

Everyday Ontology

It is suggested that these two exercises might be most productive if undertaken in a relaxed small group setting (and perhaps with people from different backgrounds).

Exercise 1: What is there?

Please find below a list of 'things' that are sometimes referred to. Do you agree these things exist in some sense? If so, in what way do they exist - for example:

- as objects which are generally accepted to exist, and which any reasonable observer should be able to recognise (so all will agree on)?
- as objects which are generally accepted to exist at a particular time and place, and which any person embedded in that cultural context should be able to recognise?
- as entities which are generally accepted to exist, but which may be problematic to identify?
- as ways of making sense of complex phenomena?
- as only accessible to those in some privileged position?
- as only existing as mental objects, but acting as shared referents in a social group?
- as only existing as mental objects, having no direct indicators in the material world?
- or something else?

true love

beauty

evolution

oceans

Big brother

nationality

unicorns

spheres

Wonderland (as visited by Alice)

bad luck

inflation

atoms

human beings

sentient beings

unicorns

Platonic love

dragons

incubi & succubi

distinction grades

good art

a good thesis

Research Methods
Everyday ontology: or knowing what populates your world

Exercise 2: What types are there?

Please find below some typologies classifying certain types of things into different kinds. To what extent do you think these typologies reflect the actual nature/structure of the world?

People:

short
tall

Schools

independent
state

Students:

full time
part time

Galaxies:

elliptical galaxies
spiral galaxies
lenticular galaxies

People:

beautiful
pretty
plain
ugly

Psyche:

id
ego
super-ego

People:

children
adults

People:

Caucasoid
Mongoloid
Negroid

Nations:

developed
developing

Angels:

Seraphim
Cherubim
Thrones
Dominions or Lordships
Virtues or Strongholds
Powers or Authorities
Principalities or Rulers
Archangels
Angels

Homo genus:

Homo sapiens
Homo erectus
Homo floresiensis
Homo habilis
Homo heidelbergensis
Homo naledi
Homo neanderthalensis

Language type:

elaborated code
restricted code

Television programmes:

drama
documentaries
sports
news
comedy
game shows

Living things:

Animalia
Plantae
Fungi
Protista
Monera

People

lawful
criminal

Classical music:

Baroque
Classical
Romantic
20th Century

Disciplines:

natural sciences
social sciences
humanities
arts

Research methods:

qualitative
quantitative