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Noema

Definition:: The object or content of a thought, judgment or perception.

Origin:: Greek

See also:: Noesis

Definition taken from (merriam-webster.com).

Examples from text:

1) In *Story of an Hour*, Louise has just received news that her husband has died. She looks forward to her life without her husband, and imagines what it will be like.

- "But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely."
- "There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself."
- "Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own."
    - These quotations from the story describe the content behind Louise's thoughts of her future life. This perception of the future is considered a noema, since it is a thought experienced through the mind of Louise.

2) In the short story by Edgar Allen Poe, *The Cask of Amontillado*, Montressor is obsessed with revenge. He vows to avenge Fortunado, and has been conjuring up an exact plan in which he will be able to carry this out. Montressor's thoughts are considered a noema, as their content contains specifications of how he plots to avenge Fortunado. He eventually acts on his plan that he has thought out in his mind. He lures Fortunado into his underground vault, gets him intoxicated, ties him up, and buries him alive.

- "The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitely, settled -- but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has

done
the
wrong."

3)
In
the
short
story
by
Jorge
Luis
Borges,
Tlon
Uqbar,
Orbis
Tertius,
an
old
encyclopedia
reveals
the
history
and
philosophy
behind
a
new
third
planet.
The
characters
in
the
story
conduct
more
research
in
an
attempt
to
find
out
more
information
about

This research allows the characters to develop a specific idea of this peculiar place, which is considered a noema, as it is the content of their perception.

(CG)

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Phenomenology (philosophy)

This article is about phenomenology in philosophy. For phenomenology as a research method, see Phenomenography. For phenomenology as an approach in psychology, see Phenomenology (psychology).

Phenomenology (from Greek: *phainómenon* "that which appears" and *lógos* "study") is the philosophical study of the structures of experience and consciousness. As a philosophical movement it was founded in the early years of the 20th century by Edmund Husserl and was later expanded upon by a circle of his followers at the universities of Göttingen and Munich in Germany. It then spread to France, the United States, and elsewhere, often in contexts far removed from Husserl's early work.

Phenomenology, in Husserl's conception, is primarily concerned with the systematic reflection on and study of the structures of consciousness and the phenomena that appear in acts of consciousness. This ontology (study of reality) can be clearly differentiated from the Cartesian method of analysis which sees the world as objects, sets of objects, and objects acting and reacting upon one another.

Husserl's conception of phenomenology has been criticized and developed not only by himself but also by students, such as Edith Stein, by hermeneutic philosophers, such as Martin Heidegger, by existentialists, such as Max Scheler, Nicolai Hartmann, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, and by other philosophers, such as Paul Ricoeur, Jean-Luc Marion, Emmanuel Lévinas, and sociologists Alfred Schütz and Eric Voegelin.

Overview

Stephen Hicks writes that to understand phenomenology, one must identify its roots in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).[1] In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant distinguished between "phenomena" (objects as interpreted by human sensibility and understanding), and "noumena" (objects as *things-in-themselves*, which humans cannot directly experience).
According to Hicks, 19th-century Kantianism operated in two broad camps:

- structural linguistics and
- phenomenology.

Hicks writes, "In effect, the Structuralists were seeking subjective noumenal categories, and the Phenomenologists were content with describing the phenomena without asking what connection to an external reality those experiences might have."[2]

In its most basic form, phenomenology thus attempts to create conditions for the objective study of topics usually regarded as subjective: consciousness and the content of conscious experiences such as judgments, perceptions, and emotions. Although phenomenology seeks to be scientific, it does not attempt to study consciousness from the perspective of clinical psychology or neurology. Instead, it seeks through systematic reflection to determine the essential properties and structures of experience. Wikipedia:Citation needed

There are several assumptions behind phenomenology that help explain its foundations. First, it rejects the concept of objective research. Phenomenologists prefer grouping assumptions through a process called phenomenological epoche. Second, phenomenology believes that analyzing daily human behavior can provide one with a greater understanding of nature. The third assumption is that persons, not individuals, should be explored. This is because persons can be understood through the unique ways they reflect the society they live in. Fourth, phenomenologists prefer to gather “capta,” or conscious experience, rather than traditional data. Finally, phenomenology is considered to be oriented on discovery, and therefore phenomenologists gather research using methods that are far less restricting than in other sciences.[3]

Husserl derived many important concepts central to phenomenology from the works and lectures of his teachers, the philosophers and psychologists Franz Brentano and Carl Stumpf. An important element of phenomenology that Husserl borrowed from Brentano is intentionality (often described as "aboutness"), the notion that consciousness is

always consciousness *of* something. The object of consciousness is called the *intentional object*, and this object is constituted for consciousness in many different ways, through, for instance, perception, memory, retention and protention, signification, etc. Throughout these different intentionalities, though they have different structures and different ways of being "about" the object, an object is still constituted as the identical object; consciousness is directed at the same intentional object in direct perception as it is in the immediately following retention of this object and the eventual remembering of it.

Though many of the phenomenological methods involve various reductions, phenomenology is, in essence, anti-reductionistic; the reductions are mere tools to better understand and describe the workings of consciousness, not to reduce any phenomenon to these descriptions. In other words, when a reference is made to a thing's *essence* or *idea*, or when one details the constitution of an identical coherent thing by describing what one "really" sees as being only these sides and aspects, these surfaces, it does not mean that the thing is only and exclusively what is described here: The ultimate goal of these reductions is to understand *how* these different aspects are constituted into the actual thing as experienced by the person experiencing it. Phenomenology is a direct reaction to the psychologism and physicalism of Husserl's time. Wikipedia:Citation needed

Although previously employed by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, it was Husserl's adoption of this term (circa 1900) that propelled it into becoming the designation of a philosophical school. As a philosophical perspective, phenomenology is its method, though the specific meaning of the term varies according to how it is conceived by a given philosopher. As envisioned by Husserl, phenomenology is a method of philosophical inquiry that rejects the rationalist bias that has dominated Western thought since Plato in favor of a method of reflective attentiveness that discloses the individual's "lived experience."[4] Loosely rooted in an epistemological device, with Sceptic roots, called epoché, Husserl's method entails the suspension of judgment while relying on the intuitive grasp of knowledge, free of presuppositions and intellectualizing. Sometimes depicted as the "science of experience," the phenomenological method is rooted in intentionality, Husserl's theory of consciousness (developed from Brentano). Intentionality represents an alternative to the representational theory of consciousness, which holds that reality cannot be grasped directly because it is available only through perceptions of reality that are representations of it in the mind. Husserl countered that consciousness is not "in" the mind but rather conscious of something other than itself (the intentional object), whether the object is a substance or a figment of imagination (i.e., the real processes associated with and underlying the figment). Hence the phenomenological method relies on the description of phenomena as they are given to consciousness, in their immediacy.

According to Maurice Natanson (1973, p. 63), *"The radicality of the phenomenological method is both continuous and discontinuous with philosophy's general effort to subject experience to fundamental, critical scrutiny: to take nothing for granted and to show the warranty for what we claim to know."*
In practice, it entails an unusual combination of discipline and detachment to suspend, or bracket, theoretical explanations and second-hand information while determining one's "naive" experience of the matter. The phenomenological method serves to momentarily erase the world of speculation by returning the subject to his or her primordial experience of the matter, whether the object of inquiry is a feeling, an idea, or a perception. According to Husserl the suspension of belief in what we ordinarily take for granted or infer by conjecture diminishes the power of what we customarily embrace as objective reality. According to Rüdiger Safranski (1998, 72), "[Husserl and his followers'] great ambition was to disregard anything that had until then been thought or said about consciousness or the world [while] on the lookout for a new way of letting the things [they investigated] approach them, without covering them up with what they already knew."

Martin Heidegger modified Husserl's conception of phenomenology because of (what Heidegger perceived as) Husserl's subjectivist tendencies. Whereas Husserl conceived humans as having been constituted by states of consciousness, Heidegger countered that consciousness is peripheral to the primacy of one's existence (i.e., the mode of being of Dasein), which cannot be reduced to one's consciousness of it. From this angle, one's state of mind is an "effect" rather than a determinant of existence, including those aspects of existence that one is not conscious of. By

shifting the center of gravity from consciousness (psychology) to existence (ontology), Heidegger altered the subsequent direction of phenomenology. As one consequence of Heidegger's modification of Husserl's conception, phenomenology became increasingly relevant to psychoanalysis. Whereas Husserl gave priority to a depiction of consciousness that was fundamentally alien to the psychoanalytic conception of the unconscious, Heidegger offered a way to conceptualize experience that could accommodate those aspects of one's existence that lie on the periphery of sentient awareness.[5][6]

Historical overview of the use of the term

Phenomenology has at least two main meanings in philosophical history: one in the writings of G.W.F. Hegel, another in the writings of Edmund Husserl in 1920, and a third, deriving from Husserl's work, in the writings of his former research assistant Martin Heidegger in 1927.

- For G.W.F. Hegel, phenomenology is an approach to philosophy that begins with an exploration of phenomena (what presents itself to us in conscious experience) as a means to finally grasp the absolute, logical, ontological and metaphysical Spirit that is behind phenomena. This has been called a "*dialectical phenomenology*".
- For Edmund Husserl, phenomenology is "the reflective study of the essence of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view." Phenomenology takes the intuitive experience of phenomena (what presents itself to us in phenomenological reflexion) as its starting point and tries to extract from it the essential features of experiences and the essence of what we experience. When generalized to the essential features of any possible experience, this has been called "*Transcendental Phenomenology*". Husserl's view was based on aspects of the work of Franz Brentano and was developed further by philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Max Scheler, Edith Stein, Dietrich von Hildebrand and Emmanuel Levinas.

Although the term "phenomenology" was used occasionally in the history of philosophy before Husserl, modern use ties it more explicitly to his particular method. Following is a list of thinkers in rough chronological order who used the term "phenomenology" in a variety of ways, with brief comments on their contributions:[7]

- Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702–1782), German pietist, for the study of the "divine system of relations"[8]
- Johann Heinrich Lambert (1728–1777), mathematician, physician and philosopher, known for the theory of appearances underlying empirical knowledge.[9]
- Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), in the Critique of Pure Reason, distinguished between objects as phenomena, which are objects as shaped and grasped by human sensibility and understanding, and objects as *things-in-themselves* or noumena, which do not appear to us in space and time and about which we can make no legitimate judgments.
- G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) challenged Kant's doctrine of the unknowable thing-in-itself, and declared that by knowing phenomena more fully we can gradually arrive at a consciousness of the absolute and spiritual truth of Divinity, most notably in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, published in 1807.
- Carl Stumpf (1848–1936), student of Brentano and mentor to Husserl, used "phenomenology" to refer to an ontology of sensory contents.
- Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) established phenomenology at first as a kind of "descriptive psychology" and later as a transcendental and eidetic science of consciousness. He is considered to be the founder of contemporary phenomenology.
- Max Scheler (1874–1928) developed further the phenomenological method of Edmund Husserl and extended it to include also a reduction of the scientific method. He influenced the thinking of Pope John Paul II, Dietrich von Hildebrand, and Edith Stein.
- Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) criticized Husserl's theory of phenomenology and attempted to develop a theory of ontology that led him to his original theory of Dasein, the non-dualistic human being.
- Alfred Schütz (1899–1959) developed a phenomenology of the social world on the basis of everyday experience that has influenced major sociologists such as Harold Garfinkel, Peter Berger, and Thomas Luckmann.

- Francisco Varela (1946–2001), Chilean philosopher and biologist. Developed the basis for experimental phenomenology and neurophenomenology.
- Werner Erhard (born 1935) uses the phenomenological methodology to provide actionable access to being a leader and the effective exercise of leadership.[10]

Later usage is mostly based on or (critically) related to Husserl's introduction and use of the term. This branch of philosophy differs from others in that it tends to be more "descriptive" than "prescriptive".

Phenomenological terminology

Intentionality

Intentionality refers to the notion that consciousness is always the consciousness *of* something. The word itself should not be confused with the "ordinary" use of the word intentional, but should rather be taken as playing on the etymological roots of the word. Originally, intention referred to a "stretching out" ("in tension," lat. *intendere*[11][12]), and in this context it refers to consciousness "*stretching out*" towards its object (although one should be careful with this image, seeing as there is not some consciousness first that, subsequently, stretches out to its object. Rather, consciousness *occurs as* the simultaneity of a conscious act and its object.) Intentionality is often summed up as "aboutness."

Whether this *something* that consciousness is about is in direct perception or in fantasy is inconsequential to the concept of intentionality itself; whatever consciousness is directed at, *that* is what consciousness is conscious of. This means that the object of consciousness doesn't *have* to be a *physical* object apprehended in perception: it can just as well be a fantasy or a memory. Consequently, these "structures" of consciousness, i.e., perception, memory, fantasy, etc., are called *intentionalities*.

The cardinal principle of phenomenology, the term intentionality originated with the Scholastics in the medieval period and was resurrected by Brentano who in turn influenced Husserl's conception of phenomenology, who refined the term and made it the cornerstone of his theory of consciousness. The meaning of the term is complex and depends entirely on how it is conceived by a given philosopher. The term should not be confused with “intention” or the psychoanalytic conception of unconscious “motive” or “gain.”

Intuition

Intuition in phenomenology refers to those cases where the intentional object is directly present to the intentionality at play; if the intention is "filled" by the direct apprehension of the object, you have an intuited object. Having a cup of coffee in front of you, for instance, seeing it, feeling it, or even imagining it - these are all filled intentions, and the object is then *intuited*. The same goes for the apprehension of mathematical formulae or a number. If you do not have the object as referred to directly, the object is not intuited, but still intended, but then *emptily*. Examples of empty intentions can be signitive intentions - intentions that only *imply* or *refer to* their objects.Wikipedia:Citation needed

Evidence

In everyday language, we use the word evidence to signify a special sort of relation between a state of affairs and a proposition: State A is evidence for the proposition "A is true." In phenomenology, however, the concept of evidence is meant to signify the "subjective achievement of truth."[13] This is not an attempt to reduce the objective sort of evidence to subjective "opinion," but rather an attempt to describe the structure of having something present in intuition with the addition of having it present as *intelligible*: "Evidence is the successful presentation of an intelligible object, the successful presentation of something whose truth becomes manifest in the evidencing itself."[14]

Noesis and Noema

Main article: Noema

In Husserl's phenomenology, which is quite common, this pair of terms, derived from the Greek *nous* (mind), designate respectively the real content, noesis, and the ideal content, noema, of an intentional act (an act of consciousness). The Noesis is the part of the act that gives it a particular sense or character (as in judging or perceiving something, loving or hating it, accepting or rejecting it, and so on). This is real in the sense that it is actually part of what takes place in the consciousness (or psyche) of the subject of the act. The Noesis is always correlated with a Noema; for Husserl, the full Noema is a complex ideal structure comprising at least a noematic sense and a noematic core. The correct interpretation of what Husserl meant by the Noema has long been controversial, but the noematic sense is generally understood as the ideal meaning of the act[15] and the noematic core as the act's referent or object *as it is meant in the act*. One element of controversy is whether this noematic object is the same as the actual object of the act (assuming it exists) or is some kind of ideal object.[16]

Empathy and Intersubjectivity

See also: Empathy and Intersubjectivity

In phenomenology, empathy refers to the experience of one's own body *as* another. While we often identify others with their physical bodies, this type of phenomenology requires that we focus on the subjectivity of the other, as well as our intersubjective engagement with them. In Husserl's original account, this was done by a sort of apperception built on the experiences of your own lived-body. The lived body is your own body as experienced by yourself, *as* yourself. Your own body manifests itself to you mainly as your possibilities of acting in the world. It is what lets you reach out and grab something, for instance, but it also, and more importantly, allows for the possibility of changing your point of view. This helps you differentiate one thing from another by the experience of moving around it, seeing new aspects of it (often referred to as making the absent present and the present absent), and still retaining the notion that this is the same thing that you saw other aspects of just a moment ago (it is identical). Your body is also experienced as a duality, both as object (you can touch your own hand) and as your own subjectivity (you experience being touched).

The experience of your own body as your own subjectivity is then applied to the experience of another's body, which, through apperception, is constituted as another subjectivity. You can thus recognise the Other's intentions, emotions, etc. This experience of empathy is important in the phenomenological account of intersubjectivity. In phenomenology, intersubjectivity constitutes objectivity (i.e., what you experience as objective is experienced as being intersubjectively available - available to all other subjects. This does not imply that objectivity is reduced to subjectivity nor does it imply a relativist position, cf. for instance intersubjective verifiability).

In the experience of intersubjectivity, one also experiences oneself as being a subject among other subjects, and one experiences oneself as existing objectively *for* these Others; one experiences oneself as the noema of Others' noeses, or as a subject in another's empathic experience. As such, one experiences oneself as objectively existing subjectivity. Intersubjectivity is also a part in the constitution of one's lifeworld, especially as "homeworld."

Lifeworld

Main article: Lifeworld

The lifeworld (German: *Lebenswelt*) is the "world" each one of us *lives* in. One could call it the "background" or "horizon" of all experience, and it is that on which each object stands out as itself (as different) and with the meaning it can only hold for us. The lifeworld is both personal and intersubjective (it is then called a "homeworld"), and, as such, it does not enclose each one of us in a solus ipse.

Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900/1901)

In the first edition of the *Logical Investigations*, still under the influence of Brentano, Husserl describes his position as "descriptive psychology." Husserl analyzes the intentional structures of mental acts and how they are directed at both real and ideal objects. The first volume of the *Logical Investigations*, the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, begins with a devastating critique of psychologism, i.e., the attempt to subsume the *a priori* validity of the laws of logic under psychology. Husserl establishes a separate field for research in logic, philosophy, and phenomenology, independently from the empirical sciences.[17]

Transcendental phenomenology after the *Ideen* (1913)

Some years after the publication of the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl made some key elaborations that led him to the distinction between the act of consciousness (*noesis*) and the phenomena at which it is directed (the *noemata*).

- "noetic" refers to the intentional act of consciousness (believing, willing, etc.)
- "noematic" refers to the object or content (noema), which appears in the noetic acts (the believed, wanted, hated, and loved ...).

What we observe is not the object as it is in itself, but how and inasmuch it is given in the intentional acts. Knowledge of essences would only be possible by "bracketing" all assumptions about the existence of an external world and the inessential (subjective) aspects of how the object is concretely given to us. This procedure Husserl called *epoché*.

Husserl in a later period concentrated more on the ideal, essential structures of consciousness. As he wanted to exclude any hypothesis on the existence of external objects, he introduced the method of phenomenological reduction to eliminate them. What was left over was the pure transcendental ego, as opposed to the concrete empirical ego. Now Transcendental Phenomenology is the study of the essential structures that are left in pure consciousness: This amounts in practice to the study of the noemata and the relations among them. The philosopher Theodor Adorno criticised Husserl's concept of phenomenological epistemology in his metacritique *Against Epistemology*, which is anti-foundationalist in its stance.

Transcendental phenomenologists include Oskar Becker, Aron Gurwitsch, and Alfred Schutz.

Realist phenomenology

After Husserl's publication of the *Ideen* in 1913, many phenomenologists took a critical stance towards his new theories. Especially the members of the Munich group distanced themselves from his new transcendental phenomenology and preferred the earlier realist phenomenology of the first edition of the *Logical Investigations*.

Realist phenomenologists include Adolf Reinach, Alexander Pfänder, Johannes Daubert, Max Scheler, Roman Ingarden, Nicolai Hartmann, Dietrich von Hildebrand.

Existential phenomenology

Main article: Existential phenomenology

Existential phenomenology differs from transcendental phenomenology by its rejection of the transcendental ego. Merleau-Ponty objects to the ego's transcendence of the world, which for Husserl leaves the world spread out and completely transparent before the conscious. Heidegger thinks of a conscious being as always already in the world. Transcendence is maintained in existential phenomenology to the extent that the method of phenomenology must take a presuppositionless starting point - transcending claims about the world arising from, for example, natural or scientific attitudes or theories of the ontological nature of the world.

While Husserl thought of philosophy as a scientific discipline that had to be founded on a phenomenology understood as epistemology, Heidegger held a radically different view. Heidegger himself states their differences

this way:

> *For Husserl, the phenomenological reduction is the method of leading phenomenological vision from the natural attitude of the human being whose life is involved in the world of things and persons back to the transcendental life of consciousness and its noetic-noematic experiences, in which objects are constituted as correlates of consciousness. For us, phenomenological reduction means leading phenomenological vision back from the apprehension of a being, whatever may be the character of that apprehension, to the understanding of the Being of this being (projecting upon the way it is unconcealed).*

According to Heidegger, philosophy was not at all a scientific discipline, but more fundamental than science itself. According to him science is only one way of knowing the world with no special access to truth. Furthermore, the scientific mindset itself is built on a much more "primordial" foundation of practical, everyday knowledge. Husserl was skeptical of this approach, which he regarded as quasi-mystical, and it contributed to the divergence in their thinking.

Instead of taking phenomenology as *prima philosophia* or a foundational discipline, Heidegger took it as a metaphysical ontology: "*being is the proper and sole theme of philosophy*... this means that philosophy is not a science of beings but of being.". Yet to confuse phenomenology and ontology is an obvious error. Phenomena are not the foundation or Ground of Being. Neither are they appearances, for, as Heidegger argues in *Being and Time*, an appearance is "that which shows itself in something else," while a phenomenon is "that which shows itself in itself."

While for Husserl, in the epoché, being appeared only as a correlate of consciousness, for Heidegger being is the starting point. While for Husserl we would have to abstract from all concrete determinations of our empirical ego, to be able to turn to the field of pure consciousness, Heidegger claims that "the possibilities and destinies of philosophy are bound up with man's existence, and thus with temporality and with historicality."

However, ontological being and existential being are different categories, so Heidegger's conflation of these categories is, according to Husserl's view, the root of Heidegger's error. Husserl charged Heidegger with raising the question of ontology but failing to answer it, instead switching the topic to the Dasein, the only being for whom Being is an issue. That is neither ontology nor phenomenology, according to Husserl, but merely abstract anthropology. To clarify, perhaps, by abstract anthropology, as a non-existentialist searching for essences, Husserl rejected the existentialism implicit in Heidegger's distinction between being (sein) as things in reality and Being (Da-sein) as the encounter with being, as when being becomes present to us, that is, is unconcealed.[18]

Existential phenomenologists include: Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995), Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961).

Eastern thought

Some researchers in phenomenology (in particular in reference to Heidegger's legacy) see possibilities of establishing dialogues with traditions of thought outside of the so-called Western philosophy, particularly with respect to East-Asian thinking, and despite perceived differences between "Eastern" and "Western".[19] Furthermore, it has been claimed that a number of elements within phenomenology (mainly Heidegger's thought) have some resonance with Eastern philosophical ideas, particularly with Zen Buddhism and Taoism.[20] According to Tomonubu Imamichi, the concept of *Dasein* was inspired — although Heidegger remained silent on this — by Okakura Kakuzo's concept of *das-in-der-Welt-sein* (being in the world) expressed in *The Book of Tea* to describe Zhuangzi's philosophy, which Imamichi's teacher had offered to Heidegger in 1919, after having studied with him the year before.[21]

There are also recent signs of the reception of phenomenology (and Heidegger's thought in particular) within scholarly circles focused on studying the impetus of metaphysics in the history of ideas in Islam and Early Islamic philosophy;[22] perhaps under the indirect influence of the tradition of the French Orientalist and philosopher Henri

Corbin.[23]

In addition, the work of Jim Ruddy in the field of comparative philosophy, combined the concept of Transcendental Ego in Husserl's phenomenology with the concept of the primacy of self-consciousness in the work of Sankaracharya. In the course of this work, Ruddy uncovered a wholly new eidetic phenomenological science, which he called "convergent phenomenology." This new phenomenology takes over where Husserl left off, and deals with the constitution of relation-like, rather than merely thing-like, or "intentional" objectivity.[24]

Technoethics

Phenomenological approach to technology

James Moor has argued that computers show up policy vacuums that require new thinking and the establishment of new policies.[25] Others have argued that the resources provided by classical ethical theory such as utilitarianism, consequentialism and deontological ethics is more than enough to deal with all the ethical issues emerging from our design and use of information technology.[26]

For the phenomenologist the ‘impact view’ of technology as well as the constructivist view of the technology/society relationships is valid but not adequate (Heidegger 1977, Borgmann 1985, Winograd and Flores 1987, Ihde 1990, Dreyfus 1992, 2001). They argue that these accounts of technology, and the technology/society relationship, posit technology and society as if speaking about the one does not immediately and already draw upon the other for its ongoing sense or meaning. For the phenomenologist, society and technology co-constitute each other; they are each other's ongoing condition, or possibility for being what they are. For them technology is not just the artifact. Rather, the artifact already emerges from a prior ‘technological’ attitude towards the world (Heidegger 1977).

Heidegger’s approach (pre-technological age)

For Heidegger the essence of technology is the way of being of modern humans—a way of conducting themselves towards the world—that sees the world as something to be ordered and shaped in line with projects, intentions and desires—a ‘will to power’ that manifests itself as a ‘will to technology'.[27] Heidegger claims that there were other times in human history, a pre-modern time, where humans did not orient themselves towards the world in a technological way—simply as resources for our purposes.

However, according to Heidegger this ‘pre-technological’ age (or mood) is one where humans’ relation with the world and artifacts, their way of being disposed, was poetic and aesthetic rather than technological (enframing). There are many who disagree with Heidegger's account of the modern technological attitude as the ‘enframing’ of the world.[28] For example Andrew Feenberg argues that Heidegger's account of modern technology is not borne out in contemporary everyday encounters with technology.

The Hubert Dreyfus approach (contemporary society)

In critiquing the artificial intelligence (AI) programme Hubert Dreyfus (1992) argues that the way skill development has become understood in the past has been wrong. He argues, this is the model that the early artificial intelligence community uncritically adopted. In opposition to this view he argues, with Heidegger, that what we observe when we learn a new skill in everyday practice is in fact the opposite. We most often start with explicit rules or preformulated approaches and then move to a multiplicity of particular cases, as we become an expert. His argument draws directly on Heidegger's account in Being and Time of humans as beings that are always already situated in-the-world. As humans ‘in-the-world’ we are already experts at going about everyday life, at dealing with the subtleties of every particular situation—that is why everyday life seems so obvious. Thus, the intricate expertise of everyday activity is forgotten and taken for granted by AI as an assumed starting point. What Dreyfus highlighted in his critique of AI was the fact that technology (AI algorithms) does not make sense by itself. It is the assumed, and forgotten, horizon of everyday practice that make technological devices and solutions show up as meaningful. If we

are to understand technology we need to 'return' to the horizon of meaning that made it show up as the artifacts we need, want and desire. We also need to consider how these technologies reveal (or disclose) us.

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[7] Partially based on

[8] Ernst Benz, Christian Kabbalah: Neglected Child of Theology

[9] Lambert, Johann Heinrich (1772). Anmerkungen und Zusätze zur Entwerfung der Land- und Himmelscharten. Von J. H. Lambert (1772.) Hrsg. von A. Wangerin. Mit 21 Textfiguren. (xml). W. Engelmann, reprint 1894.

[10] Creating Leaders: An Ontological/Phenomenological Model, by Werner Erhard, Michael C, Jensen and Kari Granger http://ssrn.com/abstract=1681682

[11] http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/intentionality/

[12] http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=intent

[13] Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Cambridge University Press (2000). Pp. 159–160. This use of the word evidence may seem strange in English, but is more common in German, which is the language Husserl wrote in.

[14] Sokolowski, *Introduction*, pp. 160–161.

[15] I.e. if A loves B, loving is a real part of A's conscious activity - Noesis - but gets its sense from the general concept of loving, which has an abstract or ideal meaning, as "loving" has a meaning in the English language independently of what an individual means by the word when they use it.

[16] For a full account of the controversy and a review of positions taken, see David Woodruff Smith, *Husserl*, Routledge, 2007, pp304-311.

[17] On the *Logical Investigations*, see

and

[18] I have attempted to respond to the request for clarification of Heidegger's distinction between being and Being. My info source was http://www.uni.edu/boedeker/NNhHeidegger2.doc.It was not copied and pasted but rephrased for copyright reasons.

[19] See for instance references to Heidegger's "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," in *On the Way to Language* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). Heidegger himself had contacts with some leading Japanese intellectuals, including members of the Kyoto School, notably Hajime Tanabe, Kuki Shūzō and Kiyoshi Miki.

[20] An account given by Paul Hsao (in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*) records a remark by Chang Chung-Yuan claiming that "Heidegger is the only Western Philosopher who not only intellectually understands but has intuitively grasped Taoist thought"

[21] Tomonubu Imamichi, *In Search of Wisdom. One Philosopher's Journey*, Tokyo, International House of Japan, 2004 (quoted by Anne Fagot-Largeau during her lesson (http://www.college-de-france.fr/default/EN/all/phi_sci/p1184676830986.htm) at the Collège de France on December 7, 2006).

[22] See for instance: Nader El-Bizri, *The Phenomenological Quest between Avicenna and Heidegger* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Global Publications SUNY, 2000) ISBN 1-58684-005-3

[23] A book-series under the title: *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue* (http://www.springer.com/series/6137) has been recently established by Springer (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht) in association with the World Phenomenology Institute (http://www.phenomenology.org/). This initiative has been initiated by the Polish phenomenologist Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, editor of *Analecta Husserliana*.

[24] See the thesis, "Convergent Phenomenology," presented to the University of Madras, June, 1979.

[25] Moor, J. H. (1985). "What Is Computer Ethics?" In T. W. Bynum (ed.), Computersand Ethics. Blackwell.

[26] Bernard, G. (1999). Common Morality and Computing. Ethics and Information Technology 1(1).

[27] Introna, L. (2005) Disclosing the Digital Face: The ethics of facial recognition systems, Ethics and Information Technology, 7(2)

[28] Feenberg, A. (1999) 'Technology and Meaning', in Questioning Technology, London and New York: Routledge.

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External links

- The dictionary definition of phenomenology at Wiktionary
- What is Phenomenology? (http://www.phenomenologycenter.org/phenom.htm)
- About Edmund Husserl (http://www.husserlpage.com/)
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Nous

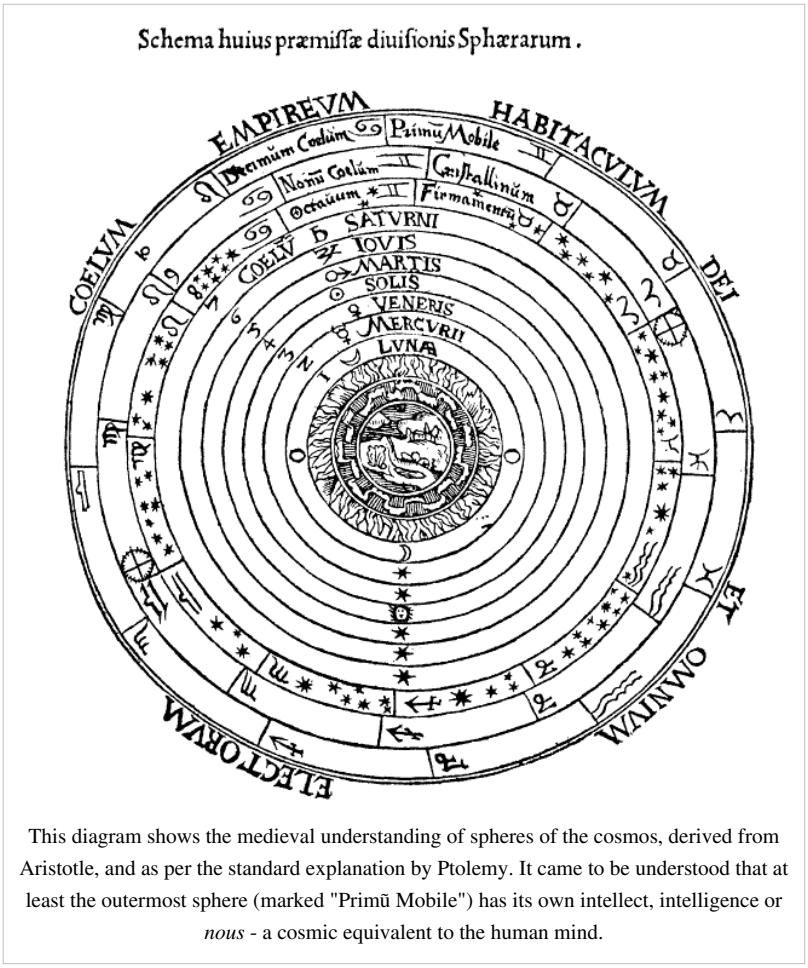
For the philosophy journal, see Noûs.

> *This article is about the concept of nous or intellect in philosophy. See also Intelligence (disambiguation) and Intellect (disambiguation).*

Nous (British: /ˈnaʊs/; US: /ˈnuːs/), sometimes equated to **intellect** or **intelligence**, is a philosophical term for the faculty of the human mind which is described in classical philosophy as necessary for understanding what is true or real, similar in meaning to intuition. The three commonly used philosophical terms are from Greek, νοῦς or νόος, and Latin *intellectus* and *intelligentia* respectively.

In philosophy, common English translations include "understanding" and "mind"; or sometimes "thought" or "reason" (in the sense of that which reasons, not the activity of reasoning).[1][2] It is also often described as something equivalent to perception except that it works within the mind ("the mind's eye").[3] It has been suggested that the basic meaning is something like "awareness".[4] To describe the activity of this faculty, apart from verbs based on "understanding", the word "intellection" is sometimes used in philosophical contexts, and the Greek words *noēsis* and *noein* are sometimes also used. In colloquial British English, *nous* also denotes "good sense", which is close to one everyday meaning it had in Ancient Greece.

In Aristotle's influential works, the term was carefully distinguished from sense perception, imagination and reason, although these terms are closely inter-related. The term was apparently already singled out by earlier philosophers such as Parmenides, whose works are largely lost. In post-Aristotelian discussions, the exact boundaries between perception, understanding of perception, and reasoning have not always agreed with the definitions of Aristotle, even though his terminology remains influential.



This diagram shows the medieval understanding of spheres of the cosmos, derived from Aristotle, and as per the standard explanation by Ptolemy. It came to be understood that at least the outermost sphere (marked "Primũ Mobile") has its own intellect, intelligence or *nous* - a cosmic equivalent to the human mind.

In the Aristotelian scheme, *nous* is the basic understanding or awareness which allows human beings to think rationally. For Aristotle, this was distinct from the processing of sensory perception, including the use of imagination and memory, which other animals can do. This therefore connects discussion of *nous*, to discussion of how the human mind sets definitions in a consistent and communicable way, and whether people must be born with some innate potential to understand the same universal categories the same logical ways. Deriving from this it was also sometimes argued, especially in classical and medieval philosophy, that the individual *nous* must require help of a spiritual and divine type. By this type of account, it came to be argued that the human understanding (*nous*) somehow stems from this cosmic *nous*, which is however not just a recipient of order, but a creator of it. Such explanations were influential in the development of medieval accounts of God, the immortality of the soul, and even the motions of the stars, in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, amongst both eclectic philosophers and authors representing all the major faiths of their times.

Pre-Socratic usage

In early Greek uses, Homer used *nous* to signify mental activities of both mortals and immortals, for example what they really have on their mind as opposed to what they say aloud. It was one of several words related to thought, thinking, and perceiving with the mind. Amongst pre-Socratic philosophers it became increasingly distinguished as a source of knowledge and reasoning and opposed to mere sense perception, or thinking influenced by the body such as emotion. For example Heraclitus complained that "much learning does not teach *nous*".

The first use of the word *nous* in the *Iliad*. Agamemnon says to Achilles: "Do not thus, mighty though you are, godlike Achilles, seek to deceive me with your wit (*nous*); for you will not get by me nor persuade me."[5]

Among some Greek authors a faculty of intelligence, a "higher mind", came to be considered to be a property of the cosmos as a whole.

The work of Parmenides of Elea set the scene for Greek philosophy to come and the concept of *nous* was central to his radical proposals. He claimed that reality as the senses perceive it is not a world of truth at all, because sense perception is so unreliable, and what is perceived is so uncertain and changeable. Instead he argued for a dualism wherein *nous* and related words (the verb for thinking which describes its mental perceiving activity, *noein*, and the unchanging and eternal objects of this perception *noēta*) describe a form of perception which is not physical, but intellectual only, distinct from sense perception and the objects of sense perception.

Anaxagoras of Clezomenae

Anaxagoras of Clezomenae, born about 500 BC, is the first person who is definitely known to have explained the concept of a *nous* (mind), which arranged all other things in the cosmos in their proper order, started them in a rotating motion, and continuing to control them to some extent, having an especially strong connection with living things. (However Aristotle reports an earlier philosopher from Clezomenae named Hermotimus who had taken a similar position.[6]) Amongst Pre-Socratic philosophers before Anaxagoras, other philosophers had proposed a similar ordering human-like principle causing life and the rotation of the heavens. For example Empedocles, like Hesiod much earlier, described cosmic order and living things as caused by a cosmic version of love,[7] and Pythagoras and Heraclitus, attributed the cosmos with "reason" (*logos*).[8]

According to Anaxagoras the cosmos is made of infinitely divisible matter, every bit of which can inherently become anything, except Mind (*nous*), which is also matter, but which can only be found separated from this general mixture, or else mixed into living things, or in other words in the Greek terminology of the time, things with a soul (*psuchē*).[9] Anaxagoras wrote:

> All other things partake in a portion of everything, while *nous* is infinite and self-ruled, and is mixed with nothing, but is alone, itself by itself. For if it were not by itself, but were mixed with anything else, it would partake in all things if it were mixed with any; for in everything there is a portion of everything, as has been said by me in what goes before, and the things mixed with it would hinder it, so that it would have power over nothing in the same way that it has now being alone by itself. For it is the thinnest of all things and the purest, and it has all knowledge about everything and the greatest strength; and *nous* has power over all things, both greater and smaller, that have soul [*psuchē*].[10]

Concerning cosmology, Anaxagoras, like some Greek philosophers already before him, believed the cosmos was revolving, and had formed into its visible order as a result of such revolving causing a separating and mixing of different types of elements. *Nous*, in his system, originally caused this revolving motion to start, but it does not necessarily continue to play a role once the mechanical motion has started. His description was in other words (shockingly for the time) corporeal or mechanical, with the moon made of earth, the sun and stars made of red hot metal (beliefs Socrates was later accused of holding during his trial) and *nous* itself being a physical fine type of matter which also gathered and concentrated with the development of the cosmos. This *nous* (mind) is not incorporeal; it is the thinnest of all things. The distinction between *nous* and other things nevertheless causes his scheme to sometimes be described as a peculiar kind of dualism.

Anaxagoras' concept of *nous* was distinct from later platonic and neoplatonic cosmologies in many ways, which were also influenced by Eleatic, Pythagorean and other pre Socratic ideas, as well as the Socratics themselves.

In ancient Indian Philosophy also, a "higher mind", came to be considered to be a property of the cosmos as a whole.[11]

Socratic philosophy

Xenophon

Xenophon, the less famous of the two students of Socrates whose written accounts of him have survived, recorded that he taught his students a kind of teleological justification of piety and respect for divine order in nature. This has been described as an "intelligent design" argument for the existence of God, in which nature has its own *nous*.[12] For example in his *Memorabilia* 1.4.8 he describes Socrates asking a friend sceptical of religion "Are you, then, of the opinion that intelligence (*nous*) alone exists nowhere and that you by some good chance seized hold of it, while - as you think - those surpassingly large and infinitely numerous things [all the earth and water] are in such orderly condition through some senselessness?" and later in the same discussion he compares the *nous* which directs each person's body, to the good sense (*phronēsis*) of the god which is in everything, arranging things to its pleasure. (1.4.17).[13] Plato describes Socrates making the same argument in his *Philebus* 28d, using the same words *nous* and *phronēsis*.[14]

Plato

Part of a series on
Plato
 Plato from *The School of Athens* by Raphael, 1509
• Early life • Works • Platonism • Epistemology • Idealism / Realism • Demiurge • Theory of Forms • Transcendentals • Form of the Good

• Third man argument • Euthyphro dilemma • Five regimes • Philosopher king
Allegories and metaphors
• Atlantis • Ring of Gyges • The cave • The divided line • The sun • Ship of state • Myth of Er • The chariot
Related articles
• Commentaries • The Academy in Athens • Socratic problem • Middle Platonism • Neoplatonism • and Christianity
• **Philosophy portal**
• v • t • e [15]

See also: Phaedo and Timaeus (dialogue)

Plato used the word *nous* in many ways which were not unusual in the everyday Greek of the time, and often simply meant "good sense" or "awareness".[16] On the other hand, in some of his dialogues it is described by key characters in a higher sense, which was apparently already common. In his *Philebus* 28c he has Socrates say that "all philosophers agree—whereby they really exalt themselves—that mind (*nous*) is king of heaven and earth. Perhaps they are right." and later states that the ensuing discussion "confirms the utterances of those who declared of old that mind (*nous*) always rules the universe".[17]

In his *Cratylus*, Plato gives the etymology of Athena's name, the goddess of wisdom, from *Atheonóa* (Ἀθεονόα) meaning "god's (*theos*) mind (*nous*)". In his *Phaedo*, Plato's teacher Socrates is made to say just before dying that his discovery of Anaxagoras' concept of a cosmic *nous* as the cause of the order of things, was an important turning point for him. But he also expressed disagreement with Anaxagoras' understanding of the implications of his own doctrine, because of Anaxagoras' materialist understanding of causation. Socrates said that Anaxagoras would "give voice and air and hearing and countless other things of the sort as causes for our talking with each other, and should fail to mention the real causes, which are, that the Athenians decided that it was best to condemn me".[18] On the other hand Socrates seems to suggest that he also failed to develop a fully satisfactory teleological and dualistic understanding of a mind of nature, whose aims represent the good things which all parts of nature aim at.

Concerning the *nous* which is the source of understanding of individuals, Plato is widely understood to have used ideas from Parmenides in addition to Anaxagoras. Like Parmenides, Plato argued that relying on sense perception can never lead to true knowledge, only opinion. Instead, Plato's more philosophical characters argue that *nous* must somehow perceive truth directly in the ways gods and daimons perceive. What our mind sees directly in order to really understand things must not be the constantly changing material things, but unchanging entities that exist in a different way, the so-called "forms" or "ideas". However he knew that contemporary philosophers often argued (as in modern science) that *nous* and perception are just two aspects of one physical activity, and that perception is the

source of knowledge and understanding (not the other way around).

Just exactly how Plato believed that the *nous* of people lets them come to understand things in any way which improves upon sense perception and the kind of thinking which animals have, is a subject of long running discussion and debate. On the one hand, in the *Republic* Plato's Socrates, in the so-called "metaphor of the sun", and "allegory of the cave" describes people as being able to perceive more clearly because of something from outside themselves, something like when the sun shines, helping eyesight. The source of this illumination for the intellect is referred to as the Form of the Good. On the other hand, in the *Meno* for example, Plato's Socrates explains the theory of *anamnesis* whereby people are born with ideas already in their soul, which they somehow remember from previous lives. Both theories were to become highly influential.

As in Xenophon, Plato's Socrates frequently describes the soul in a political way, with ruling parts, and parts which are by nature meant to be ruled. *Nous* is associated with the rational (*logistikon*) part of the individual human soul, which by nature should rule. In his *Republic*, in the so-called "analogy of the divided line", it has a special function within this rational part. Plato tended to treat *nous* as the only immortal part of the soul.

Concerning the cosmos, in the *Timaeus*, the title character also tells a "likely story" in which *nous* is responsible for the creative work of the demiurge or maker who brought rational order to our universe. This craftsman imitated what he perceived in the world of eternal Forms. In the *Philebus* Socrates argues that *nous* in individual humans must share in a cosmic *nous*, in the same way that human bodies are made up of small parts of the elements found in the rest of the universe. And this *nous* must be in the *genos* of being a cause of all particular things as particular things.[19]

Aristotle

See also: Noesis, Dianoia and Active Intellect

Part of a series on the

Corpus Aristotelicum

Logic (*Organon*)

- *Categories*
- *On Interpretation*
- *Prior Analytics*
- *Posterior Analytics*
- *Topics*
- *Sophistical Refutations*

Natural philosophy (physics)

- *Physics*
- *On the Heavens*
- *On Generation and Corruption*
- *Meteorology*

Like Plato, Aristotle saw the *nous* or intellect of an individual as somehow similar to sense perception but also distinct.[21] Sense perception in action provides images to the *nous*, via the "*sensus communis*" and imagination, without which thought could not occur. But other animals have *sensus communis* and imagination, whereas none of them have *nous*.[22] Aristotelians divide perception of forms into the animal-like one which perceives *species sensibilis* or *sensible forms*, and *species intelligibilis* that are perceived in a different way by the *nous*.

Like Plato, Aristotle linked *nous* to *logos* (reason) as uniquely human, but he also distinguished *nous* from *logos*, thereby distinguishing the faculty for setting definitions from the faculty which uses them to reason with.[23] In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI Aristotle divides the soul (*psuchē*) into two parts, one which has reason and one which does not, but then divides the part which has reason into the reasoning (*logistikos*) part itself which is lower, and the higher "knowing" (*epistēmonikos*) part which contemplates general principles (*archai*). *Nous*, he states, is the source of the first principles or sources (*archai*) of definitions, and it develops naturally as people gain experience.[24] This he explains after first comparing the four other truth revealing capacities of soul: technical know how (*technē*), logically deduced knowledge (*epistēmē*, sometimes translated as "scientific knowledge"), practical wisdom (*phronēsis*), and lastly theoretical wisdom (*sophia*), which is defined by Aristotle as the combination of *nous* and *epistēmē*. All of these others apart from *nous* are types of reason (*logos*).

> And intellect [*nous*] is directed at what is ultimate on both sides, since it is intellect and not reason [*logos*] that is directed at both the first terms [*horoi*] and the ultimate particulars, on the one side at the changeless first terms in demonstrations, and on the other side, in thinking about action, at the other sort of premise, the variable particular; for these particulars are the sources [*archai*] from which one discerns that for the sake of which an action is, since the universals are derived from the particulars. Hence intellect is both a beginning and an end, since the demonstrations that are derived from these particulars are also about these. And of these one must have perception, and this perception is intellect.[25]

Aristotle's philosophical works continue many of the same Socratic themes as his teacher Plato. Amongst the new proposals he made was a way of explaining causality, and *nous* is an important part of his explanation. As mentioned above, Plato criticized Anaxagoras' materialism, or understanding that the intellect of nature only set the cosmos in motion, but is no longer seen as the cause of physical events. Aristotle explained that the changes of things can be described in terms of four causes at the same time. Two of these four causes are similar to the materialist understanding: each thing has a material which causes it to be how it is, and some other thing which set in motion or initiated some process of change. But at the same time according to Aristotle each thing is also caused by the natural forms they are tending to become, and the natural ends or aims, which somehow exist in nature as causes, even in cases where human plans and aims are not involved. These latter two causes (the "formal" and "final"), are concepts no longer used in modern science, and encompass the continuous effect of the intelligent ordering principle of nature itself. Aristotle's special description of causality is especially apparent in the natural development of living things. It leads to a method whereby Aristotle analyses causation and motion in terms of the potentialities and actualities of all things, whereby all matter possesses various possibilities or potentialities of form and end, and these possibilities become more fully real as their potential forms become actual or active reality (something they will do on their own, by nature, unless stopped because of other natural things happening). For example a stone has in its nature the potentiality of falling to the earth and it will do so, and actualize this natural tendency, if nothing is in the way.

Aristotle analyzed thinking in the same way. For him, the possibility of understanding rests on the relationship between intellect and sense perception. Aristotle's remarks on the concept of what came to be called the "active intellect" and "passive intellect" (along with various other terms) are amongst "the most intensely studied sentences in the history of philosophy". The terms are derived from a single passage in Aristotle's *De Anima*, Book III. Following is the translation of one of those passages[26] with some key Greek words shown in square brackets.

> ...since in nature one thing is the material [*hulē*] for each kind [*genos*] (this is what is in potency all the particular things of that kind) but it is something else that is the causal and productive thing by which all of them are formed, as is the case with an art in relation to its material, it is necessary in the soul [*psuchē*] too that these distinct aspects be present;
>
> the one sort is intellect [*nous*] by becoming all things, the other sort by forming all things, in the way an active condition [*hexis*] like light too makes the colors that are in potency be at work as colors [*to phōs poiei ta dunamei onta chrōmata energeiai chrōmata*].
>
> This sort of intellect [which is like light in the way it makes potential things work as what they are] is separate, as well as being without attributes and unmixed, since it is by its thinghood a being-at-work [*energeia*], for what acts is always distinguished in stature above what is acted upon, as a governing source is above the material it works on.
>
> Knowledge [*epistēmē*], in its being-at-work, is the same as the thing it knows, and while knowledge in potency comes first in time in any one knower, in the whole of things it does not take precedence even in time.
>
> This does not mean that at one time it thinks but at another time it does not think, but when separated it is just exactly what it is, and this alone is deathless and everlasting (though we have no memory, because this sort of intellect is not acted upon, while the sort that is acted upon is destructible), and without this nothing thinks.

The passage tries to explain "how the human intellect passes from its original state, in which it does not think, to a subsequent state, in which it does" according to his distinction between potentiality and actuality. Aristotle says that the passive intellect receives the intelligible forms of things, but that the active intellect is required to make the potential knowledge into actual knowledge, in the same way that light makes potential colors into actual colors. As Davidson remarks:

> Just what Aristotle meant by potential intellect and active intellect - terms not even explicit in the *De anima* and at best implied - and just how he understood the interaction between them remains moot.

> Students of the history of philosophy continue to debate Aristotle's intent, particularly the question whether he considered the active intellect to be an aspect of the human soul or an entity existing independently of man.

The passage is often read together with *Metaphysics*, Book XII, ch.7-10, where Aristotle makes *nous* as an actuality a central subject within a discussion of the cause of being and the cosmos. In that book, Aristotle equates active *nous*, when people think and their *nous* becomes what they think about, with the "unmoved mover" of the universe, and God: "For the actuality of thought (*nous*) is life, and God is that actuality; and the essential actuality of God is life most good and eternal."[27] Alexander of Aphrodisias, for example, equated this active intellect which is God with the one explained in *De Anima*, while Themistius thought they could not be simply equated. (See below.)

Like Plato before him, Aristotle believes Anaxagoras' cosmic *nous* implies and requires the cosmos to have intentions or ends: "Anaxagoras makes the Good a principle as causing motion; for Mind (*nous*) moves things, but moves them for some end, and therefore there must be some other Good—unless it is as we say; for on our view the art of medicine is in a sense health."[28]

In the philosophy of Aristotle the soul (psyche) of a body is what makes it alive, and is its actualized form; thus, every living thing, including plant life, has a soul. The mind or intellect (*nous*) can be described variously as a power, faculty, part, or aspect of the human soul. It should be noted that for Aristotle soul and *nous* are not the same. He did not rule out the possibility that *nous* might survive without the rest of the soul, as in Plato, but he specifically says that this immortal *nous* does not include any memories or anything else specific to an individual's life. In his *Generation of Animals* Aristotle specifically says that while other parts of the soul come from the parents, physically, the human *nous*, must come from outside, into the body, because it is divine or godly, and it has nothing in common with the *energeia* of the body.[29] This was yet another passage which Alexander of Aphrodisias would link to those mentioned above from *De Anima* and the *Metaphysics* in order to understand Aristotle's intentions.

Post Aristotelian classical theories

Until the early modern era, much of the discussion which has survived today concerning *nous* or intellect, in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, concerned how to correctly interpret Aristotle and Plato. However, at least during the classical period, materialist philosophies, more similar to modern science, such as Epicureanism, were still relatively common also. The Epicureans believed that the bodily senses themselves were not the cause of error, but the interpretations can be. The term *prolepsis* was used by Epicureans to describe the way the mind forms general concepts from sense perceptions.

To the Stoics, more like Heraclitus than Anaxagoras, order in the cosmos comes from an entity called logos, the cosmic reason. But as in Anaxagoras this cosmic reason, like human reason but higher, is connected to the reason of individual humans. The Stoics however, did not invoke incorporeal causation, but attempted to explain physics and human thinking in terms of matter and forces. As in Aristotelianism, they explained the interpretation of sense data requiring the mind to be stamped or formed with ideas, and that people have shared conceptions that help them make sense of things (*koine ennoia*). *Nous* for them is soul "somehow disposed" (*pôs echon*), the soul being somehow disposed *pneuma*, which is fire or air or a mixture. As in Plato, they treated *nous* as the ruling part of the soul.

Plutarch criticized the Stoic idea of *nous* being corporeal, and agreed with Plato that the soul is more divine than the body while *nous* (mind) is more divine than the soul. The mix of soul and body produces pleasure and pain; the conjunction of mind and soul produces reason which is the cause or the source of virtue and vice. (From: “On the Face in the Moon”) [30]

Albinus was one of the earliest authors to equate Aristotle's *nous* as prime mover of the Universe, with Plato's Form of the Good.

Alexander of Aphrodisias

Main article: Alexander of Aphrodisias

Alexander of Aphrodisias was a Peripatetic (Aristotelian) and his *On the Soul* (referred to as *De anima* in its traditional Latin title), explained that by his interpretation of Aristotle, potential intellect in man, that which has no nature but receives one from the active intellect, is material, and also called the "material intellect" (*nous hulikos*) and it is inseparable from the body, being "only a disposition" of it.[31] He argued strongly against the doctrine of immortality. On the other hand, he identified the active intellect (*nous poietikos*), through whose agency the potential intellect in man becomes actual, not with anything from within people, but with the divine creator itself. In the early Renaissance his doctrine of the soul's mortality was adopted by Pietro Pomponazzi against the Thomists and the Averroists. For him, the only possible human immortality is an immortality of a detached human thought, more specifically when the *nous* has as the object of its thought the active intellect itself, or another incorporeal intelligible form.[32]

Alexander was also responsible for influencing the development of several more technical terms concerning the intellect, which became very influential amongst the great Islamic philosophers, Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes.

- The intellect *in habitu* is a stage in which the human intellect has taken possession of a repertoire of thoughts, and so is potentially able to think those thoughts, but is not yet thinking these thoughts.
- The intellect from outside, which became the "acquired intellect" in Islamic philosophy, describes the incorporeal active intellect which comes from outside man, and becomes an object of thought, making the material intellect actual and active. This term may have come from a particularly expressive translation of Alexander into Arabic. Plotinus also used such a term.[33] In any case, in Al-Farabi and Avicenna, the term took on a new meaning, distinguishing it from the active intellect in any simple sense - an ultimate stage of the human intellect where the a kind of close relationship (a "conjunction") is made between a person's active intellect and the transcendental *nous* itself.

Themistius

Main article: Themistius

Themistius, another influential commentator on this matter, understood Aristotle differently, stating that the passive or material intellect does "not employ a bodily organ for its activity, is wholly unmixed with the body, impassive, and separate [from matter]".[34] This means the human potential intellect, and not only the active intellect, is an incorporeal substance, or a disposition of incorporeal substance. For Themistius, the human soul becomes immortal "as soon as the active intellect intertwines with it at the outset of human thought".

This understanding of the intellect was also very influential for Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, and "virtually all Islamic and Jewish philosophers".[35] On the other hand concerning the active intellect, like Alexander and Plotinus, he saw this as a transcendent being existing above and outside man. Differently from Alexander, he did not equate this being with the first cause of the Universe itself, but something lower.[36] However he equated it with Plato's Idea of the Good.[37]

Plotinus and neoplatonism

Main articles: Plotinus, Neoplatonism, Porphyry (philosopher) and Proclus

Of the later Greek and Roman writers Plotinus, the intiator of neoplatonism, is particularly significant. Like Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius, he saw himself as a commentator explaining the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle. But in his *Enneads* he went further than those authors, often working from passages which had been presented more tentatively, possibly inspired partly by earlier authors such as the neopythagorean Numenius of Apamea. Neoplatonism provided a major inspiration to discussion concerning the intellect in late classical and medieval philosophy, theology and cosmology.

In neoplatonism there exists several levels or *hypostases* of being, including the natural and visible world as a lower part.

- The Monad or "the One" sometimes also described as "the Good", based on the concept as it is found in Plato. This is the *dunamis* or possibility of existence. It causes the other levels by emanation.
- The *Nous* (usually translated as "Intellect", or "Intelligence" in this context, or sometimes "mind" or "reason") is described as God, or more precisely an image of God, often referred to as the *Demiurge*. It thinks its own contents, which are thoughts, equated to the Platonic ideas or forms (*eide*). The thinking of this Intellect is the highest *activity* of life. The *actualization* (*energeia*) of this thinking is the being of the forms. This Intellect is the first principle or foundation of existence. The One is prior to it, but not in the sense that a normal cause is prior to an effect, but instead Intellect is called an emanation of the One. The One is the possibility of this foundation of existence.
- Soul (*psuchē*). The soul is also an *energeia*: it acts upon or *actualizes* its own thoughts and creates "a separate, material cosmos that is the living image of the spiritual or noetic Cosmos contained as a unified thought within the Intelligence". So it is the soul which perceives things in nature physically, which it understands to be reality. Soul in Plotinus plays a role similar to the potential intellect in Aristotelian terminology.
- Lowest is matter.

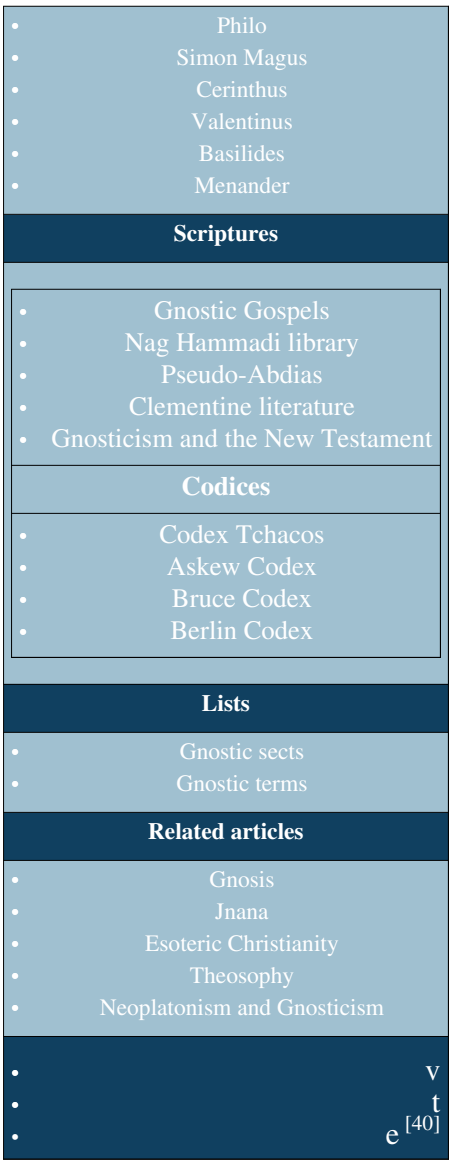
This was based largely upon Plotinus' reading of Plato, but also incorporated many Aristotelian concepts, including the Unmoved Mover as *energeia*.[38] They also incorporated a theory of *anamnesis*, or knowledge coming from the past lives of our immortal souls, like that found in some of Plato's dialogues.

Later Platonists distinguished a hierarchy of three separate manifestations of *nous*, like Numenius of Apamea had.[39] Notable later neoplatonists include Porphyry and Proclus.

Medieval *nous* in religion

Greek philosophy had an influence on the major religions which defined the Middle Ages, and one aspect of this was the concept of *nous*.

Gnosticism



Main articles: Gnosticism and Neoplatonism and Gnosticism

Gnosticism was a late classical movement which incorporated ideas inspired by neoplatonism and neopythagoreanism, but which was more a syncretic religious movement than an accepted philosophical movement.

Valentinus

Main article: Valentinus (Gnostic)

In the Valentinian system, *Nous* is the first male *Aeon*. Together with his conjugate female *Aeon*, *Aletheia* (truth), he emanates from the *Propator Bythos* and his coeternal *Ennoia* or *Sige*; and these four form the primordial Tetrad. Like the other male *Aeons* he is sometimes regarded as androgynous, including in himself the female *Aeon* who is paired with him. He is the Only Begotten; and is styled the Father, the Beginning of all, inasmuch as from him are derived immediately or mediately the remaining *Aeons* who complete the *Ogdoad* (eight), thence the *Decad* (ten), and thence the *Dodecad* (twenty); in all thirty, *Aeons* constituting the *Pleroma*. He alone is capable of knowing the *Propator*; but when he desired to impart like knowledge to the other *Aeons*, was withheld from so doing by *Sige*. When *Sophia* (wisdom), youngest *Aeon* of the thirty, was brought into peril by her yearning after this knowledge, *Nous* was foremost of the *Aeons* in interceding for her. From him, or through him from the *Propator*, Horos was sent to restore her. After her restoration, *Nous*, according to the providence of the *Propator*, produced another pair, Christ and the Holy Spirit, "in order to give fixity and steadfastness (*eis pēxin kai stērigmon*) to the *Pleroma*." For this

Christ teaches the *Aeons* to be content to know that the *Propator* is in himself incomprehensible, and can be perceived only through the Only Begotten (*Nous*).[41]

Basilides

Main article: Basilides

A similar conception of *Nous* appears in the later teaching of the Basilidean School, according to which he is the first begotten of the Unbegotten Father, and himself the parent of *Logos*, from whom emanate successively *Phronesis*, *Sophia*, and *Dunamis*. But in this teaching *Nous* is identified with Christ, is named Jesus, is sent to save those that believe, and returns to Him who sent him, after a passion which is apparent only,—Simon the Cyrenian being substituted for him on the cross.[42] It is probable, however, that *Nous* had a place in the original system of Basilides himself; for his *Ogdoad*, "the great Archon of the universe, the ineffable"[43] is apparently made up of the five members named by Irenaeus (as above), together with two whom we find in Clement,[44] *Dikaiosyne* and *Eirene*,—added to the originating Father.

Simon Magus

Main article: Simon Magus

The antecedent of these systems is that of Simon,[45] of whose six "roots" emanating from the Unbegotten Fire, *Nous* is first. The correspondence of these "roots" with the first six *Aeons* which Valentinus derives from *Bythos*, is noted by Hippolytus.[46] Simon says in his *Apophasis Megalē*,[47]

> There are two offshoots of the entire ages, having neither beginning nor end.... Of these the one appears from above, the great power, the *Nous* of the universe, administering all things, male; the other from beneath, the great *Epinoia*, female, bringing forth all things.

To *Nous* and *Epinoia* correspond Heaven and Earth, in the list given by Simon of the six material counterparts of his six emanations. The identity of this list with the six material objects alleged by Herodotus[48] to be worshipped by the Persians, together with the supreme place given by Simon to Fire as the primordial power, leads us to look to Persia for the origin of these systems in one aspect. In another, they connect themselves with the teaching of Pythagoras and of Plato.

Gospel of Mary

Main article: Gospel of Mary

According to the *Gospel of Mary*, Jesus himself articulates the essence of *Nous*:

> "There where is the *nous*, lies the treasure." Then I said to him: "Lord, when someone meets you in a Moment of Vision, is it through the soul [*psuchē*] that they see, or is it through the spirit [*pneuma*]?" The Teacher answered: "It is neither through the soul nor the spirit, but the *nous* between the two which sees the vision..."
>
> —*The Gospel of Mary*, p. 10

Medieval Islamic philosophy

Main articles: Islamic philosophy, Jewish philosophy and Averroism

During the Middle Ages, philosophy itself was in many places seen as opposed to the prevailing monotheistic religions, Islam, Christianity and Judaism. The strongest philosophical tradition for some centuries was amongst Islamic philosophers, who later came to strongly influence the late medieval philosophers of western Christendom, and the Jewish diaspora in the Mediterranean area. While there were earlier Muslim philosophers such as Al Kindi, chronologically the three most influential concerning the intellect were Al Farabi, Avicenna, and finally Averroes, a westerner who lived in Spain and was highly influential in the late Middle Ages amongst Jewish and Christian philosophers.

Al Farabi

Main article: Al Farabi

The exact precedents of Al Farabi's influential philosophical scheme, in which *nous* (Arabic *'aql*) plays an important role, are no longer perfectly clear because of the great loss of texts in the Middle Ages which he would have had access to. He was apparently innovative in at least some points. He was clearly influenced by the same late classical world as neoplatonism, neopythagoreanism, but exactly how is less clear. Plotinus, Themistius and Alexander of Aphrodisias are generally accepted to have been influences. However while these three all placed the active intellect "at or near the top of the hierarchy of being", Al Farabi was clear in making it the lowest ranking in a series of distinct transcendental intelligences. He is the first known person to have done this in a clear way.[49] He was also the first philosopher known to have assumed the existence of a causal hierarchy of celestial spheres, and the incorporeal intelligences parallel to those spheres.[50] Al Farabi also fitted an explanation of prophecy into this scheme, in two levels. According to Davidson (p. 59):

> The lower of the two levels, labeled specifically as "prophecy" (*nubuwwa*), is enjoyed by men who have not yet perfected their intellect, whereas the higher, which Alfarabi sometimes specifically names "revelation" (*w-ḥ-y*), comes exclusively to those who stand at the stage of acquired intellect.

This happens in the imagination (Arabic *mutakhayyila*; Greek *phantasia*), a faculty of the mind already described by Aristotle, which Al Farabi described as serving the rational part of the soul (Arabic *'aql*; Greek *nous*). This faculty of imagination stores sense perceptions (*maḥsūsāt*), disassembles or recombines them, creates figurative or symbolic images (*muḥākāt*) of them which then appear in dreams, visualizes present and predicted events in a way different from conscious deliberation (*rawiyya*). This is under the influence, according to Al Farabi, of the active intellect. Theoretical truth can only be received by this faculty in a figurative or symbolic form, because the imagination is a physical capability and can not receive theoretical information in a proper abstract form. This rarely comes in a waking state, but more often in dreams. The lower type of philosophy is the best possible for the imaginative faculty, but the higher type of prophecy requires not only a receptive imagination, but also the condition of an "acquired intellect", where the human *nous* is in "conjunction" with the active intellect in the sense of God. Such a prophet is also a philosopher. When a philosopher-prophet has the necessary leadership qualities, he becomes philosopher-king.[51]

Avicenna

Main article: Avicenna

In terms of cosmology, according to Davidson (p. 82) "Avicenna's universe has a structure virtually identical with the structure of Alfarabi's" but there are differences in details. As in Al Farabi, there are several levels of intellect, intelligence or *nous*, each of the higher ones being associated with a celestial sphere. Avicenna however details three different types of effect which each of these higher intellects has, each "thinks" both the necessary existence and the possible being of the intelligence one level higher. And each "emanates" downwards the body and soul of its own celestial sphere, and also the intellect at the next lowest level. The active intellect, as in Alfarabi, is the last in the chain. Avicenna sees active intellect as the cause not only of intelligible thought and the forms in the "sublunar" world we people live, but also the matter. (In other words, three effects.)[52]

Concerning the workings of the human soul, Avicenna, like Al Farabi, sees the "material intellect" or potential intellect as something that is not material. He believed the soul was incorporeal, and the potential intellect was a disposition of it which was in the soul from birth. As in Al Farabi there are two further stages of potential for thinking, which are not yet actual thinking, first the mind acquires the most basic intelligible thoughts which we can not think in any other way, such as "the whole is greater than the part", then comes a second level of derivative intelligible thoughts which could be thought. Concerning the actualization of thought, Avicenna applies the term "to two different things, to actual human thought, irrespective of the intellectual progress a man has made, and to actual thought when human intellectual development is complete", as in Al Farabi.[53]

When reasoning in the sense of deriving conclusions from syllogisms, Avicenna says people are using a physical "cogitative" faculty (*mufakkira, fikra*) of the soul, which can err. The human cogitative faculty is the same as the "compositive imaginative faculty (*mutakhayyila*) in reference to the animal soul".[54] But some people can use "insight" to avoid this step and derive conclusions directly by conjoining with the active intellect.[55]

Once a thought has been learned in a soul, the physical faculties of sense perception and imagination become unnecessary, and as a person acquires more thoughts, their soul becomes less connected to their body.[56] For Avicenna, different from the normal Aristotelian position, all of the soul is by nature immortal. But the level of intellectual development does affect the type of afterlife that the soul can have. Only a soul which has reached the highest type of conjunction with the active intellect can form a perfect conjunction with it after the death of the body, and this is a supreme *eudaimonia*. Lesser intellectual achievement means a less happy or even painful afterlife.[57]

Concerning prophecy, Avicenna identifies a broader range of possibilities which fit into this model, which is still similar to that of Al Farabi.[58]

Averroes

Main articles: Averroes and Averroism

Averroes came to be regarded even in Europe as "the Commentator" to "the Philosopher", Aristotle, and his study of the questions surrounding the *nous* were very influential amongst Jewish and Christian philosophers, with some aspects being quite controversial. According to Herbert Davidson, Averroes' doctrine concerning *nous* can be divided into two periods. In the first, neoplatonic emanationism, not found in the original works of Aristotle, was combined with a naturalistic explanation of the human material intellect. "It also insists on the material intellect's having an active intellect as a direct object of thought and conjoining with the active intellect, notions never expressed in the Aristotelian canon." It was this presentation which Jewish philosophers such as Moses Narboni and Gersonides understood to be Averroes'. In the later model of the universe, which was transmitted to Christian philosophers, Averroes "dismisses emanationism and explains the generation of living beings in the sublunar world naturalistically, all in the name of a more genuine Aristotelianism. Yet it abandons the earlier naturalistic conception of the human material intellect and transforms the material intellect into something wholly un-Aristotelian, a single transcendent entity serving all mankind. It nominally salvages human conjunction with the active intellect, but in words that have little content."[59]

This position, that humankind shares one active intellect, was taken up by Parisian philosophers such as Siger of Brabant, but also widely rejected by philosophers such as Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Ramon Lull, and Duns Scotus. Despite being widely considered heretical, the position was later defended by many more European philosophers including John of Jandun, who was the primary link bringing this doctrine from Paris to Bologna. After him this position continued to be defended and also rejected by various writers in northern Italy. In the 16th century it finally became a less common position after the renewal of an "Alexandrian" position based on that of Alexander of Aphrodisias, associated with Pietro Pomponazzi.[60]

Christianity

The Christian New Testament makes mention of the *nous* or *noos* in Romans 7:23 [61], 12:2 [62]; 1 Corinthians 14:14 [63], 14:19 [64]; Ephesians 4:17 [65], 4:23 [66]; 2 Thessalonians 2:2 [67]; and Revelation 17:9 [68]. In the writings of the Christian fathers a sound or pure *nous* is considered essential to the cultivation of wisdom.[69]

Philosophers influencing western Christianity

While philosophical works were not commonly read or taught in the early Middle Ages in most of Europe, the works of authors like Boethius and Augustine of Hippo formed an important exception. Both were influenced by neoplatonism, and were amongst the older works that were still known in the time of the Carolingian Renaissance, and the beginnings of Scholasticism.

In his early years Augustine was heavily influenced by Manichaeism and afterward by the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus. After his conversion to Christianity and baptism (387), he developed his own approach to philosophy and theology, accommodating a variety of methods and different perspectives.[70]

Augustine used neoplatonism selectively. He used both the neoplatonic *Nous*, and the Platonic Form of the Good (or *"The Idea of the Good"*) as equivalent terms for the Christian God, or at least for one particular aspect of God. For example, God, *nous*, can act directly upon matter, and not only through souls, and concerning the souls through which it works upon the world experienced by humanity, some are treated as angels.

Scholasticism becomes more clearly defined much later, as the peculiar native type of philosophy in medieval catholic Europe. In this period, Aristotle became "the Philosopher", and scholastic philosophers, like their Jewish and Muslim contemporaries, studied the concept of the *intellectus* on the basis not only of Aristotle, but also late classical interpreters like Augustine and Boethius. A European tradition of new and direct interpretations of Aristotle developed which was eventually strong enough to argue with partial success against some of the interpretations of Aristotle from the Islamic world, most notably Averroes' doctrine of their being one "active intellect" for all humanity. Notable "Catholic" (as opposed to Averroist) Aristotelians included Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, the founder Thomism, which exists to this day in various forms. Concerning the *nous*, Thomism agrees with those Aristotelians who insist that the intellect is immaterial and separate from any bodily organs, but as per Christian doctrine, the whole of the human soul is immortal, not only the intellect.

Eastern Orthodox

The human *nous* in Eastern Orthodox Christianity is the "eye of the heart or soul" or the "mind of the heart".[71][72][73][74] The soul of man, is created by God in His image, man's soul is intelligent and noetic. Saint Thalassius of Syria wrote that God created beings "with a capacity to receive the Spirit and to attain knowledge of Himself; He has brought into existence the senses and sensory perception to serve such beings". Eastern Orthodox Christians hold that God did this by creating mankind with intelligence and noetic faculties.[75]

Human reasoning is not enough: there will always remain an "irrational residue" which escapes analysis and which can not be expressed in concepts: it is this unknowable depth of things, that which constitutes their true, indefinable essence that also reflects the origin of things in God. In Eastern Christianity it is by faith or intuitive truth that this component of an objects existence is grasped.[76] Though God through his energies draws us to him, his essence remains inaccessible. The operation of faith being the means of free will by which mankind faces the future or unknown, these noetic operations contained in the concept of insight or noesis.[77] Faith (*pistis*) is therefore sometimes used interchangeably with *noesis* in Eastern Christianity.

Angels have intelligence and *nous*, whereas men have reason, both *logos* and *dianoia*, *nous* and sensory perception. This follows the idea that man is a microcosm and an expression of the whole creation or macrocosmos. The human *nous* was darkened after the Fall of Man (which was the result of the rebellion of reason against the *nous*),[78] but after the purification (healing or correction) of the *nous* (achieved through ascetic practices like hesychasm), the human *nous* (the "eye of the heart") will see God's uncreated Light (and feel God's uncreated love and beauty, at which point the nous will start the unceasing prayer of the heart) and become illuminated, allowing the person to become an orthodox theologian.[79][80]

In this belief, the soul is created in the image of God. Since God is Trinitarian, Mankind is *Nous*, reason, both *logos* and *dianoia*, and Spirit. The same is held true of the soul (or heart): it has *nous*, word and spirit. To understand this better first an understanding of Saint Gregory Palamas's teaching that man is a representation of the trinitarian mystery should be addressed. This holds that God is not meant in the sense that the Trinity should be understood anthropomorphically, but man is to be understood in a triune way. Or, that the Trinitarian God is not to be interpreted from the point of view of individual man, but man is interpreted on the basis of the Trinitarian God. And this interpretation is revelatory not merely psychological and human. This means that it is only when a person is within the revelation, as all the saints lived, that he can grasp this understanding completely (see *theoria*). The second

presupposition is that mankind has and is composed of *nous*, word and spirit like the trinitarian mode of being. Man's *nous*, word and spirit are not hypostases or individual existences or realities, but activities or energies of the soul - whereas in the case with God or the Persons of the Holy Trinity, each are indeed hypostases. So these three components of each individual man are 'inseparable from one another' but they do not have a personal character" when in speaking of the being or ontology that is mankind. The *nous* as the eye of the soul, which some Fathers also call the heart, is the center of man and is where true (spiritual) knowledge is validated. This is seen as true knowledge which is "implanted in the *nous* as always co-existing with it".[81]

Early modern philosophy

The so-called "early modern" philosophers of western Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries established arguments which led to the establishment of modern science as a methodical approach to improve the welfare of humanity by learning to control nature. As such, speculation about metaphysics, which can not be used for anything practical, and which can never be confirmed against the reality we experience, started to be deliberately avoided, especially according to the so-called "empiricist" arguments of philosophers such as Bacon, Hobbes, Locke and Hume. The Latin motto "*nihil in intellectu nisi prius fuerit in sensu*" (nothing in the intellect without first being in the senses) has been described as the "guiding principle of empiricism" in the *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. (This was in fact an old Aristotelian doctrine, which they took up, but as discussed above Aristotelians still believed that the senses on their own were not enough to explain the mind.)

These philosophers explain the intellect as something developed from experience of sensations, being interpreted by the brain in a physical way, and nothing else, which means that absolute knowledge is impossible. For Bacon, Hobbes and Locke, who wrote in both English and Latin, "*intellectus*" was translated as "understanding". Far from seeing it as secure way to perceive the truth about reality, Bacon, for example, actually named the *intellectus* in his *Novum Organum*, and the proœmium to his *Great Instauration*, as a major source of wrong conclusions, because it is biased in many ways, for example towards over-generalizing. For this reason, modern science should be methodical, in order not to be misled by the weak human intellect. He felt that lesser known Greek philosophers such as Democritus "who did not suppose a mind or reason in the frame of things", have been arrogantly dismissed because of Aristotelianism leading to a situation in his time wherein "the search of the physical causes hath been neglected, and passed in silence".[82] The intellect or understanding was the subject of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

These philosophers also tended not to emphasize the distinction between reason and intellect, describing the peculiar universal or abstract definitions of human understanding as being man-made and resulting from reason itself.[83] Hume even questioned the distinctness or peculiarity of human understanding and reason, compared to other types of associative or imaginative thinking found in some other animals. In modern science during this time, Newton is sometimes described as more empiricist compared to Leibniz.

On the other hand, into modern times some philosophers have continued to propose that the human mind has an in-born ("*a priori*") ability to know the truth conclusively, and these philosophers have needed to argue that the human mind has direct and intuitive ideas about nature, and this means it can not be limited entirely to what can be known from sense perception. Amongst the early modern philosophers, some such as Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Kant, tend to be distinguished from the empiricists as rationalists, and to some extent at least some of them are called idealists, and their writings on the intellect or understanding present various doubts about empiricism, and in some cases they argued for positions which appear more similar to those of medieval and classical philosophers.

The first in this series of modern rationalists, Descartes, is credited with defining a "mind-body problem" which is a major subject of discussion for university philosophy courses. According to the presentation his 2nd *Meditation*, the human mind and body are different in kind, and while Descartes agrees with Hobbes for example that the human body works like a clockwork mechanism, and its workings include memory and imagination, the real human is the thinking being, a soul, which is not part of that mechanism. Descartes explicitly refused to divide this soul into its

traditional parts such as intellect and reason, saying that these things were indivisible aspects of the soul. Descartes was therefore a dualist, but very much in opposition to traditional Aristotelian dualism. In his 6th *Meditation* he deliberately uses traditional terms and states that his active faculty of giving ideas to his thought must be corporeal, because the things perceived are clearly external to his own thinking and corporeal, while his passive faculty must be incorporeal (unless God is deliberately deceiving us, and then in this case the active faculty would be from God). This is the opposite of the traditional explanation found for example in Alexander of Aphrodisias and discussed above, for whom the passive intellect is material, while the active intellect is not. One result is that in many Aristotelian conceptions of the *nous*, for example that of Thomas Aquinas, the senses are still a source of all the intellect's conceptions. However, with the strict separation of mind and body proposed by Descartes, it becomes possible to propose that there can be thought about objects never perceived with the body's senses, such as a thousand sided geometrical figure. Gassendi objected to this distinction between the imagination and the intellect in Descartes.[84] Hobbes also objected, and according to his own philosophical approach asserted that the "triangle in the mind comes from the triangle we have seen" and "essence in so far as it is distinguished from existence is nothing else than a union of names by means of the verb is". Descartes, in his reply to this objection insisted that this traditional distinction between essence and existence is "known to all".[85]

His contemporary Blaise Pascal, criticised him in similar words to those used by Plato's Socrates concerning Anaxagoras, discussed above, saying that "I cannot forgive Descartes; in all his philosophy, Descartes did his best to dispense with God. But Descartes could not avoid prodding God to set the world in motion with a snap of his lordly fingers; after that, he had no more use for God."[86]

Descartes argued that when the intellect does a job of helping people interpret what they perceive, not with the help of an intellect which enters from outside, but because each human mind comes into being with innate God-given ideas, more similar then, to Plato's theory of *anamnesis*, only not requiring reincarnation. Apart from such examples as the geometrical definition of a triangle, another example is the idea of God, according to the 3rd *Meditation*. Error, according to the 4th *Meditation*, comes about because people make judgments about things which are not in the intellect or understanding. This is possible because the human will, being free, is not limited like the human intellect.

Spinoza, though considered a Cartesian and a rationalist, rejected Cartesian dualism and idealism. In his "pantheistic" approach, explained for example in his *Ethics*, God is the same as nature, the human intellect is just the same as the human will. The divine intellect of nature is quite different from human intellect, because it is finite, but Spinoza does accept that the human intellect is a part of the infinite divine intellect.

Leibniz, in comparison to the guiding principle of the empiricists described above, added some words *nihil in intellectu nisi prius fuerit in sensu*, ***nisi intellectus ipsi*** ("nothing in the intellect without first being in the senses" *except the intellect itself*). Despite being at the forefront of modern science, and modernist philosophy, in his writings he still referred to the active and passive intellect, a divine intellect, and the immortality of the active intellect.

Berkeley, partly in reaction to Locke, also attempted to reintroduce an "immaterialism" into early modern philosophy (later referred to as "subjective idealism" by others). He argued that individuals can only know sensations and ideas of objects, not abstractions such as "matter", and that ideas depend on perceiving minds for their very existence. This belief later became immortalized in the dictum, *esse est percipi* ("to be is to be perceived"). As in classical and medieval philosophy, Berkeley believed understanding had to be explained by divine intervention, and that all our ideas are put in our mind by God.

Hume accepted some of Berkeley's corrections of Locke, but in answer insisted, as had Bacon and Hobbes, that absolute knowledge is not possible, and that all attempts to show how it could be possible have logical problems. Hume's writings remain highly influential on all philosophy afterwards, and are for example considered by Kant to have shaken him from an intellectual slumber.

Kant, a turning point in modern philosophy, agreed with some classical philosophers and Leibniz that the intellect itself, although it needed sensory experience for understanding to begin, needs something else in order to make sense of the incoming sense information. In his formulation the intellect (*Verstand*) has *a priori* or innate principles which it has before thinking even starts. Kant represents the starting point of German idealism and a new phase of modernity, while empiricist philosophy has also continued beyond Hume to the present day.

More recent modern philosophy and science

One of the results of the early modern philosophy has been the increasing creation of specialist fields of science, in areas that were once considered part of philosophy, and infant cognitive development and perception now tend to be discussed now more within the sciences of psychology and neuroscience than in philosophy.

Modern mainstream thinking on the mind is not dualist, and sees anything innate in the mind as being a result of genetic and developmental factors which allow the mind to develop. Overall it accepts far less innate "knowledge" (or clear pre-dispositions to particular types of knowledge) than most of the classical and medieval theories derived from philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus and Al Farabi.

Apart from discussions about the history of philosophical discussion on this subject, contemporary philosophical discussion concerning this point has continued concerning what the ethical implications are of the different alternatives still considered likely.

References

[1] See entry for *νόος* (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=no/os) in Liddell & Scott, on the Perseus Project.

[2] See entry for *intellectus* (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0059:entry=intellectus2) in Lewis & Short, on the Perseus Project.

[3] page 38.

[4] "This quest for the beginnings proceeds through sense perception, reasoning, and what they call noesis, which is literally translated by "understanding" or intellect," and which we can perhaps translate a little bit more cautiously by "awareness," an awareness of the mind's eye as distinguished from sensible awareness." .

[5] This is from I.130 (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0134:book=1:card=130), the translation is by A.T. Murray, 1924.

[6] *Metaphysics* I.4. 984b (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Aristot.+Met.+1.984b).

[7] Chapter X.

[8] . See pages 204 and 235.

[9] Chapter XII.

[10] Anaxagoras, DK B 12 (http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/ancient-greece/anaxagoras-nous.asp), trans. by J. Burnet

[11] So, for example, in the Sankhya philosophy, the faculty of higher intellect (buddhi) is equated with the cosmic principle of differentiation of the world-soul (hiranyagarbha) from the formless and unmanifest Brahman. This outer principle that is equated with *buddhi* is called *mahat* (see Wikipedia entry on Sankhya)

[12] For example: , pp. 273-275; and . It has been claimed that his report might be the earliest report of such an argument in

[13] The translation quoted is from Amy Bonnette.

[14] On the Perseus Project: 28d (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0174:text=Phileb.:section=28d)

[15] http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:Platonism&action=edit

[16] . In ancient Greek the word was used for phrases such as "keep in mind" and "to my mind".

[17] 28c (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0174:text=Phileb.:page=28) and 30d (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0174:text=Phileb.:page=30). Translation by Fowler.

[18] Fowler translation of the *Phaedo* as on the Perseus webpage: 97 (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0170:text=Phaedo:page=97)- 98 (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0170:text=Phaedo:page=98).

[19] *Philebus* on the Perseus Project: 23b (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0174:text=Phileb.:page=23)- 30e (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0174:text=Phileb.:page=30). Translation is by Fowler.

[20] http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:The_Works_of_Aristotle&action=edit

[21] Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Aristotle's Ethics, Glossary of terms (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-ethics/#Glo).

[22] *De Anima* Book III, chapter 3.

[23] "Intelligence (*nous*) apprehend each definition (*horos* meaning "boundary"), which cannot be proved by reasoning". *Nicomachean Ethics* 1142a (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0053:bekker page=1142a&highlight=nou=s,nw=), Rackham translation.
[24] This is also discussed by him in the *Posterior Analytics* II.19.
[25] *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.xi. 1143a (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0053:bekker page=1143a&highlight=nou=s,nou=n)- 1143b (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0053:bekker page=1143b&highlight=nou=s,nou=n). Translation by Joe Sachs, p. 114, 2002 Focus publishing. The second last sentence is placed in different places by different modern editors and translators.
[26] *De Anima*, Bk. III, ch. 5, 430a10-25 translated by Joe Sachs, *Aristotle's On the Soul and On Memory and Recollection*, Green Lion Books
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[28] 1075 (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0051:book=12:section=1075b)
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[31] *De anima* 84, cited in Davidson, page 9, who translated the quoted words.
[32] Davidson p.43
[33] Davidson page 12.
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[45] Hipp. vi. 12 ff.; Theod. I. i.
[46] Hipp. vi. 20.
[47] Ap. Hipp. vi. 18.
[48] Herodotus, i.
[49] Davidson pp.12-14. One possible inspiration mentioned in a commentary of Aristotle's *De Anima* attributed to John Philoponus is a philosopher named Marinus, who was probably a student of Proclus. He in any case designated the active intellect to be angelic or daimonic, rather than the creator itself.
[50] Davidson p.18 and p.45, which states "Within the translunar region, Aristotle recognized no causal relationship in what we may call the vertical plane; he did not recognize a causality that runs down through the series of incorporeal movers. And in the horizontal plane, that is, from each intelligence to the corresponding sphere, he recognized causality only in respect to motion, not in respect to existence."
[51] Davidson pp.58-61.
[52] Davidson ch. 4.
[53] Davidson p.86
[54] From *Shifā': De Anima* 45, translation by Davidson p.96.
[55] Davidson pp.102
[56] Davidson p.104
[57] Davidson pp.111-115.
[58] Davidson p.123.
[59] Davidson p.356
[60] Davidson ch.7
[61] http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Romans&verse=7:23&src=KJV
[62] http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Romans&verse=12:2&src=KJV
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[72] "What is the Human Nous?" (http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/phronema/patristic-theology-romanides-chapter-1-what-is-the-human-nous.aspx) by John Romanides
[73] "Before embarking on this study, the reader is asked to absorb a few Greek terms for which there is no English word that would not be imprecise or misleading. Chief among these is NOUS, which refers to the `eye of the heart' and is often translated as mind or intellect. Here we keep the Greek word NOUS throughout. The adjective related to it is NOETIC (noeros)." Orthodox Psychotherapy Section The Knowledge of God according to St. Gregory Palamas (http://www.pelagia.org/htm/b02.en.orthodox_psychotherapy.06.htm#2k) by Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos published by Birth of Theotokos Monastery,Greece (January 1, 2005) ISBN 978-960-7070-27-2
[74] The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, SVS Press, 1997. (ISBN 0-913836-31-1) James Clarke & Co Ltd, 1991. (ISBN 0-227-67919-9) pgs 200-201
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[86] Think Exist on Blaise Pascal (http://thinkexist.com/quotation/i_cannot_forgive_descartes-in_all_his_philosophy/153298.html). Retrieved 12 Feb. 2009.

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External links

- Definition of *nous* (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph.jsp?l=noos&la=greek#lexicon) on Perseus Project website.
- Aristotle's Psychology (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-psychology/) from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- What is the Human Nous? (http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/phronema/patristic-theology-romanides-chapter-1-what-is-the-human-nous.aspx) by John Romanides

Noema

For the beetle genus, see Noema (genus).

Noema (plural: *noemata*) derives from the Greek word νόημα meaning thought or what is thought about.[1] Edmund Husserl used *noema* as a technical term in phenomenology to stand for the object or content of a thought, judgment, or perception, but its precise meaning in his work has remained a matter of controversy.

Husserl's noema

In *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (1913), Husserl introduced the terms "noema" and "noesis" to designate correlated elements of the structure of any intentional act — for example, an act of perceiving, or judging, or remembering (see Intentionality):

"Corresponding to all points to the manifold data of the real (*reelle*) noetic content, there is a variety of data displayable in really pure (*wirklicher reiner*) intuition, and in a correlative 'noematic content,' or briefly 'noema' — terms which we shall henceforth be continually using."[2]

Every intentional act has noetic content (or a noesis — from the Greek nous, "mind"). This noetic content, to which the noema corresponds, is that mental act-process (an act of meaning) which becomes directed towards the intentionally held object (e.g., the liked as liked, judged as judged, or meant as meant).[3] Every act also has a noematic correlate, which is the object of the act — that which is meant by it.[4] In other words, every intentional act has an "I-pole (or noesis)" and an "object-pole (or noema)."[5] Husserl also refers to the noema as the *Sinn* or sense (meaning) of the act, and sometimes appears to use the terms interchangeably. Nevertheless, the *Sinn* does not represent what Husserl calls the "full noema": *Sinn* belongs to the noema, but the full noema is the object of the act *as meant* in the act, the perceived object *as* perceived, the judged object *as* judged, and so on.[6]

In other words, the noema seems to be whatever is intended by acts of perception or judgement in general, whether it be "a material object, a picture, a word, a mathematical entity, another person" precisely *as* being perceived, judged or otherwise thought about.[7]

Interpreting Husserl

In fact, commentators have been unable to achieve consensus on exactly what a noema is. In a recent survey, David Woodruff Smith distinguished four different schools of thought. On one view, to say that the noema is the intentional object of an act of consciousness is to mean that it quite literally is an object. Husserl's student Roman Ingarden, for example, held that both ordinary objects, like chairs and trees, and intentional objects, like a chair precisely as it appears to me, or even a fictional tree, actually exist, but have different "modes" of existence.[8]

An alternative view, developed primarily by Aron Gurwitsch, emphasizes the noema of perceptual experience. Most ordinary objects can be perceived in different ways and from different perspectives (consider looking at a tree from several different positions). For Gurwitsch, what is perceived in each such act is a noema, and the object itself – the tree, say – is to be understood as the collection or system of noemata associated with it. This view has similarities with phenomenalism.[9]

Sokolowski, alternatively, holds that a noema is just the actual object of perception or judgment itself, considered phenomenologically. In other words, the noema of the judgment that "this chair is uncomfortable" is neither an entity (the chair considered as uncomfortable) which exists in addition to the chair itself (but with a different mode of existence) – the Ingarden view; but nor is the noema of such a judgment identified with a particular tactile perception of the chair – which along with other perceptions constitutes the chair as such – the Gurwitsch view. For Sokolowski, the noema is not a separate entity at all, but the chair itself *as* in this instance perceived or judged. This seems consistent with Husserl's emphasis on the noema as the "perceived as such…remembered as such…judged as

such…"[10]

An analytic philosopher, Dagfinn Føllesdal, in an influential 1969 paper,[11] proposed a Fregean interpretation of the noema, which has been developed extensively by Ronald McIntyre and David Woodruff Smith.[12] This school of thought agrees that the noema is not a separate entity, but rather than identifying it with the actual object of the act, phenomenologically understood, this view suggests that it is a mediating component of the act (of perceiving, judging, etc.) itself. It is what gives the act the sense it has.[13] Indeed, Føllesdal and his followers suggest that the noema is a generalized version of Frege's account of linguistic meaning, and in particular of his concept of sense (*Sinn*). Just as Frege held that a linguistic expression picks out its reference by means of its sense, so Husserl believed that conscious acts generally – not merely acts of meaning but also acts of perception, judgment, etc. – are intentionally directed toward objects by means of their noemata. On this view, the noema is not an object, but an abstract component of certain types of acts.[14]

Sokolowski has continued to reject this approach, arguing that "(t)o equate sense and noema would be to equate propositional and phenomenological reflection. It would take philosophy simply as the critical reflection on our meanings or senses; it would equate philosophy with linguistic analysis." [15] Robert C. Solomon attempted to reconcile the perception-based interpretation of the Gurwitsch school with the Fregean interpretation of noema as sense, suggesting that while "(i)t has now become virtually axiomatic among phenomenologists that the *Sinne* [senses] of experience stand independent of the *Bedeutungen* [meanings] of linguistic expressions. It has become all but axiomatic among analytic philosophers that there is no meaning apart from language. It is the concept of the noema that provides the link between them. The noema embodies both the changing phases of experience and the organizing sense of our experience. But these two 'components' are not separable, for all experience requires meaning, not as an after-the-fact luxury in reflective judgements but in order for it to be experience *of* anything."[16]

Other uses

Noema is in the *OED*, which has shown its use for more than three centuries. It first was used in English in the field of rhetoric to denote "a figure of speech whereby something stated obscurely is nevertheless intended to be understood or worked out." In other words, a *noema* in rhetoric is obscure speech or speech that only yields meaning upon detailed reflection.

Peacham's 1577 *Garden of Eloquence* [17] used it this way,

> "Noema, when we doe signify some thing so privily that the hearers must be fayne to seeke out the meaning by long consideration."

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