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Ockham

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Ockham. William of Ockham (c. 1287–1347/9) was an English scholastic philosopher. He was a pioneer of nominalism, arguing that only individuals exist, and denying the existence of metaphysical universals. According to Ockham, a universal such as redness is the result of abstraction by the human mind from individual red things. As such, they have no extra-mental existence. Ockham also placed a general emphasis on reducing one's ontology to the bare minimum, as reflected in the methodological principle that has come to be known as 'Ockham's Razor' (or 'Occam's Razor', based on the Latinized form of his name): 'in vain is done with more what can be done with fewer'. This principle is often expressed using the slogan, 'Do not multiply entities beyond necessity', although it should be noted that this formulation appears nowhere in Ockham's own writings.

In addition to his work on metaphysics, Ockham also made significant contributions to mediaeval logic, especially concerning the notions of signification, connotation and supposition. In his *Summa of Logic*, Ockham described logic as 'the most useful tool of all the arts'. [ABa]