

My “phenomenal field” is Our-world-from-my-perspective through the language I share with others in that world.

I am the empirical-linguistic ego at the “center” of this “phenomenal field” thanks to such language.

As a sharer in language with others, I am a member of “the forum.”

This “forum”¹ is the “minimal” concept of the world tacitly presupposed by the project of rational or scientific discussion. This forum is a “logical space of reasons.”²

An “empirical-linguistic ego” is a “time-binding” *normative* ego. A passage from Robert Brandom elucidates this normative aspect of the linguistic ego.

The responsibility one undertakes by applying a concept is a task responsibility: a commitment to do something. On the theoretical side, what one is committed to doing, what one becomes liable to assessment as to one’s success at doing, is integrating one’s judgments into a whole that exhibits a distinctive kind of unity: the synthetic unity of apperception. It is a systematic, rational unity, dynamically created and sustained by drawing inferential consequences from and finding reasons for one’s judgments, and rejecting commitments incompatible with those one has undertaken. Apperceiving, the characteristically sapient sort of awareness, is

¹A forum is defined as a “space of assembly.”

²Sellars makes a similar point this way : “The essential point is that in characterizing an episode or a state as that of *knowing*, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says.”

discursive (that is, conceptual) awareness. For it consists in integrating judgments into a unity structured by relations of what judgments provide reasons for and against what others. And those rational relations among judgments are determined by the rules, that is the concepts, one binds oneself by in making the judgments. Each new episode of experience, paradigmatically the making of a perceptual judgment, requires integration into, and hence transformation of the antecedent constellation of commitments. New incompatibilities can arise, which must be dealt with critically by rejecting or modifying prior commitments. New joint consequences can ensue, which must be acknowledged or rejected. The process by which the whole evolves and develops systematically is a paradigmatically rational one, structured by the rhythm of inhalation or amplification by acknowledging new commitments and extracting new consequences, and exhalation or criticism by rejecting or adjusting old commitments in the light of their rational relations to the new ones.

The forum is a “space of assembly” because members of that forum are held *personally* responsible for the coherence of their articulated beliefs. An empirical-linguistic ego is a fundamentally temporal locus of responsibility. I am accountable for how what I claim now coheres with what I said yesterday or last year.

My beliefs do not, however, have to cohere with your beliefs. I am allowed to disagree with you, but I at

least *should* not disagree with my self. The more I disagree with myself, the less I *am* a self, for the linguistic self is a process oriented toward becoming “a systematic, rational unity.”

1

This forum is ontology’s “necessary” entity. This forum is the enabling horizon of ontology as a scientific discussion. We might also call it the scientific horizon.

“Alienated” ontology neglects to notice this enabling condition and places rationality outside of the world it hopes to explicate.

This involves, for instance, the postulation of “consciousness” as an elusive stuff that somehow represents a different “real world stuff” that would exist with or without the “consciousness stuff.”

This kind of “alienated ontology” implies that the forum or “ontological horizon” has a secondary and merely contingent kind of reality.

What makes such an approach initially plausible is the familiar fact that mundane empirical objects do not depend for their availability on the existence of any *particular* member of the forum. Generations come and go, but the mountain remains.

2

The mountain remains, but in what sense? It remains potentially perceptually present for members of the

forum. Can I put its perceptual presence for me (its perspectival *being*) into words ? Yes and no. For instance, I can convince myself that most of us call the same things “green,” but I cannot “directly” check the way these green things are perceptually present for others.