

# 1

The following “grand ontological thesis” is a fusion of many influences. If it is original at all, then that is a matter of trying out new metaphors and a layering of the aspect metaphor. This thesis, which is arguably just an explication of what we already mean by certain concepts in a tacit way, might be called ontological cubism, or aspectualism, or neophenomenalism. In any case, it is very much a nondual theory.

# 2

Reality has many “faces.” It is nothing more than the system of these faces. Each stream of anonymous phenomenal consciousness is one of these faces. This stream of “consciousness” is really just a streaming of the world, of reality. In other words, the entire stream of your experience or my experience is the streaming of a single face or facet or aspect of the world.

The sense of “consciousness” intended is just **being itself**, the “there-ness” of entities. Consciousness is not a thing. It is the being of the world, and the world has no other kind of being.

# 3

The “nose” on one of these “faces” of the world is a sentient organism. We will focus on humans, on persons. I use the metaphor “nose” in order to say that the center of a face of the world is person. This person is very much an entity in the world. It is the center of the face or aspect of the world that is associated with it because of the “shape” of the streaming.

I will use myself as an example. The world streams all around me, as if it is spread out around my sense organs. My nose is in what I learn to call my field of vision. All of my thoughts, because they are “there” in whatever way thoughts are there, are entities in the stream. The stream is thick with my feelings, perhaps with the feeling of having ate too much, or the joyous feeling of a hot bath when one is sweaty from a bike ride in the summer sun.

The face of the world that encircles me might be called my “ontological ego.” While it’s not really an ego but a streaming of “pure world,” the ego language does capture its subject-like structure. Every face of the

world is like the stream of experience of the organism at its “center.” The ontological ego is therefore very easily conflated with the sentient organism.

I wrote above that the stream is “pure world.” This is because we have emptied the ( ontological ) subject to repopulate the world. Because the ontological ego tends to be conflated with the empirical ego (with the sentient organism), this same ontological ego, which is really just the being of the world, has often been reified. In other words, such consciousness gets understood as a kind of stuff that some objects somehow have.

But this stuff is the ( only ) being of the world. If my wife is conscious in the important sense, then she is a face of the world. A face of the world that I can't see directly, though language does allow us to “send messages.” Her toothache or love of music is an intentional object for both us, since logic and language are apriori transpersonal, directed beyond their host. But her stream of the world is hers, and mine is mine. I could travel alone for a week, and the adventure might be, for me, horrifying and wonderful by turns, but she is locked out of it, locked in her own face of the world instead. To each the world shows a difference face. But all of these faces are unified in the logic we share, in the way that we intend the same objects which themselves appear in different streams.

4

And the same objects appear differently in the same streams, as they reveal sides of times over time. The 3D spatial object can never be seen all it once. It can be turned around and looked at “over time.” So time is the “background” or “horizon” against or within which objects show themselves. Objects reveal or unhide themselves, aspect by aspect, moment by moment.

This is why the “stream” metaphor is appropriate. Each face or side of the world is a rushing stream of unrolling contexture, in which more prominent entities are embedded. Entities “need time” in order to manifest themselves, in order to be unhidden. One aspect of an entity occludes another. I turn a penny around in my hand, looking at heads and then looking at tails, glueing both sides together in a logical unity which is never a visual unity. The coin is given only in faces, just like

the world. The coin is not more than its faces, which are hidden and revealed simultaneously, since one side or face occludes another.

5

We might say then that time is the being of every entity. Time, the stream we call a face of the world, unhides or manifests beings. We might say that time is the nothingness of every entity. But this one requires unpacking. Ontology articulates permanent or eternal structure. The ephemeral isn't "real" for ontology, because it is left unconstrained. To articulate the eternal is to constrain the future.

Only time is timeless, for being is not an entity. The "fluid now" is time-as-being. The "vessel" is time. Time is the nothingness or the space in which beings show themselves. It might be said that time is the "variable" or indeterminate or generic being. So we say "stream" to point out the way that objects "flow" or exist in a not-ever-all-here way. No particular entity is essential, but the structure of existence is durable that of a world spread out around and "for" a central sentience, such as a person.