

agree with Konrad Werner that constructivism may very well be supplemented by PL-metaphysics; however, what I am proposing is that such a metaphysics by itself does not add epistemological optimism to constructivism.

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## Author's Response

### Subjects, Worlds and (PL-) Metaphysics – What Is It All about?

Konrad Werner

**> Upshot** • My principal goal in this response is to reintroduce my understanding of metaphysics, which turned out – as I have learned from almost all of the commentaries – to be problematic, to say the least. Having done this, I will be able to address some of the most topical remarks provided by commentators, thereby further clarifying and also modifying my position.

«1» I am deeply thankful for all the commentaries. There are two major points of criticism toward my target article. One finds fault with my attempts to employ

metaphysics (a) within the philosophical accounts of perception, and (b) in the realism–constructivism debate. The other consists of intriguing suggestions and reflections that broaden my perspective on the possible correlations between the PL-metaphysics perspective and other, sometimes even surprising, areas of thought.

### General remarks on metaphysics

«2» In order to respond some of the criticism regarding the employment of metaphysics, I will recapitulate and clarify my attitude toward and understanding of metaphysics.

«3» I shall start from the worry expressed by **Peter Gaiß** pertaining to my use of the word “world.” Following Marcus Gabriel (2015a, 2015b), he writes that “we cannot trust in any metaphysical notion of the world at all” (§4). In response, let me refer first to the footnote that I made in the initial steps of my reflection. I do not link “world” and “subject” to any particular philosophical position: “I simply need these notions, taken in their usual senses, to introduce the philosophical issue” (§1). Therefore, as I pointed out in §9, “world” is “defined osensively: it refers to the realm of ordinary things around me.” Here we touch on quite a profound issue, namely the question of a relationship between our everyday experience (or “folk psychology”) on the one hand, and sophisticated considerations undertaken by philosophers and scientists on the other. Let me outline an example from the philosophy of perception: Howard Robinson singles out the principle laid down in the early 20th century sense-data theories (ensuing from Locke’s and Hume’s empiricism, although not endorsed there explicitly), i.e., the Phenomenal Principle: “If there sensibly appears to a subject to be something which possesses a particular sensible quality then there is something of which the subject is aware which does possess that sensible quality” (Robinson 1994: 32). Although the principle can be thought of in many ways (and I disagree with almost all things that sense-data theoreticians have built up on this basis), one thing is central there: if I am *faced with* something in my everyday perception, then it is the job of a theory of perception to deal with *it* instead of replacing it with items having no phenomenal aspects at all (such

as propositional contents). In other words, even these highly abstract (philosophical) or scientifically sophisticated stories of perception must take care of their links *with the plain fact* known to all folk, that in everyday perception they (indeed *we*) have *the world in view*.

«4» The notion of the world as I use it in the initial paragraphs of my target article is immersed precisely in this “folk” recognition of something’s *being in view*. What is it exactly? That is another question.

«5» Having the world in view, the question arises: What can we do with it? Following the distinguished tradition of Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz (1934) and Rudolf Carnap (1950), among many others, we can – in fact we should – capture this view with some conceptual frameworks. Now, as I pointed out in §§8f, provided these frameworks are set forth, there are – as Carnap (1950) proposed – internal questions (thus answers as well) of science and external questions of philosophy. The latter should be abandoned, says Carnap. This is the place where I can reintroduce my approach toward metaphysics. Being inspired by Roman Ingarden (1964), Jerzy Perzanowski (1990, 2004), Sebastian Tomasz Kołodziejczyk (2006, 2009), Kit Fine (2012b), and Nicholas Rescher (2008), among others, I claim that there is a discipline whose objective is not so much to break the limits of conceptual frameworks, thus to get out of the world captured and constrained by them (in conjunction with all other cognitive factors); not so much to get a glimpse of reality *an sich*, but rather to problematize the most general *architecture* of this conceptually constrained world. By “architecture,” I mean the basic setup of items imposed by such pairs as the Aristotelian ones: matter–form, actual–potential, simple–complex; by such categories as substance, object, process, fact, event, relation, etc. This discipline is called ontology, and metaphysics is a special part of it. Rescher puts it aptly:

“Since categories are correlative with questions they delineate and canalize our efforts to secure information. They provide the conceptual frame of reference in terms of which we pose our questions about the nature of things – the cognitive scaffolding we employ in erecting our view of the world, or some sector thereof. ‘To think is to

order,' said Thomas Aquinas, and the categories we use are our conceptual ordering tools, our devices for setting out on the task of collecting, gathering, and arranging our thoughts about how things stand. The theory of categories is accordingly the study of thought-tools we use in forming and shaping the agenda of the issues that we face in our cognitive dealings the facts (or purported facts) of the world.' (Rescher 2008: 27)

Therefore:

“On such basis, it becomes a key task of ontology to elaborate and elucidate the concepts and distinctions on which an instructive classification of the realm of being can be founded.” (ibid: 26)

« 6 » According to Perzanowski, and in fact according to all PL-metaphysicians, the world in view – our initial *datum* – is complex. He singles out and strongly endorses Descartes's method of *analysis and synthesis* outlined in *Discourse on the Method*. For Perzanowski (2003), this is a universal manner of doing science and philosophy. Analysis means decomposition of a complex datum. In general, there are two groups of analytical methods – natural ones (chemical analysis being the paradigmatic example) and conceptual ones. The latter are enhanced by imagination and thought experiments manipulating, so to speak, our phenomena, recombining them according to the possible scenarios (Descartes's “distillation” of *ego cogito* over the course of his six meditations is the best example; but think of Hilary Putnam's Twin Earth (1973) or brain in a vat scenario, or of Ned Block's Inverted Earth (1990) if you wish).

« 7 » Now, each method of analysis reveals (or postulates) suitable simples, that is to say, the, at least provisional, level of items (or just one item) at which they cannot be further decomposed. Note that what simples you can get depends on what method you carry out. Descartes arrives at *ego cogito* and the idea of God when it comes to his first-personal analysis; and at the idea of a force when it comes to his natural analysis. Block (1990), to take a contemporary example, ends up with his qualia. Leibniz arrives at the idea of monads, and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1922) also takes this route.

« 8 » When you obtain simples you have to go *back*, so to speak, or go *up* in order to

find out how complexes actually *are* and *might be* composed of these simples – this is the route of synthesis. For instance, when you obtain monads you have to ask how and why they generate the world you know. But over the course of synthesis, you obtain much more – not only the actually realized scenario but all possible scenarios as well (cf. Wittgenstein's logical space being the space of all possible configurations). That is why Perzanowski holds that ontology is the general theory of possibility. Leibniz introduces here the ontological basis of his theodicy – God chooses the best option from the space of all possible options.

« 9 » Figure 1 depicts these remarks with the help of a simple diagram, the simplified version of Perzanowski's (2009b) original one.

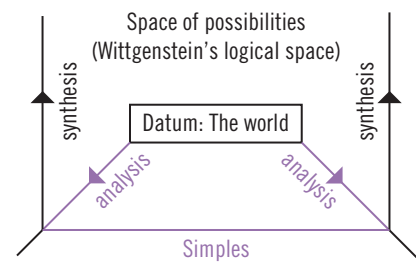
« 10 » Following Ingarden (1964), Perzanowski treats metaphysics as a part of ontology: metaphysics deals exclusively with this fragment of the space of analysis, and synthesis – which is, so to speak, devoted to our initial datum – to the actual world.

### Response to the commentaries

« 11 » Now I can address several remarks made by the commentators. I shall start from Matt Bower's rejection of metaphysics. In §10 he writes:

“I am sympathetic to some renderings of the denial that the world is ready-made, e.g., as one finds in Merleau-Ponty, Varela, and perhaps theorists of cognitive niche construction. But the productive character of perception on such views can likely be cashed out in terms of biological, psychological, and socio-cultural categories without any need for fundamental metaphysical tinkering.”

« 12 » For any A, B, C, if I say that I need A and B, and I do not need C, I must suppose that A, B, C are such items that rounding them up to make a *list* is a comprehensive procedure. However, if one accepts the above-mentioned approach, then Bower's rejection of metaphysics is flawed. One cannot say “I take biology *instead of* metaphysics,” just as one cannot say “I take metaphysics *instead of* biology.” These disciplines are devoted to completely different matters – i.e., they employ different methods of analysis and synthesis – therefore such statements



**Figure 1** • Perzanowski's model of analysis and synthesis revealing a material or basic component(s) of a given complex datum, suitable to a given method of analysis: natural (in science), formal (in mathematics and in logic), conceptual, phenomenological, or a combination of these..

are in fact not false, but meaningless in the actually discussed context. “Metaphysics” and “biology” do not belong to the same list, therefore the functor “instead of” cannot produce a meaningful statement. As regards contexts, of course I *can* say “I deal with biology instead of metaphysics” when I want to underscore, e.g., the decision I made with respect to the path of my professional career. This means that I have no time for metaphysics or that I am not interested in metaphysics, etc. And that is OK. But in our context and in Bower's, “without any need” are different.

« 13 » Let me go back to my main metaphor (§10) – of course one can say “I am able to focus on paintings themselves without any knowledge of how they are organized in the gallery.” However, imagine that one holds this: “Generally speaking, pictures are the only things deserving our attention and we do not need to care for all these curator's ideas of how to collect them, and for all these manners and places in which they are exhibited.” As an *opinion* it is clear and sound, albeit controversial, but supposedly the result of it would be such that *someone else* takes care of these neglected matters anyway. This is because pictures and all other works of art, however modern they can be, must always be *located somewhere*, in some *organized space*, be it a gallery or Central Park in New York City. Hence – sooner or later – someone must get a handle on that space.

« 14 » This leads me to a somewhat controversial claim that reveals the attitude

prevailing in my article: I believe that metaphysics is not something that we can *switch on* when needed and *switch off* when “biological, psychological, and socio-cultural categories” promise to do the job “without any need for fundamental metaphysical tinkering” (Bower §10). Of course we can switch off *this* or *that* metaphysical overview of the world, but not *a* metaphysical overview or *the need for a* metaphysical overview. Provided the world is in view and the conceptual frameworks capturing it, metaphysical problems *are just there*, whether or not we want to take them on. We can even demur to call them *metaphysical* and to regard our attempts to deal with them as *metaphysics*, nevertheless – let me reiterate – the problems *are there*. They are set up by the ways in which we are acquainted with the world; they emerge from the conceptual complexity of this acquaintance (see Kołodziejczyk 2006).

«15» This refers to the dramatic question posed by Adriana Schetz:

“Is it really the case that everyone who invokes, explicitly or implicitly, notions related to the broadly understood conceptual scheme of metaphysics, presupposes a determinate metaphysics or should attempt to find metaphysical grounding for one’s claims? I believe that there is no such transition.” (§5)

It is not clear what “should” means here. I do not claim that all people are obliged to actually carry out metaphysical investigations. Since I suppose Schetz’s good will in reading my article, I cannot imagine her taking my claims that way. Moreover, I do not even claim that everyone is committed unwillingly to a *particular* metaphysical conception, since I could hardly imagine any commitment to any conception held unwillingly and unconsciously (that is why I demur to believe that people in general are naive realists or that they endorse folk psychology). However, I do claim that there is always a *metaphysical problem*, as I said, set up by the very “machinery” of our dealing with the world. In other words, when we employ conceptual frameworks as they were proposed by Ajdukiewicz (1934) and Carnap (1950), some metaphysical issues pop up, in a sense, automatically even though nobody is *obliged* to tackle them. As in the cases of

all other theoretical issues, there are specialists poised to deal with them.

«16» These remarks also apply to the next of Schetz’s worries. She supposes that in my view:

“From the fact that the concept of the relationship between experienced reality and ontological reality belongs to metaphysics, it *follows* that if one makes use of this concept, one *needs metaphysics*.” (§3)

Once again – it is by no means clear what the word “needs” means here. To put it simply: I obviously do not claim that metaphysics is necessary for all other disciplines or even for other branches of philosophy, that they need metaphysics to succeed in their *explanations*. I just hold that since metaphysical problems are set up by the very fact that we attempt to capture the world with our cognitive tools, someone (not everyone but *someone*) should get a handle on them.

«17» When I was exploring the DL-metaphysical underpinnings of constructivism I did not pick out a supposed ready-made metaphysical conception, unwillingly endorsed by Ernst von Glasersfeld or others. I was aware of – not surprisingly – the *constructive* character of my work. As result of that work it turned out – in my view – that von Glasersfeld’s distinction of experiential reality and ontological reality and his sticking exclusively to the latter as opposed to the former fits well with DL-metaphysics and could be rediscovered in this powerful, however problematic (as all others), tradition of Western thought. Spyridon Koutroufinis aptly points out in this context that “both the concept of ‘subject’ and the distinction between subject and object are deeply rooted in Western metaphysics” (§5). Moreover, he adds, “von Foerster’s strict separation between phenomenal qualities (colors, sounds, and pain), on the one side, and the material structure (brain) that would generate them, on the other side, has deep roots in Western metaphysics [...]” (§12). That is all I am saying too.

«18» In a sense, this refers to Bower’s concept of *epistemic innocence*. He mentions views of perception “on which perception is epistemically innocent, i.e., on which perception simply makes no claims about the world or lacks (semantic) content” (§5) and

then goes on to claim, without any comment, that “[d]isjunctivists about perception hold this view (e.g., Travis 2013), and so do proponents of radical enactivism (Hutto & Myin 2013) and radical embodiment (Chemero 2009).” So, he concludes, if

“all perceptual experiences or some large subset of perceptual experiences are non-representational or lack semantic content, the inside/outside distinction will lose relevance, and so will the actual/potential distinction as Werner explains it.” (§5)

«19» This suggests that perception is epistemically innocent if it conveys no representational content. I cannot comprehend just how this could be the case. Does it mean that the predicate “epistemic” is by definition associated with representationalism? Such a strong claim would require some deliberation. Moreover, disjunctivists hold that perception is constituted by perceived things, without the mediation of content, and therefore hallucination is simply not a perceptual state. I agree with them in many respects, but I fail to understand how the claim that I have access to real things might be thought of as epistemically innocent, whatever the latter means. After all *this very access*, thought of in a PL or DL manner, is the sticking point of epistemology since the time of Heraclitus. And the question of how this immediate access contributes to knowledge is being discussed these days by Imogen Dickie (2010), Mark Johnston (2011), Susana Schellenberg (2011), and John McDowell (2013), among many others. So, it is epistemically pregnant, not innocent! Finally, it does not seem correct that the enactive approach is epistemically *and* metaphysically innocent if apparently *within* this approach there is an ongoing debate between idealistic and/or realistic commitments and how these commitments differentiate Francisco Varela and Evan Thompson on the one hand, and Alva Noë and Kevin O’Regan on the other (see Mossio & Taraborelli 2008, Taraborelli & Mossio 2008, Pascal & O’Regan 2008; also DeJesus 2015 on radical enactivism compared with Varela’s and Thompson’s views).

«20» Epistemic innocence may give rise to the idea of a metaphysical innocence, and this refers to the anti-metaphysical

projects such as Huw Price's, mentioned by Schetz. Here is not the place to discuss it in detail, but this issue is not as easy and straightforward as Schetz seems to suggest. This is because philosophers belonging to the analytic tradition, broadly construed, employ the difference between metaphysics and ontology, often rejecting the first while carrying out the latter. This is especially the case after having recognized that some of the ontological issues were set forth anew in the philosophy of science and philosophy of language. Therefore, it is not always clear whether philosophers such as Carnap, W. V. O. Quine, Michael Dummett, Wilfrid Sellars, and Price himself reject ontological/metaphysical problems themselves or just some of the traditional ways of assorting them, while holding that the right place for them is, e.g., philosophy of science (as Quine would argue) or language (as Dummett would argue). Moreover, it is not clear whether *acknowledging metaphysics/ontology* means acknowledging problems/questions in the first place and leaving room for many possible answers to them, or whether it means being *committed* to particular ontological/metaphysical positions. Recall what Price notes on Carnap, pertaining to Carnap's (1950) idea of linguistic frameworks:

“Carnap thus becomes a pluralist about ontological commitment – explicitly so, in the sense that he associates distinct ontological commitment with distinct linguistic frameworks [...]” (Price 2009: 324)

Does being a pluralist about ontological commitment mean rejecting ontology altogether? And as regards metaphysics vs. ontology in Carnap's view, Price writes:

“Carnap's view combines pluralism about ontological commitment with a strikingly deflationary attitude to metaphysics in general.” (ibid: 325)

This short sentence exhibits all the issues that I have just picked out: metaphysics or ontology; ontology or philosophy of language/science; recognition of problems and pluralism with respect to answers vs. metaphysical/ontological commitment.

« 21 » When it comes to my attitude, I put the stress on ontological/metaphysical problems rather than answers, thereby leav-

ing room for pluralism. Moreover, I fully acknowledge the fact that in the 20th century analytic tradition, ontological/metaphysical problems are reinvented or rediscovered in the contexts of the philosophy of science and language. However, I am probably much less reluctant to acknowledge traditional labels. Therefore, at the end of the day, though I see challenges, a large number of controversial issues, and a list of sticking points, I do not recognize any *straightforward* link between the so-called “anti-metaphysical” projects within the analytic tradition – in which, by the way, I locate myself as well – and the alleged bankruptcy of the PL-metaphysical project. The connection supposedly endorsed by Schetz is at least not *that* easy.

« 22 » By stressing metaphysical questions, I am interested first of all in how these questions are framed, i.e., in what sort of general architecture of the world is presupposed in these questions. My claim is that the PL-metaphysical frame, relying primarily on the *actual/potential* rather than the *internal/external* distinction, provides a potentially plausible alternative to the DL-metaphysical frame. Of course, I favor some answers to these questions and I did uncover some of them in my article, thereby prompting Gaitsch (§5) to ask whether I mean a “strong” version or a “weak” version of the *subject-world* correlationism. I admit that I was not clear enough in this respect. I employed diverse metaphors and illustrations not in order to endorse a unified, comprehensive position, but in order to give a reader the sense of how the PL way of thinking differs from the DL one. Thus, I remain open to both weak and strong versions.

« 23 » Here, it seems appropriate to address another of Schetz's criticism, i.e., that I “needlessly [charge] radical constructivists with assuming that cognition or knowledge does not adequately represent reality” (Schetz §4). I do *not charge* constructivism since I honestly sympathize with constructivism's rejection of representationalism. I had reasons to assume that my attitude in this particular case was clear throughout the text. Let me quote this critical part of my text:

“Von Glasersfeld distinguishes *experienced reality*, i.e., what I call the perceived (cognized) world, and the *ontological reality*, i.e., reality as it is in itself. The latter is just a postulate or theoretical

fiction, since we cannot have any knowledge of it. Knowledge, and experienced reality, are constructs that do not adequately represent ontological reality; moreover – and this is the crucial point – representation is not their proper goal” (§17)

I acknowledge the fact that adequacy is not, in von Glasersfeld's view, a condition of knowledge. Needless to say, I am on his side here as well. However, I take responsibility for this misunderstanding. The very fact that I had employed the notion of adequacy turned out to be misleading, and Schetz's criticism gives me the chance to make it clear.

« 24 » Istvan Danka (§§5f) suggests that von Glasersfeld's distinction between ontological reality and experiential reality, and more generally between being and knowing, might be best thought of as a meta-theoretical and in fact, if I am not wrong, a pragmatic distinction. According to his view,

“a promising strategy would be to hold a numerical identity of epistemological and ontological items and a qualitative distinction between them at the same time on the ground that they are taken as ontological items on some occasions and also taken as epistemological on other occasions.” (§6)

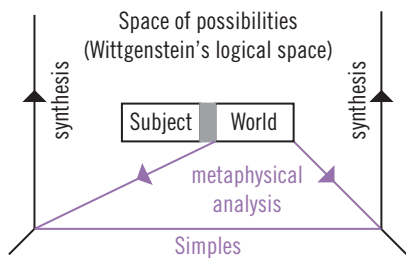
I sympathize with the pragmatic spirit of these remarks. They give me the chance to upgrade Perzanowski's schema in Figure 1 to adapt it to the present discussion.

« 25 » Suppose that the *subject/world* (thus knowledge/reality) distinction is apparent and natural in our *datum*. I believe that this is the case from the “folk” standpoint: I am not mingled with the book that I am keeping in my hands, and my thoughts of that book do not seem to be identical with the book. Now, we can employ three routes of analysis and synthesis.

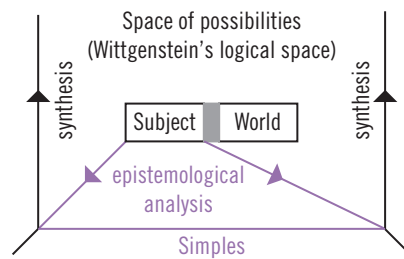
« 26 » The route of metaphysics (Figure 2) starts from the world (reality) side, that is to say, from what is thought of as a realm existing independently of subjects. We naturally ask what is the ultimate substance of the world (if any).

« 27 » The route of epistemology (Figure 3) starts from the subject (knowledge) side; that is to say, from our cognitive activity and its products. We naturally enquire about basic conditions and components of knowledge; we struggle to uncover the

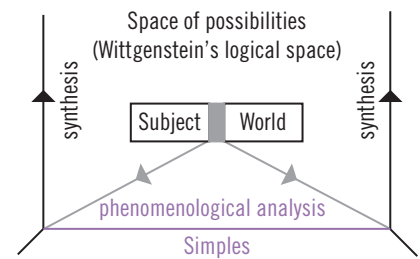




**Figure 2 •** Metaphysical analysis and synthesis revealing a substance (if any), a material, or basic component(s) of what is *recognized as the world*, suitable to a given method of metaphysical/ontological analysis, e.g., Leibniz's monads.



**Figure 3 •** Epistemological analysis and synthesis revealing simple components of a given *epistemically relevant* object, state, or process, *recognized as mind-dependent*. For example, when it comes to perception, it might be sense data or situation-dependent properties.



**Figure 4 •** Phenomenological analysis and synthesis revealing simple component(s) of a given item *conceived of as (and only as) a phenomenon*, e.g., Husserl's transcendental reduction.

perception-to-knowledge links, among other things. This is, in my view, what Danka recommends when he talks of taking items as ontological on some occasions and as epistemological items on other occasions.

« 28 » The route of phenomenology (Figure 4) is quite extraordinary since it starts *not* from one side of the distinction but from *the distinction* itself – it focuses on the very “fact” that the world *appears* somehow. That is why I disagree with Bower when he claims that “What is interesting about the inside/outside distinction is the *inside* member of the conceptual pair, not the *outside*” (§8) and then proceeds to praise Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Varela. No, phenomenology is not about *the inside* – it is precisely about the *inside-outside*. Edmund Husserl held that this focus – on *appearing* itself or *phenomena* themselves – is principal, more fundamental than the two previously mentioned routes. However, it is not the place to discuss it.

« 29 » Note, however, that over the course of synthesis we always obtain more than a reconstruction of the side that we have started from. We obtain:

- a metaphysical account of the world *and* of the subject (subject is captured as a being, substance, process, etc.);
- an epistemological account of the subject *and* of the world (e.g., it turns out, when we have perception analyzed, that the world is constrained by our species-specific mechanisms of perceiving);
- a phenomenological account of appearing *together with* phenomenological ac-

counts of the world and of the subject (here, the idea of a transcendental subject comes on stage, and of the world as its correlate);

Not to mention the fact that we obtain the whole variety of possibilities.

« 30 » So, we have three routes; but in the spirit of Perzanowski I should say – and indeed I believe – that all of them are in fact *ontologies*. We have three different routes within the schema but the schema itself is provided by ontology. Thus we have ontology of the real (Ingarden's and Perzanowski's metaphysics); ontology of knowledge, perception, thinking, etc.; and finally, ontology of phenomena (phenomenology). The latter seems especially controversial, but note the interesting fact that when we think of Husserl himself (for instance his analysis of the part-whole relation), not to mention Ingarden, who made it evident and explicit, the link between phenomenology and ontology seems close and intimate.

« 31 » This is the model – admittedly a very rough one – of what I mean by “metaphysical grounding.” In fact it should be now called *ontological grounding*. However, this is not about the term. I am happy to accept another term and to admit that I was too relaxed with respect to “grounding,” as Schetz pointed out (§5). However, there is no ambiguity or indeterminacy in my use of the term, as long as I speak of *metaphysical* grounding and not of the metaphysics of *grounding*, as it is carried out, e.g., by Fine (2012a). This is because in the first case, “metaphysical” is the functor picking out,

say, *one of many possible groundings* (the metaphysical grounding and not some other possible kinds of grounding whatever they might be), whereas in the latter case, “of grounding” picks out *one of many possible branches of metaphysics* (the one devoted to grounding and not, e.g., to universals). Therefore, “grounding” occurs in two entirely different functions and I see no reason to evoke the latter while my article is clearly about the former.

« 32 » Such a model is admittedly conservative, in particular when we take into account Paul Downes's posit, i.e., that this model is still diametric. Within the concentric model of inner-outer relation we have:

“unlike in diametric space; both concentric poles coexist in the same space, and thus, the outer circle overlaps the space of the inner one. The outer circle surrounds and contains the inner circle. The opposite that is within the outer circle or shape cannot detach itself from being within this outer shape. Similarly, notwithstanding that the outer circle or shape can move in the direction of greater detachment from the inner circle, it cannot, in principle, fully detach itself from the inner circle in concentric relation.” (§8; see also Figure 5)

« 33 » While Downes's proposal is genuinely intriguing, his commentary would require a completely new paper and probably a reorientation of my thinking on many issues. Nonetheless, I can address it here briefly as follows. The anterior view that Figure 5 depicts (by analogy to the anatomical terms

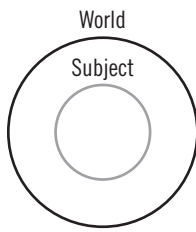


Figure 5 • Downes's anterior view.

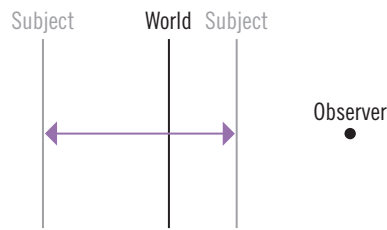


Figure 6 • The lateral view. Arrows stand for the subject's movements.

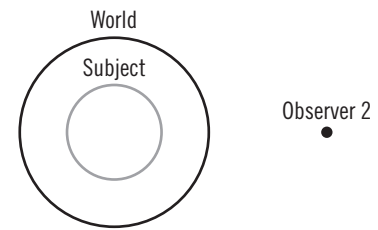


Figure 7 • Supplemented anterior view.

of location) might be an illusion. Two circles of more or less same size, arranged in tiers, might look from the observer's perspective as if one were inside the other. Suppose that this is the case, and that it is available from the other observer's perspective – the perspective that might be called, to stay in the same convention, a *lateral view* (Figure 6).

« 34 » Figure 6 presents the same circles, but from the lateral perspective, so that they do not even look like circles. Suppose that one circle symbolizes the world (W) and the other stands for the subject (S). Suppose that S can move (along the red line) with respect to the observer (O). Now, having this dynamic model, we can depict several philosophical positions. If S is behind W it looks to O as if it was inside W. This is the view that gains traction these days, endorsing the subject's *being in the world*, being situated and active in the environment, finally – being embodied. However, in the extreme version of this view, S is so far behind W that it looks to O as if there were no S at all; say, the subject is embedded so deep in the world that it is hardly discernible. This is more or less, and admittedly very roughly, the radical enactivism of Daniel Hutto and Erik Myin (2013), which turns out to be a new form of reductive materialism, interestingly differing itself from a more traditional materialism. The latter has operated rather in the diametric space, with the subject-side merely thrown away or seized on by the world-side.

« 35 » If S is in front of W, then it looks to O as if W was inside of S. This is a kind of idealism, again – interestingly different from the scholarly, rather diametric one. By calling it “scholarly,” I want to underline the fact that it occurs in course books; but I would be surprised if it was actually endorsed by any philosopher. Rather, I suppose the

concentric and dynamic model fits better with, e.g., the alleged idealism of Husserl. In the radical version of this arrangement, the world ceases, as the subject ceased in radical materialism.

« 36 » The circles might also overlap from O's perspective – what kind of philosophical position would this be?

« 37 » Finally, there might be a position that stresses not so much upon a particular stable position of these circles with respect to each other and with respect to O, but on their movement – on the very fact that they can move and produce differing views by this dynamics. To be honest, I am sympathetic to this latter view and genuinely thankful to Downes for giving me the tools to express it, even if Downes himself would not accept such an overly extravagant use.

« 38 » This new model gives me also the opportunity to address Koutroufinis's remarks. Note that the whole model makes sense only with respect to the observer. However, not only with respect to O depicted in Figure 6, but also with respect to the other observer, whose very perspective is depicted by Figure 6. Koutroufinis writes:

“With today's technology it is possible to observe the activities of our own nervous system. Our own brain, as it appears, say, in an FMRI, is nothing but a subjective phenomenon within our experiential world. If we claim that our subjective phenomena are generated in our brains, as von Foerster, Maturana and Varela think, we distinguish a very small piece of our experience by ascribing to it the magic ability to produce all the other phenomena including itself [...]” (§9)

Although I feel some reservations towards such phrases as “nothing but a subjective phenomenon,” I think that Koutroufinis aptly

points to the fact that all we can perceive and know, including our abstract ontological models, depends on perspectives. Maturana expressed it nicely in his famous dictum: “Anything said is said by an observer.” There is no “global observer,” as Diana Gasparyan (2015) calls it, or a view from nowhere. Koutroufinis's words strictly correspond to the observation that has been made by cognitive biologist Ladislav Kováč, namely that “our world of consciousness is a phenomenon of the brain, but our brain is also a phenomenon of the brain” (Kováč 2000: 55).

« 39 » Therefore, bearing in mind Koutroufinis's remarks, we should remember that the observer O in Figure 6 is not alone in the field; there is also the observer whose perspective is depicted by Figure 6. It is clear then that Figure 5, should be upgraded (Figure 7).

« 40 » Taking Figures 6 and 7, we can see that each time we have the subject *depicted*, we also have the subject *depicting* – which has been nicely pointed out by Koutroufinis and Kováč. That is why the ultimate reduction of the subject, whatever it might be, is a priori impossible: each time you succeed in the *reduction* of the subject within one model, you must keep in mind that this very model is necessarily *ascribed to* the subject (in this case – to you and to the community of subjects, e.g., the scientific community that you belong to).

« 41 » However, these upgraded pictures are still not quite adequate since they suggest that both observers are, in a sense, outside the model. As a matter of fact, the two observers and S in Figure 6 should be the same subject multiplied just for the purposes of this presentation.

« 42 » This observation leads to Gasparyan's remarks placing Hegel's thought within

the PL-paradigm. At the end of the day, everything I have just said is the story about the world's self-reference: what we identify as *our* cognition is in fact *the world* gaining awareness of *itself*. I am sympathetic to Gasparyan's view as a kind of final closure to my model when she writes:

“The world taken entirely is simultaneously subjective and objective (substantial), i.e., the entire world is given to itself in its entirety as an identity of an object (substance) and the subject.” (§5)

Lack of space prevents me from addressing this in detail, but let me express the following concern. Gasparyan also writes: “Applying Hegel's terminology, we would call this identity the Absolute, i.e., a subjectivised being” (§5). In the same spirit she carries on to claim that according to Hegel:

“(a) the truth is only in the Absolute (the same as the truth can be only absolute), and since (b) the Absolute is subjective by nature, then (c) our perception is (from the very beginning) an element of reality and, moreover, of the absolute reality, beyond which nothing exists.” (§8)

« 43 » It seems to me that Hegel fits himself within the Cartesian tradition by stressing the subject-side. In the Absolute, the *subjective/objective* rift is repaired, but, in a sense, the subject is the side that takes full advantage of this unification. Meanwhile, the PL-model, as I outlined it in the previous paragraphs, is more fair-minded in this respect, so to speak. If the model is dynamic in the sense of Figure 6, then prioritization of one side depends on a given perspective. At the end of the day, this approach is pragmatic – there is no ultimate a priori reason to take this or that perspective; however, there are still pragmatic justifications for such choices. In other words, the ways in which the world maintains its own self-recognition are not programmed inside this world and determined. A Perzanowski-an PL-metaphysician would say, following Wittgenstein, that the reasons of the world lie outside of the world, but let me take advantage of Wittgenstein's closing claim and stay silent on this matter.

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