

Joseph Margolis

“Replies”

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Replies

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The papers based on the Helsinki meetings (May 22–23, 2013) were sent to me in one bundle. In responding, I've adopted the simple scruple of keeping as close as possible to what seems to have been the completely random order of the papers thus collected. I think I'm right in supposing that I had either heard or read versions of nearly every paper in an earlier incarnation—at the meetings themselves or perhaps separately, though my own chaotic habits have (temporarily) deprived me of my notes on the originals! No matter. I'll just take the liberty, here, of thanking the conveners—dear friends of the Finnish philosophical world: Sami Pihlström, Arto Haapala, Henrik Rydenfelt, and Mats Bergman—for the original invitation to present my views on the nature of human culture and to respond *in vivo* to each presentation; also, therefore, to those who have now put their contributions in final form for the publication before you now—again, with the welcome benefit of revisiting my own responses in the same way; and with thanks to the co-editors, Robert Sinclair and Dirk-Martin Grube for the considerable labor that assembling the collection surely required. A splendid occasion, to my mind, that the Finns know best how to arrange!

To David Hildebrand

David Hildebrand is one of those careful voices that asks me very quietly (as a middle man)—though not without having scanned a large dollop of what I've written over the years—whether I may not have seriously misrepresented my philosophical vision as truly “pragmatist”, at least

on specifically, even pointedly, Deweyan grounds. His is a deliberately oblique and complex question. I take him to be asking me to answer Douglas Browning's original question along the same lines, first posed in Browning's review (2008) of my *Historied Thought, Constructed World* (1995). Read that way, I take him to be signaling that he himself would like to have my answer to Browning's charge before concluding that, very possibly, Browning was correct in thinking that, in effect, I may indeed have betrayed Dewey's most penetrating lesson about pragmatism's innovation—which (that is, Dewey's lesson), cast, cryptically, amounts to prioritizing "experience" over "theory" (or perhaps, more currently, given Richard Rorty's (1998) bewildering attack on Dewey's difficult insistence on the primacy of "experience", rightly counts, for Hildebrand, as an exposé of the misguided strategy of Rorty's (1992) abortive "linguistic turn", which, then, if you allow the contortion, might also mean that I, however inadvertently, had followed Rorty's lead). Quite a muddle.

However, Browning's implied question (*a fortiori*, Hildebrand's) unravels before our eyes, without the least prompting from my side. I take Browning's charge to harbor a deep misunderstanding of what to make of philosophy's relationship to what Dewey calls "experience"—in the setting of *Logic* (1938) and *Experience and Nature* (1925, 1929). I'll come to that part of the issue when, in closing this reply to Hildebrand, I touch directly on Browning's essential challenge. Nevertheless, to avoid any false sense of mystery at the start, since Hildebrand does follow Browning's stalking just *one* of a number of different efforts (I've made) at *presenting* the pragmatist theme—I do try to approach pragmatism's innovation from a variety of directions—I'll just drop Browning's (and Hildebrand's) essential wording in your lap, with no more than the smallest hint at explaining my would-be fatal mistake. I expect that you'll find the following excerpt from Browning's review as baffling as I do—at least until we find a moment to interpret what Browning may have meant by his formulation:

The fact is [Browning affirms] that Dewey is a much more radical philosopher than Margolis. This is so for one fundamental reason. Dewey could not take as his starting point anything quite so commissive or theoretically privileged as Margolis' symbiotic, holist, and historicist perspective. Dewey would, I think, tend to accept each of these assumptions as decent hypotheses, as well grounded theories, but his reason for doing so would be, as he insists, that they are drawn from and warranted (to the extent they are) by our reversion to our only possible starting point, namely, crude and everyday experience.

Such experience does indeed warrant our acceptance of something very much like symbiosis, for it is in and not prior to experience that the distinction of experiencing and experienced, subject and object, language and world, and so on has been elicited and turned to some responsible (or irresponsible) use. There is, therefore, no polarity at the beginning which could be taken to be symbiotized. The point is critically important. To start with symbiosis, even holistically understood, is to start with a *theory*, and to *start* with a theory is to start by assuming a certain cognitive privilege. But Dewey is as insistent as Margolis that no such privilege is warranted. Dewey's starting point is pre-theoretical; Margolis' is not. 2008, 183

This is the nerve, as far as I can make out, of both Browning's and Hildebrand's challenge. (If I may say so, it's philosophy at its most arch.) I think all I need, in answering, is to ask you to keep Browning's wording in mind as we proceed. To match the directness of Browning's indirection, let me simply say that the "start" of any essay is not (and could never be) the "starting point" of either Dewey's or my line of thought *and* no one can ever "start" with what Browning counts as the different "starting points" he (and, dependently, Hildebrand) parcels out to Dewey and to me—and possibly to himself. Does Browning mean to say that Dewey "starts" with the theory that one must start with the "pre-theoretical" given of "crude and everyday experience"? Or that there's a discernible pre-theoretical "given" that the enlanguaged person must begin with? Or what? I suppose I "begin"—if that's what Browning means by "starting"—with the existential and conceptual relationship between the human primate and the human person.

To be as candid as I can be, I confess I've discovered—it's taken me the better part of a lifetime—that I "tend to start", have "come to start", will probably continue to "start" with two seeming matters of fact that I regard as momentous for the prospects of pragmatism's second life, possibly for the prospects of Western philosophy in general, that are almost completely overlooked in the entire career of Western philosophy. I can't say whether they count as a "theoretical" or "pre-theoretical" beginning. If Browning can tell me which is which, I'll answer his charge directly. But I doubt anyone can sort the difference in a way that would legitimate Browning's complaint. I take it to be nonsense in masquerade. The "facts" I have in mind are these: that the most extraordinary cognitive feat in the entire human world, endlessly repeated, is the human infant's (the human primate's) easy mastery of language through native gifts that (*pace* Chomsky)

are initially completely languageless; and, second, that the human person is a cultural artifact, a hybrid transform of the primate members of *Homo sapiens*, under the condition (*pace* Aristotle, Kant, and Dewey) of mastering language. In my eyes, *anything* akin invites or counts as a promising "start", philosophically (and pre-philosophically). Now; Is that enough? Will it satisfy Browning? Let the conundrum stew here from the "start". Browning's view is incoherent in any case, defeated by its own brief.

About the essential commitment of the classic pragmatists—Peirce, James, and Dewey—Hildebrand says:

the concern of their pragmatisms, as I hear it, is one which decries any philosophical approach beginning from a theoretical starting point [...] It [poses] a question at the deepest level of how and where a philosopher ought to *stand* as they assert what they take to be *their* philosophical position. And so the question I raise about Margolis as a philosopher is about where he *stands*. My answer, readers will see, is that the evidence is inconclusive. I do not know where Margolis stands on what is perhaps the deepest methodological issue for a pragmatist.

Hildebrand's answer—thus far at least, in my behalf—is that I claim to provide "a new conception of the self" (the artifactual self, a "natural artifact"), instantiating what I have in mind in adopting one of Peirce's passing mottos: "Darwinizing Hegel and Hegelianizing Darwin". And that is true enough. Though, in "starting" there, I am already (necessarily) beyond my "starting point" (in Browning's idiom). Nevertheless, in succeeding thus, Hildebrand concludes, or all but concludes, I fail—or risk failing—to answer "where I stand" (at the *start* of answering his question). If pressed here, I would say I "start" with the paleoanthropological evidence that's accumulated about the evolution of persons. I start with what I find philosophically instructive about the evidence of *Homo sapiens*'s pre-history. Does that meet Browning's objection? I don't actually know, but I suppose not.

Have I started with a "theory" or with "experience"? The question makes no sense. I don't think we can merely report our experience of the paleoanthropological history (and thus *not* start with a "theory"): I've "started" with a "theoretically" informed description of the prehistoric record; I see no privileged philosophical "theory" there (in Browning's sense). Of course, as I've already said, I start with a perfectly familiar experience of engaging very young children in a way that yields the reasonable inference that they lack language and are unable to perform in

the advanced way apt speakers of English do. Have I violated Dewey's constraint (in Browning's sense)? Well, it looks very much as if Dewey cannot himself "start" with *his* "indeterminate situation" either; surely it's a conjectured "beginning" of some sort, conformable with his Darwinian speculations about the continuum of the animal and the human. I'd say it was a "mythic" posit at best, a heuristic "start" regarding something that cannot be assuredly recovered as occurring "at the start" of any reportable events pertinent to Dewey's speculations. Has Dewey violated Browning's requirement to "start" with the "pre-theoretical"? (Is Peirce's "doubt" pre-theoretical?) If Dewey hasn't violated Browning's constraint, then I think I'm home free; and if he has, then no one can possibly succeed. Browning's (and, by implication, Hildebrand's) worry is (I honestly believe) incoherent. There is no discourse that is not "theory-laden" in some way—and saying only *that* is not a privileged pronouncement, whether we find that we can modify it or not; there is no way to posit (with Browning) that we have "started" with the "pre-theoretical" that is not itself a theoretical pronouncement of some sort. If that's to "begin" with a privileged "philosophical theory", then Browning (and probably Hildebrand) have misrepresented how we should answer the question, Where do we "stand"? or Where and how do we "start"? when considering philosophical questions (or scientific or practical ones, for that matter). I say I "start" with the paleoanthropological facts and ordinary encounters with prelinguistic infants (and a sense of ordinary human confusion about existential matters). Am I already condemned to a "privileged" theory? Or is it that easy to escape? Nonsense either way, I say.

Hildebrand seems divided on the textual evidence. He stands by me as subscribing to a view very close to Dewey's insistence on

our *embeddedness* in situations of inquiry, especially our inquiries into truth and reality, which together make *this* [inquiry a form of] realism [...] *Not* as a posit borne of architectonic requirements: rather, *it is how we find ourselves in the world* [...] [a matter of] *experience as method*.

I'm not at all sure I understand what's being claimed here. Is this a privileged pronouncement? If not, then I can't see the basis on which what Browning marks as my "symbiosis" and "holism" condemns me to "starting" from the "theory" of symbiosis and holism in Browning's sense of an illicit start (for a pragmatist). The objection seems self-defeating. Except for the nettling fact that my actual "answer" seems to "start" with a new *theory* about the self. Can I escape the trap David wonders I may have set myself? *Can anyone?* I don't see that there is a trap here that anyone can or

need escape. I don't think there is a formulable disjunction (at any "start") between "experience" and "theory", or, thinking of Rorty, between "experience" and "language". It's in this sense that Dewey's "pre-theoretic" is a "mythic" posit, a heuristic maneuver by which to call into question the entire thrust of canonical philosophy, as Dewey reads it. Does Peirce fail Browning's test? Does *Browning* fail?

Perhaps the question is not an easy one to resolve; but it's also not a difficult question either. I won't dwell on the point I must mention just now, but I don't believe it's a pertinent question to have put before the author of *Historied Thought*. After all, *there*, I deliberately adopt (for presentational purposes) an otherwise theatrical, all but impossible quasi-geometrical style of argument, a forced imitation of Spinoza's method, under the auspices of the counter-Spinozistic postulate that the world is a flux! (Browning simply doesn't wish to play the game—and he's recruited Hildebrand to boot.) *There*, I "start" with the postulate of the flux. But then, *that way* of "starting" has nothing to do with the supposed question of "where and how" I "start", in the sense Browning and Hildebrand ask me to explain. *They* mean: show us why we should believe (if you think it's true) that you do not "start" with a finally polished and totalized theory—possibly a good one—that you simply impose on "primal" experience; or confess *you've* chosen to continue in the failed "intellectualist" way Dewey has taught us to spot within the whole of Western philosophy—and avoid by way of his "method of denotation". I don't see the point of the *application* of Browning's charge. I do see the point of Dewey's concern. May I say that I believe I "started" somewhat more than ninety years ago? Is that a responsive answer?

The theory of the flux is not a bad idea, you might concede: it may even be defensible from the vantage of a Deweyan "start". But *you* (that is, I) propose it as a reasonably well-formed premise meant to confront that other classic doctrine of a closed and changeless order, one abductive premise replacing another. Just suppose one of Dewey's critics claims that Dewey "starts" his *Logic* with the would-be inchoate, "pre-theoretical", existential conditions of "an indeterminate situation" somehow addressed to "primal experience". How would one save Dewey from Browning's charge? I see no defense apart from Dewey's say-so. But I have no intention of going down that garden path. Dewey, I'd say, has fastened on a "worry" that, discursively, is all but impossible to formulate or answer. He flags what he means in his inimitable way, which, ineluctably, becomes formulaic, because it's impossible to get closer by linguistic means. But

then, in providing the rest of us, thereby, with a schematic way of answering, Dewey makes it an all-too-easy answer—so as to move on, with confidence, with some fragment of a would-be true theory, very nearly any fragment we find might help to dissolve some part of the fashionable (admittedly often pointless) “intellectual” puzzles of the day. All that’s needed, we may suppose, is that we must be clever enough to persuade others (when called on) to agree that what we are advancing is passingly instrumental, existentially generated, contingent, endlessly replaceable, tolerant of diverse alternatives, never deemed to have captured once and for all what is finally true about the world, but helpful nevertheless, and certainly begun or “started” in “primal experience” (or, in the initial stages of “an indeterminate situation”)? Or, something akin.

I have no wish to avoid Browning’s and Hildebrand’s issue here. Hildebrand cites a fair number of expressions that Dewey provides, in *Experience and Nature* (1997 [1925], 28–29, 32, 374, 387), to capture his instruction. Thus, he says, quite straightforwardly: “I must elaborate on this last issue—that of the starting point—because I take it to be pragmatism’s crucial innovation, especially as pronounced and explicated by John Dewey”. The idea is to urge me (in turn) to reveal where *my* “starting point” is. (I’m happy to comply, if it’s at all possible.) Certainly, both Browning and Hildebrand acknowledge that I have no wish to advance a “privileged” theory. Dewey “starts” with “primary experience” (29) as opposed to the canonical philosopher’s “intellectualistic” objections to the intellectualistic theories of his opponents. It’s here that Hildebrand adopts Browning’s question:

Are Margolis’s claims (regarding the “indissoluble symbiosis” of language and world, the self as “artifactual”, etc.) to be taken as “posits”?
And if so, is their status not, in fact, one of a theoretical conclusion assumed in *advance* of inquiry?

Browning, Hildebrand confirms, is even straiter in his challenge of my pragmatist credentials. (I’ll risk them if I must.) I mean, Browning says (of me) “that, whatever theories we might come up with about the actual world or the knowing or experiencing or languaged subject, we cannot derive a privileged standpoint from them”. Nevertheless, in “starting” that way, I have, evidently, already betrayed myself! Let me try to come closer to Browning’s question.

First of all, do Browning and/or Hildebrand mean to speak of a *philosopher’s* “starting point” as “pre-theoretical” rather than “theoretical”, or is it closer to the truth to say that the philosopher (Dewey, say) theorizes

that the existential "inquiries" of human persons (including philosophers) characteristically begin in some "pre-theoretical", "entangling situations" that include some of the deepest animal or existential elements of human life? If this is close to what Dewey says about the transformation of an "indeterminate" situation into a "problematic" one—which, when successful, issues finally in a "determinate situation"—then I venture to say: (1) "inquiry" normally (trivially) includes a continuum of the pre-theoretical and the theoretical; (2) there is no determinate "starting point" of inquiry: we always "begin" *"nel mezzo del cammin"*; (3) the "pre-theoretical" is itself a theoretical posit; (4) it's more or less arbitrary to treat the disjunction of the theoretical and the pre-theoretical as disjunctive or to treat any conjectural pre-theoretical ingredient as determinably prior to the theoretical; hence, (5) it's simply question begging to charge anyone who makes any plausible effort to plumb what Dewey has in mind (in speaking of "primary experience") as having made a pragmatistically illicit "start" in his or her reflections; and (6) the appeal to "primary experience", in Dewey's pertinent texts, is itself completely informal, impossible to fix criterially, more or less an abstraction expressed, not discursively but in what I might myself call a "mythic idiom", meant to salvage what strikes the human subject as being of overriding importance or as existentially unavoidable or as qualifying human sensibility in the deepest possible way—or analogously.

I call this feature of Dewey's instruction "mythic", in order to flag the fact that, here, Dewey is attempting to identify some "primal" elements of what (perhaps) Browning might be willing to call "pre-theoretical"—where there's no discursive path to be found or to follow. (Dewey's language, here, is not "discursive", because, read literally, it is often read as making no determinate sense: it's precisely what baffled readers like Bertrand Russell and Ernest Nagel.) I would say that what Dewey is almost always referring to is the profoundly "animal" or "creaturely" features of human life that are engaged "organically" (we may as well say) before the least stirrings of our reflexive powers of understanding are adequately prompted. Now, if I understand this rightly, then yes—o.k.—if you are a Deweyan, you will start *there*. But tell me what that entails? Does Peirce start there? Or James? Or Nietzsche, or Emerson, or Heidegger, or Kierkegaard, or Marx or anyone else you might care to name? Browning, for instance.

I can't see that Browning's line of reasoning serves his own (deliberate) privilege at all, or that Hildebrand has successfully extricated himself from Browning's difficulties. (I am prepared to read Hildebrand, I should add, as holding scrupulously to his mediating role, in requiring me to answer, without compromising the scruple of having agreed to play that role: he offers me no out.) Dewey's worry has to do with his sense of academic philosophy's having distanced itself from a pervasive sense of the conditions and organic experience of human life. (Perhaps he has in mind, minimally, the fatuousness of academic ethics and politics.) But how would Browning suppose we could catch any normally skillful philosopher's having privileged "theory" over "primary experience" if he denied it and effectively avoided bare apriorism or apodicticity or the like? Browning does not address the discursive lacuna of Dewey's own "argument". He's come up against the paradox of our asking whether anyone addresses the "world" or "experience" as opposed to addressing a "theory" of same—or the "world" or "experience" from the vantage of some compelling intuition or abduction or theory.

My deeper countermove has it that Browning's straightforward confidence—which Hildebrand reports this way: "Dewey successfully avoids the philosophical bad faith of starting with the theoretical but Margolis does not"—is meant to be broadly confirmatory. But *what* serves as evidence? The tally I offer (items 1–6) provides one answer to the charge: "there's nothing to answer". Let me give a better answer: Dewey's appeal to "primal experience" is not unlike an Old Testament prophecy: "primal experience" is neither pre-theoretical nor theoretical. It's an oblique warning about a perceived decline in human sensibility that's compelling where it is felt to be compelling. Hence, it is not at all like Max Weber's sociological generalization about the "disenchantment" of the modern world. In my opinion, it's also not like Peirce's dawning concern, in the last decades of his life, where his infinitist version of fallibilism would finally have to yield to the simplicity of his evolving notion of "abductive Hope" (Peirce's "abductive turn").

If I must choose, I think I reason more with Peirce than with Dewey; but I accept Dewey's warning *and* I'm persuaded that Dewey himself (particularly in the *Logic*) saw his own "Old Testament" warning as congruent, philosophically, with Peirce's earliest picture of human inquiry. Now, where does that leave Browning? Dewey was onto some sort of "negative" philosophy not unlike "negative theology". Peirce was, finally, more nearly centered on the *dependence* of the conditions of cognitive success

on "instinctually rational guesses" (if that is not shot down at once as an oxymoron) that, viewed "theoretically", are likely to be characterized (misleadingly) as "nongenerative", where the fact of the matter is that these guesses (Peirce's strongest abductive conjectures) regularly yield (and are known to yield) productive hypotheses that may be confirmed or disconfirmed by other standard means—where abduction itself is not a determinable argumentative canon like deduction or (more informally) induction. (Nevertheless, as many recent discussants have been quick to remark, abduction probably includes the glimmer of contributory argumentative ingredients that have been largely ignored or left inexplicit or unformed.)

For what it's worth, my intuition here is that the classic pragmatists were occupied, one way or another, with dismantling the last vestiges of "first philosophy"—not philosophy itself—particularly the phoenix of them all, Kant's Copernican revolution, prioritizing epistemology. Here, Peirce is, finally, the most successful and philosophically productive of the three founding figures—if indeed the abductive turn is as important as I'm prepared to believe it is (especially against apriorism). The best fruit of Dewey's mythic message is his account of practical and public life; and James, severely burned though he was by the reception of his account of truth, remains admirably consistent (if that's the right term) in his unyielding refusal to have anything to do with systematic philosophy. Could that possibly be what Browning and Hildebrand have in mind? I doubt it.

Ah, yes. I almost forgot to mention what I think is the serious matter behind Browning's pique. It's the carelessness with which Richard Rorty argued that Dewey should have dropped the idea of "experience" (as in the *Logic* and *Experience and Nature*) in favor of "language", in his influential paper, "Dewey between Hegel and Darwin" (1998), which he first presented in 1991, just about the same time he wrote the confessional piece, "Twenty-five Years After" (1992), which he adds in the second edition of *The Linguistic Turn* (1992), in which he chides himself (even more than Dewey) for having supposed that there was anything philosophically salvageable in the idea of "the linguistic turn" itself! So: Is Rorty really the only "pragmatist" who starts again and again at where Browning would have us start? If you understand the joke, then you realize that Rorty managed to say that the fundamental choice in providing a theory of knowledge, a first philosophy, or what you wish, requires a choice between "experience" and "language". At roughly the same time, therefore, he says there's no point to either choice! Vintage Rorty. Now, to take Rorty's

complaint seriously (as well)—to attempt to return to philosophy—might require respecting Rorty’s scruple as well as Dewey’s. I recommend the idea to Browning. Hildebrand’s patience and caution on the matter seems more tolerant to my ear: in fact, I’ve actually heard Hildebrand speak fairly recently about the insuperable intertwining of experience and theory! Allow me a final line. If Dewey succeeds—and we understand what he’s done—then doesn’t knowing that relieve the rest of us of having to approach the matter in the way Browning recommends?

To Dale Jacquette

Dale Jacquette has always provided questions that test my resolve in the most strenuous way: his instinct is, first, to expose a mortal weakness in the hidden assumptions of an argument that tends to obscure its presence by advancing plausible, but finally specious premises of its own; and then, second, to come to the rescue, generously, by replacing a faulty premise (thus uncovered) with a better one, perhaps too quickly scanted by the upstart maneuver’s own haste or enthusiasm—or poor judgment.

On this particular occasion, Jacquette brings his skills to bear on both the “narrative” and the “prophecy” of my *Pragmatism Ascendent* (2012), the fourth, the most recent volume in a continuing series of books I began shortly after the turn of the century, in an effort to render a running account of the past, present, *and* future of pragmatism in our time. I trust I may say that it never occurred to me to suppose that there could be any uniquely valid way of proceeding in such a venture. Anyone familiar with my philosophical habits knows that in fashioning a history or a “genealogy” (as I explicitly confess I favor) I usually acknowledge a goodly measure of interpretive *ouverture* (as a relativist at least), so that it might well be the case that someone of a different philosophical persuasion (well, Jacquette himself) might link the pragmatists to Kant’s best lesson rather than to Hegel’s and yield thereby an instruction that I’d completely overlooked or declined. I don’t think that’s actually happened here, but I’d have been open to admitting it if Dale had persuaded me to view the matter his way.

Nevertheless, one preliminary instruction seems justified: it was not, and has never been, any part of my purpose to produce a hybrid offspring—“the Kantian pragmatist” or “the Hegelian pragmatist”: there would be too much excess baggage to carry: no one would want to bear the responsibility of reconciling either Kant or Hegel with pragmatism in

that way. I don't think it can be done, though I know several philosophical comrades who would strongly disagree. I'm happy enough to plunder the treasure of either master in search of what I think may be his best insight which, if salvageable at all, would probably need to be read along lines improved beyond the Kantian and Hegelian texts. I believe that would be closer to the way philosophy normally proceeds; so that if one "returned" to the "true" argumentative nerve of Kant's or Hegel's actual texts, the resultant hybrid *thesis* (whatever it was) would itself belong to the same sort of argumentative space as the upstart doctrine had itself introduced. I don't believe that this sort of genealogized theft (or revision) can be (or ought to be) viewed as a textual matter. It's meant to be a philosophical gain at the expense (if necessary) of textual fidelity. In reading Kant, there seems to be no way to provide a consistent and viable reading of the first *Critique* that is both textually accurate and philosophically sound! (If there is such a reading, I confess I'm not familiar with it. I'm more of a philosophical "genealogist" than a "textualist"; so that my question to Dale is whether he thinks Kant would serve *my* purpose better than Hegel, or whether he thinks I'm mistaken in defending the thesis I favor.)

In any event, when I turn (in Chapter 1) to "the point of Hegel's dissatisfaction with Kant", whose texts (to give Jacqueline his due), I do not examine in any way in which Kant might have said, "Georg [or is it Friedrich] you've misread me!" That seems to be Jacqueline's first step—or misstep. Frankly, I was looking for a congenial way of challenging Kant's transcendentalism (which the classic pragmatists oppose) from a vantage that, at the same time (genealogically, so to say) might benefit any suitably articulated *pragmatism* that might draw strength from one of Kant's own textual *aporiai*. There, I explicitly draw attention to the famous passage, in the first *Critique*, at BXVI, mentioned in my (2012, 8), though I do not cite Kant's text there, which I suggest touches on "the deepest puzzle of Kant's 'Copernican' revolution". As it happens, the passage, from the Preface of the second edition of the *Critique*, which I now supply, anticipates, in a surprisingly apt way, the essential weakness of Jacqueline's argument against my preferring Hegel to Kant! (That, at least, is the theme of this response.) Here's the passage:

I should think [Kant says] that the examples of mathematics and natural science, which have become what they now are through a revolution brought about all at once, are remarkable enough that we might reflect on the essential element in the change in the ways of thinking that has been so advantageous to them, and, at least as an

experiment, imitate it insofar as their analogy with metaphysics, as rational cognition, might permit. Up to now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about them *a priori* through concepts that would extend cognition have, on this presupposition, come to nothing. Hence let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition, which would agree better with the requested possibility of an *a priori* cognition of them, which is to establish something about objects before they are given to us.

BXVI

One must read a bit further, at BXVII–BXVIII, to get a full sense of what Kant is up to: particularly when he speaks of “given objects” or the rational or *a priori* rule “to which all objects of experience must therefore necessarily conform”. One must keep in mind that, here, Kant is speaking of what he calls transcendental conditions of the “constitutive” sort regarding “objects”.

Perhaps an even better clue, which dispels the worry that Kant is merely the victim of a transparently empty maneuver (mine!) may be had from another passage from the same preface (BXIII):

reason has insight only into what it itself produces according to its own design: that it must take the lead with principles for its judgments according to constant laws and compel nature to answer its questions, rather than letting nature guide its movements by keeping reason, as it were, in leading-strings; for otherwise accidental observations, made according to no previously designed plan, can never connect up into a necessary law, which is yet what reason seeks and requires. Reason, in order to be taught by nature, must approach nature with its principles in one hand, according to which alone the agreement among appearances can count as laws, and, in the other hand, the experiments thought out in accordance with these principles—yet in order to be instructed by nature not like a pupil who has recited to him whatever the teacher wants to say, but like an appointed judge who compels witnesses to answer the questions he puts to them.

BXIII

Here, one may still say that what is putatively “given” in the work of an active science may still amount to no more than “accidental observations, made according to no previously designed plan, which can never connect up into a necessary law”—perhaps as, among a significant number of recent theorists of science, Nancy Cartwright (1983) has compellingly argued: viz., that necessary closed laws of nature are themselves,

inescapably, distortions of empirical (or “phenomenological”) uniformities; or, for which (that is, would-be laws of nature) Kant himself provides (and can provide) no transcendental argument to assure us that the regulative presumption of “necessary laws” is itself a valid constraint somehow drawn from Reason alone—from Reason’s constraints on cognizable objects “before they are given to us” as experienced or perceived. In this connection, as Jacquette reads Kant, Kant never went beyond the “conditional” necessity of his transcendental reflections relative to what (at best) is contingently (or empirically) “given” in and as Newton’s physics. That “conditionality” simply does not affect (or offset) the unconditioned requirements of Reason (textually favored in the passage cited): nomologicality, say, space as a form of “pure sensibility” (contested by scientists known to Kant), possibly (for Kant), the regulative necessity of what an “object” is, the competence of the Transcendental Ego to learn such truths, and so on. I don’t feel obliged to judge the textual validity of Jacquette’s reading. I don’t believe Kant can be paraphrased here—and elsewhere in the first *Critique*—in a way that is both textually and argumentatively valid. I think it’s clear that, here, Kant claims that Newton’s physics *meets* the prior necessary constraints of Reason itself. In any case, my own argument *is* conditional in just this way!

For what it’s worth, I view science as a thoroughly historied undertaking, which we have no reason to think it can ever escape. It has no determinate, inherently rational *telos* (certainly none that we can demonstrate) uniquely fitted to the nomologically closed causal order of nature, which, somehow, contingently, we progressively approximate. Neither Kant’s nor Hegel’s conception of science strikes me as convincing or adequate in this regard. Nevertheless, Hegel captures something of the social history of scientific inquiry that is lacking in Kant, which (I should add) Ernst Cassirer is drawn to and invokes, in *displacing* Kant’s own argument, particularly as that appears in the “Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic” in the first *Critique* (1998, A642/B670–A651–B679)—which I’ve already mentioned in a prior draft of my replies to Pihlström and Honenberger (and which I cite for another purpose in my response to Honenberger). Kant’s central remark is careful and clean and rather impressive, but you cannot fail to see how it loses all determinacy; I cite it again, here, for ease of reference:

Accordingly, I assert [Kant says]: the transcendental ideas are never of constitutive use, so that the concepts of certain objects would thereby be given, and in case one so understands them, they are merely sophistical (dialectical) concepts. On the contrary, however, they have

an excellent and indispensably necessary regulative use, namely that of directing the understanding to a certain goal respecting which the lines of direction of all its rules converge at one point, which, although it is only an idea (*focus imaginarius*)—i.e., a point from which the concepts of the understanding do not really proceed, since it lies entirely outside the bounds of possible experience—nonetheless still serves to obtain for these concepts the greatest unity alongside the greatest extension.

A644/B672

(The remarks about “constitutive” and “regulative” principles seem to be intended to apply “unconditionally”. But let that pass: my argument is qualified by such a reading.) Cassirer (1957, 478) cites the same passage, which emboldens him to confront and displace Kant’s so-called “copy theory” conception of the *regulative* principle of Galilean-Newtonian physics. In the same volume (Cassirer 1957, 20–1), Cassirer clearly replaces Kant’s conception:

Yet the theoretical development of physics in the last decades shows the beginnings of a change of direction: it is indeed this change of direction which may be said to give all modern physics its methodological character. As long as the “classical” system of natural science, the system of Galilean-Newtonian dynamics, was uncontested, the principles on which it rested appeared to be the fundamental laws of nature itself. In the concepts of space and time, mass and force, action and reaction, as defined by Newton, the basic framework of physical reality seemed to have been established once and for all. Today, the immanent progress of the natural sciences has increasingly cut the ground from under this view. In the place of a single, seemingly rigid system of nature we now have a number of systems which may be said to be open and mobile. The profound transformations which particularly the concept of substance has thus undergone, the progress from the physics of material masses to field physics: all this has now shown critical self-reflection in physics a new road [...]. Heinrich Hertz is the first modern scientist to have effected a decisive turn from the copy theory of physical knowledge to a purely symbolic theory.

Cassirer 1957, 20–1

Now, is this an instance of “conditional necessity” or of reasonable but inescapably contingent philosophical prudence: I can’t see what the difference is (in any non-trivial sense)?

I cannot find, in Jacquette’s account, an anticipation of this sort (or, potentially, of other sorts) of a *deep revision* of the structure of “the epistemological presuppositions of the ‘classical’ theory of nature” (Cassirer

1957, 20). Cassirer doesn't seem to believe that what one finds in Hegel, or in Hertz or von Helmholtz, "are [as Jacqueline declares] already present in Kant, however invisible they remain to Hegel, once Kant's apriorism is understood as undogmatically conditional rather than dogmatically unconditional". If Jacqueline is right, then I conclude: (i) that Kant's apriorism is completely aposteriorist; (ii) that there is no principled distinction between the empirical and the transcendental; (iii) that Kant was already aware that there couldn't be any assured invariances of the "substantive" (or "constitutive") kind (regarding "objects"); (iv) that the invariance of "regulative" principles can only be assured if such principles are made sufficiently indeterminate to accommodate *whatever* contingent (possibly even opportunistic) changes in experience and history we find we must confront (say, Kuhnian "paradigm shifts"); and, finally, (v) that Peirce may have been entirely right to have pronounced Kant "a confused pragmatist". In saying so, I conjecture, Peirce was (would have been) obliged to reconsider his own (early) commitment to an "infinetist fallibilism". Under Josiah Royce's prodding, for instance, he may have begun to realize that he, too, was a Kantian-inspired "confused pragmatist". In conceding the need for a more drastic economy, he may have begun to grasp the full meaning of the radical innovation I name Peirce's "abductive turn". There, also, is the reason I favor a genealogical over a textualist approach to Kant and Hegel. My reading helps to explain the sense in which, dawningly, we learn that Kant and the classic pragmatists are committed to profoundly opposed undertakings.

I've taken the liberty of adding some textual evidence for the position I've advanced, though the argument doesn't depend on it. It's just that I would like to assure Jacqueline that I believe an argument attentive to the sort of resources he favors can be mounted without yielding on essentials regarding Kant's own vision. It's just that, after more than two hundred years, it seems a bit of an extravagance to find in Kant's rigidities and lacunae sufficient evidence for thinking he hasn't lost any essential ground at all.

Now, the argument I've mounted requires a little unpacking of its own. Let me offer a small tally of the points I wish to emphasize. First of all, if the perceptual "objects" of the second Preface and the "objects" of Newtonian explanation (according to the Appendix of the Transcendental Dialectic) were meant to be compatible, then either Kant changed his mind (but had not recorded the significance of the change correctly) or he committed himself to distinctly contradictory claims, or he drastically confined

the first view to perceptual objects and the second to “objects” proposed in contexts of scientific explanation, or we are seemingly unable to say just how to read the two texts as uniformly transcendental. The Preface seems to take a strongly apriorist line on the essential structural properties of perceptual objects; but, on the strength of Cassirer’s (1957) reading, Kant effectively abandons the unconditionally “constitutive” theory of perceptual objects (*a fortiori*, the transcendental standing of the objects posited in Newtonian explanations of the empirical behavior of perceptual objects). It is true that both Kant and Cassirer cling to the unconditional *a priori* necessity of a “regulative” principle meant to govern our positing suitable conceptions of objects of either sort, as an evolving science may require (though Cassirer, as far as I know, nowhere explains the sense in which the remaining regulative principle *could* be more than vacuous or opportunistically construed, wherever it lacked the accompaniment of constitutive rules (which the Appendix text rejects unconditionally).

From there, I suggest, the pragmatists (chiefly Peirce and Dewey) should gain a decisive march on Kantian apriorism. It would hardly matter whether Kant insisted on the apparent rigor of the second Preface or was prepared to yield on the idea that apriorism was really a form of aposteriorism that simply ventured interim, ad hoc, “constitutive” fixities (regarding the objects of scientific inquiry, perceptual or explanatory): the upshot would be the same—the abandonment of strict transcendental necessity; there would be no principled distinction between empirical and transcendental truths. It is part of my argumentative strategy to insist that Kant *ohne* a principled disjunction between the empirical and the *a priori* could not be the “true Kant”. That’s a quarrelsome constraint, no doubt. But there at least we must lay down our markers. Let me add, as an instructive aside, that, in advocating his notorious “*Grenzbe-griff*” (regarding truth)—in his quarrel (in the seventies and eighties) with Richard Rorty—Hilary Putnam (1981, 216) remains what, misleadingly, is now often treated as an acceptable variant of a Kantian “regulative principle”. But, as Rorty cannily perceived, it cannot be more than a fictive barrier against admitting that one has fallen back to one or another form of crypto-relativism. Now, if this is true of Putnam, then it is true as well of the Kant of the Appendix—*a fortiori*, of Cassirer and Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls. I see no escape. If it holds, then (I suggest) if holds for Jacquette as well.

Jacquette does not intend to hold to the “unconditional necessity” (apriorist) reading I’m testing here. He favors another approach, which I shall

come to in a moment. But what I wish to add at once is that the puzzle captures something of the sense of Peirce's reading of Kant as a "confused pragmatist": it doesn't matter to Peirce (and it should not matter to us) *if* Kant simply abandons the strictest apriorism or construes synthetic *a priori* truths in the aposteriorist way. For the moment, just consider whether you're not really prepared to concede (with me) that the two options I've just mentioned confronting Kant—abandoning synthetic *a priori* truths altogether or reading such would-be truths as provisionally aposteriorist posits of would-be "conceptual truths"—are subject to replacement (in the same way) in accord with pertinent empirical developments in the sciences themselves. That would explain why (beyond Jacquette's interpretation) "Kantian pragmatists" need not yield to "Hegelian pragmatists"! Still, to concede that much would not be entirely accurate, either, because the "Kantians"—including Jacquette, rather like Cassirer and Kant himself (and, pointedly, C. I. Lewis)—would have already signaled the need to historicize the *a priori*—whether read constitutively or regulatively. That's nearly all that I wish to draw from Hegel! (As I say: "regulative necessity" is entirely vacuous when deprived of "constitutive necessity".)

It's here that Jacquette advances his rejoinder to my argument—and his opposed reading of Kant. But what does he say? As far as I can make out, Jacquette relies entirely on disjunctively characterizing Hegel's critique of Kant as ascribing (to Kant) a "supposedly unconditional apriorism", whereas the textual (and "scientific") truth (as Jacquette reads it) is that "Kant presents the apriorism of Critical Idealism as conditional on specific explicit assumptions. Kant then takes the development of natural science as conditionally given and asks what must then be true in order for what is given to be possible". I think it is not contrary to Jacquette's argument to read the following sentences as literally intended, though Jacquette discounts their supposed force when applied to Kant: "Hegel proves that a certain type of apriorism is unworkable. His attack is directed against an unconditional apriorism that Kant never accepts". Fine.

I gladly accept the "correction" Jacquette tenders: that is, that Kant means to oppose the "inadequacy" of the arguments of the "dogmatic rationalists" (in effect, their groping toward what amounts to an "unconditional apriorism"—Hegel's better target). Thus, Jacquette argues: Kant, unlike Descartes, does not argue directly, for example, that there are three categories of substance, mental, physical, and infinite (God), but rather conditionally that *if* Newton's science is correct, *then* a Transcendental Aesthetic would need to support the conclusion that space and time are

pure forms of intuition, and that the category of causation is also innate, among other transcendental inferences.

I agree that there appears to be a *textual* difference between Kant's and Hegel's formulations. The question remains whether there's a significant difference between the "two" sorts of transcendental argument Jacquette (and others) claim to discern, as far as judging whether *Kant* actually rescues a viable form of transcendentalism (or, perhaps that though Kant may not succeed, Jacquette may or does). I myself cannot see the force of the counterargument.

Let me put the matter in this way. In the passage I've just cited from Jacquette, it's "*Newton's science*" that is "conditionally" taken to be true; on Jacquette's argument, it "follows" that *Kant's* account of space and time (in the Transcendental Aesthetic) must *necessarily* (transcendentally), "infer" (in some acceptable sense) that "space and time are pure forms of intuition, and that the category of causation is also innate". But what then of contemporaneous critics of Kant's (chiefly geometers and physicists) who insist, not unreasonably, that space is a feature of the "world", not a feature confined to the mind or understanding? And what then of contemporary theorists, among ourselves, who think that, at least as far as the science of physics is concerned, causality is conceptually expendable? Isn't it the case that *Jacquette* claims that *Kant's* position is "unconditionally necessary" on the "conditional" premise that *Newton's science* is true? I'm prepared to concede that what *Jacquette* says, says *that*. But if it does, then, as far as I can see, the obvious reading of *Kant's* account of space and time and causality is analytically entailed by *his* reading of *Newton's science* as true. If it means more, if it yields a different conclusion, on transcendental as distinct from deductive grounds, then and only then would I be willing to yield to *Jacquette's* counterargument. But I see no possibility of that—precisely because, at the very least, the Appendix to the Dialectic effectively abandons (as I read it) the conceptual condition on which alone *Jacquette's* option might make sense. Full stop.

Let me remind you of a splendid little argument Hilary Putnam has advanced—about Euclidean geometry, it's true; but I think we can see how Newtonian physics (or any physics) cannot, *faute de mieux*, claim to occupy a stronger position. Putnam (2004, 61–63) reports "the discovery that there can actually exist triangles whose angles add up to more than two right angles". If someone said no more than this, in 1700, Putnam claims, "he would have been speaking gibberish". But, says Putnam, "in the early decades of the nineteenth century Riemann discovered" such

a non-Euclidean geometry, which, in 1916, Einstein successfully employed in his General Theory of Relativity". Putnam then goes on to say:

The conception of conceptual truth that I defend [...] recognizes the interpretation of conceptual relations and facts, and it grants that there is an important sense in which knowledge of conceptual truths is corrigible [...] My conception regards it as a fact of great *methodological* (and not merely "psychological") significance, a matter of how inquiry is structured [...] 2004, 62

There seem to be two different transcendental questions here: one, Are the conceptual properties of Kant's concept "space" necessarily Euclidean? the other, Is physical space itself necessarily Euclidean? The answer to both, now, is, No (or, on the first option, not necessarily)! But, in 1700, the answer, Yes, might reasonably have been construed as an analogue of Jacquette's "conditional" transcendental applied to geometry and mathematics and, separately, as a necessary constraint on the empirical description of physical space. But then, the conditional transcendental is, in the "unconditional" sense supplied, merely contingent. Perhaps it could be said to be unconditionally necessary relative to what is "given" as true (according to Jacquette): namely, relative to the conditional truth of Newtonian physics. But then, Jacquette would lose the argument. For surely, the *Kantian a priori* would require at the very least that, *thus conditionally construed*, there was one and only one true (synthetic) reading of the necessary conditions of the "possibility" of space in either sense of Putnam's parable. Now, I believe no one knows how to secure the conditional transcendental in the sense just sketched. In that sense, there is no significant difference between Kant's and Hegel's positions. There's the point about historicizing the argument.

To Phillip Honenberger

I'm very pleased with Phillip Honenberger's paper on realism and relativism. He's tracked a number of the complexities involved in getting clear about the vulnerability of both Hilary Putnam's and Richard Rorty's ways of treating both notions, also about the views of each with regard to the other, and the views of other important discussants, particularly Donald Davidson and Thomas Kuhn, in canvassing the principal options. Honenberger says his own line of reasoning is "generally sympathetic to Margolis's position and convinced by his argument". In this, he leaves

me rather little to say—except many thanks! We agree on the compatibility of realism and relativism (which both Rorty and Putnam oppose in their different ways) and we agree on the need to adopt what I've called a "constructive realism" (which is not an idealism in the manner of Kant's first *Critique* or an anti-realism in Michael Dummett's sense, which—that is, Dummett's option—is itself meant to be a form of realism as well).

Honenberger goes beyond the analytic arguments directed against Rorty's and Putnam's various positions: here, I take him to intend "anti-realism" to signify (in Rorty's sense) the abandonment of all forms of realism, and, accordingly, all forms of epistemology (*and* canonical philosophy itself), and (I suppose, in Putnam's sense) the rejection of anything like Dummett's untenable anti-realism, which Putnam was once drawn to and which, mistakenly, he still ascribes to Charles Peirce's infinitist version of fallibilism.

I do feel that Honenberger has revived the essential question of my *Reinventing Pragmatism* (2002) so skillfully that I must seize the occasion to provide a very simple map of sorts of "where things stand" from my present point of view, somewhat more than a decade beyond the appearance of the original text he favors. I don't believe I've changed my position in essentials but I do understand its implications better now, if I may say so. May I add, (then) that I've been pursuing the same question this dozen years in an effort to fashion a more spacious analysis of the state of play of as much of contemporary Western philosophy as I've been able to master, in the service of isolating what seems to me to be the best intuitions of a revised pragmatism (more or less still lacking a fresh and adequate sense of direction) and the impressive skills of the most prominent philosophical movements of our day that (in my opinion) still exhibit the abiding disarray that the twentieth century has, unintentionally, bequeathed us, possibly abetted by the inadequately diagnosed (and inadequately resolved) trauma of World War II. I mean, quite frankly, that philosophy (not unlike our politics and economics, our educational policies, and even our religions) has been in danger of losing touch, all this while, with the minimal needs of the "ordinary world" in which we live, in the risky way we do: bodily and communally, let me suggest, that provides the only sources of assurance in favor of our form of life that we ever draw on (conceptually as well as "existentially"), despite our never being able to claim or confirm the validity of our ultimate resources. (But that's a story for another time.)

Here, schematically, are my present touchstones at least. First: realism is at best an abductive guess (pretty well in Peirce's sense). Hence, all of Putnam's fiddlings with metaphysical realism, internal realism, and natural realism are but clues in way of proof—but never pointless variants of the same mistake, I would say, in the sense in which Putnam is a kind of Kantian who believes that there are always "internal" resources adequate for confirming (in some sense) that realism *is* indeed true. I construe realism simply as a very plausible abduction, which outflanks both Putnam and Rorty in one stroke. I take abduction, here, to be a naturalistic improvement on Hegel's criticism of Kant.

I believe Rorty bested Putnam here, back in the eighties: Rorty saw that Putnam feared that the critique of realism would lead directly to attempts to reconcile realism and relativism. Well, Rorty was right—and Phillip Honenberger has put his finger on the need to remember the encounter. Rorty was right but he was never entitled to any of his own philosophical verdicts, because *he* took Putnam's fallback to the need for a *Grenzbegriff* of truth (1981, 216) to be neither self-evident (transcendentally) nor argumentatively supported—a kind of *petitio* that says: if you see the danger of making it impossible to support a "strong" form of realism that, though we may indeed have to acknowledge that there is no "Archimedean point" at which all defensible descriptions and explanations of the phenomena of the real world must "converge", you will understand that we *cannot* also give up the idealized function of a "regulatory" *Grenzbegriff* of truth, Putnam's "idealized rational acceptability" thesis (1981, 49–50). Because, that would drive us to admit the ineluctability of relativism (which I, Putnam, believe to be insuperably incoherent).

Rorty's lax rejoinder here is simply meant to acknowledge that Putnam was right about the upshot of the attack on realism (including a stampede to reconcile realism and relativism), but also *that he* (Rorty) was right to think that *that* hardly matters, since epistemology is no more than a failed philosophical discipline now "well lost". Putnam's position—which I've never seen him actually defend—famously and succinctly affirms: As soon as one tries to state relativism as a position it collapses into inconsistency or into solipsism (or perhaps solipsism with a "we" instead of an "I") (1992, 177). I think this must entail (I cannot expect Putnam to have considered responding to my formulation of "robust relativism", which I regard as the leanest, most pertinent, most coherent form of relativism that we need to defend) that my version of relativism is simply not a properly formed "position". Rorty is actually more informative than Putnam

about the possible varieties of relativism, but he, too, never comes to grips with the clear possibility that a coherent form of relativism may be nigh (see Rorty 1991, Pt I). (I'm merely citing here what I have already reported in *Reinventing Pragmatism* [2002].)

Putnam maintains that we must hold the line at realism and never let it slip into relativism; whereas Rorty holds that it doesn't matter: realism is, for all we know, committed to the same mistakes that relativism commits, so there is no principled difference between the two anyway. (Always insisting, of course, that "ethnosolidarity" or "ethnocentricity", the supposed (solely defensible) "third" sort of relativism is really not a form of relativism at all—so we are home free!) It's hard to believe that the entire majestic sweep of the realism issue should dwindle into this sort of language. But it has.

You must bear in mind two telling findings here: for one thing, there is no decisive difference between Putnam's three sorts of realism: they are all committed to the regulative principle of the *Grenzbegriff* (or, mistakenly, to the Archimedean point, or the God's eye view, or Cartesian realism, or some lesser doctrine that Putnam may be persuaded does not have to acknowledge that relativism is compatible with realism and that *that* remains a coherent philosophical position). The deeper lesson, however, my second touchstone, is that Kant himself had long ago (fatally) championed Putnam's *Grenzbegriff*—as had indeed Ernst Cassirer as well, following Kant as loyally as he dared be, all the while attempting to remain true to the speculative liberties post-Newtonian physics allowed itself. For, in the "Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic" of the first *Critique*, Kant pens the following almost unbelievable confession:

[the] transcendental ideas are never of constitutive use, so that the concepts of certain objects would thereby be given, and in case one so understands them, they are merely sophistical (dialectical concepts). On the contrary, however, they have an excellent and indispensably necessary regulative use, namely that of directing the understanding to a certain goal respecting which the lines of direction of all its rules converge, which although it is only an idea (*focus imaginarius*)—i.e., a point from which the concepts of the understanding do not really proceed, since it lies entirely outside the bounds of possible experience—nonetheless still serves to obtain for these concepts the greatest unity alongside the greatest extension.

Kant, 1998, A644/B672

I take this to *accommodate relativism* in the most indisputable way; to capture the entire point of Putnam's fears, which are ultimately futile; and thus, to signify the final failure of Kant's transcendentalism, since it precludes any principled distinction between the transcendental and the empirical. (See my Replies to Pihlström and Jacqueline.) What Kant says about "constitutive" principles is prescient; but what he says about "regulative" principles is no more than idle and vacuous: there cannot be a *Grenzbegriff* if there are no constitutive principles to determine the objects of a given field of inquiry that a would-be regulative principle can then monitor.

In the latter part of his paper, Honenberger offers an argument that "enriches the account of epistemically-relevant mediating structures in human cognition—what [as he reports] Margolis calls 'interpretive *tertia*' [which are *not*, please note, representational *tertia*]—in a manner consistent with relativism, yet without denying or violating the possibility of a commitment to realism either"—what Honenberger calls a "mediated realism". Here, he explicitly offers a line of argument favorable to me and "early Kuhn", which features a tolerance for Kuhnian incommensurability—which Davidson notoriously misreads (in his 2001 [1974]). I'm grateful to Phillip for the effort, since it helps to clarify a good number of nagging confusions about the fate of realism, which I've been trying to penetrate for a longish while (see my 2002, Ch. 1). In any case, what Honenberger offers affords a good occasion for airing alternative ways of approaching the idea of a constructive realism. Count that (and the argument that follows), the gist of my third touchstone. There's no need to insist on any one way to proceed: we each have our favored puzzles to address.

I'm persuaded that Kant plays an enormously important role in setting the realism puzzle for the whole of (what I call) "modern" modern (or Eurocentric) philosophy, which begins with Kant and courses down to our own day—and which both clarifies and obscures our best options. On the helpful side, I draw from a reading of the following lessons, which I'm prepared to defend but which are not assuredly Kant's or entirely Kant's: (i) that the "Copernican" turn convincingly reinterprets the puzzles of "first philosophy" so as to acknowledge the primacy of epistemological questions; (ii) that metaphysics and epistemology form distinct but inseparable conceptual concerns within a single inquiry; (iii) that rationalism, dogmatism, foundationalism, facultative privilege of every sort regarding the accessibility of reality and the confirmation of realism cannot be defended and must, finally, be abandoned; and (iv) that, as a consequence,

the defense of realism must take a constructivist form, though without its entailing that the reality we claim to know is itself constructed in the cognitive process (what is standardly called idealism or, as I prefer to label it, in the Kantian setting, Idealism, written with capital "I's" to signify that it is *not* a form of representationalism in any sense akin to Locke's idealism).

I take it to be a conceptual scandal that Kant was unwilling to acknowledge (in the first *Critique*) that his apriorism or transcendentalism violates item (III); and I take it that any proposal to the effect that the *a priori* cannot exceed *a posteriori* resources (as, say, by one or another interpretation of the bearing of the third *Critique* on the first) signifies (correctly) that there is no principled difference between "empirical" and "transcendental" cognitive powers: effectively, that there are no synthetic *a priori* truths of the sort Kant entertains regarding the description and explanation of the natural world. But if we accept this emendation, then a positive consequence of (I)–(IV) is: (v)—my third touchstone—that a constructive realism requires and depends on "interpretive" (but not "representational") *tertium*—among which we are bound to include, invoking, or at least making provision for, some form of relativism, the fruits of Kuhn's (and Feyerabend's) specimens of incommensurabilism (applied, say, to Priestley's and Lavoisier's dispute regarding the combustion of mercury and to Galileo's understanding of the difference between Aristotle's "swinging stones" and late medieval anticipations of the true pendulum). Such puzzles oblige us to consider certain definitional clarifications affecting the use of terms like "reality", "existence", "actuality" and the epistemological import of the predicate "true".

On my reading of the issues, the most productive and compelling anti-Kantian lessons include the following: (I') the formulation of an adequate epistemology is ineluctably, but not fatally, beset by self-referential paradoxes, evidentiary regress, ineliminable skeptical challenge, which are benignly tolerable even where we override (for second-order explanatory purposes) what would be intolerable with regard to first-order empirical inquiries; (II') analyses and inferences putatively drawn from a direct examination of the determinate facultative powers of cognition (reason, sensory perception, judgment, imagination) are completely vacuous, redundant, otiose, illicitly privileged or totalized; cognition is not a matter of empirical or transcendental discovery but rather, speculatively, the work of a reasonable construction fitted, diversely, changeably, informally, according to our interests, to whatever we regard as our most reliable body of systematic science and practical knowledge; (III') strict aprior-

ism and transcendentalism with respect to truth-claims are impossible to confirm; (iv') there are reasonable grounds for supposing that the most important and sustained processes of cognitive inquiry require, depend on, and incorporate a variety of forms (often described as "instrumental" or "intuitive", sometimes thought to engage animal sources of some kind) of guessing (abductively) at "the way the world is" and at the fluency and reliability of our way of forming fruitful hypotheses about the way the world is, that cannot themselves be made cognitively explicit or testable in anything like the way in which we test our first-order hypotheses: in effect, realism depends on guesses of the sort Peirce collects as "abductions" (which are inherently unconfirmable *qua* abductions) and (v') that if (i'-iv') are conceded, then Kant's Critical epistemology (as in the first *Critique*) may be summarily deemed to fail to provide any necessary, universal, or apodictic conditions—synthetic *a priori* conditions—essential to any adequate account of human cognition. Thus far, realism and relativism are compatible.

Here I find it strategically important to distinguish between "realism" and "reality". I therefore add to our tally a number of additional theorems bearing on realism: (i*) that there is absolutely nothing to be said, conjecturally or otherwise, about the "noumenal" world, the world as it is, completely independent of how we speak about the world we claim to know: in particular, we cannot claim to know that there is a noumenal world; any such claim is unconditionally self-defeating; (ii*) that we can, however, speak meaningfully of the "independent world", the world we claim to know but which we take to as exist independently of what we believe-true of it; hence, that the "independent world" is not the "noumenal world"; the expression, "the noumenal world" is a cipher that has no referent, the expression "the independent world" is not a cipher. The problem remains how to explicate the phrasing of the second notion.

I suggest we enlarge the subset of the items added to our tally to include: (iii*) that the independent world (the physical or natural world) is, ontologically, but not epistemologically, independent of our inquiries; hence, (iv*) that the independent world (the real world) is not constructed (or constituted) by our inquiries, but that our "picture" of the independent world is, clearly, a construction of our best conjectures of what the independent world is like. So "idealism" (Locke's representationalism) is a false doctrine, as is also Kant's "Idealism" (the thesis—if it is indeed Kant's thesis—that the only world we know is the world constructed or constituted by our cognitive conjectures). I'll add at least three further the-

orems to our subset regarding realism: (v*) that, if we accept (II) and (III), then there can be no access to the independent world except in accord with (IV*), meaning by that that our truth-claims about the independent world are inherently provisional, changeable, profoundly conjectural, *and* subject to "interpretive *tertia*" of whatever variety we favor; and (VI*) that if we adopt (IV*) and (IV'), then we will, effectively, have returned to support (v), which catches up Honenberger's defense of the compatibility of realism and relativism. Call that provision (VII*). But then you see at once how much becomes possible if we merely abandon Kant's transcendentalism.

I need to add a bit more in order to accommodate incommensurabilism, which is troublesome because of Kuhn's as well as Davidson's treatment of the distinction. Davidson, I would say, echoing Husserl (in the *Crisis* volume, though of course without meaning to), "totalizes" the notion of a "conceptual scheme"—that is, equates the extension of "a conceptual scheme" with that of any natural language—though without assigning number to the notion (just as Husserl totalizes the world, though without assigning number to the world: "one" world—for Davidson, "one" conceptual scheme—therefore indivisible but not denumerable in any sense). That's where Davidson's hocus-pocus sets in: both Kuhn and Feyerabend make it quite clear that they regard "conceptual schemes" as denumerable and delimited within the space of an entire language, never totalized. That's to say, they have anticipated the paradox of Davidson's position. "Conceptual schemes" are normally incomplete, very probably incompleteable (just as natural languages are), so that there is no insuperable paradox to be had when merely entertaining *testing* hypotheses in accord with competing conceptual schemes.

Davidson is wildly off the mark here: he simply misreads Kuhn and Feyerabend. *They* acknowledge a limited and provisional failure of "inter-translatability" when they speak of "incommensurable" conceptual schemes; but they also explicitly insist that provision for translatability is always, in principle, close at hand, "at least with regard to the empirical consequences of both [that is, a given pair of incommensurable theories]". Kuhn puts the point very mildly (in his 1970, pp. 266, 268): "To me at least, what the existence of translation suggests is that recourse is available to scientists who hold incommensurable theories. That recourse need not, however, be to a full restoration in a neutral language of even the theories' consequences". I cannot imagine anything plainer—or more sensible.

I admit, however, that Kuhn and Feyerabend sometimes overplay their hand. I recommend, therefore, that we distinguish carefully between "in-

commensurability" and "conceptual incommensurability". In the first, the sense featured in the Pythagorean theorem, which has nothing to do with relativism, incommensurability is open to comparison, translation, intelligibility, compatibility, and whatever else one takes to obtain in the use of commensurable terms. In the second, which maybe taken to be a form of relativism, problems of translation normally arise, but they can always be resolved or finessed (by ad hoc devices—by partial translations from common resources or by "bilingual" absorption of some sort). There's the point of not conceding that opposed or incommensurable "conceptual schemes" (as between, say, Lavoisier and Priestley) are ever construed as *totalized* extremes. (How could they be?) That's simply Davidson's fantasy. But of course, if that be admitted, then, we will have let the relativistic pussycat into the philosophical living room.

To Sami Pihlström

In replying to Sami Pihlström's very carefully crafted paper, "'Languaged' World, 'Worlded' Language", which continues a conversation we've shared intermittently regarding the appraisal of Kant's and "Kantian" resources and pragmatism's prospects bearing on the defense of a reasonably strong form of realism, I concede that we have not yet been able to isolate a premise we jointly share that might oblige either or both of us to admit a change of claim or strategy that significantly alters the terms of our debate. That's to say, so that it no longer appears to be an intractable standoff. I should like to cast my present response in a way that makes my commitments as transparent as possible. In this regard I am surely following Sami's generous lead.

For one thing, I don't believe there can be any viable way of addressing the realism question, which begins by disjoining epistemological and metaphysical issues, although the distinctions in question are genuine enough; or that fails to concede the indissoluble relationship between cognizing subjects and cognized world. This is the vantage from which it makes no sense, in the context of Kant's first *Critique*, or independently, to consult the noumenal world. But then, the same constraint obliges us to admit that to construe realism as a viable claim about (or "picture" of) the "independent world"—so that, as Peirce sometimes says, what is objectively true of the world is independent of the opinion of you or me or anyone must be a benign "construction" of some kind. My view is that we are making a dependent conjecture about the world, *qua* metaphysically-

independent-of-our-epistemological-claims—but then, not independent of those latter claims. If we propose any grounds at all, we cannot fail to be epistemologically encumbered, which is as it must be. But then, secondly, we cannot answer the question regarding the “conditions of possibility” of knowledge without implicating the self-referential paradoxes of epistemology: hence, we cannot answer the question of the “conditions of possibility” of knowledge in a way in which we could demonstrate that our answer secures what is necessary to their transcendental standing. There’s the *pons* of transcendental accounts of the conditions of knowledge. I argue that transcendentalism has no clout where it cannot in principle be determinably contrasted with empirical conjecture (even where never falsified). I hasten to add that I take the paradoxes to be “benign”, in the straightforward sense that the question is inherently reflexive and *sui generis* and inevitably presupposes some conviction about what objective (or realist) knowledge amounts to—without, however, disqualifying our being able to answer pertinently. But then—a third point—that does not mean that our answer can ever rest on independent evidence! I take our answers to be (or to involve) abductive guesses (in Peirce’s sense), that is, in the sense in which Peirce conjectures that it’s a compelling intuition that human beings are essentially formed so as to come to know the way the world is—where no particular claim can override the limitations of such an abductive constraint itself, since, on Peirce’s view, abductive guesses cannot be confirmed as ventured. Here, to anticipate a further feature of Pihlström’s argument, I confess I’m less sanguine than Philip Kitcher (whom Pihlström cites) regarding the right way to support realism (2012, Ch 3), though I venture to say that both Kitcher and I are concerned to come to terms with a tolerable and valid form of skepticism (see Stroud, 2000, Ch. 4).

I find Kitcher’s “Galilean strategy” (“from success to truth”) perfectly reasonable regarding our commitment to realism, but not in any independently evidentiary sense. In fact, on my view, *if* we accept abduction’s role in cognitive matters, Kantian strategies are placed in mortal peril. Pihlström, I surmise, does not feel the force of this constraint since he claims (seems to claim) an avenue of transcendental escape. I see no possibility of that—and, as I suggest, I construe Peirce’s “abductive turn” as obviating completely any appeal to apriorism or transcendentalism, without losing the ordinary fluency of answering cognitive and epistemological questions. Broadly speaking, first-order knowledge and second-order skepticism can live together.

If then (fourth point), I concede that what I propose as a viable realism is meant to characterize a "picture" of the independent world but *not* (assuredly) a picture that can be shown to "correspond" to or capture (in any familiar confirmatory, final, or nonvacuous sense) the way the world is—independently. The only way to understand what I am saying here is to suppose (i) that I'm *not* claiming that the independent world *is* as I claim it is *because* I or we have actually constructed the "independent world" we claim to know; (ii) that I *am* indeed giving fair warning that any first-order cognitive claim is subject to revision on evidentiary grounds, though such revision always proceeds under the benign auspices of a meta-abduction of the sort mentioned and is not to be construed as altered because the "picture" I provide is altered; and/or (iii) that that is sufficient to validate realism. I am perfectly prepared to concede that there may be many ways of approaching our sort of realist confidence, possibly by way of incompatible or incommensurable options compatible with some "given" collection of empirical premises. Here, I've chosen to oppose transcendentalism and to yield as far as possible to a benign skepticism—and to a moderate relativism.

I see no reason not to construe Kant's Critical version of apriorism as another version of the indefensible rationalism Kant himself rejects in the first *Critique*; hence, I simply define the "transcendental" as committed to some form of necessary and exceptionless synthetic truths about the *determinate* "conditions of possibility" of knowledge or understanding or something of the sort, *opposed to mere empirical or abductive constraints*. "Kantians" who see, here, a less quarrelsome ground for invoking the transcendental than I do (Pihlström, for instance) have only to specify the limitations they themselves invoke—and claim to be able to validate. The transcendental label seems harmless enough: some "apriorists", in fact, are persuaded that the relevant forms of the *a priori* are epistemologically *a posteriori* (C.I. Lewis, for instance, and Hilary Putnam, if I understand him correctly). But I'm not at all clear what Pihlström's reading of the transcendental finally is. He acknowledges that I hold that "the world [the bare physical world] cannot simply be regarded as a human construction". But then Pihlström goes on to say that "the kind of pragmatic and (moderately) constructivist realism-cum-idealism that Margolis defends can be reinterpreted as a 'naturalized' form of (quasi-)Kantian transcendental idealism, or better, *transcendental pragmatism*". I do indeed take "idealism" (as opposed to "Idealism") to distinguish, say, Locke's doctrine from Hegel's—the first being representationalist, the second not; the

first being subjectivist, the second not (or at least not in Locke's general sense); the first being disjunctive (on the metaphysical/epistemological issue), the second not. Any "apriorist" or "transcendentalist" claim that fails to provide, or abandons, a strong disjunction between the empirical and the *a priori* (in terms of something reasonably akin to what is meant to be separated in conceding apodictic certainty) seems to me to have abandoned the "contest" between "Kantian" and "pragmatist" strategies.

Here, Peirce says that Kant is nothing but a "confused pragmatist". I favor spelling out the difference, in order to capture the Kant of the first *Critique*: to avoid the familiar ambiguities of Kant's "realist" reading of his own thesis, and to oblige any "Kantian" to explain just what our transcendental powers amount to. That, I trust, would explain the sense in which I take realism to be a constructive posit, not an *a priori* truth and not an empirical discovery either: very possibly then, a conviction dependent on a Peircean abduction.

Allow me a moment more to mark the fact that I seem not to share Pihlström's or Kitcher's classification of pertinent treatments of "realism", "constructivism", or "antirealism". Kitcher provides an extremely provocative classification (to set off his own "real realism"): To put matters in their simplest terms, [he says,] empiricists take *unobservables* to be epistemically inaccessible, while constructivists regard all objects conceived as realists understand them, to be epistemically inaccessible. Antirealists thus devise a terrorist weapon, the *Inaccessibility of Reality Argument* (IRA), intended to explode realism (Kitcher 2012, 74). I don't belong to any of these camps. I regard myself as committed to a form of empiricism and realism relative to which Kitcher's specific characterization of empiricism would be false (or unnecessarily restrictive). I regard myself as committed to a form of *constructivist realism* relative to which IRA is simply false.

My "constructivist" believes the real world is "accessible", but not in any way that would make the *realist* standing of our claims merely empirical or opportunistically apriorist. I take the self-referential paradoxes of epistemology seriously: *they* cannot be resolved empirically or transcendently; in fact, though realism is a perfectly reasonable conviction, it cannot be confirmed or validated in the way *first-order claims advanced under its auspices can be*. I don't believe that that is a merely verbal quibble: partly because the apriorist or transcendentalist (in effect, the "Kantian") insists on making an epistemological claim *he* supposes *can* be demonstrably confirmed, partly because I don't believe there can be a resolution of the paradoxes by standard empirical or transcendental means, *and* partly

because the paradoxes themselves become benignly tolerable only where we are able to see that a residual skepticism about confirming realism, together with an abductively qualified realism in pursuing the sciences (say), is the strongest position we can defend. (I find the last option serviced by Darwinian and post-Darwinian discoveries.)

I'm suggesting that Pihlström may not be able to distinguish between the transcendental and the abductive and that Kitcher eschews the self-referential paradoxes. (My own view is that we "justify" our cognitive powers in the same way we justify our understanding the meaning of what we say: it's the normal result of cultural immersion or *Bildung*, which results from our self-transformation into selves or persons.) The reason such a proposal is worth advancing is that it shows the way to eclipsing the Kantian transcendental—which, of course, is equivalent to Peirce's verdict that Kant is a "confused pragmatist". On my reading, that's to say cognition is itself a puzzle that entails resources (for instance, the power to guess abductively at fruitful conjectures that we cannot completely articulate and cannot directly confirm—hence, that are less than consciously cognitive and more than flatly ignorant). There's the elusive theme on which, finally, Peirce and Dewey converge (from very different directions).

Finally, I am not, in adhering to what I have just confessed, an advocate of antirealism (in the sense of IRA or the sense in which Hilary Putnam mistakenly characterizes Peirce). Peirce, I say, was not (could not have been) an antirealist (in Michael Dummett's sense, which Putnam seems to have had in mind)—on the strength of Peirce's infinitist formulation of fallibilism—both because no finite agent could possibly know what will or would obtain at the end of the long run and because Peirce is careful, apart from "pr" tricks, to treat the seemingly antirealist doctrine (really, an "antidote" to anti-realism) to manifest itself as an article of no more than rational Hope, which, I should add, counts, in Peirce's last decade or so, as the essential force of the "abductive turn" itself. The epistemological paradoxes I take to be *sui generis*, artifactually induced by the advent of discursivity: to resolve them requires a *petitio*; merely to live with them counts as no more than a benign consequence of the original transformation of the human primate into a reflexively qualified person. Hence, I'm at a loss to see the advantage or sustainability of Pihlström's paraphrase, viz.:

It is precisely by following Margolis up to the point of regarding realism itself as a human posit that we may naturalize transcendental idealism into a constructivist pragmatic realism [...] [B]ut we can

still say that the independent world in the realist's sense is itself, like realism as our interpretation of it, a human epistemic-ontological construct.

I say Pihlström adds one epithet too many ("transcendental") and one too problematic ("naturalize"). I don't think realism itself (contrary to Kitcher, if I understand him) is an ordinary empirical claim: I'm too much impressed with the self-referential paradoxes of epistemology and the need for what is now (misleadingly; in fact inaccurately) named the "noncognitive" standing of abduction; I also don't think constructivism is idealism, unless idealism means no more than the inseparability of epistemology and metaphysics. The term "inseparability" signifies a conjectured limitation on the powers of human inquiry and cognitive claim and reportage—so that we cannot assign determinate contributions to such claims from the conceptually separate (constructivist) resources of subjectivity: constructivism refers (here) primarily to the posit of realism; it is *not* a conjecture about the "composition" of reality to which subjectivity's transcendental powers contribute. First-order claims about the world function straightforwardly as realist claims, *under* the posit of a general realist conception of inquiry; the latter is no more than an abductive (or, perhaps better, a meta-abductive) claim, since we also advance first-order abductions. But it is clearly not a transcendental claim, though it's modestly second-order.

Pihlström does indeed say (in Note 8): "my disagreement with Margolis is obviously dramatically softened, as he points out that he has no interest in either attacking or defending 'transcendental' variants that abandon apriorism—or effectively concede (say, along C. I. Lewis's lines) that the *a priori* may simply be an *a posteriori* posit; this, clearly, is exactly what my version of naturalized transcendental philosophy seeks to do (though perhaps dropping the word 'simply')". My reason for abandoning the use of the term "transcendental" has to do, precisely, with Pihlström's deliberate "blurring of the boundary between the empirical and the transcendental", as well as with Kant's disjunction between the two and the problematically privileged features of transcendental as opposed to empirical knowledge. If Kant may be rightly read as overriding this constraint, then I, for one, would deem his original contribution to be radically diminished, far less interesting and less daring than the "transcendentalist" I thought I knew. I have no wish to read Kant as no more than a "confused pragmatist".

If I may venture a purely verbal suggestion: I think it cannot be denied that we must admit "conditions of knowledge" (of the sort we find in the

sciences particularly) that we claim defines what is "constitutive" of such knowledge (as Pihlström insists). I say an essential condition of scientific knowledge—not the kind of knowledge languageless animals exhibit (as far as we understand such matters)—presupposes and entails the mastery of a natural language. Nevertheless, I regard the invention and mastery of language as a contingent development essential to the (hybrid) biological and cultural evolution of the human person (which, correspondingly, is also a contingent hybrid artifact), a development that is entirely empirical in the familiar sense. Does Pihlström mean to say that, despite his waiver, there remains *some* argumentative advantage in speaking of the "naturalized transcendental" over the "constitutively empirical"—or would he yield on that as well? If he yielded here, then (as the expression goes), we cannot be more that "words apart". I hold that Kant is unable to formulate an operable distinction between the transcendental and the empirical—and thus *he* fails. Pihlström counters by admitting that *he* means to "blur" the distinction; but what does he gain?

I think that if we follow Peirce's argument, then Kant's being "a confused pragmatist" or Kant's being a "transcendentalist" who construes the synthetic *a priori* as no more than a provisional *a posteriori* projection comes to the same thing: either Kant has not yet grasped that he must finally join the pragmatist critics of apodictic knowledge or he fails to see that he's already effectively conceded that the "*a priori*" features of Euclidean geometry and Newtonian physics will undoubtedly be replaced (exactly how, no one knows) by historied revisions affecting what our evolving sciences persuade us is a better conjecture as to the true nature of the real world *and* the epistemology by which we are thus persuaded (for instance, along the lines Cassirer favors, which are also Kant's)—see (Cassirer, 1957, 475–79) and (Kant, 1998 [1787] A644/B672). Ultimately, I suggest, Kant's concessions, in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic (of the first *Critique*), renders all of his would-be *a priori* constraints on the "constitutive" and "regulative" principles by which any realist reading of cognitive practices may be secured utterly vacuous: both with respect to practical life (and perception) and with respect to the natural sciences. I claim that the "transcendental" cannot be satisfactorily salvaged in functional terms—that is, only logically. Would Pihlström be able to demonstrate that his pragmatist transcendentals yield synthetic *a priori* truths that do not dwindle below the threshold of such would-be claims? If he is not, then, I should say, the "naturalized transcendental" is no more than an oxymoron. (I should add that the same is true—and for much the same reasons—of Brandom's "analytic pragmatism".)

I see two possible lines of argument. In accord with one, Pihlström cites (disapprovingly) my contrast between reality's being constructed (a doctrine I oppose but which Pihlström appears to adopt, as an Idealist) and the admittedly (the trivially) constructed status of our mere "picture" or (pictures) of what inquiry leads us (contingently) to believe the world is like (which, in my account, does not—certainly need not—invoke representational *tertium* at all). Pihlström apparently believes that the view just set forth would be congenial to his own notion of "pragmatic realism" if we were "able to give up Margolis's on my view too sharp distinction between (the construction of) reality itself and our pictures of it". (Of course, that scants the point of my demurrer.)

Pihlström cites (approvingly) Hilary Putnam's view that "some objects (e.g. stars) are independent of us all and would have existed even if there had never been humans". Of course! Peirce would not deny this. In at least one of his incarnations Putnam means this to challenge antirealists mortally—he brings the charge (mistakenly) against Peirce; but I can't see the point of Pihlström's citing it, if, as seems reasonably clear, it invites a distinction between the *concept* of an "independent world" and the *concept* of "our coming to know" the independent world. Does Pihlström mean (I find it more than unlikely) that Putnam's "stars" (or "unknown objects") exist in some "non-constructed" way but that known stars are "constructed" because we know them? No, the natural world is not "constructed", as a result (in any sense) of our merely coming to know the way the world is; and, of course, we may affirm what we believe the world to be like by merely stating our beliefs (which, roughly, is what I mean by our "picture" of the world). There's the beauty of opposing Pihlström's formulation.

Imagine that there is an unknown distorting factor in our perception of the world that it would be useful to discover, though we may never discover it. We "correct" our "picture" of the world as best we can, but our optimism may mislead us. Here, a residual but benign skepticism (joined to the coordinate distinction between our conception of an independent world and our conception of forming and replacing, for cause, our picture of that world) yields a degree of freedom and caution regarding our provisional claims that cannot be bettered by Pihlström's formula, though Pihlström invokes a transcendental resource.

The second possibility concerns what Pihlström says about Peirce's "scholastic realism", which he rightly links to the resolution of the first puzzle. Here, initially, he seems to favor the main thrust of my own

argument; but (if Pihlström won't mind my saying so), he wrongly casts me as a Kantian-like transcendental realist close to his own persuasion:

[The general idea is that] [t]he world is not transparent, nor describable in abstraction from our constantly developing local perspectives [Pihlström says]. Given this entanglement of reality and language, Margolis's ideas seem to lead, *pace* his own self-understanding, to a fruitful combination of pragmatism and transcendental philosophy. For him, the world is always already humanly "constructed" [I take that to be false: the realist standing of our picture of the world is an abductive guess or construct, but the world is not] and our understanding of it is "historied" [I take that to be true]; what we're dealing with (and living in) is a Kantian-like "symbiotized" world in which the subject and the object are mutually dependent on each other, never to be fully separated.

I take the indissoluble unity of metaphysical and epistemological issues at face value. I do *not* mean by *that* that there is any uniquely valid version of realism (or Idealism) or any linkage between the two that determinately affects the "composition" of the putatively independent world that we must concede *a priori*. That's to say: I am unable to say precisely what contribution Pihlström's transcendental provides. Pihlström goes on to apply these distinctions to my treatment of Peirce's view of "real generals". But let me attend, first, to the account I report Pihlström as having just cited (above).

I take "enlanguaged" knowledge (as in the sciences) to be "historied", for instance, perception penetrated by some form of linguistic rendering: such knowledge is "constructed" in various nested ways. So it's trivial enough to say (abbreviatively) that the "world we claim to know" is "constructed", because knowledge pertinently takes the form of a verbal "construction", without invoking Kantian-like distinctions of realism and idealism. My sort of constructive posit obviates Kant's constructivism, which yields determinate Idealist categories by which the known world is itself formed. Generically, realism is an abduction, neither an empirical nor a transcendental discovery. (I don't think Pihlström would agree.)

I think I never affirm (unless trivially or by abbreviation) the symbiosis of metaphysical and epistemological issues, *in the sense in which* "the world is always already humanly constructed"; it's not the independent world that's constructed (in any metaphysical sense); at best, it's our passing picture of the independent world that we construct (and report). Now, does Pihlström mean that the "independent" world is what any and every

local conceptual scheme (or picture) makes of it, or does he mean that it's entirely possible that every conceptual picture of the world is defective and open to correction and replacement and that we may never be able to determine the ultimate independent "structure" of the known world? That's to say: the world unaffected by our claims to know it or "metaphysically unaffected" by our knowing it. If Pihlström yields along these lines, then I suppose there's no role left for transcendental discovery beyond empirical discovery. So I agree with Pihlström's verdict: that "any realism that is not subordinated to historicist constructivism is, according to Margolis, hopeless, if one does not believe in the possibility of a Platonic or Aristotelian 'first philosophy.'" (I would only add, "*faute de mieux*".)

I see no evidence that we have discovered any strictly necessary or exceptionless nomological regularities in nature or that we must suppose there must be such uniformities to be found. I am myself entirely prepared to concede the possibility of competing pictures or interpretations of a given set of observational data, in terms of the putatively underlying microtheoretical structures of the real world answering to the mathematized laws said to govern that sector of the world provisionally described by a suitable reading of the data, shared, with equal aptness, by competing theories, even where those theories are incompatible, perhaps even incommensurable, in their realist presumptions. It seems to me that the unavoidable looseness of conceptual fit, in linking an observational vocabulary, an explanatory microtheoretical vocabulary, and a mathematized nomological vocabulary, will normally require so-called bridge laws or interpretations (drawing on other parts of the explanatory resources of the science in question) that, even in reconciling three such vocabularies, taken pairwise, there may well be room for apt but opposed pictures of what to count as the true structure of that part of the independent world under inquiry; so that, if so, then it may also be possible that we remain forever unable to demonstrate the superiority of one such picture over another, in terms of realism.

Furthermore, I may have misled Pihlström. I believe I make it clear, on a number of occasions, that I take "exists" to be used quite narrowly in any "naturalism" said to range over what is materially incarnate or embodied—whether substances, attributes, relations, thoughts, or whatever. I have no objection to anyone's speaking of numbers as existing, in some honorable sense; but I favor a sparer metaphysics. I don't treat "meanings" or "thoughts" or "numbers" as fictions—or Peircean "generals". Actually, as with persons and actions, and language and thought,

I suggest how to construe such distinctions as materially incarnate; furthermore, I don't find this opposed to Peirce's discussion of "real generals", though I put the matter differently. Also, I distinguish between such "abstract" entities and numbers. (See my reply to Niiniluoto.)

Pihlström has read me very thoroughly, and our differences are quite straightforward. I'm very much in his debt: I rather doubt that I would be as clear as I believe I am now, as a result of thinking carefully about Pihlström's seemingly different options. We converge in some degree; nevertheless, I'm not quite certain that I see what Pihlström is driving at when he turns the argument again and again to what he adds, toward the end of his account:

To place something or someone into a certain kind of image [Sellars's term] is already to move within the space of reasons (to continue in a Sellarsian way of speaking). A transcendental argument opens up here: you must have that space, and a transcendental self that engages in the project of "placing", already in place in order to be able to treat anything as a person. An argument within the ontology of persons and cultural entities thus seems to presuppose a transcendental and arguably transcendentially idealistic, account of subjectivity. A realism of emerging world-constructing selfhood is a transcendental presupposition of pragmatic (constructivist) realism.

I don't believe I'm wedded (intentionally or unintentionally) to "a realism of emerging world-constructing selfhood". I don't believe I must be. I do believe that persons are artifactual transforms of the individual members of the species *Homo sapiens*; but I take that to be an empirical discovery, which I put to philosophical use. (I may be mistaken.) I do indeed believe that humans build bridges, paint portraits, invent machines, and so on; but they do so by altering (in ingenious ways) parts of the material world, which they do not in any seriously metaphysical sense originally produce or create. They do not, in any sense that I can make out, *construct* the world, the world we posit to be real and to exist independently of our beliefs about it, though of course we cannot speak about it unless we are cognitively capable of doing so. I take that posit to be an abduction, not a transcendental discovery. I'm struck by the fact that there are many competing, quite different theories of what a person is and that we're quite uncertain as to what is the necessarily true way to construe "the person". I certainly don't think that Kant's account is necessarily true. To be candid, what I've just cited from Pihlström strikes me as oddly redundant, superfluous (on one reading) and false (on another). I'm afraid

I don't understand the meaning of "presuppose" in Pihlström's passage: it looks as if, if I mention the presence of a human self (which I suppose I do in a familiar empirical way: I meet you in town), then I must also, then and there, "presuppose" persons (and their "subjectivity") in some transcendental sense. But (for my own part) I merely suppose that I had indeed noticed that the persons I encounter manifest a normal ability to think and report their thoughts, and so on. What have I missed?

Would Pihlström admit human creativity to be merely empirical: say, the invention of cubism or the computer? I am aware that Pihlström is, so to say, airing "congenial differences" between us; but I don't see the conceptual motivation of the transcendental itself—or indeed of "transcendental idealism": the contingent abilities of persons seem to be novel (and variable) transforms of prior animal talents. Do there need to be transcendental conditions on genuinely new talents? Is there an animal transcendental, and what's at stake in affirming or denying that we need the Kantian apparatus at all? Peirce himself, I suggest, begins to see how the abductive turn could easily eclipse the whole of Kant's apriorism and simply acknowledge the benign standing of the self-referential paradoxes of epistemology. Regarding Sellars's "space of reasons" I'm quite prepared to admit that the concept of a person as an apt linguistic agent entails that persons find themselves in "the space of reasons"—in effect, committed to the use of normative distinctions. But, then, I explain *that* fact empirically by supposing that the formation of a person in (primeval time, or sequentially, among the current lot of human infants) is the same process as what I call, effectively, the original "invention" of language ("external *Bildung*") and/or the social achievement of successive cohorts of infants ("internal *Bildung*") in mastering language and thus transforming themselves into persons. I see no need for the transcendental option there.

To Ilkka Niiniluoto

Ilkka Niiniluoto's "Margolis and Popper on Cultural Entities" opens the discussion, without ceremony, taking me back to my first encounter with Karl Popper's well-known "three worlds" proposal (1972, Chs 3–4), which Niiniluoto finds at least latent in my treatment of persons and culture in non-reductive materialist terms, in *Persons and Minds* (1978) and *Culture and Cultural Entities* (1984); hence, also, in my keynote essay, "Toward a Metaphysics of Culture" (2014). I thank him for that: he's drawn me into

his own reflections regarding a conceptual thicket that Popper contrived at least fifty years ago.

Nevertheless, in *Objective Knowledge* (1972), Popper introduces his "three worlds" in a way I cannot accept. He claims to support a "pluralistic philosophy" and to be guided by Plato's notion of a third world "of Forms or Ideas", "though [he is] neither a Platonist nor a Hegelian"; and, on an "interpretation" of Plato's theory, he salutes Plato as having provided a theory that "genuinely transcends the dualistic schema of matter and mind" (154). Popper marks off "the physical world", "the mental world", and "the world of intelligibles, or of *ideas in the objective sense* [...] [that is,] possible objects of thought" (154). So that it appears that he is a dualist and, one must surmise, not a materialist of any sort:

[in] this pluralistic philosophy [he says] the world consists of at least three ontologically distinct sub-worlds [...] so related that the first two can interact [...] the last two can interact [...] the second world [...] interacts with each of the other two worlds", "[but] the first world and the third world cannot interact, save through the intervention of the second world. 154-55

I find this intolerably and insuperably problematic, to be honest. The dualism is unwelcome—less than perspicuous and utterly unnecessary. I don't know what to make of these worlds.

World 3 is a hodge-podge. And Popper actually advises us "[not to take] the words 'world' or 'universe' too seriously". "We might [he says] distinguish more than three worlds", "[it's] merely a matter of convenience" (Popper 1972, 106—07). But what does that mean ontologically? I myself have tried to justify a reasonably systematic ontology linking the macroscopic physical world (*including* its forms of sentience) and the macroscopic human world, which I treat as an artifactual, hybrid, unique, enlanguaged, complex and emergent transform of the other, produced through the intertwined evolution of *Homo sapiens* and the gradual invention, social transmission, individual and aggregated mastery of true language by the gifted primates that we are, self-transformed, thereby, into persons, so as to manifest the inner mental life of persons and the forms of agency that uniquely characterize such persons. I regard that as an essential task of ontology, which Popper's account cannot render in any plausible guise. World 3 seems to be a world of abstracta, though that does not quite match what Popper wishes to include.

I take the emergence of persons to be the obverse side of the intertwined biological and cultural process that appears as the embodied cul-

tural evolution of language (“external *Bildung*”) and the serial mastery of language by cohorts of the infant members of *Homo sapiens* (“internal *Bildung*”). It’s my principal economy, since it yields a systematic picture of the asymmetric interdependence of the two “worlds”: the natural (physical and physically incarnate) world and the linguistically encultured world of human persons (suitably incarnated). The model profoundly affects the treatment of causality, nomologicality, and reductionism; the relationship between freedom and causality; the indissoluble incarnation of the encultured world within the medium of the physical world; and the problematic relationship between the natural and human sciences within one world.

Popper makes it clear that he believes his “third world resembles most closely the universe of Frege’s objective contents of thought” (106). I confess I find Frege’s universe of “thoughts” utterly alien, all but useless, certainly not well adapted to include the whole of the world of enlanguaged culture (which, on Popper’s view, seems to comprise persons, artworks, actions, abstract entities, numbers, arguments and the like) deemed to be the “objective contents of thought, especially of scientific and poetic thoughts and of works of art” (106). I don’t see how Popper’s world is ordered in any recognizable way. In any case, I’m struck by the relative absence (here) of a theory of persons. I am myself persuaded that the postulation of persons as artifactual but irreducibly emergent, hybrid, enlanguaged, natural, “second-natured” agents may be the single most strategically important, unifying innovation due to Darwinian and post-Darwinian reflections. I regard the unique cognitive and agentic abilities of persons to be decisive in making systematic sense of epistemological and metaphysical issues, as well as with regard to normative and practical matters. The “cultural and social sciences” seem to me to be very different from the formal disciplines of “logic and mathematics”. Popper’s proposal of an “epistemology without a knowing subject” (107–09) seems to acknowledge the conceptual awkwardness of the omnibus category—World 3. But, more than that, I see no plausible way of disjoining the subjective and objective aspects of the cognitional relationship between persons and a cognizable world.

Here are a number of pertinent claims that I regard as empirically confirmed or distinctly favored by what may be viewed as an alternative schema to Popper’s Worlds 1 and 2: (a) there are no compelling grounds on which to vouchsafe the necessity that if events are causally linked, they must be linked under strict nomological universals (laws of nature); laws

are, rather, conjectural regularities, contrary to Kant, Hempel, Davidson, Kim, but in accord with the views of Cartwright, van Fraassen, Neurath, and, I believe, Popper himself (1972, 357); (b) the uniquely enlanguaged phenomena of the macroscopic world of human culture (what I call the Intentional world) is emergent in ways that cannot be meaningfully reduced in physicalist terms; but the things of that world exist only as indissolubly, non-dualistically, emergently incarnate—as by linguistic or linguistically qualified “penetration”, in speech, artworks, actions, machines, technologies and the like—in suitable physical or material media that are themselves, in principle, empirically open to microtheoretical, inter-level reduction (or counterfactual heuristic replacements justified on pragmatist grounds): I take my own posit of artifactual persons and their actions to provide the paradigm of the analysis required; (c) there are no psychophysical laws, though the Intentionally emergent, whether as subjective thoughts or as public artifacts (feelings, actions, artworks) can accommodate “event causality” (borrowing Donald Davidson’s term) but cannot be directly said to play an “eventual causal” role itself except by way of a “borrowed” or “courtesy” usage (against Davidson, Danto, Hempel, Kim, and possibly Popper, though, as I surmise, still in accord with the Wittgenstein of the *Investigations*); the issue has to do, rather, with constraints of ontological “adequation”; (d) there may be a need for a minimal, emergent form of incipient sentience along purely physicalist lines (as with Francis Crick and, I believe, John Searle, possibly also with Popper if I understand him correctly), and, if so, then successor biological forms of such an emergent phenomenon might, conceivably, if suitably evolved, be themselves Intentionally transformed as one or another form of self-reflexive awareness unique to human persons; (e) causality and human autonomy are entirely compatible within the terms of human action; indeed, the capacity for deliberate choice and the exercise of freedom depend on effective forms of “internal *Bildung*” (as with the mastery of language, which implicates causal processes); here, again, the Intentional world is not, as such, a causal world (in the sense of “event causality”) but, on my reading, accommodates causality within the more complex processes of incarnation (as with the inclusion of “bodily movements” within the emergent complexity of Intentional actions), in accord, say, with Wittgenstein’s famous account of raising one’s arm (1953, § 621) —hence, in various ways, against Kant, Cassirer, Davidson, Hempel, Danto, and perhaps Popper; and (f) I’m not at all clear as to what to conclude about “abstract entities”, “propositions and numbers”, as Niiniluoto suggests,

in Popper's name (and, apparently, in his own as well). "Abstract entities (in Frege's sense) seem to support Popper's division between World 2 and World 3, but I can't see how the physical sciences can support Frege's view or Popper's revision of Frege's view. I see no way of admitting perceptual evidence or perceptual grounds in the sciences, without admitting the inseparability of the rational and the psychological.

I'm inclined to think there must be many conjectured "things" that we're normally reluctant to affirm or deny (with assurance) that have some sort of realist or quasi-realist status. If, as Niiniluoto himself suggests, these "things" may be reasonably taken to be "created or constructed by human action", then it may be quite easy to capture them as indissolubly embedded in one or another more roundabout but less controversial context of discourse: for example, by invoking the practice of thinking-about-numbers (or propositions), as opposed to postulating numbers or propositions *simpliciter*. But that may appear to be no more than a way of deliberately postponing coming to grips with abstract entities themselves. I myself see no reason why we could not settle, provisionally, for some sort of permissive "quasi-realism". I'm inclined to favor Popper over Mario Bunge here, but I prefer to hedge my bets nevertheless. (I don't think the accommodation of numbers should drive our ontology: better to favor a heuristic tactic here, in the face of puzzlement.)

Niiniluoto has marked off a number of distinct convergences between Popper's and my own "ontology" of culture. He mentions, especially, a degree of convergence on "emergent materialism" with regard to the philosophy of mind and, also, my treatment of persons as "cultural artifacts". Here, it's true that I oppose Hume and Kant (for different reasons) as well as dualists and idealists (up to a point). But I'm inclined to think that we agree at least about some matters that need to be carefully explored. I should mention especially (pretty well in agreement with Niiniluoto) issues regarding how causality is to be treated in the Intentional world, how the incarnation or embodiment of cultural entities works, how to view tokens and types, and what to make of straightforwardly "abstract objects"—what Niiniluoto and Popper had in mind in speaking of "unembodied abstract objects" (natural numbers, for instance). I've already taken a pass on the last option (in favor of a lax form of quasi-realism), but I'll venture a few final remarks about these last issues, so as not to appear to be ducking topics Niiniluoto expressly favors.

Regarding the causal question, let me say that my habit is to avoid multiplying novel forms of causality. This, for instance, explains why I avoid

Roderick Chisholm's notion of "agent causality" (Chisholm, 1971): persons, on my view, do not cause (in any straightforward sense of "cause") the actions they utter (or "bring about"): they simply act; and when they act ("utter" an action), the action performed entails certain incarnating changes—a set of bodily movements which are indeed the causally enabling "parts" (but not the "proper parts") of the action uttered. (The idiom of Intentional action and that of merely "bodily movements" I regard as generally incommensurable but compatible.) Causality (read as favoring the independence of cause and effect, in the "event causality" sense) rightly holds, *adequationally*, between bodily movements as causes and effects within one or another suitably complex construction that we call a person's action (an Intentionally described event): say, the anarchist Princip's assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand. To speak of this as Princip's causing the death of the Archduke is (as I've suggested) to speak of causality in a "borrowed" or "courtesy" way (as in matters of legal responsibility). This is the sense in which Davidson (2001), following Hempel, claims that beliefs and desires usually count as the cause of an action (the "primary reason" for doing what one does: effectively, the cause of what one does). I claim the "adequation" of causality and action has been slighted here—however pardonably. Belief and desire may be treated "motivationally" rather than "causally" in the "event causality" sense: grammatically, it usually appears as adverbial, which is to say, it qualifies what is explained non-reductively.

On the matter of "emergent materialism", I must mention that if we treat the macroscopic world we live in as "emergent", then the merely physical "world" and the "Intentional world" emerge in very different ways: the emergence of the physical world is open, in principle, to inter-level reduction, under covering laws (of whatever regularity we are able to find), but the Intentional world (which, as I've argued, depends on the unique evolution of true language and a correspondingly unique transformation of the human primate into a functional person) cannot meaningfully be reduced in physicalist terms. Here, I argue, the "things" of the enlanguaged (encultured) human world are more complex than merely physical things, in that to exist or to be real or actual, things of the first sort must be indissolubly incarnate in things of the second sort (persons, artworks, words and sentences, actions, machines) and must manifest Intentional attributes (must be interpretively significant, linguistically or in linguistically qualified ways). I take the process to be a unique form of emergence, invisible to all creatures but persons and irreducible in re-

ductionist terms. This leaves only Niiniluoto's "unembodied abstract objects" to account for. My intuition, here, is that numbers and propositions and either interior thoughts and feelings or music actually performed or recorded ought not to be jumbled together in Popper's World 3.

Music and poetry I find yield very nicely to my contrived schema of Intentionally emergent incarnation: the same analytic strategy works for whatever exhibits a conceptual pairing of the general sort illustrated by person/primate, word or sentence/sound or mark, action/bodily movement, painting/painted canvas, music/sound, enlanguaged culture/material nature, history/temporal event, thought/neural discharge. I find this reassuring: I take it to hold for most of what Popper assigns (puzzlingly, disjunctively) to World 2 or World 3. I'm largely persuaded by arguments like those of Wittgenstein and Strawson to the effect that, at the level of the life of persons, the mental is largely open to public and intelligible avowal. Accordingly, as I've explained, I reject reductionism regarding enlanguaged (or what I would call "lingual") thinking (that is, inner mental states and events, or implied thinking, as in the dance, that presupposes the mastery of language but does not involve actual linguistic utterings). Here, I should add, the analogy between persons and artworks yields a heuristic model: there may be other perspicuous ways of characterizing persons.

Furthermore, the resources of the type/token idiom call for a more flexible application of my ontological schema. I introduce the purely instrumental notion of counting cultural "things" as "tokens-of-a-type", where it makes no sense to speak of "tokens" or "types" as independently real or actual: for instance, all the performances of Beethoven's Third Symphony are "tokens"-of-the-one-Symphony—for purposes of *counting* Beethoven's musical output. The musical score (which also exists as tokens-of-a-type) *is* the music only by way of a tolerated abbreviation. In its most robust sense, music exists *qua* music as and when played; the performances are inevitably very different from one another and reference to an acceptable score helps us to count "musical things" in an acceptable way: music is incarnate in appropriately ordered sound; poetry is most easily managed in terms of speech, which is not easily managed in terms of suitably ordered sounds but is easily extended to some printed notation of (say) a poem, by comparison with our treatment of music. Hence, "unembodied abstract objects" are effectively eliminated among the usual run of cultural "things". "Propositions" seem, by and large, to yield conformably. Numbers still seem effectively unique. Contrary to Popper's intuition,

they don't seem to be humanly invented but they don't seem to exist either. They seem to be deep abstractions of an invariant (or idealized) sort drawn from the whole of intelligent life (as also, with argument forms). I see no reason to invent a heavenly home for them.

To Mirja Hartimo

I find myself in an odd position, responding to Mirja Hartimo's extremely challenging paper. I think I had better be as candid as possible about the basis for my remarks. I certainly welcome the extended comparison she offers between my views and Husserl's on a number of rather large issues she finds worth explicating. Generally, she regards my views as inadequately developed, excessively "abstract and general", not informed by analyses that match the fine gauge of Husserl's "transcendental phenomenology" or Husserl's detailed reports of the work of the various sciences that ought to inform any account of the philosophical topics she mentions. Yet, in spite of that, Hartimo concedes a surprising number of substantive agreements between Husserl and myself, though Husserl does not figure at all (or more than barely) in those texts (of mine) that she explicitly mentions. I feel a little at sea here.

I have in fact tried to fathom (on other occasions) the main thrust of Husserl's immense undertaking and am reasonably explicit about my doubts about the coherence and plausibility of a number of Husserl's most fundamental concepts (for instance, in *Pragmatism's Advantage*, 2010). Frankly, Hartimo pretty well takes it for granted (understandably, perhaps, given her convictions) that Husserl has indeed effectively defined and shown us how to pursue a "science of consciousness" of the phenomenological sort he was at work on through his entire life. I confess I'm not persuaded by Husserl's argument or explanation of what he has accomplished—or the validity of his own interpretation of the import of his own work: I find that the entire "science" hangs in the air. I do, however, freely (even admiringly) admit that Husserl makes a number of stunning contributions to our understanding of what he calls "consciousness" (time-consciousness, for instance). It's just that I don't see that he ever actually shows us *that* his own picture of *what he's doing* has any chance of being valid.

Let me cite here (I've cited it before) a brief, hardly uncharacteristic statement of Husserl's, which Dan Zahavi cites (translation modified by Zahavi in his own 2003, 110–111), from Husserl's *Psychological and Tran-*

scendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927–1931) (1997); it collects in one fell swoop nearly all the most reasonable worries even sympathetic readers of Husserl would like to have clarified before they conceded anything like Hartimo's confidence in Husserl's *science* of transcendental phenomenology:

Concrete, full transcendental subjectivity [Husserl affirms] is the totality of an open community of I's—a totality that comes from within, that is unified purely transcendentially, and that is concrete only in this way. Transcendental intersubjectivity is the absolute and only self-sufficient ontological foundation [*Seinsboden*], out of which every objective (the totality of objectively real entities, but also every objective ideal world) draws its sense and its validity.

I don't deny that Husserl names and characterizes his would-be science here: I don't see anything, however, that could possibly count as confirmation of there being any such discipline, and I don't see how it could be reconciled with what Hartimo says, in her opening remarks, about showing "that Husserl's 'faculties' do not yield [are not meant to yield] necessities of thought that empirical science must accommodate [that is, must be governed by—say, in the "constituting" sense]"; or about transcendental reason's proceeding *a posteriori*; or that my naturalism and "Husserlian phenomenology" can be as "remarkably similar in spirit" as she alleges. Although I'm pleased (at the same time I'm a little bewildered) that, apart from our very different conceptions of what each of us thinks Husserl is advancing, Hartimo is prepared to acknowledge that Husserl and I agree or converge on a goodly number of particular findings; or that Husserl's criticism of normativity (for instance) is "internal [...] does not rely on any external foundations"—*how* could it be "internal" to naturalism or the "natural attitude" and *how* could it be shown to be "internal" to transcendental phenomenology (in the requisite sense), if Husserl's *epoché* is in play along the lines cited? I'm baffled here, I don't see how Hartimo can suppose that I am in any way committed to what Husserl says about "transcendental subjectivity" (in the passage I've just cited).

I'll mention, but won't actually cite, the entire well-known passage from the English edition's preface to the 1913 German edition of *Ideas* (1962), in which Husserl speaks of "Transcendental Subjectivity [as] an absolutely independent realm of direct experience". I cannot see any reason to endorse Husserl's claim, or any way to reconcile Husserl's remarks with what Hartimo now says. At the very least, Husserl's changed his

mind in various radical ways; and the few passages I've mentioned are hardly thought to be marginal or transient. Certainly, one notably bold thesis that Husserl champions is that there is a *sui generis* form of "experience" that belongs to transcendental phenomenology itself, so that the discipline is not merely methodologically distinct. (I should like to have heard more about these matters, especially if Hartimo has a systematic argument regarding what to salvage, or reinterpret, or discard in Husserl.)

I need to step back here to say, as candidly as I can, that I personally seek the leanest possible formulation of what I take to be involved in any epistemological or metaphysical reflection, or in any analysis of what Husserl calls "consciousness". For one thing, I see no suitably defended possibility of "bracketing" consciousness or the content of "experience" from the "natural attitude" (however informally or generously conceived). I'm persuaded that *the content of experience* of normally apt human persons capable of verbally reporting or avowing what they take themselves to be aware of *is*, on the strength of the unprivileged sources and evidence they standardly rely on, qualified by their having acquired the power of reportage they call on (in having mastered language)—so that the "natural attitude" cannot be bracketed. What "remains" belongs to the "natural attitude" which, as far as I can see, is second-natured, artifactual in the cultural sense, not in any way privileged.

Secondly, I see no reason to believe that the "content of consciousness" is at all "common" or uniform, moving from one society to another or moving through different historied phases of the same society. I concede that the notion of a *Lebenswelt* is extremely useful; but I see no reason to think its "content" is strictly unified (though we do have a strong sense—problematic beyond our ordinary powers of confirmation—of our tacit "system" of beliefs being workably unified); determinately bounded; internally coherent and free of inconsistent and incompatible elements; "universally" operative; capable of yielding objectively valid essences of any kind; readily individuated and reidentified among "other" lifeworlds; teleologically ordered in some determinately accessible way; not subject, adventitiously, to the vagaries of historied experience or the effects of intra and inter-*lebensweltlich* interactions among informally changing sub-societies within any putative *Lebenswelt*, and so on. (All this seems to me decidedly problematic.)

Thirdly, beyond all this, I take the human person to be an artifactual transform of the human primate (*Homo sapiens sapiens*)—effectively, the obverse side of the contingent acquisition and mastery of a home language

and the local culture that that subtends—“hybrid”—meaning by that, not any disjunctive dualism, as Hartimo suggests, but, rather, the evolutionary entwining of the biological and enlanguaged (or encultured) emergence of persons, where the second emerges within the terms of the first, is incarnate in them, but is not reducible to the phenomena of the first; and where reason itself is, in good part, an artifact of historied culture (not assuredly uniform or changeless across disciplines and lifeworlds).

If all this is conceded, then it seems to me the *epoché* must be effectively inoperative—very possibly a form of self-deception. And, fourthly, that if what I’ve just collected is true (which I take to be pretty well confirmed, empirically, by paleoanthropological evidence and evidence drawn from studies of comparative *Bildung* among observable human societies), then the presumption that we possess a faculty of transcendental phenomenological reason is more than problematic, although the ordinary powers we possess may well support some of Husserl’s discoveries, shorn of his excessive transcendental presumptions.

I see no way in which Husserl’s account can be reconciled with any realist reading of the theoretical objects of advanced physics; and where phenomenology is regarded as close to any originary reportage of what can be avowed experientially, I myself favor a view (closer to Hegel’s and Peirce’s) that phenomenology must be “presuppositionless”—that is, *not* reliable in any ontological sense. Furthermore, I see no evidence that there could be a distinctive kind of experience accessible only to “transcendental subjectivity”. I’m not sure I understand what that could mean, though Husserl’s words are plain enough. Where phenomenology is meant to accommodate what I call the Intentional world, I would insist that it is simply a more flexible “empirical” capacity to discern those perceptual features of things that exceed the limitations of “phenomenal” perception. I see no reason to accord it any sort of certainty.

I’m as much persuaded that I’m right about these and similar claims as Husserlians are about the viability of a science of consciousness under the terms of the *epoché*. I have no intention of quarreling about the matter here; but I must ask Mirja Hartimoto tell me, please, where, explicitly and precisely, Husserl actually provides a demonstration that transcendental phenomenology can proceed in the way she claims it can and does; how the practice can support the claims it makes, in *a posteriori* terms, and what its final linkage with the “natural attitude” is. Wherever Hartimo finds that she and I converge, I think it’s very likely that we interpret what’s been accomplished in very different ways and that seemingly simi-

lar ascriptions must mean very different things to each of us. I don't wish to be merely quarrelsome, but I cannot see that Husserl validates his confidence in any version of transcendental privilege—or that we need any such privilege to buttress phenomenological perception.

I'll add four further brief thoughts here. The first, that it is indeed true that I construe my own project as explicitly anti-Kantian (opposed to Kant's apriorism), though I believe Husserl's claims are probably more strenuous than Kant's and even less easily defended. The second, that I see no basis for supposing that, *if* the transcendental proceeded *a posteriori*—even if one were to allow that the *a posteriori* affords premises that may (in some sense) function benignly, possibly in a privileged *a priori* role as well, even if only in a diminished way, as for instance along C.I. Lewis's lines—transcendental phenomenology may still be shown to be determinably different or separable from empirical or naturalized inquiry. (I take the latter challenge to be the upshot of disqualifying the *epoché*.) My third thought is to the effect that I allow myself the agonistic style of presentation I adopt, for the sake of an extreme economy (for my own purpose), though I fully expect to be obliged to provide an adequate argument and adequate evidence in favor of my alternative conception. In fact, I believe I have (in anticipation, so to say, of Hartimo's charge) applied the supporting argument within the space of a fair number of empirical disciplines. It is a huge topic, I admit, and I have no right to think I'm close to completing my own brief.

The fourth consideration may be the most important and promising of the lot. Possibly, also, the least familiar. I take the self-referential paradoxes of epistemology to be insuperable, ineluctable, and of the greatest importance in philosophy; and I take Kant to have transformed "first philosophy" in such a way that epistemology and metaphysics prove to be inseparable and that epistemological questions rightly claim a certain operative primacy. The only way I can see to "resolve" the paradoxes is to render them (and the skepticism they engender) completely benign, by demonstrating that we can live with the challenge of a residual skepticism together with an informal, instrumentally adequate use of the circular reasoning and potentially infinite regress of evidentiary challenges brought to bear on the presumptive competence of our cognitive powers.

Here, I believe Charles Peirce breaks through the Kantian-like limitations of his own (originally) infinitist form of fallibilism—grasps the effectiveness of his conjectures regarding "abductive guesses" ("abductive Hope", as Peirce sometimes calls the propensity in question, what I dub

Peirce's "abductive turn"), that is, that human cognition arises out of potentially disabling blockages of inquiry (broadly called "doubts") centered inchoately in life itself; and that their resolution, along rational and cognitive lines, very probably depends on *tacit or adjunctive abilities, within the continuum of animal and rational life*, that are not themselves able to be treated as explicit cognitive methods, but without which cognition may not actually (or ever) succeed. If this line of reasoning holds, then strict apriorism, whether Kantian or Husserlian, utterly fails. (I honestly see no point to any other form of apriorism, if it cannot provide a principled disjunction between the empirical and the transcendental.) Here, we begin to glimpse the main commitment of a thoroughly pragmatist resolution of the problem of knowledge that runs counter to Cartesian, Kantian, neo-Kantian, and Husserlian convictions.

I may add that I take Dewey's analysis of an "indeterminate situation" to be a "mythic" conjecture regarding the continuum of the animal and the human, as well as the continuum between the cognitive and the "noncognitive" regarding the competence of human inquirers to achieve a significant measure of scientific knowledge. ("Noncognitive" is not a perspicuous term here, though it's often substituted for "abductive": "tacit" is a little better, but not adequate either.) If I may put the matter slyly: if Hartimo is right to say that I converge with Husserl on a number of important epistemological matters, then it may be that Husserl relies on slimmer sources than he claims for himself; and, as a result, perhaps he should have supported laxer conclusions than he actually does. In any case, the self-referential paradoxes of epistemology seem to me to subvert any sort of epistemological privilege. Seen this way, Husserl's confidence strikes me as regressive. Here, I suggest, any cognitive competence that may rightly advance claims that have realist standing cannot be legitimated by any more foundational grounds than those of sustained cultural immersion (sufficient to validate our mastery of a natural language). Realism must be a constructive posit, not an empirical discovery and not a transcendental certitude.

I'll add only a few more reflections on normativity, since Hartimo seems to find me quite close to Husserl on these issues, though still decidedly deficient in my own behalf. For my own part, I find myself particularly drawn to a number of doctrines Hartimo attributes to Husserl in the latter part of her essay, which, as far as I am aware, I readily support without benefit of transcendental phenomenology—and which, characteristically or often, I qualify in ways Husserl would probably not allow. For

instance, I agree that normative criticism must be "entirely internal; it does not require [and I would say, cannot validate] any extra-naturalist posits or foundational points of view". But then, I don't see that "it requires transcendental clarification of our experiences as well as examining the historical genesis of the activity in question". Hartimo and I undoubtedly have very different conceptions of the transcendental. I deny that we can demonstrate that we have and are capable of acquiring synthetic *a priori* truths. One critical reason for this insistence is that I cannot see that Husserl provides any convincing ground for construing transcendental phenomenology as itself "entirely internal" (to subjectivity)—and thus aprioristically reliable. It seems to rely on an entirely deceptive disjunction between the "subjective" and whatever, relative to cognition, it opposes.

I agree that, normally, "we do not experience data but a structured and intelligible world where there are objects". I would qualify the assumption that "scientific investigation presupposes that there is truth to the matter" in a similar way: I would add a qualification to the thesis that "the sciences presuppose the lifeworld in which everything takes place". I myself treat the "lifeworld" as an idealized construction projected, changeably, under the changing yield of historied experience, neither rightly unitary nor plural, nor determinately bounded, nor assuredly consistent or coherent in all respects, nor closed or totalized against opportunistic or adventitious interpretation and reinterpretation. Similarly, I concede a provisionally, softly regulative function to bivalent truth-values, open to the possible need to admit relativistic truth-like values (as with interpretation itself). Hartimo rightly sees that I ascribe an essentially *sittlich* function to norms and normativity, which, on my view, accounts for the "internal" functionality of norms (but not in any merely "subjective" sense). Ultimately, it's the artifactuality of the human self that explains the internal standing of the normative (which is evidently embedded in natural language). I don't deny that *Sittlichkeit* "embedded in social activities [or the *Lebenswelt*] can be misguided"; but then, if the matter is "internal" (as Hartimo says, speaking in Husserl's behalf), then, according to my own argument, the "correction" must be *sittlich* as well (that is, *not* confined to the "internal" of subjectivity). Otherwise, Husserl would have to claim some sort of privilege regarding normativity in what remains after the *epoché*. Would Husserl agree? I think not. But then Husserl needs "internal" resources more reliable than the "natural"—effectively, the artifactual or publicly second-natured.

I should perhaps add that I don't hold that the normative proceeds only by rules or laws, though norms require a measure of systematicity (regarding, say, ranking and grading), whereas mere (animal or human) valuation and preference do not. But this sort of systematicity presupposes discursivity (on my view), which animals lack. Husserl requires a strong form of teleology in his account of the normative; I do not, though normative discourse is admittedly cast in telic terms. Hartimo says that "norms do not tell the ego what to do, rather they serve as goals or ideals towards which we are pulled". In fact, she reports Husserl as holding that, "on a higher level, this act of striving becomes a *will to knowledge*". I see no grounds for such a claim: societies that are *gebildet* in accord with a different *Lebenswelt* will be "pulled" (Hartimo's term) in a different direction. That's all. I see no way to preclude relativism here.

My own view, based on the evolutionary peculiarities of *Homo sapiens* (for instance, regarding the much-debated matter of man's having no "place" in nature adequate for grounding the *telos* of human persons, which bears, of course, on Husserl's account of "nature" and the function of the *epoché*). The significance of the "internality" of normativity poses (as far as I can see) unresolvable puzzles about the standing of normative claims with respect to human goals. I find this a decisive source of disagreement. (Have a look, for example, at what Hartimo reports as Husserl's view of the "norms" governing "transcendental description", which she claims to draw from Husserl's *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1969). I find the following (if an accurate summary of Husserl's thesis) utterly implausible:

No rules or principles [Hartimo reports] are found in the consciousness. No rule-following or obligation can be detected in it. Indeed, to discuss rules or principles governing the constitution of a judgment, it seems, one should enter into a viewpoint external to the pre-predicative consciousness. Rules or principles appear to be part of an *explanatory machinery* used to *explain* the normativity, i.e., what Husserl only *describes* from within.

It becomes instantly clear that "internal" means "internal to pre-predicative consciousness" for Husserl, whereas, for me, "internal" means little more than "internal to the *sittlich* practices of an actual society" Our two views have nothing in common, really—we cannot have construed "nature" or the "natural attitude" in similar ways. My own intuition holds that anything that could count as "pre-predicative consciousness" would have to be theoretical—never directly discernible or reportable phe-

nomenologically. But if what is reported *is* phenomenological, then (on my view) it cannot be disjoined from the psychological. Husserl and I are utterly opposed here.

Hartimo draws me into Husserl's orbit on the normativity issue. But I think I haven't earned the right to be included. I hope I won't seem an undeserving barbarian if I say that I cannot subscribe to Husserl's famous exhortation that "what is clearly necessary" is that we must inquire back into what was originally and always sought in philosophy, [...] [which] must include a critical consideration of what, in respect to the goals and methods of philosophy, is ultimate, original, and genuine and which, once seen, apodictically conquers the will. (1970, 17-18) At the very least, this seems to me to falsify the artifactuality and historicity of human experience itself, an essential factor in my suspicion about the self-deceptive function of the *epoché*.

Nevertheless, at the end of the comparison and my rejoinder, I must say that it was more than generous of Hartimo to have sought, ironically, to isolate as well as possible what might have counted as common ground between Husserl and myself. For my part, I think I was pretty well obliged to confess that, on numerous points on which we may have seemed to share important ground—and do in a way share—we hardly do more than acknowledge the importance of the questions Hartimo believes we share, which we examine in very different—usually, opposed—ways.

To Robert Sinclair

Robert Sinclair's paper, "Margolis on Quine: Naturalized Epistemology and the Problem of Evidence", is a distinctly irenic, totally unexpected piece. I was in fact not familiar with Sinclair's work and imagined (for no good reason) that he might chide me (as others have) for an unrelievedly bleak appraisal of Quine's epistemological efforts, which, though committed to a naturalized theory of empirical knowledge and evidence carefully fitted to the physical sciences, has (on my reading) almost nothing to do with either knowledge or science. But no! Sinclair offers instead a very detailed review of Quine's efforts, which he brings into accord with the views of Bredo Johnson and Peter Hylton, largely in support of my own verdict; he then moves on to disclose fresh textual evidence to the effect that Quine undoubtedly turned toward a pragmatist reformulation that could not have been easily reconciled with his best-known essays leading to the central doctrine of *Word and Object* (1960) and subsequent essays in-

tended to strengthen the original thesis. Sinclair pronounces my “critical interpretation of key Quinean passages [to be] largely correct”—which, by my lights, is very generous indeed. He then closes his account with the briefest mention of the evidence of Quine’s adopting a pragmatist approach to epistemology, which he (Sinclair) judges confirms a sort of convergence between Quine and myself! I hardly know what to say: my comments cannot be quite as handsome as Sinclair’s.

Nevertheless, in the same spirit, my first reading of Sinclair’s piece led me to a potted genealogy, not altogether accurate but instructive enough to venture here, intended to put a didactic finger on a deeper concern than just getting Quine right or getting right the possibility that Quine and I finally converge, as pragmatist comrades, strolling and chatting through a few golden years approaching the end of the last century! The genealogy runs this way, though the biographical details are of the least importance: behind Quine (and, say, Donald Davidson and Jaegwon Kim), there stands Carl Hempel; behind Hempel, there stands Rudolf Carnap; and behind Carnap, there stands Gottlob Frege.

Frege I take to be completely unhelpful in regard to the epistemology of the empirical sciences. (Just read his papers on what he calls “thoughts”.) Carnap’s well-known paper, “Psychology in Physical Language” (1933—33 [1959]) confirms the positivists’ straightforward conviction that Frege’s anti-psychologism has no relevance for the evidential content of the empirical sciences, at the same time Carnap veers off in an utterly unmanageable physicalist direction that attempts, quite hopelessly (heroically, if you wish), to capture psychology obliquely by causal strategies that barely mention “psychologically” pertinent distinctions.

The very first paragraph of Carnap’s piece advances the following manifestos:

every sentence of psychology may be formulated in physical language.
all sentences of psychology describe physical occurrences, namely, the physical behavior of humans and other animals.
physical language is a universal language, that is, a language into which every sentence may be translated.

1933—33 [1959] 165: italics in original

I think there can be no doubt that Sinclair’s careful review of Quine’s original epistemological sketches confirm the finding (which, of course, I share) that “Quine’s use of sensory stimulation cannot account for the evidential support of scientific theories”. But, more than that, Quine’s formulation is, transparently, itself an application of Carnap’s *physicalism*.

That Quine turned to pragmatist formulations signifies that he conceded that the sentences of epistemological claims could not support physicalist translations for the normative and (let us say) "experiential" content of the sentences in question. There's still a conceptual gap, of course.

My conjecture is that Carl Hempel, notably in his influential, "The Function of General Laws in History" (1942, "slightly modified" [1965]), salvages the unity-of-science thesis already implicit in Carnap's physicalism, by eschewing the "metaphysical mode" of discourse, in favor of a "formal" or "methodologically" linguistic substitute, which permits Hempel to hew to the "deductive-nomological" model of explanation (apart from developing worries about "statistical explanation"), without needing to succor Carnap's own failed program. Quine, whose effort ultimately depends on salvaging what remains viable in the Vienna Circle's very brief period of brilliance, is notably canny in featuring what he believes he can overthrow (the analytic/synthetic divide), what he believes he can defend (his naturalistic epistemology), all the while remaining as quiet as possible about what he fears may not be defensible at all, though it still serves an unspecified but necessary function (close to, also necessary in, Hempel's own cleverly minimalist formulation of the unity program).

The essential argument is conveyed in the first paragraph of Hempel's account—though I add the first sentence of the second paragraph, for the sake of closure:

It is a rather widely held opinion [Hempel affirms] that history, in contradistinction to the so-called physical sciences, is concerned with the description of particular events of the past rather than with the search for general laws that might govern those events. As a characterization of the type of problem in which some historians are mainly interested, this view probably cannot be denied; as a statement of the theoretical function of general laws in scientific historical research, it is certainly unacceptable. The following considerations are an attempt to substantiate this point by showing in some detail that general laws have quite analogous functions in history and in the natural sciences, that they form an indispensable instrument of historical research, and that they even constitute the common basis of various procedures which are often considered as characteristic of the social in contradistinction to the natural sciences. By a general law, we shall here understand a statement of universal conditional form, which is capable of being confirmed or disconfirmed by suitable empirical findings.

As far as I know, Hempel yields to Carnap, with regard to the translational problem; and Carnap abandons his version of its would-be solution even if he continues to believe in its general thrust.

Sinclair correctly notes that Quine views his own epistemological account as a *scientific* explanation of "the evidential support of science", that is, by way of characterizing "evidential support [...] as a relation of stimulation to scientific theory"—which "consists of sentences [...] directly and firmly associated with our stimulations" (Quine's own words). Quine goes on to explain that these sentences (which Quine calls "*observation sentences*") "must command the same verdict from all linguistically competent witnesses of the occasion" (Quine 1992, 2-3). I take these remarks to signify a very carefully crafted minimal commitment (on Quine's part) to the distinct views of both Carnap and Hempel, where the latter overlap. (The claim that knowledge is itself a "scientific" question is, of course, decidedly problematic.) My own point here, apart from the failure of Carnap's physicalism, the failure of Hempel's unity of science program, and the rise of severe doubts about the need for nomological necessity or universality among the empirical sciences themselves, is that we must admit that Carnap, Hempel, Quine—also Davidson and Kim (to suggest the continuing force of the pragmatist counterargument)—fail to explain just how physical and psychological (or mental) terms *may be jointly employed in the sciences, if the claims of universal reductionism and of the universal scope of "deductive-nomological" explanation fail*. Because, if you grant the conceptual gap spanning Carnap's "Psychology" paper and Quine's turn to pragmatism, you cannot fail to see how deep Quine's concession actually is. (I don't happen to know whether Sinclair himself experienced any part of that profound trauma, which still lingers discontentedly here and there in recent analytic philosophy. I want to say that that particular game is finished, but I doubt it.)

I hope Sinclair will not find it ungenerous on my part to "correct" (or, "clarify") his summary of my account of pragmatism. I'm defending a sprawling conception that, to be quite frank, I cannot locate in any one publication and have certainly modified and tried to make more precise from time to time. I take responsibility, of course, for the inevitable consequence of inexact paraphrase on the part of the most careful of readers: it can't be helped. But if the argument is to stand at all, it must take note of potential discrepancies, even if unintended. I quite see that the matter I have been addressing may be tangential to Sinclair's primary concern: he wishes (however mildly) to question my reading of Quine, and I am

initially moved (reading what he writes) to enter at once a pertinent gloss on his summary, in the way of a delayed preface to remarks already tendered. I trust the following will strike Sinclair as being not a change of doctrine but a caution regarding what he himself draws from the texts he's consulted. He draws specifically from my (2003 and 2010). The qualification I have in mind (in anticipation, so to say), appears at (2010, 65).

I hold that metaphysics and epistemology are, indissolubly, one inquiry (essentially since the reception of Kant's first *Critique*), though epistemological and metaphysical questions are recognizably different. Accordingly, when I speak of the physical or material or natural world (as ordinary usage has it)—what we now find unproblematic to label "the independent world", a cognizable world (a usage Peirce emphatically endorses)—I specifically deny that *that* world "is a human construction" (Sinclair's wording is misleading here). I *do* wish to say, however, speaking of the world we claim to know, conceding the inseparability of epistemology and metaphysics, that my statement (my conjecture) of what that world is like (what I often call my "picture" of the world) is indeed, trivially, a "construction", though also, not insignificantly, an expression of my belief about the way the world is independently. I of course also insist that what we human persons produce, create, utter (*qua* persons) in our enlanguaged world *are*, literally, transformations (of material things) that belong ("second-naturedly") to the same natural world. My point, here, is to allow (I) for the contrast between mere physical nature and things that belong uniquely to the enlanguaged world (a distinction I strongly defend)—so that (as with Quine, Carl Hempel, the Donald Davidson drawn to Tarski and Hempel, Kim, and others), wherever we claim that extensionalism and reductionism apply to "everything that exists", the thesis is bound to be defeated within the terms of (I); and if within (I), then, trivially, within the terms of (II), which holds that the things of the enlanguaged or encultured world (what I call the "Intentional" world) are, on a reasonable argument, *not* open to reductionism and (for the most part) not open to any thoroughgoing extensionalism either; and within the terms of (III) that any and all forms of *realism* (as collecting truth-claims and truthlike claims about the world) are, trivially, *qua* "pictures", literal constructions, but not otherwise. In modifying our "picture" of the world, we do not normally alter reality itself. (See my replies to Pihlström and Honenberger.)

Having said all this, let me say, much less busily, *that I agree* with the closing two sentences of Sinclair's opening paragraph. If this is indeed

the sense of his expression "human construction", then I agree with his summary of my view as well! To put the matter in the most unguarded way, let me offer the following claims, which I have tried to defend and which, if conceded, would disallow anything like Quine's implied attempt to segregate the physical and the human sciences:

- a human persons are, uniquely, the Intentional transforms of human primates (usually, infants) spontaneously, artifactually emergent, as the upshot of mastering a true language and acquiring the novel cognitional and agentic powers that that makes possible;
- b the mere physical world comprises macroscopic "things" deemed to be subject, in principle, to extensionalist description and strict causal explanation (in the sense favored in the physical sciences), and, where the nomologicality of the causal is reasonably confirmed, subject as well to reductionism and to inter-level theoretical identities; the "natural world" comprises the macroscopic physical world (and whatever microtheoretical worlds are invoked in explaining the properties and causal behavior of mere physical things), and the *sui generis* emergent "things" of the macroscopic Intentional world (of enlanguaged persons and what persons do, produce, create, utter, etc.): "Intentional" being a term of art meant to range over all enculturated (or embodied) forms of linguistic or linguistically dependent significance or signification that emerge in ways that are *not* open to reductionism or (in any simple way) to causal explanations (in the sense in which mere physical things are causally explained). Though their explanation does indeed accommodate, dependently and in part, causal explanation of the standard sort (suitably restricted and enabled), despite not being reliably or normally open to extensionalist description (though pragmatic liberties are not impossible);
- c the things and the distinctive attributes of the Intentional world exist or are real, *qua* emergent, as and only as indissolubly incarnate in physical materiae, of which they are the artifactual transforms ("uttered" or "brought about" by the agency of persons, discernible as such only to suitably informed persons or their instruments; possessing semiotic, linguistic, intentional, purposive or similar import ascribed to suitably transformed "things");
- d the sciences themselves and practical human life are Intentional activities; so that, in effect, sensory experience, observation, consensus,

explanation, and the like are, at the human level, effectively Intentional (Intentional transforms of animal competences); accordingly, the physical sciences may be thought of as specialized and deliberately restricted treatments of a part of nature within the interests of the Intentional world and competences of the human sciences; and,

e things of the Intentional world are intrinsically interpretable and lend themselves, as among actions, artworks, practices, and the like, to motivational explanation (which are often expressed in causal terms though not in any strict nomological way, or only by a "borrowed" or courtesy causal usage); and, in certain contexts (the legal world, for instance) are expressed, in conventionally entrenched practices, in terms of causal responsibility and the like, though normally not in ways that might support extensionalism or reductionism.

If theorems like a–e are conceded, then, I suggest, Quine's admission that science relies on "observation sentences" rather than "sensory stimulation", that consensus is required where neither sensation or bare sensory experience is reliable (or really needed), that explanation depends on conceptual connections between accepted (interpreted) observation sentences and theories, it's more likely than not that an adequate theory of scientific knowledge (*per* Quine) would not depend on the Intentional features of the sorts of things that belong to the human sciences. (We cannot be sure about what Quine might derive from his turn to pragmatism.) I should like to add a few remarks bearing on the application of these distinctions to the drift of theories of knowledge (or mind or the like) favored by figures like Quine, Hempel, and Kim, in order to demonstrate how easy it is to show that the usual attempts to model the physical sciences without reference to any of the *sui generis* features of the Intentional world are already quite hopeless; and that improvements of the generous sort Sinclair himself provides cannot help Quine's cause sufficiently. If I may cobble and co-opt some of Sinclair's remarks:

[if Quine's "naturalism" or pragmatism] [...] "rejects any kind of knowledge other than that found in common sense and science"; [if] "philosophers have no epistemic standards available other than those found in our most successful science, and no standpoint external to science from which to question scientific standards for knowledge"; [and if] "our evidence consists of observable knowledge of facts about our immediate environment expressed in the form of observation sentences", then (as Sinclair himself seems to signal) Quine cannot be

speaking of human beings solely as "physical objects". He's enlarged his theory too far to escape capture by admissions regarding the Intentional world.

On my view, the Intentional world is (by way of the invention and mastery of language) more complex than the physical world, for the simple reason that it emerges from the physical world in a *sui generis* way that defeats any inclusive reductionism, though it must be incarnated in physical or natural things. In this sense, the admission of the Intentional world does not disturb in the least whatever forms of causality, nomologicality, extensionalism, reductionism and the like the physical sciences have found confirmable. In short, the Intentional world is "vertically" (emergently) linked to the physical world, which, of course, suggests a proper approach to the comparison of the physical and human sciences, the general irrelevance of dualism, the endorsement of a robust sense of existence and reality, and the extravagance of any wholesale deflationism with regard to the Intentional world. The fact is, the things of the Intentional world are simply not "abstract entities": thoughts, experiences, sensory episodes and the like are, in principle incarnate or embodied, even though, within the usual range of consciousness, we seem to be aware of what is often called "content" ("Intentional content", let us say) without ever being aware of the specific form of incarnation (neural incarnation, say) of Intentional *experience* itself.

I would say that such considerations strengthen the sense in which the physical sciences can be shown to depend on the resources of the human sciences and the Intentional world. Quine pussyfoots around all this. But the positivists (Carnap), the logical empiricists (Reichenbach), the unity-of-science theorists (Hempel), the materialistically inclined extensionalists (Quine and Davidson, in different ways), the supervenientists (Kim) all seem to be laboring under the delusion that, since the world of bare physical nature is surely the earliest and most basic form of what "there is", the explanatory resources of the physical sciences (thus restricted) must be adequate for the explanation (even causal explanation) of everything "there is". Surely, that's a *non sequitur*: there's the point of Quine's acknowledgement that he needed *sentences*! He realized that he "lost" the reductionist argument when he had to abandon the explanatory powers of neural stimulations in understanding sentences.

All this is already clear in Quine's analysis of "Gavagai!" First of all, Quine never mentions the anthropological fact that there are no exceptions to the bilingualism of natural languages; secondly, the idea that an "inten-

tionless" form of behaviorism could conceivably serve as a stopgap translational device that might bring the entire question of evidence regarding human behavior within the competence of the physical sciences (more or less as in *Word and Object*, however augmented) cannot be more than a howler. I yield to no one in my affection for Quine; but to believe that Quine's model of science and knowledge could possibly begin to reach a level close to adequacy does him no credit. Davidson, I should add, merely runs with the same mistake, greatly magnified in his "Radical Interpretation" (1973). A more significant mistake on Quine's part lies with his theory of "holophrastic sentences": the question whether holistic sentences (denied the grammatical substructure of words) can nevertheless be assigned truth-values (before whatever we regard as the "tribunal of experience") plainly borders on the incoherent; but if that's true, then Quine is simply wrong about there not *being* "a fact of the matter" regarding the formulation of an adequate metaphysics. I regard his de-intentionalized behaviorism and the ontological untenability of his theory of sentences as fatal to his theory of science.

I'll add a final (well-known) passage from Jaegwon Kim, which approaches Hempel's objective from the perspective of admitting "mental causes":

Mental properties *supervene* on physical properties, in that necessarily, for any mental property *M*, if anything has *M* at time *t*, there exists a physical base (of subvenient) property *P* such that it has *P* at *t*, and necessarily anything that has *P* at a time has *M* at that time.

2000, 9

The elementary fact stares us in the face: if we're playing chess, then (unless trivially construed) the *chess move C* may be instantiated (conventionally) in an endless variety of (incarnating) ways, unpredictable from the mere knowledge that the move has been made (say, by sending a telegram rather than by pushing the queen from one space to another); but this is characteristic of the actions of chess players and, correspondingly, of enlanguaged "mental causes" and Intentional events. Whatever countermoves Kim might provide, there is no pertinent sense in which, *with respect to Intentional matters*, "necessarily anything that *has P at a time has M at that time*". There are no general psychophysical necessities to invoke *in the Intentional world*. Kim fails to note that the incarnating property *P* must be *assigned* its intentional or Intentional import *first and uniquely* before the nomological question arises—and then, anyone can see that the linkage is not normally nomological at all. This is generally true for

Intentionally qualified “mental events” as it is for Intentionally qualified actions.

If I gauge the force of these considerations correctly, then I believe I have answered in part Sinclair’s final question advanced on Quine’s behalf: namely, “why the demands of these cultural concerns must be met by philosophy”. The answer is: because philosophy must, by now, realize that the conditions of success *among the physical sciences* are inseparable from those that bear of the success of the human sciences. The grounds for successful work in any science depend on the competence of human inquirers and the range of reportable experience that persons rely on. These conditions exceed the constraints of reductionism and extensionalism. It’s in that sense, precisely, that the unity-of-science model may be inverted: the natural sciences may be regarded as pragmatic restrictions within the space of the human sciences, in accord with prioritizing causality, extensionality, nomologicality, reduction, quantification, and the like—without, however, the assurance of complete closure or systematicity.

To Ugo Zilioli

I’ve seen Ugo Zilioli’s argument in several versions over recent years, particularly in his (2007), which he was kind enough to send me in draft. We’ve never actually met, though I feel I have a reasonably clear sense of his larger project and something of his daring. I am aware that he is more sanguine than I am about the tenability of particular epistemological and metaphysical doctrines usually viewed as possible elements in Protagoras’s thesis conceived as a form of relativism, possibly linked (according to Zilioli’s own speculations) to the doctrines of “certain subtle thinkers”, perhaps the early Cyrenaics led by Aristippus, centered on a form of phenomenalism that may have contributed to Protagoras’s metaphysics of change (See Zilioli 2012, Ch. 3).

Zilioli pays me the considerable compliment of vindicating my rejection of “relationalism” (as a primitive and incoherent form of relativism—a reading of Protagoras at one time advanced by Miles Burnyeat) and of finding my own account of “robust relativism” to be a version of relativism *as close* to Protagoras’s doctrine as he’s found. Fortunately, I have no credentials at all (in Greek philosophy) by which to try to confirm Zilioli’s judgment. But, certainly, I agree with Zilioli that relativism, ancient or modern, cannot be merely a semantic, alethic, or logical doctrine; it must include an epistemology and metaphysics. I have, I may say, argued

that all versions of the "linguistic turn" can produce nothing grander than a subaltern thesis (for instance, deflationism and inferentialism). I believe "robust relativism" can be reconciled with nearly any conventional epistemology and metaphysics not committed to privilege or fixities of any kind. In *The Cyrenaics* (2012), Zilioli ventures very far beyond the minimal Protagorean theses offered in *Theaetetus*, where the so-called "secret doctrine" and even the Heraclitean flux are ventured by Socrates (without evidence of Socrates's own conviction) as possible ingredients in Protagoras's thesis.

I find myself in the position of cheering Ugo on: if he can fashion a coherent doctrine that combines some minimal form of Protagorean relativism (akin, as he suggests, to what I've tendered as robust relativism (1991)), together with a phenomenalism and a metaphysics of processes rather than of objects, grounded in a world of radical change and utter indeterminacy (the main features of the "secret doctrine" and Zilioli's own speculations about Aristippus's and the early Cyrenaic theories), then I would be one of the first to congratulate him on a splendid achievement. I myself feature the flux of the world as a first metaphysical premise, but I don't regard the flux as a chaos (and, I surmise, neither did Heraclitus). I also believe the phenomenalism of the *Theaetetus* (particularly at 156a2–157c3) may be too strenuous a doctrine—hardly required—to support a thesis close to the perception-based "phenomenology" that a moderately Protagorean relativism might accept. Certainly, it's part of my own speculation, along related lines, that a "robust relativism" does not actually require the complete abandonment of (say) a "pragmatist" (not an invariantist) metaphysics of objects and processes. Whether a "Protagorean" variety requires the extremes broached in the secret doctrine, I'm not competent to decide; but I venture to say that the "phenomenology" Socrates lays out as the secret doctrine (in order to dismiss it) already implicates (to my mind) a stabler, more ramified, however fluxive order that cannot be easily abandoned—or coherently refused. If we are looking for a viable relativism before we consider how daring Protagoras (or Socrates's "subtle thinkers") can afford to be, I suggest we proceed a bit more carefully.

There can be no doubt that Protagoras, as well as the early Cyrenaics (according to Zilioli's best guess) are unconditionally opposed to what Zilioli willingly treats as the "archic doctrine": roughly, the posit of "a changeless world of either (Platonic) Forms or (Aristotelian) essences". But does that mean that Protagoras *requires* the secret doctrine at the very

least? Well: *not* if Zilioli is right in finding that Protagoras's relativism *is*, effectively, a form of (what I've called) robust relativism. Because, although, if I dare say so, Zilioli, Protagoras, and I are agreed that the relativist must accept an "anti-archic" metaphysics and epistemology, *it does not matter* (just there) *what particular version of that doctrine he adopts*: but, it must be at least firm enough to overcome relationalism: it must be "global" (in Zilioli's terms), which is to say, "epistemological, ontological and alethic" (as I originally argued). *But I'm not at all sure that the secret doctrine is "robust" enough to avoid incoherence.*

As I say, Zilioli is bolder than I am: perhaps he's right. (I can't say that he's wrong.) I can only put my worry conditionally: *if*, for one thing, the secret doctrine does away with all referential stability where it opposes the archic doctrine, then I would have to conclude that it was not intelligible at all; and, for another, if the secret doctrine did not implicate, presuppositionally, that its notably spare mode of discursive ("phenomenological") avowal did not implicate the accessibility of a more robust form of public reference, reidentifiability, predication and the like (short of archic claims), on which the reliability of the referential and predicative force of its own (fluxive) *avowals* remain intelligible, then I would be obliged (again) to deem it unintelligible. My own picture insists that the avowals endorsed by the secret doctrine must be "always already dependent" on some anti-archic epistemology and metaphysics. We cannot *begin* with utterances that "intend" to be avowals but are too transient, too private, too ad hoc to have any public life at all. As far as I can see, it doesn't matter whether we posit public "objects" or public "processes" (or powers) or both. (Recall P. F. Strawson's speculation about choosing a metaphysics of "objects" or "events" (1959); and, bear in mind, a pluralized solipsism won't do: for instance, reading "true" as "true-for-k", for any "k" confined to understanding private meanings.)

It does look as if Zilioli's "passage 3" (152d1–e1) taken from John McDowell's translation of *Theaetetus* (1973) is incoherent—a version of the secret doctrine (hence, perhaps, intended to explain "coming to be" as opposed to "being"), rather than relativism itself. After Kant, you realize, the alleged conceivability of Socrates's proposal would be challenged:

that nothing is just one thing just by itself, and that you can't correctly speak of anything either as something or as qualified in some way. If you speak of something as big, it will also appear small; if you speak of it as heavy, it will also appear light; and similarly with everything, since nothing is one—either one thing or qualified in one way. The

fact is that, as a result of movement, change and mixture with one another, all the things which we say are—which is not the right way to speak of them—are coming to be; because nothing ever is, but things are always coming to be. Plato 1973, 17

About this, Zilioli says: “for Protagoras the world is, more or less radically, metaphysically indeterminate”. Zilioli mounts a campaign to confirm the Cyrenaics’ commitment to “indeterminacy”; my worry is that, in context, *indeterminacy* may signify the *incoherence* of the “secret doctrine”—in Protagoras as well as among the “subtle thinkers” of the Cyrenaics. Here is Zilioli’s verdict, from (2012, 89–90), bearing on the sense both of the passage I’ve cited just above and from 160b5–c2:

In light of the theory endorsed by the subtler thinkers of the *Theaetetus* (at least on the interpretation I recommend), sensory objects in the material world do not exist as such. The sensory object and the corresponding perceiving subject are the two poles of a correlated process, which is causal, temporary and evanescent. Both poles of the process are not best described as unitary items persisting over time with a stable and well-defined unitary ontological structure but are best seen as aggregates of parts (with no unitary essence) that keep modifying over time [...]. Sensory objects do not exist because they are not, strictly speaking, independent and unitary objects.

I view all this as explicating what Zilioli takes to be the meaning of “indeterminacy”. Here, I’m inclined to think that the difference between Zilioli’s and my own philosophical judgment depends on Zilioli’s being willing (in the spirit of the ancient world) to permit ontological “conceivability” to vouchsafe a genuine metaphysical option; whereas I standardly suppose that, after Kant, metaphysics and epistemology are inseparable and epistemological coherence must make room for the intelligibility of perceptual claims in a public way. I see no clear way of retrieving Cyrenaic avowals as public data. Perhaps Zilioli has a better way of reading the Cyrenaic texts. (I’m reminded that Wilfrid Sellars held that, finally, things defined in terms of sensory qualities are not real, but, there, Sellars spoke in accord with his scientism—his confidence in the victory of the “scientific image”. He offers (Sellars 1963) no compelling argument that I can see.

It is true, as Zilioli says, that I myself speak of “indeterminacy”. But I think I do so essentially in explicating Charles Peirce’s account of vagueness and indeterminacy, and W. V. Quine’s “indeterminacy of translation”, which are themselves defined in terms of the “generality” of predicates

(Margolis, 1991, 51–3, 121–27). That's to say, I allow "indeterminacy" as a distinction *internal* to admitted cognitive powers, whereas the Cyrenaic option concerns what we may call "external" indeterminacy—indeterminacy with respect to cognizability itself. There's the trouble. I agree, of course, with Zilioli, that the difference between human subjects and physical objects is of the first importance. But if I understand him correctly here, then it is probably true that we still stand together. I had thought that his account in *The Cyrenaics* may have led him to reconsider his position; but I think that's probably not true. It may be (it sounds reasonable) that the Cyrenaic doctrine may have formed part of Protagoras's own metaphysical thesis. Zilioli sees "a point of weakness" in ancient relativism, in failing to "recognize the substantial difference between mere material things and persons". But what I myself would emphasize is the weakness due to the fact that indeterminacy (in the "external" sense I suggest) does not adequately accommodate the "conditions of the possibility of knowledge". In that sense, the ancient doctrine may be a precocious anticipation of the indiscernibility of the *Ding-an-sich*. I trust I have not misrepresented Zilioli's views.

To Aili Bresnahan

Aili Bresnahan raises an extraordinarily difficult question. I'm not sure I know how to answer. The question's a little like asking for the conditions of consciousness. She asks "How Aesthetic Creativity is Possible for Cultural Agents". She's asked it before. I find I'm prepared to venture the same truisms that Aili is already committed to. I can do little more than follow her in this: first, that it's entirely possible that there are a number of distinct patterns of brain activity that are strongly correlated with unquestionably advanced forms of creativity (that may even be apparent among neonates before they acquire language or the cultural practices of their home society, even if without any clue at all about how the disposition is likely to be manifested); second, that creativity seems to be normally characterized in terms of modes of performance (hence, also, in terms of disposition and capacity) primarily centered in the mastery of relatively advanced cultural practices (usually, but sometimes not, in one or another markedly interesting sense) that require a distinct degree of disciplined training that manifests the spontaneous fluencies of second nature (though there have been phenomenal exceptions); and, third, that a marked degree of creativity in the arts seems to be confirmable, consensu-

ally, though the pertinent abilities need not depart from well-entrenched modes of performance (Mozart and Vermeer, come to mind) as opposed to manifestations that regularly exceed the constraints of canonical modes of expression (Picasso, say, compared with Braque, in terms of cubism). I've not made much progress on the question.

I must, however, offset these seemingly optimistic remarks with a confession of uncertainty. As far as personal intuitions go, I admit that, with regard to people of moderate distinction—myself included—I don't really know what creativity signifies. What usually counts as creativity may be only loosely connected with self-referential clues. I don't find anything in myself that I could straightforwardly name creativity: I do find in myself a somewhat greater frequency in the regular onset of what seem to be "fresh ideas" (than most colleagues report) that are confirmed as such—at least in my own mind and in the kind opinion of a few friends. Thus, "creativity" seems to be a blunderbuss appraisal of such patterns judged in terms of a larger critical consensus that I (personally) am unwilling to rely on.

Here I find myself more or less in agreement with the amazement of Salieri (in that extraordinary film, *Amadeus*, when Salieri first scans Mozart's manuscripts and discovers that, as the handwritten pages keep collecting, there are no corrections marked in the scores. Creativity and what is called genius seem to go together. Both are mysterious. Picasso is a very different sort of creature, actually a multitude of one, if I may say so: because whatever may be first seen as a correction (in a good many of his things) proves to be no more than the effect of a sudden and frequent surge of energy unwilling to remain content with any one incarnation—the variations of *Guernica*, for instance, where obvious "corrections" simply punctuate decisions not to pursue (at any given moment) options that would have proved as valid as any, if they'd been allowed to be completed. Picasso sometimes seems to be prepared to paint a whole basket of canvasses at the same time, when of course he couldn't quite do that, though he does indeed come remarkably close. A torrent of invention pours out of him—a force of nature. Mozart and Picasso are benign "monsters" of creativity, it seems, quite apart from whether they are also markedly "creative" in some discernible sense keyed to the history of their preferred art forms. Or, more in keeping with Aili's question: marked by their own bodily idiosyncrasy.

Secondly, I'm struck by the ubiquitous "creativity" of ordinary conversation, which is not the same thing as "artistic creativity", though it

seems to be very close at times. Here, creativity seems to be closer to the sheer idiosyncrasy and endless invention of the human voice (in speech), where the speaker has a strong and voluminous flow of fresh thoughts and judgments that are unaccountably compelling. These seem to me to answer to the individuality of the body, which reflecting on her own career as a dancer, Aili emphasizes. I'm inclined to ascribe this feature more generally to the idiosyncrasies of our agentive powers, which though they may indeed take a bodily form in the dance, may also take a verbal form, as in poetry and conversation.

Here, I think of Paul Celan's career as a translator and instructor of would-be translators, his polyglot habits of speech and thought that came to dominate his tortured memories—but possibly not their particular fluency. There's a conversational energy in both Shakespeare and Celan, though their idioms are very different. They seem to require constraint more than inspiration. Celan's idiosyncratic pathology becomes his second-natured nature. Shakespeare is more balanced: he makes the seemingly ordinary extraordinary. It's possible that Andy Warhol's attraction to the idea of viewing human behavior in terms of the mechanical duplication of routinized manufacture, which, on his own account, explains the innovation of *Brillo Box* and installations of *Brillo Boxes*, and accounts for what we regard as his distinctive kind of creativity. But, then, "creativity" acquires an entirely different meaning: the creativity of a mechanized mimesis of mechanized iteration itself. Is that reasonable? I think it goes some distance toward suggesting that creativity is probably not a notion that lends itself to accurate capture, though its importance in accounting for artistic achievements (particularly, contemporary idiosyncrasy) seems beyond doubt.

Bresnahan brings the question to bear on the metaphysics of persons and artworks, both of which, as "materially embodied and culturally emergent", I view as "natural artifacts"—to borrow a term from Helmuth Plessner and others drawn to the thesis of the "philosophical anthropologists". But I'm inclined to go beyond the anthropologists' hesitation in counting persons, language, and the entire catalogue of whatever inhabits the enlanguaged cultural space of the human world as artifactual transforms of physical or material things. In this sense human agency—in deed and speech and the work of poetry and painting—is an acquired hybrid skill that transforms mere material things into encultured things ("Intentionally" qualified as, by a term of art, I name them), which, thus contrived, indissolubly possess significative, semiotic,

expressive, representational, linguistic, and similar sorts of import. I'm persuaded that human creativity is prized within the terms of the artifactuality of persons—isn't this true even of Picasso? Indeed, language is our most convincing paradigm of creativity, where the mastery of language transforms (for instance) a sound into a (culturally regularized) medium in which "meanings", as in the meanings of words and sentences and speech acts (or other novel skills that language makes possible), are indissolubly "fused" or, more loosely, "linked" (often in an ad hoc gesture or, for instance, in quotidian traffic signs lacking a verbal legend). It's in the artifactual world that vigorously sustained novelty counts most easily as creativity—so that even biological distinction is caught up in this encultured transformation.

This begins to suggest the pertinence of a generous theory of creativity and the many different forms of interpretation that address the arts as well as the entire motley of the Intentional world. Let me add, without pursuing the matter here, that interpretation, as the effort to articulate the significant or significative complexities of the artworld, treats meaning as open-ended and determinable rather than assuredly determinate, which then entrenches the need for all the forms of tolerance that interpretive practices may require. I'm inclined to think therefore that the theory of artistic creativity tends, increasingly, to occupy a distinctly subaltern place in the theory of contemporary art, though not, for that reason, an insignificant status tethered to the theory of interpretation itself. In rather an unexpected way, therefore, the problem of creativity returns us to the holism of the metaphysics of culture.

Nevertheless, on Aili's original question, I seem to have learned not much that is new: first, because creativity and performativity must still involve the cultural transformation of biological gifts; or, second, because the differences in native gifts will find their most significant achievement *in* the transformed differences that mark their artistic or performative utterances. Otherwise, it seems to me obvious that Chaliapin's basso may have been more sonorous and expressive, natively, than most bassos are, and perhaps better suited to singing *Boris Gudunov* than other voices are. It also seems very possible that Tanaquil Le Clerq's figure made possible a rendition of the Swan Queen in *Swan Lake*, which could not have been achieved by ballerinas of a more usual build. Also, I contend that distinctions of these sorts are bound to be featured in the creativity and individual expressiveness exhibited by different artists.

I'm on uncertain ground here. I'm groping toward a large conjecture that I'm perfectly willing to advance if I can only get my grips on it. I want to suggest, for one thing, that judgements of notable creativity tend toward the conservation of valuable or promising lines of invention not otherwise convincingly assured or confirmed. Mozart, for example, confirms the sheer energy and bounty and seemingly unquenchable charm and beauty of established musical canons against the threat of immanent exhaustion; Mallarmé, Schönberg, and Picasso confirm, in different ways, the potential endlessness of deliberately contrived departures from established practices. There's a sense of civilizational relief in both directions—that muses: Well, it seems we're nowhere near the end of our imagination! My point is—let it be my second point—we treasure the sense that we can still fill our days with forms of work and play that capture our enthusiasms (in "living on") compellingly. In that sense, even Steve Jobs was a marvelously creative capitalist entrepreneur who invented near-ecstatic forms of consumer loyalty as a new kind of *Lebensform*! No doubt risky, even pathetic, but certainly "creative" in an unexpected zone of activity.

If you say, yours (that is: mine) is no more than a Nietzschean claim, I'm prepared to agree. In any case—third point—if you buy this line of speculation, you cannot fail to see that the appraisal of creativity is basically prudential (in a civilizational sense) and tethered to the historied nature of our artifactual existence. For, behind such conjectures, lies the dawning fear (again, Nietzschean) that we may not be able to deflect ourselves forever from the unmediated discovery that, as the artifactual creatures we are, we have no *telos* or *Umwelt* on Earth! Creativity and its appreciation may be one of artifactuality's principal answers to the Abyss. I don't want to go overboard here. So I'll simply stop. But I confess I don't find the speculation pointless in the least—or especially instructive, for that matter. (It has its darker possibilities.)

To Russell Pryba

I am indebted to Russ Pryba for his patient analysis ("Experiencing Culture") of the complexity of the dispute between Arthur Danto and myself, regarding the extraordinarily important ramifications of Danto's "indiscernibility" thesis. Pryba rightly sees that I pursue the matter in terms of the more inclusive question of the conceptual relationship between physical nature and human culture; hence, adjusted to match Danto's account,

in terms of what I call the “penetration” thesis, the idea that, in accord with the normal *Bildung* of human infants, the primate members of *Homo sapiens* spontaneously transform themselves into persons (effectively, artifactual hybrids), through the mastery of their home language; and that, accordingly, their native sensory powers are (artificially) “penetrated” (transformed) by language (and other powers that mastering language makes possible)—itself a cultural invention spanning an immense stretch of time. Thus, they come to “see” and “hear” in a novel and uniquely enlanguaged way. (For instance, they hear and understand speech directly: they do not normally infer the linguistic meaning of the sounds they hear in the merely “phenomenal” way that Danto proposes; they now *hear* “phenomenologically”, as we may say; they hear and understand words and sentences in an unmediated way (as they also do, in hearing musically ordered, musically significant sound). They now perceive and think about what I call “Intentionally” qualified things and properties—the artifactual hybrid “things” of the encultured human world: artworks, actions, speech, machines, technologies, histories, institutions and the like—effectively, what persons do, make, create, and utter, which, emergently, now possess incarnated meanings or significance.

The instant consequence of all this on Danto’s perceptual theory (*a fortiori*, his theory of history and art) is to conclude that he has impoverished the conception of the entire world of human culture. “Phenomenal perception” is a theoretical distinction: it *cannot* be a straightforward instrument for reporting mere sensory discrimination. Because, for one thing, among human persons, sensory discrimination is already penetrated linguistically; and, for another, the familiar objects of macroscopic perception are, on any familiar account of the activation of our sensory organs, constructions of some sort of what is informationally accessed (theoretically, *not* reportorially) as the sensory “data” that we receive in sight and hearing. So there is, in Danto’s account, a considerable conceptual mismatch between what we are said to be able to perceive sensorily (phenomenally) and what, perceptually, we admit we perceive phenomenologically, as in speaking of paintings and music.

Furthermore, the famous “indiscernibility” thesis, which arises in Danto’s account of phenomenal perception (but cannot play any consequential role in phenomenological perception) and which gained importance as a consequence of Danto’s challenging interpretation of Andy Warhol’s *Brillo Box* (Danto, 2009) turns out to be inconsistent with Warhol’s actual artistic intentions. Warhol was completely satisfied with the mere

resemblance between his *Brillo Box* and ordinary commercial Brillo boxes; it was never his intention to make his *Brillo Box* installations “indiscernibly” different from the original objects. You must bear in mind that Danto held that, generally, the right way to view a painting accorded with the artist’s own intention, since what “constituted” a painting was, effectively, the artist’s interpretation of a “mere physical thing” that, thereby, “constituted” his work! Warhol actually prized manufacturing errors that were readily perceptible to discerning observers and happily displayed them. But, of course, the indiscernibility thesis is the very nerve of Danto’s theory. Without it, Danto really has no theory of art at all; his entire labor is committed to reversing any and every standard theory of the perception of painting. (See Margolis, forthcoming.) Nevertheless, the indiscernibility thesis is pretty nearly Danto’s alone: no one shares it with him, not even Warhol.

My own view is that the mastery of language (both originally, in the species: “external *Bildung*”, and, serially, among successive cohorts of infants: “internal *Bildung*”) is, effectively, the same process as the formation of persons. The validity and significance of this thesis ranges over the entire sweep of human culture. Locally, the upshot, as far as Danto’s work is concerned, is that Danto’s theory of art and of our ability to discern artworks is caught up in an insoluble dilemma of his own devising: he cannot hold, consistently, that artworks are numerically identical with physical objects (or “mere real things”), “have” meanings or intentional, significant or significative, interpretable, historically or culturally freighted properties, and are themselves real things qualified in ways that mere physical objects cannot be. When, as Pryba accurately reports, Danto begins to speak of artworks’ possessing “embodied meanings” (Danto 1994, 385), he effectively abandons the original theory advanced in his earliest papers in the philosophy of art (Danto 1964; 1981).

I hold, in effect, that it makes no sense to say that the distinctive properties of artworks *cannot* be perceived or discerned in the ordinary way in which we speak of paintings and poems; and, also, that it makes no sense to say that artworks *do* possess, as their rightful properties, properties that cannot in principle be possessed by mere physical objects (if only “mere physical things” are conceded to exist)—or, to say that if they do indeed possess such properties (“embodied meanings”, let us say) they could still be numerically identical with mere physical objects that cannot in principle possess them! There will, I daresay, be an insoluble dilemma that will confront us at every argumentative turn at which Danto tries to reconcile

the material identity of artworks and physical objects, the indiscernibility thesis, and the admission of "embodied meanings". He's committed to an inconsistent triad—may I say, very much in the same way (and for much the same reasons) Donald Davidson is committed to an inconsistent triad in advancing his theory of actions in which he tries to salvage the doctrine of "anomalous monism" (see Davidson 2001). The reason, quite simply, is that both Danto and Davidson were extraordinarily loyal to Carl Hempel's account of science and history, even when it became clear that Hempel's "linguistic" or "methodological" treatment of reductionism could not save it from "metaphysical" disaster. (See, for instance, Danto 1999 and Hempel 2001.) Danto actually says, in his paper on Hempel's theory of history:

Hempel's theory [regarding science and history] in fact strikes me still as true. It just stopped being relevant, the way the whole philosophy of history it defined stopped being relevant. Hempel 2001, 182

I confess Danto's remark baffles me: if he saw the need to allow "embodied meanings" as properties of artworks, and if he abandoned (as he did) his original theory of action construed along lines quite close to Davidson's theory) as a palpable blunder (Danto 1999b), then he cannot have supposed he could continue to endorse Hempel's theory of history and science as he claims he does. (It generates the same dilemma.)

It's part of my theory that the enlanguaged cultural world human persons inhabit (the Intentional world, as I call it, comprising things and their attributes that have meaning, import, significance or significative force and the like) are indiscernible, as such, to all other creatures but human persons (as far as we know). The problem regarding artworks is hardly a logical problem. Danto has effectively defeated his own theories of history, science, action, and knowledge as well—as indeed has Davidson (for much the same reasons). Hempel and the positivists were persuaded that they could avoid metaphysical entanglement by treating reduction as a purely "linguistic" matter. But they were mistaken. Philosophical semantics, linguistic analysis, the "linguistic turn", deflationism, inferentialism, and all similar strategies are inherently subaltern.

I take the liberty of adding, here, a bit of clarification regarding Pryba's closing remarks. For one thing, I speak of the "transformation" of primate into person, rather than of "transfiguration" (Danto's term) of primate or "mere real thing", because I'm persuaded that Danto reads "transfiguration" in a purely "linguistic" (even rhetorical) sense, à la Hempel, that

would relieve him of any metaphysical encumbrance: I wish to emphasize that the change involved *is*, indeed, in the best sense, a metaphysical change (affecting the existence of persons, artworks, actions, speech and the like). I take metaphysical claims to be extensions of empirical and scientific claims—not mysterious or magical in any way at all. Furthermore, on my theory, there's every likelihood that the early species of *Homo* never achieved a true language and that the lengthy span of time needed for the full invention of language is the same process that we know as the one that leads to the full *transformation* of primate into person. So that the evolution of external and internal *Bildung* are themselves aspects of one and the same process. By a reverse argument, I'm prepared to concede the incipience of proto-language or proto-persons among the nonhuman primates (if evidence supports the conjecture). I emphatically oppose the practice of addressing the theory of art (or history or action) as separable from a holistic theory of human culture. Danto shared the conviction but favored a paradoxical theory nonetheless. Davidson opposed the idea in his best-known work, though he moved in the same direction in his interesting paper, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs", (1986), which appears to be irreconcilable with his more familiar views.

To Dirk-Martin Grube

I met Dirk-Martin, I believe, only days after he arrived in Philadelphia to begin his doctoral studies. He had a lengthy, strongly argued, and notably congenial manuscript in hand, which he shared with me—I'm frankly a little hazy about its details after all this time—centered, if I'm not mistaken, on some of P.F. Strawson's work, which led us to some fruitful discussions of relativism's prospects. Since that first exchange, each of us has pursued cognate issues along somewhat different lines. So that to find, now, the two of us converging once again on a related theme, after so many years, is at least a small marvel. Grube confronts me now with an application of the relativism issue that I had not anticipated. I owe him as straightforward an answer as I can muster. It's quite likely that he had already glimpsed the possibility he's now exploring. (That would be entirely consistent with his ingenuity.) The curious thing is that Dirk-Martin favors Karl Barth's Protestant version of treating God as "transcendent", humanly "unfathomable" and finds some support for this thesis in my account of the logic of relativism! I confess I had no inkling of such a possibility over these many years.

I believe I once knew something of Barth's thesis—I'm not so sure now—when I attended a seminar of Paul Tillich's at about the same time Grube began his studies. But I came to see a very definite bearing of the "unfathomability" thesis on the relativism issue (if you can believe it) as a result of coming to a slim grasp of Meister Eckhart's extraordinary doctrine, which I did indeed formulate, obliquely, in a reading of Nicholas of Cusa's notion of "learned [or instructed] ignorance". Perhaps I came to it by a sort of "negative philosophy", since, temperamentally, I doubt that I would be likely to favor the view that, in dabbling with the doctrine that God is unfathomable (in human ways), I would paraphrase what I meant, by saying that we cannot say that or what God "is" (in any robustly alethic sense). Though, surely, He is what He is! Or perhaps, quite literally, we cannot assert that, or what, He is, though we seem to be speaking meaningfully. (I don't think I can go much further by myself. I must ask Dirk-Martin to explain the paradox to me.)

Now, Grube's argument takes a turn I find I cannot (as yet) satisfactorily support—and am inclined to think cannot rightly be favored for the run of options I've examined or seem able to grasp. Grube wishes to apply the seeming advantages of a view of relativism apparently close to mine, in my (1991), or very possibly the same as mine, to "certain religious claims"—he calls them claims—to that effect that certain paradoxical "onto/epistemic" conditions may well qualify what we suppose we can affirm. He also suggests that, where the matter is not "cognizable" in any ordinary way—where it would be problematic to represent, propositionally, what we are inclined to believe we can still affirm—we may indeed do so, if we do so under cover of a "third" truth-value or truth-like value: "indeterminate". Grube says the option "must [...] be *postulated*". He says further: the supposition that God exists "fulfills *transcendental* functions" of some sort. (I take it that the "must" is conditional on one's religious "beliefs", even where such beliefs are not logically able to be confirmed in any ordinary cognitively accessible way. (Frankly, I'm beyond my depth here.) Grube speaks of religious claims which imply, ontologically, that the transcendent object upon which those claims focus is (radically) different from humans and their concepts. Epistemologically, they imply that this object is unfathomable. Under these conditions, Grube argues, "bivalence should be abandoned and a third value should be admitted, viz. (objectively) indeterminate when distributing truth claims over them".

My first impulse is to say that “unfathomability” or “transcendence” (God’s “unfathomability”) might be provisionally treated as an “attribute” of God, if it were allowed at all, though it cannot, literally, be predicated of God, since the very question of God’s existence has not been suitably “prepared” for predication: we literally don’t know whether it makes sense to say that it is true (or false) *that* God is unfathomable! If I understand him correctly, Grube proposes (in agreement, he believes, with me) that “alethic considerations [the choice of appropriate truth-values] are [rightly] fixed by taking into account the onto/epistemic peculiarities of the realm of inquiry at stake”.

He’s handed me an ingenious conundrum. I do indeed argue that objects like artworks and natural languages are characterizable as open to interpretation or ascriptions of meaning or import in a way that, conceding their “onto/epistemic peculiarities” (to stay with Grube’s wording), we must favor a many-valued logic if we are to accommodate our practice of acknowledging what (bivalently) would be incompatible interpretations of (say) a given poem, that are (on our theory) demonstrably valid, without denying that inconsistency along bivalent lines may also be confirmable. I say in this connection that what belongs to the encultured world of human persons (our “Intentional” world) often possesses “determinable” rather than straightforwardly “determinate” meaning or import. But I wouldn’t say that what was determinable (accommodating a relativistic logic) was, effectively, “indeterminate”. *That* begins to harbor a palpable incoherence. God’s “unfathomability” seems to be entirely different from the relativistic treatment of the “determinability” of the meaning of a given piece of literature.

The question arises whether I have provided grounds enough for Grube’s proposal about the “unfathomability” of God’s “being”. He suggests we need a third truth-like value, “indeterminate”. I’ve gone back to *The Truth about Relativism* (1991) and find that I’ve made at least two important (pertinent) observations that might lend Grube some support. For one thing, I acknowledge Charles Peirce’s superb reflection on vagueness and indeterminacy bearing directly on excluded middle; and, in much the same spirit, in discussing Robert Stalnacker’s views on truth, I asked whether there may be a use for “indeterminacy” as a “third” value. In the second observation, I acknowledge Ian Hacking’s somewhat elusive (but important) remark (directed against Michael Dummett’s views on bivalence and *tertium non datur*), to the effect that “candidacy for truth-and-falsity” is not quite the same thing as “bivalence”, where “bivalence is

not the right concept for science". (I agree with Hacking, and it's entirely possible that Hacking's maneuver may be useful in enabling Grube's proposal.) It's also true that I invoke "indeterminate" as a third value in the fictional case of asking whether Sherlock Holmes had a mole on his back, that is, where other "facts" can be inferred from Conan Doyle's stories. (This also is a complex matter.)

But these options seem to me to lack force when applied to predicates like God's "unfathomability". I'm guessing that Grube must have had something like Eckhart's or Barth's convictions in mind (or, more intriguingly, Wittgenstein's early conjectures about the discontinuity between discourse about the natural world and discourse about God (or the Creator of "all that is"). Early Wittgenstein seems to have believed that the affirmation of anything like God's unfathomability necessarily violates the very idea of propositional intelligibility championed in the *Tractatus*: that speaking thus was, nevertheless, as important as (even more important than) the (propositional) "nonsense" that it surely also was; *and yet*, effectively, so speaking addresses matters of a "higher order" inaccessible to propositional formulation—so that, very possibly, it might well prove productive in practice (though futile in theory) to "respond" in the way of self-improving assertions. Now, if anything of this sort makes sense, then either Grube is committing a "category mistake" or he's failed to notice that (*per* Wittgenstein) although it may make sense to allow for such discourse, it does still violate the injunction against treating it as supporting truth-values at all. The only other option that I can see would accord Grube an even more daring innovation: namely, that we can speak, assertorically, *of* God, in the same way we speak of ordinary factual matters. If so, then Grube owes us a further clarification.

I don't deny that a many-valued logic may service non-relativistic claims as well as relativistic ones. The important point is that relativism (in my usage) provides (chiefly, or by contrivance, more or less *ad hoc*) for the admission that some pertinent claims (as in interpreting literature) appear to be convincingly valid, well-confirmed, though they cannot be said to be straightforwardly true, within the terms of a bivalent model of truth, without entailing a contradiction. It's the onto/epistemic features (as Grube says) of the encultured (the "Intentional") world of human persons (as I choose to say) that makes the relativistic liberty a reasonable enlargement of our alethic options. In that context, "indeterminate" tends to signify no more than that epistemic conditions that normally apply cannot, for contingent reasons, be properly met. (The "third" verdict of

Scottish law—“unproved”—could easily be replaced by the finding that a particular trial was never successfully completed!

Grube’s proposal seems to me to be very different: I think he wants to say: “It’s a fact that God is unfathomable”. But if that’s true, then he must believe that the new predicate, “unfathomable”, behaves, logically, however paradoxical it may appear, in exactly the same way that ordinary bivalent claims do.

Pluralism, however, seems to me to be an inherently incomplete (incompleteable) thesis—that should not be confused with a tolerance or preference for a *plurality* of viable options (as *per* liberalism). I’m persuaded, for instance, that, here, both Hilary Putnam and Richard Bernstein (1983) go seriously wrong: when we feature a tolerance for “pluralistic” options (for instance, in scientific speculation or interpretations of artworks or history), we do so on the strength of our admitted ignorance about whether our “pluralistic” options will finally prove to be fragments of a “monistic” claim or whether they will, if deemed valid, require a “relativistic” logic (that, at least *ad hoc*, would require replacing bivalence with a more flexible many-valued logic). Putnam and Bernstein are convinced, I think it would be fair to say, that a coherent form of relativism is quite impossible (though I, for one, have never seen a knock down argument—from either one—that leads inevitably to that conclusion). In any case, pluralism and relativism are entirely different kinds of theories, as are also pluralism and liberalism’s tolerance for a plurality of values (which, ultimately, is really a thesis about human freedom and autonomy).

Still, I don’t see a direct argumentative link between these considerations and Grube’s proposal: I don’t see how the addition of a “many-valued logic” (which is not quite the same thing as a relativistic logic, though it is indeed an enabling condition for one) would work, “in the case” of making predications of God: that’s to say, *unless* Grube thinks that it doesn’t matter whether we take God to “belong” to Reality (as its creator) or to be definitely a fiction (familiar enough, from one or another Abrahamic Book) or to be treated merely as an “object of belief” (in a way that need never be fully defined), as in William James’s view. I take these options to point to what’s missing. Tell me first, I find myself thinking, just what the sense is in which you say, “God is”, “There is a God”, “God created the world”, “The true God is unfathomable”, “Jews, Christians, and Muslims believe in the same God”. I think I’ve provided enough conceptual elbow room for at least a “courtesy” or “borrowed” (or analogous) treatment of attributions to God (congenial to Grube’s conjecture)

in some sense of attribution capable of accommodating God's being "unfathomable". But I doubt that that will satisfy Grube.

Here, I confess, I'm not at all clear what the gain would be in saying, for instance, that God is "unfathomable" is true, as opposed to saying that the assertion is neither true nor false but "indeterminate". I see (dimly) how Grube's intended gain would go—his idea that "a robust theory of religious pluralism" might be strengthened, consistently, with his own "beliefs about God", while continuing to hold that the beliefs of others *as well as* his own are, in a deeper sense, "indeterminate" as well. If God *were* truly unfathomable, then I suppose a human claimant could only affirm that that was true (Eckhart, say) or that the truth or falsity of affirming God's existence is "indeterminate"—impossible to determine. That's to say, "unfathomable" may be a heuristic attribute of God, but "indeterminate" applied to truth-values or truth-like values is meant to be an attribute of some set of would-be truth-claims on the point of being rejected as ineligible. Here, the use of "indeterminate" is not a third truth-value, but an oblique way of noting the failure to meet the evidentiary conditions for affirming bivalent truth-claims. Hence, believing that God is unfathomable may entail no more than that *we* cannot *knowledgeably* assert, that God is unfathomable. Belief in an unfathomable God *is*, thus far at least, not demonstrably coherent.

I seem to be missing the supposed force of the concession. When I say, as I do in my (1991), that, although much about Sherlock Holmes can be easily confirmed by consulting Conan Doyle's texts, the claim that he had a mole on his back remains "indeterminate", I mean no more than that it cannot be decided in the way his having remained unmarried can be. But that's not a third truth-value in anything like the sense in which Scottish law is said to allow for a third verdict, "unproved". It's a finding completely in accord with a perfectly conventional bivalence; it does not seem to support the rejection of excluded middle. I think Grube has to go a step further. For instance, to treat Wordsworth's famous "Lucy" poem as open to "incompatible" but valid interpretations (that is, incompatible in accord with a bivalent logic, but not now) *does* entail the abandonment of excluded middle *and*, contrary to Dummett, "tertium non datur" as well.

If I understand Grube's appeal to Lessing's "ring-parable" correctly, then Lessing's suggestion that the truth of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is "indeterminate" probably signifies that "truth" in the strong sense we've been discussing is not the principal issue at all (does not yield an adequate form of religious "wisdom"), or else anticipates (in a sense more

plausible than that of William James's famous account of religious truth) that to speak of the truth of all three conceptions is no more than a conventionally honorific use of terms.

A Last Word

It's possible that one may draw from my responses to the conference papers a proper sense of the unifying themes of my own philosophical commitment. But it may be useful to provide a frank tally of my principal claims, which, according to my lights, cast pragmatism in somewhat altered terms and signal its links to the main concerns of Western philosophy—in a novel and particularly spare and compelling way. The linchpin of my entire account rests with (I) the hybrid artifactuality of persons, as encultured transforms of the primate members of *Homo sapiens*; hence, also, (II) the emergence of persons as the obverse side of the same process that yields the invention and mastery of natural language (what I call "external" and "internal" *Bildung*, respectively); which, for their part, (III) signify the (cultural) formation of the human person beyond the resources of Darwinian evolution. I see in this sequence (IV) the continuum of the animal and the human, which bears decisively on our understanding the self-transformative powers of human infants in acquiring and mastering a language (and what language makes possible), initially by way of prelinguistic skills; (V) the continuum of conceptual powers from prelinguistic perception and experience to enlanguaged thought; (VI) the dependence of normativity on discursivity, but not necessarily (or similarly) the dependence of perception as with animals and human infants, or the capacity for valuing or manifesting valuational preferences (short of normative order and science).

Item (I) and what it entails (VII) accounts for the production, among societies of apt persons, of a culturally emergent, artifactually transformed world of (what I call) Intentional things—processes, attributes, the unique life and capacities of persons—(VIII) indissolubly incarnate and emergent in the materiae of the physical world, (IX) invisible, indiscernible, unintelligible to all but persons and their instrumentalities (unless incipiently among the higher mammals) and irreducible in materialist terms; (X) so that they exhibit in a public way significant, significative, semiotic, meaningful, expressive, representational and similarly interpretable features that either are, or depend on, linguistically qualified elements; (XI) and which (possessing Intentional features) confirm the parallel ontological

structure of persons/primates, artworks/physical media, speech/sounds, actions/bodily movements, and the like.

Norms themselves are (xii) thoroughly artifactual; hence, they have no presence in the world, apart from the thoughts, actions, and commitments of societies of apt persons. Indeed, since both the human primate and the human person lack a niche or *Umwelt* in the natural world (which corresponds to the unique evolution of the human primate and person), (xiii) the human being has no *telos* or natural purpose in the world; so that (xiv) the validation of norms, as such, cannot be separable from *sittlich* entrenchment and endorsement, or, where altered or projected, remain capable of recovering a measure of *sittlich* standing. Norms themselves, I should add, (xv) are of two kinds: "enabling" or instrumental norms, which allow us to paraphrase pertinent normative propositions by way of logical or causal replacements that we take to be the effective non-normatively formulated equivalents of affirmations of normatively ordered rank or grade; and "agentive" norms (norms of the putatively highest, noblest, best, ultimate, most fulfilling forms of personal and societal flourishing) are not similarly paraphrasable or "reducible"—and cannot (for that reason) exceed the *sittlich* or alterations of the *sittlich* along the lines already signaled). Hence, (xvi) I take agentive norms, *qua* objective, to be at best "second-best," constructed, consensual, ideologically adequate. The pragmatist is (xvii) committed to flux (not chaos) over fixity, contingency in nature over determinately necessary order, reasonable conviction over all forms of cognitive certainty, privilege, necessity, foundational sources of knowledge, or the like. Accordingly (xviii) human inquiry is inescapably subject to the self-referential paradoxes of epistemology. The upshot is that (xix) the paradoxes (and a measure of skepticism) must be benign, compatible with imputable knowledge and *sittlich* conviction, resolved (if at all) by the *sui generis* conditions of cultural immersion (internal *Bildung*), and thus not answerable in the same way ordinary first-order factual inquiries are. Hence, (xx) inquiry itself is reasonably legitimated but never completely validated, as by evidentiary means; and, in accord with the import of the continuum of the animal and the human, (xxi) is inherently dependent on abductive guesses (in Peirce's sense). But if all that is true, it's more than reasonable to suppose (xxii) that pragmatism is especially opposed to any form of Kantian apriorism or transcendentalism; or, alternatively, that, again in Peirce's terms, if Kant may be vindicated, then only as a "confused pragmatist."

The list of reasonable theorems may be easily extended and all those already mentioned may, I'm persuaded, be reasonably defended in a way that need never be mere *obiter dicta*. The ones I've selected I take to be the most pertinent with respect to the discussions of the Helsinki meetings and what I myself regard as the strongest and most promising views contemporary pragmatism will increasingly favor. If I were to add to the tally given, I should feature more disputatious, dialectically more interesting theorems; for example, (xxiii) that philosophical programs that favor the primacy of semantic inquiry (the "linguistic turn"), deflationism, scientific naturalism, reductionism, inferentialism, quasi-realism and the like are usually "subaltern" disciplines rather than autonomous or relatively independent executive claims; (xxiv) that realism, idealism, Idealism, anti-realism, and the like are caught up in the self-referential paradoxes of epistemology and cannot be confirmed or validated in the manner of first-order factual claims—that is, they are effectively abductive guesses; (xxv) that metaphysical and epistemological claims, though they address different issues, remain inseparable from one another and dwindle into the vague and cognitively indeterminate before they can complete any evidentially determinable regress effecting the validation of cognitive judgments; and (xxvi) that, being cultural transforms, persons are histories—have histories rather than natures. Accordingly, (xxvii) judgments of fact, confirmation, normative standing and the like cannot escape being constructive posits of some sort rather than straightforward discoveries, and (xxviii) the precisions of science, finally, must depend on the informalities of practical life.

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