

LETTER 24 SEP 2024

1

Representationalism versus perspectivism. Or, equivalently, representationalism versus phenomenism. Because perspectivism is phenomenism is perspectivism.

2

For representationalism, the world is X and consciousness is $f(X)$. This f is a mediating function that transforms Reality into Image.

3

For representationalism, P is true if P somehow corresponds not to $f(X)$ but to X . Truth is correspondence. Reality is a truthmaker.

4

This “Reality”, this X , is sometimes conceived of in terms of the latest version of “atoms and void.” In other words, “Reality” equals what Sellars calls “the scientific image,” as opposed the “manifest image.” This “manifest image” — roughly equivalent to phenomenology’s Lifeworld — is itself $f(X)$.

5

For others, Reality definitely exists but cannot be known. We are “trapped” in $f(X)$. Even time and space are forms of representation, added by f , and not applicable to X itself.

6

Representationalism understands truth as correspondence. For representationalism, consciousness exists as a stuff that somehow re-presents or mediates a different kind of stuff. This different kind of stuff, traditionally “Matter,” functions as a substrate for consciousness.

7

For representationalism, this consciousness stuff somehow emerges from the substrate stuff. If the consciousness stuff goes away, the substrate stuff remains.

8

Let us talk about ordinary things, like wrenches. For representationalism, an individual stream of consciousness includes an image of the wrench, which is not at all part of the wrench. In this stuff called private consciousness, we don't have any of actual being of the wrench. We have a representative thrown up by the brain.

9

For representationalism, we have representations of the wrench in private consciousness as $f_1(w)$, $f_2(w)$, ...—where w is the wrench-in-itself. Of course f_i is the representative function of subject_{*i*}.

10

For representationalism, the real w is not to be found in $f_1(w)$, $f_2(w)$, If all consciousness stuff ceases, the real w , made of not-consciousness-stuff, is still there.

11

For representationalism, $f_1(w)$ is itself a function of b_1 and w , where b_1 is the brain of subject₁. In other words, the character of f_1 is causally connected to b_1 . So f_1 has b_1 as an especially important parameter.

12

Nietzsche joked about indirect realism making the sense organs and the central nervous system *their own product*. The brain is a picture thrown up by the pictured brain.

13

Mach saw that the sense organs, themselves often in the phenomenal field, were intensely causally related to other items in the phenomenal field. The field goes black if I close my eyes. The field gets quieter if I stuff my ears. Ingesting santonin can cause xanthopsia — turn bright objects in the phenomenal field yellow.

14

These causal/functional relationships between intentional objects in the field need not be interpreted so that the phenomenal field is the “experience” of a “subject.” As Mach saw, this so-called subject is in the field with everything else.

15

Kant writes about the “I think” that can always go along with the expression of a person’s belief. The linguistic ego (also the empirical ego) reports on the phenomenal field associated with that ego.

16

The body of this empirical-linguistic ego is functionally related to “its” phenomenal field. Indeed, this body is often “in” the field, like the tip of a nose that is mostly ignored. Or the hands cutting tomatoes. Or, quite familiar to us all, as the face that appears

in the mirror.

17

For phenomenism, everything in the phenomenal field is real in the ontological sense, however unreal in the practical sense. A hallucination is real in the sense that it simply *is*.

18

For phenomenism, the adumbrations or aspects of spatial objects in the phenomenal field are real. Indeed the object has its being in these adumbrations or aspects.

19

A melody can only be heard “over time.” A melody’s non-visual “aspects” are its “moments.”

20

While only some things are spatial-visual, all things are temporal. All things are the given through or as “moments.”

21

For phenomenism, there is no such thing as consciousness stuff. Nor is there some opposite kind of stuff. Both “Mind” and “Matter” are rejected in the ontological sense. The practical categorization of entities as more “mental” or “physical” is left intact.

22

For perspectivism, the world only exists in or rather as all *nondual* phenomenal fields taken together. In traditional terms, perspectivism claims that the world is made of “experience.” While this way of talking helps to present the basic idea, it should only be taken as a hint.

23

Phenomenism rejects experience (in an ontological sense) as a synonym for mind. It does not reject the concept of experience as applied to the empirical ego.

24

The phenomenal field is also called a phenomenal stream. The world exists as the system of all phenomenal streams. There is no “Reality” outside or beyond the streams. The world is “distributed.” It is a system of streamings.

25

For perspectivism, the word “truth” doesn’t do anything. Belief is the meaning-structure of a phenomenal stream. I call “true” any articulations of the world-from-perspective —that express the meaning-structure of my stream.

26

The meaning-structure or “form” of each phenomenal stream is just the system of beliefs of the linguistic-empirical ego associated with that stream.

27

Given this important relationship, we might call the phenomenal stream an “ontological ego.” Joe’s ontological ego is simply the-world-from-Joe’s perspective. Joe is of course the associated empirical-linguistic ego. When Joe politely says “I think *P*” or “I believe *P*”, he is articulating the meaning-structure of the world — from his perspective.

28

In this sense, each ontological ego is an “aspect” of the world. The world itself is the logical unity of all such ontological egos or aspects.

29

For perspectivism, there is no aperspectival Reality that makes a proposition P true or false. Terms like “true” and “false” only indicate belief — articulate the meaning-structure of the-world-from-a-perspective.

30

For perspectivism, the same objects appear in many different phenomenal streams. The same object can appear many times in just a particular stream. This object’s appearances in various streams are called its moments or aspects.

31

These moments are the genuine (actual) being of the object. The “substance” of the object is “logical.” The object is like an equivalence class of its moments. It is the logical (temporal and interpersonal) synthesis of such moments.