

Know

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Measurement is an abstraction. To delimit and interpret the world through a rational system of measurement is to distance yourself from it. These problems are known, but their concerns and proofs have become exceedingly granular over time. You magnify and observe and record this experience. It is quantified. Its interpretation is contingent upon its communication. Its communication is contingent upon its measurement. This has nothing to do with infinity.

Language too approximates an understanding of an interpretation of an experience. It shapes itself and determines its own limits. Alone it purports the ability to describe or classify almost anything, to assign meaning or significance, and when paired with numerical data it adopts a greater air of objectivity.¹ We know as much. Similar to numbers, language can be organized or compartmentalized or protracted to such a degree as to become unrecognizable.

To describe is to define is to distance. I know this because.

Time can be tracked however you like. It is easily reducible to numbers and equally so to other nonrepresentational forms, both of which may exist simultaneously as time's visual and logical manifestation. Language has trouble with the logic of time and the experience of its passing. History as experienced by you or them or any other person may collapse before it is properly accounted for.²

Constructing a new system inevitably undermines the neutral empiricism claimed by another. These systems exist in parallel and need not be synthesized.*

¹ In the 1960 US census, Hammond, Illinois had a population of 471. Hammond, Indiana was home to 111,698. And Hammond, Kansas was a ghost town.^{1 2}

¹ The structures which supported its modest population and defined this town as such largely burned down on May 19, 1919. Its vestigial post office closed on July 26, 1968, officially designating the town as extinct.¹ Hammond still exists by nature but not by law.² Its residents are no longer reducible to data because according to data they no longer exist.³

¹ That same day in 1968, the UK Parliament accepted a report by the Standing Joint Committee on Metrication. Building upon existing efforts and preliminary adoptions by many corporations and other nongovernmental entities, the government set an official goal for total national conversion from imperial units to the metric system by 1975. This goal was not met.

² This is only partially due to the area's unincorporated status, which by design complicates its definition geographically, legally, and numerically.

³ Erasure of populations is not a new phenomenon in the territory now known as Kansas. However, it was usually accomplished by violent means, not clerical.

² The same goes for Hammond, West Virginia, once home to the revered Hammond Fire Brick Company. Hammond fire clay bricks were awarded for their quality and durability at Chicago's second World's Fair in 1933: the Century of Progress International Exposition. They are said to have been used in the construction of the Empire State Building, the Flatiron Building, and the first Ford automobile factory in Detroit. In 1950, 31 years after the destruction of the homonymous town in Kansas, the Hammond brick factory also burned down, eliminating the sole purpose for this company town's existence, and effectively eradicating it. This was believed to be an act of arson motivated by insurance fraud. The suspect later committed suicide to evade arrest.

² History and myth here are naturally entangled. Each is facilitated by collateral systems of language, data, quantification, knowledge production and time. History begets myth. Of course, the inverse is just as true. This we know. There is not a rigid or systematic way in which this relationship is built. At its core(s) it is nebulous. And so it slips, through and around and out of time. Like particles, to observe myth and measure history is to fix them temporarily, at once removing them from and wedging them deeper into the fabric of time. This is not a space for answers.

* To transcend something it must first be apprehended. Maybe. Approached, certainly. To comprehend something is a separate task, a difficult one, in which all that we know, in here and out there, up there and down here too, becomes it. I know this because—