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Sommario/riassunto	Ontology began life in ancient times as a fundamental part of philosophical enquiry concerned with the analysis and categorisation of what exists. In recent years, the subject has taken a practical turn with the advent of complex computerised information systems which are reliant on robust and coherent representations of their subject matter. The systematisation and elaboration of such representations and their associated reasoning techniques constitute the modern discipline of formal ontology, which is now being applied to such diverse domains as artificial intelligence, computational linguistics