

Your last transmission was one of my favorites so far. Yes, ontocubism is a “joke.” The seriousness of a child at play. Or my little earnest I-hope-it’s-a-contribution packaged maybe for the spirit of the times.

My questionable interpretation of Plato’s unwritten doctrine will of course offend those who insist on a mystical father figure. This is the fundamental divide. One is “scientific” or one insists on the idol.

What most people want, for basically forgivable reasons, is sophistry. The product I purvey is therefore necessarily marginal. As you obviously grasp, my goal is to make some friends, to connect with other necessarily marginal individuals who try to live beyond the usual sophistry.

1

—I’m not afraid of metaphor. This’ll alienate people with what I’d call a naive concept of rationality. But I *am* a “rationalist.” This’ll alienate those who think “the Truth” is “trans-conceptual.” Not just theists who haven’t been exposed to sophisticated conceptions of God, but also various “New Age” intimations of a “Secret” that cannot be articulated. Now I do think Nietzsche’s Jesus is a profound portrait of something like “the Divine as Feeling.” If you *feel* a certain Infinity, then who gives a shit about concepts ? One may indeed experience concepts as insufficient or secondary. But, in my experience, invokers of the “trans-rational” do not like their invocation as an invocation of “mere” feeling. Apparently the *idol* is

necessary. This or that tradition or guru. The cat chases its tail. The envelope is the letter. To me it's more of the usual sophistry. Forgivable but boring. Boring for those who are "rationalists" with a respect for transcendent concepts.

The sign is "divine" because it contains or executes the "ideality" that allows for a "higher" sociality. This "higher sociality" is the condition for the possibility of a "spiritual tradition" of "gnosis." I have to put these words in quotes in anticipation of the mysticism that comes from either side. The scientific haven't foregrounded the forum they depend on for their elevated identity. The mystical sophist reads them in a vague, absolute, escapist sense.

2

—Of course my Plato is mine. I paint one more face on an old intentional object. What if Plato was basically as "late" and sophisticated as Derrida ? De Man thought Derrida projected a naivety on Rousseau. Maybe the more recent philosophers are rebelling against a straw man.

—Can you connect this to Harman ?

—I'll try. I'm biased, but I think the darkness under objects still depends on idea in a pre-psychological sense. The object has *its own* darkness thanks to its "identity." I take the floor for granted, yes. But this taken-for-granted-ness becomes present as an attribute of the floor. Is another "face" of the object.

One can point beyond all presence, if you like, but this “darkness beyond all presence” is of course present as an entity in inferential space, in the “ontological horizon.”

—So any speakable entity is “doomed.”

—Yes. Doomed to fail to intend that which is outside the speakable. Granted that there is a horizon or fringe, there *is* such a horizon or fringe through our noticing something like our finitude, which seems related to the “infinitude” of objects. Which itself depends on the “idea” of the object, on its enduring identity as a kind of collection or negation of difference.

—The differences of the appearances are aspects are negated by being grasped nevertheless as appearances *of* the same object.

—Exactly.

—Which connects to time. Because the same object shows itself differently at different times.

—Yes. Hence aspects are “moments.” The object is an open collection or manifold of its moments.

—Open because it is never exhausted. It can always be enriched.

—Yes. Even an empirically destroyed object persists in inferential space. The “substance” of an object is “logical.”

—What about space ?

—That also figures in. The object appears different as

a function of relative position, for instance. We might also account for other “torrents” with help from space.

—On the other side of the room, for you over there, the apple appears differently.

—Exactly. One can maybe disassemble torrents into aspects of objects. This would involve space as much as time. Which connects to Feuerbach’s realization that perception is perspectival and “local,” while conceptuality is “softwhere” or “delocalized.”

3

We can use Mach because he’s a secular scientist. A “proto” logical positivist. But even he was not afraid to see that the “substance” of the individual was cultural-symbolic-ideal. This is “substance” as what is worth saving. As what shouldn’t die and as what doesn’t die. The details of Ernst Mach *body*, the dying animal, are not intrinsically important. To him while he exists sure. They matter. But as scientist and philosopher he was directed outward, toward an articulation of the universal. He *lived* this “universal self.” Also his personal self. Every angel’s wings are wet. But more than most he lived impersonally. So he was a “spiritual” person. More “spiritual” than many a person who makes a big show of such “spirituality.” Indeed, it’s the trivialization of the spiritual, expressed in the typical idolatry, that one must overcome to be “genuinely” “spiritual.”

Is this scientism ? If so, it’s a sublimated and corrected scientism. Or real science is always already

“spiritual.” We see humanism born as a reinterpretation of the crucifixion symbol. But we also saw long ago in Socrates. So our Enlightenment was the re-lighting of an old torch.

If you look at Plato’s discussion of the sophist as skillfully managing a wild beast, namely the mob, then you find an almost Schopenhauerian pessimism. The “real” philosopher doesn’t fit in. This speaks against the understanding of Plato as naive. As if we today are so sophisticated. This also speaks against the opposite mystification of Plato as some kind of supreme guru who somehow peeped at the Cosmic Secret.

To say that science demystifies is to oppose it to sophistry. To rub away familiarity is not to be left with a boring reality. What Gellner objected to in banal readings of Wittgenstein is relevant here. Phenomenology opens up reality as wonderful and terrible without sophistry. The “wise man” is dazzled not by exceptional but rather by the rule in all of its recovered strangeness.

Is *this* some kind of sophistry ? I can imagine a nothing-to-see-here-folks philosophy-as-therapy type saying so. “There’s nothing strange in the familiar.” They may be sharing their genuine belief of course. In my experience, this type of person is invested for instance in the usual tribal politics. You basically get the pragmatic form of sophistry. This pragmatism is half-philosophy. Some of these pragmatists are clever enough, no doubt. And a certain sector of civilization likes just this kind of mitigated philosophy. It’s basically conformist and comforting. Vaguely scientistic,

but maybe a little folksy too.

I hope you don't think I am "judging" any of these positions in an absolute sense. These positions fit comfortably into the world we have. They make sense in a world like this. The "real" philosopher is of course the fool here.