

Comments from a Ontologist

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Pluralism

vs.

Exclusionism & Inclusionism

Exclusionism: The concept that I am right and you are wrong and due to this fact you are outcast, excluded, from my sphere of existence. You are to be isolated from me unless you change.

Inclusionism: The concept that I am right and you are wrong but I will not exclude you from my sphere of existence just because you are not enlightened to the 'truth', my truth. You may associate with me and I will tolerate your beliefs.

Pluralism: The concept that I am right and you are also right not because I grant you an illusionary status of being 'right' but you are in fact 'right' just as I am in fact 'right'.

Exclusionism and inclusionism are aspects of our present religions, cultures, social groups, governments, etc.. Exclusionism and inclusionism are supported by the Ontological systems of Aristotelian Cartesianism and Kant/Hegelian non-Cartesianism.

The question becomes:

Is there a Ontological system capable of establishing the validity to the concept of pluralism?

Until recently there was no Ontological base existing, which could provide the rational foundation necessary to validate pluralism.

The slide presentation being presented, however, demonstrates the establishment of a new, a third Ontological system, which adds to the short list of two existing Ontological system presently existing.

This new Ontological system is one, which does not exclude Cartesianism, nor does it exclude non-Cartesianism. The new Ontological system incorporates the aspects of both Cartesianism and non-Cartesianism, incorporates the aspects of both monism and dualism into its structure.

As such, the new Ontological system is one, which validates pluralism through the very process of applying pluralism to the most basic of perceptual modeling, Ontology. The new Ontological system incorporates the principle of pluralism as its most basic of principles. As such the system lends credence to those supporting ontological pluralism and cosmological pluralism.

The new Ontological system validates pluralism through example versus rhetoric.

A closing note from the Ontologist: regarding Exclusivism & Inclusivism Versus Pluralism

Song writing philosophers do not 'just' write 'songs', they put music to the words the soul cannot otherwise express. They have a knack of being able to express the emotion of the soul as typified by the masses as well as the individual. Song writing philosophers pour out the music of the soul, the blues of the soul. They are the greatest of all philosophers for their philosophies are felt by the masses and sung by us all.

These thoughts meander through my mind as I sit listening to Eric Clapton singing *Running on Faith*. It's a beautiful song and reminds me of just where I've been all my life and what it is I think life is all about. Religion is a beautiful thing. It represents the resolve of humankind to clutch onto what it is they hold most precious to them.

I am not one to expound upon the virtues of one religion over another. They all put me in awe when I explore them and carefully peel away the beauty of their customs, traditions, and dogmas in order to look at the very heart and soul of their message.

This is not to say that their customs, traditions, and dogmas are unimportant for these are the very things, which gives them their unique character. Each has its own unique core or soul.

Hinduism, with its perception of a monotheistic God, the individuality of the soul, the close connection between the two, and lastly the awesome capability of God, is the oldest of the monotheistic religions. It is the only religion, of which I am aware, which actually assigns a power to God to constantly create and dissolve universes. Thus, religions have a phenomenal appreciation for the truly humbling acceptance in the unlimited abilities of God. This makes me want to embrace it with a total sense of emotional love I cannot find words to express. The sense of oneness I have with Hinduism is so overwhelming it's as if it's a part of my very core.

Then there is Judaism, a religion built on a purpose. Judaism evolved after Hinduism and is a religion built also upon the concept of monotheism and the soul. Judaism is so entrenched in the concept of maintaining the idea of monotheism that its members have put their lives on the line to preserve this concept for humankind. They have done so for you and I. They have done so for thousands of years at the cost of tens of millions of their own brothers and sisters in order that the rest could benefit from the concept of there being "one" God. Without this concept, there would have been endless turmoil and unrest throughout the world. There would have been no islands of peace and tranquility. If you doubt this for a minute, then reflect for a moment upon the amount of unrest, hostility, and conflict, which exists in the world presently with just one God involved. Think how much conflict there would be should there be multiple Gods in the world vying for our allegiance. The affection I have for the Jews leaves me with a sense of despair and regret regarding what society - something of which I am a part - has done to them. At times these thoughts put me into a state of depression so deep I sometimes question our potential as a species.

Often, I wish I could enter their synagogues, sit in the back, and quietly immerse myself in their customs and traditions. There is a beautiful religion, filled with a wealth of customs, traditions, and insight.

And what of the Buddhists? My mind quickly floats to the statues of Buddha and the sense of peace, tranquility, and serenity one must surely find as one sits in the simplicity of their temples; their place of reverence, their place for introspection. But it is the message of Buddhism, which appeals to me most. The concept of identifying suffering as "the" most harmful aspect of life causes me to yell out, "YES!" and then I find myself quickly falling into a state of bewilderment. I just cannot get the question out of my head, "Why aren't we, why aren't the rest of us, listening to

them?" What are we so afraid of? How can we argue with what it is the Buddhists are trying to say? Come on people, let's get with it! Eliminate suffering! Yes, Eliminate suffering! How can anyone argue with that!!! When one looks at the poor, the hungry, the sick, the heartbroken, the lonely, the abandoned, and on and on and on, how could we ever select any other religion other than Buddhism!

What of Islam and its message that "Justice will be served"? What of the message, they have to give the world; that you and I are responsible for our actions? We will have to face the consequences of our actions. It is they who point out that action may be forgiven. However, forgiveness does not imply that all subsequent consequences suddenly vanish. One can forgive the child for not taking responsibility to learn in school but that does not mean the child will not have to face the consequences later in life. The Muslims point out to us the understanding that the consequences of the action are not erased just because forgiveness is extended to the one who is responsible for the action. This is a very serious lesson. It is a lesson we often forget in society. This is not a lesson we can afford to forget. If life ended with death, the lesson would be less important. Religions do not embrace the concept of life ending with death; rather they embrace the concept of life being unattached to time, which implies a timeless existence or what religions call eternal existence of the soul. Eternal existence is a long time for one to live with the consequences of one's actions. To forget or minimize such an important concept is beyond my ability to comprehend. Yet, the world belittles and pushes aside the Muslim. The world minimizes what it is they have to tell us. How can one do such a thing? How can one minimize the concept of how one actually builds one's own eternity? Think! Think! Think! How can anyone reject Islam? I know I can't. It is too important a message.

So, what am I? Am I a Hindu? Yes I am. Am I a Jew? Yes, I am. Am I a Buddhist? Yes. Am I a Muslim? Yes and yes and yes. I am all these. I am unable to reject any of these religions. The message they each have for me is too important for me to push aside. The individual message and impact of these messages is far too significant for me to reject any one of them. Losing sight of any one of their messages would change the direction towards which the river of human blood is flowing. Millions have died over the millennia so that I can walk along this river, so that I can lend it my assistance as it strives to reach an ocean of tolerance and brotherhood.

Isn't this being 'wishy-washy' and noncommittal? No, I don't think so. It's like a person enjoying color. Some people prefer one color to another. Some people prefer the blues of meandering rivers, tranquil lakes, and thundering oceans. Some people prefer the black velvet of a star-studded night accentuated by the silver of a newly rising moon. Others prefer to gaze at the oranges and reds of a sunrise or sunset splashing against billowing clouds. Some prefer the earth tones of white-capped mountaintops, stark deserts biomes and undulating prairie grasslands. While still others gaze in quiet meditation as they immerse themselves in the myriad shades of green displayed by the dark Hemlocks interwoven throughout the blankets of oaks, maples, beeches, birches, white pines and jack pines smothering the gentle foothills of the mountain. As much as one person may have a preference of one color over another, who would ever be so bold as to sweep up the remaining colors and, in an attempt to keep them from competing with their favorite color, banish them forever from the home we call earth.

With a pluralist, religions are no different from the variety of colors we all enjoy. For a pluralist, the vast varieties of religions hold the same potential for beauty as the vast variety of colors. As with color, the pluralist sees some souls feeling more at home with one religion than with another. Why must we say one message must be correct and another is wrong? Isn't it possible they all have something phenomenally important to say to us as a specie. Is any one of these messages expendable? As a species, as individuals, can we, dare we, ignore any of these messages?

So the question is not which religion do I think is more important than another. The question is which religion do I find to be my favorite. Which particular color do I find most appealing to me as an individual?

That is the question, which occurred to me as I was listening to Eric Clapton singing, Running on Faith:

Lately I've been running on faith
What else can a poor boy do
But my world would be right
If love comes over me

Lately I've been talking in my sleep
Can't imagine what I'd have to say
'Cept my world would be right
If love comes back this way

I've always been
One to take Each and every day
Seems like by now
I'd find a love who'd care, care just for me

And we'd go running on faith
All of our dreams would come true
And our world would be right
If love comes over me and you....

It is then that I realized why my favorite religious color is the color within which I have been immersed all my life. The Christian religion which when undressed, which when peeled down to its very essential core, screams out the message: "Love unconditionally". Its core message is not to convert. Its core message is not to spread the word. Its core message, the rock upon which it stands is, to love one another.

So simple, so sweet. It is the message, which allows me to embrace the Hindu and whisper, 'We are one'. It is the message, which allows me to embrace the Jew, Buddhist, Muslim and say the words, 'We are one'. It is the message, which allows me to yell out to the world, 'We are all one'. Christ walked amongst the social outcasts, the lepers and prostitutes, with as much ease and love as he did the wealthy and the intellectuals. In his eyes, one was not above the other. How can it be anything but the same for us mere mortals?
Love unconditionally!!!! The message is not, "Love." The message is "Love, UNCONDITIONALLY" That does not mean love your fellow Christian. It means love people of all religions. One cannot love without giving perhaps the second greatest gift one can give to another, the gift of respect.

So it is, I must admit a particular fondness for a particular message, the message of "unconditional love" not "love" but rather "unconditional love."

Do I believe we can do without the other religions? No, I do not. Their messages are far too important. And so it is I find myself a little of each one and proud to be a member of a species that has managed to evolve the significance of each and every one of their unique messages. Messages they have each tenaciously struggled to maintain through the ages.

And so it is that I find myself abhorring the concept of exclusivism¹, the concept that one religion is 'right' and all other religions are wrong, and even the concept of inclusivism², the concept of one religion being 'better' than another but the rest are acceptable to me but not God.. So it is that I find myself wrapped in the warmth of pluralism³, the concept that we must all seek a religion or lack thereof as best suits our personal journeys. So it is that I find myself embracing pluralism for how else are we to reduce the brutality and abusive actions of exclusivism or inclusivism. How else are we to eliminate the acts of intolerance to which exclusivism and inclusivism give their blessing? How else are we to reject the acceptance of the very actions we abhor that exist all around us that exist around you and I?

So it is that I find myself in a state of constant bewilderment as I watch the world revolve around me with its irrational acts of intolerance and the screams of "Why?" echo through my brain. So it is that the only relief I seem to find lately, comes when I immerse myself within the music of Clapton as I listen to him sing the lyrics: 'All of our dreams would come true and our world would be right if love comes over me and you.'

Thanks Eric for sharing your unique gift as a song-writing philosopher and expressing the blues of my soul.

Philosopher's footnote: There is a little philosopher in all of us

This is a book about life and where we went wrong as philosophers. We, the leaders of society, are the originators of perceptions regarding life. We, philosophers, are the explorers seeking the explanation as to the significance of life. We, the thinkers of the world, are the one's espousing the very purpose of life itself.

Be that as it may, we, the philosophers of this organism we call humanity, have made some fatal errors in our work and it is we, truth seekers, who need to correct our mistakes.

This book is a confession of a philosopher. It is a public statement of blame. It is an attempt to correct the mistakes we have made and set the record straight.

You, the reader, have consciously or subconsciously been listening to us as philosophers. You have taken the perceptions we have created and turned them into actions and your actions have accelerated into reactions which have mushroomed into an ambiance which has swept over society as a fire fueled by the gale winds of ideas and we the philosophers of society have lit the match.

¹ Exclusivism: The perception that 'my religion and my religious beliefs are correct, your religion and religious beliefs are wrong, therefore I am going to 'heaven' and you are going to 'hell'. As such, this is the ultimate extreme of religious perception.

² Inclusivism: The religious perception, 'My religion and my religious beliefs are correct and you religion is 'ok' but your beliefs fall short of what is required of us. I can accept you for who you are but I am going to 'heaven' and you are still going to 'hell'. This would be considered the middle ground in terms of religious perception.

³ Pluralism: The religious perception that, 'My religion and my religious beliefs are best for me. Your religion and religious beliefs are best for you. I am going to 'heaven' and you are going to 'heaven'. We are one. This view lies at the other extreme of religious perceptions. It is the opposite extreme from exclusivism.

And just who are these philosophers. Some of them have been professionals, some have been dabblers, some have been renown, and some have been the butterfly flapping its wings, which initiated a full-fledged butterfly effect. So who is to say for sure?

But one thing we do know, there is a little bit of philosopher in all of us and this is the very reason this book needs to be read by all of us so that we, you and I, can finally begin to understand, so that you and I can finally begin to be leaders leading through a higher level of understanding rather than leading through our old primitive state of confusion.

Having said this, what then is the propose of this book? The purpose of this book is to give credit where credit is due. This work proposes to correct the record and recognize past philosophers for concepts they introduced but were never acknowledged as having originated which is to direct us towards a new understanding.

This work will reexamine the past contributions of twelve great thinkers in lights of today's perceptions in order that we may look back and see where the real value of these great men lay, in order that we, men and women, children and adults, terrestrials, as well as all other physical forms and abstractual forms of conscious knowing entities, may appreciate the true timeless contributions of these great members of the human specie.

And who are these souls we appreciate for the wrong reasons? They are souls who have gained prominence for their contributions to their times and whose contributions will never die for their contributions reach into the timelessness of the future far beyond our ability to see.

“So”, one may ask: ‘Just what is a philosopher?’

Perhaps it is best to begin by explaining just what a philosopher is not and then proceed to jump into the heart of the matter of explaining what a philosopher is.

What a philosopher is not:

A philosopher is not a ‘student’ of philosophy. A student of philosophy is just that a ‘student’ of philosophy. This by no means is a derogatory statement. No one would look ‘down’ upon a student of medicine, a student of mathematics, a student of religion, a student of philosophy. We all go through life as students, if in no other way than being ‘students’ of life itself. No one would find comfort in being operated upon by a surgeon who is no longer a ‘student’ of medicine. No one would want to travel upon a bridge built by an engineer who no longer is a ‘student’ of engineering.

A philosopher is not a ‘teacher’ of philosophy. A teacher of philosophy is just that a ‘teacher’ of philosophy. It is often said, ‘Those that can - do, those that can’t - teach, and those that can’t teach - teach teachers.’ Having been a teacher for thirty years I have never been insulted by this statement. In fact, I have always found the statement to be phenomenally humorous. It is one of the better pieces of levity I have come across. After all, the truth of the matter is that the whole of our society, the whole of our civilization, is built upon ‘doers’ and it is teachers who, to some degree or another, have taught the ‘doers’ to ‘do’. And what of the teachers? Why the teachers themselves had teachers to teach them.

Now this is not to say that students of philosophy and teachers of philosophy cannot be philosophers. Nor is this to say that students of philosophy and teachers of philosophy are unimportant to philosophy. It does imply, however, that students and teachers of philosophy are not necessarily philosophers

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The analogy taken would appear to imply that it is from the ranks of students and teachers of philosophy from which it is that the philosophers emerge, as is the case with doctors and engineers.

Before we address the issue regarding the source of new philosophical perceptions, we need to examine philosophy itself and then come back to this last assumption.

So just what is philosophy?

Philosophy, as the Greek syllables indicate, is ‘philos-’ ‘love of’, ‘-sophia’ – ‘wisdom’.ⁱ

What then is wisdom?

Wisdom, according to William L. Reese, can be best described through the eyes of:

Plato: Wisdom concerned the ‘knowledge of the whole’. The path to wisdom required both scientific knowledge and practical experience.

Aristotle: While practical wisdom relates to the conduct of life, speculative wisdom – requiring the elements of intuitive reason and rigorous knowledge of first causes and principles – is best exemplified by the highest branch of speculative science known as ‘Ontology’.

Madhyamika: Buddhism wisdom involves going beyond knowledge to emptiness.

Wisdom, according to The American Heritage Dictionary is:

The understanding of what is true, right, or lasting.

All this becomes quite confusing. In order to establish a sense of understanding regarding what philosophy is, it may be beneficial to disregard the above and go directly to more generic source of linguistic definition. As such we find The American Heritage Dictionary defining:

- Philosophy:
- 1a. The love and pursuit of wisdom
 - 1b. The investigation of causes and laws underlying reality
 2. Inquiry into the nature of things based upon logic rather than empirical methods.

Such a definition appears to encompass the basics as suggested by Reese’s more sophisticated reference book: Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion.

All philosophy would then appear to rest upon a foundation Aristotle termed ‘first philosophy’ or Ontology.

Does, Ontology, however, exist as a valid concept? Is there a ‘beyond’ the physical as the term Ontology suggests. If the answer is: No there is no ‘beyond’ the physical, then Ontology is an illogical concept.

Should there be no ‘beyond’ the physical then Ontology must yield its status as the ‘first philosophy’ to the realm of the phenomenal, to the scientists of the world.

The intent of this work is to address the issue regarding the existence of the realm known as ‘beyond’ the physical. This intent of this work is to establish the rationale of the location of the

'beyond' the physical as well as establish the understanding regarding how understanding such a region 'beyond the physical' allows us to resolve some of the most perplexing philosophical paradoxes humanity has verbalized over the last twenty five hundred years.

What then does such a statement have to do with the questions: What is a philosopher and from where do philosophers emerge? Philosophers are the individuals who originate the systems or lack of systems, which explain reality. Developing such systems are not the objectives of teachers and students of philosophy. Teachers and students of philosophy teach and study such systems as opposed to 'creating' perceptions of such systems.

If one seeks to understand another's perspective of wisdom, the truth of reality, then one is a student of philosophy. If one seeks to teach an understanding of an established perspective of wisdom, the truth of reality, to another then one is a teacher of philosophy. If one seeks to develop a new system or lack of system regarding reality then one is attempting to be a philosopher. If one, however, establishes a new model of reality then and only then does one become a true philosopher, join the ranks of the most elite group of thinkers for then one becomes an Ontologist.

Modeling a system or lack of system which explains the fundamentals of reality, requires an understanding of universal 'truths'. Such an understanding must be sought through a process of thinking universally, thinking beyond our personal geographical regions, personal country, personal planet, personal solar system, and beyond our personal universe itself.

Understanding universal truths requires the ability to step 'beyond' the universe in order to view the universe in its entirety – thus the importance of Ontology to philosophy.

Expanding an understanding, which goes 'beyond' our personal universe, means going beyond our understanding of present and past philosophers and philosophies. Does this mean we ignore all philosophers and philosophies and begin anew? No, we do not, cannot ignore what the past and the present have to offer us for universal truths are just that, universal. Universal truths regarding the structure or lack of structure of reality should have some seed, should have some grain of truth visible within the works of and teachings of the historical masters of philosophy.

Philosophy is not a concrete concept as is medicine and engineering. It is an abstraction constantly eluding us.

A philosopher then is one who is on the cutting edge of understanding the whole of reality much as a theoretical mathematician is on the cutting edge of understanding mathematics and the theoretical physicist is on the cutting edge of understanding physical reality.

General questions and answers

Ockham's razor would suggest the more difficult the explanation the less likely it is to be 'the' explanation. With this in mind:

Q: Is the new Ontological perception itself difficult to understand?

A: No, the Ontological perception itself is not difficult to understand.

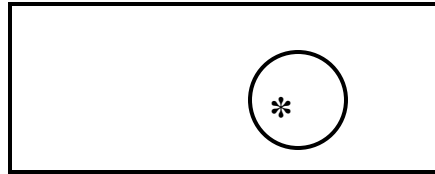
Q: If the new Ontological perception is not difficult to understand, can you explain it know?

A: Certainly, the new Ontological perception can be described with three concepts – the individual - *acting within* - God

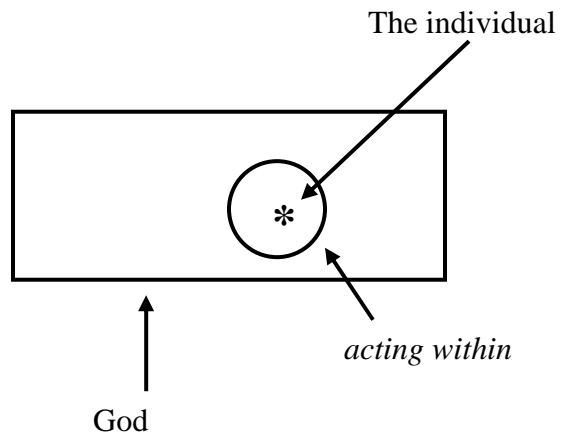
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This can be further understood in a simple diagram regarding the state of being (verb) in the passive form:

Panentheism

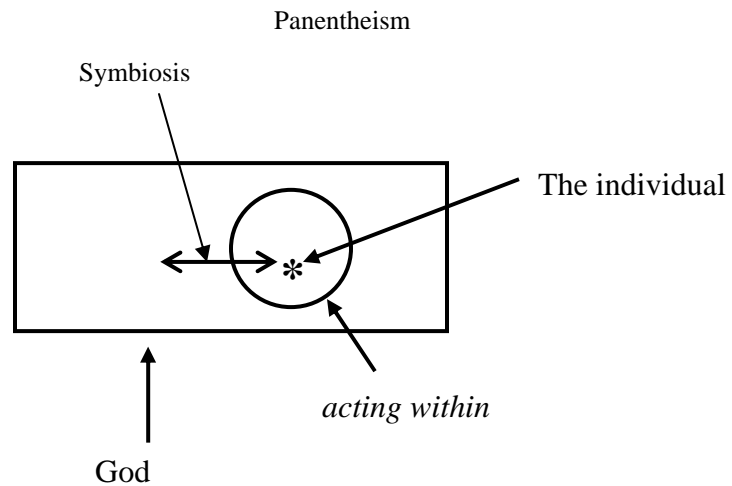
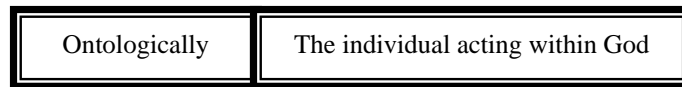


Which can be further understood through labels:



This can be further understood in a simple diagram regarding the state of *being* (verb) in the active form:

Scientifically	Symbiotic Panentheism
Religiously	Symbiotic Panentheism
Philosophically	Symbiotic Panentheism



Which can be further understood through defining the individual, *action*, existing (passive state), and God as:

The individual (noun):	Multiplicity/individuality
<i>being</i> (action verb) :	Action – process/reality, the universe
God (noun):	Totality, summation, the whole

Which can be further understood through distinguishing the individual, *action*, and God from existing as in the state of existing without action.

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And so it is complexity begins to creep into the understanding of the simple concept of 'being' *being* 'Being' being a Ontological perception of symbiotic panentheism, the fusion of cosmology – observation with ontology – faith through the use of Ontology – reason.

The shadow on the wall of Plato's cave led to the concept of complex formations of myths. The scientific observation of the sun generating light, which produced the shadow, led to the simplification of the mythical substructure, which evolved, from the shadow. As such the mythological substructure was eventually replaced by science.

The initial thought was that the scientific explanation was much easier to understand than the explanation the various levels of mythological intricacies that had evolved over a period of thousands of years.

As science evolved over the next several thousand years, however, it too became extremely complex. The sun produced the shadow, but what were these things called photons, which traveled from the sun to do so? How was it the photons had characteristics of both matter and energy and how did the speed of the photon interrelate with its mass? Or did they actually have no mass? And if they had no mass, how was it that energy could equal mass times the speed of light (within a vacuum) squared? And was there actually such a thing as a perfect vacuum? Could nothingness really exist? But back to the simplicity of the sun creating the light, which created the shadow. What is this thing called 'light'? How is it produced? What is fusion and what are these things called 'electrons' which interact with the atoms, which interact with each other to undergo fusion? Do these electrons found 'circling' atoms actually move or do the spaces they supposedly occupy move? And if it is the spaces the electron occupies which move, what are these spaces? Are the spaces nothingness itself? And just what is fusion and how is it related to the basic building block of matter and will this instrument we may build, this enormous cyclotron, which is fifty miles in circumference, really help us find this thing we call the basic building block of matter. Does this basic building block of matter in fact exist or is this elusive unit simply a unit of multiplicity in and of itself just as a molecule is a unit of multiplicity of atoms and an atom is a unit of multiplicity of subatomic particles.

And what is this multiplicity and how does it impact singularity and nothingness?

The War and Peace of a New Ontological Perception begins with the concept of nothingness. The first tractate begins with 'nothingness' and humanity's lack of understanding regarding the concept of nothingness for it is nothingness itself, which suggests multiplicity and singularity exist.

Generalizations Format regarding: The War and Peace of a New Ontological Perception

Issues:

The 'chapters' are labeled issues rather than chapters because issues are treatise in and of themselves. Each 'issue' stands as a complete treatise: a systematic exposition or argument in writing including a methodical discussion of the facts and principles involved and conclusions reached - Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, tenth edition, 1993

ⁱ Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion, William L. Reese, Humanities Press, 1996.