

# Contextualizing Objects: Husserl, Wittgenstein, Dennett, and Hegel

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In everyday experience, it seems as if the world is made up of objects such as tables, universities, numbers, and so on. These individual objects appear to be self-sufficient things that are what they are independently of other existents. If everything in the universe disappeared except my writing table, the table would still be a table – not an elephant or the square root of two. This, at least, is how the world appears to us.

This everyday assumption that objects are self-sufficient is rejected by four philosophers (among others) who in different ways reject the notion of objects-in-themselves: Husserl, Wittgenstein, Dennett, and Hegel. Despite their very different philosophical perspectives, they conclude that what an object is does not depend on itself: it is defined by a context of some kind or other.

## 1 Husserl

The project of Husserlian phenomenology is to describe experience. By experience, he means anything of which we are conscious. By describing, he means intuiting experience solely as it appears to us, (*phenomena* is Greek for appearance) as opposed to interpreting it on the basis of any theory, whether that be from common sense, from science – such as neurophysiology, or from philosophy. Husserl is a foundationalist: he holds that science and philosophy must ultimately be based on experience. "We are, he claims, the real positivists." So, to avoid circularity, he must not presuppose or rely on theories of any kind in his description of experience.

Take as an example the visual experience of a simple object, such as this table before me. What exactly am I given? Despite Hume's theory or, neurophysiology, I am not experiencing impressions of colour or other sense data; I am seeing a "table." By a table, I mean a solid, three-dimensional object in a defined location relative to my body and to other objects. Like any other physical thing, as a table, it has another side, indeed many other sides. If it didn't have another side, it wouldn't be a table. (Perhaps it would be a movie facade, although that too has another side.) Don't say that I couldn't be experiencing the other side because light rays and retinal images won't allow it. That is to theorize. Taken just as given, my experience is of a multi-sided table.

It is true, says Husserl, that this side of the table is experienced in a different way than the other side, a difference that we can all take note of. Our phenomenological description must include this feature, which he calls "adumbration." (From *umbra*, a shadow, since one side shades out the others.) The way Husserl puts it is to say that the "actual" experience of this side is an "explicit" experience that adumbrates the "potential" experience of the other side, which is an "implicit" experience.<sup>2</sup> Don't misinterpret this as claiming that I only *really* experience this side of the table. What I see is a physical object, a table, so the other side is really experienced, only in a different mode. Otherwise it wouldn't be a real table that I'm experiencing.<sup>3</sup> The potential of the

other side relates to my ability to convert it into the mode of actuality, for example, by walking around to the other side. (Don't misunderstand potential here as some Aristotelian, metaphysical principle. It simply refers to my capacity, my power, to look at the other side.) What is implicit can be made explicit. Seeing a table is not as simple as it might seem: it essentially involves at least two modes of experiencing.

Essentially? By this term. Husserl is referring to the necessity that, in so far as it is experienced as a table, it has to have another side. Indeed, Husserl claims that we can see indubitably that other-sidedness is essential to any physical thing given in visual perception. As he would put it, we have eidetic intuition of the regional essence of any physical thing whatsoever.<sup>4</sup> He is not telling us what mechanism allows us to do this; the project of phenomenology is to describe the experience of us doing it, not theorize about it.

Of course, we have other kinds of experience, experience of other regions of phenomena.<sup>5</sup> Consider the region of numbers. When I experience the number seven, it is not given to me as having another side. (Note that I'm talking about the mathematical *number* seven, not, the *numerals* "7", "VII", "sept," "sieben;" as signs, these are physical objects that do have another side.) We can see that it is an essential necessity that a number not have another side; if it did it would not be a number. However, when I am actually thinking of seven, I have the capacity to experience eight, six, one, fourteen, etc. Imagine someone who claims they can grasp seven, but are unable to grasp six, eight, or one. An actual number, such as seven, can only be given against a potential background of other numbers, of relations between them, indeed, of the whole arithmetic, natural number system. The regional essence of numbers is different than the regional essence of visual things, but both are open to our intuition and therefore describable in phenomenology. We can see (intuit) that we could never (necessarily never) experience the square root of an apple as being blue.<sup>6</sup>

According to Husserl, there are indefinitely many regions, each with its own essence: emotions, moral values, social institutions, scientific objects (think bosons!), and so on. All of them, however, share one essential characteristic: they have one focus, something actually, explicitly experienced, against the background of potential other objects given implicitly in consciousness, which could be experienced, a background that Husserl calls its horizon.<sup>7</sup> Without the (regional) horizon, that is, the regional essence, nothing could ever be experienced. This is, Husserl says, a characteristic of the essence of experience itself.

Solomon says, "It is singularly unfortunate that Husserl, who conscientiously avoided use of terminology with long and varied philosophical histories, should choose the notion "essence" as a central concept in his philosophy."<sup>8</sup> What Husserl means by essence is not what Aristotle means. It is much more akin to Frege's notion of *Sinn*, of sense, of meaning. Focusing on language, Frege famously claimed that only in the context of the sentence does a word have a meaning. More generally, the meaning of any unit of language depends on the language system of which it is a part. Following Solomon, I interpret Husserl's discussions of essence as being about sense, though he applies the notion far beyond language to all consciousness. Husserl

himself frequently switches to speaking of meaning, sense and significance rather than essence.

In any case, just as Frege's linguistic *Sinn* depends on the wider linguistic context, so Husserl, when he claims that every object is given with an essence, is claiming that every object depends on its regional essence, its horizon, to be what it is. The regional horizon itself depends on the general possibility of any sense whatsoever, what he calls the horizon of all horizons, or, simply, the World. By "World," he means something like the possibility of any meaning whatsoever. His way of putting it would be to talk of transcendental subjectivity as constituting all possible meaning. "If transcendental subjectivity is the universe of possible sense, then an outside is precisely nonsense."<sup>9</sup>

Husserl's thesis is that no object can simply be given by itself; it always comes with an essence, an horizon that constitutes its sense.

## 2 Wittgenstein

"Wittgenstein, according to Pears, wanted to plot the absolute limits of language, just as Kant wanted to plot the absolute limits of thought"<sup>10</sup> and "he took much of the framework of the *Tractatus* from Kant."<sup>11</sup> "Now, according to Wittgenstein, the necessity that the limits of language should lie where they do lie is an absolute necessity."<sup>12</sup> So, "in the end, his system is like Kant's."<sup>13</sup>

Wittgenstein's project is to determine the conditions necessary for truth. First there must be something to which we can attribute truth or falsity: a judgment, a thought, a proposition, a sentence, or any expression made up of signs. Secondly, there must be something to which it corresponds that makes it true: a fact in the world. "World" is a technical term that does not, in Wittgenstein's usage, refer to the set of objects in our physical world, as we might use the term in ordinary English, but to the set of all *facts*. Judgments do not correspond to objects, but to facts. Whatever a fact is, it is not a physical object. A fact is anything which "is the case" and is not restricted to everyday facts about tables or to facts about molecules in physics. There are mathematical facts about triangles, institutional facts about Memorial, metaphysical facts about the attributes of God. Facts are timeless: propositions about past events, or future ones, are true in so far as they correspond to what was, or will be, the case.

Following Frege, Wittgenstein claims that what can be said at all can be said clearly. By *clearly*, he means that, before we actually check on "what is the case," we can know in advance what facts in the "world" would make it true. That is, if the meaning of a proposition is indeterminate, if we don't know what would be the case if it were true, then it is not really saying anything; it is not really a proposition, despite appearances. One way a proposition can be unclear is when the conditions which would make it true depend and vary with the truth of some other proposition. For example, "the King of France is bald" is unclear, for until we know whether or not there is a King of France, we don't know what, if anything, is bald (true or false). The central argument of the *Tractatus* is that a necessary condition for any proposition to be clear, that is, unambiguously meaningful, is that it be based ultimately on simple names that

refer to simple objects. By a *simple name* he means a name whose reference does not depend upon the truth of some other proposition. By a *simple object* he means one that has no parts, for if it had parts, their being together would be a contingent feature. If that feature might not obtain, the object might not exist to be named. Hence, a condition for truth to be possible is that there be simple objects.<sup>14</sup>

Famously (infamously?) Wittgenstein is unable to point to any example of a simple object. Chemical atoms, however small, or Humean/Russellian sense-data — immediate acquaintance with an impression of "red," — cannot qualify as logically simple objects. All the *Tractatus* can do is point to the logical need for such simples as necessary conditions for truth. Plato, as Wittgenstein points out, got into the same quandary.

This pure referentialism,<sup>15</sup> in which the meaning of simple names is exhaustively given by the simple objects to which they refer, is later rejected by Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations*. Much of the first part of *Philosophical Investigations* is a detailed argument against the notion of a simple object. On the surface, his criticism is directed at Plato's *Theatetus*,<sup>16</sup> but the real target, he admits, is his own previous Tractarian position.<sup>17</sup>

The notion of "simple," he argues, is not so simple. We mean different things by "simple" in different circumstances and for different purposes.

But what are the simple constituent parts of which reality is composed?—What are the simple constituent parts of a chair?—The bits of wood of which it is made? Or the molecules, or the atoms?— "Simple" means: not composite. And here the point is: in what sense 'composite'? It makes no sense at all to speak absolutely of the 'simple parts of a chair'. ... We use the word "composite" (and therefore the word "simple") in an enormous number of different and differently related ways. (Is the colour of a square on a chessboard simple, or does it consist of pure white and pure yellow? And is white simple, or does it consist of the colours of the rainbow?—Is this length of 2 cm. simple, or does it consist of two parts, each 1 cm. long? But why not of one bit 3 cm. long, and one bit 1 cm. long measured in the opposite direction?) To the philosophical question: "Is the visual image of this tree composite, and what are its component parts?" the correct answer is: "That depends on what you understand by 'composite'." (And that is of course not an answer but a rejection of the question.)<sup>18</sup>

The argument is general: it makes no sense to talk of absolutely simple objects dubbed with simple names, in any circumstance. He points out that we cannot just point at something and utter a sound — what he calls 'ostensive definition' — without being misunderstood. "...An ostensive definition can be variously interpreted in every case."<sup>19</sup> When I point and say "gloie" you cannot tell if I'm referring to an individual, a genus, a colour, a shape or a direction. This cannot be the absolute origin of meaning, no matter what Plato, Augustine or the *Tractatus* may say.<sup>20</sup>

Instead, still pursuing the necessary conditions for truth and meaning, Wittgenstein adopts an alternative model: the game. Within chess, for example, one can point to an object and call it a king – an ostensive definition – but only because one already understands chess. This labeling — giving a meaning to the word "king" — works only because it occurs within the wider project of mastering chess, and assumes we already understand the game up to the point of needing to know which icon instantiates the king.<sup>21</sup>

Wittgenstein expands this example into a general theory about the nature of meaning: All words get their meaning from their use in a "language game." Only within the context of a language game do words make sense.

"Game," is of course a metaphor. What it points to is the dependence of meaning on rules. A positive account of what it is to follow a rule is one of the most intriguing — but unfinished — projects in Wittgensteinian philosophy. Negatively, however, he argues that following a rule cannot be the same as *believing* that one is following a rule. The illusion that meaning comes from labeling simple objects with names is founded on the mythology that I have a mental life in which objects, sense data, or experiences are present before me and that I make an agreement with myself to always use the word "red," for example, to refer to the same red sense-datum. The word "red," with its meaning preassigned in this private way, can then be uttered out loud to others. But this can't work; my self-agreement is unpolicable, so it is possible that every day I could assign a different experience as the meaning of the word and, as long as I believed I was following the rules of my agreement, no one (including myself) would be any the wiser. If following a rule were a completely private, mental affair, then there would be no difference between following a rule and acting randomly. Wittgenstein therefore insists that there can be no private rule-following and hence no private language. Instead, Wittgenstein holds that words are meaningful only within a public, social context.

Nothing is simple. It is not just words, but also things that exist within the language game. The word "king" gets its meaning from the context of chess, but the chess piece itself, the king as an object, has its being only within the chess game. Only within the context of a language game can there be determinate objects.<sup>22</sup> For the later Wittgenstein, all words and objects make sense only within language games, that is, within sets of rules, which are themselves inextricably social. It is this social, rule-governed context that is the condition for the possibility of meaning, of truth and of objects.

### 3 Dennett

Wittgenstein's attack was directed in particular at Russell and his notion that we can have direct acquaintance with simple sense-data. Russell's position, however, didn't just roll over and die. It is still alive and well (maybe a little sickly) and being defended by qualophiles. Dennett rejects qualophilia.

A "quale" is an absolutely simple element of experience, defined solely by its intrinsic quality. Qualophilia is the condition of believing that there are qualia. The word "qualia" designates "the ways things seem to us." When I look at a glass of wine, the way it looks to me is a visual quale; if I taste it I have

another, gustatory, quale. A quale is present before my mind but is private and ineffable. According to qualophiles, when I look at a red object, I have an experience of redness that is unexplainable in terms of behavior or brain mechanisms.<sup>23</sup>

The presence of qualia is the central characteristic of consciousness according to qualophiles, the one that a computer could never have. We can imagine a computer that could detect red objects as well as I can and could be programmed to respond exactly the same way I do by saying, "that's red," by stopping my automated car at a red traffic light, by matching the red on a colour chart, etc., but such a computer wouldn't have the unique quality of redness right there before it, as I do. Conscious experience is not a matter of what gets done; it is a certain, mysterious, way of being. The computer could *do* everything I can do, but it could never *be* how I am. There is *nothing it is like* for the computer to experience the quale red. There may be something it is like for a bat to experience echo-sensations, but a bat, being colourblind, cannot know what it is like to have the quale red, any more than I can know what it is like to be a bat. A quale is a simple, ineffable, unanalyzable presence, defined by its intrinsic quality and cannot be understood in terms of behavioral dispositions, neurophysiological mechanisms, or informational processes. That's what qualophiles say.

The qualophile position is often defended by the following thought-experiment. Can we not imagine a possible scenario in which, perhaps for genetic reasons, I have always had the experience of redness on the occasions when what you experience is greenness, but since I have learned to call my experience "green," neither of us have noticed? Indeed no one could ever know; it's ineffable, after all. Maybe the difficulty here is one of communication, so there is a version of the thought-experiment designed to bypass the communication problem. In the intra-personal version, I wake up one morning with my own spectrum of colors inverted, seeing red grass and green blood. Perhaps some evil neurosurgeon has operated on me during the night and switched my input circuits. Is it not obvious, suggests the qualophile's intuition pump, that the phenomenal qualities of my experiences could be radically different even if everything else — what I say and do — remains unchanged?

Hold on, says Dennett, the experiment is incomplete. If the aim is to show that the qualia can change while everything else remains constant, then we will need a second surgical intervention to switch the output functions as well. I will need my language module to be adjusted so that I will now verbally describes the red grass as "green" and the green blood as "red." So, listening to me, you will not believe that there has been any change. Similarly, if red used to make me alert and green peaceful, our second intervention must adjust these emotions so that the red grass will now incline me to peacefulness. If the red blood used to remind me of sunsets and stir patriotic memories of my nation's red flag, the second surgery must associate these memories with greenness. If my typical reaction to the greenness of the grass was to lie on it, from now on it must be the redness of the grass which inclines me to this behavior. The qualophile claims, after all, that even if a computer's input and output were identical to mine, the qualia would be absent. Even talking to myself, when I

conceptualize my experience and make judgments about it — these are downstream of experiencing, are they not? — I too will believe that what I am experiencing is red blood and green grass.

We could imagine a similar thought-experiment with pleasure and pain. Imagine swapping the input circuits for pain and pleasure as well as all the output functions related to them, while leaving the qualia unchanged. The glass of wine I used to enjoy now leads to a painful quale, nevertheless it results in a fuzzy, warm, comfortable feeling, I reach eagerly to refill the glass, I report sincerely that I am enjoying it, and my own judgment and belief is that the experience is giving me pleasure. The qualophile's hunch that the actual experience, considered in isolation, still has its own intrinsic quality of being painful is now hard to credit.

Qualophiles claim that they can imagine what it would be like to experience pain even in the absence of the functions associated with it. Dennett thinks they cannot. If one really tries hard to imagine such a thing one will fail. If we subtract from pain our aversive reactions, anticipations of future suffering, worries about how the pain may cripple our future projects, memories of our suffering in the past, our anxious tensions and hormonal responses, then there is nothing — no quale — left; our imagination draws a blank.<sup>24</sup>

Dennett considers the imagination of such scenarios to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the very notion of qualia — at least when we imagine them to completion. He is not simply claiming that the swapping of input and output functions modify the intrinsically defined qualia; he is claiming that there are no qualia. The notion is meaningless. Of course, there seem to be qualia, but this seeming can be accounted for by reference to the complex of dispositions related to the input. The nervous system discriminates the redness of the blood or the flavor of the wine and these discriminations activate various judgments, emotions, memories, actions, words, beliefs and so on. The colour red itself is a complex set of reflective properties of objects in the world. The experience of being conscious of an object as red is the state of the organism when it has discriminated these reflective properties and has responded to them in the ways in which the organism was predisposed. As Dennett puts it:

Do not our internal discriminated states also have some special "intrinsic" properties, the subjective, private, ineffable properties that constitute the way things look to us (sound to us, smelled to us, etc..)? No. The dispositional properties of those discriminated states already suffice to explain all the effects: the effects of both peripheral behavior (saying "Red!" stepping the brake, etc.) And "internal" behavior (judging "Red!" seeing something as red, reacting with uneasiness or displeasure if, say, red things upset one).<sup>25</sup>

The simple givenness of sense-data, the intrinsically defined quality of qualia, is an illusion. What we have in fact, claims Dennett, is a complex network of dispositions — mental and behavioural — which define the experience of redness.<sup>26</sup> Once again, it is the context that constitutes the apparently simple.

## 4 Hegel on negativity

Hegel says, "... in comprehensive thought, the negative belongs to the content itself and is the *positive*, both as its *immanent* movement and determination and as the *totality* of these. Taken as a result, it is the *determinate* negative which emerges out of this movement and is likewise thereby a positive content."<sup>27</sup>

"The ball is red" is a simple constation that appears to be meaningful by itself, something I, as an individual, can just see ("intuit"). For Hegel, however, it is not so simple, for I can grasp the redness of the ball only if I realize that to be red is not to be green (or yellow or blue), that is, if I refer it to the set of alternative predicates that are the contraries of red. And I must do so not just as an individual, but as a social being governed by community norms. This is what Hegel means by "determinate negation." Let me try to unpack Hegel's position.

To explain determinate negation, I need first to distinguish two kinds of negation.<sup>28</sup> In contemporary logic negation is applied to propositions:

if  $P =$  "The ball is red" then  $\sim P =$  "It is false that the ball is red."

These are contradictions in sentential logic. But in traditional Aristotelian logic, besides *propositional negation* there was a second kind of negation, *term negation*: "The ball is non-red." Term negations do not yield contradictions, but contraries. Hegel's claims about determinate negation presuppose that we are talking about term negation rather than the negation of propositions.<sup>29</sup>

Sometimes these two negations amount to the same thing. If I claim that the proposition "the number three is even" is false, then the number three must be odd, that is, non-even. (Hegel's own example is, "[w]hite is white only in opposition to [in *Entgegensetzung gegen*] black, and so on."<sup>30</sup>) But this is an exception based on the fact that there are only two possible predicates for a number: even or odd. If I claim that the table is non-red, it doesn't follow that it is green. It might be yellow or blue — there are more than two possibilities. Assume for the sake of argument that there are seven colours in the rainbow, then these colour-predicates are all *contraries* of each other. To say that the ball is red, is to say that the ball is non-green, non-blue, non-yellow, etc. Could this be what Hegel means when he says, "The point of singularity (*Einzelheit*) in the medium of subsistence'[this actual red ball before us?] therefore must 'radiat[e] forth into plurality. [depends on the possibility of many other colours?]"<sup>31</sup> Hegel's theory of determinate negation applies only if by "negation" we mean term negation. His position is that the real meaning of a claim such as "the ball is red," which on the surface appears to be positive, simple and free-standing, is the complex negation: "it is non-green, and non-blue and non-yellow, etc."<sup>32</sup>

Note that the ball being red (or not-green, etc.) does not imply anything about the shape of the ball. Since roundness and squareness are contraries, the ball cannot be round and square at the same time. But redness and squareness are not contraries, so the ball being red doesn't imply that it is non-square. The redness of the ball may involve negation, but not a general negation of *any* other property, only a negation of colour-predicates. I take it that that's the point of the term *determinate* negation.<sup>33</sup>



On the face of it, Hegel's notion of determinate negation seems implausible, so let's try an alternative, more positive way, of putting his point.<sup>34</sup> You cannot grasp, "The ball is red" if you don't understand that red is a colour. What is a "colour"? It is the set of predicates: green, blue, yellow, red, indigo, etc. It is not the set of predicates: round, square, oblong, etc. Nor is colour the set: wooden, plastic, glass, etc. Each predicate term is a specification, a determination, a selection from one of the sets of potential, but contrary, predicates. Hegel says, "they are only determinate in so far as they differentiate themselves from one another, and relate themselves to others as opposed [*als entgegengesetzte*]"<sup>35</sup> Only if we know that "red" is to be differentiated from green, yellow, etc. from which it is opposed as contraries — but not from wooden or square — can we grasp what redness is.<sup>36</sup> The claim that the ball is red is meaningless, he holds, if taken in isolation from the conceptual scheme of colours, which must include the colours that it is not but could potentially be. Redding says, "The idea is that if, say, the world were monochromatically coloured red, then, from the point of view of 'perception', it could not even be thought to be red. Being (determinately) red requires the existence of other non-red things."<sup>37</sup>

We can imagine an object, the ball, surrounded by balloons of sets of mutual contraries from which we can pick at most one from each set. But this way of putting it is too static. Hegel would insist on a dialectical dynamic in which the original constation of red as a simple given needs to be overcome by actualizing its full meaning through the negativity of the contrary predicates.<sup>38</sup>

This process is of course normative. One could say that the red ball was yellow, or perceive it as yellow, but this would be a misapplication of how the concepts red and yellow *should* be used. This "should" refers to a norm, and such a norm is possible only within the context of a community. The normativity of all concepts depends, says Hegel, on reciprocal recognition by members of a community. A norm is, as Brandom puts it,

constituted by reciprocal authority (mutually dependent moments). Wherever a norm can properly be discerned, there must be distinct centres of reciprocal authority and a process of negotiation between them. For this, Hegel thinks, is the nature of the normative as such, the only way in which determinate contents [e.g., redness] can be associated with norms according to the conception of the normative embodied in the autonomy thesis.<sup>39</sup>

Hegel's theory of determinate negation applies not only to logic, language and thought, but also to reality. So he holds that objects in the world and their properties are also defined by negativity.<sup>40</sup> It is what things are not that makes them what they are.<sup>41</sup> But he doesn't mean what they are not in general, but what they specifically are not. That is, the red ball is red because it is not green, blue, etc. That it is not square, though negative, is irrelevant to it being red.

Hegel's theory of "determinate negation" is a theory of meaning that claims that properties and predicates make no sense in isolation, but only within the process of selection, of specification, from a background range of alternative — negative — options. What appears simple and free-standing — the red ball — is always a kind of illusion, like the tip of an iceberg. "What is the truth is not an originary unity as such, that is, not an immediate unity as such."<sup>42</sup> What is real or actual is the underlying meaning structure — the context — that defines what the object is and which allows us to grasp it in its full actuality.<sup>43</sup>

So Hegel joins my team of contextualists, about both meaning and reality.

## 5 Summary

The contextualist approach opposes itself to the recurring theme in Western philosophy of simple, isolated, self-contained objects given in perception and intuition. Atomism has been around since Democritus, and can be found in Plato's and Descartes's simple objects, in Hume's and Russell's sense data as well as in our common sense naïve realism.

The main point in this paper is that the four philosophers I examine, who hold for the most part radically different philosophies, all agree on rejecting atomic entities and insist that objects make sense only in a context. For Husserl, the context is essence and horizon. For Wittgenstein, context for both objects and language about them is the language game. For Dennett, how things are experienced depends on their functional and pragmatic context, the set of dispositions with which they are associated. For Hegel, the context is a set of negativities that are denied by any positive entity.

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## Endnotes

1 I have been insisting on the crucial role of context in many of my own papers over the last couple of decades. I have offered a contextual account of time in opposition to punctualism. ("The Concept of Time in Husserl" 1990) I have rejected the Cartesian notion of the ego as a substance in favor of a concept of the self as embedded in the context of a narrative. ("Selfhood and Rationality," 2003, What Makes Us Essentially Different? 2007) I have argued that the functionality of biological organs — their *telos* — make sense only in the context of evolutionary history. ("Teleological, Causal and Evolutionary Explanation," 2008) I discussed the dependence of objects on constitution by complex systems. ("The Constitution of Objects by Systems." 2013) Indeed, the theme can be found in one of my earliest papers ("Man Learns to have a Soul," 1971)

2 "[To all mental processes] ... there belongs that noteworthy modification which converts consciousness in the *mode of actional [aktueller] advertence* into consciousness in the *mode of non-actionality [Inaktualittit]* and conversely. At the one time the mental process is, so to speak, "*explicit*" consciousness of its objective something, at the other time it is implicit, merely *potential*." (Husserl, *Ideas*, 71-72)

3 "It is neither an accident of our peculiar sense of the physical thing nor a contingency of "our human constitution," that "our" perception can arrive at physical things themselves only through mere adumbrations of them. Rather is it evident and drawn from the essence of spatial physical things (even in the widest sense, which includes "sight things") that, necessarily a being of that kind can be given in perception only through an adumbration; and in like manner it is evident from the essence of cogitationes [psychological processes], from the essence of mental processes of any kind, that they exclude anything like that. For an existent belonging to their region [psychological region], in other words, anything like an "appearing," a being presented, through adumbrations makes no sense whatever. Where there is no spatial being it is senseless to speak of a seeing from different standpoints with a changing orientation in accordance with different perappearances, adumbrations. On the other hand, it is an essential necessity, to be seized upon as essential in apodictic insight, that any spatial being whatever is perceivable for an Ego (for any possible Ego) only with the kind of givenness designated. A spatial being can "appear" only in a certain "orientation," which necessarily predelineates a system of possible new orientations each of which, in turn, corresponds to a certain "mode of appearance" which we can express, say, as givenness from such and such a "side," and so forth." (Husserl, *Ideas*, 90-91)

4 "[These concepts] ... are distinguished by the fact that they express, by virtue of the regional axioms, that which is *peculiar* to the regional essence or, correlatively, express *with eidetic universality that which must belong, "a priori" and "synthetically," to an individual object within the extension of the region.*" (Husserl, *Ideas*, 31)

5 "Any concrete empirical objectivity finds its place within a *highest* material genus, a "region," of empirical objects. To the pure regional essence, then, there corresponds a *regional eidetic science* or, as we can also say, a regional ontology." (Husserl, *Ideas*, 18)

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6 “An individual object is not merely an individual object as such, a “This here,” an object never repeatable; as qualified “*in itself*” thus and so, it has its *own specific character*, its stock of *essential* predicables which must belong to it (as “an existent such as it is in itself”) if other, secondary, relative determinations can belong to it. Thus, for example, any tone in and of itself has an essence and, highest of all, the universal essence tone as such, or rather sound as such — taken purely as the moment that can be singled out intuitively in the individual tone (alone or else by comparing one tone with others as “something common”). In like manner any material thing has its own essential species and, highest of all, the universal species “any material thing whatever,” with any temporal determinations whatever, any duration, figure, materiality whatever. *Everything belonging to the essence of the individuum another individuum can have too*; and *highest* eidetic universalities of the sort just indicated in our examples delimit “*regions*” or “*categories*” of individuals.” (Husserl, *Ideas*, 7-8)

7 It is thus an essential property of the ego, constantly to have systems of intentionality — among them, harmonious ones — partly as going on within him <actually>, partly as fixed potentialities, which, thanks to predelineating horizons, are available for uncovering. Each object that the ego ever means, thinks of, values, deals with, likewise each that he ever phantasies or can phantasy, indicates its correlative system and exists as itself the correlate of its system. (Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 65)

8 Solomon, 31.

9 (Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 84)

10 Pears, 37.

11 Pears, 45.

12 Pears, 49.

13 Pears, 54.

14 As the *Tractatus* puts it:

2.02 Objects are simple

2.021 Objects make up the substance of the world. That is why they cannot be composite.

2.0211 If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true.

2.0212 In that case we could not sketch any picture of the world (true or false).

3.202 The simple signs employed in propositions are called names.

3.203 A name means an object. The object is its meaning.

3.23 The requirement that simple signs be possible is the requirement that sense be determinate. (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*)

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15 Hanna says, “Referentialism holds that all words are names, and that the meaning of a name is nothing but the referent or bearer of that name. Referentialism, as its name obviously implies, identifies meaning with reference. Thus according to Referentialism ‘Fido’ means Fido and ‘dog’ means the concept DOG. Furthermore, according to Pure Referentialism, all names are proper names, and the meaning of every basic proper name in a basic proposition (whether a basic singular term or a basic general term – a.k.a. a ‘concept-word’) is nothing but the referent or bearer of the name, i.e., an absolutely simple individual concrete object or a definite abstract concept or universal. In turn, according to Wittgenstein in the *Investigations*, there are two main problems with Pure Referentialism. First, identifying meaning with reference to individual objects in the case of singular terms does not account for systematic variations in the use-based meanings of ostensive terms having the same referent (PI 28–38). Second, identifying meaning with reference in the case of general terms fails because there are no uniquely identifiable concepts or universals (PI 66–71, and 75–8).” (Hanna, 19)

16 Socrates says: “Let me give you, then, a dream in return for a dream:—  
—Methought that I too had a dream, and I heard in my dream that the primeval letters or elements out of which you and I and all other things are compounded, have no reason or explanation; you can only name them, but no predicate can be either affirmed or denied of them, for in the one case existence, in the other non–existence is already implied, neither of which must be added, if you mean to speak of this or that thing by itself alone. It should not be called itself, or that, or each, or alone, or this, or the like; for these go about everywhere and are applied to all things, but are distinct from them; whereas, if the first elements could be described, and had a definition of their own, they would be spoken of apart from all else. But none of these primeval elements can be defined; they can only be named, for they have nothing but a name, and the things which are compounded of them, as they are complex, are expressed by a combination of names, for the combination of names is the essence of a definition. Thus, then, the elements or letters are only objects of perception, and cannot be defined or known; but the syllables or combinations of them are known and expressed, and are apprehended by true opinion. When, therefore, any one forms the true opinion of anything without rational explanation, you may say that his mind is truly exercised, but has no knowledge; for he who cannot give and receive a reason for a thing, has no knowledge of that thing; but when he adds rational explanation, then, he is perfected in knowledge and may be all that I have been denying of him. Was that the form in which the dream appeared to you?”  
(Plato *Theatetus* 201e-202c)

17 “... Both Russell's 'individuals' and my 'objects' (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*] were such primary elements.” (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para 46)

18 (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para 47)

19 (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para 28)

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20 Another of Wittgenstein's arguments against simple objects is the need to explain propositions denying the existence of such objects. According to Hanna:

(4) Moreover, if the meaning of a basic singular term were just the bearer of the name, then whenever the bearer was destroyed, the meaning would be destroyed, which is absurd because it would make true negative existentials with singular terms into nonsense (PI 40). But true negative existentials with singular terms, such as 'Moses did not exist', are in fact perfectly meaningful, although such sentences do also allow of irreducibly different meanings, depending on their use (PI 79). (5) Furthermore, there are no such things as absolutely simple individual concrete objects, because every object we can perceive is complex in various ways, and allows of no unique decomposition into ultimate simple parts (PI 46 64). (6) So Pure Referentialism about basic singular terms is false, and the thesis that meaning is use is the best overall explanation of how even basic singular terms have meaning. (Hanna, 29)

21 "When one shews someone the king in chess and says: "This is the king", this does not tell him the use of this piece—unless he already knows the rules of the game up to this last point: the shape of the king. You could imagine his having learnt the rules of the game without ever having been shewn an actual piece. The shape of the chessman corresponds here to the sound or shape of a word." (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para 31) "[T]he ostensive definition explains the use — the meaning — of the word when the overall role of the word in language is clear." (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para 30)

22 I would myself call this position "Internal Realism", but Wittgenstein doesn't use this term. It comes from Putnam.

23 The immediate targets of Dennett's attack are Thomas Nagel, Chalmers, and maybe Searle. But Russell's direct acquaintance and Hume's sensationalism are not far behind.

24 A being with all the behavioural and cognitive dispositions of a person but lacking qualia is called by qualophiles a "zombie" — a special technical use of that term. Dennett repeatedly rejects the notion of a zombie as ludicrous. "Postulating zombies is exactly as silly as postulating epiphenomenal gremlins, and so, when a philosopher does it, I blush for the profession." (Dennett, "The Unimagined Preposterousness of Zombies"177)

25 Daniel Dennett, "Instead of Qualia," 143.

26 In many ways, Dennett's rejection of Nagel et al. parallels Husserl's rejection of Hume. Dennett has studied Husserl, and his embedding of simple objects back into a context, an horizon, is similar to Husserl's position. But Husserl emphasizes the homogeneity of features in the regional horizon: red makes sense against the horizon of other colours. While Dennett doesn't disagree, he complements this kind of horizon with a wider horizon of reactive

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dispositions, not just other colours. Dennett's "context" is more inclusive than Husserl's. In many ways, Dennett is more akin to Merleau-Ponty and the latter's body-subject with its powers of motricity than he is to Husserl and the emphasis on the horizons of pure consciousness.

27 (Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, para 59) Pinkard p. 55.

28 "Hegel's complex attitude to the law of non-contradiction is a consequence of his cognitive contextualism and of his associated need to employ the different 'negations' from term and propositional logics." (Redding, 19-20)

29 "When Hegel talks about 'determinate negation' he means material incompatibility relations among concepts: the way the applicability of one concept normatively precludes the applicability of another. An example would be the way calling a patch of paint 'red' precludes calling it 'green'. Formal or logical negation (what Hegel calls 'abstract' negation) is definable from the determinate or material version." (Brandom, 174)

30 (Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, para 120)

31 In these moments taken all together, the thing, as the truth of perception, reaches its culmination or at least insofar as it is necessary to develop such a culmination here. It is  $\alpha$ ) the indifferent passive universality, the "also" of the many properties, or, rather, matters;  $\beta$ ) likewise the negation as simple, that is, the one, the excluding of contrasted properties; and  $\gamma$ ) the many properties themselves, the relation of the two first moments, namely, it is the negation as it relates itself to the indifferent element and extends itself within it as a range of distinctions; it is the point of individuality in the medium of durable existence radiating out into multiplicity. In terms of the aspect in which these distinctions belong to the indifferent medium, the distinctions are themselves universal; each relates itself merely to itself, and they do not affect each other. However, according to the aspect in terms of which they belong to the negative unity, they are at the same time excluding each other, but they necessarily have this contrasted relation to the properties, which are far removed from their "also." The sensuous universality, that is, the immediate unity of being and the negative, is in that way the property insofar as the "one" and the pure universality are developed out of that unity, insofar both as they are distinguished from each other and as the unity merges them with each other. This relation of that unity to those pure essential moments finally brings the thing to its culmination. (Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, para 115)

32 "Typically, the basis on which I am going to deny your claim that, say this table is wooden, is not because I have acquired a belief about some negative state of affairs, the state of affairs of its not being wooden. Rather, my denial is likely to be based on some direct perceptual knowledge of its being determinately non-wooden, for example, metal or plastic." (Redding, 208)

33 "The negative of something is its limit, what demarcates it from something else, that is, the point where it ceases to be what it is or, even more important, where it ceases to exercise the authority it otherwise has. Hegel calls this



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'determinate negation' to indicate where the limit of something is not simply everything it is not (which would be everything else, full stop) but is what the item would become if, as it were, it stepped over its limit. (There may, of course, not be one thing but many different things that an item stepping over its limit could become; red could become green, or blue, or so on, but not sweet.)" (Pinkard, 54)

34 The completeness of the forms of unreal consciousness will result from the necessity of the progression of and interrelations among the forms themselves. To make this comprehensible, we can in general note at the outset that the account of non-truthful consciousness in its untruth is not a merely negative movement. Natural consciousness generally has that kind of one-sided view of that movement, and a knowledge that makes this one-sidedness into its own essence is one of those shapes of incomplete consciousness which in the overall course of things both belongs to that path and itself shows up on the path. It is the very skepticism which always sees in its results only pure nothingness and which abstracts from the fact that this nothingness is only the determinate shape of the nothingness from which it itself has resulted. However, it is only the nothingness which is taken as the nothingness of that from which it emerges which is in fact the true result. That nothingness is itself thereby determinate and thereby has a content. Skepticism which ends with the abstraction of nothingness or emptiness cannot progress any further from this point but must instead wait to see whether something new will come along and wait to see what it will be if indeed it is then to toss it too into the same empty abyss. In contrast, when the result is grasped as determinate negation, that is, when it is grasped as it is in truth, then at that point a new form has immediately arisen, and in that negation the transition has been made by virtue of which the progression through the complete series of shapes comes about on its own accord. (Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, para 79)

35 (Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, para 114)

36 "Clearly Hegel is here appealing to the type of 'determinate negation' holding between opposing or contrary and not just different terms. 'Round' and 'green' may be different, but 'round' and 'square' or 'red' and 'green', are opposed. Plato had presumably intended something like this, but his attempt to capture this in terms of difference is too weak. Thus, the tomato's being round, say, does not explain why it is false to call it red. Only invoking an opposed or contrary property will do this." (Redding, 207)

37 Redding, 103

38 As subject, it is pure, simple negativity, and precisely by virtue of that, it is the estrangement of what is simple, that is, it is the doubling which posits oppositions and which is once again the negation of this indifferent diversity and its opposition. (Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, para 18)

39 Brandom, 173-4

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40 “It is just such determinate negation that promises for Hegel a Kant-derived alternative to Kant’s own idea of determination by intuition, an alternative needed because of his own criticisms of any doctrine of ‘the given’.” (Redding, 55)

41 “Thus, in Hegel’s rigorous (but rather obviously nonstandard) terminology, the finite is always that which is intelligible in terms of or is explained by its reference to something else, its 'negation.' For something, x, to be finite, means that it can only be grasped in terms of its contrast with y.” (Pinkard, 46)

42 (Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, para 18)

43 “Furthermore, the living substance is the being that is in truth subject, or, what amounts to the same thing, it is in truth actual only insofar as it is the movement of self-positing, that is, that it is the mediation of itself and its becoming-other-to-itself. As subject, it is pure, simple negativity, and precisely by virtue of that, it is the estrangement of what is simple, that is, it is the doubling which posits oppositions and which is once again the negation of this indifferent diversity and its opposition. That is, it is only this self-restoring parity, the reflective turn into itself in its otherness – What is the truth is not an originary unity as such, that is, not an immediate unity as such. It is the coming-to-be of itself, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal and has its end for its beginning, and which is actual only through this accomplishment and its end.” (Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, para 18)