

1.99999: A REVIEW

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01. 614:793 .774 We hadn't been there ninety seconds, because it was right as we walked in the backyard of the high school graduation party that her cousin approached us and, without the slightest hesitation, asked my girlfriend right to her face—'Did you bring my tupperware with you?' It took perhaps longer than I care to confess to fully recognize what exactly it was she was referencing. Oh, the oxtail, I reflected, a second or so later, as I recalled there being a beautiful, wood-covered, piece of glass of tupperware sitting in our refrigerator for over a week, incubating an oxtail dish that had, unfortunately, totally expired—it was so far gone I was hesitant to even open the top of the tupperware container, despite the fact the top of the container was a beautiful, wood finished piece. There was no doubt in my mind that this oxtail was, at that point, not just completely expired but essentially a type of meat soup, a type of liquified corpse, which of course disgusted me severely. Cleaning it out struck me as a grotesque idea. I can't say for certain, but it's more likely than not that I threw it into the trash-tupperware, wood top, and oxtail. 'Oh, so sorry, I'll definitely bring it back soon!' she said, and I glanced at her and attempted to decipher if she had any idea the tupperware and the oxtail were both long gone, that both now sat in a garbage heap, a pile of trash somewhere, at the bottom of a public dump, still filled with decayed, grotesque oxtail, and that her cousin would never again

own the privilege of placing her leftovers into that piece of tupperware with the beautiful wood cover. That tupperware was finished. Having said that, even the finest piece of tupperware—how precious is it really? Couldn't we replace it for five dollars or less? My thinking at the time was yes, that the tupperware was entirely fungible, yet as soon as we stepped foot into this high school graduation party her cousin inquired about the tupperware—as if this tupperware perhaps belonged to some sort of rare species of tupperware, perhaps a species of tupperware on the verge of extinction, perhaps this was some kind of one-of-a-kind tupperware I nonchalantly tossed into a pile of trash. Some people have massive amounts of respect for tupperware, but I've never been one of them, it always eluded me why anyone would invest more than one dollar into a piece of tupperware, personally. To my mind, if a piece of tupperware, no matter the level of craftsmanship, is priced above one dollar, then it's an overpriced piece of tupperware. It's just not an item I've personally ever viewed as an investment of any kind. In my mind, plates and bowls are relatively worthwhile investments, while tupperware is essentially a capitalist ploy to increase the profit margin on plastic bags-to convince people they shouldn't only invest in plates and bowls, but also invest in the highest quality plastic bags (tupperware), that in theory they'll use again and again, but in practice they'll lose incessantly and constantly have to replace.

- 02. 696:817 .852** 'She's never getting that tupperware back,' I said. 'You threw it in the trash?' she said. 'You gave the okay?' I said, to which she shook her head, clearly misremembering the plethora of times we've thrown out tupperware in the past, the countless times I've seen a

piece of well-worn tupperware taking up space in our refrigerator, asked her if I could throw said tupperware out, received approval to throw said tupperware out, and thrown out said tupperware. 'It's not a problem,' I said, 'we can probably just buy her a replacement or something.' She agreed but seemed dubious, and I felt the same, I found myself agreeing with both myself and my girlfriend, despite the fact we had diametrically opposed views on this tupperware. My girlfriend and I disagreed on our ability to replace this tupperware, and I agreed with both of us. I sat in a lawn chair a second or so later, drinking a glass of Soju, explicitly attempting to avoid any unnecessary interaction at this high school graduation until I'd imbibed at least half this bottle of Soju, doubting my ability to come off appropriately cordial in a social setting sans a minimum of half of a bottle of this Soju ruthlessly percolating through my bloodstream. I sat there, contemplating high school graduations, contemplating my own high school graduation, recalling nothing of my high school graduation, contemplating the pervasive idiocy of organized education, considering how more or less every unique thinker—from Socrates stoned by the Athenians to Giordano Bruno burnt alive by the Catholic church to Nietzsche unread and in an insane asylum as he rotted away—yes, every unique thinker over the course of human history was either intensely ostracized or simply assassinated by the systematic educators of his or her day. In short, I was vociferously drinking this glass of Soju when I thought to myself—Isn't it possible that we think of the theological philosophers as the conservatives, as the ones restrained by this so-called conception of God, yet it's actually the case that the theological philosophers, over the course of

human history, are the most audacious, the boldest philosophers we have and have ever had? How else can we explain Berkeley, I thought—easily the most radical skeptic the modern West has produced, yet also a Catholic priest? Dionysius, for example, was actually quite vigorous in his skepticism of our ability to know anything, his circumlocutions were actually quite radical. Whereas our typical secular atheist philosopher, while assured of our ability to know there are no Gods, is rather neutered in his philosophical speculations if the fact that God doesn't exist is left to the side. Isn't it possible that the so-called theological philosophers are the most audacious among us? The ones who are willing to take the properly radical leaps necessary when dealing with metaphysics, I thought while vociferously drinking this bottle of Soju, unwilling to speak to anyone at this high school graduation until I had thoroughly contemplated the true nature of the theological philosopher.

- 03. 805:1077 .747** In any case, we can't compose metaphysics in a rational sense, can we? Isn't it always in a between-the-lines sense that we compose metaphysics, in winks and nods that we write metaphysics, because we can't write metaphysics in a linear and/or rational fashion? We take far too much at face value. Our literalism is intentionally or unintentionally nefarious. Because the reality is nearly nothing can be taken at face value. Do you really believe the greatest minds of Antiquity intended to be taken at face value? The Byzantines read Plato the same way we read Dostoyevsky, whereas we read Plato the same way the Byzantines read the Gospels. Perhaps both are absurd. Now, sure, I'm without a doubt, from a certain vantage point at least, a disciple of Palamas, I won't attempt to

deny that, but we can't take everything Palamas put to papyrus at face value either. Although Palamas understood the shortcomings of Antiquity better than even the most progressive modern scholar, I'd be the last one to say I take everything the saint wrote at face value, because I'm far from a literalist. The modern scholar, insofar as he keeps his faith in rationalism, will most likely never come to terms with the nature of Antiquity—is that fair to say? He'll read Parmenides and take everything literally, and in taking everything literally he'll inevitably take everything idiotically. Isn't it the case that the theologians are the greatest skeptics among us? We view faith as poison as we retain fanatical levels of faith in our sensory organs. We peruse a variety of empirical studies that vivisect the grotesque fictions of our sensory organs—did you know it's now speculated human beings didn't see the color blue until the latter BC centuries at earliest? All around us our sensory organs excrete evidence of their utter unreliability, yet we view faith as idiocy while retaining this fanatical notion that our sensory organs can and should and must be trusted—which is why we're not quite radical enough. The modern age retains radical faith in its sensory organs in a more fanatical fashion than any historical religion known to man. Nothing can be taken at face value, that much we should agree on, which brings me to this, a true fly in the ointment, so to speak—how is it you arrive at a postulation of an essence you cannot know? This is the question, is it not? How does the mathematician reach the postulation numbers are actual and distinct? How is it possible, given human capabilities, to distinguish the number two from the number one point nine repeating (1.999999...) in practice? How is it possible to

distinguish two from one point nine repeating? How does mathematics attempt to lay any claim to physical space—to attempt to claim the ability to leave the theoretical—when it's impossible for us to distinguish the number two from the number one point nine repeating (1.99999999999999999999...), in practice? It seems impossible for us to know that the number two is in fact the number two, and not the number one point nine repeating (1.9999999999999999...), and if we're unable to know the number two is in fact the number two then how could it be possible to assert that mathematics has any value outside of the purely theoretical? By instinct perhaps we feel as though the number two is the number two, and the number one is the number one, yes, the mathematical axioms may feel correct, yet the fact remains that we lack the perceptual faculties to distinguish two apples from one point nine repeating (1.9999999999...) apples. When we speak of the Essence of all things we don't speak any differently—with the exception that our philosophy of an unknowable Essence seeks to put a strict limit on knowledge based on instinctive assumptions, whereas the philosophy of mathematics attempts to indefinitely expand our knowledge based on nothing more than an instinctive assumption, the instinctive assumption that we can successfully distinguish two apples from one point nine repeating (1.9999999999...) apples.

04. 363:468 .776 There's no doubt that we're in the midst of something essentially mysterious, that when we discuss the essence of life we think we can make sense of it all, that we're on the precipice of making sense of ourselves and our surroundings, yet there's still little doubt we remain in the midst of something essentially mysterious

when we begin to think clearly. Thinking is perhaps the most mysterious act of all. Thinking, which we generally believe translates material and immaterial experience into language—into modes that are communicable. Thinking, which attempts to take something such as consuming a juicy pear, an experience that ultimately is confined to personal experience, and extrapolate it in a communicable format to the general populace. Sans thinking, consuming a juicy pear would be something confined to the private sphere-with thinking it's then presumably allowed to enter the public domain. There is, in fact, no remaining public domain sans thinking, and there's in essence no thinking sans a public domain. Assuming we consume a juicy pear, thinking Wow, this pear is juicy, but refuse to write it down, to verbally express it to our peers, then the thought Wow, this pear is juicy remains in the purely immaterial realm, it's existence purely speculative, both the thought and the physical experience remain essentially purely speculative. It's only when the thought Wow, this pear is juicy enters the public domain that it becomes, perhaps not real, but at least apparent in a more material manner—it's verified as a real experience and subsequently verified as a real thought. I too consumed a pear, and wow it was also quite juicy! There's no doubt we're in the midst of something essentially mysterious here.

Footnotes

01—614:793 .774 We hadn't [b]een there n[i]nety [s]e[c]onds, [b]e[c]ause it [w]as r[i]ght as [w]e [w]al[k]ed in the [b][a][ck]yard of the h[i]gh [s][c]hool [g]r[a]du[a]tio[n] [p]arty th[a]t her [c]ousin a[pp]roached u[s] and, wi[th]out [th]e [s]l[i]ghte[s]t hesit[a]tio[n], a[s]ked my [g]irl[f]riend r[i]ght to her [f][a][c]e—D[i]d you br[i]ng my [t]u[p]per[w]are [w][i]th you? It [t]oo[k] [p]erha[p]s longer than I [c]are to [c]on[f]e[s]s to [f]ully [r]e[c]ognize [w]hat exa[c]tl[y] it [w]as sh[e] [w]as [r]e[f]e[r]en[c]ing. Oh, the oxt[ai]l, I [r]e[f]l[e]c[t]ed, a [s]e[c]ond or [s]o [l]a[te]r, as I [r]e[c]alled there [b]e[i]ng a [b]eauti[f]ul, [w]ood-[c]overed, [p]l[e]c[t]e of gla[s]s of tu[p]per[w]are [s]it[t]ing [i]n ou[r] [r]e[f]r[i]gerato[r] [f]o[r] ove[r] a [w]ee[k], i[n]cub[a]ti[n]g a[n] oxt[ai]l dish th[a]t h[a]d, u[n]f[or]tunate[l]y, [t]o[t]a[l]l[y] ex[p]ired—it was so [f]ar gone I was h[e]si[t]a[n]t [t]o eve[n] o[p]e[n] the [t]o[p] of the [t]u[p]pe[r]wa[r]e [c]on[t]aine[r], [d]es[p]ite the [f]a[c]t the [t]o[p] of the [c]on[t]ainer was a bea[ut]i[f]ul, wood [f]i[n]i[sh]ed [p]iece. There was [n]o [d]oubt in [m]y [m]i[n]d [th]at [th]is oxtail was, [a]t th[at] [p]oint, [n]ot just [c]om[p]l[e]te[l]y [e]x[p]ired but [e]ssential[l]y a ty[p]e of m[e]at sou[p], a ty[p]e of l[i]q[ui]fied [c]o[r]p[s]e, wh[i]ch of [c]ou[r]s[e] di[s]gu[s]ted m[e] [s]ev[e]rel[y]. [C]l[e]aning it out [s]tr[u]ck m[e] as a g[r]ote[s]q[ue] idea. I [c]an't [s]ay for [c]ertain, but it'[s] more l[i]k[e]ly [th]an not [th]at I [th]r[ew] [i]t [i]n[t]o the [t]r[ash]—[t]u[p]per[w]are, [w]ood [t]o[p], and oxt[ai]l. 'Oh, [s]o [s]orry, I'll [d]ef[i]nitely [b]r[i]ng [i]t [b]ack [s]oon!' she [s]aid, [a]nd I gl[a]n[c]ed [a]t her [a]nd a[t]t[e]m[p]t[ed] [t]o [d]e[c]i[ph]er i[f] she had [a]ny [i]dea the [t]u[p]per[w]are [a]nd the oxt[ai]l [w]ere [b]oth l[o]ng g[o]ne, th[at] [b]oth now [s]a[t] in a gar[b]age hea[p], a [p]ile of tr[a]sh [s]omewhere, at the [b]ottom of a [p]u[b]li[c] [d]um[p], [s]t[i]ll f[i]ll[ed] w[i]th

[d]e[c]ayed, gro[t]e[s][q]ue ox[t]ail, [a]nd th[a]t her [c]ousin
would ne[v]er again [o]wn the [p]r[i]v[i]l[e]ge of [p]l[a]c[ing]
her [l]e[f]t[o]v[er]s in[t]o that [p]ie[c]e of [t]u[pp]er[w]are [w]ith
the beauti[f]ul [w]ood [c]o[v]er. That [t]u[pp]er[w]are [w]as
[f]i[n]i[sh]ed. Having [s]aid that, [e]v[e]n the [f]in[e][s]t
[p]ie[c]e of [t]u[pp]erware—how [p]r[ec]i[ous] i[s] i[t]
[r]eall[y]? [C]ouldn't we [r]e[p]l[a]c[e] it [f]or [f]ive do[ll]ars or
[l]e[ss]? My thin[k]ing at the [t]ime was ye[s], [th]at [th]e
[t]u[pp]er[w]are [w]as en[t]irely [f]un[g]ible, yet as [s]oo[n] as
we [s]tepp[ed] [f]oot int[o] this [h]igh [s]ch[oo]l [g]raduation
[p]arty [h]er [c]ousin in[q]uired a[b]out the [t]u[pp]er[w]are—as
i[f] th[i]s [t]u[pp]er[w]are [p]erha[p]s [b]elonged to [s]ome [s]ort
of rare [s]p[e]c[ie]s of [t]u[pp]er[w]are, [p]erha[p]s a
[s]p[e]c[ie]s of [t]u[pp]erware on the verge of ex[t]i[n]c[t]i[on],
[p]erha[p]s this [w]as [s]ome [k]ind [o]f [o]ne-[o]f-a-[k]ind
[t]u[pp]erware I non[ch]a[n]tly [t]o[s]sed in[t]o a [p]ile of
[t]ra[sh]. [S]o[m]e [p]eo[p]le h[a]ve [m]a[ss]ive a[m]o[un]ts [o]f
re[s]p[e]ct for tu[pp]er[w]are, [b]ut I've n[e]ver [b]een [o]ne of
them, It al[w]ays e[l]u[d]ed [m]e [w]hy a[n]y[o]n[e] [w]ould
i[n]vest [m]ore than [o]ne [d]o[ll]ar i[n] [t]o a [p]ie[c]e of
[t]u[pp]er[w]are, [p]er[s]ona[l]ly. [T]o [m]y [m]i[n]d, if a [p]iece
of tu[pp]erware, no [m]a[tter] the level of cr[a]fts[m]a[nshi[p], is
[p]ri[c]ed ab[o]ve [o]ne dollar, then it'[s] an over[p]ri[c]ed
[p]ie[c]e of tu[pp]erware. It'[s] ju[s]t not an [i]tem I've
[p]er[s]ona[l]ly e[v]er [v]iewed [a]s [a]n i[n]v[e]stment of [a]ny
kind. In [m]y [m]i[n]d, [p]l[ates] and bowls are re[l]ati[v]e[l]y
[w]orth[w]hile i[n]v[e]st[m]ents, [w]hile tu[pp]er[w]are is
e[ss]entia[l]ly a [c]a[p]ita[l]i[s]t [p]l[oy] to i[n]c[re]a[s]e the
[p]rofit margin on [p]l[a]s[tic] [b]a[gs—to] c[on]v[in]c[e]
[p]eo[p]le they shouldn't [o]nly i[n]v[e]st [i]n [p]l[ates]
and b[ow]ls, [b]ut al[s]o i[n]v[e]st [i]n the highe[s]t [q]ua[l]ity
[p]l[a]s[tic] [b]a[gs] ([t]u[pp]erware), [th]at in [th]eory [th]ey'll

use [a]g[ai]n and [a]g[ai]n, [b]ut [i][n] [p]ra[c]ti[c]e they'll [l]ose
[i][n][c]e[ss]ant[l]y and [c]on[s]tant[l]y have to re[p]l[a]c[e].

02—696:817 .852 'She's n[e]v[e]r g[e]tting that [t]upp[er]ware
b[a]ck,' I [s]aid. 'Y[ou] th[r]ew it in the [t][r][a]sh?' she [s]aid.
'You g[a]ve the o[k][ay]?' I [s][ai][d], to which [sh]e [sh]oo[k]
[h]er [h][ea]l[d], [c][l]ear[l]y [m]i[s][r]e[m]e[m]b[e]ring the
[p][l][e]tho[r]a of [t]imes [w][e]'ve thrown out [t]u[pp]er[w]are
in the [p]a[s]t, the [c]oun[t]l[e]s[s] [t]i[m]es I've [s][ee]n a
[p][ie][c]e of [w]ell-[w]orn [t]u[pp]er[w]are [t]a[k]ing u[p]
[s][p]a[c]e i[n] our [r]e[f]r[i]ge[r]ator, a[s]ked her i[f] I [c]ould
th[r]ow [s]aid [t]u[pp]er[w]are out, [r]e[c]eived a [pp][r]oval to
th[r]ow [s]aid [t]u[pp]er[w]are [ou]t, and th[r]own [ou]t [s]aid
[t]u[pp]er[w]are. It's n[ot] a [p]r[o]b[le]m, I [s]aid, we can
[p]r[o]b[a]bly ju[s]t [b]uy her a [r]e[p]l[a]c[e]m[en]t or
[s]o[m]ething. Sh[e] ag[r]ee[d [b]ut [s][ee]med du[b]i[ou]s,
and I [f]elt the [s]ame, I [f]ound [m]y[s]elf a[g]r[ee]ing with
[b]oth [m]y[s]elf and [m]y [g]irl[f]r[i]end, [d]e[s]p[ite] the
[f]a[c]t we had [d]ia[m]e[t]r[i]cally o[pp]o[s]ed views on this
[t]u[pp]erware. My [g]irl[f]r[i]end a[n]d I di[s]a[g]r[ee]d on
our [a]b[i]lity to re[p]l[a]c[e] this tu[pp]er[w]are, and I
a[g]r[ee]d [w]ith [b]oth of u[s]. I [s]at i[n] a [l]awn chair a
[s]e[c]o[n]d or [s]o [l]ater, drin[k]ing a g[l]a[s]s of [S]oju,
[e]x[p]l[i]c[it]ly a[t]t[em]p[t]ing [t]o a[void] a[n]y
u[n]ne[c]e[s]s[a]r[y] i[n]te[r]a[c]t[i]on a[t] thi[s] h[igh] [s]chool
g[r]adua[t]ion until I'd im[b]i[bed] at [l]ea[s]t h[alf] this [b]ottle
of [S]oju, doubt[i]ng my [a]b[i]lity to [c]ome off
a[pp]ro[p]riate[l]y [c]ordi[n]al in a [s]oci[al] [s]etting [s]an[s] a
[m]i[n]i[m]u[m] o[f] half o[f] a [b]ottle o[f] thi[s] [S]oju
[r]u[th]l[e]ssly [p]er[c]o[l]ating thr[ough] my
[b]lood[s]tream. I [s]at there, [c]on[t]em[p]l[ating] h[igh]
[s]c[h]ool g[r]adu[a]tions, [c]on[t]em[p]l[ating] my own h[igh]
[s]c[h]ool g[r]adu[a]tion, [r]e[c]allin[g] nothin[g] of m[y] h[igh]

[s][c]hool [g][r]adu[a]t[i]on, [c]ontem[p]l[a]t[i]ng the
[p]erv[a][s][i]ve [i]di[o][c]y of or[g]anized edu[c][a]t[i]on,
[c]on[s]idering how more or l[e]ss [e]ver[y] u[n][i][q]ue
thin[k]er—from [S]o[c]r[a]t[es] [s][t]oned by the [A]the[n]ians to
Giorda[n][o] [B]ru[n][o] [b]urnt a[l][i]ve [b][y] the [C]atho[l]i[c]
[ch]ur[ch] to [N]ietzs[ch][e] un[r][ea]d a[n]d i[n] a[n] i[n][s]ane
a[s]y[l]um as he [r][o]tted [a]way—y[e]s, [e]ve[r][y] un[i][q]ue
thin[k]e[r] ove[r] the [c]our[s]e of [h]uman [h]i[s]to[r]y was
either inten[s]e[l]l[y] o[s]t[r]a[c]ized or [s]impl[y]
a[ss]a[ss]in[a]ted by the [s]y[s]temati[c] edu[c][a]tors of [h]is or
[h]er d[ay]. In short, I was vo[c][i][f]er[ou]sly dr[i]n[k]i[n]g
th[i][s] gla[ss] of [S]oju when [I] thought to m[y][s]el[f]—[I]sn't
[i]t po[ss]i[ble] [th]at we [th]ink of [th]e [th]eo[l]o[g]i[c]al
[ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]ers as the [c]o[n]s[er]vatives, as the ones
[r]e[s]t[r]ained by thi[s] [s]o-[c]alled [c]o[n]c[e]ption of God, yet
it's a[c]tually the [c]a[s]e [th]at [th]e [th]eo[l]o[g]i[c]al
[ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]ers, over the [c]our[s]e of [h]u[m]an [h]i[s]tory,
are the [m]o[s]t au[d]acious, the [b]ol[d]est [ph]iloso[ph]ers we
[h]ave and [h]a[v]e e[v]er [h]ad? How [e]l[se] can we [e]xp[l]ain
[B]er[k]e[l]ey, I thought—[ea]sil[y] the [m]ost ra[d]i[c]al
s[k][e]p[t]i[c] the [m]o[d]ern W[e]st h[a]s [p]r[odu]c[ed], yet
al[s]o a [C]atholi[c] [p]r[ie]s[t]? [D]iony[s]iu[s], for ex[a]m[p]le,
was a[c]tually [q]uite v[i]gor[ou]s [i]n h[i]s [s]k[e]p[t]i[c]i[s]m
of our [a]b[i]l[it]y to k[n]ow a[n]ything, his
[c]ir[c]uml[oc]utions were a[c]tua[l]l[y] [q]uite r[a]di[c]al.
[W]hereas our typi[c]al [s]e[c]ular athei[s]t [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]er,
[w]hile [a]ssured of our [a]b[i]l[it]y to k[n]ow the[r]e a[r]e
[n]o Gods, is rather neutered [i]n h[i]s [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]i[c]al
[s]p[e]c[u]l[at]ions [i]f the [f]a[ct] th[at] God [d]oesn't ex[i]st
[i]s le[f]t to the si[d]e. [I]sn't [i]t po[ss]i[ble] [th]at [th]e
[s]o-[c]alled theo[l]o[g]i[c]al [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]ers are the
m[o]s[t a]udacious [a]mong [u]s? The [o]nes who are [w]illing
[t]o [t]a[k]e the [p]ro[p]erl[y] r[a]di[c]al [l]ea[p]s

ne[c]e[ss]a[r]y [w]hen [d][ea][l]ing [w][i]th meta[ph][y]s[i][c]s, I thought [w]hile vo[c][i][f]er[ou][s][l][y] dr[i]n[k][i]ng th[i]s bottle of [S]oju, un[w]i[l]ling to [s][p]ea[k] to [a]nyone [a]t this high [s][c]hool gradu[a]t[i]on un[t]il I had [th]orough[l]y [c]on[t]em[p][l][i]a[t]e[d] the [t]rue n[a]ture of [th]e [th]eo[l][o]g[i][c]al [ph][i][l][o]so[ph]er.

03—805:1077 .747 I[n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e, we [c]an't [c]om[p]ose [m]etaph[y]s[i][c]s i[n] a rational [s]en[s]e, [c]an [w][e]? I[sn't] i[t] al[w]ays in a bet[w]e[n]-the-lines [s]en[s]e that [w]e [c]om[p]ose [m]eta[ph][y]s[i][c]s, i[n] [w][i]n[k]s and nods that we write [m]eta[ph][y]s[i]cs, be[c]ause we [c]an't w[r]ite [m]eta[ph]ysi[c]s i[n] a l[i]near [a]nd/or [r][a]t[i]o[n]al [f]a[sh]io[n]? We [t]a[ke] [f]ar [t]oo much at [f]a[ce] value. Our [l]i[te]r[a]l[i]sm i[s] i[n]tentio[n]a[l][y] or un[i]ntentio[n]a[l][y] [n]e[f]a[r]iou[s]. [B]e[c]ause the rea[l]it[y] is [n]ear[l]y [n]othing [c]an [b]e t[a]lk[en] at f[a]c[e] va[l]ue. [D]o you r[e]a[l]ly [b]e[l]i[e]ve the gr[ea]test minds of An[t][i][q]u[i]ty i[n]t[en]d[ed] [t]o [b]e t[a]lk[en] at f[a]ce value? The [B]y[z]a[nt]ines r[e]ad [P]l[a]to the [s][a]me [w][ay] [w]e [r][ea]d Do[s]toyev[s]k[y], [w]hereas [w][e] r[e]ad [P]l[a]to the [s][a]me [w][ay] the B[y]z[a]nt[i]nes r[e]ad the Go[s][p]els. [P]erha[p]s [b]oth are a[b]su[r]d. Now, su[r]e, I'm with[ou]t a [d]ou[b]t, from a [c]ertain vantage [p]oint at lea[s]t, a [d]i[s]ci[p]le of [P]alama[s], I won't a[t]t[e]m[p]t to d[e]n[y] that, but we [c]an't t[a]k[e] eve[r]ything [P]a[la]mas [p]ut to [p]a[p][y]r[u]s at fa[c]e va[l]ue either. Although [P]ala[m]a[s] under[s]tood the short[c]o[m]ings of Ant[i][q]u[i]t[y] better than [e]ven the [m]o[s]t [p]rogre[ss]ive [m]odern [s][c]holar, I'd [b]e the la[s]t one to [s][ay] I t[a]k[e] every[th]ing [th]e [s][ai]nt wrote at [f]a[ce] va[l]ue, be[c]ause I'm [f]ar [f]r[om] a [l]i[te]r[a]l[i]s[t]. The m[o]de[r]n [s][c]h[ol]a[r], in[s]o[f]f[ar] as [h]e [k]eeps [h]is [f]aith i[n] ratio[n]a[l]ism, will m[o]s[t] l[i]k[e]l[y] [n]eve[r]

[c]ome [t]o [t]e[r]ms with the [n][a]tu[r]e of
 An[t][i][q]u[it]y—is that fair to s[a]y? H[e]’ll r[ea]d
 Parmen[i]d[e]s and ta[k]e eve[r]ything [l]ite[r]a[l]l[y], a[n]d i[n]
 ta[k]in[g] eve[r]ythin[g] [l]ite[r]a[l]l[y] he’[ll] i[n]ev[i]tab[l]y
 ta[k]e everything [i]d[i]ot[i]c[a]l[l]y. [I]sn’t [i]t the [c][a]s[e]
 [th]at [th]e [th]eologians are the gr[ea]te[s]t [s][k]e[p]ti[c]s
 am[o]ng [u]s? We view [f][ai]th as [p]oison as we [r]et[ai]n
 [f]anatical levels of [f][ai]th in ou[r] [s]en[s]o[r]y o[r]ga[n]s. We
 [p]e[r]use a [v]a[r]iety of em[p]i[r]i[c]al [s]tudies that
 [v]i[v]i[s]e[c]t the [g]rote[s]q[ue] fi[c]tions of ou[r] [s]en[s]o[r]y
 o[r]g[an]s—did you k[n]ow it’[s] [n]ow [s]pe[c]u[l]ated human
 [b]e[i]ngs didn’t s[ee] the [c]o[l]or [b]l[u]e until the [l]atter [B][C]
 [c]enturie[s] at ear[l]ie[s]t? [A]ll [a]r[ound] u[s] ou[r]
 [s]en[s]o[r]y o[r]g[an]s [e]xcrete [e]viden[c]e of their [u]tter
 [u]n[r]e[l]iab[i]l[i]ty, yet we view [f][ai]th as idiocy while
 [r]et[ai]n[i]ng th[i]s [f]a[n]at[i]c[a]l [n]otio[n] that ou[r]
 [s]en[s]o[r]y o[r]ga[n]s can and should and m[u]s[t] be
 tr[u]s[t]ed—[w]h[i]ch [i]s [w]hy [w]e’re [n]ot [q]uite [r]adi[c]al
 e[n]ough. The [m]o[d]ern [a]ge [r]et[ai]ns [r]a[d]i[c]al [f][ai]th
 [i]n [i]ts [s]en[s]ory o[r]g[an]s in a [m]o[r]e [f]an[a]ti[c]a[l]
 [f]a[sh]ion tha[n] a[n]y hi[s]to[r]i[c]al r[e]l[i]g[i]on k[n]own to
 man. [N]othing [c]an [b]e t[a]k[en] a[t] [f][a]ce v[a]lue, th[at]
 [m]uch we should ag[r][ee] on, wh[i]ch [b][r]i[n]gs [m][e] to this,
 a t[r]ue [f]ly i[n] the oint[m]e[n]t, [s]o to [s]p[ea]k—how [i]s [i]t
 you [a]rrive at [a] po[s]tulation of a[n] e[ss]e[n]c[e] you ca[n]n[ot]
 k[n]ow? Th[i]s [i]s the question, [i]s [i]t [n]ot? How [d]oes the
 [m]athe[m]a[t]i[c]ian reach the po[s]tula[t]ion num[b]ers are
 [a]c[tual] a[n]d [d]i[s]t[i]n[c]t? [H]ow is it [p]o[s]s[i]b[le], g[i]ven
 [h]uman ca[p]a[b]i[l]ities, to [d]i[s]t[i]nguish the [n]um[b]er
 two fro[m] the [n]u[m]ber one [p]oint [n]ine r[e]p[re]senti[n]g
 (1.999999...) i[n] [p]r[act]ic[e]? How [i]s [i]t [p]o[s]s[i]b[le] to
 d[i]s[t]i[n]guish [t]wo from one [p]oint nine re[p]eati[n]g? How
 does [m]ath[e]m[at]ic[s] a[t]t[em]pt [t]o [l]a[y] any [c][l]ai[m] to

[m]a[k]e [s]en[s]e [o]f it [a]ll, that we're on the [p]re[c]i[p]i[c]e of
 [m]a[k]ing [s]en[s]e of [o]ur[s]elves and [o]ur [s]u[r]oundings,
 yet there's [s]t[i]ll [l]i[t]tle doubt w[e] [r]e[m]ain [i]n the
 [m]i[d]st of [s]omething e[ss]ent[i]a[l]ly [m]y[s]te[r]iou[s]
 [w]hen [w]e beg[i]n to th[i]nk [c]l[ear]ly. Th[i]n[k]i[n]g [i]s
 [p]erha[p]s the [m]o[s]t [m]y[s]te[r]ious a[c]t [o]f [a]ll.
 Th[i]nk[i]ng, [w]h[i]ch [w]e gene[r]al[ly] be[l]ie[ve]
 trans[lates] [m]ate[r]ial and i[m]mate[r]ial exp[er]ien[c]e i[n]to
 [l]anguage—i[n]to [m]odes that are [c]o[m]uni[c]able.
 [Th]i[n]k[i]ng, wh[i]ch a[tt]em[p]ts [t]o [t]a[k]e [s]ome[th]ing
 [s]uch as [c]on[s]u[m]ing a j[ui]c[y] [p]ear, an ex[p]erien[c]e that
 ult[i]m[at]ely [i]s [c]on[f]ined to [p]er[s]onal e[x]p[er]ien[c]e,
 and [e]xt[r]a[p]olate [i]t i[n] a [c]o[m]mun[i]c[a]ble [f]ormat to
 the gene[r]al [p]o[p]ula[c]e. [S]ans thin[k]i[n]g,
 [c]o[n]s[u]min[g] a j[ui]c[y] [p]ear would be [s]omething
 [c]o[n]fined to the [p]rivate [s]p[h]ere—w[i]th th[i]n[k]i[n]g
 [i]t's then [p]resuma[b]ly a[ll]owed to enter the [p]u[b]li[c]
 [d]o[m]ain. [Th]ere [i]s, i[n] fa[c]t, no re[m]ai[n]ing [p]u[b]li[c]
 [d]o[m]ai[n] sans [th]i[n]k[i]ng—and [th]ere's i[n] e[ss]e[n]c[e]
 n[o] thin[k]ing [s]ans a [p]u[b]li[c] [d]o[m]ain. A[ss]u[m]ing
 [w]e [c]on[s]u[m]e a j[ui]c[y] [p]ear, thin[k]ing [W]ow, this
 [p]ear is j[ui]c[y], [b]ut [r]ef[u]se [t]o w[r]ite it down, to
 ver[b]ally ex[p]r[e]s[s] it to our [p]ee[r]s, [th]en [th]e [th]ought
 Wow, th[i]s [p]ea[r] [i]s jui[c]y [r]e[m]ains in the [p]urely
 i[m]material [r]eal[m], [i]t's ex[i]s[t]en[c]e [p]ure[ly]
 [s]p[e]c[u]lative, both [th]e [th]ought and the physi[c]al
 e[x]p[er]ien[c]e [r]e[m]ain e[ss]entia[l]ly [p]ure[ly]
 [s]p[e]c[u]lative. It's on[ly] [w]hen [th]e [th]ought [W]ow,
 th[i]s [p]ear [i]s jui[c]y enters the [p]u[b]li[c] do[m]ain that it
 [b]e[c]omes, [p]erha[p]s not real, [b]ut [a]t lea[s]t [a]ppare[n]t
 i[n] a [m]ore [m]ate[r]ial [m]anner—it's [v]e[r]i[f]ied as a [r]eal
 ex[p]erien[c]e and [s]ub[s]e[qu]e[n]tly [v]e[r]i[f]ied as a [r]eal
 thought. I t[oo] [c]on[s]u[m]ed a [p]ear, and [w]ow it [w]as

al[s][o] [q]uite jui[c]y! There's n[o] doubt we're [i]n the
[m][i]d[s]t of [s]ometh[i]ng e[ss]ent[i]ally [m][y][s]teriou[s] here.