

Metaphysics between Redundancy and Esoterics
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The essay argues that metaphysical theories relying on the ontological paradigm, according to which such theories seek (in one loose formulation) to identify the fundamental stuff of which all non-fundamental entities are somehow made must be either redundant—as are those who rely on physics to identify the fundamental stuff—or esoteric—as are those that introduce fundamental stuff that is unknown to physics. These unpromising extremes can be avoided by metaphysical theories that rely instead on the paradigm of transcendentals, according to which the task is, in Whitehead's words, "to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted," or, in the words of Lorenz B. Puntel, to articulate "the most general and universal structures of the unrestricted universe of discourse." The essay considers how the evaluative criteria of coherence and adequacy can be satisfied by metaphysical theories relying on this paradigm.