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## 1

I read phenomenology for a few years perhaps before I **got** what I tend to call phenomenism. But this phenomenism is also ( and just as much ) perspectivism.

But do not trust an indirect realist ( a dualist ) to tell you what either is. They don't want to lie to you. They can't help it.

Finally "getting" phenomenism is finally ceasing to try to squeeze phenomenism into the dualist framework.

I may seem to be attacking those I consider friends. I primarily have my own former misreadings in mind. But I also have the few articles one can dig up in mind.

The tempting *bad* reading of phenomenism is plural solipsism.

Now what amuses me about this is its indication of the character of indirect realism.

Indirect realism is representational plural solipsism. The represented substrate is **glued on** to a system of solipsists. This substrate is the home of truthmakers. The individual solipsist is consciousness as situated functional representation of substrate.

The substrate is inferred by each solipsist. To be fair, the indirect realist is of course not a solipsist. My joke is inspired by the way that this isolated consciousness stuff is *saved* from solipsism by an *inferred* substrate.

The individual subject is not in direct contact with the shared world. If the world is  $X$ , then consciousness is  $f(X)$ , the *image* of the real world under some implied function  $f$ .

The apparent qualities of the object are only qualities of the image, which may ( thankfully ) be indirectly transmitted to the

true object, again through careful inference.

Or so one hopes. Yet the true object is defined to be inaccessible, never presented but only re-presented. A curious use of terminology. The unpresentable, the never-presented, is re-presented from the beginning.

Because I see the object with my eyes and brain, I do not see the object. This is the short argument for indirect realism.

But the indirect realist takes eyes and brains as real in order to make this argument. The indirect realist starts with direct realism as a premise to argue against that same premise.

“I see you have eyes and brain, so you what you see isn’t real.”

Locke’s early version is less absurd. Only matter and void and impulse are real, so your eyes and brain tell you the truth about shape and impulse, but the rest is painted on, God knows how, by a colorless brain that generates the illusion of color.

To pick on Locke just one more time. “Since only shaped matter in space and impulse is real, your eyes see things because things shoot off tiny little particles that bump against your eyes. These tiny little particles are too small to see. ” But he had just said that my eyes don’t lie about shape.

We can imagine a series of primary quality indirect realists, each transferring a secondary quality to primary quality status as it gets worked into the scientific image.

Gone are the days of the absolute space of Newton, but this absolute space was perhaps the supreme symbol of Objective Reality. The “Truth” is a specification of every pixel.

Some groups of pixels will represent brains, “inside” which an entire “fake version” of perspectival space will live. God’s space is absolute. Human spaces are each from-a-point-of-view. A unique and lonely point of view.

I may believe that a certain pixel is switched on. If it is Really switched on in Absolute Space, then my belief is “true.”

I live in a colorful representation. But reality is shades of gray. My pain and thirst and fear are translations of pixel states that do not hurt, thirst, or fear.

The brain-in-itself, made of such pixels, can somehow generate color, pain, thirst, fear. This brain-in-itself is a machine for converting configurations of atoms in the void ( somehow ) into a much richer lifeworld in which science is possible.

Now I find this story implausible, and I confess that I present a caricature. But I think this caricature captures the essence of a typical approach to “consciousness.” And also, as I see it, to being itself.

The “hard problem of the physical” is the tendency of thinkers to *not even see* that something like “consciousness” is the very *being* or *presence* of “the physical” in the first place.

The crude version goes like this: **consciousness is the presence of the physical.**

To sniff around the physical *looking* for “consciousness” is therefore absurd.

The brain scan monitor before me is present for me, there for me. This there-for-me-ness is the looked for “consciousness.”

“Well, gentlemen, I cannot find this consciousness stuff, so I declare that all is physical.”

I almost even agree with this gentleman. Consciousness is nothing at all. **Consciousness is no present thing but the *presence* of all things.**

But such presence is stubbornly first-person. And yet we share the world. The things present for me are also present for you, at least when we stand in a room together and look in the same direction.

We develop similar webs of belief about the states of objects that aren’t currently perceptually present. We remember them. We can make them signitively or imaginative present in our conver-

sation about them. We even go out of our way to co-develop a set of “officially rational” beliefs about these shared objects.

We become so invested in knowledge as warranted belief, so used to justifying beliefs in terms of perceptual presence, that we forget that presence is stubbornly a first-person affair. Even the presence of the scientific image is presence-for-me or presence-for-you.

We try to construct a system of “truths.” We construct what we think of as an articulation of “Objective Reality.” We are empiricists, of course. So this weighty construction is grounded in “sense experience” or “possible falsification.” But we eagerly forget this soil and take the flower to be more real than the soil.

The soil — the stubbornly private experience — becomes secondary and representational. Our hope for overlapping belief is transformed into the presupposed *completion* of this infinite project.

Objective Reality, functioning a Truth Maker, is already definitely out there. Definitely as certainly and definitely as already articulated in a resolution or detail that is superior to our hopefully truth-approximating beliefs. If my belief is 3.14, then the truth is  $\pi$ .

Now “sense-experience” ( to borrow indirect realist language ) is indeed often more determinate than the vague claims we make. When he is not around, I guess he’s about 5’9” or 5’10”. Now that he’s here again I can measure his height to an  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch.

I will also grant that beliefs about an object tend to become more exact with a further investigation of object, along with our confidence in those more exact beliefs.

It’s tempting to project Truth as a limit point of a sequence shared scientific beliefs about this or that topic. Indeed, that’s roughly what C. S. Peirce did.

What Peirce got right is that reality ( the world ) is articulated, immediately significant, or expressible in words. But this is to

say that world is **not** sense-experience.

Instead the world, which is always world-for-me or world-for-you, is more like a continuum of situations-for-me or situations-for-you. But we politely speak of “the” situation, which we break into facts with the “for-me-ness” scraped off as much as possible.

The useful habit of scraping off the “for-me-ness” leads to the “hard problem of the physical.” To our *not noticing* the foundation of the physical in for-me-presence.

So physicalism sings a song of the present without its presence. The physical is “present” (pseudo-present) in Absolute Space. The forum literally loses itself in this pragmatic fiction, in this *theological* fiction.

Theological because monotheist, and monotheist because The Truth Is One.

Science and philosophy come to take themselves as attempted revelations of The Truth. Belief is understood as mirroring a pre-articulated “true” reality.

But I claim that each us **lives in** — already — our **own** belief as the fluid articulation of the world from our individual point of view.

I am not all saying that we should wallow in this belief as is. Or that all belief is equally good or bad. I present my own ontological beliefs as possibly valuable to others. As in they may find value in such beliefs and partially adopt them, weave them into their own understandings of the world.

It took me a long time and plenty of study and thought to generate these beliefs. I present them as a painter presents a canvas. But I don’t present them as Truth. Indeed, I explicitly question the solidity and security of this concept truth.

The issue of consciousness started to nag me like a hangnail in the last couple of years. I had my radical instrumentalist neo-pragmatism bender before that. Now I’d say that pragmatism is a clever excuse to hide from real ontological work. “Real” in

the honorific sense.

The “hard problem of the physical” seems connected to the low-grade pre-theoretical pragmatism of a society that worships tech and incautiously adopts an ideology that follows behind.

A cynical pragmatic instrumentalism can surprisingly be helpful here. Our adoration of physics looks to be grounded in the qualitative presence of what technology gives us. Stuck in Los Angeles, I want to be in Hawaii, and 6 hours later I am there. That’s a flight distance of 2470 miles. Or I have a severe asthma attack as a child, and Albuterol lets me breathe easy in few minutes.

As Heidegger already put, existence is care. Quality is what we care about. Quality *personally* affects us. Technology speaks to us personally, through its qualitative first-person manifestation.

“Utility” is an ugly name for quality. The name is ugly because it suggests an incompatible value-for-no-one or, at best, value-for-anyone. When the revolution comes, you *will* like strawberries.

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” This wise maxim is nevertheless misleading. For you, she’s an angel. For me, she’s blah. But both beauty and blah are there in her face. The “same” face appearing in two presencings of the world, in two existences. She finds her own face, her face for her, in the mirror.

The philosophers I currently set myself against, including my former philosophical self, presuppose Objective Reality and try to work backwards. They presuppose the solidity of our understanding of the being of the physical and find “consciousness” elusive.

But finally *investigating* the being of the physical leads us to consciousness as situated presence. To “consciousness” as the presence of world, as the presence of those items in the world that we categorize as “physical.”

I sometimes tell myself that I should really be writing a novel. Being as presence is understood already in a vague way — as if instinctually — by “artistic” types.

I don’t think they could write what I’ve written. They haven’t articulated their sense of existence as being. But they *live* this understanding of life or existence as qualitative presence. “Of course” the world is experience, because experience is what matters. Matter only matters as it plays a role in experience. Obviously.

What they miss is the strange joy of an odd genre of “scientific poetry.” So I comfort myself. But part of me wants to **get it said** and move on. The “problem” is that I keep sniffing around from stronger phrases. I can’t resist sharing a new metaphor. A sentence that seems more potent, more vivid.

This is probably connected to my fascination with the unreadable *Finnegans Wake*. I read books *about* it. I read Joyce’s bio. It’s the grandiose idea of the book that fascinates me, the theory of its technique. Is the book an aesthetic success? I have to say YES, though in a complicated way. I don’t rule out in the least that Joyce planned the reader’s fascinated ambivalence as a desired effect.

If I am going to keep blabbing about philosophy, then perhaps I “should” discuss the “worm juice” stuff. Or talk about Gadamer.

The “being” issue is simultaneously dry and wet, abstract and concrete. “Well, this channel used to be OK but now he just talks about presence.”

The issue of being or presence is part of that cold conceptuality in early Heidegger. A cold conceptual approach to what is most concrete and varied. Formal indications.

Yet I have a crank’s opportunistic frustration with what I think is “right there” but somehow seen by only a few. The great intellectuals stifled by “the hard problem of consciousness.” Or

the pretense that only QM fucks with us ontologically. Chatter about “the physical” in an apparent blindness to the issue of its presence in the first place.

I say “opportunistic” because my own work is worthless if I don’t find something that others are looking for.

But above I mentioned that sensitive people “already know” that being is existence is presence is quality. Without the words perhaps, but they don’t need to be steered away from an alienated ontology anyway. My target audience is ... my former self. Almost definitely male and turned on by math and objectivity.

Interest in ontology is rare enough, and what I call alienated ontology goes along with the default STEM ideology. This “alienated” ontology is imperial, self-assured. So I am not exactly helping kittens out of trees.

On the other side, you have “consciousness mystics,” who stir in a few terms from QM. A kind of do-it-yourself scientific hallucinogenic whatnot.

I once made the mistake to post a “serious” ontological defense of “nondualism” on the Alan Watts Reddit. The pot heads were annoyed that I implied that some kind of conceptual labor was appropriate. One guy valiantly defended my honor, which I appreciated. While phenomenism is technically nondualism, in some secular non-pot-head sense, I soon dropped the term “nondualism” completely as all too tainted.

Now Mach was indeed the author I was reading when it all clicked for me, and I find my own attitude in Mach ( as opposed to the persona of Heidegger, another great influence.) But waving the flag of “phenomenism” and referring to Mach was also an aesthetic choice. I continue to see ontology as intensely scientific. I love the concrete sciences, but I found myself always wanting to dig deeper. Physics is deep, of course. But one takes so much for granted. One *avoids* the most fundamental questions. Even the mathematicians I knew, immersed in a science just as deep, cared more about proving theorems than figuring out what theorems



really *were*.

I don't at all think that everyone should do ontology. I think we go where we feel our gifts will shine. Ontology is scientific and yet also surprisingly literary. Am I surprised that Heidegger is a poo-poo mouth in the opinion of STEM types ? It's not just his political sins, those these play some role. It's the idea that science is *fundamentally* literary.

Now the literary is the ambiguous. One is forced into a *personal* engagement with a difficult text. There are no axioms or empirical results to lean on. If physics are priests who bring the lightning, mathematicians are at least these specialized helpers. But philosophers are inscrutable fools. Anyone can do philosophy. Just ask Anyone.

But Anyone can't *read* philosophy. These obscurantist buffoons pretend to say something profound. Carlo Rovelli read *Being and Time* twice, he says, but the reading didn't take, it seems to me. Yet he strikes me as offering an honest response.

He insists that Heidegger is following Descartes and Kant.

These have put the subject — in particular the subject of knowledge — at the center of philosophical speculation. For me this perspective is not convincing, because I am immersed in the naturalism that dominates scientific thought, for which the subject is only a small part of nature, a fairly marginal part, in the great scheme of things, which only we care about because, precisely, that is where we are.

It is of course this confessed *immersion is naturalism* that is critique and analyzed by Husserl as well as Heidegger. Rovelli's *own existence* — in which this grand vision of nature plays out — is still apparently transparent to Rovelli. The subject is a “small part” of nature. Yes, the body of this or that scientist is dwarfed by the immensity of the world, but the issue of the *presence* of nature is predictably ignored. Nature as objective presence is “obvious.” Rovelli betrays himself rhetorically when

he say **I am immersed in.** This “fairly marginal part” of Nature is precisely the part that *has* Nature *as* Nature. Does the mosquito have Nature this way ? Other species from other planets with bigger brains may “have” Nature in more detail than we do. The complexity enabling this projection of a singular Objective Nature is left unexamined. Immersion is just the right metaphor. The presence of the present is forgotten. Its “meaningful being” — its articulation — has become transparent. The stars-for-scientific-man, already a flattening of the stars-for-Joe and the star-for-Jane, have been flattened further into just the stars. But tacitly the stars-for-God, hanging in an absolute spacetime. The world is a container of objectively present entities. That are what they are what they are, man or not, in what way who can say, but most likely just as they are for the latest thing in human physics.

To reduce this starting difference to a simplistic image: I see reality as an endless universe of galaxies where near a marginal star a biosphere has grown within which there are sentient organisms and human beings that have developed a complex cultural system and a rich ability to reflect on the world. Whereas Heidegger sees a single human being with his direct experience of existing and interacting with something that is the world around him, made of things that matter to him. In a slogan, I think my experience is part of the world; Heidegger sees the world as part of his personal experience. There could be no more different starting points.

Now I myself continue to defend being as first-person presence or quality. But Rovelli is either a bad reader or indulging in a cheap shot. Being-in-the-world is being-with-others. The way we have the world together through language is at the center of Heidegger’s work. The world itself, including the vastness of Nature, is what is present in a “first person” way. Rovelli shares his thoughts in English. How does English work ? How does meaning work ?

Heidegger, on the other hand, does not assume that it is obvious what "existence" means, and repeats Descartes' move to seek evidence from our own asking questions, but not, like Descartes, questions about what we can be sure of, but, more radically, about what it means to "be". This initial step reduces the understanding of the meaning of 'being' to the personal existence of anyone who asks the very question of what 'being' means. So being is reduced to being man (and here I am not saying 'woman': it would really be to betray Heidegger's language even more than I am already violently doing). To use his twisted language: Being is the being of the entity that asks the question of being, that is, man.

So being is the being of man ? That's the climax ? Rovelli completely misses Dasein as the THERE itself. Dasein is time is the disclosure or presencing of *world*. The *world itself* asks the question of what it means for something to be. **Being is ontology**. This is my phrase, but I think it's much closer to Heidegger than the idea that being is man. Rovelli isn't always so crude, and he praises the book at times, if only to immediately continue to humiliate it.

### 3

So why would I make the outrageous claim that **being is ontology** ? I even used this a title for one of my videos. If we don't fall in to the scientific image, a mere part of what is there, as the "truth" of being, then we are at least more able to understand our entire personal existence as a questioning disclosure of the world. The world "worlds" in a way that includes sense or language or articulation. Many thinkers are stuck in a tradition that understands inquiry, our own sense-making, as a **other than** and "outside of" reality.

Reality, they presuppose, is the Chess board down there. Up here we hypothesize. What happens up here is unreal and secondary.

The Forum has a fugitive existence, like a shoe horn. You only need it to get the shoe on. The shoe is the thing wherein we'll catch the conscience of the king. Rovelli's NATURE is like this game of Chess. Its meaning and presence, tacitly instituted and supported by the Forum, is taken to be secure. Likewise, I who find my body at the center of the streaming of this world, can pretend that I'm just a piece of meat of equal stature with the rest. Until I drink too much and the room starts to spin. Until I read a powerful book and somehow the world is lit up in a new way.

Rovelli's personal attacks on Heidegger, which I mostly left unquoted, are too predictable to offend. If some damning story comes out about Einstein, I don't think Rovelli or anyone else will question Einstein's science. Any *fool* can navel gaze. And since philosophy is just pretentious diary-keeping, we must invoke the sins of said ontologist. I have no interest in minimizing those sins. The point is the reluctance to understand as scientific what isn't primarily mathematical.

But this leads me back to Mach, the physicist who influenced Einstein's breakthroughs and who was also an important philosopher. **How would Rovelli have dealt with Mach ?**

Was Mach also a shamanic mystical German ? A man incapable of the higher science of physics, who had to content himself with phrase-mongering ?

Mach nails **a** fundamental issue in a style that doesn't immediately scare off the scientistic. Heidegger is a much greater philosopher in terms of range. But Mach offers an immanent critique of default scientistic ontology of unproblematized objective presence.

I often mention Mill. This is because Mach didn't get around to exploring the implications of his first-person phenomenism, not in *The Analysis of Sensations* at least. If one understands Mach's focused analysis, one naturally wants to make sense of the shared world in terms of a **plurality** of phenomenal fields (different situated streamings of the same world). This involves

sharing objects. I see it. You see it. The same it. This believing together that we both see the same object is the beginning of a possible construction of an “objective reality” that we can forget ourselves in. Forget ourselves as situated presencings of the world.

Did Mill think of the system of interpersonal possibilities as fixed? Perhaps. I don’t remember him emphasizing that we live in our belief. I need to look in to his understanding of truth. But in general Mill’s language was stained with words like “sensation.” Just as Husserl had to use “consciousness.” Just as I still have to use that word. Though I “don’t believe in” consciousness. As an internal stuff. I take it upon myself to offer an immanent critique of ingredient ontology. “Well I can see the physical all around me, but I can’t find this consciousness stuff you philosophers go on about.” This search for consciousness as a **stuff** is doomed.

I may decide a year from now that I was a crank all along. I’d be more afraid of this if hints in the tradition didn’t point to what I hope is an emphatic clarification.

This is how Polt opens his essay *Revisiting Presence* :

“Being is presence,” writes Heidegger. This “decisive experience of my path of thinking cannot be remembered often enough” (GA 98: 278).

But on its own, the assertion that “being is presence” leaves us in the dark. What does “being” mean? What does “presence” mean?

There it is: **Being is presence.** Heidegger wrote it long ago. Later we find:

Some of us (including me) have long believed Heidegger is critiquing the identification of being with presence, while others believe that he is trying to appreciate and preserve presence in its richest form. I first read Heidegger in the mid-eighties, when Derrida’s attack on “the metaphysics of presence” was in the air; did this prejudice me?

Now maybe Derrida *did* bias Polt. Do I see something that Polt doesn't see ? But I'm just some asshole who bussess tables on the weekends.

Yet I am tempted to say: being is time is horizontal presence. Time shows by hiding. The critique of presence is the critique only of total presence. The object that is present for me does not give *all* of itself. Each aspect occludes all the others.

Perhaps I also read Derrida in an inferior way. But I understand the early stuff as a critique of "pure meaning" which is "inside" a sealed container subject. The subject is empty. The subject is turned inside out. The subject is world from POV. Only this "from-a-point-of-view-ness" is saved, and even that is "in" the object, latent in the *way* it shows this or that aspect.

The spoken word is an empirical entity or event. It radiates significantly. We don't have pure meaning as passenger on meaningless sensation. That dichotomy is demystified, demolished. The word, like all other objects, is a blurry equivalence class, set ajar, more absent and possible than present and actual.

Later Polt considers a wider notion of presence, along these lines. Note he has already ruled out a narrower notion.

The broadest sense of presence, then, would include all these non-Eleatic phenomena: emptiness, otherness, potential, becoming, and so on. All these phenomena are "present" in the sense that they show up in some way, they make a difference to us. Absence itself can be vividly present: just think of the question, "Where's my phone?" If these phenomena weren't present at all, we couldn't even refer to them.

Now the claim "being is presence" is far more flexible and plausible. But the problem is that it's so plausible that it seems trivial. How could this triviality be a "decisive experience" for Heidegger? What would be its critical edge?

If neither of these extremes is right, what we're looking

for is a claim that packs a punch and lands a blow: a provocative, questionable, but defensible claim that has both historical and phenomenological resonance.

Now I am still surprised that first-person “from-a-point-of-view-ness” is not considered by Polt. Heidegger discusses Leibniz in *Basic Problems*. Dasein is Monad, almost. Dasein is *fixed* Monad. Phenomenalism is a radical perspectivism. Being is presence is quality has a “first-person” character.

This is provocative because it *related* to subjective idealism, without being subjective idealism. If the subject is burned to a crisp, reduced to a residue, then **the one thing subjective idealism got right** is preserved. Turns out to be the hero of the piece after all.

Of course it's questionable. All that Rovelli could take from Heidegger was this apparent “idealism,” this (to his eyes) reduction of the world to one man's experience. Now we sapient types know that Dasein is transcendence itself or the revelation of the world as world. “Experience” is the secret name of W O R L D.

Let us also recall Heidegger's early criticism of Husserl, long before Husserl smelled danger. *Anxiety in the face of relativism is anxiety in the face of existence*. Husserl, despite his deep investigation into the taken-for-granted foundations of naturalism, was still essentially its champion. He wanted Objective Validity. The Absolute Science Of Eternal Essences.

This project saves Objective Presence, but enriches it. Gives it The Absolute Foundation it deserves. Now that foundation is Consciousness. Husserl is on both sides. But the Timeless Objectivity of this presence is all the more cherished and defended.

Where I find myself agreeing with young Heidegger is the questioning of truth, of the pre-articulation of the world. Of Derrida's discussion of the signifiers as subject to time and chance is a similar approach. Husserl needed Essences, so he needed Pure Meaning. If meaning is demystified into equivalence classes of “material” signifiers, then the “meaning” is dangerously first-person again. Yes, we can strive for a sense of mutual understanding.

But this involves trading signifiers. I don't get certainty. Philosophy is built on the abyss of language. On hope. On the uncertain jazz of genuine conversation.

So Pure Meaning and Eternal Essence, despite their subjectivity, are flights from situatedness, flights from the singularity of a mortal existence.

Rovelli didn't see it, but his vision of Nature was implicitly a vision of Eternal Essence. He just took the articulation of Nature and the implicit mirroring of its Objective Presence by Truthful Science for granted. He, like so many, didn't see the mirror but only what it reflected.

But let's dip back to Heidegger, as quoted by Polt, with Derrida in mind.

It's now a commonplace that "being" means presence. . . . But . . . presence as the basic characteristic of being has nowhere been properly thought . . . . Why would it have been necessary for me to dedicate all my reflections to this one point and to think of the "temporal" character of being qua presence?

**The temporal character of being qua presence.** But we can go back to the *ur-Being and Time*, a lecture called *The Concept of Time*, translated by William McNeill, to get help with this.

Summing up, we may say: time is Dasein. Dasein is my specificity, and this can be specificity in what is futural by running ahead to the certain yet indeterminate past. Dasein always is in a manner of its possible temporal being. Dasein is time, time is temporal. Dasein is not time, but temporality...In so far as time is in each case mine, there are many times. Time itself is meaningless; time is temporal.

"In so far as time is in **each case mine**, there are **many times**. *Time itself is meaningless; time is temporal.*"



Time is public clock time is “meaningless.” It has its presence or being in the primal **times** that are streamings of the world. Streamings plural. There is no objective time or objective world except the useful projection thereof in singular existences.

Each existence is a local streaming of time. Time shows by hiding. Time is also structured by care, and the time I **am** has an ending that never arrives but structures what is present through my more or less faced sense of my finitude and mortality.

Anxiety in the face of “relativism” is anxiety in the face of one’s own to-be-decided mortal existence. Consciousness is time is being is the *presence* of the entire world *for* me or you.

So it’s darkly funny that the physicalist hunts around for “consciousness” and finds only the “physical.” He looks for presence among all the things that are present. Heidegger, like Hegel, is a *concrete* thinker, because he does not abstract from the richness of existence. Being is ontology in the sense that my total existence, the presence of the world from “my” point of view, of course includes my trying to make sense. This existence is structured by my projects, by my beliefs. Hegel wrote the of subject-like substance, which he called “reason” and described as “purposive activity.” If I describe my existence, without deciding ahead of time to focus on objectivity present objects for the theoretical gaze, then I, among other things, tell the story of my life.

Existence is a *who* and not a *what*. This is not sentimentality but simple “objectivity” in the proper sense of the absence of disqualifying bias. In my lingo, we tend to take the forum for granted, in a hurry to unveil whatever math is good at describing. Or, in the case of Husserl, in a hurry to find the Pure Meaning of Eternal Essences. We don’t question whether Objective Presence in either case makes sense in the first place. We leap out of our situatedness, sure that being is *not* presence. Yet this crucial notion of presence is there, unclarified, in both empiricism and rationalism. In empiricism, perceptual presence is made decisive. In rationalism, the presence of “pure meaning” is decisive. But empiricists tended to misread presence in terms of internal sense-

data. And rationalism tended to ignore the being of meaning as radiantly *there* in or as the always empirical sign.