill or ability for logic mind, give a chance use knowledge for moral and social problems, increase a interest about the context of subject and encourage for student to accept values of human civilization.

Method of education classified by Al-Ghazali into two-part, namely: First, specific method about religious education, this method has an orientation to the knowledge of aqidah because religion education, in reality, is harder than other education, because religion education explains about the intuitive problems and more count heavily on student's personality formation. Second, method of specific about the education of morals, according Al-Ghazali explain thatsuch as doctor, if giving patient with one kind of medication alone, certainly it's will kill more sick people, as well as the teacher, if indicate a route to student with the one various from training, certainly will decimate them spiritual but regard about student's disease, age condition, body's character and training about what is enabled that. Based on that, be constructed to training.

That evidence, Al-Ghazali affirms that to make a diagnosis and kids improve an ignoble is prescript for doing otherwise act. As if sick body's medicine is with the manner of descending a fever or medicine is throw away that disease. Therefore, it can be concluded that the method of learning idealism consistent with idealism concept, method of dialectic, dialogue, discussions, and other methods is used to expand student's minds (Muhaimin & Mujib: 1993).

4.CONCLUSION

Idealism is the flow of philosophy that respond to a primary idea regarding the materiality as a secondary idea, with another words regard from an idea or be created from an idea. According to the purpose of education, the concept of idealism is more direct to the development of an idea and student's self-personality,

relevantly with the purpose of personality, society, and life that relates to God. The participant's position is free individual in expanding the personality and skills of basics consistently to with the talent, interest, and each skill to them age. Material is used to expand the education of intellectual is knowledge of natural, society, education of technology, mathematics, and education of literature.

The material of education about the moral inside to expand benevolence is the attitude for try reaches self-perfection, equitable attitude, not partiality, the attitude of understanding sameness to humans. Method of learning according to idealism content, method of dialectic, dialogue, discussion, and another method can be used for expanding student's thoughts.

BIODATA

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Research Article

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Superficiality and Representation: Adding Aesthetics to "Knowledge without Truth"

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Abstract: This article has two parts. The first one compares the ontological and epistemological implications of two main philosophical stances on how reality relates to appearance. I call the first group the "plane of superficiality," where reality and appearance are the same; there is no gap between what a thing is and how it manifests itself. I call the second group "volume of representation," in which reality is beyond appearances; there is an insurmountable gap between the thing and its phenomena. The second part of the article focuses on Graham Harman's Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) as the second group's contemporary position. Within the OOO epistemological model of "knowledge without truth," Harman's schema of the observer's participation in the object's knowledge production is questioned. Alternatively, based on the notion proposed here of "flat representativity" in which each appearance is equally valuable to represent different aspects of the object, I argue for the full spectrum of the sensual as the basis for "knowledge without truth." In particular, the aesthetic method, excluded from Harman's concerns about knowledge, is suggested as another contribution to the episteme.

Keywords: reality, appearance, aesthetics, knowledge, Object-Oriented Ontology, flat representativity

1 Introduction

The relationship between reality and appearance is an important point (if not the central one) in any philosophical system and its associated knowledge model. Although the topic has been addressed in multiple ways and exists in an uncountable gradient of theses, two main stances can be identified: (1) reality *as* appearance and (2) reality *behind* appearance. The distinction lies in whether or not there is some total or partial inclusion of appearances in the nature of reality: in short, whether or not there is an insurmountable gap in the thing between its reality and its manifestations.[1] By appearance, I mean any form of expression (manifestations, phenomena, qualities, representations, ideas, facts, reflections, capacities, profiles, or events) in any medium (physical, mental, or any other).

1 Although this article focuses on the relationship between reality and appearance of external things to a beholder, it should be noted that the appearance–reality distinction can also be attributed to the subject–object relationship. In the latter case, the discussion would lie internal to the *subject* as if mind productions are appearances as reality or an underlying mental reality, i.e., if our ideas are the thing, or there is something behind such ideas. In both cases, the world outside the mind is excluded. For example, Berkeley's epistemological approach of ideas finds the innermost reality for his ontological idealism in the divine reality of God. Therefore, we would still be discussing (2) reality behind appearance within idealism since one can account for a "tenable basis for a realistic stance for Berkeley…[that] leads to a realism about mind, human and divine." Guyer and Horstmann, "Idealism," ch. 3.

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When this opposition is accepted, each of the two models can encompass theories and authors of different and even opposing idiosyncrasies. For example, within model (1), modern philosophies such as idealism and empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume) share common ground with their rival direct realism (Reid) or later theories of direct perception (Gibson). All of them involve appearance in the form of sensory or mental experience as a fundamental element in the definition of reality. (Obviously, each gains uniqueness through their respective policies on how to handle these appearances as realities.) For the same reason, and oddly enough, materialistic theories also fall into this category the moment they assume the possibility of bridging the reality–appearance gap, i.e., when they can epistemologically explain the nature of reality.[2] The alternative is to consider an elusive reality behind appearance. This is usually the subject of metaphysical theories in which reality is indescribable on a perceptual or cognitive basis. The positions to be included in this group (2) are also broad. Perhaps the most significant contrast within them is the ontologies of discreteness and continuity, meaning theories that account for finite realities against endless processes underlying their manifestations. Deleuze's plane of immanence is a clear example of the latter. Everything falls under passing fluxes of differentiation in his monistic system, beyond the layer of the actual strata (appearances). On the contrary, Kant's *thing in-itself*, or more recently, Harman's *real object*, recognizes a finite and specific reality independent of its appearances and our perception of them.

Focussing now on Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO), which is a discretized ontology of model (2), Harman refutes philosophies that claim direct access to reality (model [1]) and the continuous metaphysics of model (2). To this end, he coined the terms "undermining, overmining, and duomining" (the "miner" critique).[3] In this way, any form of *literalism*, which claims that "any object can be adequately paraphrased by describing the qualities it possesses," is rejected.[4] On the contrary, OOO postulates that autonomous objects populate the world, each being a unique and withdrawn reality containing a finite plurality of qualities. However, none of these qualities or appearances is a direct exposition of its reality. Harman offers two epistemological approaches to objects within this ontological schema: *aesthetics* for indirectly addressing withdrawn, unitary reality, and "*knowledge without truth*" for the multiplicity of expressions.[5] Although he is more interested in the aesthetic method, he also posits "a new definition of knowledge that incorporates elusive real qualities rather than directly masterable sensual ones."[6] This can be seen as a gesture to overcome his rejection of literalism concerning reality and knowledge, which means that there can be a type of knowledge not only attributed to propositions that are tangible and measurable by us. Nonetheless, Harman includes the observer in the production of knowledge about the object.

From these OOO arguments, two implications for the state of knowledge come into consideration, bearing in mind that no manifestation or knowledge can be a literal expression of reality. First, since the object has a multiplicity of appearances and knowledge is about qualities, any manifestation can contribute to knowledge. To this, there must be added that the diversity of expressions, sometimes incomplete or contradictory for our cognitive limits, can lead to the episteme's instability. Second, if the aesthetic method is a way of indirectly accessing the elusive reality, why not use it also for the elusive qualities, meaning for the production of unmeasurable knowledge? If "the search for knowledge is [*not only*] a *literalist* enterprise,"[7] aesthetics appears as a promising field that, besides referring to the withdrawn reality as OOO maintains, can also reveal non-literal qualities: for example, aesthetic impressions as another sort of expression of the object.

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2 More aptly, for materialism – at least in its physicalist version – reality is reduced to the smallest observed phenomena from which everything else is built; therefore, the reality of anything can be decomposed into a basic known entity (atom, quark, wave, or the like).

3 Undermining refers to what reduces the object's reality to its appearance, what it is made of, or the process of creation. Overmining refers to what the object does (effects) or its mathematization. Duomining means employing the two forms simultaneously. See Harman, "Undermining, Overmining, and Duomining."

4 Harman, *Art and Objects*, x.

5 Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, ch. 2 and 4.

6 Ibid., 192.

7 Ibid., 75–6.

Within this framework, the present article has two primary purposes. The first is to add further arguments and examples to support Harman's "miner" critique of reducing the reality to their appearances and our knowledge of them. Different cognitive repercussions of the models mentioned above (reality as appearance and reality behind appearance) will be examined. This analysis also includes OOO's epistemological issues. The second, in connection with the OOO notion of "knowledge without truth," I will reconsider these perceptual/cognitive instabilities as epistemological opportunities for a model of knowledge that considers the entire spectrum of the sensual. To this end, the definition of the sensual also calls for a revision.

Based on a common perceptual situation between various objects, Section 2 will examine the cognitive implications of the model (1) under the here-called *plane of superficiality*, a regime in which appearances and reality become the same. Two scenarios will be contemplated: the thing exhibits a unitary expression, or multiple appearances. Section 3 will compare the cognitive repercussions of the opposite model (2), which recognizes a reality beyond appearances. More specifically, ontologies based on continuity and discreteness will be contrasted. I will introduce the concept of the *volume of representation* as that which stands for each reality and encompasses all its manifestations and capacities, and its epistemological ambiguity will be examined. Section 4 is devoted to the OOO model of "knowledge without truth," in which Harman's schema of including the observer's real qualities will be questioned. Alternatively, I will propose his aesthetic method as an additional form of knowledge. By way of conclusion, Section 5 will argue for a knowledge of objects that accounts for their complete multiplicity and a form of innocuous cognition for the object's phenomena.

2 Reality as appearance: plane of superficiality

Many philosophies take the reality of something to be the way it manifests itself in the world. Sometimes things are taken to be what the senses capture (direct realism and, to a certain extent empiricism as well) or as they appear in the mind (idealism); at other times, it might be what they do and their effects (ANT), or what they are made of (materialism/physicalism). According to Harman, these are forms of reducing the reality of things.[8] They are forms that assume reality according to appearance and our access to it. The interior of a thing is like its surface as registered by someone/something, and *vice versa*, the surface of a thing is like its interior. More aptly, the thing has no interior because it flattens on to its surface in what can be called the plane of superficiality. This plane established a world of appearances that are, literally, realities. In such a regime of equality, the depth of something no longer counts because there is no independent depth. Things are shallow. The being of a thing is its directly exposed appearance, ready to be apprehended. In Berkeley's famous phrase "*esse est percipi* (*aut percipere*) – to be is to be perceived (or to perceive)."[9]

Within this context of "direct presence" theories, the nature of appearance for perception becomes fundamental. One may wonder if the appearance of something is singular or plural, and how it affects its notion of being and its observers. Does the thing remain consistent despite transformations in its appearances? Moreover, how many appearances does something have in a given moment? Can it be perceived differently by various observers and remain the same thing? This section will consider the perceptual implications of two possibilities within the plane of superficiality associated with those positions that accept encounters with reality in experience. In the first case, the thing exposes a *single* appearance for any given spatiotemporal circumstance (direct realism). The second case contemplates *multiple* appearances for the same space–time (from phenomenalism and bundle theory to phenomenology).

8 Harman, *Immaterialism*, 7–20.

9 Downing, "George Berkeley," sec. 2.

2.1 Direct realism

Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid claimed that when an object is perceived, it happens *directly*.[10] Pre-existing premises or ratiocinative processes are excluded, since the perceptions are phenomenally not inferential but direct. On the one hand, his belief in immediate awareness of the outside world allowed him to criticize the skepticism of the time. On the other hand, directness implied that the reality–appearance distinction did not exist internally in the thing, nor between the thing and the subject. There is no gap at all. When something is perceived, it is the reality of the thing as such. Perception makes immediate contact with the world as it is, so Reid did not conceive of an ontological treatment separate from appearances or from the moment in which they are experienced. Along the same lines, and two hundred years after Reid's assertions, we find the still influential James J. Gibson's theory of visual perception.[11] For Gibson, the observer is directly involved in the perceived environment, a scheme he called "ecological psychology."[12] In his theory, an object endures or persists thanks to "invariants of structure," meaning that things have a single "essential structure" capable of being perceived through its invariants.[13] The object is in the external world, rather than in the mind. What is perceived is already the thing, which has one form of expression at a given moment (although it can admit transformations in time). However, is there also only one likely form of perception for that thing?

For Gibson, different observers at various positions get different "optic arrays" of the object, but "[i]f a set of observers move around, the same invariants under optical transformations and occlusions will be available to all. To the extent that the invariants are detected, all observers will perceive the same world."[14] Therefore, to perceive the same object, which has only one set of invariants, any observer must perceive that object's same consistent characteristics. How many invariants are necessary to capture the "same world"? It is not clear. Nonetheless, Gibson remarked that "there is also ignorance of occluded things," i.e., of unperceived invariants, with the result that "you and I do not perceive quite the same world."[15] In other words, when multiple observers perceive different invariants within the same environment, they can refer to different worlds. That means that there can be an inconsistency between the object of perception and the thing perceived. Therefore, to remain uniform within direct perception, reality, appearance, and perception must be one.

Consider a stone, whose invariants and essential structure are in the plane of superficiality given the same space–time. When various observers register the stone's invariants, they get the same reality of the stone. Quoting Gibson again, "[t]o the extent that the invariants are detected, all observers will perceive the same world." The stone is subject to erosion and locomotion as the river's flow changes shape and position, which entails that the invariants can change within the same structure. Thus, the structure admits of transformations over time, but the stone cannot hold several structures simultaneously. To perceive the same stone, which has a single appearance/structure independent of observers, each observer must experience the stone's same constant features. If not, if the same stone is registered differently in the same space–time, then it will not be "quite the same stone." To avoid the stone's multiplication (one per different apprehension), the beholders' perception must be the same for this object. The stone offers a single

10 He was one of the most representative voices against Berkeley's and Hume's idealism and empiricism in the 18th century. His direct realism rejected the argument that perception was an intermediate process between the mind and the objects of perception. Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, sec. II.

11 Although the psychologist does not mention Reid in his latest book, his arguments strongly favor direct realism. See Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, Editorial Note.

12 Gibson rejected cognitive processes that consider how a sense stimulus reveals to the mind because "[perceiving is] an experiencing of things rather than a having of experiences, [...] not of the mind or of the body but of a living observer." Ibid., 228–9.

13 For Gibson, the invariants are in the object (what he called "essential structure"), and the variants are the observer's perspective for different positions. What Gibson does is link both concepts so that an observer perceives the object directly through the constant characteristics of its structure. Ibid., 66–7.

14 Ibid., 190–1.

15 Ibid., 192.

perceptual profile for any perceiver, regardless of the nature of their perceptual system. In this manner, a frog and a human who grasp the stone must do so in the same way; their perceptual apparatus overlaps as far as the stone's perception is concerned. Any perceptual deviation from the stone's invariant structure leads to another stone, or "not quite the same stone." Because it is not possible for the stone to manifest itself in different ways and it is assumed that both the frog and the human can perceive it, the perceptual apparatus of a frog and the human being must be the same concerning this stone. In other words, anything in the world that registers the same thing must have the same perceptual system for that thing. If not, the stone in question is not perceived. The stone cannot have different appearances for different perceptual systems, since its appearance equals reality.

But what about the stone itself? Gibson's theory only considers what he calls "perceptual systems" (that is, sentient animated entities) just as modern philosophy deals with only one type of entity: the human.[16] However, why reduce philosophical attention to perceptual systems, especially to human systems only? If the frog–stone–human scene wants to open up beyond sentient beings, then perception and cognition must be understood in a broader sense that contemplates any *relationship* between objects within a flat ontological regime.[17]

When it is so and still considering a single manifestation scheme merging its being, the way a human being relates to stone is the same as how a frog relates to it and how another stone or even the perceived stone relates to itself. Therefore, if a thing can be perceived/related to itself, and there is only one form of perception/relationship for that thing, any external observer who can register the thing must have the same perceptual/relational faculties for that thing as the thing itself. Although some similarities in the forms of perception, cognition, and relation are admitted between a chimpanzee and a human, it would never be said that they are exactly the same for a given object. For the same reason, it is difficult to maintain the argument that the relational capacities of a stone, a human, and a frog are the same for a given appearance. Therefore, a plane of superficiality that retains the object's identity under a single manifestation leads to a *reductio ad absurdum*, since it equalizes its observers' perceptual faculties about what is experienced.

In conclusion, this model works under a hyper-rigid perceptual/relational system that can only capture a single apprehension. For the thing to be consistent, there must be only one relational profile for that thing.

Let us label this model *single appearance*, *individual being*, *single cognition*.

2.2 From phenomenalism and bundle theory to phenomenology

A plausible alternative to the previous model within the plane of superficiality is to admit that a thing can be perceived or known differently in a given space–time moment. That would challenge direct realism, since the thing cannot have simultaneous essential structures. Phenomenalism seems to fit the request, despite

16 Harman follows Latour's critique of modern philosophy on human-centrism, which "split[s] between human beings on one side and everything else on the other." Harman, *Immaterialism*, 4. See also Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*. Against this modern position, Harman claims that "[a]ll objects must be given equal attention, whether they be human, non-human, natural, cultural, real or fictional." Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 9.

17 Attributing a perceptual or cognitive system to something non-human should not be understood as an anthropomorphic gesture. It is not intended to locate characteristics of the human sense and the intellectual apparatus in non-human objects. It does not mean that frogs, stones, or galaxies see, feel, and think like humans or have human consciousness. Admitting cognitive capacities to any object means that they have an autonomous ability to enter into a relationship with something else. The relationships between things are not exclusive to sentient beings. Perception/cognition, as understood here, means being able to relate in frog, stone, galaxy, or human fashions, each in its own way. In short, perception/cognition means *relationality*. And most of these encounters do not need human mediation. The way the frog relates to the stone is independent of human perception. What does the human have to do when the frog jumps on the stone? The stone–frog relationship is a subject-independent relational or cognitive object. Such autonomous capacity of each object comes from what is called *flat ontology* in OOO's circles, summarized in the phrase "*all things equally exist, yet they do not exist equally*." See Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 11–9.

Reid's criticism for involving the mind in experiences. The former asserts that objects do not exist in themselves, but in phenomena or sense-data located in space and time. Unlike the objectivity of direct perception, the phenomenalist concept of reality in everyday experience stems from beliefs, convictions, and feelings, leaving the responsibility for accuracy to science. David Hume appears as a prominent figure in these principles involving the body and mind. Unlike Berkeley's version that only considered the mind, Hume still somehow accounted for external objects. According to his bundle theory, an object is a collection of sensed qualities. We perceive things as indiscriminate sets of perceptions based on their appearances, to which we attribute an idea or identity.[18] In short, the bundle theory works under the plane-of-superficiality regime, since an object comprises nothing more than its properties (appearances) to be experienced, excluding any substance.

Once it is accepted that any beholder (sentient or non-sentient) has his/her/its ability to enter into relation with another object that admits several sensual or relational profiles simultaneously, the previous unification of relational systems is avoided. When the frog and the human can perceive the stone differently, their relational faculties with respect to the perceived object remain separated. However, the disadvantage is for the stone, which will inevitably lose its unitary identity. Why? Because when the reality is appearance, each appearance of the same thing is a distinct reality. The thing has multiple realities/appearances; the thing is multiple things. Although this regime allows the frog's relational abilities and perceptive apparatus to differ from the human one, there is no enduring stone but a separate one per each perception/cognition/relationship. That means one stone for the frog, a second stone for the human, and a third stone for the stone itself. There are as many stones as there are entities in the world that can register the stone differently. In short, the thing multiplies instead of pluralizing. Moreover, the problem for the stone's multiplication occurs between multiple beholders and for a single observer. If the same beholder captures various profiles of the stone, there will be multiple stones for that beholder. To avoid new realities for each new experience, the observer instead of the thing forces the unification of the different realities-appearances under his/her/its criteria. The reality of the thing then becomes subject-dependent. That means that of all the frog's possible expressions, the human captures a part of them to define what the frog is for him/her. This is Hume's maneuver, which provides a subjective image of reality to the individual or collective beholder with the same cognitive system at the cost of ignoring the object's own self.[19]

A critique of this model is found in phenomenology and Edmund Husserl's distinction between *intentional objects* and *adumbrations*.[20] For him, there is a unified and independent reality beneath its various appearances. Paradoxically, this reality only takes place in the observer's consciousness. Put differently, if for Hume the human defines the object's reality from the experiences of its qualities, for Husserl that reality is independent, even if imprisoned within the human. Unlike for Hume, the thing's unification is not a post-experiential human construct indifferent to the thing's reality, but there is a reality–appearance gap where human consciousness hosts the intentional object in the phenomenological sphere. As Husserl puts it,

> one needs here a supplementary distinction between the *phenomenological* moments of unity, which give unity to the experiences or parts of experiences (the real phenomenological data), and the objective moments of unity, which belong *to the intentional objects and parts of objects,* which in general transcend the experiential sphere.[21]

For our present case, this means that the plane of superficiality is incompatible with Husserl's principles, because the unitary reality of the stone in the observer's consciousness does not merge with the multiple stone-adumbrations. Nonetheless, one can take the intricate path of arguing there is no gap but *two* different planes of superficiality, one in mind and the other outside of it. This is the path of Kasimir

18 Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, pt. 1:4.

19 For the same reason, one must consider the scenario under which the same relational condition is assumed for the frog: when the frog is the observer, and the human is observed. Unfortunately, this reversed scheme is ignored by Hume, who, like many others, centered his studies only on the human subject.

20 Husserl, *The Shorter Logical Investigations*, sec. V and VI.

21 Ibid., 168.

Twardowski. As Harman remarks about Husserl's coetaneous peer: "For Twardowski, a doubling occurs: there is an *object* lying outside the mind and a *content* inside it."[22] However, this strategy further intensifies the multiplication of the stone. Not only does the stone stand out in various ways for each different cognitive system, but it also duplicates itself *within* each observer. The stone will always exist differently in the manifestations captured by the frog, the human, and itself and will be doubled once again for each beholder (inside and outside the mind).

From Hume to Husserl, the stone steps towards its independence as the object detaches itself from its qualities for a unification behind them. However, as a modern philosopher, the German thinker was still a long way off from recognizing any intentional object outside human consciousness. In his work, an inanimate observer has no possibility of being philosophically considered. For if the hypothetical assumption under which the previous relational capacities for any animate or inanimate entity – each thing has its autonomous way of entering into contact with something else – were implemented for Husserl's phenomenology, the frog, the human, and the stone would each have each their "intentional object." What would that mean for the stone's reality? In this context, the stone would exist for each different intentional object as the deepest ontological level. That means that the intentional object unifies appearances, but there is no unification of different intentional objects in connection with the same thing. In other words, to the extent that an intentional object is hosted in the beholder and depends on his/her/its cognitive system and "consciousness," the stone will multiply as many times as there are differentiated cognitive/relational/conscious systems upon it. In this scenario, when is an intentional object the same for these various apparatuses? Let us examine both extremes: a universal versus an individualized cognitive/conscious system.

In the present hypothetical case in which an inanimate observer can also account for intentional objects, Hume's and Husserl's distinctions become blurred. Depending on the cognitive/conscious abilities of each observer, one or another appearance will be captured and associated with one or another intentional object accommodated by one or another "consciousness." Therefore, the reality is still somewhat dependent on the object's qualities dictated by where the boundaries are between forms of cognition, relationship, and consciousness. In short, it is dependent on the precision of the taxonomy of beholders. And here we enter a vicious. The more general the classification, the better it will work; the better we understand better, the lower the stone's multiplication. Put it differently, the more different forms of cognition/relation can be unified, the less multiplication of the stone will occur. As can be quickly deduced, this argument's optimal scenario ends in the previous nonsensical cognitive model of single appearance/single reality: the stone has just one appearance that is registered in equal manners (or it is simply not registered).

On the contrary, if the criteria for taxonomizing cognition are to be opened up, where are the limits to form cognitive/relational groups with the same intentional object that refers to the same entity? The immediate answer that comes to mind is the classic division in the natural sciences of genus, genera, and species. The frog's kingdom has its own particularized reality–appearance gap with respect to the stone, humans have theirs, and the same strategy for the stone's world. However, the stone's reality is still multiplied. Cognitions within the same intentional stone would only occur for observers who can relate to the stone in the same way because they share the same type of sensory, cognitive, relational, or conscious apparatus. It is fine if the human cognitive apparatus is ontologically unified with a frog or a stone, but getting rid of their differences seems an excessive price to pay for preserving the object's unitary reality.

Furthermore, the problem worsens if the taxonomic division is refined not by groups but by individuals. What if the cognitive/relational abilities within members of the same species are considered unique? For the sake of clarity, let us reduce the problem to humans from our comfortable human position. That means that each beholder contains a different intentional object. Since each beholder carries a different reality (intentional object), each will register different stones. At such an extreme of cognitive/conscious differentiation,

22 Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 23. See also Twardowski, *On the Content and Objects of Presentations: A Psychological Investigation*.

partial overlays of our experiences are ineffective if we have different intentional objects. In other words, the moment there is a discrepancy in the intentional object, no matter how many similarities our perceptions share, we register different things. There will be as many stones as there are intentional objects in different cognitive systems. Communications between observers become a pronounced problem since they will never refer to the same thing. To avoid the multiplication of reality, an additional ontological level capable of unifying the stone independently of the beholder is still missing.

Let us label this model *multiple appearances*, *multiple beings*, *multiple cognitions*.

3 Reality behind appearance: volume of representation

The alternative to reality as appearance is the reality behind appearance. Here there is an insurmountable gap between what the thing is and how it manifests itself, which is the usual field of study of metaphysics. For example, Leibniz's *monads* distinguish between the changing qualities of something and its single indivisible substance. Immanuel Kant's criticism of empiricism led him to establish an ontological model that recognized the existence of a reality independent of its appearances and our perception of them: the *thing in-itself*.[23] As he puts it: "[t]he estimate of our rational cognition *a priori* at which we arrive is that it has only to do with phenomena, and that things in themselves, while possessing a real existence, lie beyond its sphere."[24] In the twentieth century, Martin Heidegger's *ontological difference* distinguished between *Being* as what is hidden or withdrawn and *beings* as what is present.[25] In opposition to the plane of superficiality that fuses the reality–appearance gap, I propose the *volume of representation* as the compendium of appearances that refers to its underlying reality. There is no relation of equality (reality is not the same as appearance), but only of correspondence (appearances translate or illustrate reality). Representation is never the same as what it represents. On the contrary, the appearance is an approximation to reality.

The primary debate among ontologists is perhaps the nature of such a reality, which entails different approaches to deal with appearances. One possible distinction is whether reality is continuous (Bergson, Deleuze) or discrete, and if the latter then whether it is singular (Heidegger) or plural (Leibniz, Harman).

In this context, this section will examine first the indeterminacy of reality (identity) in the metaphysics of continuity (Deleuze), and second the epistemological ambiguity of the ontological discreteness of singular realities, which claims multiple but limited forms of expression (Harman).

3.1 Ontological continuism

Metaphysical models of continuity normally reject any dependence on the subject and any finite essence that transcends appearance.[26] There is no ungraspable bounded nucleus upon which certain qualities appear on its behalf. However, unlike the philosophies discussed in Section 2, appearance also does not blend with reality. The ontological treatment arises from identifying reality as a *process* in which a monist limit is progressively fragmented in multiple directions until it becomes present. This is Deleuze and

23 However, Kant's epistemology did not continue the ontological condition of the independence of reality. He did not capitalize on the reality–appearance gap but instead focused on an epistemological idealism that included *a priori* knowledge neglected by empiricism.

24 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, XXX.

25 Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, sec. 22.

26 For example, Manuel DeLanda criticizes the thesis of inexplicable characteristics that are necessary for a thing to be what it is, producing "a transcendent plane overflying that which the entities populate." DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory*, 12.

Guattari's *plane of immanence or consistency*, as continued by DeLanda.[27] This model has been described as "an ontological vision of an asubjective realm of becoming."[28] Put differently, appearance does not have a corresponding finite reality, but what is behind a thing's current state of material, expressive properties, and effects at a given moment is the historical procedure of its creation.[29] In short, reality is the continuous process of self-making.

On this basis, at least two questions arise: first, where does the identity (reality) of the thing lie if, as ontological continuists assert, it is not in its actual properties (or bundles of qualities), nor in an individualized inaccessible reality of the object? Second, can a thing have various forms of expression in the actual coming from the same self-making process?

As to the former, DeLanda answers: "it is the genealogical links of the present object with the past object (all the way to its historical birth) as well as the current interactions between its component parts, interactions that act as *maintenance* mechanisms for its identity."[30] In short, the thing is its biographical history and its current state of properties, which are stabilized by homeostatic relations. If an object is its current state of appearance plus the accumulation of its history, meaning "the ontological status of objects as unique historical entities,"[31] there is a moment in the life of any object that has no "history:" its birth (or moment of actualization). If what counts as a differentiation process is the history of the object, that would mean that the stone, the frog, and the human would be the same thing in their first appearance to the world. All of them have the same no-history. Two arguments can counter this criticism. First, although the object has no history, it still has its first current state of qualities and effects as a parameter of differentiation. However, how does this differ from the previously criticized bundle of qualities (Hume) and their associated plane of superficiality? Second, someone can claim that the history of the object does not start from scratch at the time of its birth since, to some extent, its generational descent already determines it before the thing is actualized. In this case, the reality of the thing is dislocated from its actual existence. The frog's pre-world life is a reality without associated appearance or properties. If one takes Darwinian theory and adds some metaphysical touches, that could mean that the frog already exists in her parents before the frog has any expression in the world. How far can this historical reality without attached qualities be traced? There would be some point in time when some actual thing(s) would contain the same frog's and human's reality, and further back, the stone would be included. If we continue backward, would the Big Bang be the ultimate reality of the actual for any moment?[32]

However, as Bryant comments on the Deleuzian continuum, "[d]ifference comes from the domain of the virtual, *not the actual*."[33] If we look at the virtual instead of the actual in search of an ontological answer, everything starts from the same "absolute horizon."[34] The limit of virtuality already contains all possible actualizations and non-actualizations.[35] This implies that infinite entities coincide in the same monistic reality, i.e., the stone, the frog, and the human collapse as the same at some point (or more aptly, trajectory). In those moments our three actors, and the rest of the things in the cosmos, are the same ontological being. That gives us a model in which an individualized reality is neither in the unified moments of

27 Manuel DeLanda describes this process of actualization as follows: things can "start in thought with an *ideally continuous* cosmic plane and then derive all [objects] (and their material and expressive components) as the products of a process of actualisation, a process that breaks up the continuous plane into discrete or discontinuous entities." Ibid., 109. See also Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, pt. 1.2.

28 Bryant et al., *The Speculative Turn*, 4.

29 For DeLanda, objects are "unique historical individuals, in which processes of genesis and maintenance are what ensure that the individuals are not mere bundles of properties." DeLanda, in DeLanda and Harman, *The Rise of Realism*, 53.

30 DeLanda, ibid., 55.

31 DeLanda, ibid., 58.

32 Nonetheless, some studies relate the Big Bang theory with Darwin's natural selection, see Lee et al., "Rates of Phenotypic and Genomic Evolution during the Cambrian Explosion."

33 Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 99 [emphasis added].

34 Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 38.

35 In Deleuze and Guattari's words: "The plane of consistency is the intersection of all concrete forms." Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 251.

ontological immanence nor in differentiated appearances. So the extremes of pure virtuality and strata (or actual manifestations) must be discarded for the question of the thing's reality. When this is the case, reality appears as the portion of virtual space (or so-called "phase space") between the first bifurcation of things and its maximum differentiation. In the latter, the thing gains a complete pre-individualization just before the realm of the actual. As Deleuze commented: "Difference is not phenomenon but the noumenon closest to the phenomenon."[36] However, is this process somehow related to its current appearance beyond determining how it is born? No, it is not. For Deleuze, the virtual image and the current image of an object do not resemble each other.[37] Therefore, gradual differentiation in the virtual process of self-making establishes an explanatory model of why something is individualized and led into its current state, but it does not fully sustain its existence. It holds only its historical virtual journey.

This lack of ontological support beyond the thing's current state is what Harman criticizes as the two ends of reality within an ontology of continuity, which for him results in a duomining of the object.[38] The thing boils down to its current state of properties and effects (overmining) and biographical history (undermining).[39]

What remains open is the second question of whether a thing can be expressed differently in the same moment based on the same virtual process. Are two phenomena expressed in two different media related somehow beyond any epistemological connection a subject can make? As concerns our case, does the material stone have something to do with a photograph, a poem, or a human impression of it? If the subject is discarded as what unifies phenomena, then the underlying reality must hold things together. In this case, the answer will depend on where those objects are placed within the virtual diagram. If they are at the cosmic boundary, all appearances of the stone are related not only to each other, but to all other objects in the world. The physical stone would be related to its photograph in the same terms as it does with the frog, since they all come from the monistic corner.

Again, the alternative is that the objects' realities are in their moments of maximum virtual differentiation, meaning in "the noumenon closest to the phenomenon." However, their appearances have nothing to do with each other, since they have followed unique virtual itineraries. The physical stone and a photograph of the stone are different unrelated objects, each in its own medium of expression. Hence, objects are medium-dependent because although the continuous model may celebrate endless transformations within the same medium (one at a time), it does not contemplate simultaneous expressions in different media. Therefore, this scheme takes us back to Gibson's direct perceptual theory and the already discussed single perception/cognition/relationship problems. The proof of this connection is how DeLanda usually foregrounds Gibson in his texts.[40]

Let us label this model for the two aforementioned ontological possibilities: *infinite appearances*, *monistic being*, *multiple cognitions*, and *individual appearance*, *individual beings*, *and single cognitions*, respectively.

3.2 Ontological discretism

The last model to be discussed is ontological discretism, or ontological realism, which postulates a world of finite and concrete realities beyond its multiple appearances and cognitions. Objects in the world are independent and autonomous from how humans or any other agent consider them, and any of their manifestations is insufficient to account for their ungraspable reality. Derived from the Aristotelian

36 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 220.

37 Ibid., 209.

38 Harman, in DeLanda and Harman, *The Rise of Realism*, 80–1.

39 For Harman's critique of the bundle theory, see Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 11. For Harman's critique of reducing the object to its biographical origins, see Harman, *Dante's Broken Hammer*, 151.

40 DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, 66; DeLanda in and Harman, *The Rise of Realism*, 99.

substances, the Kantian *thing in-itself,* and Heidegger's *ontological difference*, the last stand for a theory of essences (or objects) can be found today in Graham Harman's Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO). Especially relevant is how Harman extracts from Heidegger's concept not only the distinction between *Being* as hidden or withdrawn and *being* as present, but also the unity-multiplicity tension – respectively linked to the unveiled-veiled dichotomy.[41] On this basis, OOO builds a theory of objects on two axes: object-qualities (a unitary reality with multiple appearances) and real-sensual (withdrawal-presence).[42] In this section, I will first consider the cognitive repercussions of ontological realism on our three-actor scene. Second, there is the epistemological ambiguity of some cognitive scenarios caused by the ungraspability of the real. Third, we have the problem of infinite representations in Bryant's theory of onticology.

3.2.1 Unity and multiplicity

There are at least two main ways in which ontological realism differs from continuity ontologies: first, it recognizes an indirect relationship between reality and appearance, and second, the thing can be expressed differently in any given moment, and as will be argued, also in different media. Like any other object in the world, the former means that the stone is a unique autonomous being that is represented by a pool of sensual profiles.[43] Manifestations, qualities, or events do not comprise reality, but as Bryant remarks, each reality is a *substance*, "*which is not predicated of anything else*, and which therefore enjoys *independent* or *autonomous* existence."[44] However, reality is not formless either. For Harman, it is a mistake "to assume that the real and the sensual are two fixed sites, so that anything real would be at the bottom of the universe and anything sensual would like at its surface."[45] Reality is not a mystical, divine, and amorphous essence that operates from an indeterminate dimension nor an area of pre-individual potentials.[46] Nonetheless, none (not even the sum) of their appearances and qualities can determine any unitary reality. The substance of a thing does not manifest itself as such. However, for each object there is an *indirect* internal relationship within the reality–appearance gap by which a particular and finite volume of representation (the complete sensual domain) represents a particular object and not others. In this internal relationship of representation, any of these appearances emerges as an approximation of the reality it represents. A representation stands for or acts on behalf of reality; there is an internal delegation from reality to appearance. Each profile of the stone is a representative of its being but is never the stone itself. As Harman puts it: "The real objects that withdraw from all contact must somehow be translated into sensual caricatures of themselves."[47]

Furthermore, not only reality but also the volume of representation is independent of the subject. Although appearances and manifestations are the basis of experience, they exist without having to be experienced, as Bryant remarks.[48] The extreme form of this condition is Harman's *dormant object*, where the object exists, although nobody or nothing enters in relation to its surface.[49] Although the stone is perhaps a complicated case of a dormant object (the frog and the human may not experience it, but the river or the ground where it lies always do), some fashions or styles seem to be better examples since they come and go

41 As Graham Harman puts it, "[f]or Heidegger, Being is not just deeper than beings: it is also *one*, while individual beings are superficially plural." Harman, *Art and Objects*, 108. See also Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 85–87. OOO expands Heidegger's singular Being to a plural state individualized for each object.

42 And their four poles: real object (RO), real qualities (RQ), sensual object (SO), and sensual qualities (SQ). See Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, ch. 2 and 3. See also, Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, sec. 22.

43 For OOO, "object" refers to physical, immaterial, living, dead, real, fictitious entities, events or relationships on any scale.

44 Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 72.

45 Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 110.

46 Harman, "Strange Realism," 5.

47 Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 75.

48 See Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 88.

49 In Harman words: "A dormant object is one that is really present but without effect on other objects, or at least not yet." Harman, *Immaterialism*, 64.

without dying and being born as a new object every new time.[50] Hence, if the representations cannot encompass the fullness of a reality, much less can the observer's experiences, since there are fewer experiences than manifestations available. For our cognitive example, that means two things: first, the frog and the human's experiences of the stone are based on some of the multiple stone's manifestations, and second, no beholder can come into direct contact with the stone's essence. On the contrary, any representation or experience "translates" the stone. As Bryant claims, "all objects translate one another, the objects that are translated are irreducible to their translations."[51] Within this framework, the flat ontology regime recognizes the observed object *and* the observer as autonomous entities. Any beholder can encounter another object without a third party's mediation. In the stone–human relationship, the frog is excluded as much as the human is in the stone–frog encounter. This is undoubtedly one of the chief contributions of OOO to the school of realism: the gap between reality and appearance is not exclusive to human limitation, but exists in any relationship between objects. In short, relationships between things do not need privileged mediators (whether humans, God, or anything else).[52]

The second point of disagreement with the ontology of continuity is the medium of expression. Rather than having a single virtual trajectory as a reality for each actualization or appearance in *one* medium, each ontological-realist entity sustains multiple appearances in *multiple* media. Such a multimedia condition of the object can be linked to Alois Riegl's work,[53] reinforcing Harman's connection with formalism in the arts.[54] Within the colorful tradition of German aesthetics in the 19th century, Riegl emerged as one of the leading voices within the formalism of the time with his famous concept of *Kunstwollen* (artistic volition or the will of art).[55] For Lambert Wiesing, the Austrian art historian promoted a "polymorphous state of being,"[56] which implies the media promiscuity inherent in any object. As Riegl says, "each style [and medium] of art strives for a true representation of nature and nothing else and each has indeed its own perception of nature in that he views a very particular phenomenon of it."[57] In other words, each manifestation has the right to be a representation of what it represents. The specificity of what is represented is unique because each medium offers something exclusive in its terms. However, any representation, style, or medium has no authority to reduce the being of what is expressed. Each is simply one of the many expressions of an entity that can be expressed in many different ways.

This argument allows us to overcome the epistemological error of reducing objects to a particular privileged medium by the observer. For example, observers (people, in this case) can find more Venice in a Canaletto's *capriccio* or a William Turner's watercolor of the city than in the built Venice. These two-dimensional representations can infer deeper connotations of the reality at issue than the built city's culturally imposed readings. Suddenly, the fact that the city is "built," a medium of expression that we presume lays the foundation for the reality of cities and buildings better than any other, is superseded by other representations in another medium (in this case, the pictorial canvas). Consequently, a deeply rooted yet myopic epistemological assumption of reality opens onto an ontological issue. For this to happen, the paintings need not imitate the built Venice literally. Canaletto's *The Basilica di Vicenza e il Ponte di Rialto* includes three of Andrea Palladio's buildings that do not exist in Venice's physical environment. For the

50 This means that not every object is a dormant object.

51 Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 18.

52 See Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 150.

53 Another link that requires attention is Robert Vischer's notion of empathy in relation to object-oriented formalism and the beholder's participation with the artwork. See Vischer, "On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics."

54 See Harman, *Art and Objects*, ch. 2.

55 Moshe Barasch's description of Riegl's *Kunstwollen* has an evident OOO flavor: "whatever the specific subject, *Kunstwollen* always refers to something that is behind the immediately visible or tangible work. [...] This something that is behind the work and its style, is *Kunstwollen*. [...] We simply do not have direct access to the *Kunstwollen*." Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art 2*, 165. Also significant is Riegl and Harman's common rejection of materialist theories. Riegl found Gottfried Semper's advocacy for material and technique problematic, as they tend to replace art. See Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, 4. Harman's rejection of the term lies in reducing things to the smallest physical unit or a continuous whole. See Harman, "Materialism Is Not the Solution."

56 Wiesing, *The Visibility of the Image*, 48.

57 Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, 226, footnote 117.

same reason, it is irrelevant if Turner's gondolas are the exact ones that physically existed. The paintings are not representations of the built city, but the built city and the artworks are equal manifestations of the same object. Put differently, the built city is not hierarchically above the paintings within the whole sensual spectrum of the Venice-object. If so, the painting would be a representation of a representation.[58] On the contrary, both paintings and the physical city are some of the appearances (caricatures) that constitute the Venice-object's volume of representation. Each appearance reveals different aspects of the same withdrawn object. The same argument is valid for any object, including those of nature. That means that natural phenomena are not the only representation of their realities. As Wiesing continues to comment on Riegl's theory: "Nature does not have one form that is to be captured. [...] The polymorphous character of nature, its indeterminacy, makes a multiplicity of [appearances] possible."[59] This condition of equal manifestations within the object in different media can be called *flat representativity*.[60]

Thus, compared to the other models examined above, the perceptual/relational consequences of ontological realism imply for our three-actor scene:

(1) The frog, the human, and the stone itself can perceive the same stone without unifying their perceptual apparatus for that stone, including their respective intentional or sensual objects.[61] OOO's extra unitary ontological level ensures the unification of Husserl's intentional objects while respecting their heterogeneity, meaning the beholder's identity.
(2) The stone can be perceived differently in a given moment thanks to its several simultaneous representations (also in several media) without multiplying its reality.
(3) Since every object has its own discrete reality, an experience refers to this particular stone and not to another object.[62] This occurs because of the indirect internal relationship, or "duel" as Harman calls it, between the real and the sensual. Let us label this model *multiple appearances, single beings, multiple cognitions*.

3.2.2 OOO's epistemological instability

However, these conditions also have other epistemological repercussions derived from the indeterminacy of the object's surface and the beholder's cognitive limitations, which sometimes creates difficulties for the sensual object (SO). Once again, I will reduce the following considerations to the case of a human observer for the sake of clarity.

First, *different representations of the same object are not consistent with the observer's notion of such an object*. As per point (1), different observers produce different SOs of the same entity; each consciousness harbors some individually encoded sensual unification. The question is whether, for the same observer, several SOs could exist simultaneously. By Harman's definition, the SO is singular to a beholder. However, what if I apprehend two or more representations of the stone that are contradictory to me? That would mean that the same observer could encounter more than one SO, or conversely, the SO could accommodate

58 This does not cancel out that the actualization of some representations may depend on the experience of other manifestations of the same object. The present case of the city and the painting (or a photograph) is an example of such a chain condition – a representation whose formal syntax triggers the actualization of another of the same sensual pool.
59 Wiesing, *The Visibility of the Image*, 48.
60 The notion of flat representativity, which does not assume a hierarchy of appearances within the object, may be in conflict with Harman's differentiation between real qualities and sensual qualities. In my opinion, such opposition has more to do with the spectator's abilities to structure the sensual domain, that is, what she/he/it considers relevant or disposable qualities, than an internal and independent distinction of the object. In any case, this point requires more detailed study.
61 Sensual object (SO) is OOO's alternative name for Husserl's intentional object. The sensual object is the unification of appearances (sensual qualities) in the beholder's consciousness. For more about SO, see Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, ch. 2.
62 Another thing is if the viewer is aware of such an ontological connection. This is one of the epistemological flaws described in Section 3.2.2.

differences that are opposite in the observer's consciousness. Hence, the SO would not be singular. When the former occurs – there are several SOs for the same observer – it can lead to the typical epistemological error of dividing the object into different real objects (RO), one for each contrary understanding of the observer. Since the object is subjectless for OOO, this problem does not affect the entity's ontological constitution. However, we (human observers) generate a false dislocation of the real for us, with all the epistemological repercussions that this entails. In these cases, the observer falls into an idealism that falsely associates this form in consciousness with a non-existent reality. The mind does not house the corresponding SO with its real object but produces a reality associated with a phenomenon that does not belong to it. In OOO terms, that would mean a conflict in the tension called *sincerity*, because the sensual object does not correlate with its real object.[63]

Second, *the experienced representations do not sufficiently represent the object for the beholder*. This is Morton's central theme in *Hyperobjects*.[64] He takes global warming as an example of an object whose manifestations are so massively distributed in space and time that it surpasses the human cognitive capacity to realize such an SO for us. It is only from the last few decades that humans as a collective observer have formalized the first traces of such an SO.[65] In our terms, that means that the observer (human society) could not identify a sensual object (a unitary object for the mind) from the scattered and meaningless sensory appearances, despite being the human producer ("criminal," in Morton's words) of such an object. The denial of global warming as an object is the human inability to reveal the link between its phenomena and reality. But *that* is what is at stake: there are no free-floating manifestations, and there is no single representation of an object. If the conditions of an SO are that the sensual object is what appears in consciousness, and what provides its unity is some coherent unification in the mind (it must make sense), then the unrecognized global warming is an object without an SO for us as a collective observer. More aptly, global warming is an inactive, unexercised, *dormant* SO with active sensual qualities. The absent SO occurs when the cognized appearances are so complex, inconsistent, or insufficient that the observer cannot establish for him/her a coherent unity for that reality. Epistemology without SO leaves us with reality–orphan qualities. On the contrary, the other possibility of keeping the SO always present is to accept that it is not always directly accessible to consciousness, suggesting an SO lying in the unconscious. This point requires further investigation.

Third, *a manifestation represents more than one object*. This epistemological confusion occurs when the same appearance stands for several objects, so the object is partially involved in other objects. Consider the case of a company representative. She/he is the representation of a company-object that can never be fully apprehended, but simultaneously, the representative can be involved in other entities such as his/her family, the bowling team, and obviously him/herself. On a more complex level, this muddle is the usual reason for identity crises between disciplines. For example, for Clement Greenberg art *qua* art "has to be a material phenomenon 'before' it's art."[66] However, the art critic acknowledges that the same artistic phenomenon may also be subject to scrutiny in other fields. However, when referring to the artistic object, "[w]hat I do say is that we shouldn't assume we're talking about art or the esthetic when we're actually talking about *something else* for which the art at hand is just a pretext."[67] This multiple representation of a manifestation is also a consequence of the observer's prior lack of sufficient differentiation.

Perhaps an extreme example of multiple realities behind an appearance is the phenomenon known as *apophenia*, defined as the production of meaning and connections between unrelated things. For instance, when I see the frog in the shape of a stone or in a cloud, am I faced with the representation of the stone-object having frog-shaped tones? Or is it an impossible representation to my consciousness of the frog-object in mineral composition, but which maintains its frog shape? Or both? Such an unsolvable problem

63 Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 132–5.

64 Morton, *Hyperobjects*.

65 As Morton says: "The first global warming evidence was published in 1955." Morton, *Dark Ecology*, 35. The study that Morton remarks is Plass, "The Carbon Dioxide Theory of Climatic Change."

66 Greenberg, *Homemade Esthetics*, 62.

67 Ibid., emphasis added.

establishes a history of ambiguity between form–meaning–reality that has been explored in many ways throughout history: from religion to psychological models of the early 20th century (Rorschach's inkblots); from neurological studies (the term apophenia was coined by a German psychiatrist in 1958 to frame the initial stages of schizophrenia) to abstract art in general; or more recently, architectural explorations on the role of fiction production in the notion of reality.[68]

Fourth, *similar representations are repeated across various objects*. In other words, when the experienced manifestations of different objects are too similar for the observer to be unable to discern between the two. Representation becomes a *type*. The assumption that the entire sensual domain of an object (volume of representation) is unique as a collection does not cancel the repetition of partial profiles in another object's pool of appearances. When an observer recognizes the same form of something that belongs to two different things, it is what in linguistics is called a *homonym*: the spelling and pronunciation of a word are the same, but it has several meanings, which can refer to different objects. Again, this problem appears when our cognition cannot capture the singularities that would differentiate each object sufficiently.

3.2.3 Onticology's problem of infinite representations

Before closing this review of ontological realism, it seems necessary to clarify a distinction between Harman's OOO and Bryant's onticology about the limits of an object's sensual domain. To my knowledge, Harman does not conceive of an infinite number of representations of an object.[69] Bryant does, which is understandable given that his philosophical position is somewhere between Deleuze and Harman. As Bryant puts it:

> Where the local manifestations of a substance are concerned, these manifestations are, in principle, *infinite*. There is no limit to the number of local manifestations that an object can actualize, precisely because there is no limit to the exo-relations an object can enter into and the exo-relations it can consequently produce.[70]

This is contrary to Harman's limitation of the relationships an object can enter. In his words, "nothing relates to *everything* else,"[71] i.e., there is a limit of exo-relations within an object. If a thing's manifestations were unlimited, there would be a single infinite sensual domain for all discrete objects. Each entity would contain or perform all possible representations or events of the others. It would not be a *finite volume* of representations but an *infinite plane* of representations. Each point in the unbounded plane would represent its object *and* any other object because this point of representation is also in all other infinite planes of other objects. At each point in the plane, the representations of all objects are coincident. The stone, the frog, and the human represent the same object and *all* objects. This model suffers from the same infinity problems examined in monism, but applied instead to each discrete reality. When something is open to be cognized, not everything can cognize it, as Harman says. Such *non-existent* relationships are responsible for making the entire spectrum of experientable manifestations of all possible relationships between objects finite. Why? Because the number of realities in the cosmos is also finite. If not, the model of infinite realities with infinite manifestations is even worse. In the oxymoron of infinite holistic realities, infinite objects multiply exponentially, since they would be simultaneously the rest of infinity and would be represented by infinite manifestations.

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68 Ruy and Klein, "Apophenia."

69 This can be deduced from Harman's statement that objects have a limited number of interactions and from his notion of knowledge in which "every reality supports multiple types of knowledge, but not an infinite number." Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 189.

70 Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 121.

71 Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, Introduction.

To avoid the problem of infinity, each reality and its volume of representation must be finite within the (non-existent) world.[72] The object's sensual finitude is a limitation of the subject and the inherent condition of the subjectless object. If no cognitive entity can apprehend all the object's appearances, it is not because it has infinite manifestations. What remains consistent for Bryant and Harman is that, even if an infinite or finite sensual domain could be exhausted, "the being of objects is nonetheless radically withdrawn";[73] "only objects, deeper than all relations, are truly inexhaustible."[74] However, not because they are infinite, but because their finitude is ontologically ungraspable. On the contrary, if the volume of representation seems inexhaustible or infinite, it is an epistemological (cognitive) hoax, not an ontological condition. As Morton said, "[v]ery large finitude is harder to deal with than an abstract, ideal infinity."[75] Let us label this model *infinite appearances, single beings, multiple cognitions*.

4 An extended "knowledge without truth"

Although OOO's central concern is not epistemological, Harman also proposes a theory of knowledge and alternative ways of indirectly approaching the object through aesthetic methods. For Harman, "OOO is completely opposed to the idea of knowledge as direct access to the real."[76] Section 2 (reality as appearance) of this article supports this claim of the impossibility of grasping reality. Since the knowledge of things is based on qualities, "knowledge is always an imperfect translation of its object."[77] Thus, knowledge is about appearances and manifestations rather than reality.[78] For this reason, Harman expels "truth" from "knowledge" because truth demands an impossible direct revelation of reality.[79] That leaves us, as he puts it, with a "knowledge without truth." In this framework, two additional aspects must be highlighted. First, knowledge according to Harman is finite,[80] something consistent with the idea of delimited volumes of representation (sensual domains) for each object. Second, although knowledge is traditionally served in literal propositional expressions because "knowledge cannot be metaphorical but must be literal." OOO also "adopt[s] a new definition of knowledge that incorporates elusive real qualities rather than directly masterable sensual ones."[81] That means that aesthetics and knowledge are for Harman two separate epistemological areas of the object.[82] However, a non-literal form of knowledge beyond tangible and measurable manifestations is possible. For that, Harman uses the notion of a *paradigm*, in which the observer must actively participate.[83]

My intention here is to argue, first, that Harman's approach to the concept of knowledge, which replaces the object's real qualities with those of the observer, can lead to a form of epistemological idealism. Second, aesthetics and knowledge can be interrelated for the benefit of an extended notion of "knowledge without truth."

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72 I agree with Bryant's thesis that "the world does not exist," understanding the world as the last super-component that contains everything. See Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, ch. 6. However, this cannot imply that the number of realities has to be infinite, given what has just been argued.

73 Ibid., 121.

74 Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 215.

75 Morton, *The Ecological Thought*, 40.

76 Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 168.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid., 170.

79 Ibid., 186.

80 Ibid., 189.

81 Ibid., 185, 192.

82 As Harman says: "I suggested that philosophy and the arts are forms of cognition without being forms of knowledge." Ibid., 167.

83 Ibid., 189.

4.1 The shadow of epistemological idealism

In order to create a model of knowledge detached from the literalism of undermining, overmining, and duomining, Harman proposes a scheme to indirectly address the real qualities in a way similar to how metaphor alludes to the real object: the knower takes the role of the withdrawn real qualities, as does the beholder with the real object in aesthetics.[84] If Harman calls the compound object (object + beholder) *aesthetic unit*,[85] the other can be called *knowledge unit* (object + knower). Both are *cognitive units/objects* in which an observer apprehends somehow an observed thing. Harman endorses the notion of paradigm within the knowledge unit, which he notes is borrowed from Thomas Kuhn. His purpose is to seek the subtle "hard core" within a scientific paradigm or program beyond the already known pieces of evidence and known sensual qualities.[86] In this sense, any object (scientific or not) is a paradigm, because there is always a surplus of manifestations behind its directly accessible qualities. The knower's "commitment" is required to deal with this sensual background,[87] meaning an attitude acknowledging that something else about such an object can be known. For Harman, the real qualities' background moves away from experience no less than the real object; therefore, he substitutes the object's real qualities for those that the knower brings with him/her to the knowledge unit. As he puts it,

> in what sense does the beholder supply real qualities for a sensual object? Practically speaking, the real qualities of any sensual object we encounter can be found in the unnoticed background *assumptions* that make it visible to us.[88]

However, if the knower brings his/her real qualities to the assumptions about the object's background, how is this model of knowledge safeguarded so as not to fall into a form of epistemological idealism? Put differently, in what way do these assumptions belong to the object instead of being an imposition of the knower? Does the knower construct the knowledge by assuming unclear pre-existing manifestations that may not belong to the object in question? Understanding how Harman treats the object's capabilities could help the discussion if the same approach is extrapolated to the discussion of knowledge.

According to him, all the capacities or properties that an object can exert when interacting with several beholders do not belong to the object, but to the interactions that compose a new compound entity (object + beholder).[89] His argument is not to assign a multitude of pre-existing capabilities as possibilities. If one imagines a similar strategy for the question of knowledge, knowledge will belong to the composite knowledge unit (object + knower), and therefore knowledge will be different according to each of the multiple interactions object + knowers. Thus, knowledge is strictly separate from the object in question. Reality and some manifestations belong to the dormant object, but the experiences it offers and its associated knowledge do not – they are in the compound object. In this context, how can knowledge about something be unified if knowledge is always about objects that are a scalar level above, meaning not about the object itself but about multiple composite cognitive objects? In terms of our example, it would mean that there would be no unified knowledge about the stone, because the knowledge individually refers to each interaction-object that the stone enters into with different knowers. What can be known about the stone does not lie in the stone, but knowledge is about the different knowledge-units themselves, one level above the stone.

To avoid that, one could try to find the common denominator between all knowledge-units and look retroactively to see if such a piece of knowledge resembles the observed component in any way; at least,

84 Ibid., 84, 184.
85 Harman, *Dante's Broken Hammer*, 197.
86 Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 190.
87 Ibid., 192.
88 Ibid., 189 [emphasis added].
89 As Harman explains, "it's true that [an object] can affect things differently from how it currently does, but my position is that when it does have these different effects, they do not belong to the [object], but to a new entity composed of the [object] and something else." Harman, in DeLanda and Harman, *The Rise of Realism*, 69–70.

this is how Harman deals with the object's capacities for each interaction.[90] That would mean that the knowledge of each knowledge unit must be related in some way to the properties of the studied object. To this end, the OOO diagram of knowledge proposes that the knower's real qualities must be assumed as belonging to the object's background.[91] However, in my opinion, the revelation of unknown characteristics and profiles cannot risk constructing phenomena coming from the knower that may not belong to the object. If so, this gesture is very close to (if not the same as) Kant's epistemological idealism. Especially his synthetic *a priori* propositions are not about objects that have some characteristics that we know *a priori*, but about premises that we, knowers, impose on our experiences regardless of whether or not they refer to the object in question.

For that reason, and being entirely in agreement with the notion of "knowledge without truth," I am inclined to recognize a model of knowledge in origin. What can be known about an object resides in the object itself, even though it implies that there will be a ridiculously large (but always finite) amount of trivial and unexercised pieces of knowledge about it. Indeed, I would assert that evaluating whether qualities or capabilities are trivial or relevant has no relation to the object itself. These are criteria that categorize our knowledge according to sociocultural circumstances, as to which features count as knowledge and which do not. Structuring qualities have more to do with how we, observers, handle the sensual domain than with any internal value system of the thing that favors or discourages its qualitative profiles. For this reason, following Riegl's theory, an internal regime of flat representability is proposed as the basis of knowledge in which any appearance has the right to represent the object in its own way and contribute to the episteme.

4.2 Aesthetics as an additional form of "knowledge without truth"

The second point of discussion is the separation of aesthetics from knowledge, on which I suggest that the OOO indirect aesthetic method to the real object can also address its other sensual profiles, with consequences for the knowledge of the thing. Harman's aesthetic concept of *allure*, or *allusion*, put into practice by the mechanism of *metaphor*, makes the object's withdrawn reality absentmindedly present through aesthetic experiences.[92] Reality is present without being evident, i.e., the object reveals its unitary existence exposing no quality. On this basis, Harman correctly asserts that aesthetics and allure are impossible forms of knowledge, because reality has no qualities.

However, I posit that allusion is not the exclusive consequence of aesthetic cognition. Unlike Kant and Greenberg, aesthetic experience is not an end in itself,[93] but it has the additional capacity to induce a colorful range of impressions that are *other* forms of manifestation of the object. Emotional content is part of the reality's various representations, something that is clear for the early British formalism of Roger Fry or Clive Bell.[94] Alternatively, in the words of Henrich Wölfflin: "We designate the effect that we receive the *impression*. And we understand this impression to be the *expression* of the object."[95] That means that the emotional content derived from aesthetic experiences belongs to the object's sensual domain, and the

90 On whether an object's capacities reside in the object itself or in the composite object it forms with another, Harman claims that "any genuine relation forms a new object, and that this object often has a retroactive effect on its components." Ibid., 71, Harman.

91 Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 184.

92 Harman describes *allure* "as a way of making the thing in-itself present without making it *directly* present." Harman, *Art and Objects*, 67. For more about allure and allusion in OOO, see Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, ch. 9c; Harman, *Weird Realism*.

93 On how Kant and Greenberg claim that aesthetic experience is an end in itself, see Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 53; Greenberg, *Homemade Esthetics*, 6.

94 For the two scholars, emotional responses are various and internal to the artwork. See Fry, *Vision and Design*, 194; Bell, *Art*, ch. 1.

95 Wölfflin, "Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture," 150.

human becomes another medium of expression of the object.[96] As I claim elsewhere: "While the [object]'s emotional effects are another type of [its] multiple formal expressions, the allusion/allure escapes analytical considerations; it cannot be formally explained."[97] The proof that the impressions are plural and different from each other (each has its articulation and structure) in opposition to the single non-qualitative unity of the allusion becomes apparent when the sciences (psychology, anthropology, or sociology) count them as phenomena to study. Aesthetic cognition is twofold since the unitary allusion to the withdrawn reality unifies all aesthetic experiences on that object, canceling none of them as forms of expression. Aesthetic cognition refers simultaneously to the unity *and* the multiplicity of the object, to its substance and features. Therefore, emotional responses provide *qualitative* plural data that is sensitive to be incorporated into the body of knowledge about the object. To some extent, Harman sees it that way too.[98] Aesthetic information is certainly not a clear, literal, and measurable knowledge for us like other scientific propositions are. However, if the observer's impressions show articulation, they reveal sensual aspects of the object in question. Obviously, not every object can represent itself in us. Aesthetic cognition as an additional source of knowledge does not apply to those objects that cannot instill emotional responses. In this sense, the aesthetic result depends on the medium of the cognized object. For example, painting produces a mental response. Emotional impressions must be translated in some way into another medium, so that others can grasp them and turn them into shareable data. On the contrary, the observer of a sculpture or an architectural space must move or act around or within the object. Such corporeal actions are both the production of the aesthetic experience and another expression of the artistic or architectural object. The person's involvement is not only mental but also physical. Unlike the static partition in painting or literature, space art formats provide the expressions of the object in the spectator or user in a more evident way.

Therefore, based on the notion of flat representativity – in which all representations of an object stand equally for its reality – I claim that *any* experienced quality contributes somehow to our knowledge of the thing. This requires the same strategy as with the question of knowledge: to locate the emotional content in the object as such and not in the aesthetic unit. Harman would probably not agree with this, because it means that many non-actualized emotions will pre-populate the object. However, just as with knowledge, how can an object's emotional effects be unified if they do not lie in itself? In the present case, the role of the object–beholder interaction is to make the expression evident to the beholder rather than create it. The surplus of the object is its unexercised qualities and capacities.

In this context, non-literal aesthetic knowledge emerges as a contribution to expanding OOO's notion of "knowledge without truth:" a knowledge that never touches reality, but which circulates in several but finite forms around it.

5 Conclusion

When the reality–appearance gap is applied as a parameter for navigating philosophical positions, two large groups can be contrasted, each in turn with different cognitive implications. When the gap is denied or ignored, the philosophical arguments are framed within the *plane of superficiality* where reality is appearance. At least two general scenarios derive from this: either the thing endures at the cost of offering a single experiential profile with the subsequent and improbable unification of the observers' faculties for that thing, or the thing's reality is multiplied by each different form of perception/cognition/relationship with it. On the contrary, when the gap is taken into consideration, reality is beyond appearance. In this case as

96 Harman uses the concept of "mimesis" to clarify that the aesthetic experience is based on the composite entity object + observer for what the beholder becomes the object. Harman recognizes the human as a medium in the following way: "aesthetic participants themselves provide that medium." Harman, "Materialism Is Not the Solution," 109.

97 Vaillo, "The Knowable and the Ineffable."

98 As he puts it: "In some cases [philosophy and art] may produce knowledge as a byproduct, but unlike mathematics and the natural sciences, knowledge is not their principal aim." Harman, "A New Sense of Mimesis," 49–50.

well, two scenarios can be distinguished. First, if reality is a continuous process, either reality is monistic so that a single virtual limit supports all actual appearances. There is a problem of ontological identity and constant self-cognition, since what cognizes is the same reality as what is cognized. The alternative is to isolate each appearance, since each one comes from individualized virtual paths. The price here is that things can only have one form of expression. Second, if reality is finite and has multiple but finite forms of expression, the model relates to the *volume of representation*, in which manifestations are translations of reality. Here there is a regime of internal correspondences between the copious surface and the unitary reality, so that the observers' cognitions about the same thing do not merge.

The last case is the ontological discretism of OOO, which carries opposite consequences for the episteme. On the one hand, because reality can never be pinned down insofar as any of its experienced representations is sufficient for the task, reality can never be known as it is. However, the multiplicity of an object's manifestations does not mean that they must be coherent for the beholder, which creates an unstable epistemological regime. On the other hand, the beholder's cognitive limitations imply that there is always something to be known. The object's cognitive inexhaustibility stimulates a continuous "commitment" (Harman's term) to produce knowledge. That means that such epistemological instability invites us to reconsider the model of knowledge. For an episteme in tune with the object's natural diversity of representations and media, dogmatic, domesticated, reductive, and manageable models of knowledge must be abandoned. This does not imply rejecting literal or scientific knowledge. On the contrary, it demands a model in which both literal and non-literal knowledge *coexist*. Indeed, I argue that the degree of non-literality of an expression has more to do with our inability to realize its articulation than with the manifestation that lacks it.[99] Any appearance of the object is qualitative, and is therefore articulated, formed, and structured. The epistemological objective of such coexistence is the inexhaustible fullness of each entity's volume of representation – its sensual domain. In short, the source of the episteme is *all* of its forms of articulation and expression.

In general, our model of knowledge is inherited from the mentality of the Enlightenment that grouped disciplines and objects of inquiry by focusing on partial expressions around specific media. It has crossed sensual realms looking for similar expressions, ignoring and disaggregating the variety of the sensual and its supporting reality to offer us a stable superficiality. However, such a taxonomization is not coherent with the objects' realm of appearances and their "polymorphous state of being." An episteme concerning objects requires leaving behind strategies of capitalizing on specific phenomena or the medium of expression so as to study the thing's diverse and distinctive pool of sensual profiles. That would imply a knowledge based on flat representativity, which claims that "*all* [*representations*] *equally* [*represent*], *yet they do not* [*represent*] *equally*," rephrasing Bogost's definition of flat ontology. Put differently, a model of knowledge where the object does not have a privileged type of manifestation or a singular medium of expression, but is transdisciplinary and medium-promiscuous, allows for acquiring knowledge in unsuspected parts of the sensual. Art and architecture are already absorbing such circularity (flying around without perching) to establish alternative modes of disciplinary production.[100] Within this framework, the OOO model of "knowledge without truth" implies an episteme that can accommodate differences, contradictions, and ambiguities that reflect the inherent plurality of the object's nature.

To this end, knowledge must account for the vastly finite volume of representation of the object. That supposes at least two points of disagreement with Harman's model of knowledge. First, it is stated that all appearances (qualities, capacities, events, manifestations, etc.), whether or not actualized, are contemplated in the object rather than in the interaction with the knower. Thus, the knowledge about an object lies in the object as such, in all its possible appearances. The actualization of a manifestation corresponds to the

99 For example, the cognition of the emotional expressions of an object in us as a medium has a difficult degree of articulation compared to the literal descriptions of science. However, it is argued that this is an epistemological limitation rather than an ontological condition of the object's representations.

100 For some examples of the OOO influence on architectural discourse based on mystery, curiosity, and ambiguity, see Ruy, "Returning To (Strange) Objects;" Young, *The Estranged Object*; Gage, *Designing Social Equality*.

cognitive unit (object + beholder) but not the generation of additional properties attributed to the original object. If so, this would be a form of epistemological idealism. In other words, the inclusion of the knower to form the cognitive unit cannot mean that the unveiled qualities that are the basis of knowledge are exclusive to such a composite object and not to the entity itself. For that reason, the knower's contributing qualities are rejected as not necessarily being contemplated within the sensual domain of the observed object. That means that the purpose of the object + beholder/knower tandem is *extracting* (rather than constructing) appearances without affecting the observed object's constitution. What can be known about something is in its domain of unknown appearances. If an object's real and sensual domain is discrete, so too is what an observer does not know about it. Therefore, each object shows a particular unknown individualized to each observer.

Second, the difference in the observer's engagement with the object, be it for aesthetic or knowledge outcomes, is not so obvious. While it is clear that only aesthetic encounters are capable of indirectly approaching the substantial and withdrawn reality through allusion, aesthetic experiences can also reveal qualitative manifestations. Those expressions of the object are the impressions *in* the spectator. Following the principles of flat representativity, this means that (a) those impressions are appearances of the object in the beholder as a medium, which is different from the latter constructing unrelated expressions, and (b) such manifestations contribute to the knowledge about the object as they belong to its sensual domain. Therefore, the cognitive unit (aesthetic or knowledge) must be *innocuous* to the observed object.

On this basis, the manifestations and associated knowledge of an object are epistemologically inexhaustible not because the object has infinite manifestations, but because our biological and cultural limitations on it always have something to reveal from the object's intrinsic and vast finitude of sensual profiles. Since no cognitive system in the world has absolute access to the full volume of representation of any entity, objects always have a particular remnant of knowable qualities beyond those known. This cognitive constraint is what makes objects sensually inexhaustible.

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ARTICLE

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Revisiting the history of ideas: A forgotten resource for historians of geography

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Abstract

In this paper I revisit the mid-twentieth century body of literature founding the field of the history of ideas, emphasising the work of Arthur Lovejoy (1873–1962). This branch of intellectual history is often overshadowed by both the history of knowledge and the history of science. I will argue that the history of ideas is valuable to any historian of geography, even though some of its key arguments are justly criticised and rejected. Subsequently, I will reflect on recent examples of how histories of geography have been written and the role of geographers within a "spatial turn" taken by intellectual history. These elements will then be connected to the history of ideas, explaining why this field might be valuable to disciplinary historians, and brief reference will be made to the most explicit borrowing from this field by "idealist human geography." The central argument is that a Lovejoyian history of ideas has contributed to the inclusion of and emphasis on certain non-elitist voices in academia and the crossing of boundaries between disciplines, language areas and countries. Although certain epistemological aspects of this field might not withstand criticism, other aspects of what it has achieved might still be worth revisiting.

KEYWORDS

historiography, history of geography, history of ideas, intellectual history, knowledge, Lovejoy

1 | INTRODUCTION

"Ideengeschichte ist tot, lang lebe die Ideeengeschichte!"[1] (Goering, 2017:7). With this opening statement, Goering sets the tone for his book on the current status of the history of ideas in Germany. The allusion to the accession of a new monarch refers to the revival of an intellectual tradition or field that was declared dead long ago. That field was clearly discernible in the Anglophone and German academic communities of the mid-twentieth century (Goering, 2017). Examples include the works of Rothacker (1940) in Germany, Collingwood (1946) in Britain and Lovejoy (1936, 1940, 1941) in the United States. In this review, I will emphasise the work and ideas of the latter, Lovejoy, offering pointers as to why this field of history of ideas might be reappraised as a resource for academic geography.

By means of a broad-brush encounter with Lovejoy's history of ideas followed by a short discussion how histories of geography have been written, I will address the value of revisiting this "dead" field of intellectual history. First, I will explore recent signs of a resurgence of history of ideas against the broader context of intellectual history (Goering, 2017), pursuing the interdisciplinarity for which Lovejoy aimed; and second, I will address how discussions concerning history of ideas have contributed to the inclusion of and emphasis upon non-elitist voices in academia, including in histories of geography. This analysis will demonstrate that, although not all arguments by historians of ideas such as Lovejoy are justified or can withstand criticism (e.g., Foucault, 1975; Skinner, 1969), the field known as history of ideas *has* influenced both intellectual history and human geography. Exploring the mid-twentieth century history of ideas is thus valuable to any historian of geography: questions about temporal and spatial scales of research and on whose voices should be included in historical research were relevant to historians of ideas, as well as to their adversaries, and arguably remain highly relevant to historians of geography today.

1.1 | History of ideas as a branch of intellectual history

The ordering and naming of different branches of intellectual history (e.g., history of science, history of knowledge, history of ideas: see Table 1) is messy, tangled and somewhat arbitrary. It reflects battles between rival "schools" with differing philosophical and maybe ethical-political preferences, as revealed in a statement such as this: "For most historians of science trained in the past thirty years, doing history of science has meant avoiding the history of ideas" (Tresch, 2014:153). Conflating some of the distinctions drawn above and in Table 1, Wickberg (2001) distinguishes two broad schools of practice in intellectual history: the history of thought, concentrating on the "internal" movement of ideas, and the social history of intellectuals, addressing the "external" influences of who, where and when produces the ideas. The former includes "history of ideas, language, texts, ideology, meaning and cultural

TABLE 1 A succinct overview of different branches of intellectual history

Branches of intellectual history	Core concerns	Exemplary text	Example in geography	Exemplary journal
History of science	Origins and uptake of key scientific concepts and practices	Kuhn (1970)	Livingstone (2005)	Isis (founded in 1912)
History of knowledge	Development and application of identifiable subjects, disciplines, substantive foci	Burke (2016)	Wright (1947)	Journal for the History of Knowledge (founded in 2020)
History of ideas	Appearance, reiteration and sedimentation of specifiable ideas of the world	Lovejoy (1936)	Guelke (1982)	Journal of the History of Ideas (founded in 1940)

representations" (Wickberg, 2001:384). The history of thought, on this reading, has a strong focus on language, on how texts and speeches are composed and communicated, as well as an awareness of how thought is indelibly caught in the workings of power, an angle expressed—by both geographers and others—through genealogical studies (e.g., Foucault, 1975) and inquiries into the persuasions of ideology (e.g., Althusser, 1971; Cresswell, 1996). history of ideas, although a term regularly used as a synonym for "history of thought," is characterised by—unsurprisingly—the organising concept of *ideas*, and is hence often taken as occupying its own distinctive and, for some, unfashionable niche.

Using ideas as a central concept in writing history is connected to the ontological and epistemological status lent to ideas and other *mentalities* within the philosophical framework of idealism. To summarise baldly, there are two fundamental conceptions of idealism: first, idealism in the sense of the foundation of all reality being "something mental" (such as "the mind," or ideas); and second, idealism in the sense that *knowing* reality is always dependent on activities of the mind (Guyer & Horstmann, 2019). For idealist historians, the dynamics of ideas held by humans are precisely what shape history, once humans enter the historical record, and all else is secondary. Idealists thus confront both realist and materialist accounts: realism as the doctrine "that there is a world of physical things that exists independent of our perceptions and cognition of them" (Gibson, 1981:148), prioritising what is ostensibly real in the world; and materialism as that "which takes matter to be all there is" (Guyer & Horstmann, 2019, page no.?), prioritising the material dimensions of any human situation or process. Idealism sits apart from both these doctrines, in the wider universe of philosophy as in the narrower pastures of academic geography, resulting in it often being regarded as too partial, only accessing one small corner of how "real" peoples, places and periods are constituted. Moreover, if the idealist focus homes down specifically on "ideas," then that focus arguably becomes even more tightly drawn.

1.2 | Lovejoy's interdisciplinary tracing of "unit-ideas"

History of ideas emerged in the eighteenth century (Berlin, 2000), but in this review I will emphasise the contributions of Lovejoy during the twentieth-century interwar period, coinciding with the institutionalisation of history of ideas, in certain quarters, as a recognisable academic field. Arthur Lovejoy (1873–1962) was an American philosopher and historian. He was Professor of Philosophy at Johns Hopkins University from 1910 to 1938, where he founded the university's "History of Ideas Club" together with George Boas, another philosopher, before he founded the still existing *Journal of the History of Ideas* in 1940. In the first volume, he gave the *raison d'être* of this new journal:

> "The history of political events and social movements, of economic changes, of religion, of philosophy, of science, of literature and the other arts, of education, have been investigated by distinct groups of specialists, many of them little acquainted with the subjects and the researches of the others. The specialization which—the limitations of the individual mind being what they are—had this as its natural consequence was indispensable for the progress of historical knowledge; yet the consequence proved also, in the end, an impediment to such progress. For the departmentalization—whether by subjects, periods, nationalities or languages—of the study of the history of thought corresponds, for the most part, to no real cleavages among the phenomena studied." (Lovejoy, 1940:3–4).[2]

This call for interdisciplinary historical research based its arguments on the unifying and structuring element of so-called "unit-ideas" previously introduced in Lovejoy's most famous text *The Great Chain of Being* (1936):

> "There are, first, implicit or incompletely explicit *assumptions*, or more or less *unconscious mental habits*, operating in the thought of an individual or a generation. It is the beliefs which are so much a

> matter of course that they are rather tacitly presupposed than formally expressed and argued for, the ways of thinking which seem so natural and inevitable that they are not scrutinized with the eye of logical self-consciousness, that often are most decisive of the character of a philosopher's doctrine, and still often of the dominant intellectual tendencies of an age." (Lovejoy, 1936:7).

Unit-ideas would be traceable in "different provinces" of history (Lovejoy, 1936), and Lovejoy presents an example of how philosophy, romanticism and landscape-gardening are contexts in which one unit-idea appears: thus, in different provinces (Lovejoy, 1936:15). Such unit-ideas can be "disguised," but that is exactly what the historian should solve: making connections between the different appearances of the same unit-idea. Lovejoy emphasised how ideas constantly "migrated" (1940:4) and were in "perpetual interplay" with each other (1940:19), and these descriptions already reveal that his history of ideas as anything but fixed or exemplary of ontological idealism. It is the name of "history of ideas" that suggests such ontological idealism,[3] but, on the contrary, Lovejoy's history of ideas was intended to be a "hybrid creature": combining some aspects of Anglo-American empiricism with aspects of German idealism (Parsons, 2007) without fully adopting their respective ontological and epistemological postulates. It was specifically this mixture that proved fruitful: it could appeal to different audiences, perhaps ones with differing ethical-political commitments, and thus be an appealing intellectual field for many scholars in the humanities (Parsons, 2007:688).

Lovejoy himself emphasised the unit-idea being determined by "usage," not by "meaning" (Lovejoy, 1941:258): unit-ideas hence are "historical conglomerates more than they are logical entities" (Taylor Wilkins, 1956:322). In practice, he considered unit-ideas as "meeting points" for academics of diverse backgrounds, a claim that will form the bridge from Lovejoy's history of ideas to my reflections on its value for (historical) geographers and disciplinary historians. Additionally, moreover, for Lovejoy history of ideas:

> "is especially concerned with the manifestations of specific unit-ideas in the collective thought of large groups of persons, not merely in the doctrines or opinions of a small number of profound thinkers or eminent writers." (Lovejoy, 1936:19).

Notwithstanding occasional appearances to the contrary, then, Lovejoy envisaged history of ideas to be non-elitist, not prioritising the great thoughts of "Great Men," but rather ideas sedimented into the worlds and doings of ordinary people, even if originating from the "profound" and "eminent." Non-elitist notions of knowledge were given voice louder and clearer towards the end of the twentieth century, of course, both in studies by historians of geography and across other subdisciplinary fields of academic geography.

1.3 | History of ideas and contextualism

Critique of Lovejoy's history of ideas grew in the 1960s, exemplified by a banner with the text "Just Say No to the History of Ideas" attached to Princeton's Department of Philosophy, demonstrating negative attitudes towards the methods and objects of the history of ideas (Grafton, 2006:18). This critique of Lovejoy objected to his seeming reduction of all art and literature to illustrations of *particular* ideas or philosophical doctrines (Grafton, 2006) and insisted that his posited historical continuities between given unit-ideas were spurious (Mandelbaum, 1965). One of the leading opponents of Lovejoy's history of ideas was Skinner (1969). Along with Pocock and Dunn (James, 2018), he represented the Cambridge School of intellectual history which proposed a contextual mode of historical understanding (Gordon, 2014), wherein thought always needs to be understood in its time, place, situation and circumstances, never through tracing "decontextualised," essentialised, unit-ideas down the ages.

Contextualism offered many justified arguments against a mid-twentieth century history of ideas, and yet there is now a recognisable comeback occurring for a Lovejoyian history of ideas. The main emphasis in this newer

incarnation of history of ideas is the temporal ambition of this approach, the *longue durée* (Armitage, 2012; McMahon & Moyn, 2014), as well as the crossing of all kinds of boundaries and boundaries beyond "the material" as in the immediacy of specific places (Goering, 2017). The call for a long-term, large-scale- and non-elitist history of ideas is also perceptible in papers published in the *Journal of the History of Ideas* over recent years (e.g., Chaplin, 2017; De Bont, 2015; Shogimen, 2016), one example being De Bont's inquiry into international conservation and the shift of discourses of exclusion to discourse of inclusion, considering the knowledges of indigenous people between 1910 and 1975 (De Bont, 2015).

Besides this influence on temporal, spatial and conceptual scales of intellectual history, the history of ideas also helped to break down "the barrier against philosophy" (Gordon, 2014:52) that contextualism had built, allowing historical study to open itself to realms of imagination, conjecture and speculation beyond the mundanely "real" and "material." The history of ideas is hence one field where history and philosophy can arguably be brought together (Bevir, 1997), similarly to the collaborations that Lovejoy envisaged in the 1930s-1940s. To have some kind of "shared playground" of interaction between historians (and not just theorists of history!) and philosophers might benefit intellectual history as a whole. Calls for historians of science not only to focus on theoretical knowledge but also on intuitive and practical knowledges (e.g., Renn, 2015) are clearly grounded in these epistemological discussions.

Already in the 1980s, some efforts to unite, or at least to connect, contextualism and traditional history of ideas were undertaken (LaCapra, 1980). What I would like to urge here is a return, even if it is just a short visit, to history of ideas as it was proposed halfway through the twentieth century, because much of what might be termed non-idealist intellectual history, as in contextualism, is to some extent precisely a response to history of ideas. Indeed, the history of ideas influenced neighbouring academic fields such as philosophy of language, philosophy of action and theories on textual interpretation, as well as the history of political thought (Boucher, 1985). Further, whereas perhaps the structuring concept of the unit-ideas is less easily justified (Armitage, 2012), Lovejoy's call for interdisciplinary historical-theoretical experimentation is a remarkable for anyone interested in knowledge exchange and migration (McMahon, 2014) alongside disciplinary developments and institutionalisation.

More contemporary works on history of ideas, such as the *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (Horowitz, 2005), express a broad conception of what constitutes ideas. Indeed, ideas discussed in the *Dictionary* include concepts such as Bioethics, Citizenship and Hate. Yet, this edition also explicitly covers an extensive number of possibilities, ranging from many "-isms" such as Aristotelianism, Pragmatism and Socialism to practices such as Dance, Volunteerism and Ancestor Worship. Horowitz explains the difference between this *New Dictionary* and the original *Dictionary* (Wiener, 1973) mainly by a shift from a focus on the history of influential *texts* to the inclusion of ideas expressed orally, visually and in public debate (Horowitz, 2005: xxvii). In the process, she refers to the mid-twentieth century field of history of ideas "as a trendsetter in establishing 'interdisciplinarity' in academia, encouraging the pursuit of ideas across the borders of academic disciplines" (Horowitz, 2005: xxvii). This claim directly connects to one of Lovejoy's ambitions—the cross-cultural, interdisciplinary approach—but utters a broader conception of ideas than is arguably contained in Lovejoy's sense of unit-ideas.

1.4 | Non-elitist knowledges in disciplinary history

In his book chapter on the return of history of ideas, McMahon (2014) explores four different domains in which the history of ideas might have influenced later historiographers: the broadening of temporal ambition and scope; the discussion about universalism versus provincialism; "writerly craft"; and the travels and migrations of ideas, both in a literal and conceptual sense. McMahon also reflects on the common emphasis upon "elites" and elitist knowledge in intellectual history writing. Various developments in the second half of the twentieth century opened the floor to "voices from below." At the end of the 1950s and in the early 1960s some Marxist historians began publishing works on "history from below": the formative contribution of Thompson, notably *The Making of the English Working Class*

(Thompson, 1963), epitomised the experiences, agency and self-consciousness of "the working class" (Featherstone & Griffin, 2016). This history from below contested "the passivity to which ordinary people have been consigned by so many historians" (Tosh, 2002:71).

Genealogical research, emphasising historical *meaning* as well as accounts that include historical *usage* of concepts, are also traceable within geography. Agnew (2014), for instance, explores some of human geography's "basic concepts," paying attention to their longer-term genealogies. Intriguingly, he refers to the history of ideas in his argument:

> "It [a dialogue about the uses and limitations of a 'history of ideas' approach] is inspired by a fear that the field has become so obsessed with tracing the intellectual genealogies of its concepts (as singular words) that the practical lives to which the concepts can help provide tentative understandings have been increasingly forgotten. (…) My point is not totalistic (…) an interest in the history of ideas has been a welcome one for the field as a whole. More specifically, however, that static nominalism that the approach sometimes entails leads to a rigid essentializing of terms." (Agnew, 2014:318).

Although such genealogies are different from Lovejoy's history of ideas, they share a concern for the *longue durée* in historical research, as popularised in *Annales* School[4] histories concerned with the articulation of long-term (structural) processes (e.g., Braudel, 1949, 1980).

When turning to historiographies of geography, there are many ways of telling such a disciplinary history. The scope of every historiography influences the voices and contributions that are prioritised. Livingstone's *The Geographical Tradition* (Livingstone, 1992) covers more than 2000 years of history, during only a relatively small period of which geography was institutionalised in research centres and universities. Because of this, Livingstone includes a colourful collection of characters and texts: contributions of voyagers, navigators, and scientists from both humanities and natural sciences are prominently staged. Other classic historiographies, such as *Geography and Geographers* (Johnston, 1979; Johnston & Sidaway, 2015), give the university as an education and research institution a central place in the history of geography. There is hence a distinction—to an extent captured in the contrast between the two texts just mentioned—between two kinds of historiographical sources: works on the history of geographical *ideas* versus works on the history of geography as an *academic discipline*. This distinction is not always clear-cut: for instance, Cresswell's *Geographic Thought* (Cresswell, 2013) can be placed at a midway position on the spectrum. The justification of the narrative that a historiographer is telling is complex: what should be included? the masterpieces of each era? the approaches followed by a majority in a discipline? the methodology that has sustained for the longest time? the theories most influential in contemporary works? In recent years, some historians of geography have called for attending to "uncommon" voices are from within the academic community. Their voices are not obscure in any way; but, for whatever exact reason, they are not discernible, or strongly under-represented, in the well-known historiographies of geography: meaning voices from female geographers (e.g., Domosh, 1991; Maddrell, 2009), "dissident" geographers (e.g., Barnes & Sheppard, 2019; Blunt & Wills, 2000) and non-Anglophone geographers (e.g., Oldfield & Shaw, 2015).

1.5 | The spatial turn in histories of geography

Science has often been regarded as "an enterprise untouched by local conditions" (Livingstone, 2003:1), with socio-spatial contexts for the making of science rarely acknowledged (Finnegan, 2008). However, just as sociologists and anthropologists are now discussing science, so are social, cultural and historical geographers (e.g., Livingstone, 2005). Geographers engaged more with social theory, cultural studies and related disciplines in order to begin framing how to research and narrate the geographies integral to the histories of science and, indeed, as shaping the histories of geography as knowledge and as a form of science, resulting in what has been termed a

"spatial turn" in such endeavour (Withers, 2009:641). Several different emphases arise in research on the spatialities of knowledge and science. Some discuss the "locationality" of the production of knowledge (e.g., Livingstone, 2003), while others emphasise the circulation of scientific knowledge (e.g., Naylor, 2005a, 2005b), the movements of academics themselves (e.g., Jöns, 2010), or the *milieux* for the "consumption" of scientific knowledge (e.g., Keighren, 2006).

Reflection on the history of ideas might aid understanding these different approaches to narrating a disciplinary history: the travelling and migration of ideas in different provinces, as Lovejoy suggested, meant that the unit-ideas would be found in collective (or not-individual) thought. Similarly, the exploration of unit-ideas crossing boundaries and surfacing in other languages than English was central to Lovejoy (1936: 17). However, it is unfair to ascribe the acknowledgement of non-elitist knowledges and focus on circulation and migration of ideas only to the adversaries and successors of history of ideas: a plural conception of knowledge, emerging in the above-identified "spatial turn," is epistemologically different from the tracing of ideal—in some sense invariant, unchanging—unit-ideas around different contexts, communities and times. Methodologically, as well as in terms of spatial and temporal scale, history of ideas and pluralist accounts of knowledge do have much in common, however, rendering it worthwhile to return to mid-twentieth century discussions ideas about history of ideas.

1.6 | A note on idealist human geography

The field of history of ideas as a whole is more extensive than Lovejoy and thinkers from within the Lovejoyian "tradition." It is associated with a variety of philosophical thought argued from an epistemological and ontological idealist point of view, exemplified, for instance, within the discipline of geography by Leonard Guelke. Guelke argued for a Collingwoodian conception of how history can be studied by historians and historical geographers (Guelke, 1997), the reference being R.G. Collingwood (1889–1943), the English philosopher, historian and archaeologist. Collingwood's posthumously published *The Idea of History* (1946) engaged with the epistemological problem of how to know the past:

> "All history, then, is the history of thought, where thought is used in the widest sense and includes all the conscious activities of the human spirit. These activities, as events in time, pass away and cease to be. The historian re-creates them in his own mind: he does not merely repeat them, as a later scientist may re-invent the inventions of an earlier: he re-enacts them consciously, knowing that this is what he is doing and thus conferring upon this re-enactment the quality of a specific activity of the mind." (Collingwood, 1946: 445).

The idealist, Collingwoodian, approach that Guelke advocated did not neglect material aspects of human existence, but insisted that material aspects should be treated in relation to the thought of individuals involved (Guelke, 1982:33). Understanding history meant understanding the rationalities of thoughts from people in the past: they should be prioritised, instead of "our" own rationalities.

Idealist human geography did not establish itself as a significant theoretical approach within the discipline.[5] This does not imply that idealist thought in its broader sense did not influence the discipline. Some say Guelke might deserve some credit for formalising an explanation "that has long been present in human geography" and for "complementing" the heightened sensitivity to the ideas of given peoples in given places (Cloke et al., 2004: 70). J.K. Wright's argument for the field of "geosophy" is another example of how thought on ideas—the "imagined ideas" he addresses in *Terrae Incognitae* (1947)—have influenced later developments within human geography (Keighren, 2005). These examples, though very different in their orientations, demonstrate the versatility of historical thought on the role of "ideas," both in historiography and in historical geography, and thus once again invoke the value of revisiting thinkers such as Lovejoy.

2 | CONCLUSION

The connections between the history of ideas and plural non-elitist notions of knowledge are perhaps not always very direct. In this paper, I have emphasised the value of looking back at Lovejoy's mid-twentieth century body of work within the field of history of ideas, one that did have some influence on the relationships between history and philosophy, and on historiographical thought, later in the century. Acknowledging the multiple "provinces" wherein ideas can be expressed might have contributed to the broadening of "what and who should be studied" in academia. My central point is that, even when the epistemological aspects of an approach might not withstand criticism, other aspects of an approach might still be worth revisiting. The broadening of temporal, spatial and conceptual scale and the tracing of non-elitist historical thought are all very much present in history of ideas, even in Lovejoy's original conception. With recent academic debates about the voices of "dissidents" or social or spatial "outsiders," as shortly discussed in this paper, the crossing of boundaries that is advocated by historians of ideas seems very relevant today. Furthermore, there are several recent examples of comparative studies on national or local disciplinary differences (e.g., Hoyez, Collins, & Fleuret, 2016; Peake, 2011). Such studies often focus on one specific geographical subfield such as, for instance, social or health geography, but because of its comparative and spatial scope the Lovejoyian notion of "different provinces" and his notion of ideas as "meeting points" become apparent. Historians of geography and historical geographers often sketch parallels with diverse approaches taken within research on the history of science and history of knowledge, but the less fashionable branch of intellectual history—history of ideas—might provide an unexpected sense of recognition and kinship.

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ENDNOTES

[1]"The history of ideas is dead, long live the history of ideas!"

[2]This paper will not discuss the notion of "science as progress" as it is expressed in this quotation by Lovejoy. Some interesting sources about this notion in general are, for instance, Krige (1980) and Bowler and Morus (2005), or, more specifically about progress in geography, Livingstone (2006).

[3]Ontological idealism, as described above, is the conception that the foundation of all reality is "something mental", such as ideas, will, the mind (Guyer & Horstmann, 2019).

[4]For its influence on geography, see, for instance, Baker, 1978.

[5]It rather became lost in the midst of a more broad-brush humanistic geography (of the 1970s-1980s), within which more challenging "philosophical" claims about phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics and the multiple dimensions of "human agency" – as set against versions of radical, structural, political-economic geography – came more prominently to the fore (Gregory, 1978; Cloke et al., 1991).

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Idealism

Detail of Plato in *The School of Athens*, by Raphael

In philosophy, **idealism** is a diverse group of metaphysical views which all assert that "reality" is in some way indistinguishable or inseparable from human perception and/or understanding, that it is in some sense mentally constructed, or that it is otherwise closely connected to ideas.[1] In contemporary scholarship, traditional idealist views are generally divided into two groups. Subjective idealism takes as its starting point that objects only exist to the extent that they are perceived by someone. Objective idealism posits the existence of an *objective* consciousness which exists before and, in some sense, independently of human consciousness, thereby bringing about the existence of objects independently of human minds. In the early modern period, George Berkeley was often considered the paradigmatic idealist, as he asserted that the essence of objects is to be perceived. By contrast, Immanuel Kant, a pioneer of modern idealist thought, held that his version of idealism does “not concern the existence of things”, but asserts only that our “modes of representation” of them, above all *space* and *time*, are not “determinations that belong to things in themselves” but essential features of our own minds.[2] Kant called this position “transcendental idealism” (or sometimes “critical idealism"), holding that the objects of experience relied for their existence on the mind, and that the way that things in themselves are outside of our experience cannot be thought without applying the categories which structure all of our experiences. However, since Kant's view affirms the existence of *some* things independently of experience (namely, "things in themselves"), it is very different from the more traditional idealism of Berkeley.

Epistemologically, idealism is accompanied by skepticism about the possibility of knowing any mind-independent thing. In its ontological commitments, idealism goes further, asserting that all entities rely on the mind for their existence.[3] Ontological idealism thus rejects both physicalist and dualist views as failing to ascribe ontological priority to the mind. In contrast to materialism, idealism asserts the *primacy* of consciousness as the origin and prerequisite of phenomena. Idealism holds consciousness or mind to be the "origin" of the material world – in the sense that it is a necessary condition for our positing of a material world – and it aims to explain the existing world according to these principles.[4] The earliest extant arguments that the world of experience is grounded in the mental derive from India and Greece. The Hindu idealists in India and the Greek neoplatonists gave panentheistic arguments for an all-pervading consciousness as the ground or true nature of reality.[5] In contrast, the Yogācāra school, which arose within Mahayana Buddhism in India in the 4th century CE,[6] based its "mind-only" idealism to a greater extent on phenomenological analyses of personal experience. This turn toward the subjective anticipated empiricists such as George Berkeley, who revived idealism in 18th-century Europe by employing skeptical arguments against materialism. Beginning with Immanuel Kant, German idealists such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, and Arthur Schopenhauer dominated 19th-century philosophy. This tradition, which emphasized the mental or "ideal" character of all phenomena, gave birth to idealistic and subjectivist schools ranging from British idealism to phenomenalism to existentialism.

Idealism as a philosophy came under heavy attack in the West at the turn of the 20th century. The most influential critics of both epistemological and ontological idealism were G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell,[7] but its critics also included the new realists. According to *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the attacks by Moore and Russell were so influential that even more than 100 years later "any acknowledgment of idealistic

tendencies is viewed in the English-speaking world with reservation". However, many aspects and paradigms of idealism did still have a large influence on subsequent philosophy.[8] Phenomenology, an influential strain of philosophy since the beginning of the 20th century, also draws on the lessons of idealism. In his *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger famously states: "If the term idealism amounts to the recognition that being can never be explained through beings, but, on the contrary, always is the transcendental in its relation to any beings, then the only right possibility of philosophical problematics lies with idealism. In that case, Aristotle was no less an idealist than Kant. If idealism means a reduction of all beings to a subject or a consciousness, distinguished by staying *undetermined* in its own being, and ultimately is characterised negatively as 'non-thingly', then this idealism is no less methodically naive than the most coarse-grained realism."[9]

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Definitions

Idealism is a term with several related meanings. It comes via Latin *idea* from the Ancient Greek *idea* (ἰδέα) from *idein* (ἰδεῖν), meaning "to see". The term entered the English language by 1743.[10][11] It was first used in the abstract metaphysical sense "belief that reality is made up only of ideas" by Christian Wolff in 1747.[8] The term re-entered the English language in this abstract sense by 1796.[12]

In ordinary language, as when speaking of Woodrow Wilson's political idealism, it generally suggests the priority of ideals, principles, values, and goals over concrete realities. Idealists are understood to represent the world as it might or should be, unlike pragmatists, who focus on the world as it presently is. In the arts,

similarly, idealism affirms imagination and attempts to realize a mental conception of beauty, a standard of perfection, juxtaposed to aesthetic naturalism and realism.[13][14] The term *idealism* is also sometimes used in a sociological sense, which emphasizes how human ideas—especially beliefs and values—shape society.[15]

Any philosophy that assigns crucial importance to the ideal or spiritual realm in its account of human existence may be termed "idealist". Metaphysical idealism is an ontological doctrine that holds that reality itself is incorporeal or experiential at its core. Beyond this, idealists disagree on which aspects of the mental are more basic. Platonic idealism affirms that abstractions are more basic to reality than the things we perceive, while subjective idealists and phenomenalists tend to privilege sensory experience over abstract reasoning. Epistemological idealism is the view that reality can only be known through ideas, that only psychological experience can be apprehended by the mind.[3][16][17]

Subjective idealists like George Berkeley are anti-realists in terms of a mind-independent world, whereas transcendental idealists like Immanuel Kant are strong skeptics of such a world, affirming epistemological and not metaphysical idealism. Thus Kant defines *idealism* as "the assertion that we can never be certain whether all of our putative outer experience is not mere imagining".[18] He claimed that, according to *idealism*, "the reality of external objects does not admit of strict proof. On the contrary, however, the reality of the object of our internal sense (of myself and state) is clear immediately through consciousness".[19] However, not all idealists restrict the real or the knowable to our immediate subjective experience. Objective idealists make claims about a transempirical world, but simply deny that this world is essentially divorced from or ontologically prior to the mental. Thus, Plato and Gottfried Leibniz affirm an objective and knowable reality transcending our subjective awareness—a rejection of epistemological idealism—but propose that this reality is grounded in ideal entities, a form of metaphysical idealism. Nor do all metaphysical idealists agree on the nature of the ideal; for Plato, the fundamental entities were non-mental abstract forms, while for Leibniz they were proto-mental and concrete monads.[20]

As a rule, transcendental idealists like Kant affirm idealism's epistemic side without committing themselves to whether reality is *ultimately* mental; objective idealists like Plato affirm reality's metaphysical basis in the mental or abstract without restricting their epistemology to ordinary experience; and subjective idealists like Berkeley affirm both metaphysical and epistemological idealism.[21]

Classical idealism

Pre-Socratic philosophy

Idealism as a form of metaphysical monism holds that consciousness, not matter, is the ground of all being. It is monist because it holds that there is only one type of thing in the universe and idealist because it holds that one thing to be consciousness.

Anaxagoras (480 BC) taught that "all things" were created by *Nous* ("Mind"). He held that Mind held the cosmos together and gave human beings a connection to the cosmos or a pathway to the divine.

Platonism and neoplatonism

Plato's theory of forms or "ideas" describes ideal forms (for example the platonic solids in geometry or abstracts like Goodness and Justice), as universals existing independently of any particular instance.[22] Arne Grøn calls this doctrine "the classic example of a metaphysical idealism as a *transcendent* idealism",[23] while Simone Klein calls Plato "the earliest representative of metaphysical objective idealism". Nevertheless, Plato holds that matter is real, though transitory and imperfect, and is perceived by our body and its senses and given

existence by the eternal ideas that are perceived directly by our rational soul. Plato was therefore a metaphysical and epistemological dualist, an outlook that modern idealism has striven to avoid:[24] Plato's thought cannot therefore be counted as idealist in the modern sense.

With the neoplatonist Plotinus, wrote Nathaniel Alfred Boll "there even appears, probably for the first time in Western philosophy, *idealism* that had long been current in the East even at that time, for it taught... that the soul has made the world by stepping from eternity into time...".[25][26] Similarly, in regard to passages from the Enneads, "The only space or place of the world is the soul" and "Time must not be assumed to exist outside the soul".[27] Ludwig Noiré wrote: "For the first time in Western philosophy we find idealism proper in Plotinus".[5] However, Plotinus does not address whether we know external objects,[28] unlike Schopenhauer and other modern philosophers.

Christian philosophy

Christian theologians have held idealist views,[29] often based on neoplatonism, despite the influence of Aristotelian scholasticism from the 12th century onward. However there is certainly a sense in which the scholastics retained the idealism that came via St. Augustine right back to Plato.[30]

Later western theistic idealism such as that of Hermann Lotze offers a theory of the "world ground" in which all things find their unity: it has been widely accepted by Protestant theologians.[31] Several modern religious movements, for example the organizations within the New Thought Movement and the Unity Church, may be said to have a particularly idealist orientation. The theology of Christian Science includes a form of idealism: it teaches that all that truly exists is God and God's ideas; that the world as it appears to the senses is a distortion of the underlying spiritual reality, a distortion that may be corrected (both conceptually and in terms of human experience) through a reorientation (spiritualization) of thought.[32]

Chinese philosophy

Wang Yangming, a Ming Chinese neo-Confucian philosopher, official, educationist, calligraphist and general, held that objects do not exist entirely apart from the mind because the mind shapes them. It is not the world that shapes the mind but the mind that gives reason to the world, so the mind alone is the source of all reason, having an inner light, an innate moral goodness and understanding of what is good.

Idealism in Vedic and Buddhist thought

There are currents of idealism throughout Indian philosophy, ancient and modern. Hindu idealism often takes the form of monism or non-dualism, espousing the view that a unitary consciousness is the essence or meaning of the phenomenal reality and plurality.

The sage Yajnavalkya (possibly 8th century BCE) is one of the earliest exponents of idealism, and is a major figure in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

Buddhist idealism on the other hand is more epistemic and is not a metaphysical monism, which Buddhists consider eternalistic and hence not the middle way between extremes espoused by the Buddha.

The oldest reference to Idealism in Vedic texts is in Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda. This sukta espouses panentheism by presenting cosmic being Purusha as both pervading all universe and yet being

transcendent to it.[33] Absolute idealism can be seen in Chāndogya Upaniṣad, where things of the objective world like the five elements and the subjective world such as will, hope, memory etc. are seen to be emanations from the Self.[34]

Indian philosophy

Idealist notions have been propounded by the Vedanta schools of thought, which use the Vedas, especially the Upanishads as their key texts. Idealism was opposed by dualists Samkhya, the atomists Vaisheshika, the logicians Nyaya, the linguists Mimamsa and the materialists Cārvāka. There are various sub schools of Vedanta, like Advaita Vedanta (non-dual), Vishishtadvaita and Bhedabheda Vedanta (difference and non-difference).

The schools of Vedanta all attempt to explain the nature and relationship of Brahman (universal soul or Self) and Atman (individual self), which they see as the central topic of the Vedas. One of the earliest attempts at this was Bādarāyaṇa's Brahma Sutras, which is canonical for all Vedanta sub-schools. Advaita Vedanta is a major sub school of Vedanta which holds a non-dual Idealistic metaphysics. According to Advaita thinkers like Adi Shankara (788–820) and his contemporary Maṇḍana Miśra, Brahman, the single unitary consciousness or absolute awareness, appears as the diversity of the world because of *maya* or illusion, and hence perception of plurality is *mithya*, error. The world and all beings or souls in it have no separate existence from Brahman, universal consciousness, and the seemingly independent soul (*jiva*) is identical to Brahman. These doctrines are represented in verses such as *brahma satyam jagan mithya; jīvo brahmaiva na aparah* (Brahman is alone True, and this world of plurality is an error; the individual self is not different from Brahman). Other forms of Vedanta like the Vishishtadvaita of Ramanuja and the Bhedabheda of Bhāskara are not as radical in their non-dualism, accepting that there is a certain difference between individual souls and Brahman. Dvaita school of Vedanta by Madhvacharya maintains the opposing view that the world is real and eternal. It also argues that real atman fully depends and reflection of independent brahman.

The Tantric tradition of Kashmir Shaivism has also been categorized by scholars as a form of Idealism.[35] The key thinker of this tradition is the Kashmirian Abhinavagupta (975–1025 CE).

Modern Vedic Idealism was defended by the influential Indian philosopher Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan in his 1932 *An Idealist View of Life* and other works, which espouse Advaita Vedanta. The essence of Hindu Idealism is captured by such modern writers as Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, Sri Aurobindo, P. R. Sarkar, and Sohail Inayatullah.

Buddhist philosophy

Buddhist views which can be said to be similar to Idealism appear in Mahayana Buddhist texts such as the Samdhinirmocana sutra, Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, Dashabhumika sutra, etc.[36] These were later expanded upon by Indian Buddhist philosophers of the influential Yogacara school, like Vasubandhu, Asaṅga, Dharmakīrti, and Śāntarakṣita. Yogacara thought was also promoted in China by Chinese philosophers and translators like Xuanzang.

There is a modern scholarly disagreement about whether Yogacara Buddhism can be said to be a form of idealism. As Saam Trivedi notes: "on one side of the debate, writers such as Jay Garfield, Jeffrey Hopkins, Paul Williams, and others maintain the idealism label, while on the other side, Stefan Anacker, Dan Lusthaus, Richard King, Thomas Kochumuttom, Alex Wayman, Janice Dean Willis, and others have argued that Yogacara is not idealist."[37] The central point of issue is what Buddhist philosophers like Vasubandhu who used the term *vijñapti-matra* ("representation-only" or "cognition-only") and formulated arguments to refute external objects actually meant to say.

Vasubandhu's works include a refutation of external objects or externality itself and argues that the true nature of reality is beyond subject-object distinctions.[37] He views ordinary consciousness experience as deluded in its perceptions of an external world separate from itself and instead argues that all there is *Vijñapti* (representation or conceptualization).[37] Hence Vasubandhu begins his *Vimsatika* with the verse: *All this is consciousness-only, because of the appearance of non-existent objects, just as someone with an optical disorder may see non-existent nets of hair.*[37]

Statue of Vasubandhu (jp. Seshin), Kōfuku-ji, Nara, Japan.

Likewise, the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakirti's view of the apparent existence of external objects is summed up by him in the Pramāṇavārttika ('Commentary on Logic and Epistemology'): *Cognition experiences itself, and nothing else whatsoever. Even the particular objects of perception, are by nature just consciousness itself.*[38]

While some writers like Jay Garfield hold that Vasubandhu is a metaphysical idealist, others see him as closer to an epistemic idealist like Kant who holds that our knowledge of the world is simply knowledge of our own concepts and perceptions of a transcendental world. Sean Butler upholding that Yogacara is a form of idealism, albeit its own unique type, notes the similarity of Kant's categories and Yogacara's *Vāsanās*, both of which are simply phenomenal tools with which the mind interprets the noumenal realm.[39] Unlike Kant however who holds that the noumenon or thing-in-itself is unknowable to us, Vasubandhu holds that ultimate reality is knowable, but only through non-conceptual yogic perception of a highly trained meditative mind.[37]

Writers like Dan Lusthaus who hold that Yogacara is not a metaphysical idealism point out, for example, that Yogācāra thinkers did not focus on consciousness to assert it as ontologically real, but simply to analyze how our experiences and thus our suffering is created. As Lusthaus notes: "no Indian Yogācāra text ever claims that the world is created by mind. What they do claim is that we mistake our projected interpretations of the world for the world itself, i.e. we take our own mental constructions to be the world."[40] Lusthaus notes that there are similarities to Western epistemic idealists like Kant and Husserl, enough so that Yogacara can be seen as a form of epistemological idealism. However he also notes key differences like the concepts of karma and nirvana.[40] Saam Trivedi meanwhile notes the similarities between epistemic idealism and Yogacara, but adds that Yogacara Buddhism is in a sense its own theory.[37]

Similarly, Thomas Kochumuttom sees Yogacara as "an explanation of experience, rather than a system of ontology" and Stefan Anacker sees Vasubandhu's philosophy as a form of psychology and as a mainly therapeutic enterprise.[41][42]

Subjective idealism

Subjective idealism (also known as immaterialism) describes a relationship between experience and the world in which objects are no more than collections or bundles of sense data in the perceiver. Proponents include Berkeley,[43] Bishop of Cloyne, an Anglo-Irish philosopher who advanced a theory he called "immaterialism," later referred to as "subjective idealism", contending that individuals can only know sensations and ideas of objects directly, not abstractions such as "matter", and that ideas also depend upon being perceived for their very existence - *esse est percipi*; "to be is to be perceived".

Arthur Collier[44] published similar assertions though there seems to have been no influence between the two contemporary writers. The only knowable reality is the represented image of an external object. Matter as a cause of that image, is unthinkable and therefore nothing to us. An external world as absolute matter unrelated to an observer does not exist as far as we are concerned. The universe cannot exist as it appears if there is no perceiving mind. Collier was influenced by *An Essay Towards the Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World* by Cambridge Platonist John Norris (1701).

Bertrand Russell's popular book *The Problems of Philosophy* highlights Berkeley's tautological premise for advancing idealism;

> "If we say that the things known must be in the mind, we are either unduly limiting the mind's power of knowing, or we are uttering a mere tautology. We are uttering a mere tautology if we mean by 'in the mind' the same as by 'before the mind', i.e. if we mean merely being apprehended by the mind. But if we mean this, we shall have to admit that what, in this sense, is in the mind, may nevertheless be not mental. Thus when we realize the nature of knowledge, Berkeley's argument is seen to be wrong in substance as well as in form, and his grounds for supposing that 'ideas'-i.e. the objects apprehended-must be mental, are found to have no validity whatever. Hence his grounds in favour of the idealism may be dismissed."

The Australian philosopher David Stove harshly criticized philosophical idealism, arguing that it rests on what he called "the worst argument in the world".[45] Stove claims that Berkeley tried to derive a non-tautological conclusion from tautological reasoning. He argued that in Berkeley's case the fallacy is not obvious and this is because one premise is ambiguous between one meaning which is tautological and another which, Stove argues, is logically equivalent to the conclusion.

Alan Musgrave[46] argues that conceptual idealists compound their mistakes with use/mention confusions;

> Santa Claus the person does not exist.
> "Santa Claus" the name/concept/fairy tale does exist because adults tell children this every Christmas season (the distinction is highlighted by using quotation-marks when referring only to the name and not the object)

and proliferation of hyphenated entities such as "thing-in-itself" (Immanuel Kant), "things-as-interacted-by-us" (Arthur Fine), "table-of-commonsense" and "table-of-physics" (Arthur Eddington) which are "warning signs" for conceptual idealism according to Musgrave because they allegedly do not exist but only highlight the numerous ways in which people come to know the world. This argument does not take into account the issues pertaining to hermeneutics, especially at the backdrop of analytic philosophy. Musgrave criticized Richard Rorty and postmodernist philosophy in general for confusion of use and mention.

A. A. Luce[47] and John Foster are other subjectivists.[48] Luce, in *Sense without Matter* (1954), attempts to bring Berkeley up to date by modernizing his vocabulary and putting the issues he faced in modern terms, and treats the Biblical account of matter and the psychology of perception and nature. Foster's *The Case for Idealism* argues that the physical world is the logical creation of natural, non-logical constraints on human sense-experience. Foster's latest defense of his views (phenomenalistic idealism) is in his book *A World for Us: The Case for Phenomenalistic Idealism*.

Paul Brunton, a British philosopher, mystic, traveler, and guru, taught a type of idealism called "mentalism," similar to that of Bishop Berkeley, proposing a master world-image, projected or manifested by a world-mind, and an infinite number of individual minds participating. A tree does not cease to exist if nobody sees it because the world-mind is projecting the idea of the tree to all minds[49]

John Searle, criticizing some versions of idealism, summarizes two important arguments for subjective idealism. The first is based on our perception of reality:

(1) *All we have access to in perception are the contents of our own experience* and

(2) *The only epistemic basis for claims about the external world are our perceptual experiences*

therefore;

(3) *The only reality we can meaningfully speak of is that of perceptual experience*[50]

Whilst agreeing with (2) Searle argues that (1) is false and points out that (3) does not follow from (1) and (2). The second argument runs as follows;

Premise: Any cognitive state occurs as part of a set of cognitive states and within a cognitive system

Conclusion 1: It is impossible to get outside all cognitive states and systems to survey the relationships between them and the reality they cognize

Conclusion 2: There is no cognition of any reality that exists independently of cognition[51]

Searle contends that *Conclusion 2* does not follow from the premises.

Epistemological idealism is a subjectivist position in epistemology that holds that what one knows about an object exists only in one's mind. Proponents include Brand Blanshard.

Transcendental idealism

Transcendental idealism, founded by Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth century, maintains that the mind shapes the world we perceive into the form of space-and-time.

> ... if I remove the thinking subject, the whole material world must at once vanish because it is nothing but a phenomenal appearance in the sensibility of ourselves as a subject, and a manner or species of representation.
>
> — *Critique of Pure Reason* A383

The 2nd edition (1787) contained a *Refutation of Idealism* to distinguish his transcendental idealism from Descartes's Sceptical Idealism and Berkeley's anti-realist strain of Subjective Idealism. The section *Paralogisms of Pure Reason* is an implicit critique of Descartes' idealism. Kant says that it is not possible to infer the 'I' as an object (Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*) purely from "the spontaneity of thought". Kant focused on ideas drawn from British philosophers such as Locke, Berkeley and Hume but distinguished his transcendental or critical idealism from previous varieties;

> The dictum of all genuine idealists, from the Eleatic school to Bishop Berkeley, is contained in this formula: “All knowledge through the senses and experience is nothing but sheer illusion, and only in the ideas of the pure understanding and reason is there truth.” The principle that throughout dominates and determines my [transcendental] idealism is, on the contrary: “All knowledge of things merely from pure understanding or pure reason is nothing but sheer illusion, and only in experience is there truth.”
>
> — *Prolegomena*, 374

Kant distinguished between things as they appear to an observer and things in themselves, "that is, things considered without regard to whether and how they may be given to us".[52] We cannot approach the *noumenon*, the "thing in Itself" (German: *Ding an sich*) without our own mental world. He added that the mind is not a blank slate, *tabula rasa* but rather comes equipped with categories for organising our sense impressions.

In the first volume of his *Parerga and Paralipomena*, Schopenhauer wrote his "Sketch of a History of the Doctrine of the Ideal and the Real". He defined the ideal as being mental pictures that constitute subjective knowledge. The ideal, for him, is what can be attributed to our own minds. The images in our head are what comprise the ideal. Schopenhauer emphasized that we are restricted to our own consciousness. The world that appears is only a representation or mental picture of objects. We directly and immediately know only representations. All objects that are external to the mind are known indirectly through the mediation of our mind. He offered a history of the concept of the "ideal" as "ideational" or "existing in the mind as an image".

> [T]rue philosophy must at all costs be *idealistic*; indeed, it must be so merely to be honest. For nothing is more certain than that no one ever came out of himself in order to identify himself immediately with things different from him; but everything of which he has certain, sure, and therefore immediate knowledge, lies within his consciousness. Beyond this consciousness, therefore, there can be no *immediate* certainty ... There can never be an existence that is objective absolutely and in itself; such an existence, indeed, is positively inconceivable. For the objective, as such, always and essentially has its existence in the consciousness of a subject; it is therefore the subject's representation, and consequently is conditioned by the subject, and moreover by the subject's forms of representation, which belong to the subject and not to the object.
>
> — *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. II, Ch. 1

Charles Bernard Renouvier was the first Frenchman after Nicolas Malebranche to formulate a complete idealistic system, and had a vast influence on the development of French thought. His system is based on Immanuel Kant's, as his chosen term "néo-criticisme" indicates; but it is a transformation rather than a continuation of Kantianism.

Friedrich Nietzsche argued that Kant commits an agnostic tautology and does not offer a satisfactory answer as to the *source* of a philosophical right to such-or-other metaphysical claims; he ridicules his pride in tackling "the most difficult thing that could ever be undertaken on behalf of metaphysics."[53] The famous "thing-in-itself" was called a product of philosophical habit, which seeks to introduce a grammatical subject: because wherever there is cognition, there must be a *thing* that is cognized and allegedly it must be added to ontology as a being (whereas, to Nietzsche, only the world as ever changing appearances can be assumed).[54] Yet he attacks the idealism of Schopenhauer and Descartes with an argument similar to Kant's critique of the latter *(see above)*.[55]

Objective idealism

Objective idealism asserts that the reality of experiencing combines and transcends the realities of the object experienced and of the mind of the observer.[56] Proponents include Thomas Hill Green, Josiah Royce, Benedetto Croce and Charles Sanders Peirce.[57]

Absolute idealism

Schelling (1775–1854) claimed that the Fichte's "I" needs the Not-I, because there is no subject without object, and vice versa. So there is no difference between the subjective and the objective, that is, the ideal and the real. This is Schelling's "absolute identity": the ideas or mental images in the mind are identical to the extended objects which are external to the mind.

Absolute idealism is G. W. F. Hegel's account of how existence is comprehensible as an all-inclusive whole. Hegel called his philosophy "absolute" idealism in contrast to the "subjective idealism" of Berkeley and the "transcendental idealism" of Kant and Fichte,[58] which were not based on a critique of the finite and a dialectical philosophy of history as Hegel's idealism was. The exercise of reason and intellect enables the philosopher to know ultimate historical reality, the phenomenological constitution of self-determination, the dialectical development of self-awareness and personality in the realm of History.

In his *Science of Logic* (1812–1814) Hegel argues that finite qualities are not fully "real" because they depend on other finite qualities to determine them. Qualitative *infinity*, on the other hand, would be more self-determining and hence more fully real. Similarly finite natural things are less "real"—because they are less self-determining—than spiritual things like morally responsible people, ethical communities and God. So any doctrine, such as materialism, that asserts that finite qualities or natural objects are fully real is mistaken.[59]

Hegel certainly intends to preserve what he takes to be true of German idealism, in particular Kant's insistence that ethical reason can and does go beyond finite inclinations.[60] For Hegel there must be some identity of thought and being for the "subject" (any human observer) to be able to know any observed "object" (any external entity, possibly even another human) at all. Under Hegel's concept of "subject-object identity," subject and object both have Spirit (Hegel's ersatz, redefined, nonsupernatural "God") as their *conceptual* (not metaphysical) inner reality—and in that sense are identical. But until Spirit's "self-realization" occurs and Spirit graduates from Spirit to *Absolute* Spirit status, subject (a human mind) mistakenly thinks every "object" it observes is something "alien," meaning something separate or apart from "subject." In Hegel's words, "The object is revealed to it [to "subject"] by [as] something alien, and it does not recognize itself."[61] Self-realization occurs when Hegel (part of Spirit's nonsupernatural Mind, which is the collective mind of all humans) arrives on the scene and realizes that every "object" is *himself*, because both subject and object are essentially Spirit. When self-realization occurs and Spirit becomes *Absolute* Spirit, the "finite" (man, human) becomes the "infinite" ("God," divine), replacing the imaginary or "picture-thinking" supernatural God of theism: man becomes God.[62] Tucker puts it this way: "Hegelianism . . . is a religion of self-worship whose fundamental theme is given in Hegel's image of the man who aspires to be God himself, who demands 'something more, namely infinity.'" The picture Hegel presents is "a picture of a self-glorifying humanity striving compulsively, and at the end successfully, to rise to divinity."[63]

Kierkegaard criticized Hegel's idealist philosophy in several of his works, particularly his claim to a comprehensive system that could explain the whole of reality. Where Hegel argues that an ultimate understanding of the logical structure of the world is an understanding of the logical structure of God's mind, Kierkegaard asserts that for God reality can be a system but it cannot be so for any human individual because both reality and humans are incomplete and all philosophical systems imply completeness. For Hegel, a logical system is possible but an existential system is not: "What is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational".[64] Hegel's absolute idealism blurs the distinction between existence and thought: our mortal nature places limits on our understanding of reality;

> So-called systems have often been characterized and challenged in the assertion that they abrogate the distinction between good and evil, and destroy freedom. Perhaps one would express oneself quite as definitely, if one said that every such system fantastically dissipates the concept existence. ... Being an individual man is a thing that has been abolished, and every speculative philosopher confuses himself with humanity at large; whereby he becomes something infinitely great, and at the same time nothing at all.[65]

A major concern of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and of the philosophy of Spirit that he lays out in his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817–1830) is the interrelation between individual humans, which he conceives in terms of "mutual recognition." However, what Climacus means by the aforementioned statement, is that Hegel, in the *Philosophy of Right*, believed the best solution was to surrender one's individuality to the customs of the State, identifying right and wrong in view of the prevailing bourgeois morality. Individual human will ought, at the State's highest level of development, to properly coincide with the will of the State. Climacus rejects Hegel's suppression of individuality by pointing out it is impossible to create a valid set of rules or system in any society which can adequately describe existence for any one individual. Submitting one's will to the State denies personal freedom, choice, and responsibility.

In addition, Hegel does believe we can know the structure of God's mind, or ultimate reality. Hegel agrees with Kierkegaard that both reality and humans are incomplete, inasmuch as we are in time, and reality develops through time. But the relation between time and eternity is outside time and this is the "logical structure" that Hegel thinks we can know. Kierkegaard disputes this assertion, because it eliminates the clear distinction between ontology and epistemology. Existence and thought are not identical and one cannot possibly think existence. Thought is always a form of abstraction, and thus not only is pure existence impossible to think, but all forms in existence are unthinkable; thought depends on language, which merely abstracts from experience, thus separating us from lived experience and the living essence of all beings. In addition, because we are finite beings, we cannot possibly know or understand anything that is universal or infinite such as God, so we cannot know God exists, since that which transcends time simultaneously transcends human understanding.

Bradley saw reality as a monistic whole apprehended through "feeling", a state in which there is no distinction between the perception and the thing perceived. Like Berkeley, Bradley thought that nothing can be known to exist unless it is known by a mind.

> We perceive, on reflection, that to be real, or even barely to exist, must be to fall within sentience ... . Find any piece of existence, take up anything that any one could possibly call a fact, or could in any sense assert to have being, and then judge if it does not consist in sentient experience. Try to discover any sense in which you can still continue to speak of it, when all perception and feeling have been removed; or point out any fragment of its matter, any aspect of its being, which is not derived from and is not still relative to this source. When the experiment is made strictly, I can myself conceive of nothing else than the experienced.
>
> — F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, Chapter 14

Bradley was the apparent target of G.E. Moore's radical rejection of idealism. Moore claimed that Bradley did not understand the statement that something is real. We know for certain, through common sense and prephilosophical beliefs, that some things are real, whether they are objects of thought or not, according to Moore. The 1903 article *The Refutation of Idealism* is one of the first demonstrations of Moore's commitment to analysis. He examines each of the three terms in the Berkeleian aphorism *esse est percipi*, "to be is to be perceived", finding that it must mean that the object and the subject are *necessarily* connected so that "yellow" and "the sensation of yellow" are identical - "to be yellow" is "to be experienced as yellow". But it also seems there is a difference between "yellow" and "the sensation of yellow" and "that *esse* is held to be *percipi*, solely because what is experienced is held to be identical with the experience of it". Though far from a complete refutation, this was the first strong statement by analytic philosophy against its idealist predecessors, or at any rate against the type of idealism represented by Berkeley.

Actual idealism

Actual idealism is a form of idealism developed by Giovanni Gentile that grew into a "grounded" idealism contrasting Kant and Hegel. The idea is a version of Occam's razor; the simpler explanations are always correct. Actual idealism is the idea that reality is the ongoing act of thinking, or in Italian "pensiero pensante".[66] Any action done by humans is classified as human thought because the action was done due to predisposed thought. He further believes that thoughts are the only concept that truly exist since reality is defined through the act of thinking. This idea was derived from Gentile's paper, "The Theory of Mind As Pure Act".[67]

Since thoughts are actions, any conjectured idea can be enacted. This idea not only affects the individual's life, but everyone around them, which in turn affects the state since the people are the state.[68] Therefore, thoughts of each person are subsumed within the state. The state is a composition of many minds that come together to change the country for better or worse.

Gentile theorizes that thoughts can only be conjectured within the bounds of known reality; abstract thinking does not exist.[67] Thoughts cannot be formed outside our known reality because we are the reality that halt ourselves from thinking externally. With accordance to "The Act of Thought of Pure Thought", our actions comprise our thoughts, our thoughts create perception, perceptions define reality, thus we think within our created reality.

The present act of thought is reality but the past is not reality; it is history. The reason being, past can be rewritten through present knowledge and perspective of the event. The reality that is currently constructed can be completely changed through language (e.g. bias (omission, source, tone)).[68] The unreliability of the recorded reality can skew the original concept and make the past remark unreliable. Actual idealism is regarded as a liberal and tolerant doctrine since it acknowledges that every being picturizes reality, in which their ideas remained hatched, differently. Even though, reality is a figment of thought.

Even though core concept of the theory is famous for its simplification, its application is regarded as extremely ambiguous. Over the years, philosophers have interpreted it numerously different ways:[69] Holmes took it as metaphysics of the thinking act; Betti as a form of hermeneutics; Harris as a metaphysics of democracy; Fogu as a modernist philosophy of history.

Giovanni Gentile was a key supporter of fascism, regarded by many as the "philosopher of fascism". Gentile's philosophy was the key to understating fascism as it was believed by many who supported and loved it. They believed, if priori synthesis of subject and object is true, there is no difference between the individuals in society; they're all one. Which means that they have equal right, roles, and jobs. In fascist state, submission is given to one leader because individuals act as one body. In Gentile's view, far more can be accomplished when individuals are under a corporate body than a collection of autonomous individuals.[68]

Pluralistic idealism

Pluralistic idealism such as that of Gottfried Leibniz[70][71] takes the view that there are many individual minds that together underlie the existence of the observed world and make possible the existence of the physical universe.[72] Unlike absolute idealism, pluralistic idealism does not assume the existence of a single ultimate mental reality or "Absolute". Leibniz' form of idealism, known as Panpsychism, views "monads" as the true atoms of the universe and as entities having perception. The monads are "substantial forms of being, "elemental, individual, subject to their own laws, non-interacting, each reflecting the entire universe. Monads are centers of force, which is substance while space, matter and motion are phenomenal and their form and existence is dependent on the simple and immaterial monads. There is a pre-established harmony by God, the central monad, between the world in the minds of the monads and the external world of objects. Leibniz's cosmology embraced traditional Christian theism. The English psychologist and philosopher James Ward inspired by Leibniz had also defended a form of pluralistic idealism.[73] According to Ward the universe is composed of "psychic monads" of different levels, interacting for mutual self-betterment.[74]

Personalism is the view that the minds that underlie reality are the minds of persons. Borden Parker Bowne, a philosopher at Boston University, a founder and popularizer of personal idealism, presented it as a substantive reality of persons, the only reality, as known directly in self-consciousness. Reality is a society of interacting persons dependent on the Supreme Person of God. Other proponents include George Holmes Howison[75] and J. M. E. McTaggart.[76]

Howison's personal idealism [77] was also called "California Personalism" by others to distinguish it from the "Boston Personalism" which was of Bowne. Howison maintained that both impersonal, monistic idealism and materialism run contrary to the experience of moral freedom. To deny freedom to pursue truth, beauty, and "benignant love" is to undermine every profound human venture, including science, morality, and philosophy. Personalistic idealists Borden Parker Bowne and Edgar S. Brightman and realistic (in some senses of the term, though he remained influenced by neoplatonism) personal theist Saint Thomas Aquinas address a core issue, namely that of dependence upon an infinite personal God.[78]

Howison, in his book *The Limits of Evolution and Other Essays Illustrating the Metaphysical Theory of Personal Idealism*, created a democratic notion of personal idealism that extended all the way to God, who was no more the ultimate monarch but the ultimate democrat in eternal relation to other eternal persons. J. M. E. McTaggart's idealist atheism and Thomas Davidson's apeirotheism resemble Howisons personal idealism.[79]

J. M. E. McTaggart argued that minds alone exist and only relate to each other through love. Space, time and material objects are unreal. In *The Unreality of Time* he argued that time is an illusion because it is impossible to produce a coherent account of a sequence of events. *The Nature of Existence* (1927) contained his arguments that space, time, and matter cannot possibly be real. In his *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* (Cambridge, 1901, p196) he declared that metaphysics are not relevant to social and political action. McTaggart "thought that Hegel was wrong in supposing that metaphysics could show that the state is more than a means to the good of the individuals who compose it".[80] For McTaggart "philosophy can give us very little, if any, guidance in action... Why should a Hegelian citizen be surprised that his belief as to the organic nature of the Absolute does not help him in deciding how to vote? Would a Hegelian engineer be reasonable in expecting that his belief that all matter is spirit should help him in planning a bridge?[81]

Thomas Davidson taught a philosophy called "apeirotheism", a "form of pluralistic idealism...coupled with a stern ethical rigorism"[82] which he defined as "a theory of Gods infinite in number." The theory was indebted to Aristotle's pluralism and his concepts of Soul, the rational, living aspect of a living substance which cannot exist apart from the body because it is not a substance but an essence, and *nous*, rational thought, reflection and understanding. Although a perennial source of controversy, Aristotle arguably views the latter as both eternal and immaterial in nature, as exemplified in his theology of unmoved movers.[83] Identifying Aristotle's God with rational thought, Davidson argued, contrary to Aristotle, that just as the soul cannot exist apart from the body, God cannot exist apart from the world.[84]

Idealist notions took a strong hold among physicists of the early 20th century confronted with the paradoxes of quantum physics and the theory of relativity. In *The Grammar of Science*, Preface to the 2nd Edition, 1900, Karl Pearson wrote, "There are many signs that a sound idealism is surely replacing, as a basis for natural philosophy, the crude materialism of the older physicists." This book influenced Einstein's regard for the importance of the observer in scientific measurements.[85] In § 5 of that book, Pearson asserted that "...science is in reality a classification and analysis of the contents of the mind..." Also, "...the field of science is much more consciousness than an external world."

Arthur Eddington, a British astrophysicist of the early 20th century, wrote in his book *The Nature of the Physical World* that "The stuff of the world is mind-stuff":

> The mind-stuff of the world is, of course, something more general than our individual conscious minds... The mind-stuff is not spread in space and time; these are part of the cyclic scheme ultimately derived out of it... It is necessary to keep reminding ourselves that all knowledge of our environment from which the world of physics is constructed, has entered in the form of messages transmitted along the nerves to the seat of consciousness... Consciousness is not sharply defined, but fades into subconsciousness; and beyond that we must postulate something indefinite but yet continuous with our mental nature... It is difficult for the matter-of-fact physicist to accept the view that the substratum of everything is of mental character. But no one can deny that mind is the first and most direct thing in our experience, and all else is remote inference."[86]

Ian Barbour in his book *Issues in Science and Religion* (1966), p. 133, cites Arthur Eddington's *The Nature of the Physical World* (1928) for a text that argues The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principles provides a scientific basis for "the defense of the idea of human freedom" and his *Science and the Unseen World* (1929) for support of philosophical idealism "the thesis that reality is basically mental".

The 20th-century British scientist Sir James Jeans wrote that "the Universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine"

Sir James Jeans wrote: "The stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the Universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears to be an accidental intruder into the realm of matter... we ought rather hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter."[87]

Jeans, in an interview published in *The Observer* (London), when asked the question: "Do you believe that life on this planet is the result of some sort of accident, or do you believe that it is a part of some great scheme?" replied:

> I incline to the idealistic theory that consciousness is fundamental, and that the material universe is derivative from consciousness, not consciousness from the material universe... In general the universe seems to me to be nearer to a great thought than to a great machine. It may well be, it seems to me, that each individual consciousness ought to be compared to a brain-cell in a universal mind.

Addressing the British Association in 1934, Jeans said:

> What remains is in any case very different from the full-blooded matter and the forbidding materialism of the Victorian scientist. His objective and material universe is proved to consist of little more than constructs of our own minds. To this extent, then, modern physics has moved in the direction of philosophic idealism. Mind and matter, if not proved to be of similar nature, are at least found to be ingredients of one single system. There is no longer room for the kind of dualism which has haunted philosophy since the days of Descartes.[88]

In *The Universe Around Us*, Jeans writes:

> Finite picture whose dimensions are a certain amount of space and a certain amount of time; the protons and electrons are the streaks of paint which define the picture against its space-time background. Traveling as far back in time as we can, brings us not to the creation of the picture, but to its edge; the creation of the picture lies as much outside the picture as the artist is outside his canvas. On this view, discussing the creation of the universe in terms of time and space is like trying to discover the artist and the action of painting, by going to the edge of the canvas. This brings us very near to those philosophical systems which regard the universe as a thought in the mind of its Creator, thereby reducing all discussion of material creation to futility.[89]

The chemist Ernest Lester Smith wrote a book *Intelligence Came First* (1975) in which he claimed that consciousness is a fact of nature and that the cosmos is grounded in and pervaded by mind and intelligence.[90]

Bernard d'Espagnat, a French theoretical physicist best known for his work on the nature of reality, wrote a paper titled *The Quantum Theory and Reality*. According to the paper:

> The doctrine that the world is made up of objects whose existence is independent of human consciousness turns out to be in conflict with quantum mechanics and with facts established by experiment.[91]

In a *Guardian* article entitled "Quantum Weirdness: What We Call 'Reality' is Just a State of Mind",[92] d'Espagnat wrote:

> What quantum mechanics tells us, I believe, is surprising to say the least. It tells us that the basic components of objects – the particles, electrons, quarks etc. – cannot be thought of as 'self-existent'.

He further writes that his research in quantum physics has led him to conclude that an "ultimate reality" exists, which is not embedded in space or time.[93]

Contemporary idealists

There are various philosophers working in contemporary Western philosophy of mind who have recently defended an idealist stance. These include:

- Nicholas Rescher
- Howard Robinson
- John McDowell — *Mind and World* (1996)
- Vittorio Hösle — *Objective Idealism, Ethics and Politics* (1998)
- John Leslie — *Infinite Minds: A Philosophical Cosmology* (2002).
- John Foster — *A World for Us* (2008), coming from a traditional Christian theological perspective.
- Timothy Sprigge — *A Defense of Absolute Idealism* (1984).
- David Pearce — *Non-Materialist Physicalism: An experimentally testable conjecture (https://www.physicalism.com/)* (2014)
- Bernardo Kastrup — *The Idea of the World* (2018)
- Donald D. Hoffman — *The Case Against Reality* (2019)

See also

- *Cogito ergo sum*
- Dialectical idealism
- Metaphysical solipsism
- Mind over matter
- Moral idealism
- Neo-Vedanta
- New Thought
- Panpsychism
- Rationality
- Reason
- Spirituality
- Teleological idealism

Notes

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12. "idealism, n." (https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=idealism) Online Etymological Dictionary.
13. "Idealism - Define Idealism at Dictionary.com" (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/idealism). *Dictionary.com*.
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53. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part 1 On the Prejudice of Philosophers Section 11; cf. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, book III, 25, the last paragraph.
54. Cf. e.g. *The Will To Power*, 552. Online text here (https://archive.org/stream/TheWillToPower-Nietzsche/will_to_power-nietzsche_djvu.txt). "At last, the «thing-in-itself» also disappears, because this is fundamentally the conception of a «subject-in-itself». But we have grasped that the subject is a fiction. The antithesis «thing-in-itself» and «appearance» is untenable; with that, however, the concept «appearance» also disappears."
55. Cf. e.g. *The Will To Power*, 477. Online text here (https://archive.org/stream/TheWillToPower-Nietzsche/will_to_power-nietzsche_djvu.txt)
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