

## *Original Paper*

# The Third Attempt. A New Chance for an Idealist Philosophy

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### **Abstract**

*The message of total non-universality (both sensible content and concept as such are evaluated as non-universal) is incompatible with human nature. From this, the exceptional character of my philosophical venture is derived. Essentially, it is a problem of communication. Hence, it is a didactical construction which is central to my paper. The crucial importance of two simple assertions must be emphasized:*

- 1) A finite extension is not divisible infinitely (proposed by Berkeley and Hume)*
- 2) The line does not consist of points (proposed by Hegel)*

*The above two assertions may be called the hard core of idealist philosophy. Both are instrumental in the conception of original environment. Being tied to the original environment is the outstanding fact that explains why the sensible content should be qualified as non-universal.*

### **Keywords**

*Berkeley, Hume, Hegel, Schelling, total non-university*

### **1. Introduction**

The overwhelming majority of people declare themselves to be materialists: they believe that external existence is the absolute truth. Contrary to this, idealist philosophy suggests that external existence is not the absolute truth. Idealist philosophers represent the smallest minority of human thought—being far away from the mainstream thinking. Their case seems not to make any advances. There is, however, a wise saying that states civilisation is a slow process of adopting the views of minorities.

This paper is unusual in that it does not set itself the goal of convincing the reader of the truth of the idealist standpoint. Why not? In my opinion, only those intellectual endeavours that are committed to remaining entirely within the limits of what can be understood can set themselves the goal of convincing the reader. Because idealist philosophy points to the limits of understanding, convincing the reader is not a natural requirement. We will, however, not be lacking any goal!

Because the idealist standpoint is deeply rooted in the history of philosophy, a special goal can be set here. This goal is to secure acknowledgement of the so-called *third attempt*. I consider the first attempt to be Berkeley and Hume's endeavour in the eighteenth century. The second attempt was classical German idealism. This work dares to form a third attempt, in which this author firmly believes. With regard to the geographic situation of the author's homeland (Hungary), I would suggest that idealist philosophy keeps going from West to East.

A *third attempt* will need to have the following two qualities:

- substantial attachment to the classics, from Berkeley to Schelling,
- importation of a new element into the elaboration of the idealist standpoint.

I believe that both conditions are fulfilled in this work. The main reason for the substantial attachment to the classics is the "non-universal" assessment of both sensible content (SC) and the institute of conceptuality. The new element in the presentation of idealist philosophy is the three-pillar didactic construction, and within that construction the special importance of the distinction between present and absolute present.

In my presentation, idealist philosophy has a clear (but difficult) message: total non-universality. The non-universal nature of SC and conceptuality, taken together, are what I call total non-universality. The concept of total non-universality may enforce the notion of *defensive philosophy*. Here the "defence" means a declaration that one can dismiss this message happily, assuming that one is willing to answer two simple questions. These questions are:

- Can a finite extension be infinitely divided?
- Does a line consist of points, or does it not?

By declaring this kind of self-restriction (convincing is not a goal), a new situation emerges in the idealist/materialist debate. This is the situation brought about by stressing the above two questions. I do not feel compelled to answer any attempts to refute the idealist standpoint here, which ignore the two questions at issue. The requirement for answers is only a small restriction; in the future too, the critics will be able to suggest whatever they wish. I am convinced that there is no point in conducting the debate within the old framework. Taking the questions "whether or not a finite extension is infinitely divisible?" and "Does a line consist of points or not?" with deadly seriousness may guard against unnecessary verbiage.

## 2. Locating Sensible Content

### 2.1 *The Question of the Present: Extension or the Absence of Extension*

There are two basic answers to the question of the present, invoking either extension or the absence of extension. A further possible answer may be one of "infinitely small" extension, but the trouble with this is that it is not discipline-based; it stands simply and solely for "exceedingly small extension". My claim, therefore, is that materialism and idealism depart from each other in connection with the question of the present. For materialists, this question is not at the forefront, so their answer is the same

as the received view: extensionlessness. The answer of idealists is short extension, or a time-atom. The attribute “short” is a conventional one, so the phrase “short extension” can only be interpreted in human terms. On this basis, the concept of time cannot be a category independent of a human.

What gives significance to the new interpretation of the present proposed here is that it can be attached to an elementary instance of sensory perception, which always takes place in the present, and never in the past or in the future. That particular part of the time continuum known as *the present* is extremely important from the point of view of establishing the idealist standpoint.

### 2.2 *Sensible Content as Peculiarity*

The hegemonic position of SC in naïve materialism (that is, in our natural world view) suggests that it is universally valid, and it is this perception that has been elevated by the materialists to the status of a philosophical truth. The idealists have attempted to point to the peculiar character of SC, but this is devoid of persuasive power because such a “peculiar character” cannot be demonstrated through contrast. One is not able to present another (non-sensible) contentual item in the hope that its mere existence will call into question the universal nature of SC.

What might enable resistance to the overwhelming power of the suggestion regarding the universality of SC? What can make the qualification of “peculiar” plausible? In brief: the great achievement of locating SC. To be able to declare the non-universal nature of sensibility, one must find a *place* where SC can be established.

Let us attempt to grasp an elementary instance of perception (that is, perception in a single moment) with the aid of space and time. One can say that this takes place in *large space* and *short time*. By “large space”, I mean that perception happens not in the microworld but in the world of human-scale objects. By “short time”, I mean an extension of the moment “now”. From these definitions, it can be seen that by *locating* SC, I mean grasping the fact of perception with the aid of space and time. I call the combination of large space and short time the *original environment*. I will move away from the original environment in two directions: toward *small* space and *long* time. These departures are made to demonstrate the non-universal nature of SC.

### 2.3 *Manifestations of the Common Belief in the Universal Nature of Sensible Content*

As noted above, one can conceive of two manifestations of the assumed universal nature of SC: its projection into small space and into long time. These correspond to two statements:

- The implication of projection into small space is the contention that there exist an absolute finitude (that is, the Democritean atom).
- The implication of projection into long time is the assertion that things are destined to last for eternity.

The advocates of modern materialism may object that these assertions belong to the realm of naïve materialism and that pointing out their falsehood does not damage the actual philosophy. This author believes, however, that the true nature of materialism is revealed by the intense force its first (and naïve)

version possesses. The above two statements reflect a belief in the universal nature of SC; in turn, their firm dismissal is equivalent to a declaration of the non-universal nature of that content.

Let us explore the projection of SC into small space in more detail! Does absolute finitude exist? Lenin does not say “yes” or “no”, but strives to downplay the question (“matter is disappearing”, i.e., the physicists have not found absolute finitude):

*“Matter is disappearing” means that the limit within which we have hitherto known matter is vanishing and that our knowledge is penetrating deeper; properties of matter are likewise disappearing which formerly seemed absolute, immutable, and primary (e.g., impenetrability, inertia, mass) and which are now revealed to be relative and characteristic only of certain states of matter. (Lenin, 1920, p. 267)*

In contrast, the idealists insist on the vital importance of this question. While the materialists would never say: “we would surrender, if absolute finitude cannot be demonstrated or proved”, the idealists in turn would assert, “if absolute finitude is demonstrated, we will give in firmly and unambiguously”. One can conclude from this that idealism is a refutable philosophy.

Returning to the concerted examination of the two projections (into small space and into long time), let us suppose that both projections proved to be true. In this case, the principle pointing out the local character of SC does not apply, and we cannot say that SC is anything that exists only in large space and in short time. In the event of the triumph of the projections, we cannot give a new wording to the thesis “to be is to be perceived”, while in the event of their defeat we can do just that. In the latter case, we can state that the combination of large space and short time must be judged as a substantial circumstance. This is, thus, a new wording of Berkeley’s thesis, which also accomplishes more than the original insofar as it suggests a possible outcome in which the thesis is false. “To be is to be perceived” is a false thesis, if the two projections—that an absolute finitude exists and that things are everlasting—prove to be true.

The new wording of the noted thesis is worth repeating: the combination of large space and short time must be judged as a substantial circumstance. Naturally, the new wording asserts that Berkeley’s thesis states nothing less than the non-universal character of SC.

#### *2.4 The Question of the Present in Detail*

Within the framework of the original environment, the element to be discussed is the present, interpreted as short time. As noted above, this interpretation differs from the traditional interpretation, which is “present = extensionlessness”. The concept of the original environment comes into being the moment we move away from the traditional interpretation of the present. I support the interpretation “present = small extension (or extension atom)” with two statements: a finite extension cannot be divided infinitely, and a line does not consist of points.

Let us consider the statement that a finite extension cannot be divided infinitely. Here, the key is that infinite divisibility may not be considered a *property* of extension. If infinite divisibility is not a property, then what is it? My answer is that infinite divisibility of space and time—that is, the possibility that by infinite division we reach a zero position—is the negation of the absoluteness of

space and time. Interpreting infinite divisibility as a *non*-property makes it possible to introduce the following distinction: infinite division can be performed, but this is not permitted.

This is an important distinction. We can make that distinction because we are able to give the two opposing statements reasonable interpretations. I present the two interpretations for the case of space, but I regard them as valid for time as well.

What is meant by the statement that “finite space can be divided infinitely”? It means the absence of a physical barrier. The potential barrier is the Democritean atom (we should use the concept of space in the Hegelian sense: space does not differ from its filling). Let us look at the opposing statement: what is meant by the statement that “finite space cannot be divided infinitely”? This claim is a defensive move: we defend the conceptual substance against being consumed. It is not permitted that extension (the conceptual substance) be reduced to the zero level.

In connection with the above question, I must make a minor detour in anticipation of what will follow later. Conceding the two opposing assertions (“a finite extension can be divided infinitely” on the one hand, and “it is not permitted to divide it infinitely” on the other) makes it possible for us to introduce a more fundamental distinction: beyond understanding and within understanding. The outcome of infinite division of space and time is “zero space + zero time”. This is a formula for „beyond understanding”. The outcome of non-infinite division, in turn, is “space + time” (we have managed here to preserve the conceptual substance). This is the formula for understanding.

The logic of our didactic construction, however, will force us to introduce another formula for “beyond understanding”: space + zero time. The status of “beyond understanding” is also due to “space + zero time”, because it differs from “space + time”, which is our established formula for understanding. So, we have two formulae for “beyond understanding”. “Zero space + zero time” will be called absolute unity, “space + zero time” will be called positive/negative structure.

Returning to our original question, we are already aware of why Berkeley and Hume insisted on the non-infinite divisibility of finite extension: they were led by the intention to preserve the conceptual substance. Berkeley said:

*“The infinite divisibility of finite extension, tho’ it is not expressly laid down, either as an axiom or theorem in the elements of that science, yet, is throughout the same everywhere suppos’d, and... that mathematicians never admit it into doubt, or make the least question of it.”* (Berkeley, 1998, paragraph 123)

Hume talks about indivisible moments:

*“It is certain then, that time, as it exists, must be composed of indivisible moments.”* (Hume, 2016, p. 17)

What are these indivisible moments? These are the embodiments of the conceptual substance, that is, the extension. They should be esteemed. It is not permitted to annihilate them by infinite division.

Now let us consider the question: does a line consist of points or not? On this matter, Hegel takes a very clear stance:

*“That the line does not consist of points, nor the plane of lines follows from their concepts”.* (Hegel, 2007, p. 31)

If the statement “the line consists of points” does not evolve from the very concepts of line and point, then what is the reason for this common opinion? The answer is simple: common opinion is under the influence of a visual approach, and if we start from the representation of the point (which in reality is an extension-atom), then the statement “the line consists of points” is true. However, this representation of the point misleads; it distorts the concept of a point, which is simply the absence of extension. The visual approach turns this absence into extension.

How does the statement “the line does not consist of points” contribute to the concept of the original environment? The answer is that it excludes the interpretation “present = extensionlessness”. Namely, the notion of time includes an obligation and compulsion to build it out of moments; one conceives that a succession of moments in the present form the past, just as a succession of points forms a line. If one adheres strictly to the concept of a point (and to the traditional interpretation of the present), this requirement is not fulfilled. To repeat the point: it is a requirement for moments of “now” that they, each succeeding the other, form the past.

### **3. The Non-universal Nature of the Institute of Conceptuality**

Idealist philosophy differs from all other areas of human thought in that it does not accept the institute of conceptuality as unquestionable. What possible basis is there for downgrading the concept as such? It can be the same as in the case of SC. The aspiration of idealist philosophy thus becomes to bind conceptuality to the original environment. This happens through SC by using the equivalence “SC = large space + short time”.

Therefore, my claim is that every concept must contain some kind of SC. Accordingly, I state that there are two levels of concepts: one is the conscious level, which is that of meanings, and the other is the unconscious level, which maintains and cherishes the ties of concepts to the sensible. This latter level represents an abstract SC that is a property of all concepts, independent of their meanings. Such a hidden level of the existence of concepts cannot be proved, but does it have to be? Much can be expected of human understanding, but not the ability to provide conclusive proof of its own non-universal nature. However, I have recourse to the authority of the classics of idealist philosophy. We can observe the two levels described above by Hegel:

*“To ask if a category is true or not, must sound strange to the ordinary mind: for a category apparently becomes true only when it is applied to a given object, and apart from this application it would seem meaningless to inquire into its truth. But this is the very question on which everything turns.”* (Hegel, *Short Logic*, paragraph 24)

To make the above sentences more understandable within the framework I am advancing, let us translate them into the language of the terms used above. “Ordinary mind” means understanding, “category” means concept, and “applied to a given object” means meaning. The refashioned version

thus runs as follows: “To ask if a concept as a tool of the understanding is true or not must sound strange to understanding, for a concept apparently becomes true (or untrue) only when it has a meaning, and apart from this meaning it would seem meaningless to inquire into its truth. But this is the very question on which everything turns.”

Concepts without meaning are useless for understanding. But these concepts, taken in general, are of significance for (idealist) philosophy, because they carry prejudice. So what is the very question upon which everything turns? Whether or not concepts contain hidden prejudice.

For Schelling, “ordinary thinking” means understanding:

*“ordinary thinking is a mechanism governed by concepts, though they are not distinguished as concepts.”* (Schelling, 1978, p. 9)

This definition requires only slight modification: understanding is a mechanism governed by concepts, in which the concepts are not distinguished and emphasised as concepts.

For understanding, concepts matter only if they possess meaning. Within understanding, the various meanings are emphasised, and to raise the issue of this characteristic of concepts is disturbing to the ordinary mind. This is the principle of the exclusiveness of meaning. And that principle is a precondition to the setting forth of assertions believed by materialists to be absolute truths.

For example, let us consider the thesis that *reality* should be used as a starting point. If reality is a carrier of an invisible prejudice, then it is unfit to serve as a starting point. The thesis holds only if one sets aside the conceptual character of reality and concentrates exclusively on its meaning.

#### **4. Idealist Philosophy as a Three-pillar Didactic Construction**

##### *4.1 Three Pillars, Four Actors*

The aim of the construction introduced here is to relieve the antagonism that ruptures idealist philosophy to the fullest extent possible. The thrust of this antagonism is that a message that is averse to understanding must be presented solely in the language of communication, that is, the language of understanding.

The three pillars are as follows: the original environment and the understanding assigned to that *place* form the middle pillar. The two end pillars are absolute unity as a thing beyond understanding and the positive/negative structure as another thing beyond understanding. The nature of these two things is conveyed by the circumstances of their origin, which I address below. An explanation for the belief in the existence of external SC, which is likely the greatest prejudice of human existence, is also an important aim of this construction. Here the stakes are so high that I take the step of impersonating SC (specifically, visual content) to facilitate this aim.

It has been shown that the understanding, led by the firm belief that SC is absolute, executes projections: it projects SC into small space and long time. It has also been assumed that these projections are not true. The didactic construction is built on the ruins of our understanding’s failed attempt to extend the validity of SC beyond the original environment.

Since I aim to propose two denotations of “within understanding versus beyond understanding”, I will need four actors. The two end pillars are joined by two additional formulae, which equally represent understanding.

- 1) The first actor is the basic structure of understanding, which I call space/time symmetry. It comprises three elements. The central element may be called either “matter” or “the object of the senses”, or a “thing.” In this structure, both space and time are subordinate to the central element and are at the same logical distance from it; thus (if we put the three elements in plane), they are symmetrical with respect to the central element.
- 2) The space/time structure (formerly mentioned as “space + time”) has two members, and here, matter (the central element in the basic structure) dissolves into space. The space/time structure can be considered to be a significant modification of the basic structure of understanding, but it still acts within understanding. Its aim is to represent the conceptual separation of space and time clearly (without a third member).
- 3) Absolute unity (zero space + zero time) is a thing beyond understanding. Here, the conceptual framework is ruptured at its weak point: the conceptual separation of space and time (Hegel said “everything deserving the name of philosophy has constantly been based on the consciousness of an absolute unity, where the understanding sees and accepts only separation” (Hegel, *Short Logic*, paragraph 213))
- 4) The positive/negative structure initially means positive space and negative time, but when both factors are considered, it differs from the simplified structure of space/time (slightly in the case of space, and greatly in the case of time). Being a structure beyond understanding, it can only be a product of separation from the original environment. I will demonstrate that this is really so.

Let us go back to the first two actors. As noted above, the space/time structure is derived from the space/time symmetry structure. We can find the key sentence of the derivation in Hegel: “[*Space*] is always a filled space and never distinct from what fills it.” (Hegel, 2007, p. 30) Hegel thus dismisses the conceptual separation typical of natural language and creates “one” out of the duality of matter and space by dissolving the former into the latter. This modified concept of space is used in the space/time structure, which I also refer to as the *simplified structure*.

The same concept of space (being indistinct from what fills it) constitutes the positive part of the positive/negative structure, with the addition of both external and internal SC connected to a given object. Therefore, the positive/negative structure implicitly states that the essence of the antipodean worldview is of a spatial nature, because the external/internal division is realised entirely in space, that is, in the absolute present. The truth and validity of this pure fulfilment carry only 50 percent weight, because it is embedded in the positive/negative structure (the impure fulfilment of the external-internal division can be observed in the present; it is short time that is unnecessary for the division).

The negative time included in the positive/negative structure is not the traditional extension-time (so that in the event of negative time we cannot talk about past, present, and future) but merely a time



factor (this is why the formula introduced above of the positive/negative structure was “space + zero time”). The sheer existence of negative time serves the pure fulfilment of antipodeanity. Negative time does not make the existence of SC in the present possible by stepping into the place of traditional time. It forces SC from its natural place, the present, into an artificial one, the absolute present.

The positive/negative structure is a product of a separation from the original environment toward long time. As has already been observed, the projection of SC into long time results in the statement that things are destined to last for eternity. Because this first standpoint of understanding is obviously false, materialists make a correction here, according to which everything changes and nothing is eternal. The thrust of this is that the infinite validity of SC over time is abandoned in favour of a vote for the finite validity of SC in time.

The question that arises is whether this correction can be made without a harmful aftermath. Can this step be brought into harmony with the basic formula of materialist philosophy, which is space/time symmetry? My answer is no. The standpoint that everything changes and nothing is eternal lends a new role to time: that of both *generator* and *consumer*. This brings time into a superior position with respect to the objects of the senses. Materialists do not know what to do with this development but still insist on the basic formula of understanding in which time is in a subordinate position with respect to the objects of the senses. Idealist philosophy treats this problem by proceeding not from being taken in general (which would yield the basic structure of understanding) but from the temporal sequence of existence. This starting point takes into consideration both the old (passive) and the new (active) roles of time.

Negative time as a fictitious entity originates from weighing the two roles: if one combines the role that gives time a subordinate position and that which gives time a superior position, then the resulting artificial formation could be called juxtaposed time. This creation (i.e., negative time) and the positive/negative structure can be and should be interpreted as a breaking away from the original environment.

Here we should sum up briefly the different nature of the materialist and idealist viewpoints on the two crucial scenes weighing in the balance, i.e., those marked by small space and long time.

While in the opinion of the materialists the existence or non-existence of Democritean atoms is not a cardinal question (see Lenin), according to the idealists there are no Democritean atoms, and the absence of these atoms must be sanctioned by the existence of absolute unity, as a thing beyond understanding. The two parts are of the same opinion that the assertion that “things are everlasting” is not tenable. Their opponents, however, do not draw the same conclusion from this assessment. Stating that everything is changing, nothing is everlasting, materialists come here to a stop. The result is that the generating/consuming functions of time are in the air; these functions are not built into the basic structure (in that the role of attribute is only meted out to time in the basic structure). The idealists use the statement „everything is changing, nothing is everlasting” as an intermediate step, creating a new actor appearing on the scene, the positive/negative structure.

#### 4.2 *Oppositions of the Type “Within Understanding Versus Beyond Understanding”*

Having finished the description of the four actors, let us see their oppositions:

- Space-related opposition: space/time structure versus absolute unity;
- Time-related opposition: space/time symmetry versus positive/negative structure.

The attribute “space-related” refers to the genesis of absolute unity. Absolute unity is a product of moving away from the original environment toward small space. Similarly, the attribute “time-related” refers to the genesis of the positive/negative structure.

As noted earlier, our understanding is represented by two structures. In both structures space and time are present—necessarily, since this is the condition of figuring on the side of understanding.

Now look at Hegel and his fight against “also”:

*“In pictorial thought, space and time are taken to be quite separate: we have space and also time: philosophy fights against this ‘also’.”* (Hegel, 2007, p. 30)

This sentence is key in our didactical construction, and later on I will refer to it as a fight against “also”.

The fight against “also” is present in two forms in our didactical construction. In the first, space-related, opposition it is an effective instrument which produces an immediate result. This immediate result is absolute unity.

We have seen that the space/time structure of the first opposition is such a simplification of the basic structure that it shows this fight in a distinct form, that is, without a surplus element. The point of the structure is that there are only space and time and nothing else. They are the absolute necessary elements of understanding, so they are suitable to represent understanding itself at the critical point where its universal nature is challenged. So much for the first, space-related, opposition.

Coming to the second opposition: in the space/time symmetry structure there is a natural place for the SC in the present, while in the positive/negative structure there is a potential place or position for the SC in the absolute present. The question of this (time-related) opposition reads: is the threat of the fight against „also” able to move the SC from its comfortable place and accept the place in the absolute present? My answer is yes.

The fight against “also”, which is in the space/time symmetry structure, can accomplish its goal at any time. The accession of the absolute unity to the throne instead of “space + time” is a real danger. To express this in a dramatic way: the fight against “also” threatens to take away the “air” (space and time) from the SC, and by this it may inflict a death by drowning on SC. As a result, the SC is frightened, desperate and weak. This desperate SC is tempted to accept a position in the absolute present, a position that was looked down on earlier. Our protagonist’s consideration is the following: the sure one (the attribute space, existing in the absolute present) is better than the unsure two (the attributes space and time, existing in the present).

The story (slightly differently) may be narrated as follows. In the beginning, the impersonated SC feels quite content in the present, which is its natural place because its essential conditions, which are space

and time, seem to rest upon a secure foundation. Along with this easy existence comes the illusion of its own universality. However, evil comes in the person of Hegel and destroys everything. Hegel declares the fight against “also”, and this fight endangers the essential conditions of SC, which weakens it. Now the SC does not feel quite safe in the present any more. It is eager to leave the present. Idealist philosophy offers it the absolute present located in the positive/negative structure where there is peace and where, for a “moment” (a moment without extension, that is, a quasi-moment), it can realise itself and display its truth, which can be called antipodeanity or external–internal duality. Then it comes to the act of denial by negative time; that is, the SC has to pay heavily for the “moment” of calm that is attained in the absolute present.

In summary, we can say that the point of opposing the space/time symmetry structure with the positive/negative one is to demonstrate the effect the fight against “also” has on the welfare of SC. The outcome of this fight is a weak SC in the present and a strong SC in the absolute present. The latter serves didactic aims.

#### 4.3 *The External Senses as Prejudice*

Why do we believe in the existence of the external senses? Because we do not make any distinction between present and absolute present. In consequence, for the common man the question “what is valid in the present and what is in the absolute present?” does not arise. The external senses possessing a solid position in the absolute present nurtures the belief that there are external senses in the present as well. This human belief seems unmovable, but unmovable beliefs of any kind can be questioned as well. In the present there is no external SC! I quote Berkeley: “colours, which are the proper and immediate object of sight, are not without the mind.” (Berkeley, 1948, point 43)

Berkeley’s assertion is clear, distinct, and true. Despite this, it does not stand up; an explanation must be added for why man’s belief in the existence of external SC is so firm. A merely degrading classification such as “it is a mere appearance” does not shake the common belief in external SC. Terms with sufficient explanatory power to refer to the only possible source of explanation, the absolute present, are required. One such term is the *prejudice* in Schelling’s statement that

*“The one basic prejudice, to which all others reduce, is no other than this: that there are things outside us.”* (Schelling, 1978, p. 8)

Prejudices must have an origin. The prejudice against (sensible) things outside us originates in the absolute present. I believe that my notion of *weak SC* possesses an explanatory power similar to that of prejudice because it refers back to the absolute present. With comparison to what is the SC weak in the present? It is weak compared with the position that it is able to attain in the absolute present.

## 5. Kant: Disengagement from Our Natural World View—by Halves

It follows from the notion of total non-universality that idealist philosophy is destined to question all (substantial) contentions and beliefs that mark naïve materialism, our natural world view. The beliefs in the universal nature of SC on the one hand, and antipodeanity on the other are important cornerstones of our natural world view; essentially, they are two sides of the same thing. As noted above several times, the requalifying into non-universality of both *in a convincing way* is little short of impossible. No wonder: our understanding is imbued with the sense of its own universal nature. Because of the difficulty of the above mission, idealist philosophy encourages permanent experimenting.

Consider the sacrosanct antipodeanity. The antipodean layout is attacked from two sides: while Berkeley is deploying only one actor (the SC existing in mind), Kant is deploying three actors along the line of object/subject (the third actor is the thing-in-itself). Both avoid “two” regarding the number of actors. This way of “avoiding number two” may be called a rough questioning of antipodeanity. My thesis reads: in the traditional structure (which is space/time symmetry) only the rough questioning of antipodeanity is possible.

What about subtle questioning of antipodeanity? It occurs in the positive/negative structure. In this structure antipodeanity is displayed in its positive part (in the absolute present), but this is immediately opposed and balanced by negative time. Thus, the external-internal duality of SC (that is antipodeanity) loses weight. It is reduced to 50 percent of the weight enjoyed in the space/time symmetry structure. So, the subtle questioning of antipodeanity simply means losing weight.

In Kant’s vertical threefold dividing (SC in mind, external SC, and the thing-in-itself) the thing-in-itself constitutes the new and striking element. It has both useful and retarding impact on the efficiency of questioning every substantial element of our natural world view.

The thing-in-itself does not require space and time. Hence, the thing-in-itself is characterised by zero space and zero time, that is, by absolute unity. The thing-in-itself, as it were, “bears” the absolute unity. Absolute unity is the term that serves as a point of contact between Kant’s scheme and the three-pillar didactic construction.

Kant left the setting of the SC, that is the space/time symmetry structure, unchanged (as do all classics of idealist philosophy, with the possible exception of Hegel, to whom we will return). The sensible objects as phenomena exist just as in space and time as the materialists’ real objects. In a striking way, the sheer existence of the thing-in-itself supports this structure. Being an axis of symmetry, the thing-in-itself attracts and displays the basic structure of understanding despite the fact that this structure can only be a shadow one in the absence of space and time. (To repeat the point: the basic structure of understanding is ingrained in one’s mind to such a degree that it is capable of being maintained even while some of its elements are lacking. That on-going maintenance can be referred to as a shadow structure.) This is the reason for our impression that Kant duplicates the world. Kant keeps questioning a number of things, but one thing is left intact: the basic structure of our understanding.

In my opinion Hegel goes further than Kant, because he has taken steps toward the elimination of that structure. Such a step is the assertion that space does not differ from its filling, which is dealing a blow to the threefold dividing of the basic structure. Moreover, in Hegel space is qualified as positive, time as negative (Hegel, 2007, p. 28). The terms “positive” and “negative” exclude a third actor, so this too is a blow to the space/time symmetry structure. (This writer took the idea of qualification as positive and as negative from Hegel; from this the positive/negative structure has come.)

Why must we accept that sensible objects are mere phenomena? Kant is at fault for an answer. The cause of idealist philosophy is in need of a simple answer, which is: the SC is attached to a definite space/time combination, so it has only local validity, not universal validity.

In summation, beyond the well-known qualification of SC as appearance, it is the absolute unity that forms Kant’s contribution to the version of idealist philosophy presented in this paper. The key to criticism of Kant is structure. With him, our understanding remains unbroken concerning its belief in its own universality, because its basic structure remains intact.

## 6. Closing Notes

The term “universality” means being true generally, unrestricted by any condition. The advocates of non-universal SC should point out that SC is tied to a definite combination of space and time, called the original environment. To draw a parallel, let us consider the question: what is the reason for the Jewish religion being a non-universal religion? The reason is that it has been attached to the Jewish people (unlike Christianity, which has not been attached to any particular people). Similarly: what is the reason for the SC being a non-universal content? The reason is that it has been attached to something as well. This something is the original environment.

\* \* \*

The question of whether space and time are infinitely divisible is central to idealist philosophy. My answer is well-known to the reader: it is not permitted to divide space and time infinitely, but—at the same time—infinite division can be performed.

How should we interpret non-infinite divisibility? Claiming non-infinite divisibility is a declaration to defend the conceptual substance against being wholly consumed.

How should we interpret infinite divisibility? Claiming infinite divisibility is a declaration pointing out the non-absolute character of space and time. Implicated in that claim is that there exists no Democritean atom that may be regarded as absolute extension. A Democritean atom is a protagonist. If it exists, it would be the highly prized depository of absolute space and (by implication) absolute time.

\* \* \*

For the SC the question arises: where is it better to be, in the present or in the absolute present? The answer: it is better to be in the present—before the announcement of the fight against “also”. After the announcement of this fight it is better to be in the absolute present. The claim “it is better to be in the absolute present” means that we can assume a strong SC in that position. Idealist philosophy displays

the external senses being in the absolute present as a source of prejudice and it displays the same in the present as prejudice.

\* \* \*

Do external senses exist? Kant's answer is widely known: yes, they exist, but qualify themselves only as appearances.

Challenging this, I have made a different answer: yes, they exist, but only in the absolute present. I will present this answer as one from Hegel. Two things must be pointed out why it is justified to speak of Hegel's answer.

- The term "absolute present" can only be discovered in Hegel.
- It was seen in this work that the fight against "also" (announced by Hegel) tends to drive SC from present into the absolute present.

The statement "external senses exist only in the absolute present" may support Berkeley's position (it allowed for us to claim: in the present there are no external senses!) and may suggest a place of origin for Schelling's term "prejudice".

Throughout this work I have emphasized that in idealist philosophy (damned by the message "total non-universality") there are no true or false statements but only different didactical solutions. The statement "external senses exist only in the absolute present" should also be valued as a didactical solution. Time will decide its effectiveness.

In the competition between Kant and Hegel (in their intellectual afterlife) it is not crucial, but should be noted: Hegel's solution is more in agreement with other classics of idealist philosophy than his rival's.

\* \* \*

"This work fails to present a convincing case", wrote one reviewer. This remark gives me an opportunity to highlight the unique nature of my intellectual enterprise once again.

Should it present a convincing case regarding the fact that the message (total non-universality) is foreign to human nature? One must see that this is the message that is most resistant to our understanding. It is assured that an uneasy feeling will have accompanied the reader throughout this work.

My philosophy is a defensive one. Its fate depends on simple questions requiring strict answers. We need these answers to determine the concept of the original environment, the basis for every "non-universal" assessment. The reader should be careful: to present a convincing case is a requirement only for those intellectual products that do not leave the sunny domain of our understanding.

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