

# Notes on Rota's *The End of Objectivity*

Cameron Smith

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## 1 Introduction

These are notes on [1].

## 2 The Two Philosophies

### 2.1 The existential attitude: a critique of physicalist reduction

The first and still main thrust of existential thought is a critique of the attitude now known as reductionism, of all its versions but primarily of one version, the one that considers physical reality, the reality of matter, to be the primary source of reality, and that reduces, so the word goes, all other forms of experience to the experience of physical reality. A technical term for physical reality is the Cartesian world, the world of matter that was brought forth by Rene Descartes and which led to the extraordinarily successful development of science in the centuries that followed, all the way to our

day. Today we shall discuss physical reductionism, the attempt to explain intellectual, artistic, moral, philosophical, emotional and even scientific phenomena by reduction to physical facts. Let us not give a precise meaning to the word reduction, for that would probably be impossible. The word is of common usage, and we all have a vague idea of what it means. Here, as elsewhere, we must be content with a vague though meaningful idea.

## **2.2 The consequences of the existential view: a new objectivity**

# **3 The Reform of Logic**

## **3.1 The existential critique of knowledge as primary**

## **3.2 The Cartesian world view has cracked**

## **3.3 The reform of logic: Heidegger**

# **4 Heidegger and the Shaking of the Foundations**

## **4.1 Review**

### **4.1.1 Acts of withholding**

1. Suspend all forms of physical reduction including the tendency to wish things off your mind by saying they are purely psychological
2. Suspend the belief that nothing can be understood except by a process of logical Cartesian reasoning

## **4.2 Existentialism's thesis**

- The root of the crisis in culture is the [dysfunction?] of the logic of syllogism and quantifiers we have inherited from Aristotle, Leibniz, Kant, and Godel
- The root of the crisis in both the exact sciences and the soft sciences lies in an insufficiency of logic that has become inoperative with respect to the tasks at hand

## **4.3 Heidegger's reform of logic**

## **4.4 Operational logic made primary**

## **4.5 The structure of operational logic**

## **4.6 The consequences of operational logic**

## **4.7 Truth and angst illustrate the relations of classical logic to operational logic**

## References

- [1] Gian-Carlo Rota. The end of objectivity. *The Technology and Culture Seminar at MIT*, 1973.

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