**The Ontology of the Experiential**

**John Jupe**

**£25 – Contact: John.jupe@pac.org**

'Reality’ occurs to us – it's a relationship we form with the real. In experimental terms it is neither in our instrumentation nor in their measurements and records, but can be found to some degree behind our status and intent in undertaking the measurement. Through experimental processes dependent on instrumentation scientists hope to ‘observe’ objectively and monitor remotely any phenomenon including the relationship we develop with the real. For example, optical records, photographs stand in for the phenomenal experience and we promote that record as being representative of the real. “ There is nothing less real that realism” claims Georgia O’Keeffe [[1]](#footnote-2). The perceiver’s share is not ‘present’ in an optical projection.

We do not see the world in wide angle with sharpness front to back in the same way that a 17mm lens at f16 will record it. Neither is there any depth of field in vision. We do not compress landscapes, bringing distant and near objects closer together in the same way that a telephoto lens does. We do not freeze a moment in time, stopping water drops in mid air. The camera is simply a device, which under our guidance extracts data about the environment from the light array via a limited set of processes where those limits have been designed and set into the apparatus by us based on our understanding of optical projection.

Visual art can tell us a lot about the phenomenon of vision precisely because it's a first hand account. The camera is not involved. It is visual art that takes us close to the visual encounter and so what can and can’t be meant by our use of the word ‘objective’. We can’t take the perceiver out of an act of observation. Doing so leads to misleading data, experimentation with built in limitations with respect to our ability to capture an account of our relationship with the real. The ontology of the scientific approach has been exceptionally useful underpinning the age of enlightenment, but ultimately it fails to account for our status and intent in undertaking the measurement. It’s no longer fit to purpose.

Only an ontology based on the experiential in conjunction with the rigor of scientific evaluation will usher in a working understanding of the perceiver's share. Vision is non-photographically rendered and vision is prior to science. Only while immersed in the environment and aware of that experience can we penetrate and model aspects of our relationship with the real. This procedure necessarily involves the direct study of sensory awareness through the phenomenon of vision (and audition). Through intuitive study and subsequently evaluation the underlying structure to perception can be realized.

Under the experiential ontology, the challenge is to undertake multidisciplinary enquiry to find and substantiate these connections and subsequently embed them into a new generation of technologies.

1. <http://www.drbilllong.com/CurrentEventsXI/OKeeffeIII.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)