

1

The table, as a spatial object, is given (to the eyes especially) in aspects. Logic refers to the table, which is the system not only of aspects so far but also of possible future aspects. So the "entire" table is not "in" consciousness. Consciousness would have to "consume" all of the table "at once" and exhaust it, drain it of possibility. "Consciousness" is a synonym for being, in my view. So we can also say that spatial objects are always "open" toward the future. This is there "infinite." We "experience" the wooden table as the sort of thing that looks different from different angles, as something we could burn, etc. Heidegger would add that we "circumspectively" use it in the appropriate way, sit down at it with a plate of food. The table "is" (primarily even) possibilities.

2

(1)

We might say that "consciousness is [aspectual] being" and that "being is time." In more familiar terms, experience is a "flow." As Husserl saw, we experience the front of a house as implying a back. We automatically expect that we can walk around that house and see the other side. So there is a "protension" or "expectation" or "possibility" that we do indeed experience in spatial objects. We experience that there is yet more to experience. If I see a refrigerator, I see it as containing who knows what but probably food.

We experience, in other words, the "depth" of the world. We experience "darkness" in a literal and figurative sense. We walk in the dark with a sense that we might bump furniture. We experience the world as uncertain and indeterminate.

(2)

We might also think of the experience of others. I believe that my wife is a "site" of the being of the world (that she "has experience.") Logic allows us to communicate, but I don't have "her field of vision" as I have my own. I therefore do not believe that my "individual consciousness" "contains" the world. I see my own "stream" as something like one "tunnel" through a world that includes us all.

(*)

More exactly, I think the world is "the one" which is given in "aspects" or "sides." Sentient creatures are sites of being that are these "sides" of the world. But all is flowing, so the "side" or "aspect" metaphor gets stretched pretty far. But it's all a generalization of Husserl's analysis of the spatial object. That spatial object, in the analogy, is "the one" or "the world." Each adumbration or aspect is a "stream of experience." But "experience" is misleadingly subjective in this breakthrough to a nondual ontological. Nevertheless, idealism is a useful ladder.

The so-called experience includes the so-called experiencer. To me that's a reason to abandon the word "experience", except as a disposable ladder, for scientific types who haven't even noticed the typically transparent subjective "form" of the world. The 3rd person POV, which is realist takes as absolute, is an cultural construct that only ever lives (and is inspired by an idealized version of) the 1st person POV.

through the interaction of my experience with the experience of other people, the world and its spatial relationships were made "by us" coherently.

I think I can feel my way into why you'd suggest that. But it seems like an empirical claim ? I'm not against such claims, but I'm influenced by phenomenology and logical positivism to try to focus on clarifying description of "the given." What is the general form of how it is ?

panexperientialism/ontological perspectivism (apologies for conflating these two if you think of them as distinct)

Our views are definitely similar. But your use of "experience" as a fundamental word might indicate a subtle difference. To me experience just is world or being. A stream of what is typically called "experience" is an "aspect" or "side" of the world (the "one", the "forum", that-which-is, etc.) The world does not exist apart from these sides.

The so-called experience includes the so-called experiencer. To me that's a reason to abandon the word "experience", except as a disposable ladder, for scientific types who haven't even noticed the typically transparent subjective "form" of the world. The 3rd person POV, which is realist takes as absolute, is an cultural construct that only ever lives (and is inspired by an idealized version of) the 1st person POV.

The other angle represents the holistic panexperientialist position that the world and its spatial relationships "becomes" as it is experienced. Obviously we are in an age of billions of experiencers, so it is easy to think that there is a world "preformed" out there as a consequence of the fusing of experience of experiencers past and present.

I think I agree with you. The world "worlds." It gushes forth, ever new, and yet with enough repetition in a blurry way for us to learn and articulate what is unchanging in the flux.

The experiencers coming and going is probably what tempts people to make a 3rd person POV absolute. A random person dies but the moon still floats in the night. But what if I die? What we mean by the moon is the experienced moon. Of course aspects of the moon appears (exists partially in) different streams of experience. Some streams cease. Others begin.

The speculative realists like to trot out their "ancestral object," thinking it is evidence for their side. But I don't think it is. To say that the moon was here before we were is to say that "if we could go back,

then we'd have certain experiences." And we can also explore the implications of that assumption, see what experiences they would imply. What else could we mean by the assertion of the existence of the ancestral object ?

4

One of the reasons I'm probably so careful to swerve away for subjective terminology is the tendency for nondual thinking to be tangled up with "guru religion." If you look at subreddits on nonduality, there tend to be even anti-philosophical, with a definite focus on the sacred and ineffability. I find the logical positivists fascinating because, despite their reputation for shallowness, encouraged by the shallowness of analytic philosophy that followed, they were phenomenologists and deflationists about truth. Which means post-dualist, yet with a intense fidelity to science in the large sense of the word.

But you are right that "world" can be misleading in the other direction. People who haven't read much philosophy (like the foundational stuff, like Hume and Locke) won't even know the background of methodological solipsism.

5

I agree. I do think "appearance" will tempt some people to think of something opposed to a corresponding reality. Do you see why I contrast representation and

aspect ? I think that's the heart of the issue. The world has a "subjective" form. But what exactly is subjective form ? Husserl's analysis of the spatial object, in its profound simplicity, opens up a path. The world doesn't show all of itself to anyone. It never even shows all of a single spatial object.

In the world, objects are given only as "sides" or aspects. The subject is "there" in that "form" (spatial structure) of the world. This is obscured in a sophisticated age that is familiar with mathematical methods that negate perspective. I can create a mathematical model that specified the state at every point in space at once. I can gaze at it in my imagination. And lose myself in that imaginary model, and forget my central role in its being. So we end up with a mathematical mysticism that takes itself as the anti-mystical option, without noting the way its "real" entities float unspecified.

It makes sense that Mach was such a great philosopher, because he studied sensation and never forget that science was something that creatures engaged in for economic reasons. He read Kant young, presumably grasped the subjective form of the world, but also saw the useless confusion of the thing-in-itself. Yet Kant was sometimes (like the passage about people on the moon) basically an implicit nondual perspectivist.

6

Even if we can't get "absolute" certainty, which I think we can live without, a scientific discussion like ours presupposes the forum (space of assembly) in which it occurs. The role of scientist or philosopher only makes sense in a larger context (a world shared with others through a language with semantic and inferential norms.) The details of this world are endlessly up for debate, but it seems to me that it's a performative contradiction to debate that the conditions for the possibility of that debate are not in place. It's one thing to have private fears and doubts, perhaps that everyone else in the world is an android with no experience. But to argue it earnestly doesn't seem to make sense.

7

Right. As a private matter, one might decide that "of course one lives that way." Then there's the second issue of what theses are coherent not existentially but logically.

An easier example is someone who argues against logic itself, who argues, for instance, that there just are no inferential norms. Or maybe they argue that we can't be sure that there are inferential norms.

My approach is more normative than the usual epistemological point. I think skepticism is great, right up to the point where it becomes credulous about its own epistemological knowledge and authority, as if it

wants to have its cake and eat it too.

8

Just to be clear, I am against this first angle in a crucial sense, as I think you are. We can definitely project our mathematical models back before our postulated emergence, but the question is then an interpretation of what those models mean.

This might be a moment for me to emphasize the "Hegelian" component of my approach. Our logic, our ontological community here and now, is articulating the real. We are not looking through a telescope, far away from the object. We are at the very center of the world in the way that matters to us. Our inferential and semantic norms are our essence and the world's. Inasmuch as we and it are intelligible. And of course much of reality is not itself concept but "handled" or "organized" by concept. I think we agree on this.

The point is that we come first, ontology being its own necessary and central entity. So Heidegger to investigate being has to investigate the investigator at the center of being.

Less abstract, but to me "space" can only have meaning in the usual contexts of "experience." To say it was always here is to say (roughly) that if one had a time machine, etc. BUT I am open to Kantian consideration on time and space. For us now, they both seem to stretch out infinitely.

In his Ideas, Husserl imagines a stream of consciousness which is not organized into a world like ours. Maybe there is some shape and order, but far less. I imagine that a baby's stream is pretty wild. Very confusing and liquid.

The more I dwell on it, the more it seems vaguely plausible. And then we have people on strong drugs or people lost deep in the dream world.

You might want to check out William James' Principles of Psychology. I have the two volume full version, and it's one of my favorite books. That comes to mind because your question touches on the issue of memory. I can't remember what it was like to be a baby. To learn how objects work in space. It might be because there is a lack of continuity. Baby-mind and adult-mind are like oil and water. This also touches on the later Heidegger. Being-for-baby is an aspect of being. It is as real as being for the adult. But to see "baby world" is to not see "adult world" and the reverse. Both are real. But being "hides" or only gives itself in aspects.

Sartre emphasizes that "all the results of phenomenology begin to crumble if the I is not...an object for consciousness."

This means that consciousness is not the self, is not, for instance, the empirical self discussed by Wittgen-

stein in the TLP.

"Transcendental consciousness is an impersonal spontaneity." Transcendental consciousness is "geyser" or rushing stream of being. Transcendental consciousness is endless becoming. I'd call it "pre-personal." It is intimately connected to sentient creatures. It is the "core" of another person, the "life." The person is a "site of being" for this "pre-personal consciousness" which is not really "consciousness" at all but just a "neutral" or "polyphonic" becoming.

Now Sartre uses "world" above as the other to the empirical ego, which is a bit confusing, though common enough. The empirical ego is one more entity "in" or "of" the world. But it is especially prevalent in the "geyser" or "torrent" of becoming. In each stream, there is a particular person's (or animal's) nose at the bottom center of the picture, and so on. (If they have a nose, etc.)

This absolute consciousness, when it is purified of the /, no longer has anything of the subject. It is no longer a collection of representations. It is quite simply a first condition and an absolute source of existence.

"Condition" and "source" are misleading. But the point is clear enough. "Absolute consciousness" is just being. I think Wittgenstein is helpful here though. This "absolute consciousness" still has the "form" of a subject. The spatial objects are given in aspects that are functions of the position of a sentient creature's eyes in space, and so on. The "feeling channel" of this stream is related to the associated creature's

requirements. The evolving logical structure of this stream or geyser of "absolute consciousness" is also the tentative belief structure of an associated sapient creature (if that creature is sufficiently sapient, but we can also think of belief in a more Heidegger-circumspective way, as in comportment, etc.)

11

Wittgenstein mentions both subjects. "I am my world" involves the ontological ego. But his body is in the visual field, an entity among other entities.

The ontological ego is "made" of world, is world, but "from-a-point-of-view." So it's not really an ego at all. Consciousness is just being. Does not exist but "is" existence itself. And being does not appear as a particular being but is itself the appearance of those beings. The language is awkward. By "being" or "appearance" I mean that "it-is-there-ness" of the entity. The "presence."

So the ontological ego is really just the "field of sight" in terms of the analogy. But there is some reason to call it an "ego" after all. For how do spatial objects appear in the visual field? This side or that side is just there, but never all sides at once.

With the flow of time we often get other sides in the visual field, so the total object, as a possibility of sides, is fundamentally temporal. Spatial objects imply/require time, because they logically transcend anything that can be given in a single "frame" or mo-

ment.

As Mach might put it, we can trace functional relationships between the body parts and the way that shapes are given. If I move closer, the side of the object gets bigger. If I bring down my eyelid, the world goes black. But the empirical self "is just there" like other objects "in" the "ontological ego" understood as the flowing of the world in which objects are always given only in sides. And "I" get a different side than you do on the other side of the room. The object exists in two different streams as two different sides. But our sharing in English allows us to glue our streams together (to some degree) in the social-historical-conceptual realm.

12

My understanding, probably naive, is that if we imagine there to be a residue of "world" or "reality" left after the perspective of it is removed, then we have just returned to a "material" realism of a world independent of our perspective of it. Am I misunderstanding things?

I understand your concern, but I feel very confident about reading these lines in terms of stripping away only extra machinery that complicates the radical simplicity of the "transcendental ego." The more we embrace the lifeworld as the real world, the more that "substance" inherits the attributes of "subject." As in things really are beautiful. Beauty shines "in the object." My mood colors all of the world "from my

perspective.” The side of the world given to me (more exactly given as me) is dyed all the way through by my mood. My beliefs are just the structure of the world I live in, until those beliefs change, simultaneously with the side/aspect of the world that I (as ontological ego) ” am.”

Being-in-the-world is being-as-the-world-from-perspective. The little me (empirical ego) is an avatar on the stage of the big me (ontological ego.) The sides of spatial objects that are given ”in” the ontological ego (in the stream) are a function of the position of the empirical ego. The point of ”the transcendence of the ego” in Sartre is that this ego is just another entity, that has to be experience in time for us to know it better. That’s the only true ego available, since the ontological ego is really an ”aspect of the one.” (A streaming ”side” of reality.)

13

We can think of a single aspect being given and yet not grasped as an aspect (as part of the ”system” of an object.) The aspect grasped as aspect involves grasping also all the aspects as logically unified.

Ayer calls objects ”logical constructions.” I think this is the right direction, but one can probably endlessly clarify exactly how the object is a ”system” of its aspects. We learn to speak of objects first, for our own subjectivity tends to be conveniently transpar-

ent (convenient except when we do ontology, then it's confusing.)

Anyway, the point is that the object grasped as object is also grasped as a kind of organized infinity of actual and possible aspects. We are such visual creatures that this visual metaphor steals all the air. To be fair to the other senses, we can talk about objects as systems of possible experience. To be yet more fair we have to include theoretical posits which are "grounded" by their inferential relationships with more familiar, empirical objects.

FWIW, this connects to the philosophy of math. The set or category of natural numbers has an infinitude which is never consumed.

14

Ontology (and science generally) presupposes a world shared with others, along with a functioning language and effective semantic-inferential norms. I realize that we live in an anti-philosophical irrationalist era, so I offer the argument for this "outlandish" claim here.

This forum is just "the world as a whole" or "how things are" or "all that is the case." This forum is what our ontological claims are about. Unavoidably. A priori. An individual ontologist has a set of beliefs about the world (how things are, the forum, etc.) These beliefs, according to the approach I've been calling ontological perspectivism, are the conceptual structure of an aspect of that world. The ontologist as stream of

”experience” includes the ontologist as scientific person responsible for claims. The ontologist as person is one more entity in the world. The ontologist as ”stream of experience” is the being of the forum itself (of one of its aspects.)

”Ontological perspectivism” is already use for a different idea, which is unfortunate, because the name is a simple summary of the idea. Just as spatial objects are given always in or as aspects, so the forum or the world is given in aspects at a higher level. Individual streams are flowing aspects, like differing tunnels taking different paths through the one world, revealing its objects also in aspect in the more familiar Husserlian way. It might be said that ontological perspectivism is a generalization of the spatial object. What Wittgenstein calls ”the philosophical I” and ancient thinkers called ”witness consciousness” is better thought of as exactly the aspectual being of the world —of a world given only in or as such aspects, just as spatial objects are also never consumed all at once, but only give this side or that side at any given time and position of viewing.

Now the issue that inspired this post. Are scientific posits ”merely” instrumental ”fictions” or tools ? Or do atoms ”really” exist ? I don’t think it’s important to choose a position. We can and do organize the forum in many different ways. The forum concept was conceived as the minimum we have to agree on to avoid performative contradiction. We have to be realists about the forum or world itself. What does it mean to say reality isn’t real ? But that’s a comfort-

ably loose constraint.

15

I see Sartre as fixing or sharpening Husserl. As I see it, since Descartes, Locke, and Hume (and others), what might be called "methodological solipsism" has dominated the tradition. Hume used the word "impression." This is a physiological metaphor. Descartes already understood that nerves send messages to the brain. He thought of them like little ropes for pulling a bell and making it ring. He understood that stepping in a fire somehow pulls little nerve ropes in the leg, so that burning-in-the-leg is somehow created in the brain.

Anyway, it became traditional, for some reason, to describe this first-person situation (in general, as applying to everyone) and then stop there. Leibniz is an exception. He saw that streams of experience (monads) were "synchronized." That's my rough understanding of Leibniz. Schrodinger's aspects of the one stands out in its strong identification of ego with world-from-perspective. It is also neutral. The world is not mind or matter. The world is just the world, the "one," the unity, how it is, etc. I think Husserl in his later work took up the monad idea, in his own way, but I'm fuzzy on that phase of his work. But generally we only get a sketch of the typical/generic first-person situation, with not much discussion of what this means for the world as a whole, if we believe that others are "conscious" (also sites of the worlds aspectual being.) But

of course we do, most of us, I hope.

The gist is that ontological perspectivism is a corollary of the post-dualist fusion of experience and world.

16

You ask me to expand on “theology is God.” I might also say that “ontology is (the developing spine of) being”. The point is that our sense-making is not outside of what we are making sense of but rather at its center. Theology begins in an alienated state, thinking of course that the God it articulates exists independently of the discourse that reveals that God. Theology discovers that God is its own product. That theology is creative, the creator of creators (like Blake’s “Poetic Genius”). An unconscious projection is grasped consciously as such. The scientific discourse that determines God/Nature turns out to be the most significant or crucial part of God/Nature. “God” is self-explicating, but initially this self-explication takes itself for the explication of something grand but distant and independent.

As Rorty saw, some of this same alienation seems to motivate that brand of representational scientific realism that I would call dualism. Which gives us the hard problem of consciousness, so called, while being blind to the problem of the reality of the real, if the real is understood in terms of something “behind” representation. This generalized “matter” is something sufficiently transcendent to give a certain kind of a

philosopher something truly superhuman. We may not know whether our beliefs are true, but this basically mystical stuff ensures that (properly formed) propositions are either true or false in some absolute sense. Something is thickly there, radically apathetic. Is it a coincidence that this apathy mirrors the cold gaze of theory without mercy or bias? That's what I loved about Freud. Not this or that theory so much as the daring and the ice-cold diagnostic gaze, beyond what certain primates call good and evil, normal and perverse. Divine solidity. Numinous plenitude.

And let us celebrate the brilliance of Democritus and confess the charm of taking such an X-ray of the Lifeworld. It's all "really" little pieces of the same matter, but shaped in many curious ways, with hooks and loops, so what we see at the macro-level can be explained (in a vague way.) But then sweetness and color and the sensation of heat are, absurdly, made unreal. And the fragments give no explanation, but this dualism of Democritus is still with us. And its purveyors fancy themselves sophisticated. As if most philosophy types are unaware of the physiological complexity of perception. But these poor indirect realists seem blind to space of reasons, and they seem to think that some analogue of the pineal gland is the self that perceives. They just can't over their cleverness, which was already in Descartes. The nerves in the foot are like a little rope that you can use to ring a bell in the brain. Physiologically correct enough. But the kind of existence that the self has in the space of reasons is completely overlooked, taken for granted,

transparent, even as this same self writes a philosophical treatise. Hilarious. But such is the seduction of Nature's mechanically cold causal nexus. Or corpuscles or atoms or waves. Anything simple. Like pieces on a Go board. Like bits in a matrix. The beautifully simple combinatorial form of the world. These fellows are poets, lost in the tittymilk of their muses. I work in such poetry myself, though typically with imaginary sculpture, math as art, animated and set to abstract "music." But I know my art is art. Not that I grudge Democritus. Good physics isn't, however, necessarily good ontology.

17

For direct realism, you and I, differently placed in the same room, see different aspects of the same lamp. For indirect realism, you and I see private mental representations of that lamp.

For the indirect realist, there are already three lamps involved. There is the "real" lamp which cannot be presented but only re-presented, and there are both of our radically private "mental" re-presentations.

As Kant saw, the "real" lamp shrinks to a empty promise or residue, for more and more of "its" attributes are given to the representation. Some mysterious faculty, associated with the brain, "prechews" reality for us, so that we only ever get an already mediated and distorted version of the lamp, its "representation." But, again, the lamp is never originally presented.

I think Ayer's phenomenalist approach is a sketch of the solution. The lamp "itself" is a "logical construction." Statements about the lamp can be "translated" into statements about perceptions. The lamp is not a simple sum of perceptions. An inferentialist approach to semantics is illuminating here. Not only the philosopher but also the typical practical agent applies inferential norms constantly, and we should look for the "truth" of the lamp in these inferential norms.

The subject that perceives the lamp in the first place is not a piece of the brain. This subject is a "virtual" entity in the social space of reasons. This alone should wake up those in the quicksand of indirect realism, who tend to think that direct realists simply ignore the complicated biological basis of perception. Instead the indirect realist ignores the space of reasons in which the debate between direct and indirect realism occurs. This is the transparency of the normative, and such transparency is associated with viewing the subject in physiological terms. The normative, even as it functions, is ignored.

18

I like where you are going with this. In some sense reality is a "product" of our normative discourse. Or, alternatively, our own human conceptuality is profoundly entangled with the real, because there is something like a "given" in an informal sense. (If belief/concept is bones, the world is also flesh, and the

bones tend to match the flesh, us being practical animals who "use" our minds.)

I think it's best to parse "objective" in terms of unbiased. The association with objects probably flows from our agreement on simple facts about lamps and lizards.

My own position (my own belief) is that we always have only belief, never truth. More exactly, "true" is a way we describe our own beliefs. My system of belief(s) is the intelligible structure of the-world-from-my-perspective. My beliefs may or may not be "true" according to you. But "truth" itself has no deep meaning. The story of truthmakers, on the other hand, is at least useful for reasoning about the relationship between beliefs and other entities. He believes P because he "saw it with his own eyes." Or He believes P because he was assured that P by a trustworthy friend.

As an ontological ego, ("philosophical I" in the TLP) I am [an aspect of] the world. And so are you. We are both different "streamings" of a single world. The same lamp can appear in both streams (as a system of actual and possible profiles or adumbrations.)

In such a way 'the lamp' properly comes about from the union of experience and not some inaccessible and preceding world in itself.

Perhaps you don't understand me on this point, because, in my view, the lamp is basically "a union of experience." But "experience" tempts many to think in terms of representation rather than aspect. Ex-

perience just is world — once dualism is abandoned. Logically, in the basic practical sense, there is only one lamp. This lamp does not exist "off the stage" or hidden away from all its adumbrations in your stream or my stream or possible theoretical streams. It is the "system" of all such adumbrations. It is a "logical construction." Note that "ontological" perspectivism is more radical than mere epistemic perspectivism. There is only belief, world-from-perspective. There is no "really real" world from no perspective at all. My linguistic self is one more entity in the world, just as much in your stream as in mine. The set of all streams, of all ontological egos, on the other hand, just "is" the world.

19

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as much in your stream as in mine. The set of all streams, of all ontological egos, on the other hand, just "is" the world.

20

Following Wittgenstein, we can just say that a person is a stream of experience. But experience is itself just world. So a person, in the deep ontological sense, is a stream or streaming of the world. A monad, basically, tho we have made progress since Leibniz.

This understanding of the person "anonymous consciousness" is not the different understanding that we need of an individual as a locus of responsibility. As a body with a name, I am "in" the stream of the world that I, in another sense, am.

As a stream of experience (of world, really), as a transcendental or ontological ego, I contain myself as linguistic ego. In my view, the conflation of these two ideas is the cause of endless confusion.

The world exist always and only as being-in-the-world, and being-in-the-world is an improved synonym for experience. The improvement consists in a stronger overcoming of dualism. Even the great Husserl, relative to Heidegger, was confusingly tilted toward the subjective and representational, if only in the residue on his lingo.

Fulgurations are "out-flashings." I think this is like the world worlding. Phenomena "shine forth." Reality is a streaming. All is procession, movement. God is music. God is being is time. I write this as an "atheist" who is using "God" as a personification of a world that is given aspectually, in streams that are structured like the experience of animals in that world — even usually "entangled" with their flesh.

The "created being" would be an individual stream like yours or mine, associated with a body that is born and dies, centered on the sense organs of that body. And yet the body and its environment are all aspects of a single stream, of a "solipsistic" unity.

In other words, we each us "are" a private world, and yet this "private" world is aspect of the world. I can talk about "my perspective" on the world, but this is me talking as an empirical, linguistic ego. Such an ego "has" a perspective like it has a toothache. But the "ontological ego" just is the world, or rather one streaming aspect of thereof.

This ontological "ego" is no more mental than physical. Ontological perspectivism is a theory of the basic structure of the world. It's a nondualist fundamental articulation of "how it is."

To me the God stuff is fascinating but irrelevant. What matters here is the blazing emphasis on the basic structure of the world. The world is given "through" or "for" sentient flesh, in some sense. We tend to ignore it, because it is practical to do so, but there is always a nose in the picture. The hard problem of consciousness, fundamentally confused and taking "matter" for granted, is a forgetfulness of this nose.

Existence is always "mine" or "yours." Objects are given in adumbrations. That which transcends and "causes" the adumbrations is a transcendent "logical" construct, though we inherit a world organized practically in terms of tools before we can start to do philosophy, so this "construct" is inherited. "Language is received like the law." An impersonal conceptual scheme is given in such an intimate way that we'd call it practical reality at its most mundane and obvious.

The point is that the adumbrations of these familiar objects are found to be organized into streams. Your existence is one stream of adumbrations of such objects, and my existence is another stream. Perhaps we live in the same small town, so that the same objects appear (through adumbrations organized logically as a transcendent system) in both of our streams. And we can talk about these objects, as if they were "behind" their adumbrations, as if they existed somehow without needing adumbrations.

But this step is the leap of the dove into vacuum. It

is the essence of the seen spatial object to be given perspectively. This side or that side. The eye does not appear in the visual field. The nature of this field suffices to see the absurdity (meaningless, failure to signify) of the aperspectival object. And yet for practical purposes we ignore the perceiver.

Anyway, "windowless" represents the "privacy" or "solitude" of "form" of the stream. And it's perhaps impossible not to also think of a linguistic, empirical ego here, because memory is extremely important here. And, for common sense, memory is private. Each stream has a dedicated memory. It's partially because you can't (easily) see my memories or fantasies that the stream is "mine." As Locke saw, memory is an important part of identity. Then Brandom shows that the rational self is coherence project, essentially temporal. No wonder the empirical-linguistic ego is so easily conflated with the stream itself (which has been called the "transcendental ego").

24

Respectfully, this concern sounds like dualism to me. You seem to be treating our thoughts as unreal, as mere representations. I can understand the temptation. We can of course be wrong or find more adequate beliefs, but my current beliefs just are the intelligible/logical structure of the world from my perspective. "Logic pervades the world." A change in my beliefs is a change in the world from my perspective.

(I argue elsewhere, following Wittgenstein and Ayer, that "truth" is basically an empty concept, primarily used to endorse and discuss belief. Belief is fundamental. Truth is a convenient way of talking about belief. Belief is the structure of the world from a generalized POV. [Point of view is a metaphor here that now includes subject-relative structure.])

But such conceptuality is "only" the structure. The world is sensual, full of color and sound, pleasure and pain, desire and fear. Our concepts are like handles or a skeleton. The "flesh" of the world is other-than-concept, which I can only point at with concept (via a negation of the concept of concept.)

A view that seems to not make sense is that of a world that is somehow pre-articulated and yet not conceptually. Literally doesn't make sense. Concepts are as worldly as they are internal. They are the bones of the world. "Logic/grammar is metaphysics."

But the world is also flesh, the "stuff" that concept organizes.

25

If we had epistemic access to the transcendent, would we not have an ultimate theory, or would not an ultimate theory be within reach?

I'm thinking that I don't know what you mean here. Just for context, I tend to use "transcendent" in the Husserlian way these days. The worldly spatial object

is not "behind" its adumbrations, as if they were in the way. But the object is essentially futural, as Mill saw. It's not exhausted by what we've seen of it so far. We understand it in terms of the possibility of ever more sensations. So it's not behind its adumbrations. It's more like the logical unity of actual and possible adumbrations. And (what Mill didn't emphasize) the role it can play in inferences, including those not yet formulated. We can always know more about the object, but we never quite consume it, because it futural, understood in terms of the possible even more than it is in terms of the actual (what has been manifested so far.) I think it's safe to claim that we constantly leap from the actual to the possible. To understand something involves the future, how it might be used, etc.

On the other hand, there is the immanent versus the traditionally transcendent. I think dualism would be an example of this framework. The "mental" would be immanent, and the real world would be radically outside our "ego tunnel," etc.

26

In other words, the third person POV is a cultural construct. One of the great human creations. But we tend to forget the soil that this flower grows in, and this flower turns to plastic once it's plucked.

Especially clever people are especially good at handling or operating this construct. This construct, in

its refined version, is the scientific image.

This image is designed to be independent of any particular first-person POV. This is indeed its chief merit. The problem is our naive tendency to think that independence from any particular first-person POV is also independence of the first-person POV in general.

Let's consider an easier example. A "form of life" or culture is independent of any particular member of that culture. But if they all die or vanish, so does the culture.

In the same way, the Charleston can survive independently of any particular dancer, but the disappearance of all dancers is the disappearance of the Charleston.

As far as we know, streams are only associated with organisms. We don't know if a roach "gets a stream." We don't even know if a computer running a large language model "gets a stream." If we are "anti-speculative" logical positivists, bent phenomenologically, we concern ourselves with unfolding our concepts, out toward the horizon where meaninglessness creeps in. I think it's only honest to admit that concepts are fuzzy and ambiguous. We try to reduce this fuzz, but we don't expect some final perfection. Nor do we expect distinctions to be perfect, or boundaries to be drawn with surgical precision.

27

I am not a Leibniz scholar, but perhaps I can clarify.

I believe that you (as ontological ego) are a "separate" streaming of the world. I am also a streaming of that same world, but I see this part over here, and with my nose and not your nose in my picture.

For me, in this context, a "monad" is a streaming of the world. Not a streaming of representation. There are only streams. The world is the system of these streams. This is what is "shocking" in the view. The "ontological ego" or "transcendental ego" is "being-in-the-world." Or rather "being-as-the-world" or "the-aspectual-being-of-the-world." This, I claim, is implicit in Wittgenstein and Heidegger and Mach. But usually the perspectivistic implications aren't emphasized.

Can these streams be "reduced" ? Are they "fictions" ? They are attempted articulations of how it is, on the most fundamental level. Permanent structure. I believe that I can't feel your toothache "directly." We have language, so the same toothache exists for both of us, but you have a special access to that toothache. You have "your" memories. I have "mine."

Brandom is also helpful here. We are creatures who try to keep our stories straight. I am allowed to disagree with you, and but I am not allowed to disagree with myself. So I have to keep "my" story straight. Our stories do not have to agree. And you can criticize me for holding a belief that you hold, for instance, because it doesn't fit in with some of my other beliefs. While it does fit in with yours.

So we are back to the normativity of the forum, which

includes a second-order tradition of theory criticism and synthesis (Popper is great on this). A plurality of internally coherent belief-systems is great. I am one thinker. You are another. We can each build different theories, but they have to be meaningful, and incoherence is a failure of meaning. If I contradict myself, I "fall apart" as a self.

In short, I think it would be hard to deny the monad as a "stream of experience" associated with a "linguistic ego" who refers to this experience, and this experience, for logical reasons, must be "of" the world. Note that "my" daydream is still part of our world, because it can figure in explanations (of why I was late for work or lost my faith in God, etc.) It is "logically substantial." And that suffices.

28

Glad you joined !

"Consciousness" is perhaps the most charged of these terms. Similar to "mind", it too has baked into it the notion of capacity. Looking up the definition of consciousness by various writers³ one usually finds that common to all of them is that consciousness describes our capacity for experience. "Conscious" is an adjective, while "consciousness" is a noun, and as such describes a state or a quality, thus "being conscious" is a state described by "consciousness". But a state of what? What is in this state? It must obviously be a something, a substantive. But this then presupposes a dualism, the very dualism that has led to centuries

of philosophical trouble.

I agree, dualism is trouble, dualism is confused.

The problem, perhaps, is that a practical distinction between the "imaginary" and the "real" is taken out of context, blow up to be "the" fundamental ontological distinction. We are such practical creatures that we look right thru the way that objects are given to us, perspectively. And, indeed, we understand the objects to remain behind us when we leave the room. J.S. Mill seems to me to have maybe made the primary breakthrough. Possibilities of sensation. Then later thinkers, like Heidegger, could give a much better description of the structure of flowing experience, such as its equipmental always-already-significant structure. Sensation is a relatively late abstraction, but the point in Mill was to point at what is actually given. And, finally, to what we can actually mean when we talk about objects and matter. Semantic. And your investigation above is likewise semantic.

"Heidegger places "being" as inseparable from "being in a world", that to be is to be irreducibly directed "outwards" towards something other, towards a world. Being in this world is a historical and traditional process, and as such being-in-the-world is immersion, in being we are immanent in the world. Immersion is thus that irreducible and always present aspect of "tension" and intentionality in experience, a tension between self and other, past and future."

I like your use of tension. We "are" time, stretched like rubber. Schrödinger puts it this way: we are aspects

of the one. The "one" is of course the world, and we, in our "deep" subjectivity, are "situated streamings of the world," sites of being. The "transcendental ego" is "being-in-the-world" is a "flow of aspects." By aspects I mean profiles or adumbrations.

I think this is so confusing because "I" tends to refer the linguistic, responsible, empirical ego. "I" am a creature who takes responsibility, with a body in the world among other bodies. One can ask whether I am "consciousness" is this reduced sense, which takes consciousness as one entity among others. But consciousness understood radically is being plain and simple. So that "experience" is a bit misleading, for the experiencer is one entity among others. I think James and Mach are great on this particular issue.

29

I've been reading the logical positivists lately, and some of them make the point that language can only communicate structure. I don't know if "your red" is "my red." I just come to trust that we call the same objects red. The "privacy" of the experience stream is strange indeed. The same one world shines in these streams which are united by language and their situatedness in bodies.

The only statement we can make about reality in itself*, is that it* is*, prior to any epistemisation, but primordially dependent on an experiencing subject* to be for*. This mutual co-dependence and co-existence between experience and reality is primary. . .

We cannot talk about Ultimate Reality, the ontic, only about its co-dependent manifestation and co-existence as* experience*.*

I basically agree, and this is called by some "correlationism." As mentioned above, the "experiencing subject" is eventually abandoned. I think the young Wittgenstein saw this. Pure solipsism is pure realism. "Consciousness" or "experience"...these words, taken most radically, can only be synonyms for being in the widest sense, a sense that includes tarantulas and toothaches and tautologies.

Yet "experience" is so natural given the positioning of the stream. We "look out" from the face of a mammal. We feel mammalian feelings. So the neutral being stream is structured like a subject. Which makes me think of Hegel's famous line.

30

Indeed. Gotta say that actual logical positivists, not the cartoon that tends to obscure them, had strong phenomenalist leanings. Radically empirical. The world is given. It is there. But I agree that we bump against language here. Wittgenstein said that he wrote "nonsense." I think he meant that he was writing quasi-tautologies, and this is one way to clarify our terms, through normative definition. But to understand the clarification is to transform the quasi-tautology into an actual tautology. And of course actual tautologies are meaningless, because they are analytic. So some "analytic" statements only become

so, if one understands and agrees.

31

This is one of my favorite of your passages so far. I really like your use of "tension." I tend to read this as Hegelian. Hegel said that idealism is just holism, because it recognizes the finite or isolated as "ideal" or merely fictional, imaginary.

That means "idealism" refers to an awareness of the human tendency to take its practical fictions too seriously. How badly the idealists have sometimes been understood then, because "idealism" tends to be understood in the opposite sense.

we end up conceiving of static objects as fundamental

I think we can blame us on our practicality. It is useful for us to forget the role we play in the constitution or meaning of objects. In their being given as possibilities of perception. As Mill put it, we begin to reify these possibilities. But instead of understanding this in a deep way, so that logic is the essence of the world, we crudely think of possibility as a magical substance.

Objects as possibilities of perception lead us to inferentialism. We start to see that "experience" is fundamentally "rational" and stretched over a "now" which is now longer punctiform. Inferentialism reveals that meaning itself is temporal. Concepts are "promises" (binding rules for responsible linguistic subjects.) You mention "tension," and I'd say that normative tension is central here. The scientific eros is one of autonomy

and magnanimity. Science (philosophy), the essence of humanity, to some degree, has no authority beyond itself. The individual strives to transcend its smallness, to become what it is (implicitly.) To make its infinite "divine" subjectivity explicit to itself.

The ontic cannot be recovered from the epistemic, because ontic experience is enduring and a whole, while the epistemic is static and in parts. The epistemic can only approximate the ontic. This is why from the epistemic, the ontic is only ever an ideal limit, the horizon.

This reminds me of Heidegger's "formal indications." I can't just "give you" (and you can't just "give me") an awareness of a typically overlooked aspect of existence. This follows for the partial privacy of our streams, the fact of our individuality. But we can trade "smoke signals" and "objective correlatives" and get a sense of "structural congruence." We can agree that we are seeing basically the same phenomenon.

Totally agree about the horizon. Husserl saw that even most mundane of objects is infinite and inexhaustible and therefore "transcendent." And the world itself has a "fringe." If philosophy is figuring out what the fuck we are even talking about, and I think it is, then it's an infinite project. I, for one, do not expect the arrival of some Final terminology. Words are wise men's counters but the money of fools.

But I do think philosophy has made great progress. It's just that each of us has climb that ladder individually, which is made easier by the traces that others

have left behind for us. Easier but difficult enough.

32

As a heretical Hegelian, in some sense, I think that philosophy itself is a "time-binding" virus. And yet it is this virus itself that must be saying so, for we are the parasite and not the host. Only an analogy and yet, in my view, very illuminating. The grand ontological Conversation is like flame that leaps from melting candle to melting candle. It once used a body that people associated with "Hegel." It now controls my fingers so that it can call itself a virus, for it is especially interested in its own nature. It wants to know what knowing is and, by the way, if you don't mind, who or what that knower is supposed to be.

The theory of the parasite. Note that progress is only possible because those who go before us have made our paths smooth and flat, so that in the same silly lifespan we go further, learning what they learned more easily than they did, thanks precisely to their metaphors and arguments. In Hegel this "parasite" made a great leap of self-consciousness.

33

Brandom, following Kant, makes explicit (unfolds) what it already meant for us to be rational. We are, as linguistic selves, self-editing systems of belief that strive toward coherence. Consider also the project of philosophy. It makes sense precisely of making sense.

Gadamer's Truth and Method is, for instance, an attempt to understand understanding itself.

What I'm getting at is that the you and me who are having this scientific conversation are enacting the "virus." As Schopenhauer puts it, science and art are relatively pure forms of perception and contemplation in which practical concerns are forgotten. The philosopher who "should" be taking care of his body, his mortal worldly ego, instead "loses himself" in a contemplation of reality from an ideal point of view, as adequate and balanced as possible, perhaps that of a god in the balcony. The player gives himself to the game. The more rational and honest a thinker, the more that thinker submits to public semantic-inferential norms and lets the logic lead. The game plays the player.

So the better we are as philosophers, the more we just are philosophy. Our hardware (our flesh) is running the philosophy program, and the results, if we manage any, will survive the body that helped them emerge from what was explicit (and implicit) in the Conversation so far.

The linguistic self is a role that is performed. It's got to be one of our deepest and oldest transitions. We learn to think in terms of responsible ghosts who drive machines. That body over there belongs to "Sally." Sally is the "mind" or "soul" "inside" that body, and Sally is responsible for what that body does. Is it logically necessary that only one "soul" is understood to be in a body ? Can we imagine a society that gives

each body a weekday name/self and a weekend/self, each of them held responsible only for the body does when they are "on duty" or officially "in charge"? "One is one around here." That is so taken for granted that you are literally a madman to doubt seriously. Even playing with it philosophically will look silly to most. And yet the mere conventionality of the self, its status as a social construction, seems to be valued in Buddhism and other profound traditions. Anattā ,no-self, etc. And Mach achieved his breakthrough this way, albeit in a dry and lovably unpretentious way. What's interesting is that this singular conventional ego is a miniature version of philosophy, because it's unified (coherent) set of beliefs. And that ideal end of inquiry is belief settled in an ideal manner. An impossibly perfect adequacy and clarify.

As Peirce put it: Truth is that concordance of an abstract statement with the ideal limit towards which endless investigation would tend to bring scientific belief. The word truth may be more trouble than it's worth, but Peirce is much better than James on this particular issue.

Anyway, the philosophy virus has a kind of selfhood, since the point or goal is a single, ideal set of beliefs. The actual process is cooperatively adversarial. But this process strives to synthesize an always better single set of beliefs. (Reality can't be black and white, round and square at the same time.)

To me there's something funny in Metzinger's claim. What is transparent is actually the aspectual mode of the world's givenness. The scientific image is a view from nowhere, for no one. After the idea of science itself in the largest grandest sense, this "image" is arguably the supreme human achievement. But ontologies that try to make sense of it tend to be embarrassingly crude.

I suspect this is because the practical glory of technology, along with a mathematical mysticism that functions only as a distance effect, encourages a kind of irrationalism, namely a "pot-bellied" (complacent) pragmatism. Every drunk in the bar thinks he's Plato, that's just words, but a bomb is a bomb is a bomb. Those who can make bombs must be good at telling a coherent story about the whole, right? Some of them are. There are some strong philosophers among scientists, but I think Metzinger reads the transparency backwards. I am guessing that he turns his nose up at philosophy, but this tends to mean repeating the mistake of Kant, hastily leaping from the causal relationships between eyes and apples to a dualism that falls apart upon investigation. For we only believe that we have a brain in the first place through the evidence of our sense organs. Naive (direct) realism is also secretly presupposed before the absurd move is made. The commonsense lifeworld is taken as legitimate, and then this same legitimacy is used to argue against...this same legitimacy. The reality of the life-

world (including its commonsense understanding of eyes, brains, and apples...all actually there) is used to "prove" the unreality of this same lifeworld.

Phenomenology fixes Kant by clarifying that the "model" just is reality, except that reality is dynamic. Most of the "model" (reality here and now) is unstable. Some of it must be stable for philosophy to be possible, for philosophy articulates the permanent features of reality, its structure.

35

I would say that world at large is changing, and that "the forum" is something like the minimum structure common to all worlds (all modifications of this world) in which science makes sense. Science is a conversation governed by the norm of rationality (of scientificity.) Conversation presupposes a shared world and a shared logic (and really this world and this logic are entangled).

I realize that the "forum" sounds like a metaphysical concept in the bad, speculative sense. But it's just another metaphor for the "equiprimordiality" of world-language-others. These concepts only make sense as a "system." The forum is this system. We in the forum can argue about anything we like. We can make wild claims about our shared situation. But we are confused if we seriously deny the shared situation and the shared language that makes such a denial possible. And, on the normative level, "might makes right" or

"whatever works is true" is also confusion. Note that the "forum" is also this ideal communication community. This normative ideality is what makes science science and not just careless assertion. I've seen some thinkers try to jettison or cancel all normativity as a mere prejudice or fiction, but such a rejection relies on a residual scientific normativity to have whatever force it may have. This is why, incidentally, that coherent, charitable interpretations of Nietzsche feature him as a scientist who could question the origins of the will-to-truth but NOT the grip it had on him or the sense it gave to his project.

I hope you can see that I want to assume the minimum possible. I very much sympathize with the logical positivists. I don't want my philosophy to be speculative. It should articulate and clarify the given. I'm not saying we should disallow conjectures, etc., just to be clear.

36

Elsewhere I have written about "the forum" which is necessarily presupposed by science and philosophy as such. This "space of assembly" is the world in a minimally specified sense. It is the otherwise indeterminate concern or target of ontology. Less abstractly, it's also a (thrown) form of life.

Above you make a case for direct realism. We don't see a model of the world. We see the world. Humans don't see a different world than alligators see. They see the same world differently. (This is a matter of

logic.) Indirect realism are seduced by the complexities of perception. Their otherwise admirable knowledge of our biology obscures the way that the linguistic ego exists, primarily normatively, responsible for its claims, like the boy who cried wolf. Indirect realists don't know who it is that sees. The self has a virtuality. It is cultural, symbolic. It is performed temporally. It is stretch over the time dimension by its responsibility. The self as a "linguistic ego" is a social construct, an inherited habit of responsible selfhood, that had better tell the truth and learn the difference between a rope and a piece of snake.

37

The scientific image is indeed, in several sense of the word, a "limit." Actual measurements are always messy and imperfect, but laws are expressed in gleaming perfect mathematics. Those who don't think about may underestimate how "noisy" and tentative the projection of these patterns is. There's a profound "lust" for "the source code." I call this tech-driven mathematical mysticism. I studied math. I love math. But math won't do philosophy for you. Cognition is analogical and not just logical. We live in a "semantic field," which means we live in the slippery foggy meaning of our metaphors. We live in the fuzz of idle talk, the smoke of gossip, the haze of talk from down the hall.

I, as a talker, as a thinker, am fundamentally a piece of the we. Talk is intrinsically about the world, the forum. I claim, in other words, that the shared world

is absolutely presupposed by logic. This is another way to emphasize the sociality of language. Logic and "the forum" (shared world) and responsible subjects are presupposed by the scientific project, which is a co-articulation of its own basis.

But let me stress, in agreement with you, that this "forum" is not the "external world" of the dualist. This "forum" is prior to every such ontological thesis. It's what every ontological thesis is about.

I have trouble feeling understood on this point, so let me put it another way. What are the conditions for the possibility of science as a normative enterprise? How do things have to be in order for science to make sense as a project? As Husserl puts it, any theory that denies what makes theory possible in the first place is confusion, and this confusion was popular then and remains popular now. (Because it sounds sophisticated and worldly, and it wraps itself in a fashionable, difficult jargon.)

Basically the "forum" (as a whole) is what the ontologist, as such, cannot deny. For instance, he can't say that communication is impossible, that we don't share a world, that knowledge is completely impossible, that nothing is true, etc. As a human he can say it, but he becomes incoherent. One can get surprisingly far by calling out performative contradiction, at least among those who embarrassed to say one thing and do another. But that gets us to the ethical dimension, the motive toward honesty and the story that makes sense, incorporates criticism, becomes more ad-

equate...

”It is the kaleidoscopic union of all our worlds,”

I love the metaphor, and I think your view is pretty close to what I call ”ontological perspectivism.” I highly recommend Schrodinger’s My View of the World. I can send you a pdf in case you are interested.

38

”Ontological cubism” is a catchy term created by someone else which I will ”translate” as ontological perspectivism. The idea is that the world is a cubist painting, shown in aspects or channels. And we, as streams of experience, are these aspects, channels, or panels. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashomon>

1

Schrödinger is what I’d call an “ontological perspectivist.” He claims that we are all “aspects of the one.” We can read this in terms of Wittgenstein’s “philosophical I.” It’s not the linguistic-empirical ego which is an aspect of the world, for such egos are “in” the world. Instead it’s the whole structured sensual stream of experience that is an aspect of the world. But since there is no deep subject, but only the empirical subject, “experience” is a somewhat misleading word. It’s a ladder that should be pushed away when it has done its job.

Mach’s work implies a similar ontological perspectivism, but he doesn’t apply his first-person result to

“the forum” (the world of others, with whom we converse, in order to do philosophy and science.) But Mach did achieve the necessary “flat” ontology. So-called inner things and so-called outer things were all just there, and there were functional relationships to be explored.

2

The “forum” is a minimally specified version of the world. It’s what philosophy as such cannot deny and at least tacitly presupposes. It is the “space for assembly.” Whatever the case may be, we philosophers, as such, must all exist together and be able to talk about our shared situation. Or philosophy as a project makes no sense. And one can avoid philosophy. But one cannot claim the impossibility of theory (deny the forum) in a seriously theoretical way.

It’s a recognition of the necessity of the forum that motivates the move from Wittgenstein’s “I am my world” to a perspectivism that understands each of us to be an aspect of the same world. My linguistic self is in the piece of the world that my “ontological self” is. My “life stream” worlds an aspect of the world. The world exists as a plurality of such aspectual streams. So the same object (the Eiffel tower) appears in many streams.

Apparently every stream is associated with a sentient creature at its center. Objects are, in their visual aspect, “through” or “for” my eyes, though my eyes do not appear in the visual field. But I learn to associate this field with my eyes, which I can see in the mirror

or through photographs.

39

Many of the logical positivists, following Hume and Mill, were implicitly ontological perspectivists. But, like most philosophers, they didn't think much outside this methodological solipsism. Perhaps they thought the last move, to perspectivism, was obvious. And it is obvious. And yet ontological perspectivism has not been much discussed. The softer version of perspectivism was made famous by Nietzsche, but the crucial move is the identification of the being of the world and the being of experience. The world exist only in and through its aspects, the streams of experience, which are not experience really since there is no transcendental subject. Unless one identifies that "subject" with world, as one of its flowing aspects.

All this may sound mystical, and "nondual" thinking is definitely associated with mystical types. Yet how strange that this "mystical" idea is also held by the logical positivists. Because they wanted to break through the dualism of a mystified Kantian heritage, which is to say the belief in some hidden-in-principle reality.

I suspect that some of the ancient thinkers were just as "positivistic" as the Vienna circle, even if certain Western consumers of imported spiritual products tempt us to project this consumer back on the ancient producers. I think also of phenomenology's tendency to

be embraced by the self-mystified. That's just the way of the world. Some people will turn anything into the same chicken soup for the soul. Some Nietzsche on this :

Every profound spirit needs a mask; nay, more, around every profound spirit there continually grows a mask, owing to the constantly false, that is to say, superficial interpretation of every word he utters, every step he takes, every sign of life he manifests.

The twist here is that the superficial in this context is an obscure pseudo-profundity. All the hard work of conceptual clarification, which varies in the great thinkers, is transformed, if possible, into the same strategically indeterminate mush. The logical positivists are, on the surface, anti-profound. But there's a love for reality in the rejection of this profundity. What is it to walk in the sun, be married, make scientific or artist progress ? The simplest most available things are already too rich for a lifetime of investigation.

40

I suspect that, indeed, "analogy is the core of cognition." The book *Surfaces and Essences* (to name just one) makes a detail case for this hypothesis.

The logical positivists seem, even today, to be correct in general, in at least a blurry way. Given the essential "figurativity" of language (the role of analogy in thinking), this was as much as we could wisely expect

of the movement. I used "analogical positivism", but "hermeneutic positivism" seems to me to be a reasonable alternative.

Interpretation "decodes" or integrates figurative language (analogy, for instance, in a broad sense.) This means that all texts are at least minimally esoteric. We should perhaps speak of an "eso-exoteric continuum." Pure "literality" is like a mathematical limit, a goal which is never achieved, given the genealogies of our concepts (metaphors more or less alive, also on a continuum.)

As Derrida notes, the concept of metaphor is itself a metaphor. While concepts may evolve from relatively literal references to the practical world, their original use can be "lifted" into something more general. This of course happened with the word metaphor itself. This suggests that meaning is not reducible to interactions with medium sized dry goods.

De Man is not so easy to parse, but I recall his insistence on the difficulty or complexity of reading. Interpretation is "infinite." We can't get behind it. We "are" it.

I've check out psychoanalytic reddits lately, and I love Freud and the gang. But I think Freud is valuable most directly for his scientific invasion of the forbidden zone. To talk about incest and other sexually taboo acts in a cold, serious way. Beyond good and evil, our codifier of Nietzsche. Also love the transference metaphor.

But my point is that these still are metaphors, so folks that think psychoanalysis gives them literal truth, such as decoding of signs into "pure" unmediated sense, are deluded, asleep at the reel. One analogy is used to approach still another analogy. And that's that. As Derrida saw, this situation is irreducible. But, FWIW, I'm not one to embrace the performative contradiction of anti-philosophy. If analogy is central, we make it central in our account. If no distinction is perfect, so be it. If no "perfect" literality is available, we'll work with relatively literality.

But indeed, metaphor makes new meanings. Etymology helps us understand the new meaning, but the new meaning is not the old meaning. Our categories wear the sigils their origins, but they have indeed left home.

41

Let me connect this to Husserl. The transcendent worldly object is given in aspects, profiles, adumbrations.

For me or you, they are given like a sequence in time. We walk around the chair, continuing to look at the same chair, while what we see, in another sense, constantly varies. The "transcendence" is perhaps logical or semantic.

But for me and you, standing still on different sides of the room, the plurality of aspects is expressed differently. I see one aspect of the chair, and you see another. The same chair appears in both your "stream"

and my "stream" differently. But "logic pervades the world" and you and I live in the "same enough" semantic field. We can both refer to the "same" chair, however differently it is given to us. You may even be blind, but you've felt the chair or been told of it. This reminder is useful to pointing out that "aspect" also plays a metaphorical role in "ontological perspectivism."

Schrödinger is calling out the confusion of the indirect realist approach. But I've quoted him out of context, so some elaboration is called for. As Wittgenstein saw (and I paraphrase), the ontological subject is no longer a subject at all but merely the perspectival form of the world. Pure solipsism is pure realism. Dualism is annihilated.

In other words, I am the chair, or, if you prefer, the sequence of its aspects. Of course what I'm getting at is a stream of experience which is no longer experience at all but "pure world." Part of this world is the linguistic or empirical subject. I consider myself to be elaborating what is already in Wittgenstein's TLP. Though Wittgenstein did not bother to draw out the perspectivist implications of the passages on the "philosophical I" (which I've called the ontological subject.)

Schrödinger goes on to discuss how language is instituted, making a point familiar from logical positivism (and the beetle in the box analogy) that meaning (as communicable content) is structural. Red is logical and "transcendent." We can both refer to the "same"

red without "seeing" red in the same way. You may be colorblind. You may call "red" what I'd call "green." But, as long as we both call roses red, all is well, for this structural (of therefore practical) coherence suffices. We learn the basics of this structure as children. This is apparently possible (if that's the right phrase), because we live in the same world. Is this a pseudo-proposition, a "meaningless tautology" ? Such propositions, perhaps empirically meaningless, help secure meaning and reduce ambiguity.

Here is the gist of ontological perspectivism: we are all really only various aspects of the One. This claim is not as mystical as it sounds. Indeed, it's latent in phenomenalism. What blocks access is reification of consciousness as some kind of diaphanous "magical" substance. But Wittgenstein, more perhaps than others associated with the movement, demolished this ego (perhaps inspired by Mach.)

42

We can do without truth in philosophy. What matters is how we establish, criticize, and synthesize beliefs. This "deflationary" approach is valuable in at least two ways. (1) Our fallibility is harder to forget if we avoid the usual self-flattering "truth" rhetoric. (2) The classic attempts to define truth, which all tend to end up in confusion, are completely circumvented. This allows us to clarify the scientific task, which I claim is a kind of hygiene with respect to beliefs.

Here some's background on the approach:

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth-deflationary/>

Wittgenstein and Ayer both offer a simplified version. To claim that an assertion is true is basically equivalent to repeating the assertion. "It is true that it is raining" is basically equivalent to "It is raining." The "prosentential" approach, slightly more complex, points out some subtle differences, which basically amount to the convenience of pronouns. In brief, we can reason about our reasoning more easily with words like "true" and "false." But the essence is still that calling P true is basically equivalent to reasserting P.

43

The ontological difference (Heidegger) is very elusive. Which is the point, really. Because "the problem of the meaning of being" is approximately a translation of the "hard problem of consciousness."

The being of entities is not itself an entity. We find ourselves "thrown into" the entire context of the world, into "logic." We can explain X in terms of Y. We can definitely do a scientific study of perception. The empirical ego is an entity. The red apple is an entity. The scientist can look at both and draw conclusions. The empirical ego being studied and the red apples are "there" for the scientist. They exist in/for what some people would call his "consciousness." At least the studied empirical ego and apple "manifest themselves" for the scientist. He can fit curves to measure-

ments, etc. But that's because this context is "there" for him. If you reject the idea of consciousness as a "Stuff," you can instead just talk about the way that the world itself exists in "phenomenal streams." So our scientist is himself an empirical linguistic entity at the center of his own stream. He can think about himself, the other person Joe, and the red apple. But what does it mean (if anything) for him to insist that they are "there" (present) in the first place ?

Leibniz stands in his expanded "Mill" of neurons. The consciousness he is looking for is his own. I mean that that Mill's being (part of it) is just its "thereness" in the phenomenal stream that has Leibniz the linguistic-empirical ego at its center. Perspectival Phenomenalism grasps the world sort of like the movie *Rashomon* or the novel *As I Lay Dying*. (I didn't invent it. I go thru key sources in this paper. I just think it's an elegant solution to certain traditional ontological issues.)

44

To me the living nervous system seems to be a condition for the possibility of what we call "consciousness." That is established empirically. In other words, we tend to assign sentience to the "people" (and animals) that also have "electric meat" in their skulls.

If someone discusses Thomas Jefferson, they intend Thomas Jefferson, an entity outside their nervous system. Can we expect to find this intention in neurons

? I am open to the possibility of correlating clusters of neurons with what we call intentions in the space of reasons, but I don't see how ****identifying **consciousness**** with neurons solves our problem. The more we zoom in, the more we find "stupid" hydrocarbons that we don't usually assign "consciousness" to.

45

I don't think this is an empirical issue. I agree that we live in the same world —the same implicitly presupposed ontological forum. I reject subjective idealism. So the ontological question becomes : how do we best explicate the structure of this world we definitely share ?

To conflate philosophy with empirical inquiry is basically to deny its existence. Even the logical positivists thought there was work to do in the clarification of the logical framework of empirical science. And I count myself as basically a logical positivists — many of whom were also phenomenologists. The name of their group originally referenced Ernst Mach, the famous physicist, who did actual science while also being a....phenomenologist. His phenomenology arguably helped Einstein come up with relativity. The role of perspective in science is not some secondary issue.

As far as "magical" conceptions go, I think you are missing the spirit of immaterialism as a "negative" critique of metaphysical projections by philosophers. The philosopher's "Matter" had nothing to do with

anything empirical. This is WHY certain more-critical philosophers tried to point out its "emptiness." But certainly we intend the same objects in the same world that endure through time. So there is something that should be explicated. "Matter" and the representationalist approach failed. That fact that it failed is still not grasped by most, because we are very much practical animals who live in a default naive realism without even thinking about it.

Ontology is like pure math, but even less applicable. Your attempt to conflate it with empirical issues seems to me like a misunderstanding — a kind of faith in ontology as "actually" just physics. Personally I count myself an extremely secular thinker —and an atheist. Physics is great. Math is great. But a scientific personality is likely going to want to dig in to what these disciplines MEAN in the total context of life. And that is where "useless" ontology comes in.

Last point: some people (not saying you) try to use the later work of Wittgenstein as a justification for mental sloth. At all times anyone can just go along with practical life, speak in "common sense," and insult philosophy. People can insult pure math in the same way, for the same reason. They are correct that ontology and pure math are useless. They are incorrect to infer from this uselessness either meaningless or magical thinking. I'd say instead that ontology sets itself against the default drifting along with hazy common sense. It doesn't oppose common sense, though. Instead it wants to clarify and even justify common sense. So phenomenism is something like a sophisti-

cated direct realism —as opposed to the haze naive realism that dominates our usual drifting along in "what everybody knows."

46

This is close to what Descartes says. It's easy to see why someone would make that claim. But if you look at inferentialist semantics, it becomes clear that "mental" and "physical" entities are all discussed in the same inferential nexus. So the mental/physical distinction does not make sense beyond its practical application.

Example: I'm in court for a car accident. I explain to the judge that I was prescribed buphorin (a fictional drug.) This drug, thought of as physical molecules, caused me to hallucinate while driving. This hallucination (mental) caused me to swerve and hit a fire hydrant. So in the "space of reasons" (Sellars) I am clearly linking mental and physical entities in the same logical nexus.

In my opinion, it's very easy to conflate the practical distinction (mind/matter) with an "ontological" distinction. Critics of the ontological distinction (of dualism) make some strong points. Like how does the ghost "touch" the machine? Descartes just put the ghost in the pineal gland. He had no explanation. Just somehow the ghost was tickled by the pineal gland, which itself concentrated all the tickles of the material body, which were translated by nerves in the

body. Descartes thought of them as little ropes that rung bells in the brain. We really haven't come very far. Just a more sophisticated theory of rope and bells. Of course I think the dualist assumption is the problem.

good question. maybe we can speak like early wittgenstein or the logical positivists.

science deals w/ empirical issues. and practical life also deals with empirical issues. like fitting models to data (science) or making excuses in court(practical life.) doing this usually means taking the fuzzy everyday meanings of terms for granted.

many traditional philosophers thought of themselves as offering quasi-empirical or quasi-scientific claims. so the "metaphysical" was an "extension" of ordinary reality. accessible to mystics perhaps. for instance theology talks about God. so God is part of reality and theological claims are "empirical" in that sense. about things in the world.

but logical positivism and early wittgenstein thought of philosophy as different than science. it was instead just the activity of elucidating basic concepts. a semantic investigation. heidegger add the hermeneutic element, because concepts historically evolve. they are literalized metaphors. so it helps to go back to the source.

but this "new" kind of explicative philosophy was ANTI-speculative. It wasn't trying to hypothesize about hidden dimensions of reality. instead (as "phe-

phenomenology”) it just wants ”foreground” the structure of experience. Even ”my” phenomenism is not supposed to be bong-hit speculation but a careful explication of how we ”experience” and discuss the things in the world. so this anti-speculative explicative phenomenology just ”digs into” mundane experience and tries to get a better grip on the most fundamental concepts. What does it mean to say that something ”is”? And what do we mean by ”consciousness” ? And of course as a rational tradition, we make a case for this or that explication.

I guess my point from above would be that lots of people think of the metaphysical as an extension of the empirical. If you look at Ayer’s famous book LTL then you’ll see what I mean. Logical positivism became very interesting the logical/semantic framework of empiricism. So there’s science proper, and then there’s philosophy which is not at all conceived like a science. But traditional metaphysics thought of itself as a Science of Special Entities....such as spirits and God and free will and so on.

47

phenomenism is very much a form of immaterialism. it’s very close to saying the reality is just ”actual or possible experience.” but it also sees that the linguistic-empirical ego is one more entity in the world—even tho it plays a special, central role in the phenomenal stream.

It's incredibly simple and straightforward and I wonder why people feel so confused about it all. What the hell is there to be confused about??? Philosophy, especially of the deeper, ontological variety, just seems like pointless insanity to me...

here's my view. you see on this reddit people "drunk-enly" sure of what is "obvious." so clearly intuitions alone don't resolve these issues. and of course some people will never bother to question their intuitions of what is obvious.

subject idealism starts from the perspectival way that reality is given. that's a valid starting point.

physicalism starts from the obvious fact that the world is bigger than me. it was here before me. it will be here after me. that's also a valid starting point.

both positions tend to deny the valid insight of the other. physicalists say maybe that consciousness is an illusion. in any case they make it secondary to something that functions as a substrate.

perspectival phenomenalism (or aspect realism) appeals to me because it tells a coherent story. it doesn't skip over either sides objections to the other. it is, however, intricate and non-trivial to understand. not really at all something needed for practical life. so i say that yeah ontology is a bit maddening. a bit like solving a puzzle. how can we fit all of are basic concepts together in a plot without holes ? almost no one gets paid to do this. its a weird hobby. but i personally love it.

48

in my opinion (as someone who 90% agrees with it) it just concentrates the question to heidegger's quest for the elusive meaning of being. as a kind of phenomenology, it does not even aspire to or pretend to Explain the world. it's goal is to "foreground" the "ontological horizon." very much like logical positivism. explicated don't speculate. slice through confusions to reveal the problem in its most intense form. imv, the hard problem of consciousness is "really" the hard problem of being. and both wittgenstein and heidegger specialized in this kind of foregrounding.

49

I agree. As I see it, the postulation of consciousness-stuff is equivalent to the postulation of non-consciousness-stuff. Neutral monism just embraces "world-stuff" — which is just the being of tootaches and tarantulas, promises primenumbers and protons, etc.

50

we basically agree. and i think that's what fryguy (the OP) means too. close to nondual vedanta thought. also sartre's transcendence of the ego. personally i think calling it a "Subject" is slightly confusing. "witness consciousness" or "pure witness" in a similar way. but that's a small point. the main thing is things just ARE. that finite empirical egos are just more things.

tho they play a key role as the centers of neutral phenomenal streams. so for my money, i like to drop subject talk altogether. but i think your equation of Consciousness w/ Being means the same thing. so this is just a terminological preference.

i like that. i think that's the great illusion of some western philosophy, finally overcome by certain phenomenalist and adopted by phenomenologists (some of them anyway.) but this overcoming is still in the background.

do agree, and I appreciate the kind assumption that I'd understand. Philosophy (on the level of concept) is a joyful game. hard work sometimes . beating the thoughts into a coherent harmonious explication. but deeply joyful, like hammering a sculpture out of iron. but status of the buddha and paintings of christ are no less effective for a certain kind of communication. and of course music. but i love math and philosophy. but that might be for the contingent reason that i just happen to lean toward that form of expression. while others , with every bit as much passion and right, express "it" in other ways. but deeper than all of that is the character from which it flows. now that's a painful kind of sculpture. i think of the stoics as carving themselves into statues. taming the resentful beast, approximating a serene stasis.

Right. I like to talk about streamings of the world at the moment. but william james talked about the personal continuum. heidegger used "being. " and i guess being as the being of entities is about as clean

as it gets. but it's still just a word. the idea is the idea. people who get it or see it can pretty quickly get around terminology variance. as this conversation confirms. and i think they WANT to get around that variance, because it's a beautiful insight that people want the joy or sharing. not some private possession to be claimed. and of course it's an ancient idea. so we are just remembering.

exactly. my own approach to this is the redundancy theory of truth. in short, belief is the structure of a personal continuum. i "live in" belief. a change in belief is a change in the intelligible structure of the word. the word "true" is basically secondary. i call my own beliefs true. i call beliefs I share true. but that's all. a convenience. but lots of people get very comfortable in their beliefs and forget they are living on a volcano. i am not saying (just to be clear) that all beliefs are equally insecure. but i am i guess insisting on the perspectival nature of reality. that we "are" it "as" world-from-perspective of the empirical ego. the steam, because it is structured by the beliefs of this empirical ego, can also be called the "ontological ego." Thou Art That. but "perspectively." at least our sensuality is located.

anyway, as you say, our fundamental belief structure can collapse. people suffer a crisis. sometimes arising as a much more "solid" person. i think of "stoics" as people who survived their own death. they really Feel the finitude of their own personality. they don't much fear their own personal death. because they don't primarily identify with biographical trivia. they "find

themselves" in the dead and the unborn. and of course they "lose themselves" in science, art, music,....and of course loved ones.

I'm a fan of Jung. "Individuation" involves the "integration of the shadow." People are most cruel when they are self-righteous. You see this in mobs. Individuality dissolves in self-righteous fanatical violence. But the "psychopathology of everyday life" (Freud) is more plagued by "the resentment industrial complex." Close to Sartre's thought of bad faith and "victim culture." A sort of negative aggrieved narcissism. Not that we don't get screwed over by life. Life is tragic. But stoics (and other hellenistic philosophers) tried to "rise above the world" by rising above their own petty tendencies. By sculpting themselves. I'm no expert on Buddhism, but I've read some key scriptures. and I was very impressed. Spengler classes Buddhism as a "late" religion, a sort of Hellenistic "nihilism" / "enlightenment" in asia. i think he's basically right. or that's a secular interpretation of Buddha. compared to certain key pali text, Schopenhauer just muddies the water with his kantianism. but schope-nahuer, on the whole, is still great. and relevant here.

basically one (always only partially overcomes) petty resentment by grasping one's own wickedness and complicity in the evil of the world. close to the christian idea of awareness of "original" sin, but made secular and rational (charitably interpreted) by "psychoanalysis" etc. i mean this is just my way of looking at it. the "stoic" tries to be magnanimous and serene.

but the industrial resentment complex (you mention YouTube) thrives on casting its consumers of victims of an External Evil. so you get racism, sexism, and every kind of scapegoating xenophobia. if the Evil can be Expelled, the pure person will be happy. a total delusion of course. the real "enemy" is one's own petty greasy tendencies. one's own vanity and identification with oneself as an object determined by others (bad faith as flight from our terrible freedom—and freedom is just responsibility.). whether we are "really" free is beside the point. to be ethical or noble (it seems to me) presupposes some kind of responsibility and self-control. but no one is perfect, so of course we need a tolerance of others as we hope to be tolerated. we forgive as we hope to be forgiven. brandom wrote a book called the spirit of trust which is deep. clearly christian heritage plays a role here. the deep core of christian insight. i'm not religious in any normal sense, but i respect the old traditions. which can be read of course in many ways.

You nailed it. It is a "luxury" to foolosophize. Heidegger's "what is a thing?" has a beautiful intro. you can't "do anything" w/ philosophy. so the housmaids giggle. thales falls into a well, looking at the useless but dazzling stars.

but yeah if you are "grabbed" by "useless" issue, thrust into wonder, you can (with effort) untie the knot. that art thou. you can "see around" your own mortal finite personality. if you aren't busy in monkey mode saving your skin. if you can beat down your vanity long ago

to tolerate the "little death." i bet it's very ancient. this insight. at some point it gets written down. and that was already long long ago.

also love this: I also think that everyone, deep down, wants to understand what's beyond word. Get to the idea.

i used to talk about that nietzsche passage in terms of being "behind language" – derrida writes about this "lust" for the "pure presence" of the "idea." the "mind" is or wants to be "infinitely intimate" with this pure presence, which is undefiled by the empirical. sort of the basic dream of philosophy.

I respect that. and it's worth noting that concepts are essentially poetic or metaphorical or analogical. Since we "live" in our beliefs, the world is "liquid" in the sense of analogically smooth or fuzzy or indeterminate.

i agree with kojeve and popper. basically theories are just myths. metaphors. a rational tradition is just a second-order tradition. we embrace a meta-myth of the hero as "always on the way." no belief/myth is sacred except for this "meta-belief" itself. we criticize and synthesize myths together. so we never "transcend poetry." we just accept the infinite process itself as the goal. objectivity is an ethical ideal. the better myth is hopefully on the way, and it is made of parts of old myths and maybe some fresh acts of poetic creation/unveiling.

i do think that phenomenology is very much for in-

tropective types who also pay attention to their feeling and sensuality. jung's sense of introvert captures this pretty well. introverts are constantly "turning inward" to look at their experience of the object, which is a turning away from the object's "public" or "practical" meaning.

IMO, the essence of phenomenological bracketing is just this de-prioritization of the practical. and we find this in schopenhauer too. the "genius" of a person is a "parasite" on their practical life. like they give over time-as-money to the ontological Conversation (or pure math) in an unselfish way, lost in ideal rationality.

I think this is the most intricate and obscure part of my phenomenism. basically it falls out from ontological perspectivism. the world is only the-world-for-mary and the-world-for-joe and so on. and the-world-for-mary is mary's ontological ego. it's not really an ego but an "aspect" of the world itself. but it is structured by the beliefs of mary as an empirical-linguistic ego. we "live in" our beliefs. if "truth" is just a way of talking about belief, then "belief" is (the structure of) reality-from-a-point-of-view. "objective belief" does not correspond with some world-from-no-perspective. it's just an ideal form of personal belief. the scientific ethic is striving toward an ideal consensus. but the beliefs of the ideal scientific community don't "correspond with" (aren't made True by) some Aperspectival Matter that is outside all of experience. maybe you can see here how the representationalist as-

sumption that consciousness is a private translation or image of Matter as truthmaker meshes so temptingly with strong theories of truth that involve Truthmakers. but to really grasp ontological perspectivism — to reject the phantom of the world-from-no-perspective — is already to be on the edge of the deflationary redundancy theory. this ties in with wittgenstein's picture theory of language and phenomenology's assertion that the lifeworld-from-perspective is always already "significant." it is the familiar context of tools and responsibilities that we take for granted. it is not chaotic sense data that we need to consciously organize. instead we can "read off" this significance and "represent it" as linguistic egos. we can articulate in words the structure of the-world-from-my-perspective. but of course we all "stream" the same world. we intend the same entities. (we can doubt this, but we can't sensibly argue for that doubt, for argument presupposes our sharing of the world and linguistic-rational norms.)

I should clarify that my "stoic" is a blend of the artist and basically the type that "takes the impersonal personally." they lose their "petty selves." they find their substantial selves. the content of this substantial self is inherently "transpersonal." the image of the virtuous "stoic" is basically universal. this goes back to the ethic of science (ideal consensus) and also of art as revealing what is deep and beautiful for all of us in a high state. also i guess the christian idea of abasing yourself to be exalted.

exactly. phenomenism is the most mis-fucking-understood historical position that i am aware of. i read J S Mill (hence my name) and was blown away by his relatively awkward presentation of phenomenism. i could read it charitably (as someone who already studied Husserl) and see that he had basically solved the problem of Mind and Matter.

BUT if you don't go to the source (J S Mill's book on Hamilton) and only read encyclopedia entries, you get really crude misreadings. because they are written by outsiders who project their own assumptions on Mill. they just can't "think around" their own dualist preconceptions.

the rejection of Consciousness (as a deep ontological kind of stuff) is absolute foundational for phenomenism. it is NOT idealism. tho it of course integrates the valid PART of idealism. and the valid PART of materialism. it basically succeeds where Kant fails. experience is perspectival and rational. located sensation and "transpersonal" logic (semantic and inferential norms). both idealism and materialism ignore one aspect of "experience" and prioritize the other. both failing to offer a coherent explication of our basic situation.

Of course I agree. Immaterialism is also (implicitly) the rejection of "consciousness." Of course aspect realism (or whatever you want to call it) does not view the world in terms of a bunch of dead stuff. For aspect realism, promises and daydreams are no less real (in the ontological as opposed to merely practical sense) than tomatoes or tornados. The world is the "ontological horizon" in which all kinds of "logical-intentional" entities are lived with and discussed. Basically nondual phenomenism affirms the reality of the "Lifeworld" — the world of "common sense" that includes human beings with thoughts and feelings and responsibilities. It does not try to reduce this world to being "made of" two kinds of "Clay" in a representational relationship.

On the other hand, I personally think Wittgenstein's picture theory is correct. And this picture theory is very close to Husserl's concept of signitive (empty) intentions versus their "fulfilled" complementary versions. In other words, we can "represent" possible situations in language, and we can "recognize" or "read off" the "actuality" of these situations through perception. So "representation" remains an important concept, but it does not work in a foundational sense that takes perception itself to be representation.

Just to clarify, phenomenism doesn't deny entities like thoughts or feelings. So it's more "on the side"

of saving commonsense notions of "being a person" than physicalism. But it does this (or tries to do this) without representationalism. Without indirect realism, without the idea of consciousness as a "stuff" that is other than the "real world." It accounts for the perspectival manner of the world's being without making the phenomenal stream a kind of isolated ghost that grows on a complementary matter stuff.

My clarification above isn't an attack on idealism. It's just an attack on the conflation of phenomenalism and idealism. To conflate phenomenalism with subjective idealism is basically to not even "see" it. It's an underdog position. Since I think it's a strong position, I consider this unfortunate. It was once a mainstream position . It was common among the logical positivists and at the center of Wittgenstein's TLP. It also seems to have been the core of Hegel's complicated philosophy. I think it's clear that most phenomenalism evolved from idealist premises. Though Avenarius might have started from the other side.

54

i like the "empty bark." we of course should inure ourselves to intentional pettiness or even just the accident semblance of it. i got another story about monks.

3 monks vow to live a quiet life together in a hut on top of a mountain.

after ten peaceful years the first monk says "all this silence is just wonderful."

ten more years pass and the second monk says "it really is."

yet another ten years pass and the third monk says "would you two shut the fuck up?"

i can't remember where i heard some version of that, but it sticks w/ me

55

In some ways it's unfortunate that Sartre tried to do so much. I also disagree with him on various points. And Being and Nothingness is famously uneven. But I very much like the way it opens. It really captures one of the best things in Husserl, the way that objects are given in "aspects."

In contrast, my theory integrates consciousness into a larger, interconnected universal system, viewing individual consciousness as just one aspect of a broader collective.

We may agree on this point. Following Feuerbach's demystified version of Hegel, I'd say that logic or language is fundamentally "transpersonal." The self is more "we" than "me." The "tribal software" of logic "networks" us in an intense way that can hardly be exaggerated. The "ontological forum" is ontology's necessary object. We can't even have rational conversation (ontology) without the tacit assumption of shared world, language, and logical/rational norms.

The classic view of a person trapped in a private repre-

sensation of the world with a private language is therefore (in my view) pretty much refuted. For defending it seems to involve a performative contradiction. To me the solution has to account for the possibility of rational conversation (of science generally) without failing to account for the "perspectival" nature of sensation. Which is just the fact that perception is "located." The world "gathers around" my sense organs, always. I think this "perspectival given-ness" of the world was misinterpreted to imply that perception is private representation of some Real Object that is outside of all representational located private streams.

56

we've talked before, so you know where i stand. basically i agree with aspect realism or perspectival phenomenalism. the name doesn't matter. nor really does the terminology. BUT the concept of aspect or moment is crucial. unless a person can explain to themselves the role of "aspect" in this phenomenalism — they do not understand it at all. and we both know that Husserl is a key source on this.

things are the "logical" unities of their "appearances" or "aspects." i think i can safely say that we completely on agree the following point : to understand NEUTRAL phenomenalism is basically to answer Heidegger's famous question: what the fuck is a thing ?

a think is an interpersonal and temporal SYNTHESIS of its moments/aspects. the object is always primarily

”absent.” it ”needs time” in order to show more of its aspects/moments. it can’t show them ”all at once” because aspects occlude one another. so we get this understanding of how being and time are deeply related. in a cryptic summary, you might say that being ”is” time, but this is nonsense without the context.

57

Basically anything we can talk about (intend) is an entity in the widest sense. We can reason about toothaches and daydreams. They function as ”counters” in the same inferential network as novocain and insurance policies. This is where Brandom’s inferentialism comes in.

Roughly speaking, all entities are given as/through ”aspects” or moments. A blind person can talk about ”red.” Someone else can justify my rudeness in a situation by mentioning my toothache.

Of course some entities are more ”mental” or ”private” than others. The ”pain” of toothaches. This takes us to Wittgenstein’s ”beetle in the box.” Basically meaning depends on a public ”inferential” structure (the box or word ”pain”) and some elusive private element (the beetle or ”actual” pain itself).

Phenomenalism/phenomenology IMV takes us to the problem of the meaning of being. It doesn’t explain the world but only tries to get a better grip on the issue.

In practical terms, all of this ontology stuff is rubbish. I think that's worth noting. People live in a kind of naive realism. You might say that phenomenism sort of "justifies" or "pretties up" this naive realism.

People live with objects. The actual objects. They don't feel themselves (in the "natural attitude" of Husserl) to be wandering in a maze of private representation. But indirect realism basically says that they are.

So the task becomes "fixing" theoretical ontology (which is practically useless but fun to think about) by explaining how the perspectival "form" of the world's being has been misinterpreted as a representational form. This is done by what is called "ontological perspectivism." Aspects are real. The being of the object is the "sum" of its actual and possible aspects. So I see the real apple, but the apple is only given "through" time and "interpersonally" so that know particular appearance (moment/aspect) of the apple exhausts its being. The apple is not "behind" such appearances. It is their logic synthesis. Time is the "context" of entities that appear only "partially" "over time." Logic is interpersonal. Objects are "apriori" enduring and interpersonal. Basically "private representation" is reinterpreted as "stream-immanent" aspect or moment. And objects are understood to be "shattered," with their being distributed over many NEUTRAL phenomenal streams (perspectival streamings of the

world.)

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All good points. I take early Heidegger to be focused on the way that humans tend to interpret their own existence in terms of things. Which makes me think of Descartes' implicit identification of existence with some vague stuff in the pineal gland.

Reminds me of a joke: A crooked stick looks straight when you pull it out of the water. To me this emphasizes that the tactile/practical manifestation is taken as the "real" one. The stick is "really" straight because it feels straight to the hand. The tactile is prioritized. "The real is that which resists." And yet there's no obvious non-practical reason to call one appearance an illusion. Mach discusses this issue, and it suggested to me that phenomenology's "bracketing" is best understood as a suspension of practical interest. Which is classic really. Theory is "free" relative to practical needs that "bend" thought toward a short-term payoff.

I like phenomenism because it embraces all of experience as genuinely real. Of course there's the practical concept of "real," but this is something else. The object is "given" in terms of "qualia." It's a total complex that involves sensation, emotion, and concept. But I'd say the "fused" object itself is primary. Every "experience" of the intentional object is a "moment" or "aspect" of it that is "part of" its genuine being.

Exactly. And might be worth saying that we are perceptually perspectival streams of presence. But our logic/meaning is trans-perspectival. We have to be able to intend the same entities to have a rational discussion. So we might as well assume explicitly what we assume tacitly as we begin to do ontology. The world is an ontological forum or horizon. The logical-interpersonal "stage" of perspectival perception/presence.

Presence can be without being presence to mind. Perhaps it could be argued that 'mind' should be taken in some ultra minimal sense and that therefore presence resolves into infinitesimal sparks of consciousness.

I'd even say that presence "has to" finally just "be." If reality needs a subject, then that subject is part of reality that itself needs another subject, and so on. Presence just "is." So we get Heidegger's and Wittgenstein's recognition of the elusiveness or almost ineffability of being. Wittgenstein says that it is "nonsense to wonder at a tautology." Any tautology presupposes world.

"Sparks of consciousness" reminds me of Whitehead. *Process and Reality* is written in a strange way that makes it hard to summarize. Whitehead jumps around, attacking the issue from here and there. But his fundamental vision seems close to James'. Reality is made of drops of qualitative combinations of basic logical entities. Hard to explain, but very close (it

seems to me) to both of our views.

I agree. Great paper. Reminds me of Wittgenstein's TLP. He solved the problem of consciousness and joked how little had been achieved. It was a big achievement, but it left the problem of being more visible than before. And it opened up the world. A certain knot was untied. The knot of "consciousness and its implied other."

I actually use "idiolect" elsewhere in my "tribal software" metaphor. We all run a particular version of the "operating system" known as logic/language. So the "English language" is a "transcendent" or ideal object in Husserl's sense of "transcendent."

Rational discussion aspires "toward" objectivity-as-unbiasedness. Which is basically an ethical goal, it seems to me. We TRY to find consensus, get the sense that we understand and are understood.

So you are not Seager but mostly agree? Thanks for the clarification. Since I am always typing up my ideas in little papers, I just assumed you were sharing yours in the same way. If you have written any pdfs of your own current views, I'd be glad to read them. I think very few people "see" or "get" phenomenalism (or whatever you want to call it.). It's a beautiful solution to various traditional problems, it seems to me. But people are still trying to "square the circle." So it's nice to interact with a few people who see it (even if such people disagree on this or that detail, which after all is a good thing.)

I completely agree/relate. Unless a person is really interested in communication (as opposed to playing a strictly adversarial ego-game), it's pretty much a waste of time.