

1 foundationalism

The world is radically presupposed as forum by the philosopher as such. A forum is a place of assembly. A philosopher is one among other philosophers. Critical-rational discussion assumes a (*normative*) context of challenge and response. These voices articulate (characterize) *this forum itself*. Each describes **the** world. Note that denying the existence of such a world is absurdly an assertion about the very world one is (lost in confusion) trying to deny.

As philosophers (and not just gossiping drunks) their enterprise is especially normative. The ontological is always also deontological. It is not essentially about what I believe but instead about what one *ought* to believe. All is this is implicit or enfolded in the notion(s) of the philosophical, the rational, the scientific.

Some prephilosophical blurry conception of philosophy is therefore always effective from the beginning, as a condition for the possibility of the performance, as its sense. Or, in other words, some prerational understanding of rationality itself is radically presupposed, just as the world is. Finally an inherently public and world-directed language is assumed. These claims are established by considering the absurdity in their attempted negation.

2 phenomenism

J.S. Mill was among the targets of Husserl's criticism of psychologism. On this issue, Husserl was right. But Husserl and Mill were perhaps in agreement on a separate issue. Both Mill and Husserl were influenced by Berkeley. Both saw that Berkeley needed cleaning up, because Berkeley, however insightful, was completely tainted by various theological prejudices.

For Mill, "matter is the permanent possibility of sensation." I suggest we approach this semantically. When we say that something **is**, we imply (mean) that certain experiences of this entity are possible, directly or indirectly. Correlationism is implicit here. But, as is phenomenologically correct, **this is not speculation**. This is hermeneutic phenomenology, a young-Wittgenstein-style clarification of what we already dimly mean.

Kant famously equated the assertion of inhabitants on the moon with the assertion of possible experiences thereof. Heidegger claims that Kant is an ontologist who identifies being with being perceived. I take Zahavi to interpret Husserl this way. I interpret the great Ernst Mach this way. This is a (perspectival) phenomenism, which is “neutral” in that it is no more subjective than objective. The object is the “transcendent” (unconsumable, open-ended) system of its profiles. Crucially the transcendental ego must be rejected here. The world is given in “subject-like” or “subject-structured” **neutral streams**. Each stream should be understood in terms of the “environmental” discussed in very early Heidegger (1919). But we can say that the same Eiffel Tower or $\sqrt{2}$ is intended within various streams. Thinking is not a function of the individual subject. Language is apriori world-directed, equiprimordial with world, and suprapersonal (to speak against psychologism, etc.)

3 historicity

The historicity of human existence is perhaps most intensely visible and significant in human conceptuality. Korzybiski, who might not be so interesting otherwise, hit the nail on the head when he emphasized that humans, unlike all other known creatures, were **time-binding**. As spiders live in webs, humans live in time. We today speak a language which is the result of thousands of years of research and development. As Hegel, Mach, T. S. Eliot, and so many others have seen, personal development is better described as **impersonal** development. The philosopher, for instance, strives for the ideally adequate and comprehensive theory of (etymologically perspective on) the world (with “the world” taken in the largest and most radical sense possible.)

Language (especially understood in terms of its semantic and inferential norms) is the “spirit” or “essence” of the philosopher especially. The philosopher’s philosophy “is” that philosopher as such. But, as Hegel saw, philosophy has a history, and this is no accident. A more adequate comprehension of the world involves the accumulation of determinate negations.

4 direct realism

The indirect realist calls the direct realist a “naive” realist. Despite the enduring popularity of indirect realism, it is a *fundamentally broken and confused* approach to explicating the relationship between the perceiver and the perceived.

Why ? Because it takes the very position it pretends to reject as its foundational assumption. It establishes itself on the mundane understanding of perceiver’s body (his or her sense organs) in various causal relationships with objects apart from that body. Note that direct realism *does not dispute* such causal relationships. The indirect realist, on the other hand, both needs and rejects the legitimacy of this mundane experience. The sense organs (and their associated nervous system) play a crucial role, for the indirect realist, in establishing what is equivalent to the unreality of all other entities, which is to say their merely representational nature. Reality is hidden from us, they claim, by the product of the very organs of its revelation. But they forget that the sense organs as we experience them and reason from them, according to their own theory, are merely representations, essentially unreal.

The peak of such clowning is manifested in thinkers like Hoffman, who uses the theory of evolution to argue against the evidence *for that very theory*. Setting aside the closet mystics who need some dazzling escape from an insufficiently appreciated mundane reality, we might ask how otherwise more serious philosophers could have not noticed the obvious-in-retrospect confusion of indirect realism. In my view, the wrong turn is taken when representation is chosen instead of perspective. Perspectivism suffices to do justice to subjectivity, and such perspectivism only improves and explicates direct realism. I suggest that **the strongest argument for direct realism is semantic**. We intend (usually) the “worldly” object. Occasionally we can and do focus on the way that it is given to us (from this side of the room, or through this colorblindness.) But primarily we discuss the object out there, the same object for all of us, in the same one world.

5 direct realism

I mention in passing the an inferential approach to semantics is highly illuminating on issues like this. What are we philosophers up to after all

? What does the project of philosophy presuppose ? Is our rationality something that even *can* be removed from the picture ? I address this aspect of our situation in a previous post.

Excellent post. You wrote: irreducible to and yet inherently for consciousness.

I think the object is reducible to all actual and potential consciousness, but I think we should even replace consciousness with the perspectival being of the world. Consciousness does not exist, from this perspective. But the world is given ONLY in subject-like or subject-structured streamings. This subject-like stream is fundamentality temporal, stretched. This squares with what Wittgenstein was getting at in the TLP. The philosophical I just 'is' its world, which is our world from a single fluctuating perspective.

6 Metaphor and Metaphysics

If metaphysics is metaphorical, and I think it is, then saying so involves the metaphysical use of the concept of metaphor. In other words, one does not escape from metaphysics by “reducing” it to metaphor. Instead one repeats its essence, practices it intensely, exactly as one claims or hopes to be doing the opposite. The attempt is revealed as confused when this metaphorical reduction is turned against the new master concept itself, which is to say against metaphor itself. For metaphor is itself a metaphor, a “carrying over” or transport.

We might say that ontology is relatively naive when it has not yet grasped the elusive metaphoricity of its concepts. What is foundation ? Etymologically, it is ass. Thinkers like Lakoff remind us just how embodied our cognition is. If there are terms that are relatively primary, they are body-relative terms like “up” or “behind”. From such mundane beginnings we weave “fundamental ontology.” An “anemic mythology” .

The metaphoricity of our “sacred” (normatively scientific) concepts does indeed make them mythical. The scientist too has “only” myths. But crucially the scientist has a “metamyth,” a dominant myth about how the scientific “hero” should experience and employ all other myths. **No theory is sacred, except for this theory itself.** The scientist holds only his own scientific identity or metamyth firmly (as

unquestionably sacred.) All other hypotheses are understood to be disposable. With the communal embrace of such a metamyth, we get an explosion of knowledge held more or less tentatively. Two different scientists can disagree about almost everything, but if they both respect the metamyth above all else, they are fundamentally allies rather than foes. Their antagonism is even fruitful and proper, when contained and organized by a metamyth that keeps bias and perspective in check.

In a certain sense, science is a “religion” in its embrace of a orienting myth. But it’s a peculiar religion, for it is self-consciously dynamic and evolving. Even its relatively stable and essential self-understanding can and is evolved “scientifically”, and this is the strange trick of philosophy, a kind of Neurath’s boat, which manages to edit norms within the constraints of those very norms. This “circularity” of rationality is manifest also in the evolution of a particular personality. Immanent critique is the only critique that the critiqued is able to hear, willing to acknowledge.

7 Necessarily Misunderstood

Phenomenology is “necessarily” misunderstood as concerned [only] with subjectivity, because it is embedded in a context which takes dualism for granted. Consider this from the SEP: *Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view.*

Phenomenology is wonderful. This description is terrible, but perhaps it “has” to be. Because phenomenology is only satisfactorily understood from the inside. Only immanent critique “can” be used on those flies still in the bottle of indirect realism (of dualism). Minds must be eased out of their nonsense carefully. Neurath’s boat must stay afloat.

Phenomenology concerns itself with reality. But it does so in a way that allows it to catch precisely what is usually ignored as not relevant practically. The practical mind focuses on the what, stripping away what might be called the “way” it is given or the “how” of its givenness. For instance, the scientist cares perhaps only about the measurement and ignores the rich “first-person” contexture or lifestream within this measurement was taken. That the measurer was colorblind or deaf is irrelevant. The worldly measurement is reduced, for solid practical reasons, to pure number. In a criminal trial, we might only care if

some reliable witness or another saw the crime committed. We focus on whether a claim is warranted or not. We are not interested in the details beyond this. The practical mind constantly looks “through” what is called “subjectivity”. The object **is** the system of its actual and potential “profiles”. This is not speculation but explication, for what else can one mean by asserting P ? (Kant makes a similar point when discussing possible inhabitants of the moon.)

The phenomenologist reverses this tendency, looking precisely at the aspects of the world that are typically neglected. To the practical mind, these are “subjective” or basically unreal leftovers. They are mere “structures of consciousness”. But this practical mind is lost in a fuzzy, unstable dualism, which does not recognize its confusion on this issue. This is not speculation but explication, for what else can one mean by asserting than an object exists ? *Certain experiences are implied to be possible.* If there’s a beer in the fridge, then I can go and get it. Entities exist differently of course, allowing for differing kinds of access, but all of them are entangled in and get their sense from a single semantic-inferential nexus of concepts. In this one sense they exist all on a single plane.

We talk of “consciousness”, but “consciousness” is **of** the world, and is even, understood most radically, the very being of our world, a world that is only given in profiles, in a plurality of streamings. But once we go this far, we can drop the word “consciousness” and just say “world,” since the transcendental ego was nothing but a byproduct of dualistic assumptions in the first place, though of course the legitimate-actual empirical-normative ego clearly played a role in its postulation. Let me put this difficult thought in another way. In one sense, I am an empirical responsible person, with bills to pay and promises to keep. In this sense, consciousness means awareness, responsibility for my actions, ability to consent. But more radically (following Wittgenstein), my philosophical “I” is just the streaming of the world itself, as if through my eyes and ears. But these eyes and ears aren’t usually in the stream. I need a mirror for that. In any case, all entities in this stream are real in some sense of the word, for even “private” entities like daydreams can be discussed and play a role in our inferences. No further qualification should be demanded. Whatever we can take into consideration and include in the explanation of the world is real in that crucial sense. Especially from a holist perspective that sees how entities are interdependent on

one another for their significance.

8 the distance effect

Obscurity seduces.