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ON THE METAPHYSICS OF NOTHING

What seems to be the arbitrary matter in the pursuit of a first principle in metaphysics is that any fundamental concept can be used to equivocate an absolute; It could be existence, nothingness, data, logic, information, energy etc. but in all cases, they beg the question and it tips the pursuit over into infinite regress: What *are* those things?

When they are described with the most abstract qualities such as "non-contingent entity" for example, it seem to be a last-ditch attempt that is as low-resolution and tautological as saying "It is what it is", and therefore loses meaning. This leads one to see how truth is ultimately tied to meaning- we wish to express the most basic, pervasive, justifying truth that we know and experience in the most intimate way; Keyword "experience"- we are

subjected to the experience of truth and prohibited from mapping it with any language possible: Math, logic, poetry etc.

Such languages that we use is a reflection of our conscious experience trying to express its own truth through the lens of perception, but it is falling short due to its ironic capability to conceive of, and intuit truths that go beyond perceptual capabilities.

This said, we may simply not trivialize the content of certain concepts that are the most relevant and *a priori* to us, such as nothingness, void, Eternity, and Infinity. "Nothingness" and "void" are used interchangeably throughout this essay, and both stand to mean the ontological, *absolute* state of nothingness that implies there can be no existence and *not* relative nothingness- like the absence of an object for example.

We are aware of these concepts as being absolutely relevant to our understanding of the world and of ourselves, and in this way, they could be labeled as "true", but to satisfy the condition that they must also be

ontologically proven through empirical means to show that they are also existential (meaning substantial as separate from the content of mind), then no further examination is needed by the empiricist: Logically, he must concede that he will never prove infinity, nothingness or anything of the like- Does this justify him if he then chooses to default to believing that they do not exist, ontologically or otherwise? I would hope all would say no, as the impossibility emergent from the limitations of the human mind is no satisfactory parameter by which to arrive at proof of anything. This does not, however, constitute the teapot fallacy: I have said that the impossibility for a human mind to arrive at a logical proof of the existence of something is no "proof by default" of its opposite (that it must therefore not exist). Besides, one must ask what it means for void "not to exist"… Do these three words refer to the void they are supposed to negate? Such is the treacherous nature of language, and if we are to use language to abolish the void due to its inadequacy, we must just as much abolish language altogether, especially in its pursuit of negating the void.

That having been dealt with first, the teapot fallacy now does make its appearance: The burden of proof lies on the one claiming the existence of something impossible to prove, in this case: void. But of what proof do I refer to? When invoking the void, I simply categorize the fact that there is a subjective experience of void in my own mind that I can not simultaneously negate when I think about it. The other category appears because the same can not be said for others- I do not know if anyone else can. In other words, I do not make the statement that objectively, this capability is subjectively true for all minds- this I could only assume. This is why I say that "proof" is a matter of experience, not some sort of language or symbol or sequence of logic that (as previously shown) will always fail to disprove that which it claims to disprove by its own limitations.

Here, it is best to point out the irony between dualism and monism as it relates to existentialists versus the non-dualists; The latter are the ones who accept dualism as a necessary step to achieving "the oneness" of reality while the existentialists who are in the pursuit of such a one are adamant to get there by negating duality via the rejection of nothingness (the very thing that

gives substance to the world of matter they accept as the only truth). In other words, duality exists and applies everywhere in the differentiating world the "scientifics" are intimately acquainted with: *numbers, discreet units such as Planck length, positive and negative charges and so on*; Yet, they reject this very principle when speaking of their underlying reality: It is all one discreet unit of eternal existence, no matter how it is defined; They wish to jump to the conclusion that reality is one and non-dualists see a need for the *process* of going from two to one (reverse engineering as a convenient pathway).

The question philosophers ask, however, is *how does one become two?* Material reductionists seem to stop short of this question in the busy work of infinitely breaking down the latest fundamental into its constituent parts. This is perhaps why one would understandably see how the two camps are not quite in the same business whatsoever. *What is the fundamental nature of reality? And how do we know that what we find is true?* Are both these questions mutually exclusive?

This might be an unnecessary question to explore, as the philospher David Neupauer put it: *It's the question AFTER you come to nondualism [that matters].* He says this because evidently, we are all in agreement that 1=2, meaning the world and its complexities emerges from one existential reality. He then continues: *But the next question is does 0=1. And [As non-dualists] we say "oh hell yes." And they say, [The existentialists] "that can't happen; It would be stuck at 0, so it has be stuck at 1 since we're here."*

This is a perfectly valid point on its face. In fact, it is completely valid, coherent, sound, and has an integrity that makes it stand on its own. If void is the case, and by the rules of logic nothing can come from nothing because nothing does not exist by definition, then the simple truth that we are around to say this gives existence its value of "one", to the exclusion of zero. David Neupauer remarks on this truth quite candidly when he says: *And so it is. They are right. We're wrong. And we're "right" about that in our world but not theirs; The cosmos is paradoxical, so this is perfectly sensible in our world. Of course, the answer is a paradox. And from the other perspective, it can be nonsense, yet it doesn't matter to our side.* By "nonsense" here, he

refers to the paradoxical worldview that one and zero either equate and or simultaneously exist with each other.

Why is it that "our side" comes to this conclusion? The answer lies somewhere within the idea of "being". Non-dualism it seems, is transcendental of all categories including logic itself, and this we call *being*. For an existentialist, this might be nonsense because there is no *utility* in such an idea, and is false to begin with anyway. However, it is remarkable how little attention is paid to the utility of *meaning*, which is inherently necessary for human consciousness and the entire basis for why the discussion is being had to begin with. For us humans, great meaning is found *in the experience* of reality as "oneness", and such an experience is achieved by some through non-dualism. To be fair, perhaps there are different meanings within each respective worldview: In the world of matter and physics meaning is found in the utility that can be extracted for practical activities, whereas in the world of abstraction, the meaning comes from the need for spiritual/mental health.

A very useful way to parse out what is happening here is by applying what the philosopher Matthew Acutt suggests is an important contextual distinction to make: *epistemological categories versus ontological commitments*. By this, he means that some conceptual assertions can only belong to the realm of mind and that they can not *also* be ontologically "real". This is a very useful and important distinction to draw in all philosophical matters relating to the nature of truth.

The point of contention here is that it contains a special exception: When discussing nothingness and the mind's conceptualization of it, what is considered "epistemological" and "ontological" lose all distinction. This is due to the hard problem of consciousness as it has come to be known- What is considered "real" can not simply be relegated to material substrates because we know that the mind generates *real* effects on the body. Therefore, if we can not place one before the other we can not definitively say that the mind's contents is not "real", only perhaps that it is "an illusion caused by the material substrate of the brain". Yet the perplexing question here is *what is having the illusion?* If it is just the inert matter of the brain, then all matter

has the potential to be conscious and therefore "mind", which forces us into the predicament that what was supposed to be caused by matter has switched places: Now, the mind potentially causes matter- There is an equal plausibility there.

Circling back to why the topic of nothingness makes an exceptional case for excluding itself from the epistemological and ontological distinction, we can better see how mind/matter subjectively generates an "objective reality" that includes void by virtue of its conceptualization. Here it is necessary to know that the use of "mind/matter" at this point is not restricted to an individual human nor a pantheistic understanding of the universe- These too, lose the ability to be distinguished via the same "hard problem" just now elaborated.

Resumed, the claim of nothingness being a purely epistemological claim is not justified, and we can approach this reasoning from another angle in the form of a question: *is the epistemological claim of nothingness "ontologically significant"?* If we accept that existence is ontologically

justified via our epistemological faculties, it stands to reason that our

epistemological claim of void is also valid- why does it justify one but not the

other? Under the hard problem of consciousness, we may not give

preferential treatment in this way. The very fact that we run into a paradox or

a "hard limit" when delineating existence from void seems to justify both as

plausibly "real", does it not? A limit implies the unbounded existence beyond

it as paraphrased from Graham Priest.

At this point, the investigation comes down to defining what "real"

means; Ontology may not be precise enough as a word because we already

know that void exists conceptually, and so it is ontologically justified in that

way. What we want to know is whether that very concept "makes" or

generates the void in a *substantial* way (substance then needing definition). If

we operate under the common understanding that material equates substance,

then no, void does not exist. If substance is one side of a dovetail into the

"real", the other side being something like "potential", then void does exist.

According to Matthew Acutt, data and logic are the dual aspects of what is

the fundamental, "real", reality. This could be a viable substitute or

equivalent for the counterpart of "potential-substance", as in data represents substance and logic represents potential.

But seeing it this way causes problems for the Datalogical theory; This is because it inevitably runs into the arbitrariness initially explained in this essay, and it may not adequately integrate consciousness nor deal with the problem of infinite regress. Perhaps more aptly, "data-logic" is a *subset* of substance, and all the missing elements now mentioned reside in "potential", for which "void" or "nothingness" is the equivocal metaphor. Like this, we retain a sufficiently abstract and intellectually clean definition of "real" (via substance & potential) to be conclusive on the issues of regress, arbitrariness, and paradox (what is known as the Agrippan trilemma) and still incorporate a sufficiently structured definition of "real" via the Datalogical theory.

One last thing which is ironically also the first that needs to be considered is *purpose*: If building an undoubtable bridge between the two camps (Existentialism and non-dualism) then integrating void is necessary for all the reasons explicated in this essay. On the other hand, if it is simply to

establish a context wherein like David Neupauer says *"we allow one to "feel" the world a certain way via semantic equivocations"*, then philosophy has certainly already achieved that.

In the grand scheme of utility though, philosophy in modern times should preoccupy itself with the reconciliation of this metaphysical quandary to move humanity into a "post-antagonist" era, necessary for an integrating global society to reach stability. In this regard, we can not and should not trivialize "nothingness" by negating it philosophically because, on the level of the common man, it is taken for granted by the majority that an ontological void necessarily exists. Sweeping that under the rug is irresponsible for the academic intelligentsia whose ideas impact cultural, political, and eventually economic outcomes. However, the majority of them do and remain disembodied from the bulk of human experience.

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