KNOWING AND THE KNOWN:

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE LECTURE 3: REALISM

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HOLES AND CRITIQUES

- REMAINS ON THE OBSERVABLE SURFACE OF THINGS
- COVARIATION DOESN'T ACTUALLY
 EXPLAIN ANYTHING
- TACITASSUMPTIONS:
 - ☐ CONSTANT CONJUNCTIONS OBTAIN
 - THE WORLD AS A CLOSED SYSTEM

CORRELATION AND CAUSATION

- ☐ NEOPOSITIVISTS SAY THEY AREN'T THE SAME...
- ☐ ...BUT NEOPOSITIVISTS HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE <u>BUT</u> CORRELATION
- DEFINITION OF NEOPOSITIVIST "CAUSE":
 - □ X-> Y (SUFFICIENT); ~X-> ~Y (NECESSARY)
 - WITH PROBABILITY P" DOES NOT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

LIMITATIONS

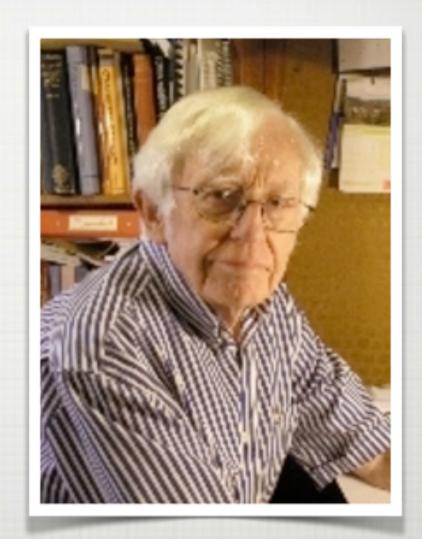
- ☐ IF SOMETHING HAPPENS ONCE, WAS IT CAUSED?
- REAL-WORLD DATA IS IMPRECISE AND AMBIGUOUS
 - STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES = CLEAN DATA TO
 APPROXIMATE PRESUMED "REAL" CAUSAL
 RELATIONSHIP
- SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION RULED OUT
 BY DEFINITION

CAUSAL POWERS

- ROM HARRÉ, STUDENT OF JOHN AUSTIN
- ☐ NOT STATISTICAL

 TENDENCIES, BUT

 DEEPER PROCLIVITIES
- CAN MANIFEST AS
 STATISTICAL
 TENDENCIES IN
 PARTICULAR
 ENVIRONMENTS
 (LABORATORIES)



BEYOND THE EMPIRICAL

PERCEPTION NOT EXHAUSTIVE "UNOBSERVABLE" TOO IMPRECISE THINGS AN OBSERVER HASN'T EXPERIENCED OR PERCEIVED THINGS NO ONE HAS EVER EXPERIENCED OR PERCEIVED, AT LEAST NOT YET THINGS NO ONE COULD EXPERIENCE OR PERCEIVE, EVEN IN PRINCIPLE

TYPES OF "UNOBSERVABLE"

I haven't observed	unobserved	Angor Wat	go see it
we can't observe (yet)	undectected	Neptune; electrons; Higgs boson	build detector
we can't observe (in principle)	undetectable	single quarks; higher dimensions; social structure	?

THEORETICAL OBJECTS

- KNOWN BY WHAT THEY DO
- ABDUCTIVE INFERENCE FROM OBSERVED OUTCOMES
- HAVE TO BE ISOLATED AND VETTED:
 - ☐ IN A LABORATORY
 - ☐ VIA TRANSCENDENTAL ARGUMENT

REALIST EXPLANATIONS

- ☐ CAUSAL POWERS IN AN OPEN SYSTEM
- SEQUENCE AND INTERACTION MATTER
 - DLANT SEED BEFORE WATERING
 - ☐ SEED ONLY GROWS IN APPROPRIATE SOIL, ETC.
- IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, AGENCY KEY
 - ☐ THE LINK BETWEEN CAUSAL POWERS IS OFTEN AN AGENT'S ACTIVITY
 - ☐ ACTUALIZING POTENTIALS
 - ☐ BUT ALSO BOUNDARIES ON/OF ACTION

METAPHYSICS?

- ☐ CAUSAL POWERS HAVE TO BE UNDETECTABLE
 - ☐ NO CRITICAL POTENTIAL OTHERWISE
- THE DANGER IS "ONTO-THEOLOGY"
- THE REMEDY IS SHOWING HOW CAUSAL POWERS EXPLAIN SPECIFIC OUTCOMES
- ☐ EMPIRICISM IS CONSERVATIVE;

 METAPHYSICS CAN BE REVOLUTIONARY

PROGRESS

REALISM CLAIMS TWO KINDS OF PROGRESS: EXPLANATORY PROGRESS (RICHER SCIENTIFIC ONTOLOGY) SOCIAL PROGRESS (ELIMINATING ILLUSIONS) "CRITICAL" = NORMATIVE BUT BASED ON REAL CAUSAL POWERS REALISM MAINTAINS THE SUBJECT-OBJECT, KNOWER-KNOWN DIVIDE