

FRAGMENTS

1

We are in some deep waters here. I am open to letting go of "the being capable of making an intention."

In some sense, the objects are fundamental. We call "intending" something like the presence of the object in a "stream." For context, here' my latest thinking, if you want to see where I am basically coming from:

For me, explication is actually more like FOREGROUND-ING. So it "brings forth" (into "attention") what is latent or mostly unnoticed in the background. In this case, I would like to foreground/explicate our "being in the same world" through the "idea" of objects. Ideas are between us, not inside us. So "intending" is not "really" inside some subject understood as a container.

We might able to explain intention in terms of time as "horizontal presence."

2

To me the "big thing" that happened in philosophy in the 20th century was the "dethroning" of consciousness as the correct starting point. One of the basic ideas, IMO, is that meaning is fundamentally social, not "inside" the subject conceived of as a container of "contents." You might say that it is an alternative to "indirect realism," which is basically a "two

substance" theory of consciousness and the physical. This "two substance" assumption has famously given rise to all kinds of seemingly insoluble problems. In this A. J. Ayer vid, we that even the "scientistic" (strictly empirical) logical positivists weren't happy with the two-substance theory. Precisely because they —unlike so many others — saw how "metaphysical" it was in a pejorative sense. But IMO they were still somewhat trapped in a "methodological solipsism." Though Ayer is an edge case.

One of the tricky issues is what I call the "forum." Robert Brandom is great on this. Rational conversation is ethically structured in terms of linguistic subjects understood as "processes" of keeping a belief system coherent. As rational subject, I am something like an evolving set of beliefs, aiming at the coherence of those beliefs.

So even if you want to put objects first, you have to do so within a "forum" that can't help but emphasize the objects known as "linguistic subjects." If I make some ontological claim, then I have to defend it. I understand myself to be presenting the claim TO others. So my claim (like all ideas) is between us. But, like mundane physical objects, it appears differently to different people. It may have "holes" in it that I can't see but that you can. Or maybe I "know what I am talking about" but my words are yet "properly" (ideally) parsed by others.

We see here how the very notion of translation involves a sense of "moving content" from one "vehicle"

to another. That "content" is ideal or idea. But I personally don't want to mystify this ideality. Instead I want to foreground what seems like a brute fact, namely the (imperfect) "intelligibility" of reality.

3

Yes. Great points. Some thinkers would say that reality is not "pre-articulated." We "articulate" reality by means of our evolving concepts. Even Einstein thought this way, though he admitted that our most basic concepts are pretty much just "here" and very difficult to see around.

As far as predicates and subjects, Brandom makes a case that entire claims (predicate and subject) are the fundamental semantic units. This is because a linguistic subject can't be responsible for an isolated concept but for a definite assertion about the world. Concepts would get their meaning from the way such assertions were inferentially related. This plugs the meaning of concepts into a normative context. Consider the boy who cried wolf. Consider a person who calls the same marble both black and white.

For Brandom, reason would indeed be grounded in our activity in the world. If John had wings, then John could fly. But John crashed to the pavement. So John did not have wings. You can see the inferential linkage.

So I agree that there's some controlling of our own and others' action in all of this. We are primarily practical

beings. For Brandom, we first use concepts in a very practical way. Eventually we learn to talk about this concept use via the invention of new concepts. We make our own rationality more and more explicit to ourselves. His work blew my mind, frankly. It was like the last brick I needed to finish a wall. It helps explain how toothaches and promises and protons can all be in the same one world.

4

I tend to agree that the inferentialist analysis of meaning is not the whole story. Illuminating, but not the whole story.

HOW exactly we "climbed up" the ladder to "official" concept use is a great question. More or less empirical, I suppose.

Note that official concept use, according to Brandom, involves an enacting of norms. " In other words, although the parrot can identify the swatch as red she cannot then go on and use this as a reason for inferring that it is colored, that it is not green, a squirrel, etc. A parrot cannot participate in the game of giving and asking for reasons, and thus they lack the use of concepts.

Integral to Brandom's understanding of concepts is the further claim that each concept is necessarily related to other concepts, to the inferential web of premises and conclusions that connect one concept with another. As Brandom puts it, when it comes to the infer-

ential connections that constitute conceptual content, a natural consequence is that ‘one must grasp many such contents in order to grasp any.’ ” <https://schizosoph.wordpress.com/and-concepts/>

On the truth issue, I personally think that the only good theory of truth is actually a theory of belief. Wittgenstein’s picture theory in an intra-worldly context, for instance. ”True” is an adjective we apply to beliefs we share. Redundancy theory. I don’t believe in a definite ”pre-articulated” reality. And we can and do change our minds about the articulations we live in. We ”live in” strong beliefs as if they were ”true.” But I claim that belief is fundamental. That ”truth talk” is useful but confusing when we tackle intricate issues like this. ”Truth talk” assumes an ”aperspectival” reality as something already out there, while I say that inquiry tries to negotiate an rational consensus, a core set of tested beliefs —that can nevertheless be modified. People thought Newton found the source code of nature. But they just couldn’t measure carefully enough to see its limitations. We could also discuss a kind of ineradicable ”from-a-point-of-view-ness” in perception itself. And also in terms of belief, because no two people have exactly the same beliefs. (Or so I believe.) You might say that the vision of an already determinate-articulated ”aperspectival” reality is a projection of an infinite task as if it could be and has been completed.

Well, I'd say that analytic statements get the most assent. So we all, in ordinary language, call them "true" or "truisms." But some philosophers have famously challenged even that. Nietzsche called our insistence on enduring things within a primordial chaos a kind of "lie" that we couldn't live without.

That may even touch on the ideality of the thing. Is it the same thing in every regard ? Or does our insistence on grasping it the same thing enable the recognition/definition of change ? Heraclitus said you couldn't step in the same river twice. Can you intend the same river twice ? Of course I think we "have" to accept this "ideal" endurance of the "same" thing as the condition for the possibility of intelligibility. So I am inclined to agree with you on the whole.

Which, in my view, is one reason I prioritize explication rather than speculation. Wittgenstein called his profound statements "nonsense" because he knew they weren't empirical but attempts to specify or "explicate" the basic concepts that we seem to assume in order to even talk about the world in the first place. I relate to that. What is a thing ? An "ideal" identity. This "appearance" and that "appearance" at two different times are the "same" thing, even if the appearances are very different.

I'd say that "the tree then" and "the tree now" are NEW intentional objects constructed from "the tree."

If we discuss the unthinkable-for-anyone (which I think is reasonable), then we seem to assume that concepts are "outside" or "beyond" the individual. Otherwise, if concepts are inside some subject-as-container, we would not be in a position to make such a claim.

Joe insists that he can picture a round square, and also a triangle with 2 sides. How can one prove otherwise?

But proof itself presupposes access to the SAME meanings. To the SAME relationships between those meanings. So philosophy lives or dies, in some sense, on the recognition of the "transcendence" or the "publicity" of ideas. As Husserl puts it, we can be personally relatively wrong about ideas in the same way that we can about physical objects. So the "out-there-ness" of concepts does not imply immediate agreement. Indeed, ideas are "ideal." They are "unfinalized." They are "in progress." Like that river for Heraclitus. The "same" river is never finished being further experienced and contemplated. Even if the river dries up, it can still evolve as an intentional entity in memory. We continue, for instance, to contemplate and understand Lincoln, etc.

I think we agree. I consider Nietzsche's statement to be incoherent.

Note that you are also invoking Brandom's "norm" of "linguistic subjects." The linguistic ought not contradict himself or herself. In some sense, such a contradiction breaks the unity of this "linguistic subject" —shatters the subject into incoherence. A challenge for all of us is that we don't always see the implications of our claims. So we can ACCIDENTALLY contradict ourselves. This comes out in dialogue. Someone can bring to my attention an implication of my claim that contradicts another of my claims. In some sense, the "law of identity" seems to be a re-expression of the idea as such, AS a kind of definite "object" between us.

I'd say that I'm some kind of "soft" rationalist. The "ideality" of ideas is their "liquidity." But ideas are "between us" in that I myself am in some sense "constituted" by this evolving ideality. I as person am myself an unfinished ideal unity. The "same" me who is here now has an unwritten future. Even after I die, the idea of me, as "public property", can undergo transformation. The "co-intending" seems to be primary.

So I'm not "against" the "law of identity." I'd call it an explication rather than some law imposed on us from who knows where. It's something like a "brute fact" that reality has a "categorical" structure —is made of things as "ideal manifolds" or appearances "collected" by the idea of the thing.

Yeah. It was just a little of that ambiguity that haunts all conversation.

I definitely need such principles to do philosophy.

Wittgenstein's "nonsense" was just "tautology-in-retrospect" – an attempt to point out core meanings like this "principle of identity." We are trying to talk about things that are so deep and taken-for-granted that it is almost "nonsense." NOT an empirical claim, but the condition for the possibility of empirical claims, etc.

We can contrast this with theories of origin and so on. What is "under" every theory? That's what interests me most.

8

This seems to touch on the issue of the conceptuality of animals. I wouldn't deny the possibility of some kind of nascent conceptuality in such cases. But that would seem to be an empirical issue. To investigate that issue rationally or scientifically would presuppose a full-fledged social conceptuality.

The "forum" is not projected as a speculative-mystical entity but only as an explication of the conditions for the possibility of science.

If you tacitly assume that some beliefs are warranted than others, then you assume something like this forum. Within this forum we can speculate about less developed forms of intention and conceptuality.

Is sense independent of language ? That's a tricky one. If you intend a public concept of sense, then I think not. But it does make sense, IMV, for you to intend a public concept that "points at" "how it is" for pre-linguistic beings.

9

I would suggest that any kind of scientific categorization involves more than that. We can of course investigate the mechanisms of perception. But any results of such an investigation would only be warranted with a rational forum that includes argument FOR the result. Your theory (or mine) of "whiteness perception" would have to be subject to criticism. It would have to be intelligible to others in the first place.

In short, the idea of a private science is (I claim) incoherent. Reason in its full-fledge sense is intrinsically social. A skeptic can indeed doubt this. But if they argue for it, they are lost in a performative contradiction.

Think of this way maybe. You are offering a metaphysical theory of perception and intention and signification. Why should I believe you ? Why should you believe you ? Are some beliefs better than others ? If so, how ?

I still think maybe you are interpreting the forum as a speculative or metaphysical entity. So you are offering rival metaphysical theories. But I'm trying to foreground what is taken for granted in any presentation

of any theory as a claim that deserves consideration.

For instance, you are making an interesting case against the fundamentality of this forum. But this "making a case" only emphasizes the forum it argues against, precisely by arguing against it.

Note that I don't pretend to offer some final articulation of this forum. I doubt that one is possible.

10

I'd say that surely there are causal functional relationships to be explored.

We depend on functioning sense organs for "full-fledged" perception.

I think animals with relatively simple nervous systems somehow track enduring objects. Their behavior suggests this. A few humans have been raised without culture, and I assume their survival depended on some kind of tracking and recognition of objects.

We might use "natural power" to indicate the biological basis of perception. Presumably this "natural power" is a product of evolution. At some point, language in the full sense was added to this biological basis. Not only genes but also memes were now at play. Which is the basically the idea of idea itself.

We can consider all of this within a social ideality that we mostly take for granted. I'll grant that this social ideality has its basis in biology, etc.

But I see this issue as tangential. As I said, I'm just articulating the conditions for the possibility of rational discuss. Origin stories are empirical and speculative. Interesting stuff of course. But tangential.

Now that we find ourselves in a normative social ideality, I'd argue that ontology/philosophy should take that into consideration. For instance, Democritus' theory of atoms did not account for this social ideality. It was therefore naive and incomplete. If his theory was to be warranted, he needed the space of reasons. But it's not clear how the space of reasons can be constructed from his atoms. If normativity is an "illusion" in a "consciousness" then his theory is of course not rational/warranted. It's not easy to "construct" or "reduce" normativity from the non-non

One can adopt an "absolute pragmatism." One can refuse to bother But this is just a shameless sophistry. I don't mean that in a pejorative sense. A shameless ironic sophistry rules the world. The philosophers who bother trying to make good sense of things, just for the pleasure in it, are the "fools" here.

In the context of "ontocubism," this foregrounding of the forum is offered as one of many reasons to reject the "two-substance superstition" of indirect realism. As philosophers, we have tacitly ALREADY taken a social conceptuality for granted. Kant's demand for a PROOF of the external world is accidentally hilarious in retrospect. What value could such a proof have in the first place if we weren't already in the world ? What did he imagine ? A solipsist with a private logic

proving to himself alone that there was a real world out there ? My point is roughly that logic is already "beyond me" in its essence.

11

Great question. I love Peirce. I'm not deep into his triad stuff like some people are. But his idea that inquiry is the settlement of belief was crucial for me. I connect this to the crucial "redundancy theory of truth."

I can see the connection to Hegel. If consciousness/perception is not representation and there is no "external" Truth-maker, then what we have is just evolving belief. We "live in" these beliefs as "truth" while they last. This seems correct to me. The idea of truth-maker (as opposed to the more plausible belief-strengthener) seems like one of the fundamental mystifications that haunts philosophy.

12

I agree with much that you say above.

But I'd say that the concept of truth is a mystification. What we have is just belief, which is more or less warranted. All belief is tangled up in perspective. So people can believe at different intensities, have different beliefs about which beliefs are warranted, etc.

We also don't have dualism or the "myth of the given."

Reality ("experience") is "immediately articulated." Wittgenstein's picture theory. My inferentially articulated beliefs are "grounded" by "empirical presence." As in I see my dog eat the piece of chicken. So that seeing is articulated with categories. "My dog" is a particular entity. But also "a" dog. Classified as a dog. Hence I could infer that "some dogs will eat chicken."

Note that dominant inferential norms can and do change. Note also that there is no official version of these norms. You might say that each of us carries an "idiolect" of a "distributed operating system." With no central "bank" that guarantees our inferences.

Right now, for instance, I present my own explicative beliefs as relatively warranted. They may or may not become more dominant (taken for granted by most) in the long run.

13

1. Causal/function relationships.

I mean between sense organs and perceptual presence. If you give me Novocain, I don't (as usual) feel the invasion of my tooth.

Here my point is that such functional relationships encouraged the theory that the world we experience is a "useful fiction" (hallucination, user interface) "thrown up by the brain."

2. "Full-fledged" perception is perception by humans

like us who recognize the object as a particular object, typically also as belonging to various categories. As Wittgenstein discussed. We "experience" "states-of-affairs" that can be put into words that are legible beyond our death. "The milk has gone bad." Lots of concepts in that. For instance, milk is something that CAN go bad. This particular container HAS gone bad. Note that we do not experience planes of colors and random stink. We experience unified situations.

3. For me intentional objects are primary. The concept blue is one such intentional object. It too endures through time. It is also "interpersonal." So we can use it to describe an empirical object, like a wave. Even if the wave is gone in a second, it too endures as intentional object. 100 years later, someone can discuss that wave that Jimmy saw that one day.

4. Evolution. Yes. But now you are on my page. I've been saying that origins are beside the point. What interest me is what we already take for granted when we try to do science. What are the conditions for the possibility of rational conversation ? A forum involving "interpersonal" concepts and a shared world.

14

This is where time relates to being. Knowledge of X is possible through the identity or substance or idea of X. We discuss X rationally, working out which beliefs about X are warranted. As future-oriented beings, we are largely trying to predict what X will do or become.

(I agree that we have to reason to assume perfect or certain knowledge.)

If I "experience" X, then I "experience" a moment or piece of X. I "see X from a point-of-view." I see a "side" of X at particular time. But X is a "public" object. I know that others can see the same X differently.

Why call a particular appearance of X a genuine "part" of X ? If we see the confusion in indirect realism, we also see that the only reality that X has beyond these "appearances" is the IDEA of X as the UNITY of such appearances. This idea is "open" because there's no limit ahead of time on how X might appear to others, including intelligent life from other worlds with 79 sense organs.

To say that the sensory presence or manifestation of empirical objects is "unreal" is to cancel them AS empirical objects. To project a "thing in itself" outside of a "consciousness bubble" is to do a bad quasi-physics. This "thing in itself" is, after all, ONE MORE intentional-logical entity. As the supposed "cause" of a perceptions understood as representations, it's an untestable empirical claim masquerading as explication.

I don't know how you feel about indirect realism. In my opinion, it's hard to make sense of ontocubism from "within" the assumption of indirect realism. You might say that phenomenalism was "born" as the demystification of indirect realism. My big influences are Mill, Mach, and James. As I see it, indirect realism

has always been a broken theory. But it piggybacks on the undeniably practical notion that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," etc. Certain "primary qualities" were projected beyond all possible experience into a mystified incoherent status. The correct way to approach this, in my opinion, is to understand that some perceptual presence has been prioritized as especially practically relevant. So weight and size, through careful measurement, become relatively independent of any particular observer. But removing all possible observers leaves us with a paradoxically empty object. I think one has to see this serious problem with dualism to appreciate the rival approach of phenomenism.

15

Your comment got cut off.

I think it's easy to misunderstand my "phenomenalism" as a kind of subjective idealism. I think the world is VERY real. I don't adopt a theory of "consciousness" stuff. Indeed, the world is "more real" in some sense than linguistic subjects who are in that world and part of it.

I also very much believe in the physical. But the issue is making sense of the physical. I insist that objects MUST be "transcendent" or "between us." More strongly in fact than indirect realists who postulate a hermetically sealed bubble of "consciousness" stuff.

Just to be clear, I don't believe in "one substance." I

like radical pluralism. There are all kinds of things. So my position is more like anti-dualism. It is associated with the term "neutral monism", but this name can be misleading. The main thing is that phenomenalism doesn't "double the world" and create some gap between an internal image and the real thing way out who knows where.

For what it's worth, I think indirect realism is inspired by a completely practical and legitimate distinction between relatively "internal" and relatively "external" things in the world. My daydream may be a public intentional object, but it's a very different practical matter than a used tire. We need not reject these important practical distinctions. But I still think it's illuminating to see that ALL objects, as speakable, are already "public" in the space of reasons.

16

For example, consider the following question:

Q. What does science or rational conversation in general take for granted ?

A. That we can all talk about a shared world, and that some beliefs are more warranted than others in terms of norms that are binding for all.

Is the answer above speculation ? How would one challenge such a claim rationally ? Let's say you make a case that it is speculation. Then, it seems to me, you assume that concepts of speculation and explication are "between us." That we can intend these same

concepts, that we are using the same signs for them.

If you argue that they are speculative, then you are appealing to norms that are ideally binding on both of us. In other words, you make a case (if you can) that has validity not just "in your mind" but for any rational mind.

This, I suggest, in one way INTO philosophy. Unfold what is latent in the concept. Then we can continue. We are in a shared world that includes objects. What is implied by our ability to talk about the same objects, given that we see them differently ?

Consider the famous problem of the external world. We see that it is a confusion, or a pseudo-problem. Because any rational approach to this problem presupposes shared semantic and inferential norms. In other words, rationality "presupposes" a "trans-personal" "externality" as such.

I should add that one can refuse the gambit.

For instances, mystics can insist the "knowledge" is esoteric. Or not even conceptual. To do this coherently, they should IMO avoid ARGUING that their secret "knowledge" is conceptual or rational. But I see many half-mystics do this.

Another variety of refusing the gambit is extreme skepticism-cynicism-ironism. The consistent skeptic would be coherent if they lived their skepticism by avoiding the logic they distrust. You can probably guess the strategies of the cynic and the ironist —if they want to maintain a coherent persona and avoid performative

contradiction. Though many of them don't see the problem. You might say that genuine philosophers are only accidentally caught in such incoherence. They fix it when they recognize it, seemingly an endless process of self-correction.

17

PROMPT

Why not replace beliefs with theories so that we leave room for the infinite? I think truth is only an empty concept within the realm of absolutes-hyperreality, and the state of confusion exists between the infinite, and the finite, the real, and the imagined.. Truth can only exist in its purest form as an existential orientation towards paradox nullification.

Perhaps you could say more about your approach ?

For me, beliefs and theories are pretty much the same thing, but I would count simple statements like “we are out of milk” as beliefs too.

I suppose my main point might be: we can do without truthmakers. If perspective goes all the way down, then the world is a system of phenomenal streams that are structured by the beliefs of the believer at the center of each stream. Beliefs vary in intensity. The stream is undecided or liquid in some places while being crystallized in others. So we don't have a-perspectival truthmakers. But we still have ordinary empirical experience, like seeing a gallon of milk in the

fridge. That would be a belief-maker. Such a belief is still revisable, but it's strong, and this kind of concrete belief (expressed as what Popper would call a basic statement) is the empirical basis of science. Of course science also needs the initial creative projection of a pattern.

18

PROMPT

I don't know, I feel like there's an aspect to rationality that hides itself from itself. I think that we naturally want to be close to other human beings, after all, that is where we come from. A sort of closeness, and the guarded ego, must convince itself to converse with the other to fulfill the vast subconscious need of intimacy with the other, hence, in the enactivist lense, where we actually grow. so the rational discussion is not the means for individual parties to pursue truthmaking, but the truth being made in the coming together, and then, funny enough, the parties would have to forgo their awareness of being apart of this larger system in order to reach this unity... or they could also just remember it, after the game is over and the clock has run out

I think we mostly agree. For the individual subject is basically a virtual entity. This atomic subject is built on a deeper communal subject. For us to understand one another requires sharing in a logic or sign system that is deeper than the particular person with their

opinions.

Do you like Gadamer ? He talks about a fusion of horizons. This is like the truth being made in coming together. This is what I was getting at when I mentioned the blind hope in rational discussion. We are open to what the other has to say. We are open to changing our current beliefs, because we take what the other has to say seriously. We care about finding a consensus.

What you write also reminds of Hegel and the idea that the self seeks recognition and community.

Your hinting about death reminds me of Plato and the idea that we remember eternal truths, having passed through the river of Lethe, etc. As if we are built to discover and rediscover some fundamental facts about rationality. I definitely agree that some of the aspects of rationality are hidden. In fact, I'd say that all entities are largely hidden. Their identity is something like the ideal unity of their aspects, both exposed and hidden.

19

For me, the "aperspectival" would be the "True Reality" that people often take for granted as a "truth-maker." But I am floating the idea (already in Leibniz) that we only have one and the same world from many points of view. With no "official" point of view. The "scientific image" (Sellars) is a useful construct but not a "true reality" hidden "behind" or "under" the

perspectives on reality we live in or as.

The redundancy theory of truth fits beautifully with perspectivism understood to go all the way down. So objects themselves are splintered into their manifestations in different "streams." These "streams" are what some would call "consciousness," but I prefer to say (with Wittgenstein) that experience is just world-from-perspective. And there is no other kind of world.

I very much appreciate that you get my point on "foolishness to the Greeks." I've spent lots of time on forums, and I've often reflected on the personas of others. And of course my own. Part of rationality, it seems to me, is a pursuit of personal coherence. If I insist that the divine is ineffable, then I should only hint, if even that. For instance, on this channel I've tried to stick to the "exoteric" part of my philosophy. At the risk of seeming less ironic/mystical than I perhaps am. The "esoteric" is by definition somewhat excluded from the public persona. Usually because it's elusive, delicate, easily misunderstood, triggering, etc. So it makes most sense in a conversation between friends. Yet I don't feel bad about us discussing the boundaries of the territory.

20

What you say about belief reminds me of Wittgenstein's disposable ladder. Use it, climb up, let it drop from the cloud you are now on.

Also we might think of many different paths to the

same realization. Once you have the realization, you see that the particular path doesn't matter. So you have no attachment to the way you happened to travel.

For me the "divine" is connected to "a gleam in the eye" or an "irony." Nietzsche's portrait of Jesus in *The Antichrist* is profound.

"" It is only on the theory that no word is to be taken literally that this anti-realist is able to speak at all. Set down among Hindus he would have made use of the concepts of Sankhya,[7] and among Chinese he would have employed those of Lao-tse[8]—and in neither case would it have made any difference to him.—he cares nothing for what is established: the word killeth,[10] whatever is established killeth. The idea of "life" as an experience, as he alone conceives it, stands opposed to his mind to every sort of word, formula, law, belief and dogma. He speaks only of inner things: "life" or "truth" or "light" is his word for the innermost—in his sight everything else, the whole of reality, all nature, even language, has significance only as sign, as allegory. "" I like the idea of using language to get beyond or behind language. To get free of the need to formulate faith.

21

I think a completely unique experience is an indeterminate "something." "I had this experience that I can't find (more) words for."

I agree that sighted person can't put color into words. The world is more than signs. More than intending objects within that world. That's why I claim that objects are given in/as/thru "aspects" or "moments." These moments are "imminent." What James calls a "personal continuum" is constituted these aspects-moments-manifestations. But language, fundamentally transpersonal, is also fundamentally transcendent. We can never "directly" confirm that a piece of music or a novel means to others what it means to us. Perspective goes all the way down. The world is a "system of monads." But language/conceptuality glues this fragmented reality in an intelligible whole.

The "privacy" of the toothache (the local-personal pain) is understood in terms of aspects. The logical-intentional entity is transcendent, between-us. But our access varies. Consider how the same woman manifests to two men, one in love with her, one a disinterested stranger. Or consider a difficult philosophical text. How it appears to those with the background for it and those without.

I agree that an intense toothache is a kind of maximum example of differential access. Pain is "real." In the world, in my view, but in a very imminent, intimate way. I see the "container subject" as a device that makes sense practically. But it leads to trouble ontologically (dualism, etc.)

Is it obvious that we can't point at toothaches ? We can often point to the location of the pain, help the dentist find the trouble. What about pointing at ra-

tionality or justice or the flaw in an argument ? Even when pointing at a dog, the pointing does not actually provide the boundary between dog and non-dog but rather appeals to an "impersonal conceptual scheme." As Julien Young puts it, we might be pointing only at the dog's skin or only at the space currently occupied by the dog and not at all the dog itself. Shared cultural norms seem to be necessary for pointing to succeed. I suggest that a "communal subjectivity" is prior to an individual subjectivity. The "forum" is prior to its "citizens."

22

The toothache is admittedly relatively private, but it is caught up in a causal-inferential nexus. Why couldn't brain scans (and so on) indicate a toothache ? Now a dualist could say that the "real" toothache is in a completely other realm. But I think this dualism has been shown untenable.

Might be worth mentioning the forum again. To show up as a participant in a rational conversation tacitly presupposes a shared world, shared meanings (use of signs), and shared rational-ethical norms. When Kant complained about the lack of a proof of the external world, he was confused. Proof is only genuine through invoking transcendent/"external" semantic and inferential norms. Language is always already transcendent. The argument for this is simple. Its negation or denial is a performative contradiction. One can (in my view) even "build outward" from what is latent in

the very concept of rational conversation. This is not to say that we share objects or meanings or norms perfectly. Indeed, rationality is something like the quest toward a stronger and better sharing of these things.

23

I agree with you about objects. They are POSSIBILITIES of perception. (I did videos on J.S. Mill about this.) Let me emphasize that world is prior to subjectivity for me. The subject is emptied or turned inside out. "Experience is world." One might say that world is given with a kind of from-a-point-of-view-ness that gets reified into a container subject.

Note that I insist that the "idea" that "constitutes" the object is necessarily "ajar." We find this in Husserl and Sartre. The object is never reducible to a finite set of its manifestations. The future is "more important" than the past of present. "Possibility is greater than actuality." Eddington's two tables are just one table. The lifeworld table is endlessly enrichable by scientific investigation, etc. Lincoln is still a work in a progress, as an intentional object still in play. The empirical destruction of an object is secondary. The "life" of an entity is its "signitive presence." However much (for practical reasons) we tend to focus on its sensory availability.

I think we agree more than we disagree. Let me stress that I'm talking about a hermeneutical phenomenalism. The empirical-linguistic subject is in the world but also comes into play in discussions of how entities manifest themselves for others. What did Plato's work mean for Husserl? This is an intentional object we can discuss, Plato-for-Husserl. Plato, as intention object, "showed a particular face" to Husserl. Husserl shows a different "face" to me than to you or Heidegger, etc. And I keep going back to Husserl, finding new faces. To be sure, there is an intense internal cohesion within a personal continuum. This is the "historicity" of the lifestream. So (just to emphasize) the world is not for me some land of dead objects. The world is given in all of its richness and affectivity within these "personal" streamings-of-world. The scientific image is a "de-vivification" of the "real world" which is the "lifeworld." The scientific image is a construction that methodically scrubs away the affective and the perspectival as much as possible, so that it becomes a tool for the generic user. My view is close to panexperientialism, but I object to calling the world "experience" or "mind." This is because it is shared at the level of logic. It is THE world, and every subjectivistic term erodes this primordial sharing. At the same time, I also stress the "first-person-ness" of the world. Objects are "between us" and yet "from a point of view." Immanent perspectival aspects are "gathered" logically in transcendent entities. In my view, many philosophers fail to account for one side or

the other. But thinkers like Leibniz tried to account for both. I believe in the "consciousness" of others (though I wouldn't call it that), so I understand that objects can manifest themselves differently for those others. And I believe that I can talk about the SAME objects with others. Indeed, philosophy presupposes the possibility of co-intending objects that manifest differently to different "subjects" at different times.

25

In my view, ALL entities as intentional objects are "transcendent" or "between us." So an "internal" object like a toothache or an imagined golden mountain is only relatively internal. To be sure, I call the toothache "mine" because I have an aspect to its practically crucial aspect, namely the pain. But that toothache has a definite, public role in the space of reasons. I can use it as an excuse to take the day off. I can use it to explain a dentist appointment, etc. My toothache and my daydream are both in the world.

Note that a sighted person in the land of the blind would have special access to the color of an apple. Yet they could discuss that apple with the blind. So differential access (differential aspect) is familiar to us already.

So the subject is "emptied" or turned inside-out. Of course the empirical subject is flesh in the world. And the linguistic-normative subject is the virtual-temporal entity discussed so well by Brandom, held in a score-keeping regime to a coherence norm.

You mention items not found in others' consciousness. You probably see that I reject the container notion of the subject. But what about feelings ? Where do they live ? As intentional objects, in the space of reasons. But I'm with Heidegger and others when I insist that the total presence of the object is affective, etc. "It values." The work of art emanates its beauty. The desired face. The eye of the beholder is in the beauty. Tho as a practical maxim, we say otherwise. Because indeed the manifestation of the same object varies. The same object "has many faces" in various "streams" at various times.

Does a worldless ego make sense ? Husserl defended it, but IMO his methodological solipsism was a mistake. The "I" is fundamentally social. This pronoun is part of a sign system that enables not only intersubjective intelligibility but even intra-subjective intelligibility. I think Derrida's early work (which I made some vides on) is crucial here. But the realization (as I see it) goes back to Hegel and Feuerbach. We speak in universals. From the emptied subject signs erupt. Even in an unspoken monologue, a minimum "materiality" of the memory of phonemes clings to a thought that dreams of perfect transparency. I don't think one can prove a negative : that we don't think without "world" or that we think only in signs that are minimally sensory (in an extended sense that includes the remembered/imagined sounding of a voice.) On the other hand, all making a case will involve the

contamination of "pure idea" by sound, mark, etc. What's essential (as Derrida gets from Saussure) is the gap or difference between signs, form rather than substance. Yet this arbitrary substance is necessary. As in there are many ways to slice up the medium, but some medium seems to be necessary. Signs too as intentional objects are transcendent/external, even if "internal" in the sense of being the great exemplars of the private and concealable.

27

Response to last paragraph. Is it impossible to perceive another's toothache? One can be mistaken. A group can postulate that one of its members is drunk, in pain, even if that member tries to conceal it.

But one can also revise an empirical claim. Eyewitnesses can disagree. Peirce used the example of a blind man and a deaf man witnessing the same murder. Though in that case they agree about what happened (its ideal content) though they experienced it via entirely separate channels.

My toothache is "external" even for me as a fact that can be articulated.

** Something that might help here is my embrace of the redundancy theory of truth, which gels with an unmitigated perspectivism. If there is only evolving belief, and belief just "is" the structure of my stream, then representation only applies in an intraworldly sense. Perception is NOT representation, in my view.

But signs can indeed re-present or pre-present states of affairs that might be "promoted" to "actual." And maybe demoted to "hallucination."

** I think analogous experience is helpful, but "analogous" reminds us of metaphoricity. I remember the concept of "being in love." And I also remember the experience coming after. "THIS is what they were talking about." That recognition seemed to depend on behavior associated with the concept (picked from TV shows.) I think the "affective" is real indeed. Not a behaviorist. But it seems plausible to me that sharing an empirical world is necessary for subjects to recognize an experience as belonging to this or that category.

FWIW, I allow for aspects of objects to be wildly unlimited. I think an alien with none of our sense organs could convince us they were intending this or that mundane empirical object. But maybe the details of that access would be beyond us, as ours are beyond them. It seems to me that our (sense of) "co-intending" one and the same entity is the fundamental thing—that this is the "being" of the object. Or its logical core. Because I would include all of its aspects as parts of its being. Those "parts" are where the ineffable would be accounted for. But to me it makes more sense to associate this aspect with a splintered object in the world and not put it in a "container" subject. Yet I think "aspects" are what "container subjects" are trying to account for.

PROMPT

*You may enjoy Davidson's story about the same objects or the same world being the presupposition of our rational conversation. He calls that 'triangulation' and the shared nature of our beliefs guarantees the truth of a great share of those beliefs (most), because we cannot even get mutual understanding of agreement if we don't all refer to or intent the same worldly objects. So a shared, and thus a real world is necessary for us even getting each other and conversing in the court of rationality. Also, the inner world, the social world and the objective world presuppose each other in our knowledge of them. The principle of charity, which is a maxim in the ethics of interpretation and criticism of others, is also based on that basic anti-skeptical presupposition that there can be no real understanding without the real world being responsible for most of our beliefs. Even disagreement depends on lots of implicit agreement; we must have a common referential and conceptual frame to even disagree. The shared and taken for granted nature of most of our beliefs is supposed to provide warrant for withholding those very beliefs and staying by them, since they are, *ex hypothesi*, based on the real world.*

RESPONSE Thanks ! I haven't seen Davidson's approach to this point. But I find a version of it in *On Certainty*. Personally, I'd use belief instead of truth,

since I think truth-talk suggests an aperspectival (as opposed to shared) reality. Of course this is what I intend by The Forum.

29

The “local subject” is built “on top of” the “communal subject.” Hegel. Heidegger. Feuerbach. To be an *I*, one has to first and always primarily be a *We*. Indeed, this *We* is called (the) *one* by Dreyfus/Heidegger. One uses signs this way around here. Indeed, *one is one around here*. A hocus-pocus locus-focus of freedom-responsibility. Essentially temporal as in stretched over time. Held fast to what I have done and said. Accountable for it. Conform, cohere. Brandom.

We have the local historicity of Dasein/existence/self and the global historicity. My local history constrains interpretative perception, and my global cultural history (“tribal software”) constrains this interpretation even *more* intensely. My ability to speak and listen depends on the global historicity, on English as an ancient “parasite.”

30

Husserl is great, but methodological solipsism hobbles.

The subject is ajar not a jar.

Early Derrida builds on Husserl, improves on Husserl.

Bracketing is bullshit. The sign system is in the world. It's always too late to pretend that you are bubble, boy. To pretend you are a bubbleboy.

"Consciousness" may have been a necessary term at the time, when folks were so lost in an alienated mysticism (the scientific image, very much entangle in the lifeworld, mistaken for a True Substrate Reality.) As Heidegger saw, Husserl was himself a prisoner of Descartes obsession with grounding and certainty. Illuminating to read Karl Löwith's novelistic sketch of both, where Husserl is presented as a pitiable prophet of a Super-mathematics of the Ethical. Heidegger is just as cruel in letters to Löwith. (You can find these fragments in Kisiel's *Becoming Heidegger*.)

Now I find the *Crisis* readable, windy but basically good. So I think the issue with Husserl was his way in person with others. Onanistically self-occupied. Not that I'm the proper judge for that bench. Löwith is hard on Heidegger too, but Heidegger comes off as an anti-hero rather than a clown. Both saw themselves as prophets. As world-historical. Is that bad ? Would they have worked so hard otherwise ?

The question for "us" is : what part of their work endures ? Can be recontextualized in less dramatic terms ? I say: much if not most of it. Tho I don't pretend to be done deciding. Heidegger might agree with me that such a decision is personal, not a decision for Everyone. If one is a gallows humor "black flower" pessimist, then the utopian prophet stuff is fascinating but only essential to the biography, to the philosopher

as psychologist. (Which might be the philosopher that matters most personally.) But the "scientific" phenomenological content, the genuine non-maniacal progress, is real. In both cases, it will endure, because it deserves to. Thus Spake Onanismo..