

I'll start by answering the questions in your last letter. To be as readable as possible, I'll even break it into points. It'll be easy to refer to these points when you challenge them, as of course you should. I've written many informal essays that go into detail, so please pardon the summary nature of the presentation below, and refer to those essays if you are intrigued by this summary.

1. Phenomenalism is the basis of phenomenology. In other words, phenomenology is the completion and correction of phenomenalism.
2. Phenomenalism is under-appreciated because it is misunderstood.
3. The only good phenomenalism is a *neutral* phenomenalism.
4. Mach, a first-rate phenomenalist, understood this. He insisted that his "elements" were "neutral." But, to get himself understood, he often used the word "sensations."
5. Mill, another first-rate phenomenalist, understood the world (understood "matter") in terms of "possibilities of sensation."
6. Wittgenstein, just as great as Mach and Mill, articulated the same insight in a different way. "The thinking, presenting subject; there is no such thing."
7. William James meant the same thing with "consciousness does not exist."

8. Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre build on the basic phenomenalist insight. To understand this is to understand why it is claimed that “only as phenomenology is ontology possible.”
9. Note that it’s an ontological *discovery* that phenomenology *is* ontology. So Heidegger’s claim is an expression of the phenomenalist basis of his work.
10. Because phenomenism is generally neglected and misunderstood, this is not much noticed. Or, if it is noticed by certain scholars, they don’t bother to say it, for whatever reason. Moran, Zahavi, Braver, and others wrote great books on phenomenology, but I don’t recall them discussing phenomenism explicitly. Of course they articulate the phenomenalist insight as they explain phenomenology.
11. Moran *does* mention that young Husserl was impressed by his reading of Berkeley, and Husserl himself, in the *Crisis* lectures mentions the significance of various English empiricists.
12. Berkeley counts for me as the great *proto*-phenomenalist. Mill celebrates the genius of Berkeley, but Mill goes on to secularize and streamline his work. Mill, without emphasizing it, achieved a genuine (neutral, post-dualist) phenomenism.
13. As mentioned above, Mill’s phenomenism is still mostly misunderstood. The crucial phenomenalist passages, in Mill’s book on Hamilton’s philosophy, aren’t even that easy to get on paper, though you can find a pdf of the book online. Nor is Mill men-

tioned for this breakthrough in the typical histories of philosophy.

14. My own reading of Mill was no doubt illuminated by having studied Heidegger and then Husserl first.
15. As an anonymous taintwrinkle, I can “afford” to call attention to this under-appreciation. What Mill offers readers today is a focus on the “mind/matter” issue, to the exclusion of all the other great stuff that phenomenology built on top of this foundational insight.
16. All this “other great stuff” only becomes more powerful when the basis is clarified. Sartre gives us some brilliant passages on the owning of objects in *Existential Psychoanalysis*. To those still caught in an inherited and unclarified representationism, these passages might seem like psychology rather than ontology.
17. The representationism of thinkers like Locke and Descartes quickly became so dominant that it became “obvious” to thinkers who followed. But this “obvious” starting point lead to endless confusion.
18. These thinkers saw correctly that the world is given “first-personally.” But they misunderstood perception, which is always perspectival, *to also be representational*.
19. Perception, correctly understood, is (original) presentation and not RE-presentation.
20. The objects of the world are not “behind” the aspects given to perception. The objects of the world

are the logical and temporal syntheses of such aspects.

21. I see, in one sense, only this or that aspect, never all of them at once. Indeed, aspects tend to occlude one another. But I grasp the seen object *as* the “total” worldly object, aware also that I am only “given”, in a sensual sense, this or that aspect.
22. This vision-centric approach to explication can be generalized. The aspect becomes a *moment* of the object.
23. For instance, the moment of a person might be a “side” of themselves that they’ve just shown for the first time.
24. This focus on the way that spatial objects are given in aspects is something that I found in Husserl. Such brutal simplicity, and yet the key to phenomenism. How are aspects related to their objects, as parts of a whole ? What does it mean for different people to see and discuss the same object ?
25. I may never see the aspect of the object that you do, but logic synthesizes “my” aspects (those given to me) and “yours” (those given to you.)
26. Since “consciousness does not exist” and objects are not hidden “behind” their aspects, it turns out that my so-called “transcendental ego” just *is* a stream of aspects of the world’s entities.
27. My own “empirical ego” is one more entity in the world, albeit especially central.

28. The so-called transcendental ego is better described as a streaming of the world, with an admittedly “first-personal shape.” Substance is subjectlike. (Hegel seems to be a phenomenalist too.)
29. Each “first-personal” streaming of the world might be called a “personal continuum,” a phrase from William James. A “world of pure experience” is, less confusingly, the world of neutral phenomenism. If the experiencer is part of the so-called experience, then “experience” might be a misleading term.
30. Phenomenalism is not idealism. While phenomenism correctly accounts for the subject-like-ness of substance, it does not make the representational mistake of setting some magical stuff known as “mind” or “consciousness” against some other kind of stuff. For phenomenism, there is only world, but this world is given in a plurality of streams, of first-personal continua.
31. A personal continuum is “being-in-the-world.”
32. As the spatial object for the eyes is given in aspects, the world entire is given as a system of such continua.
33. The moments of an object are given in various streams, and it’s logic that glues these moments together. But we are always already thrown into such a logic, as one dimension, a crucial dimension, of a “form of life.”

I’ll stop there for now. I’ve tried to find different names for this neutral phenomenism. What my phe-

nomenalist sources don't do is emphasize the social implications of their insight into the first-personal situation. I've tried to add on what is already implied in that breakthrough.

“Ontological perspectivism” nails it, but others use this term to mean something else. “Aspectualism” is unclaimed, and it has the virtue of emphasizing that the “by-me-extended” phenomenism is a “double generalization” of Husserl’s analysis of the spatial object. If I didn’t see that the addition was already implicitly in the work of Heidegger and Husserl, I might try harder to market “aspectualism.” I should note in closing that Schrödinger already described the world as “aspects of the one”, but he didn’t go into detail. Leibniz, even earlier, gave a crucial hint in his *Monadology*.¹

¹I provide the passage in another paper.