

Being and Truth: An Etymological Study

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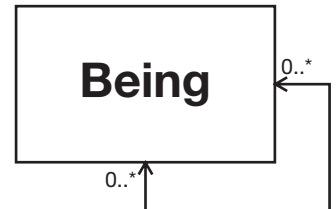
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This is not an etymological study of *being* and *truth* as such. Rather, it is a study of *is*, first person indicative of ‘to be’, and *sooth*, an archaic word for ‘truth’. The connection between these two words is that they both derive from the Proto-Indo-European base **es-* ‘to be’, which is also the root of many other words in Indo-European languages, such as English *Presence*, *Essence*, *interesting*, *ontogeny*, and *soothe*, Sanskrit *satyagraha*, *satsang*, and *Satchidananda*, and Swedish *sann*. By studying what David Bohm called the archaeology of language in this way, rather like the way that biologists search for a common ancestor for related species and ultimately all cellular species, we can learn much about the essential truth of what it means to be a human being.

As this study is being conducted within the context, framework, and foundation of Integral Relational Logic (IRL), we can best begin with Aristotle’s concept of being, which is the basic building block of this universal, all-inclusive system of thought and hence of the Universe viewed as Consciousness. For as Aristotle said in *Metaphysics*:

There is a science which studies Being *qua* Being, and the properties inherent in it in virtue of its own nature. This science is not the same as any of the so-called particular sciences, for none of the others contemplates Being generally *qua* Being; they divide off some portion of it and study the attribute of this portion, as do for example the mathematical sciences.

Thus **Being** is the superclass in the transcultural, transdisciplinary Unified Relationships Theory (URT), a generalization of **Object**, the superclass in object-oriented modelling methods and programming languages that helped information systems architects build the Internet in business. We can thereby use the superclass **Being** to show that all beings are related to all others in zero to many ways, some of which can be categorized and some of which defy classification, and must remain a mystery, as this diagram illustrates. It is thus not true that we are separate from the Divine, Nature, and each other, as Western religion, science, and business teach; we are all One, as Divine, Cosmic beings.



Now of the six forms of the verb *to be*—*be*, *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, and *were*—only two are derived from the PIE base ‘to be’. *Am* derives from **es-mi* and *is* from **es-ti*, also root of many Indo-European words, such as Greek *esti*, Latin *est*, French *est*, German *ist*, Welsh *ys*, and Sanskrit *ásti*. *Yes* derives from the optative PIE stem **si-* (expressing wish or desire) through Middle English *ȝeis*, Old English *ȝēse* ‘so be it’, and *sīe* ‘may it be so’, prefixed with the PIE base **i-*, **yam-*, pronominal stem, also the root of Swedish *ja*.

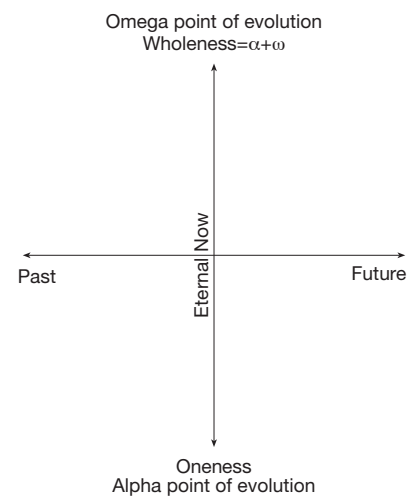
However, what is most revealing is the many words derived directly from the PIE base **es-* through the Latin and Greek words for ‘to be’: *esse* and *einai*, respectively. The most obvious of these is *essence* ‘the innate quality of any being in the relativistic world of form, called the soul in human beings’, from Late Latin *essentia* ‘being, existence, viewed as a fact or as a property possessed by something’. In Absolute terms, *Essence* is ‘the Divine, as the ineffable, innate quality of the Totality of Existence of all beings, viewed as Immanent, Nondual Love, which has no opposite’. For John wrote in his first Epistle: “God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him,” words that Pope Benedict XVI took as the text for his first encyclical ‘*Caritas Deus Est*’ in 2005.

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Essential also derives from *essentia*. So what is essential for us as human beings is that there is no separation between humanity and the Divine, for otherwise we cannot be grounded in Love, the Divine Essence we all share as our True Nature. For the native English word for *nature*, from Latin *nasci* ‘to be born’, is *kind*. Kindliness—*karunā* ‘compassion’ in Buddhism—is thus essential if we are ever to live in love, peace, and harmony with each other.

Also in Absolute terms, throughout human history, many have sensed an immanent, transcendent Presence, from Latin *praesentia* ‘presence’, participle of *praesse* ‘to be before’, from *prae* ‘before’ and *esse* ‘to be’. Thus *Presence* means ‘before being’ or ‘prior to existence’, which human beings have had great difficulty in fully understanding during the millennia, leading to much fear and denial. But when we form the concept of the Absolute in exactly the same way as all other concepts in the relativistic world of form, as in IRL, then we can know, with absolute certainty, that all forms in the Universe, whether they be physical or nonphysical, ultimately emerge from Presence in the Eternal Now, through the creative power of Life.

The noun *present* also indicates this, for one of its many meanings is ‘now’, a moment of time between past and future, looking at time horizontally. But if we look at the Timeless in the vertical dimension of time, as in this diagram, the Present is another name for the Eternal Now. A further meaning of *present* is ‘something presented, as a gift’ from the verb *to present* ‘to make a gift to’. Again in Absolute terms, the Present is the Datum of the Universe, from the Latin *datum* ‘that which is given’, neuter past participle of *dare* ‘to offer, give’, also root of *donor* and *endow* among several other words. So the Divine is the Donor of our bodies and of everything we might create in the relativistic world of form, especially important to remember in this Information Age, when we recognize that information is data with meaning. For to make information and symbolic knowledge—like trademarks, patents, and copyright—a property that we can own through intellectual property laws is a violation of the fundamental laws of the Universe.



The ancient Greeks had some sense of the inner nature of all beings, encapsulated in the word *quintessence*, from the Latin translation of *pemptē* ‘fifth’ and *ousiā* ‘being, essence’, “thought to be the substance of the heavenly bodies and latent in all things”. This fifth essence or element was the aether, from Latin *aether*, “the pure essence where the gods lived and which they breathed”, from Greek *aither* ‘pure, fresh air’, in contrast to fire, air, earth, and water, the basic building blocks of the Universe for the ancients and even some today. Today, this notion of an underlying Essence is reappearing as dark matter and dark energy in physical cosmology and as the zero-point field in quantum physics. But few yet seem to recognize the Presence of the Divine in these hypothetical concepts.

Another compound of *esse* has led to the English transitive verb *interest*, after the noun *interest*, from Latin *interest* ‘it makes a difference, concerns, matters, is of importance’, third person singular indicative of *interesse* (used directly as a noun in Middle English) ‘to be between, take part in’, from *inter* ‘between’ and *esse* ‘to be’. So what is interesting, important, and essential is not the interest that banks receive in today’s debt-driven, divisive economy, or more generally things in themselves, but the *relationships* between entities, a word also derived from *esse*. For meaningful relationships, a generalization of the physicists’ concept of fields, are what makes the world go round. In contrast, reductionist scientists,

focused on objects rather than the relationships between them, throw the interesting associations and connections away!

English words that have evolved from the Greek *ont-* ‘being’, present participle of *einai*, include *ontology* ‘the science or study of beings’ and *ontogeny* ‘the growth of individual beings’, in contrast to *phylogeny* ‘the development of the race or species’. Other compound words that have evolved from Greek *ousiā*, which could also mean *substance*, literally ‘that which stands under’, are Greek *homoousian* ‘of same essence, of one substance’ and *parousiā* ‘presence’. The true meanings of these words have been clouded in Christian theology, which we come back to at the end.

While there are many other English derivatives of Latin *esse*, let us now turn to the participial PIE base **as-ont-*, becoming **sont-* ‘being, existing’, hence ‘real, true’. This gave rise to Old English *sōth* ‘real, true’, which became the archaic *sooth* with the same meaning. The original meaning of *soothsayer* was therefore ‘one who speaks the truth’, now obsolete. Today, the main meaning of *soothsayer* is ‘one who claims to be able to foretell events or predict the future; a seer’, like a prophet, someone who speaks from the Divine. The original meaning of *soothe* was thus ‘to prove or show (a fact, statement, etc.) to be true’, also now obsolete. The modern sense of *soothe* ‘to quiet, calm, comfort’ developed from this meaning, for to uphold the truth, to corroborate, support, confirm or encourage a person by assent or approval led people over the centuries to see that telling the truth could help people become calm or quiet, even though this might feel uncomfortable for those who are not yet ready to face the truth of human existence: we are all conceived and born to die, both as individuals and as a species.

We can see how to come to peaceful terms with this inevitability by looking at the Sanskrit derivative of **sont-*: *sat-*, *sant-*, ‘existing, true, virtuous’, cognate with Swedish *sann* ‘true’. The best known words that have derived from this Sanskrit root are Mohandas Ghandi’s *satyagraha* ‘truth force’ and *bodhisattva* ‘one whose essence is enlightenment’, from *bodhi* ‘perfect knowledge’, from PIE base **bheudh-* ‘to be aware, to make aware’, also root of *bid*, *forbid*, *bode* ‘to be an omen’, *ombudsman*, and *Buddha*, and *sattvam* ‘essence, being’. A less familiar cognate to the general public is *satsang* ‘an assembly of seekers of the Truth who gather around a spiritual teacher for reflection on the ancient wisdom’. The morpheme *sang* is cognate with *sangha* ‘a Buddhist community living together for spiritual synergy and mutual support’, from PIE base **ksun* ‘together, with’, also root of *symbol*, *synoptic*, and *soviet*, corresponding to *cum* in Latin.

Like many English words that have both a mundane and mystical meaning, Sanskrit *Sat* could also mean ‘Absolute, Eternal, Unchanging Being’, the first syllable in *Satchidananda*, from *sat* ‘being’, *Chit* ‘Absolute Consciousness’, and *Ananda* ‘bliss, absolute joy’. In Hinduism, *Satchidananda* is used to inspire the intuition of the seeker of liberation (*moksha*), which is Ineffable, quite impossible to express in words. Thus *Satchidananda* denotes the great joy of living freely in the bliss of Nondual Consciousness, knowing that there is no such thing as free will in a Universe in which we are all One Whole, not separate from the Divine, Nature or each other for an instant.

The PIE base of *be* itself is **bheu-* ‘to be, exist, grow’, which throws up some more interesting associations. From **bhū-* comes *build* and *physics*, from Latin *physica*, from Greek *ta phusika* ‘the natural things’—the collective title of Aristotle’s physical treatises—from *phusis* ‘birth, origin; nature, inborn quality; creative power’, from *phuein* ‘to grow, to bring forth’. So the true physicist or natural philosopher ‘lover of wisdom’ is someone who searches for the essence or origin of things before they begin to grow and ultimately for the Essence or Origin of the Universe. And from the suffixed form **bhū-tu-* comes *future*, from Latin *futūrus* ‘that is to be’, the future participle of *esse*.

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From **bhū-* comes *bower* ‘dwelling space’, *neighbour* ‘one who lives near’, and *bylaw* ‘the law of a settlement’, cognate with Swedish *by* ‘village’, the suffix of many English place names where the Vikings settled, such as Whitby and Grimsby, among the villages that grew into towns. The suffixed form **bhū-lo-* has led to *phylogeny* ‘the development of the species’, from Greek *phūlon* ‘tribe, class, race’. So, in the abstract, *ontogeny* and *phylogeny* both mean ‘the growth of being’.

Of the other forms of *to be*, *are*, like Swedish *är* ‘am, are, is’, derives from Proto-Germanic **ar-*, cognate with Latin *oriri* ‘to arise, be born, come to be, come into existence’, also root of *origin*, *orient* ‘where the sun rises’, *rise*, and *earnest*, from PIE base **er-*, **or-* ‘to move, set in motion’. The past tenses *was* and *were* have a PIE base **wes-* ‘to dwell, live, remain’, also root of *wassail*, literally ‘to be healthy’, and presumably Swedish *vara* ‘to be’.

For completion, *truth* derives from Old English *trīewth*, *trēowth* ‘faithful, loyal, trustworthy’, from PIE base **deru-* ‘to be firm, solid, steadfast’, hence specialized senses ‘wood, tree’, the semantic link being the firmness or steadfastness of oaks and suchlike trees, which is also a derivative. Other cognates are *trust*, *betroth*, *endure*, and Swedish *trygg* ‘safe, secure’. The meaning of *true* as ‘in accordance with the facts’ was a secondary development in Middle English in the thirteenth century. It is not surprising therefore that Jesus said, “And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.” For when we know the Truth, with a capital *T*, we feel safe and secure, free of anxiety about what might happen in the future, for the past, on which these fears are based, has disappeared.

We can see from this short etymological study that being is the most fundamental of all concepts; in Absolute terms, the one on which the Truth is based, and from which the entire world of form emerges. It is thus a fundamental misconception to believe that atoms, or their constituent subatomic particles, are the basic building blocks of the Universe. So why do governments fund CERN’s Large Hadron Collider (LHC) with many billions of euros, searching for that which doesn’t exist—the so-called God particle?

The great tragedy facing much of humanity today is that we have thus lost touch with Reality, with our Divine Essence, a perilous predicament that arises as much from religious and economic beliefs, as from scientific ones. For as Ernest Becker described in the Pulitzer prize-winning *The Denial of Death* from 1973, much human learning and behaviour is determined by the fear of mortality, the root cause of the Holy wars—wars about the Whole—throughout humanity’s conflict-ridden history. But more than this. As the much-prized documentary *Flight from Death: The Quest for Immortality*, released in 2003, well describes, this subconscious or even unconscious fear governs our daily relationships, especially in association with people who we perceive to be different from ourselves. For they can be seen as a threat to our precarious sense of identity and security as separate beings, and hence people to kill, or at least diminish through ridicule and many other means. Abraham Maslow called this inhibiting behaviour the ‘Jonah Syndrome’. Not only do we hesitate to realize our fullest potential, we also attempt to prevent others doing so.

The fundamental cause of these conflicts, in the West and Middle East, at least, is the monotheistic belief that God is other, that there is a great gulf between humanity and the Divine that can never be bridged—the first pillar of unwisdom in the URT. The one exception to this principle, in orthodox Christianity, is that Jesus, alone, was Divine, expressed in the Nicene Creed, formulated in 325, as *homoousian*, from Greek *ōmos* ‘same’ and *ousiā* ‘being, essence’, intended to rebuff the Arian doctrine of *heteroousian*, from *ēteros* ‘different’, in which Newton secretly believed, despite being Lucasian professor of mathematics at Trinity College, and the semi-Arian doctrine of *homoiousian*, from *ōmoios* ‘like, similar’.

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In Christian theology, *homoousian* denotes “the divine nature or essence of which the three Persons of the Trinity are one”, Persons here being God, Son, and even Holy Spirit. Curiously, in early Christian writings until the fourth century, an alternative to *ousiā* was *hypostasis*, from *ὑπο* ‘under’ and *stasis* ‘standing, position, state’ meaning ‘substantial reality’, that which stands under, like Latin *substance*. And just as *substance* became ‘matter’ in physical science, *hypostasis* became ‘individual reality’ or ‘person’ in Christian theology, reflecting the superficiality of Western civilization, far removed from Reality.

In contrast, as derivatives of the PIE base **sont-* ‘being, true’ indicate, if we are to be free of the fear of death, living in love, peace, and harmony with our fellow human beings, it is essential that we base our lives on the first pillar of wisdom: we are all Divine creatures. For the Essence of the Divine Cosmos and the ultimate essence of humanity is exactly the same, a universal principle encapsulated in the word *homoousian*.

When we realize our True Nature in this way, we can also sense the Presence of the Divine. Plato used the Greek word *parousiā* ‘presence, arrival, right time, official visit’ to denote the essential qualities of his eternal Forms and Ideas, corresponding to classes in object-oriented modelling methods and hence in IRL. *Parousiā* comes from *para* ‘beside, near, alongside, beyond’ and *ousiā* again.

In ancient Greece, “the main use [of *parousiā*] is the physical presence of a person, which, where that person is not already present, refers to the prospect of the physical arrival of that person, especially the visit of a royal or official personage and sometimes as an extension of this usage, a formal ‘occasion’.” In the Greek New Testament, *parousiā* is used twice to indicate the presence of Paul and twenty-two times to indicate the arrival or coming of someone. There are three occasions when the coming of individuals is indicated, and two others when God and Satan arrive. The other seventeen uses of *parousiā* refer to the second coming of Christ at the end times of humanity, called Parousia in Christianity.

But Jesus, like Buddha and all other beings, is within us, as we realize when the Divine itself arrives in and around us. What actually happens here is that the Divine is *revealed* to us, because the immanent, transcendent Divine is ever present. This revelation is essentially an apocalypse, from Greek *apokaluptein* ‘to uncover’ or ‘to reveal’ from the prefix *apo* ‘from, away’ and *kaluptra* ‘veil’. So *apocalypse* literally means ‘draw the veil away from’, indicating the disclosure of something hidden from the mass of humanity: the Principle of Unity, the fundamental design principle of the Universe: *Wholeness is the union of all opposites*.

If such an apocalypse happens suddenly, rather than gradually, it can be quite a shock to the psyche, as decades, centuries, and millennia of personal, cultural, and collective conditioning are burnt up in the roaring fire of Consciousness, enabling self-reflective Intelligence to adapt to the unprecedented, exponential rate of evolutionary change that the creative, but fragmented mental energies of scientists and technologists are blindly causing today. It is just such a cataclysmic apocalypse that we can expect in the next few years as the global economy self-destructs, when we realize that technological development cannot drive economic growth much further. For if humanity is to enter the spiritual end times of our species as fully awake as possible, an epoch-making life-shock is absolutely essential.

Such a mind-shattering tsunami could emerge by showing the association between *being* and *truth*. For as all-inclusive **Being** is the superclass of all concepts, it represents all cosmologies, theories, beliefs, opinions, and ideas that anyone has ever had throughout human history. So **Being** allows us to develop a fully integrated transcultural, transdisciplinary synthesis of all knowledge in all cultures and disciplines at all times, the solution to the ultimate problem in human learning, which Einstein called the ‘unified field theory’, still unsolved. In this elegantly simple way, we can establish Consciousness as Ultimate Reality,

completing the revolution in science that the Institute of Noetic Sciences is promoting, just as Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* completed the Copernican/Keplerian heliocentric revolution.

Furthermore, **Being** is also the superclass for the concept of Supreme Being or Absolute, formed in IRL in exactly the same way as all other concepts: by carefully noting the similarities and differences in the data patterns of our experience. So the URT—the name of this megasynthesis, prophesied by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in *The Human Phenomenon*—is solidly grounded in the Truth: the Pathless Land, in J. Krishnamurti's terms, declared in 1929, when disbanding the organization that wanted to make him a World Teacher.

Yet, despite the great awakening of Love, Consciousness, and Intelligence in the world today, there is still intense psychological and social resistance to going All the Way, to the utmost breadth and depth of Being. So whether the imminent death of Western civilization and the collapse of the global economy will usher in a superconscious, superintelligent Age of Light, foreseen by the visionaries, even on a small scale, is far from certain. If so, so be it. For whatever happens or not is not in the control of any separate being in the Universe, not even the Divine. For when we realize that our True Nature is Wholeness, we can see that the Universe is designed, but there is no designer thereof. God, as Reality, exists both as the Immortal Formless—distinguished from the ever-changing world of form—and as the union of Nonduality and duality. God, the Universe, and the Totality of Existence, as Consciousness, is everywhere and everywhen, a profound understanding and experience that leads to deep Love and Peace, beyond inner conflict and suffering, a marvellous ending to a tumultuous journey in life.

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My own experience of Consciousness, the radiant light that enables self-reflective Intelligence—the eyesight of Consciousness—to see the Totality of Existence as one, wonderful, coherent whole.