Philosophers on 'being'

Wu Xinzhong

Shanghai Jiaotong University, School of history and culture of science, China

E-mail:sju@sina.com

[Abstract] This paper discusses various philosophical viewpoints about being, and admits its important logical philosophy meaning to distinguish reality and fiction.'Being'concept of positivism is high strict but very vague, and'being'concept of existentialism is in fact another philosophical statement of self, and Sartre's existence view is equivalent to solipsism's monadology mode of thinking in Ludwig Wittgenstein's 'Tractatus Logico-philosophicus'. Bertrand Russell's theory of descriptions is too simple in ontology because of canceling fictional objects and impossible objects. According to sense-reference function of psychological activity, we need to construct a new ontology about fictional objects, and form an objective horizon beyond monadology mode of thinking.

[Keywords] being, fiction, object

1. In Metaphysics,Delta,7,Aristotle lists,among others,the following meanings of Being (that is things as Heidegger said) , that-which-is:
1.1 Being is that which is divided by the ten categories[i.e.,that which is it either a substance, or a quality (of a substance), or a quantity (of a substance), or a relation (of a substance),etc]
1.2 Being is that which signifies the truth of a proposition .

2. Medieval thinkers made this passage the base for the distinction between (1) ens reale, real being and (2)ens rationis,conceptual Being. For example, the 'trees' or 'green' exist really in the sentence (There are green trees).'A centaur is half man and half horse' is a true proposition, and obviously a centaur isn't a real being but a conceptual entity.
2.1 In the light of this distinction, Medieval scholars regarded 'absence-of-stone' in 'The stone is not on the table' also as 'the actual existence of concept'. This seems to kill reality of facts represent negative statement.
2.2 Kant underlined,'Being is evidently not a real predicate, that is a conception of something which is added to the conception on some other thing'.'But in reckoning

my wealth there maybe said to be more in a hundred real dollars, than a hundred possible dollars——that is,in the mere conception of them. '

3. Analytic philosopher and positivists followed Kant's viewpoint.For the positivists, existence is not a concept,but because it is too empty, thin,and therefore ultimately meaningless; for SΦren Kierkegaard, my existence is not a concept because it is too dence ,rich,and concrete to be represented by adequately in any mental picture . 'Self' can't be completely thought as 'surd', my existence is not a mental representation but a fact in which I am plunged up to the ears,and over the head. Existence isn't the same as thinking, the truth is only subjective thinking.

3.1 Bertrand Russell declared: 'I worried about the difference between is and being'. But a common verb and its gerund have the same meaning. 'What is means is and therefore differs from is,for "is is" would be nonsense.'

3.1.1 To exist, Plato said, is to be a copy or a likeness of the ideal or essence. Particular things exist to the degree that they fulfill or satisfy ,the archetypal patten of the Idea.

3.1.2 Bertrand Russell said:'To exist is to satisfy a propositional function, where "satisfy" has the same meaning as when we say in mathematics that the roots of an equation-i.e.,satisfy an equation.

3.1.3 In both cases existence is understood as derivative from essence.Existents exist in virtue of   essence.

3.2 Bertrand Russell thought,Jean-Paul Sartre ' tries to transform an individual's outlook on life into an ontology, traditional philosophers (whether belongs to rationalism or empiricism camp),this seems weird, like someone uses Dostoevsky novel as philosophy textbooks.'

3.3 I think, existentialism's trick uses 'I exist' instead of 'empty existence' secretly, thus my life philosophy transforms into 'everybody's life philosophy'. They act only as spokesman of a political or religious groups , promote consciously a new outlook on life and values as an independent thinkers, rather than as a philosopher over in one's mind of humankind.Their thought return back to pre-logical mental perception stage, and can't get rid of race illusion and cave illusion as Francis Bacon said, and analytic philosophy often fall into market illusion,speculative philosophy tend to fall into a theatical illusion.

4. Rudolf Carnap asked:' Material things exist?Sense data exists?Number exists?Proposition exist?'

4.1 Rudolf Carnap thought, if according to the conceptual framework in which we deduce whether provides the methods to solve the case,answer is obvious. Yes, there are physical objects, this table is a physical object. Yes, there are numbers,3 is a number. Yes,there are fictional roles, Duncan is a fictional role in 'Macbeth'.

4.2 But on the other hand, if we have conversation in the domain according to actual position in space-time as existence standard, there is no fictional role, and there is no number.

4.3 Existence problem should not debate in as an external problem outsides the given

concept or language framework, but should be discussed as an internal problem in text to solve.

4.4 William Barrett said, the denial of existence as a genuine predicate belongs——in the case of most philosophers——to that impulse of the philosophic mind which loves the static and timeless self-identity of essence, and would construe existence as some kind of shadowy derivative of these latter.

4.5 The effort to transcend the primary fact of existence tasks, as we have seen, three forms, of which denial of existence is perhaps least radical: the second is to cast out the existential operator, 'There is,' from a properly logical language; the third, to reduce the meaning of the verb 'to be' to a mere copula, an auxiliary symbol signifying that predicate and subject are somehow joined. And it has been this last that brought us to the hidden root of the question: the meaning of 'to be'.

4.6 The verb with its tense retains an essential reference to the existential. We always say, 'It is raining', or 'It had already been raining', or 'It will be raining'. The paradoxical fact, however, is that in one range of usage 'to be' is precisely the verb that lose its essential temporality. We say '7 is a prime number', and it is nonsense to say '7 was a prime number', or '7 will be prime number'. This returns us to Plato, for whom the derivation of existence from essence was human project of escape from the temporal into the timeless.

5. Martin Heidegger said, the thing has been there, or has been shown to exist, and has object properties, one can ask what it is. But Being(to be) is not the thing and hasn't object properties of the thing but mere being of 'the thing', not to speak of. Heidegger's suggestion is that the best ways we can find in English would be: beings, where we mean the thing that are, and Being where we mean the to-be of whatever is.

5.1 There is a road to bring us to close to being, namely investigation and inquiry of human existence——Dasein (Being-there, equivalent to this 'I' now as Bertrand Russell said) . As Edmund Husserl said, the here-now experience is the ground zero of space-time experience. From a certain perspective, this experience is also self location (Leibniz's monad, Russell's perspective space).Leibniz had said that the monad has no windows; and Heidegger's reply is that man does not look out upon an external world through windows, from the isolation of his ego: he is already out-of-doors.

5.2 Bertrand Russell said, each mind sees at the moment an immensely complex three-dimensional world what corresponds to a perspective monad. Each space of material world in a perspective monad is a private space, different views of different perspective monads form a physics space. There are as many private space as there are perspectives; there are therefore at least as many as there are percipients, and there may be any number of others which have a merely material existence and are not seen by anyone. All events in a physical place constitutes a physical perspective space. At one time all my perception forms a psychological perspective space that is in my mind. A point in a perspective space is located in a three-dimensional space by arrangement of three-dimensional perspective spaces, which is six-dimensional. We may define 'here' as the place in perspective space, which is occupied by our private world, 'here' is equivalent to 'Dasein' as Heidegger said.

5.3 Dasein is essentially 'being in the world', which is neither two objects coexist in space, nor object exist inside space, neither refers to persistence of an object , nor refers to relation between object and subject. The world as a worrying domain coexists with human, a tool is a thing 'in the hand', and environment is 'at hand' .Relative to environment, human suffering is in practice, relative to population, human suffering is individual.

5.4 A person's dasein always appears in a specific, unique place contrary to his desire, he is 'thrown into his being'. This is a mystery as Wittgenstein said: 'my world is just so'.

5.5 My Being is not something that takes place inside my skin (or inside an immaterial substance inside that skin); my Being, rather, is spread over a field or a region which is the world of its care and concern. Heidegger's theory of man (and of Being) might be called the Field theory of Man(or the Field theory of Being) in analogy with Einstein's Field theory of Matter, but Newton regarded a body as existing inside its surface boundaries. Heidegger said, man's Being is such a field, but there is no soul substance or ego substance at the center from which that field radiates.

5.6 Karl Popper laughed at existentialism, and thought it very stupid to consider what is existence when human was faced with devastating dangers such as nuclear war and ecological disaster. Popper like Gottlob Frege, divided everything into three domains: physical domain, psychological domain and ideological domain.

6. Jean-Paul Sartre thought, Being is a simple, pure, naked being in self, 'Being is what it is'.

6.1 'Being is simple Dasein, thing is present, it can be met by us, but we can't deprive it from its concept.'

6.2 'Being is nothing, from a distance, it will suddenly engulf you and remain above you, as a stationary hulking monster heavily on your mind——In addition, everything is nothing'.

6.3 In all our judgment, we make an object in judgment 'nihility'. Because judgment makes difference, and regards this thing as a thing different from another thing, and regards it as nothing of other things. Past has gone away into nothing, future doesn't exist, now is just a negative link between past and future, it is in fact a nothingness.

6.4 Being in itself is the objective external world,(1) it is 'neither be created, nor creates its own', 'it is its own', so it is meaningless, indescribable; (2)it enriches itself, and completely opaque, it is closed, it is outside changes, no development, no past, no future, so it is not known; (3)it is independent of God ,and independent of spirit, it happened by accident, ……no reason to exist, and isn't to be known. Being transcends phenomena, and it is beyond our understanding, acts as basis of this understanding.

6.5 Human existence is a being for itself, and surpass itself constantly, always changes, and always seems to create itself from nothing .He is 'sentenced to be free'. Thing's essence precedes its being, only human nature is created by ourselves continuously.

6.6 Bertrand Russell said, Sartre's this kind of freedom is a pathology, as a neuropathy patients exhorts himself, his agitation is courage, his destructive impulse is creative. It

is the absolute freedom reason so that he is so vague to play in two concepts such as being and nothing. What he said almost has no definite meaning, so that we are forced to interpret it as a dream, a kind of their own fantasy. Jean-Paul Sartre attempted to destroy real obstacles of absolute freedom——necessity, not only to destroy scientific reason, but also rationalism God should die.

7. According to Russell's position, we should regard philosophy king Sartre as an incomparably great and free person in his perspective space, but a microorganism as dust in physical universe, like a zero-dimensional point resident living in a 'flatland' praises self.

7.1 'Infinite beatitude of existence! It is; and there is nothing else beside It!'

7.2 'It fills all Space,' continued the little soliloquizing Creature, 'and What it fills, It is. What it thinks, that it utters; and What it utters, that it hears; and It itself is Thinker, Utterer, Hearer, Thought, Word, Audition; it is the One, and yet the All in All. Ah, the happiness, Ah, the happiness of Being!'

7.3 'Ah, the joy! Ah, the joy of Thought!……Ah, the joy, the joy of Being!'

7.4 Sartre's existentialism falls unfortunately into 'instantaneous solipsism' as Russell said. As Wittgenstein pointed out: 'A limit of my world' reduce to a non-extensive point apposition to 'real world living in space-time', as an immoral monad hidden in beyond space-time.

8. Russell's descriptive theory adheres to the dichotomy of proper name and description, and gives a way to transform a norm phrase into a predicate. W.V.O.Quine promoted it, and treated a proper name as a single descriptive predicate equivalent to 'such and such'. Pronouns and other demonstrative pronoun is instead of an individual description chosen by the context.

8.1 As a result, we obtained a language, in which the only way to refer to an object is not determined by a mark to represent quantitative variables. That is, 'Something' is represented by sign '（∃x）', and 'everything', 'anything' is represented by sign '∀x '.

8.2 Therefore the question what specific thing exists changes into a predicate problem what kind of thing connects with mark represents in fact for quantitative variable. The only way we can involve ourselves in ontological commitments by our use of hound variables. Any group of judgment and its logical consequence constructs a theory what ontology commits various entities in its variables scope, and this ontology commitment will be determined by the verb it contains. While we invent a theory, and simultaneously appoint the existence of things implies in references of concept in this theory.

9. Alexius Meinong believed that mental events have common property to means something, what intent activities refer to is the 'object'. Particulars and universals are real things, once they enter human mental activity, they have 'intrinsic objective' or 'real' property.

9.1 According to phenology description of Edmund Husserl, 'stream of consciousness' as William James said can give intrinsic time series of various objects emerging in our minds, that is duration as Henri Bergson said. We discover that auditory sense has

sharp time sense and can synthesis object by conceptualization under using language symbols, but this may not be conform to objective space-time series of objective objects in outside cause and effect chain, that is physical time as Henri Bergson said. Kant's time institution a priori hasn't objective effective capacity to synthesis an empirical judgment into a   judgment of experience.

9.2 The 'content' in psychological behavior is the property of mental activity which can mean an 'object'.

9.3 Alexius Meinong thought, an ideal object is indeed a subsistent, but it mustn't be an existent in any way, and it mustn't exist actually in any way. Existence form what mathematics concerns has never been the existent. In this context, mathematics has never gone beyond the subsistent.

9.3.1 Some objects, such as a round square, are neither the existent nor the subsistent.They are outside in the 'existence', but they are still 'objects'.

9.3.2 People's normal interest area are generally excluded the existence of phenomena which isn't as an existence basis. However, all of these can't change a fact, namely phenomena existence of an object is not affected by the impact of its non-existence, an object is represented neither by essential relation with its existent ,nor by essential relation with its non-existent. 'Existence in the representation', can be seen as 'pseudo-like existence'.

9.3.3 Before the Goldbach Conjecture is proven, one can image an even number that isn't able to decompose into the sum of two prime numbers, but don't know its subsistent or not. Early Wittgenstein thought that people can not be non-logical thinking, but his this viewpoint completely not withstand scrutiny. As Frege said, 'Even if a concept symbol contains a contradiction, this concept also is allowed; Only is that people cannot pre-suppose some kind of thing under this concept .

10. On one hand, we should follow Alexius Meinong and construct a comprehensive but not necessarily logical object theory about fictional objects and even impossible objects; on the other hand, we should follow Julies Henri Poincare, and form an objective epistemological position to go beyond the zero-dimensional point-inward solipsism's monad thinking, and regard ego as a sensation field in a high-dimensional continuum: In addition to sight, touch, auditory, taste and smell, there is a kind of movement sense associated with muscle feeling. If our time-perception connects mainly with our auditory, and then our perceptual space connects mainly with our sight,touch and movement sense.

10.1 How many have our muscles, how many dimensions have our movement sense space. Each kind feeling of different dimensions may arrange into a three-dimensional visual space. Our mind's eye appears to synthesize a priori various other senses into a three-dimensional visual space, and forms a material body concept in a three-dimensional space. Not only our muscles feeling relative with eyeball movement give the depth of the visual space to increase a new third dimension in the visual space, but also the displacement invariant group relative to such as translation and rotation invariant group can project substantially visual space converging in eyeball into an uniform isotropic Euclidean space through a regulation of idealized

transformation. We can't image an outside object in a geometry space, but can reason them in it as if they are in the geometry space.

10.2 Each ego is external to the would, and each other outside, and they aren't necessarily sharing egos in the mind of God. We can grasp the relation between objects appearing in our experience   by the conventions of language symbols. This leads to a Maxwell-Einstein field theory revolution in epistemology.

References:

[1] Donald Palmer, *Looking at Philosophy: The Unbearable Heaviness of Philosophy Made Lighter*, 2013 by McGraw-Hill Education.

[2] William Barrett,*Irrational Man:A Study in Existential Philosophy(1958),* Doubleday,Anchor Books paperback(1962).

[3] Bertrand Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz.* London;George Allen and Unwin,1937.

[4] Bertrand Russell,*Logic and Knowledge.*Unwin Hyman Ltd,1988.

[5] Bertrand Russell,*My Philosophical Development.*London;George Allen and Unwin,1959.

[6] Bertrand Russell,*Our Knowledge of External World.* Chicago and London:Open Court Publishing,1914.

[7] Karl R.Popper,*Objective Knowledge:An Evolutionary Approach.*Oxford University Press,1972.

[8] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractaus Logico-Philosophicus.*Chinese version translated by Zhang Shenfu,Peking University, Beijing,1988.

[9] Jules Henri Poincare, *Science and Hypothesis.*Chinese version translated by Li Xingmin,The Commercial Press,Beijing,2006.

[10] Edwin A.Abbott,*Flatland: a romance of many dimensions.* Chinese version translated by Chen Shen, Popular Science Press,Beijing,1991.