

*A crooked stick looks straight when you pull it out of the water.*

## 1

When I say that phenomenalism is perspectivism, I mean *radical* perspectivism.

It is the critique of “objective reality” as a meaningless phrase.

My work is a post-scientistic post-truth logical positivism.

Ayer toyed with the redundancy theory of truth but didn’t unfold it properly in *LTL*. Yet his phenomenalism, despite arcane terms like “sense-data”, dissolves subjects into one another’s associated streams. This psychedelic moment in Ayer is a great achievement. Even if he didn’t emphasize the absence of the assumption of a recalibrated “pre-established harmony.”

In Leibniz’s monadology, which is on the edge of radical perspectivism, we still have the God monad. And the pre-established harmony gives us the ghost of an implied objective reality.

What must be emphasized is that my sense of the world — my total sense of the world — can clash with yours.

As philosophers we presuppose ( often without noticing it ) what I call *the forum*. We presuppose that we share *the* world. We intend and discuss *the* world. But this is all. We need not ( though some of us do ) also presuppose that this world is “finished.”

I intend the apple that I see before me, red and round. You might deny that it is there. “I don’t see any apple. You are insane.”

For me perspectivism includes this clash, which is to say the differing revelation of the same world to different subjects.

Consciousness is the presence of the world, I claim. But it’s only the forum that makes this presence the presence of *the* world,

our shared world.

## 2

I “believe” in the usual “laws” of science in the reduced sense of those “laws” *expressing my expectations*.

I have what I take to be the usual strong *sense* of mundane “objective” reality. Almost without exception, people seem to understand me when I talk about this or that “physical” object. The cat, the car keys, the bridge across the river.

I believe I “share the world with others” in the usual way.

My perspectivism is “uselessly theoretical.” Ontology is foolishness to the geeks.

But this perspectivism, which I often call phenomenism, is “forced” on me.

The attack on objective reality is motivated by what I take to be a *solution* to the “problem” of “consciousness.”

## 3

Indirect realism is a disaster.

It is perhaps the dominant story of our basic situation. Consciousness is inside-stuff that mediates outside-stuff. This outside-stuff is “objective reality.”

I have criticized it elsewhere. Many philosophers have criticized it. So I won’t do that here.

But I will reiterate that the basis or core of this ontology is the assumption of truth as a property of statements that somehow mirror “objective reality.”

This truth-as-mirroring is a confused and absurd extension of seeing-is-believing.

The mundane physical object — something I can see and touch — makes me *call* a claim “true.”

I see that there is a gallon of milk in the fridge, so now I believe there is a gallon of milk in the fridge. I walk away from the closed fridge. I believe that milk is in there waiting for me.

The continued existence of that gallon of milk when I am not perceiving it is my sense that *anyone* — not just me — could open the fridge and find it. That gallon of milk could play a role in situations that do not involve me.

*That* gallon of milk. If people tell me stories about it, then I tacitly trust that we are discussing the *same* gallon of milk. This “trust in co-intending” is usually so automatic that we don’t include it in ontological discussions.

But this “logical between-us-ness” is central.

Mundanely “physical” objects don’t usually give us too much trouble. My sense of the world and yours mostly overlap if we are in the same environment. We agree on what we therefore call “the facts.”

But what if we didn’t ? Would we still call them “the facts” ? Perhaps we don’t agree on them because they are the “facts.” Perhaps it’s the other way around.

My perspectivism denies the meaningfulness of “objective reality.” But I acknowledge that a strong overlapping of our individual senses of the world is how we are *partially* intelligible to one another.

Anyone who regularly talks about philosophy with others will

understand this “partially.” As we wander away from “the facts,” we can feel misunderstood. The other might even be trying to understand us. But they aren’t saying the right things. They still don’t get it.

## 6

Perspectivism cannot coherent present itself as objective truth, for it is the denial of the significance of this phrase “objective truth.” Perspectivism is — if coherent — a self-consciously situated belief.

Perspectivism ( which is also phenomenalism ) is how I have come to understand how things fundamentally *are*. It’s the fundamental “form” of the world. As *I* understand it. As it, the world or reality, is there for me.

## 7

This rejection of objective reality as nonsense may seem anti-social. But I did not all *start* with this rejection.

I arrived there by thinking intensely about the “consciousness” of others.

Philosophers have often described consciousness as a stuff. My joke, that parodies this approach, is to say they mean a mystical purple smoke in others’ brains.

I call such philosophers *scientistic* because they hurry on to explanation without securing the meaning of their terms. Scientistic philosophy is passionate about math that mirrors objective reality. The goal is to find the “laws” of this objective reality. *Objective reality is a video game*. The goal is to find the source code.

Now the consciousness issue is *embarrassing*. When I google “consciousness is presence” in the hope of finding other “serious”

philosophers whose views are like my own, I find a good paper by Fasching, yes, but I mostly find spirituality products. Eckhart Tolle and similar offerings. I don't hate Tolle. Not at all. Nor do I deny that this stuff might help people. Nor do I even deny that my own ontology can have similar "spiritual" relevance for people.

But I see my "ontology" as genuinely scientific. I am ambitious, dear reader. I love early Heidegger, before his tone became too spiritual. Harman claimed<sup>1</sup> that Heidegger would be a minor figure if Heidegger had died before the lectures published as *The Concept of Time*. I disagree. Those lectures are great, but Heidegger was already a great philosopher before those lectures. It would have taken longer for his truncated early work to be recognized. I'll give Harman that.

But if Heidegger had died early and never involved himself in politics, he'd be understood as an intensely critical thinker, as a kind of radical empiricist. I do find value in his later works, and it would suck to not have *Being and Time*, but the early stuff is good enough that he'd be more easily embraced as a scientific thinker.

I mention this because he's a key influence on my work. But I want to swerve away from some of his rhetorical tendencies. Now I tend to like his rhetorical tendencies in the early work, *because* they were critical. He was irritated at nonsense. Irritated at what people tended to treat as all too settled and easy.

Heidegger saw that phenomenology is ontology and that ontology was hermeneutical or interpretative. I don't much include this stuff when I present my "phenomenalism." But this "phenomenalism" is a hermeneutical ontology.

So why the term "phenomenalism" ? It's a risk on my part. Many people understand by "phenomenalism" a *stupid* position that probably no one ever held. No one reads J. S. Mill anymore. Almost no one reads Mach. I find pieces of a coherent ontology in Mill and Mach, as well as Leibniz. These pieces,

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<sup>1</sup>in his intro book on Heidegger

when fit together carefully, and polished with a fresher post-phenomenological terminology, give us an ontology that finally makes sense to me.

I mentioned the feeling of being misunderstood above. If I have found an option that most have missed <sup>2</sup>, then I should *expect* to be misunderstood. I'm lucky to have a few supporters on Patreon, some of whom have become friends, though we've never met in person.

I'm ambitious, I say, but I am recklessly informal. Shouldn't I be more serious about all of this ? More discrete ? Perhaps. I'm not sure. Derrida is one of my guys. And I am attacking the concept of objective reality. So there is something funny in all of this.

I also see my ideas as hopefully having a life beyond me. Even if they aren't presented as truth, they are potentially contagious beliefs.

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<sup>2</sup>A few thinkers out there have views close to mine, but I haven't *found* anyone else yet with *all* of the pieces in the right place.