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“Philosophy is this foolishness.” “Fundamental ontology” is “useless.” Like great art is useless, to those with no use for it.

From naive direct realism, to gee-whiz indirect realism, and back to now-gee-whiz direct realism.

Indirect realism is built on the soul superstition. Built on a “consciousness” opposed to “really out there” stuff. The thematized hard problem of the conjured ghost. The unseen hard problem of the machine.

Tacit projection of omniscient unsituated narrator, whose belief is the truth, full stop.

The sophisticated indirect realist, equipped with ghost and real reality. This the fundamental ontology. A system of representational ghost. A single represented substrate.

The tree will be climbable by others long after I am buried beneath it. The tree transcends me. But I too will be seeable by others after I am dead. Some poor soul will have to clean up the mess, dig a hole beneath that tree. The I that is seen may be the I that sees, but the I that is seen is not the seeing of the tree from his perspective.

That seeing of the tree from his perspective, at a particular moment, is not me but tree. An aspect or moment of that tree, beneath which I’ll soon enough buried be.

Hard problem of the so called hyper-physical. Tacitly the public worldly thing is an interpersonal possibil-

ity. The tree will stand in its green splendor, if you are willing to make the drive. The tree waits for you. It'll show itself to me just as eagerly (or just as indifferently.)

I can't see without eyes. I agree. I can't see without that juice lighting up my brain. Fair enough. But it's the tree itself that's seen. Yes, its manifestation is indeed conditional. It does not suffice for me to be within this or that distance. My nervous system has to be in working order. Though a nearsighted person and a color blind person can both see that tree at the same time.

The nearsighted person knows that the tree isn't "really" blurry, for he takes his glasses on and off. Not so fast. How does the eagle, how does the 50-eyes alien see the tree ? Perhaps in so much detail that even the best human vision is blurry in comparison.

In a nod to *Rumble Fish*, we imagine our colorblind person to see only in grayscale. Born that way. Has *heard* of course of this color thing. Knows that the tree "actually" has color. Indeed. Does Mr. Grayscale see the tree then ?

Well, yes, for it's only by talking about the *same* objects in the world that Mr. Grayscale has been able to learn, for instance, about this color stuff.

The general success of reference is presupposed by philosophy, by all conversation that would take itself to be scientific, or even just meaningful.

By "general success", I just mean more or less suc-

cessful. Of course there are misunderstandings, which sometimes we can't address. Likewise, we believe in hallucinations as a kind of false perception. But I'd put it this way. A hallucination is an intentional object, right next to the perceived object in the "space of reasons." I don't expect you to also see "my" hallucination of an apple. Indeed, I recategorize the perceived apple as a hallucinated apple *because* I believe that others can't see it.

I likewise live my dreams as the public world, until I wake up, and I recategorize the events of such dreams as largely but not entirely independent of events in the public world. I didn't "really" get in an awkward gunfight or commit adultery or dissolve into sand. But I can tell others about the events of this dream, which they too will understand as only dream events. Events, yes, but of a special kind. So my dreams are in their world, which is of course *our* world.

This our-ness of the world is implied already by our sharing in the same language, for this language is eerily our-world-directed, down to its bones. It's not exactly "me" who speaks our language. Yes, it's me as flesh-and-blood locus of responsibility. But I've been trained into (loaded with) and ability to hear speech and create speech. I can refer to situations, hypothesize a possible future, and others can understand me. I can't prove that they understand me, but I don't need to. Am I going to prove to myself that others understand me ? Wouldn't a proof, if it mattered, have to take *shared* rational and semantic norms for granted ? In other words, I'd be assuming

what I thought I had to prove, namely that I share in language and logic with others.

To “phenomenologically see” our being-together-in-language is freaky ! This helps explain why “continental” philosophy is distrusted by the “scientistic.” Not scientific but scientistic. Language (“meaning”) is dangerously poetic. If one is not careful, one finds that metaphor haunts reality itself. So one must insist that math alone, shorn we hope of metaphor, captures or indicates the really real.

Above, we saw the temptation to call the tree when seen with my glasses the real tree. We prefer, of course, the richer aspect. For just about every practical purpose, the more definite aspect is better. One might speculate that the real tree is infinitely definite. If one knew what that meant. Specified to the uncomputable real number in every attribute perhaps.

Perhaps I can specify a mathematical model of the tree that is perspective-independent. Infinite precision requires infinite information, so we’ll let the real tree be a limit. Perhaps we’ll use a giant matrix. Then, given the situated perceiver, we can construct the appropriate aspect. Ray tracing, etc. Though really we’d need a finite model of the perceiver.

OK, so reality is the limit of a sequence of video game worlds. Not bad ! And this *is* a sophisticated conception.

But what is quality ? Not only green-ness. But let’s start there. Is my green your green ? Yes, we both call

the grass green. But that is “structural.” A chatbot without eyes can tell you that the grass is green. Mr. Grayscale above can tell you that the tree is green. How, by the way, did we and Mr. Grayscale figure out that he *was* Mr. Grayscale ? Probably he couldn’t differentiate to colors with the same grayscale intensity. We could, he couldn’t. Does Mr. Grayscale know what being a Mr. Grayscale really is in the same way that I trust we do ? You and I call the same movies “black and white,” and we don’t need to read the label. Just put on the movie, and it’s obvious.

But is my “black and white” your “black and white” ? An AI could be trained with labeled data that we all agree on to reliably classify films as color or black and white. Without eyes.

What, finally, is quality ? What is presence itself ? What is having the world ? What is being there ? Or, perhaps better, what is being there itself ?

What kind of answer could one hope for ? *There is a world here. I see it. I hear it. Color and sound and the smell of a rotten piece of chicken in the trash that needs to be taken out.*

I make these sounds. Particular sounds. That I tell you about with this inscription. But not *this* inscription, the one before my eyes. You’ll see a different shape (maybe in a different font) on your screen, with different eyes. Equivalence class of inscriptions that point to an equivalence class of “concrete” speech acts.

I write “concrete.” I mean “specific.” I mean the qual-

itatively present “aspect” or “moment” of a speech act, of a mark on the screen. This self-referential mark, for instance. No, not the one you are seeing now. The one I saw. Or the one that I see as I am typing it now.

How did the time flow there ? How does the time flow as I improvise this sentence ? I had to remember where I was, what I had already said, and simultaneously move toward the end.

But in physics, you are told that time is just some real number t , which implies a NOW that is punctiform and infinitely thin. Which we might call a useful fiction, despite its inscrutability. One learns to do the calculations. Real world input, injected heuristically into a game with symbols, symbol output injected heuristically back into the real world life world. Yet some would have us take the game of symbols for the real world. Would have us believe in the infinitesimal now. But, sir, I need a fluid time — a stretched rubbery moment — in order to read the claim that the true now is punctiform.

I’m tempted to ask: is this empiricism ? Or can we identify what I razz as “scientism” by its tendency toward an accidental mathematical mysticism ?

Let us return to the scientific fantasy of reality as the limit of a sequence of de-situated video games. How will music be squeezed in ? No problem. Encode sample amplitudes. Compute situated moments (hearings) with supplementary model of hearer’s nervous system. Let us ignore the deep mystery of presence

and simple quality and focus on emotional response, on the “feeling” of the music. Perhaps we need to model the “taste” of the hearer. We can use a vector in \mathbb{R}^{1000} to model the “total emotional effect” of the music on that hearer. Really that’s just one thousand 64-bit floating points, etc. But a substantial chunk of info. Feeling in response to music is just numbers. And the presence of a hue is just an RGB code. But the RGB code, if presented on a monitor is qualitatively present.

Our scientific mathematical mystics have taken the meaning of their math for granted. Pure meaning. They need it. For if meaning is cashed-out less mystically in terms of equivalence classes of qualitative present signs for situated perception, the game is over. The divine video game, the truth, already reluctantly reduced to an ideal, a limit of not-quite divine finite models, is grasped as this or that person’s vague fantasy. “Fantasy” in the sense of incoherent flight from situatedness.

To be sure, we can and do use models of a de-situated world. Experts can achieve consensus, decide that this or that model is best. We just don’t live in those models. They live in us. They live, more exactly, between us. These desituating models manifest themselves, curiously, only through situated perception and belief.