



PRAGMATISM, METAPHYSICS AND CULTURE

Reflections on the Philosophy of Joseph Margolis

Edited by:
Dirk-Martin Grube &
Robert Sinclair



Nordic
Studies in
Pragmatism

2

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Nordic Studies in Pragmatism

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REFLECTIONS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF
JOSEPH MARGOLIS

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Nordic Pragmatism Network,
Helsinki 2015

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Preface

The Nordic Pragmatism Network was initiated in 2006 to facilitate the cooperation of Nordic philosophers and scientists whose work concerns philosophical pragmatism both with one another and with colleagues and collaborators elsewhere in the world. In 2010, the Network established the publication series Nordic Studies in Pragmatism, which publishes research on the tradition of philosophical pragmatism as well as on closely related topics in an open access format. To publish a volume dedicated to the influential work of one of the most prominent contemporary pragmatists, Joseph Margolis, is most appropriate for such a venture.

The series editors are heavily indebted to Mr. Jukka Nikulainen, whose many efforts guaranteed the success of the technical production of this volume.

Helsinki, November 2015

Henrik Rydenfelt

Introduction

This volume contains revised versions of papers presented at the conference *Metaphysics of Culture—The Philosophy of Joseph Margolis* held in Helsinki, Finland, May 20–21, 2013, as well as several other contributions including Margolis’s own responses to each paper. The purpose of this introduction is to summarize these contributions and briefly indicate their connections to Margolis’s philosophy. It should also help give direction to those readers interested in a specific theme or issue highlighted by one or more contributions. Accordingly, readers are invited to pick and choose based on their interest. After beginning with Margolis’s own general statement of his approach to the metaphysics of culture, the volume is further divided into three main sections. The first contains chapters that focus on Margolis’s appropriation of the American pragmatist tradition. The second section addresses Margolis’s relation to other philosophers, including Husserl, Popper, Protagoras, and Quine, who he has been either explicitly critical of, or who share some affinities with his own view. The final section critically explores Margolis’s respective contributions to the philosophy of art, culture and religion. Lastly, we are grateful to Margolis himself for concluding the volume with his own reactions to the contributions seen here.

Margolis has an œuvre as broad as few other philosophical œuvres are. One of its characteristic features is the way it spans several different contexts: Originally rooted in Anglo-American philosophy, it has increasingly incorporated Continental approaches, ranging from Kant and Hegel to Habermas and (French) deconstructivism (albeit often in a critical spirit). Although it borrows from the analytic tradition—in particular, in its early phase—, it is also strongly committed to classical pragmatism.

If any label fits Margolis broad vision at all, it is that of ‘pragmatism’. Yet, it is a distinctive kind of pragmatism. Margolis critically engages with the work of C. S. Peirce and John Dewey, and further distinguishes his po-

sition from the more recent types of neo-pragmatism seen in the work of Hilary Putnam and Richard Rorty. For example, he rejects the 'internal realism' Putnam favors in the late 1980s and is also critical of Putnam's later rejection of all '*tertia*' (for further details see Honenberger's contribution below). Margolis' pragmatism is further distinguished from Richard Rorty's neopragmatism, which he sees as undermining the entire project of philosophical legitimation.¹ This points to a fundamental metaphilosophical disagreement between Rorty and Margolis over the proper role of philosophy within contemporary intellectual life. This difference is further highlighted through Margolis' sharing Rorty's critique of classical ('Cartesian') forms of realism, but his resisting Rorty's conclusion that this results in complete rejection of the philosophical viability of any form of realism.

In addition, this illustrates the way that Margolis sees the need for a philosophical perspective that shows a kind of unity within the diverse set of activities found in human life, where this involves a critical assessment of those activities as well as a constructive attempt to demonstrate both their interconnections and importance. Seen from this perspective we can make sense of the initially puzzling fact that while Rorty rejects the label 'relativism' Margolis accepts it. From Margolis's philosophical perspective sketched above, the way Rorty combines his specific interpretation of pragmatism with a further commitment to ethnocentrism in order to reject any philosophical legitimation of our practices, looks like an extreme form of relativism, since he leaves us with no grounds for saying one view is better than another. So, while Rorty rejects the label 'relativism' since he thinks its intelligibility is tied to the very philosophical project that he rejects, for those like Margolis, who in some qualified way still adhere to this project, Rorty's view could only be seen as an unacceptable form of relativism. Although Margolis is out to deconstruct all classical versions of absolutism, i.e. theories of cognitive privilege, essentialism, teleology, and the '*archic canon*' of classical philosophy with its search for invariant structures, he does not embrace what he would view as the philosophically uniformed view of relativism Rorty embraces. Margolis' endorsement of 'relativism' draws on the classical tradition of relativism and is based upon a rejection of a strict exceptionless adherence to the principle of bivalence (see the contributions by Zigioli and Grube in this volume). Yet, although it allows for the possibility of incongruent

¹ See Margolis 2002, 74.

judgments to exist side by side in certain domains of inquiry, it does not go so far as to undermine the entire project of philosophical legitimation or to abrogate all forms of realism. Indeed it is an attempt to provide a constructive philosophical understanding of how this form of relativism helps to make sense of and give a type of unity to the variety of human activities and practices at our disposal.

If we would classify philosophers on a scale between the two poles of absolutism and relativism, Margolis would fall on neither side. That is, he certainly does not fall on the absolutist side in the sense in which the Greek philosophers do, or Descartes and Kant (in Margolis' understanding; but see the contribution by Pihlström in this volume). Yet, he does not fall on the extreme relativist side either—at least not, if we identify this side with Rorty, French deconstructivism and related approaches. In a sense, Margolis searches for a *third way between the extremes of absolutism and relativism*.

Of course, with his insistence on the historicity of thinking, flux rather than invariance, and his further acknowledgement of contingency (in that whatever we posit ontically are *our* epistemic constructions), Margolis is closer to the relativist pole than the absolutist one. Yet, characteristically, he does *not* pursue the relativistic implications in these (and related) issues all the way down. For example, he does not revel in contingency the way Rorty does with his celebration of ethnocentrism. Thus, in *some* sense of the word, Margolis searches for the safe passage of Medina in order to avoid the absolutist Scylla *as well as* the relativist Charybdis. Although the way he works out this passage differs from Putnam, Richard Bernstein, and (slightly) from Thomas Kuhn, he shares their intention to avoid both extremes.

We are pleased to offer the varied contributions of this volume as a means for furthering the understanding of Margolis' wide ranging and impressive philosophy. The first contribution, Joseph Margolis' 'Toward a Metaphysics of Culture' contains a useful overview of Margolis' recent views, where he emphasizes the centrality of the artifactual self and the Intentionality of the cultural world of human persons. It is then devoted to a subject upon which all of Margolis' inquiries converge, according to his own estimate, namely, the '*definition of the human self and the analysis of the unique features of the human world and our form of life*'.

For scholars familiar with Margolis' work, this self-estimate may be somewhat surprising. If one looks at his philosophy as a whole, this particular topic does not seem so central. As the contributions below will

demonstrate, Margolis has indeed written on the nature of the human self. The artifactuality thesis appears in numerous places and he has worked on the interpretation of cultural entities since the beginning of his career. However, his original treatment of the artifactuality of the self was based on an analogy with artworks and in terms of "second-natured" *Bildung*. Sometime in the 80s, under the influence of the "philosophical anthropologists" and the pioneering work of Marjorie Grene, he took a further step in affirming that the human person was itself a cultural transform of the human primate. In his most recent work he plans to go further still and offer a first reading of the theory of human culture, in terms of an analysis of "person," "action," "cultural world" and "social practice". So the convergence he finds in his "Metaphysics of Culture" paper is a culmination of themes discussed at various times and places.

Moreover, the reason why Margolis considers the subject of the self to be the converging point of his philosophical work has to do with, at least, two features: first, through his non-standard approach to the human self, which relies on a synthesis between (what he calls) a post-Darwinian approach and a Hegelian (and pragmatist) account of *Bildung*. This non-standard approach enables him to pursue the issue of the human self in unexpected ways and relate it to other philosophical topics in an unorthodox fashion in a way which will become clearer below. Second, his use of 'convergence' is not to be understood as pointing to a theme which explicitly dominates his work but, rather, as that which *underlies* much of his discussion of other philosophical topics. It is not so much a quantitative as a qualitative category: The topic of the human self upon which his works converge is not the explicit center of his philosophy but the *implicit* wheel upon which many other subjects turn—or, at least, can be reconstructed from.

Viewed in this sense, as a wheel upon which other philosophical subjects turn, the statement that Margolis' inquiries converge on the subject of the human self loses much of its initial implausibility. After, all it is intuitively clear that this subject ramifies into other areas of philosophizing, such as the discourse on (reductive) naturalism and the reconstruction of the relationship between the human and the natural sciences. However, Margolis' account of the human self ramifies into other philosophical subjects in unexpected ways. As will become clear, these ramifications reach into issues such as realism and even that of (Kantian) transcendentalism in Margolis' hands.

Finally, it should be mentioned by way of introduction that by emphasizing the human self as the wheel upon which many other philosophical subjects turn, Margolis takes up a topic that has been neglected in philosophy. This is remarkable in so far as much philosophical discussion is based upon anthropological presuppositions. This is true not only for ethics and philosophies such as pragmatism which explicitly rely on anthropological assumptions but also for philosophical discourses which rely *implicitly* on anthropological assumptions. An important example is epistemology which, ultimately, rests upon assumptions on the range and limits of the capacity of human cognition. Take, for example, empiricist-based approaches, such as logical positivism, which never adequately face issues revolving around the self in a constructive fashion. This is particularly remarkable in the face of the fact that their emphasis on the cognitive privileges ascribed to 'protocol sentences' by (some) Logical Positivists *assumes* a cognitive subject. Their focus on capturing the objective observable content of experience blinds them to making any sense of the subject's nature and role within that experience.

Not that empiricist approaches always stay clear from anthropological considerations. Yet, if they delve into them, it is mostly by adding some kind of *materialist* doctrine to their empiricist agenda. Yet, materialism is such a heavily metaphysically-loaded doctrine—at least, in its classical 18th century version as well as in its 20th century successor, physicalism—that any attempt to legitimize it within empiricist parameters is a non-starter. The same holds for the currently popular versions of bio-evolutionary reductionism, such as 'speculative' or 'scientist Darwinism' (as opposed to Margolis' 'post-Darwinism'; see below): Whatever else may speak in its favor, it is hopelessly overburdened if used for the purposes of squeezing out some notion of the self.

Margolis' devastating critique of all forms of scientism makes that unambiguously clear: Reductionist approaches fail to account for important features of the human self, such as Intentionality (see below). As he keenly observes, naturalism has got it wrong from the start. In his view naturalism 'must be tailored to what we take to be executive facts of the human world'. That is, naturalism is conceptually dependent upon an account of the human self rather than providing a sufficient basis for such an account.

A notable exception to this bleak picture is obviously pragmatism. The classical pragmatists offer resources which allow for a non-reductionist account of the human self. As will become clear below, Margolis draws on their resources. It is to be hoped that, in the wake of pragmatism's

ascendence², non-reductionist, philosophical anthropology will rise, too. As will become clear below, Margolis provides a fresh start on this much needed but regrettably neglected subject of the human self.

1. Margolis

The central thesis of Margolis' contribution 'Toward a Metaphysics of Culture' is that the human self is not a natural-kind but a '*second-natured transform of a natural kind*'. In section I, he suggests that the human primate has transformed itself gradually into a functional self or person whereby the mastery of language and its transmission between generations including the self-reflexive awareness of those evolving skills is most crucial.

His account of the human self is then driven by an *opposition* to two positions, viz. *to reductionism and to dualism*. The former, e.g. 'biologism' and naturalism (in the above specified sense) 'is inadequate in the face of the amplitude and uniqueness of the emergent human powers.' The gradual transformation of the hominid primates through the invention and mastery of language—part of what Margolis' means by 'the lingual'—, into persons who have acquired important new artifactual competences cannot be accounted for by reference to biological factors alone. Obviously, cultural entities are embodied in corresponding natural entities (e.g. paintings in painted canvases and spoken words in uttered sounds) but are not reducible to merely physical terms.

The prime example of the latter, dualism, is Kant with his duality of causality and human autonomy or freedom. Margolis rejects Kant's 'transcendentalism'—by which Margolis means the outcomes of Kant's transcendental analysis with its supposedly *a priorist* claims (which leaves the possibility of reconstructing transcendental claims on *an posteriori* basis intact). Transcendentalism (in this sense) is vulnerable to empirical counter evidence and is incompatible with the discoveries of post-Darwinian paleoanthropology.

Approaching the issue from an unexpected angle, Margolis applies his account of the human self to the discussion of *realism*: Our claims regarding the world have an artifactual side to them. Yet, this does not mean that they are nothing but constructions of the cognizing mind. According to Margolis, this is one of the 'splendid corrections *Hegel* provides in his critique of Kant' and '*pragmatism is the upshot of "Darwinizing" this particular correction*'.

² See Margolis 2012.

It should be noted that 'Darwinizing' refers in Margolis' hands not so much to the direct import of Darwin's own account of evolution which is rather 'speculative' and uninformed by (later) empirical inquiries, such as embryology. Rather, this term refers to the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Darwin's account, i.e. predominantly to the *post*-Darwinian paleoanthropological record.

The basis for Margolis' account of the self is thus not biology but, surprisingly, the philosophy of art: He proceeds by invoking a strong analogy between the creation of an artwork and the *Bildung* of persons: Both are *hybrid natured*. That is, although both are thoroughly natural things they '*have (or are) histories rather than natures*'. The lingual as well as the Intentional (in the capitalized, Margolian sense) emerge in the natural world but do *not* "'supervene"' on the natural in any way that can be algorithmically or nomologically inferred from adequate materialist descriptions... '.

In section II, Margolis refers to the '*philosophical anthropologists*', i.e. a group of biologically-minded German philosophers in the interval spanning the 1920s and 1960s: Helmuth Plessner and Adolf Portmann and, in a sense, Jakob von Uexküll and Arnold Gehlen explored the 'profound inadequacy of the Darwinian model of evolution'. Their reception by the 'pioneer American philosopher of biology', Marjorie Grene, provides an important source of inspiration for Margolis' account of the human self. Grene suggests that the self can only emerge by using language, social conventions, etc. Margolis takes that to imply that 'the full measure of being human... depends on the *Bildung* of an enabling language and the culture it makes accessible... '.

Following Portmann, Margolis emphasizes the importance of embryological studies and its progress in the 20th century. The development of the fetus decisively confirms the view that the human species is '*biologically formed to be cultural animals*' (Grene). In this context, Margolis proposes his main thesis, viz. that the self is a *hybrid, second-natured artifact*. The 'achievements of the functional powers of enlanguaged selves is [sic!] "*culturally emergent*" but not "*supervenient*"' in Jaegwon Kim's sense.'

In section IV, Margolis distinguishes between two senses of *Bildung*: '*External*' *Bildung* is the 'the longitudinal process of intertwined biological and cultural evolution by which hominid primates first "*invented*" (and mastered) true language and transformed themselves (into persons)...'. '*Internal*' *Bildung* is the 'inter-generational process by which neonates are enabled to enter the lists of a supportive society of apt persons... by mastering the language and practices the mature members of their society already share.'

In section v, Margolis takes up the issue of the differences between the physical and the human science. Besides the well-known difference that human agency cannot be reduced to causal explanations, he emphasizes the importance of the interpretive disciplines when explicating the Intentional which belongs to the encultured world. Finally, he suggests that 'interpretation may be rightly deemed to the most compendious and absorbing activity of the human self...'

2. Hildebrand

David Hildebrand's 'Margolis's Pragmatism of Continuity' locates pragmatism's key insight in its use of practice, where this is more specifically interpreted as requiring that philosophy must begin with our experience of things and not with some prior theoretical interpretation of experience. He then uses this key metaphilosophical issue to further wonder about the starting point of Margolis's own version of pragmatism. Margolis's overarching systematic vision attempts to distill the key philosophical insights of the past while placing them within recent biological and cultural developments in the further attempt to offer a pragmatism for the 21st century. Hildebrand highlights the way that this systematic vision while in the service of promoting pragmatism appears in tension with the active, piecemeal, melioristic starting point of the classical pragmatists, especially John Dewey.

The tension seen by Hildebrand emerges with his claim that pragmatism fundamentally rejects the idea that philosophy begins in theory. This raises a deep question concerning philosophical starting points: where does a philosopher begin when articulating and defending a philosophical position? Asking this question of Margolis results in a stalemate of sorts. Hildebrand offers evidence that Margolis's view may be too theoretically loaded for the philosophical pragmatist. However, he also discerns several points in Margolis's work that hint at the Deweyan inspired experiential starting point of philosophy that he takes as central for pragmatism. And so on this question about Margolis' starting point as a philosopher the evidence remains inconclusive. Hildebrand concludes that it remains unclear where Margolis stands on what is perhaps *the* deepest methodological issue for a pragmatist. So, the issue remains concerning what is Margolis's starting point in philosophy and this raises further questions concerning how it contributes to the sort of social and moral perspective

that Margolis thinks a proper view of pragmatism must bring to an ailing world.

3. Jacquette

In 'Margolis On The Progress of Pragmatism', Dale Jacquette evaluates Margolis's historical reconstruction of what he recognizes as the main advantages of pragmatist thought. Jacquette focuses on the recent *Pragmatism Ascendent: A Yard of Narrative, a Touch of Prophecy*, where Margolis provides an extended examination of the past and future fortunes of pragmatism. He finds three core elements in Margolis's account, where the first offers a sympathetic reading of Hegel's criticisms of Kant's transcendental philosophy, and the second highlights Peirce's view of inquiry and its fallibilism as his chosen model for implementing Hegel's critique of Kant. Lastly, Margolis presents his optimistic future for pragmatism, once it is properly seen as a synthesis of Hegel's humanized idealism with Darwin's key insights. Jacquette questions the historical framework that Margolis uses in support of his forward-looking view of pragmatism. More specifically, he argues that Margolis's Hegel-friendly defense of pragmatism's core advantages, can be better located in a more sympathetic reading of Kant's main achievements.

Jacquette characterizes his proposal as showing that Margolis's description of the progress of pragmatism proceeds more convincingly from a correct reading of Kant's theory of knowledge than from Hegel's mistaken criticism of Kant's apriorism. In carrying out this strategy, he begins by first distinguishing between conditional and unconditional apriorisms. He then uses this distinction to argue that Margolis's advocacy of Hegel's objections to Kant apply only to an *unconditional* apriorism that Kant is not committed to. Jacquette then further argues that Kant accepts only a weaker *conditional* apriorism that is immune to Hegel's and Margolis's criticisms. Kant is not then, on Jacquette's reading, dogmatic concerning any single predetermined choice of some necessary unconditional *a priori* conclusions. Rather he advocates a carefully crafted *conditional* apriorism of the following form: *If* our best science teaches *p*, *then* the absolute pre-suppositions of *p* are revealed by transcendental reasoning as necessary *a priori* truths required by the *given* science in order for proposition *p*, not yet to be true, but merely logically possible. This form of conditional apriorism survives revolutionary scientific changes, where new concep-

tions of physics not known by Kant would still have their own necessary a priori truths as the prior logical conditions of these physical truths. Further support for aligning Margolis's project with Kant's is offered with Kant's promotion of philosophical anthropology, which inserts the type of humanized perspective into philosophy that Margolis sees as absent until Hegel. Jacqueline further defends and develops his interpretation of Kant's critical project by citing the *Prolegomena* where Kant argues that his conclusions could in principle be rejected by those with better insights into the issues that he takes as indispensable in treating metaphysics as a science.

4. Honenberger

In his contribution 'The Poverty of Neo-Pragmatism: Rorty, Putnam and Margolis on Realism and Relativism', Phillip Honenberger compares Margolis' insistence on (his kinds of) realism and relativism to Putnam's and Rorty's views. He first traces the development of Putnam's and Rorty's respective positions before comparing them with Margolis' views.

In the 1980s, Putnam defended an '*internal realism*'. This form of realism was intended to provide a middle ground between, on the one hand, a '*metaphysical realism*' and, on the other, post-modern views which Putnam associated with Michel Foucault, Rorty and Thomas Kuhn. Yet, this form of realism was criticized as collapsing into relativism. This was one of the reasons why Putnam changed his view later adopting a '*natural realism*' that treats our epistemic situation as being in 'unmediated' contact with a mind-independent world.

Honenberger considers Margolis' '*constructive realism*' to be similar to Putnam's '*internal realism*' insofar as the former posits the possibility of a correspondence between our utterances and their objects provided that the objects in question are understood as accessible to us only as *constructed* posits. The difference lies in Margolis' emphasis upon historical contingency in our constructive efforts as emerges in his rejection of all forms of what he calls '*Cartesian realism*' (under which not only classical figures like Descartes and Kant are subsumed but also current ones, such as Dummett, Davidson, and (although debatably) Putnam in his internal realist phase). Also, Putnam's insistence on defining truth as 'idealized rational acceptability' and on the notion of a '*Grenzbegriff*' is absent in Margolis' account. Whereas Putnam's internal realism is ultimately committed to some version of Kantian transcendentalism and verificationist

presuppositions, Margolis' realism is motivated by cultural anthropology and the history of ideas, such as by Kuhn's incommensurability thesis, according to Honenberger.

While both Putnam and Rorty reject the label 'relativism' for their accounts, Margolis expressively accepts it. Yet, Margolis favors a particular kind of relativism: He rejects all relationalist forms of relativism according to which truth is relativized to some conceptual scheme, say, a language ('true in Language 1 but false in language 2') because they are self-contradictory. His relativism draws upon rejecting bivalence in favor of a many-valued logic (for further elucidation of Margolis' rejection of bivalence, see Grube's essay below).

Putnam, however, emphasizes from the late 1980s onwards '*conceptual relativity*' according to which there is no 'use of "exist" inherent in the world itself'. Rather, the way in which we describe reality is dependent upon our underlying concepts and there is no 'Archimedean point' which determines what concepts to apply. Honenberger considers this form of relativism to be considerably less radical than Margolis'.

In his later, natural realist phase, Putnam has emphasized (following Dewey) a 'transactionist' view according to which human organisms transact with their environment—what he calls 'liberalized functionalism'. Yet, Honenberger emphasizes that the form of transaction Putnam has in mind is largely naturalistic and organic and thus neglects 'the social, historical, artifactual and symbolic mediation of our relation to the world'. Putnam's 'liberalized functionalism' thus contrasts sharply with Margolis insistence on interpretive *tertia*, 'thirds' which stand in between human interaction with the world (construed in a way to meet Davidson's complaints against *tertia*)—which can accommodate historicity and contingency, such as that implied in using language, technology, social institutions, etc.

Comparing Rorty with Margolis, Honenberger reminds us of Rorty's critique of all forms of representationalism, i.e. the idea of a correspondence between words and the world. According to Rorty, there is no way to 'step out of our skins', whatever they are, say, the linguistic conventions within which we think. Honenberger, however, rejects Rorty's view by introducing *Hegelian externality*, i.e. the possibility that we re-construct our previous constructions of the word/world relation according to a more mature view (as, say, we reconstruct our childhood views when we reach maturity). Although there may be no 'God's eye point of view' available from which to judge 'objectively our constructions of the word/world relationship, it is contra Rorty possible to 'step out of our skins'—the usefulness of which can hardly be doubted.

Rorty rejects 'the given' which emerged in 20th century philosophy, i.e. reference to 'bare facts' as rock bottom for knowledge-acquisition (as e.g. in the logical positivist insistence on protocol-sentences) in favor of 'ethnocentrism'. We should give up all pretensions of somehow 'exiting' language, in particular, of attempts to evaluate language's relationship to reality. Rather, we should regard language as a tool for communication and problem solving. Again, Honenberger emphasizes that Rorty overestimates the consequences which follow from his critique. In line with Margolis' 'relativistic realism', in particular, Margolis' (anti-Davidsonian) insistence on the value of (appropriately qualified) '*interpretive tertia*', Honenberger emphasizes that the description of language as a *tertium quid* or even a picture is *not* incompatible with Rorty's insistence that it is a tool. Rather, the latter cannot be understood without the former—particularly so for the purposes of developing a 'post-philosophical culture' along Rortyan lines.

5. Pihlström

In his contribution "'Languaged" World, "Worlded" Language": On Margolis's Pragmatic Intergration of Realism and Idealism' Sami Pihlström reconstructs Margolis' (pragmatist-inspired) synthesis of realism with antirealism and its relationship with pragmatist metaphysics of culture as a form of *transcendental pragmatism*. In Pihlström's eyes, this form of transcendental pragmatism is closer to Kant than Margolis himself thinks.

Pihlström's strategy is to integrate Kantian transcendental idealism into the discussion on pragmatism's relevance for the contemporary debate on realism and idealism. He questions Margolis' claim that Kant is incoherent from the start and suggests to reconstruct the *story of the emergence of pragmatism by starting with Kant*—rather than from Hegel, as Margolis does.

However, Pihlström favors Margolis over many contemporary realists since the latter rejects the idea that metaphysical convictions about realism are part of the world's 'own' account of itself. Rather, he holds that realism is itself a human posit. The 'independent world' Margolis' minimal form of realism presupposes, is the best 'picture' of the world we currently have.

According to Margolis, we must view reality through our historically and culturally conditioned, hence practice-laden, epistemic perspectives rather than from a God's eye point of view. For Margolis, reality and

language are intrinsically entangled so that all forms of realism which are not subordinated to historicist constructivism are hopeless.

Margolis' constructivism implies that questions of knowledge, objectivity, truth, confirmation and legitimation are construed in accordance with our interpretive conceptual schemes and that, although we do not construct the actual world, our posits of the independent world are epistemically dependent on our meditating conceptual schemes. Pihlström suggests that *this constructivism is "transcendental idealism by other means"*. This judgment is particularly apt for Margolis' later specification of constructivism as 'whatever is constructed as ontically independent of human inquiries is epistemically dependent'. Here, Pihlström proposes an *equivalence to the Kantian synthesis of empirical (factual) independence and transcendental (epistemico-ontological) dependence*.

Finally, Pihlström analyzes the link between Margolis' pragmatism and his theory of emergence (for discussion of this theory, see the above Introduction and Pryba's essay below): Margolis' pragmatist should be a realist (in the sense specified above) about normative structures such as language and the mind (or self). Such a pragmatist account of emergence demonstrates the futility of a reductionist theory of culture and of mind. Although being fully natural, those normative structures are hopelessly underdetermined by merely factual, i.e. naturalist, explanations. Departing from Margolis at this point, Pihlström concludes by suggesting that the realism of emerging world-constructing selfhood should be construed as a transcendental presupposition of a pragmatic (constructivist) realism.

6. Niiniluoto

Ilkka Niiniluoto in his 'Margolis and Popper on Cultural Entities' offers a comparative study of Karl Popper's and Margolis's view of cultural entities that explores their respective similarities and differences. Despite their quite different philosophical pedigrees, he explains that they share a central insight in their use of nonreductive materialism to explain personhood and other cultural entities. This agreement concerning the nature of human persons depends on their own distinctive way of claiming that persons are cultural artifacts. Margolis compares persons to cultural artifacts more generally, while Popper takes self-conscious persons to be what he describes as 'World 3 entities', that is, public products of human social action like languages, cultural objects, and other abstract entities including propositions and numbers.

Niiniluoto further argues that Popper's conception of World 3 entities provides a better way to address the ontological status of human-made abstract entities such as works of art, social institutions, and mathematical objects. While Margolis' attempt to account for cultural entities relies on their physical embodiment and is intended to cover *all* cultural entities, Niiniluoto claims that this view works best only for those artifacts which have a unique physical object as their embodiment, such as paintings and sculptures. The Popperian framework applies to a much larger domain of cultural objects because of its additional acceptance of "unembodied" entities. Popper is then in a better position to explain unanswered issues within the philosophy of mathematics since he can countenance the existence of abstract entities that have not been written down or thought about. Niiniluoto gives the example of the next prime number to be found by mathematicians, which has the property of being prime before its discovery. He concludes by offering his own Popperian inspired suggestion for dealing with abstract entities such as the infinite set of natural numbers, whose parts have not been studied without this reverting back to an unacceptable version of Platonism.

7. Hartimo

Mirja Hartimo compares Margolis' and Husserl's respective views in her contribution "In Defense of Transcendentalism: Vestiges of Kantianism in Margolis' Naturalism". Her main contention is that Margolis' kind of naturalism and Husserl's phenomenology exhibit significant similarities in spite of terminological differences.

Hartimo focuses primarily on the issue of normativity. She contends that both Margolis and Husserl subscribe to a kind of normativity which is embedded in culture, tradition and customs rather than based upon *a priori* reasoning. For Husserl, the analysis of norms is based upon '*Besinnung*': '*Besinnung*' aims at finding out the goal of an activity, such as a scientific one, by emphatically participating in the activity in question. Hartimo regards this to be compatible with Margolis' naturalism since norms are internal to practices on both accounts rather than based upon *a priori* reasoning. Both can thus accommodate a pluralism about norms.

On the face of it, Husserl seems to conflict with Margolis on the issue of bivalence: Husserl insists on it whereas Margolis rejects this insistence. Yet, Hartimo shows that this difference can be relativized once we recognize that logic for Husserl is a *goal* to be achieved. Thus, Husserl's insis-

tence on bivalence is not necessarily incompatible with Margolis' view of the cognitive intransparency of the world.

Husserl uses the term 'teleology' to describe the normative structure which directs our conscious life. Yet, although Margolis rejects all teleological accounts, the difference between them is primarily of a verbal sort, according to Hartimo. Margolis has some sort of more or less fixed development towards some pre-determined goal in mind whereas Husserl's '*teloï*' refer to norms guiding our practices and its goals.

Provocatively, Hartimo proposes that Margolis' account still displays vestiges of Kantianism since he proceeds from the results of the empirical sciences and only then tries to synthesize them into a coherent picture of the person. Yet, a phenomenologist would reject this procedure since the sciences provide only fragmented views of personality. The phenomenologist would rather proceed from a direct analysis of experience.

Hartimo recognizes differences between both Husserl and Margolis regarding their use of the term 'relativism': Margolis feels more comfortable using it than Husserl does. Also, Margolis seems to be more conservative regarding the *Sitten* embedded in our forms of life whereas Husserl was deeply troubled by the crisis of the European sciences. Yet, on the whole phenomenology and Margolis' naturalism have more in common than what divides them, according to Hartimo. Both reject scientism, without going (in Margolis' words) 'extra-naturalist', both emphasize the deeply historicized, 'second-natured' view of human beings, and they share a view of the sciences as human constructions without, however, denouncing objectivity.

8. Sinclair

In his 'Margolis on Quine: Naturalized Epistemology and the Problem of Evidence', Robert Sinclair offers a defense of Quine's naturalized approach to epistemology against Margolis's main criticisms, focusing especially on his claim that Quine's use of sensory stimulation cannot account for the evidential support of scientific theories. Quine's naturalized account of knowledge seeks to provide a better scientific account of the connections between the activation of our sensory surfaces and our theoretical discourse about the world. Margolis wonders how this appeal to physical sensory stimulation, which is causal, could provide evidential support for our theories. Margolis isolates a familiar but important worry

about Quine's naturalized epistemology, which appears to confusingly (and inexplicably) mix the causal with the evidential.

Sinclair further shows that Margolis's critical interpretation of key Quinean passages is largely correct when these passages are taken at face value. Responding to his criticisms involves some careful interpretive reconstruction concerning what Quine should have said, and a further consideration of other important features of his mature epistemological view. Once this is done Sinclair further explains that for Quine evidence consists of observable knowledge of facts about our immediate environment that are expressed in the form of observation sentences. Sensory input consists of the physical events of which we are unaware but which are causally responsible for the beliefs which get expressed in observation sentences, and which then further serve as support for such beliefs. Sinclair builds on these preliminary points by discussing Quine's further reflections on the relations between theory and observation. Here he describes how the inferential gap between observation sentences and the standing sentences of a given theory are bridged with the implication of a categorical that through its parts is linked to observation sentences. The result is a detailed response to Margolis's concern over how mere physical stimulation could serve to justify our scientific theories of the world.

Sinclair concludes that with this defense of Quine's view in place, we can recognize that Quine's overall view has much more in common with the pragmatist position that Margolis himself favors. The presence of these shared pragmatist affinities leaves some unanswered questions concerning what explains this apparent disagreement. Sinclair suggests that there remains a basic conflict between Margolis and Quine concerning the proper scope and function of pragmatist philosophy, and he further shows how this is reflected in Margolis's cultural criticism of Quine's asocial naturalism. He claims that this disagreement is so profound as to make neutral adjudication of this dispute unlikely.

9. Ziliolo

In his contribution 'Protagoras and Margolis on the Viability of Ancient Relativism', Ugo Zilioli analyzes the understanding of ancient relativism Margolis has provided in *The Truth about Relativism*. Zilioli's aim is not only to show the plausibility of Margolis' reconstruction of Protagoras' view but also that he is entitled to defend the latter's viability in light of his own concept of 'robust relativism'.

Zilioli delves first into Socrates' interpretation of Protagoras' slogan "Man is the measure of all things, of those that are that are, of those that are not, that are not". Socrates understands this maxim to be an epistemological thesis, viz. as a form of perceptual relativism according to which the phenomena are as they are perceived to be. Understood in such terms, Protagoras view reduces to a form of relationalism which is self-refuting. Yet, Protagoras' view is probably not so much fed by the epistemological but rather by metaphysical and alethic, that is, truth-related, concerns. In other words, it is best categorized under what Margolis calls 'robust relativism', viz. the suggestion to retreat from the bipolar pair of truth values to a many-valued logic, plus a thesis on the material world: The latter is in a radical sense metaphysically indeterminate (thus challenging both Plato's Forms and Aristotelian essences).

Although Zilioli agrees with Margolis' reading of Protagoras and shares the view that it deserves to be defended, he raises a point of possible disagreement with Margolis since he places greater emphasis on indeterminacy than Margolis. Yet, Margolis has responded that, if indeterminacy is emphasized too strongly, the central difference between persons and other material things is jeopardized. That is, for Margolis, persons exhibit emergent properties which mere material things do not exhibit (for more details see Margolis' 'The Metaphysics of Culture'). In Margolis' view, ancient relativism fails to accommodate this point if reconstructed too strongly along indeterministic lines.

10. Bresnahan

Aili Bresnahan in her 'How Artistic Creativity is Possible for Cultural Agents' attempts to locate the source of individual artistic creativity within the larger cultural and social environment. Her starting point is Margolis' view that both artworks and selves are "culturally emergent entities". She then further considers the question of how Margolis' view of the encultured artist, as an individual emergent self, is able to make sense of an identity that is both from culture and proceeds to develop in a distinctive way from that culture. Her aim is to demonstrate how Margolis' work on the artist as cultural agent is still capable of accommodating creative innovation within a given cultural context. Her main hypothesis then stresses that Margolis' idea that a person both emerges from and is at work within a given culture still allows for that agent to acquire the skills needed to create a novel artistic contribution.

More specifically, she focuses on Margolis' theory of the creative artist as cultural agent, but adds a genetic dimension required for the acquiring of cultural competence. This, she further claims, is where we must look for an explanation of why some encultured persons are able to create exceptional innovations in the arts while others cannot. While she accepts Margolis's view that innovation remains impossible for a non-cultured self, the results of highly creative and innovative artists, are, she argues not possible without an inborn potential to these creative abilities under the right conditions.

Her further defense of this point makes use of some empirical results drawn from recent theories of creativity from neuroscience and psychology. Such theories suggest that the locus of creativity is not just found in conscious thought, but also lies in the unconscious capacity to freely associate, thereby developing novel ideas that can form the basis for creative inspiration. The difference then between extraordinary genius and ordinary creativity then stems from some individual's ability to access their unconscious states through intense focus and dissociation not available to others and their heightened ability to create free associations among those states. Breshanan further applies these empirical results to Margolis' theory by suggesting that artists being emergent hybrids of nature and culture include those who are simply born with better physical materials from which to culturally emerge. Their intense focus and dissociation while culturally derived cannot come from culture alone and so the creativity of an innovative artist is in part due to having been born with superior resources for novel creation.

11. Pryba

In his contribution 'Experiencing Culture: Reconsidering the Danto/Margolis Debate', Russell Pryba analyzes Margolis' famous charge that Danto's theory precludes the existence of the cultural world. In Margolis's eyes, Danto cannot have anything coherent to say about the truth-conditions for the application of cultural terms since he does not have a sufficient understanding of the nature of culturally enriched human selves at his disposal.

Pryba begins his account with summarizing the genesis of Danto's theory: Proceeding from the observation that Warhol's Brillo Box does not differ from any brillo box bought in a supermarket, Danto concludes that the difference between art and non-art cannot lie in perception but

must lie in theory. Following Margolis, Pryba charges Danto with holding a somewhat reductionistic account of perception, i.e. a view according to which seeing is equated with certain physiological functions of the eye. However, the history and culturally embedded character of the act of seeing is then neglected. As a consequence, a bifurcation between 'optical reality' and a 'higher reality' emerges. Yet, Pryba charges Danto with being unclear on the grounds upon which he distinguishes between optical reality and cultural reality.

In opposition to Danto's incoherent approach—at least, in the eyes of both Margolis and Pryba—Margolis provides an analysis of culture which can account for the metaphysical nature of artworks based upon a broader theory of culture. This theory is based upon a 'penetration thesis' according to which the natural kind members of *Homo Sapiens* are transfigured 'metaphysically' by the process of language acquisition (enculturation) into persons (for further details see Margolis' 'Metaphysics of Culture' above).

Pryba argues that Danto is incoherent when acknowledging the cultural character of the (supermarket) brillo boxes as originally conceptualized by Harvey since his phenomenological account does not provide the means to ground such a claim. Yet, according to Margolis' 'penetration' thesis, perception is 'culturally-loaded' by linguistic and other enculturing processes, which transforms Members of *Homo Sapiens* into apt selves.

Pryba concludes his contribution by arguing that the point of the Danto/Margolis' debate goes beyond the narrow question of the essence or definition of art. Rather, it extends into an account of the human self as creator of art. Pryba regards the decisive advantage of Margolis' account as having provided a rich and compelling theory of the human person. He suggests that there is no better testament to the depth and complexity of the human ability to make meaning than Margolis' philosophy.

12. Grube

In his contribution 'Margolis' Critique of Bivalence and its Consequences for the Theories of Action and Religious Pluralism', Dirk-Martin Grube analyzes the consequences of Margolis' critique of Bivalence for ethics and the philosophy of religion. Grube shows that Margolis' concern for relativism is prompted by truth-related concerns since, at least, the 1980s (see the distinction between 'relationalist' forms of relativism and 'robust' forms elucidated in Honenberger's contribution). Margolis calls those con-

cerns 'alethic' ones, meaning that they are on the *nature* of truth or restrictions on using the truth predicate (rather than on first-order truth claims).

His basic thesis is that alethic considerations cannot be fixed independently from ontological ones. Thus, considerations on the objects at stake can make a difference regarding the question what truth predicates to use. Grube summarizes this point under the heading *alethic 'a posteriorism'*. Given alethic *a posteriorism*, Margolis suggests to abandon bivalence in certain domains of inquiry. For example, in domains where Intentional (for Margolis capitalized use of that term see the summary in Breshanan's contribution) phenomena are at stake, bivalence is to be abrogated in favor of a many-valued logic.

Margolis' critique of bivalence is then applied to the theory of action. Grube suggests that given certain objects of inquiry, a principled insistence on bivalence can be very imprudent or lead to morally unacceptable consequences. Those objects include cases which are so complex that we are currently incapable of distributing the bipolar pair of truth values over them but are at the same time of such a nature that we cannot afford to postpone deciding on them for too long. Grube points to the question whether global warming is caused by the exhaustion of pollutants as a case in point. In such examples, we should acknowledge the limits of our logical resources and use this acknowledgment as an invitation to go 'extra-logical: Rather than insisting on bivalence, we should use prudential means, 'rules of wisdom', in order to maintain our capability for rational action and decision-making.

Finally, Grube traces the consequences of Margolis' critique of bivalence into the theory of religion. Grube argues that classical pluralist theories of religion, such as John Hick's pluralism based upon the postulate of the '*Real an sich*', are found wanting. Margolis' suggestion to retreat from bivalence provides an interesting alternative for construing a pluralist theory of religion: Whereas holding a religion to be true under bivalent parameters implies by definition to hold all other religions to be false, this is not necessarily the case under the parameters of a many-valued logic. Considering a religion to be 'apt' rather than true allows for the possibility that another religion can be 'apt', too. Retreating from bivalence provides thus an interesting potential for developing a theory of religious pluralism.

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Toward a Metaphysics of Culture¹

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I

I've been aware for a good many years that all my inquiries, no matter how scattered, have been converging with increasing insistence on the definition of the human self and the analysis of the unique features of the human world and our form of life. And yet, for all its plausibility, what I find to be its immense importance remains largely ignored in the academic literature.

Of course, it's not the generic notion that's discounted; it's the specific heterodoxy that I've come to favor that's been remarked, passingly, more for its whimsy than for its merit. "He says that, *qua* person, the human being is an artifact, not unlike a sculpture or a character in a play or a spinoff of a technology. But not a fiction." And, without quarreling, that's true. The only thing I insist on is that, if it's true—that is, in the double sense that that *is* what I say and that I stand by its being true as well, or, at least, that it's perspicuous as a model of the self, since no one supposes any longer that it matters whether the formulation is said to capture what's essential about humanity in the large—then the upstart doctrine is worth a second look. I mean the thesis that the self is not a natural-kind kind, but rather a second-natured transform of a natural kind.

My own quarrel has it that, since the eighteenth century (certainly in Kant and Hume and certainly in contemporary Anglo-American analytic philosophy), the theory of what it is to be a person has played no more

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than a minor role among the claims of the most influential movements, and that knowledgeable discussants are perfectly comfortable in their professional indifference because they believe there's no reason to think any sizable conceptual correction is needed along such lines. I take that to be a mistake.

I believe, instead, that a very large part of Western philosophy has perseverated much too long along seriously defective, unprofitable lines of inquiry and that the artifactualist position goes a long way toward restoring the promise of fresh lines of conceptual invention. If you ask me for the briefest digest of what's to be gained, I suppose the most straightforward answer runs this way: it would confirm the philosophical primacy (beyond the mere ineliminability) of the entire run of explicative concepts drawn from the forms of enlanguaged life (of thought and action and understanding, say) that appear, uniquely, within the space of what we usually have in mind in speaking of the cultural dimension of the human world.

Imagine, for instance, that, considered longitudinally (what I collect under the category of "external *Bildung*," paleoanthropology's turf), the human primate has transformed itself, gradually, into a functional self or person—that is, has done so, sequentially, episodically, innumerable times, diversely, over historical time, regularly changing or enlarging its newly emergent abilities through the transmissibility of its mastery of language from one generation to another and what (regarding sensibility, thought, feeling, creativity and the like) that makes possible. Imagine, that is, that the human primate, passing through the cultural phases of its developing competence (a matter of "internal *Bildung*, let us say), reinvents itself, progressively, as a proto-person on its way to becoming a full-fledged person: as it becomes increasingly aware of its evolving skills (linguistic, reflexive, agentive, "lingual"). It's not difficult to suppose that such a process might actually alter the selective breeding of favored features of its own biology, as well as entrench progressively more and more complex cultural "software" enabling new forms of neural and agentive fluency.

I find it not unreasonable to draw the principal corrective categories from a revision of Kant's immense initiative: from his emphasis on the discursive; the normative; the rational; the agentive; the autonomous; the cognitive; the practical; the intelligible; the committed; the conceptual; the perceptual; the imaginable; the creative; the responsible; the appreciable and the like. Kant, of course, features a pointed interplay between the transcendental and the empirical in his treatment of these and similar distinc-

tions. I should like to retire Kant's transcendental strategy altogether, or at least suppose that there is no principled cognitive or facultative distinction between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* or between the transcendental and the broadly empirical or commonsense. Furthermore, in the light of the two centuries-plus that have transpired since the appearance of Kant's first *Critique*, I would rather feature, now (though not disjunctively), the continuum of the animal and human; the artifactual transformation of the human primate that yields the functional self or person; the novel reflexive powers made possible through the invention and mastery of language; the invention of language itself and the lingual infection (so to say) of the entire world, as a consequence of the mastery of language; the linguistic, semiotic, meaningful, interpretable nature of whatever belongs to the human world, either by production, creation, deed, theorizing or practical thought—but especially language and whatever is instructively interpretable, analogically, as the result of human work and understanding; hence, most important, the thoroughly artifactualized (hybrid) standing (I dare add) of everything in the human world (including the whole of nature, as in science, art, and practical life); and, thereupon, the thoroughly historied nature of all the parts of that emergent world.

You cannot fail to see that the very notion that standard disputes about the scope and primacy of the "naturalism" issue—whether with regard (say) to language, culture, history, personhood, cognition or the like—can be resolved by consulting naturalism's prior constraints has got the cart before the horse: it's naturalism that must be tailored to what we take to be the executive facts of the human world. Imagine denying that Aristotle was a "naturalist" (in his time) or insisting that naturalism must continue to make *a priori* concessions (*now*) to the teleology of nature or the necessity of an Unmoved Mover.

By and large, it's naturalism that we continually adjust, *dependently*, in the light of what, reviewed in our time in history, we find all but impossible to deny convincingly, in our contemporary sketches of reality.

I, for example, find it more than merely difficult to deny that selves or persons are artifactual (hybrid), thoroughly natural, culturally emergent evolutes of a matching prehistorical process of gradually inventing true language, the achievement of creatures (ourselves, initially merely gifted primates) who become proto-persons in the very process. But, then, once conceded, what we take "nature" to "include" or "exclude" will be construed conformably. Spinoza's God belongs to one picture of nature; but the Abrahamic variants of the One Creator are, now, rather unceremoni-

ously thought to be unrecoverable within the terms of our various conceptions of legitimately testable inquiry. For what it's worth, let me add that naturalism and deflationism seem to have been the two most strategically placed philosophical doctrines elevated as distinctly autonomous or fundamental inquiries, arbitrarily (I should say), in contemporary Anglo-American circles—I assume, largely through privileges thought to have been gained by the "linguistic turn" of our relatively recent past, now contested or simply withdrawn.

Kant casts his account of the intelligible world in constructivist terms—though not, for that reason, as lacking realist standing; but, of course, the principal mystery of his entire venture is what to understand as the cognitive agent of *that* construction. My own conjecture is openly post-Darwinian: which is to say, all of Kant's essential categories and distinctions are, like the categories of language itself, artifactual transforms of whatever perception- and experience-based concepts and forms of cognition may be reasonably attributed to the prelinguistic primates (hominid and nonhominid) species (capable of some diminished form of cognition, *not* artifactualized in the human way), from which we take our race to have descended. In this sense, unlanguageed creatures capable of socially enabled learning may be said to possess and share a culture generically not altogether unlike our own enculturation—but severely limited in ways we are not. That's to say, the invention of language entails the invention of conceptual possibilities inaccessible to unlanguageed creatures.

What *Homo sapiens* gains in the way of novel reflexive powers—acquiring by generational transmission what it has gradually invented (collectively) over millions of years—alters our picture of the "nature" of human persons. It appears that we don't have to admit an immortal or changeless *psyche* if we admit the transformative acquisition of the self's inherently artifactual powers. But that's not to say we consult "nature" first and then cobble all that we believe about the human primate and the human person in order to make the entire argument conform to our most congenial prejudices. Our review of primate nature is already the conjecture of a society of accomplished persons.

I believe Kant's constructivism yields an intractable paradox regarding our cognitive access to the intelligible world, that is in principle completely relieved (if not entirely resolved) by restricting the constructivist aspects of human intervention to whatever falls out as a consequence of the artifactual emergence of the functional self itself (the import, chiefly, of the invention and mastery of language and of the effect of language's

penetration of the whole of human experience and feeling). Such formations, in turn, infect our "picture" of the natural world, conjecturally independent (metaphysically, as we say, but not epistemologically) of the conditions under which we are able to know the world at all and able to transform parts of it, artifactually, by way of the deliberate intentions and exertions of human agency, as in art and science and practical activity. The "independent" world is neither Kant's noumenal world nor any constructed (would-be realist) world: it answers to what we conjecture, constructively, is our best "picture" of the world. Its realist standing depends on our epistemology, which cannot therefore be either merely subjectivist or noumenal.

Kant seems, effectively, to have equated the intended realism of the noumenal world (a completely vacuous, even incoherent conjecture) with the realism of a "subject-ively" (but not solipsistically) "constructed" world that, according to Kant's own lights, is the "only world" we could possibly know (a completely self-defeating posit, if our purpose is to legitimate our realist confidence in a publicly discernible world that answers suitably to our sciences and practical inquiries). What Kant requires (I suggest) is the notion of an "independent world" (neither noumenal nor confined to "subject-ive" construction) that we may discern (though we deem it to be ontologically independent of human cognition). But, of course, to concede this would already obviate the entire labor of Kant's "transcendental idealism." There seems to be no plausible reading of the first *Critique* that is both textually reasonable and philosophically adequate to Kant's avowed task.

I concede at once that the artifactualist account entails ascribing an insuperably instrumentalist cast to the whole of our understanding of nature (to include, of course, ourselves and the encultured world we ourselves "produce," in the various ways we do); but I don't see that that disallows our adding that we come to a conviction about the independent (again, *not* the noumenal) world by way of a reasoned conjecture from the import we ascribe to the continuum of the animal and the human. Accordingly, the objective standing of any of our claims regarding the world does have its artifactual side; but that need not signify that the world (thus identified) is somehow a construction of the cognizing mind itself! I take this last notion to be one of the splendid corrections Hegel provides in his critique of Kant, whatever else may be said of Hegel's own extravagances. Broadly speaking, pragmatism is the upshot of "Darwinizing" this particular correction—where, by "correction," I mean to feature more

the *post*-Darwinian paleoanthropological record than the direct import of Darwin's own account of evolution—though the first depends, historically, on the second.

Epistemology cannot be governed by textualist loyalties alone: it becomes "genealogical" (or dialectical), so to say, once it abandons cognitive privilege. Permit me, therefore, to risk an unofficial manifesto here. From my vantage, the "best" way to read Hegel (and the Idealists in general) is to override whatever we deem to be their epistemological and ontological extravagances: to begin, then, by conceding, without *a priori* exclusions or privilege of any kind, whatever we avow as phenomenologically "given," more or less in the sense and spirit of the reflexive, interpretive bridge Hegel proposes (in his response to Kant's Critical undertaking), linking the *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopedia*; and, going on from there, to construe, instructively, what the Idealists (or others) offer—for instance, figures like Ernst Cassirer and Charles Peirce—in the way of limning an admittedly constructed "picture" of what they thereby take to be the independent world, without invoking any would-be attributions regarding what Kant calls the noumenal world. This (or something similar) should serve well enough to signify the *bona fides* of any minimal grasp of the immensely problematic nature of any "post-Kantian" recovery of epistemology, metaphysics, methodology, first philosophy, skepticism or the like, all the while intending to advance our actual inquiries as to what is true about the world (hence, true about our knowledge of the world).

When I first considered what might be the best way of introducing this notion of what was important, philosophically, about the human career, I thought of featuring the perilous conditions of human survival and the problematic survival of that much-abused medium-sized planet that we still inhabit. I concede without a murmur the wanton nature of our exploitation of the earth and the simple truth that a thorough grasp of the fact is assuredly more important than anything I could possibly say about the loftier topic I've just mentioned. Nevertheless, I'm persuaded that my conjectures about the fate of the planet and the human race could never count for more than a tired bit of science fiction and moralizing; and, more than that, that the best of what I might say would itself rest on a prior reckoning of what I'm calling the loftier topic. The fact is, I favor a conception of the human that is not generally featured in contemporary philosophical discussions (an increasing part of which is now directed to recovering, however selectively, some of the main themes of Kant's own account in his first *Critique*). Nevertheless, I'm persuaded that

the artifactualist picture has definite advantages over the Kantian model, particularly in overcoming the unwanted dualisms of Kant's own effort (and those of his critics) and the cognate difficulties of Kantian-inspired revisions—with regard, say, to realism, knowledge, normativity, language and logic, interpretation, the compatibility of freedom and causality, the metaphysics of enlanguaged culture and persons, and the significance of historicity. Quite an imposing list of fundamental themes that would be—would have to be—altered by acknowledging the artifactuality of the self: the main themes of what I'm calling the loftier topic.

The beginning of a promising analysis, I suggest, starts with what I shall call the "Darwinian effect": not so much the lesson of Darwin's evolutionary theory regarding the continuum of the animal and human, but the specific formation of modern *Homo sapiens* that requires a sense of the biological oddities of the species, in terms both of its evolutionary trajectory and the inseparability of the latter (bearing on the emergence and epigenetic development of the primate members of the species) from the intertwined cultural evolution of true language and its unique (hybrid) powers effecting the social transformation of hominid primates into artifactual persons.

It's a curious, though undeniable, fact (the full import of which has dawned on me only in recent years) that I came to my present view about what a person is, *not* initially by way of biology but (if you can believe it) by way of my earliest work in the philosophy of art—especially regarding the interpretation of art. There's no question that the fine arts are occupied with the creation of an entire world of artifacts, essentially different from anything to be found in "nature" (as we say)—birds' nests, termite mounds—that may seem quite similar at first glance, but are not: because the first (but not the second) are enlanguaged transforms of natural or natural-kind things (possessing linguistic or semiotic import or something of the sort) as the emergent upshot of the deliberate work of human persons. That's to say, my theory of the self takes form by invoking a very strong analogy between the creation of an artwork and the *Bildung* of a person. I believe this bears on the artifactuality of the normative as well: a most important verdict, if true.

I take both persons and artworks to be hybrid artifacts, which I characterize as inherently possessing properties and powers of a linguistic, enlanguaged, or linguistically-dependent sort ("lingual," as I tend to say)—precisely because they are "second-natured," in a sense deeper than that intended in Aristotle's metaphysics, closer to Herder's and Vico's notions,

though the latter notions are not yet post-Darwinian, if I may put the point thus.

Everything of this kind—persons, artworks, words and sentences, actions, histories, preeminently—are similarly qualified and structured as hybrid artifacts (thoroughly “natural” things), that have (or are) histories rather than natures; are inherently interpretable (in the manner barely suggested); are functionally so characterized; are discernible by, and only by, persons; and are, as such, indissolubly embodied or incarnate in suitably natural *materiae* or lesser transforms, so to say. (The entire robotic world is flexibly accommodated thereby.) Everything so qualified belongs to a world (possibly many different worlds), accessible more or less in the same way distinct languages are accessed bilingually, as a space of “Intentional” things (taking “Intentional” as a term of art, written with capital “I”; to signify their manifesting inherent linguistic or semiotic import open to some *sui generis* sort of objective interpretation).

This allows, of course, for the pertinence of agents’ intending what they do or say or create or produce to mean or signify, in a suitable way, what they may thus be rightly interpreted to signify or mean. It also allows for the pertinence of the technical use of “intentional,” written with lower-case “i,” reintroduced from medieval sources by Franz Brentano and elaborated in different ways by other authors, so as to signify the so-called “aboutness” of mental states and the cognate features of the monadic structure of sentences regarding belief and the like (or of other similarly apt vehicles—the expressiveness of music, say, however quarrelsomely). Here, “Intentional” (with capital “I”) signifies a huge space of culturally interpretable structures that present serious puzzles regarding the determinacy of meaning or import, admittedly strenuous though not in principle impossible to resolve. Perhaps the most distinctive “metaphysical” feature of this world is that Intentional things actually emerge in culturally regular ways—are discerned, by persons, to be real—in the natural world (that incorporates whatever is thus second-natured), the (emergent) order of which is not known to “supervene” on the natural in any way that can be algorithmically or nomologically inferred from adequate materialist descriptions of its putatively enabling substrate.² In this precise sense, the cultural world(s) of human societies cannot be reliably correlated along either causally explanatory or semantically regular

² If this be granted, then the entire cultural order defeats the supervenience claims of Jaegwon Kim, for instance in his *Mind in a Physical World: An Essay on the Mind-Body Problem and Mental Causation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

lines involving correct descriptions of its embodying *materiae*. I'm hinting here at two entirely different forms of emergence, both within nature: one, the Intentional transformation of natural-kind kinds, collecting the irreducible cultural emergents of the specifically human world; the other, restricted to the natural emergents of the macroscopic physical world, at least potentially reducible to a more fundamental stratum of physical nature. (I take the profound difference between the so-called "natural" and "human" sciences to rest on these two forms of emergence; although both forms may be coherently invoked within a "single" science: for instance, in contemporary genetics and in art criticism!)

II

The profound inadequacy of the Darwinian model of evolution was effectively explored by a group of biologists and biologically-minded German philosophers known as the "philosophical anthropologists," more or less in the interval spanning the 1920s and 1960s. I first became familiar with them and others who, one way or another, responded, often unfavorably, to Darwin's published theory, through the excellent brief studies provided by the pioneer American philosopher of biology, Marjorie Grene, whom I'm pleased to have been able to count as a dear friend. I met Grene around the latter part of the 70s or early 80s, hence fairly close to the publication of important statements by figures like Helmuth Plessner and Adolf Portmann, though close also to the statements of such obliquely linked figures as Jakob von Uexküll and Arnold Gehlen, who overlap the outer bounds of the *floruit* of the anthropologists and share some of their problems. The latter two happen not to figure prominently in Grene's overview, but they seem to me to be essential to a rounded picture of the work of the philosophical anthropologists themselves; as, of course, is Grene, whose final paper, in *The Understanding of Nature* (1974), "People and Other Animals," suggested a way to reconcile my own biologically naïve view, formed in the early 70s, with an ampler grounding in biology, though by way of a more radical conjecture than Grene herself ventured. I began to see how to thread together, more effectively, the artifactual unity of the entire range of human culture manifested in the analogous formations of persons, artworks, histories, language(s), and actions, without which it would have been impossible to attempt to unseat, in a single stroke, an Aristotelian or a Darwinian biology or to make entirely plausi-

ble the radical notion that the human self is a hybrid, artifactual transform of the primate of our species.

Following Plessner's lead, Grene herself, though never entirely persuaded (I think) by Plessner's somewhat idiosyncratic formulations, clearly thinks of persons *as* the mature, fully evolved members of *Homo sapiens*. (I see no evidence, in Grene's account, of a "metaphysical" transformation.) If I understand her correctly, then, when she says "we become human, not just by being born *homo sapiens*, but by relying on a complex network of artifacts: language and other symbolic systems, social conventions, tools in the context of their use—artifacts which are in a way extensions of ourselves,³ she means that *the full measure of being human* (not, being "merely" human) depends on the *Bildung* of an enabling language and the culture it makes accessible (without quite answering whether infants, at birth, or just before beginning to learn a language, are, functionally, already persons). The Aristotelians construe the self as a native biological resource, though perfected, second-naturedly, by artifactual means. But then, they are unaware of the thoroughly artifactual achievement of true language *and* the entailed invention of the self that masters language. Grene remains more of an Aristotelian than she admits.

Grene does not hold (as far as I can see) that the very formation of a functioning self evolves, transformatively, only through the mastery of language and what that makes possible—always by means that cannot be characterized completely or primarily in biological terms. It's hard to see how the difference between languageless and enlanguaged primates, otherwise so similar biologically, can be a matter of mere degree: the "ontologies" of prelinguistic primates and of enlanguaged persons are so extraordinarily different. Indeed, I'm persuaded that the chance education

³ Marjorie Grene, "People and Other Animals," *The Understanding of Nature: Essays in the Philosophy of Biology* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974), p. 358. Grene (as well as Plessner) seems oddly inexplicit. Thus she says: "We make ourselves what we are through the way we actively assimilate our perceived culture, and in so doing we remake it, and that is also to unmake it. . . . In short, our nature demands for its completion the unnatural, the indirect, and also the unreal. . . . [B]ut we *exist* as human beings on the edge between nature and art, reality and its denial" (pp. 359-360). My sense is that she means that we become "fully" human in assimilating our "perceived culture"; but I don't see that she ever says (or means to imply) that we become *persons* ("minimally") when we begin to acquire language. She specifically wishes to avoid admitting some new entity called soul or mind; and treats "the achievement of personhood as the *embodiment* of a culture" (p. 357). But chimpanzees also assimilate their "received culture" and they are unable to function as persons. My claim is that human cultures are already *enlanguaged* and that *assimilating them is undergoing* transformation into personhood (without "requiring" a soul or mind).

of the gifted bonobo (Kanzi) makes Kanzi an incipient person in a sense more convincing than the sense in which normal prelinguistic human infants may be said to be persons.⁴ (Kanzi's achievement, you realize, is "impossible" on Chomsky's original thesis.)

Persons, I'm convinced, "suddenly" *acquire* novel, powerful, thoroughly artifactual abilities (when they acquire language), which they do not have as a result of merely being born as *homo sapiens* or of acquiring whatever abilities they may gain by prelinguistic means: languageless primates cannot refer to the fine-grained content of their own mental states; they cannot share such characterizations, in verbal ways, with (other) verbally apt persons; they cannot formulate complex alternative options regarding absent matters that are not (and cannot be) otherwise identified in the immediate contexts in which they are poised for pertinent responses; they cannot store or reliably transmit the accumulating memory of their own technological gains so as to advance, in culturally distinctive ways, from generation to generation. I won't deny that there is an uncertain range of phenomena regarding self-identity among chimpanzees and even elephants (apparently on seeing themselves in a mirror), but that is not yet "self-awareness" in the sense in which *we* gain the ability to identify ourselves as the very agents who acquire the abilities mentioned, or the ability to report and share the content of our mental life with apt interlocutors. For reasons of this sort, I originally favored the artifactuality of the self or person, by way of an analogy with artworks; but I was quickly persuaded that the biological evidence strengthened the thesis immeasurably in the same direction. (Think of the sheer rate of change in the accelerating history of modern painting. Nothing in biological evolution compares with that.) The process must, I suggest, be tracked ontogenetically as well as phylogenetically, so to say—that is, by way of cultural analogy.

The philosophical anthropologists and Grene tend to resist construing the human person as a hybrid artifact, a culturally formed transform of a natural-kind kind, the primate species we call (rather self-importantly) *Homo sapiens*, by way of a linguistically qualified *Bildung*. Grene and Plessner do speak of persons as "natural artifacts"⁵ of course. But what they mean seems to signify that the "full" development of the human potential is largely due to our involvement with artifactual instruments and instru-

⁴ See E. Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, et al., *Language Comprehension in Ape and Child* (Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 58, Nos. 3–4, 1993, Serial No. 233), pp. v–vi, 1–254.

⁵ Grene, "People and Other Animals," p. 358.

mentalities. They do not openly commit (as far as I know) to the idea that persons *are*, as such, artifactual transforms, whatever marginal incipience we may suppose appears among human infants and prelinguistic animals. And, of course, they nowhere consider the need to explain the appearance of the advanced instrumentalities they themselves invoke. How do they explain the invention of language itself? Here you begin to see the precision that inheres *in* the deep informality of our conjectures.

All of this clarifies the sense in which most discussants of the "nature" of (human) persons conflate (or confuse) the analysis of the human primate and that of the human person. It's for this reason that the "biology" of the human being (featuring, say, its evolution, genetics, and epigenetic development—its ontogeny and phylogeny) must be joined to the paleoanthropology of the conjectured *cultural* evolution of the human person. All of this is missing, of course, in Aristotle and Kant; but it's also missing, it must be said, in the best work of such diverse but important (modern) figures as Cassirer, Husserl, Mead, the philosophical anthropologists, Sellars, Searle, Kim, and McDowell.

It's worth noting as well that George Herbert Mead, the Darwinian-oriented social psychologist and philosopher among the classic pragmatists, who most thoroughly engages the question of the right analysis of the self, explicitly construes the functioning of the "self" as primarily *social* and interactional, rather than *language-specific*. Mead was (at least at times) quite prepared to attribute a genuine sense of selfhood to chimpanzees for instance, because he took them to be able to respond to the "resistance" of objects and the bodies of other creatures in terms of tactile sensibility and related forms of external pressure and "opposition" in a manner akin to the human pattern. He meant, apparently, the capacity for social interaction—he may even have intended something like a dogfight (which he repeatedly mentions)—where it's clear that, thus construed, reference to the "self" could only mean an organism's awareness of its body and action being resisted or opposed by the body and behavior of another animal (and, of course, the "resistance" of what we regard as entirely inanimate). Mead was extremely perceptive; but I think the line of thinking I've just described, including what seems (to me) to be his inapt dialectic of the "I" and the "me" (for which, however, Mead is nevertheless deservedly famous), falls woefully short of what (as I am suggesting) the analysis of the human self requires.⁶ The "I" and the "me"

⁶ George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society, from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934, 1965), Part III, especially §25.

must be aspects of the *self's* functioning; they cannot be mere prior phases of socially interactional processes (open to languageless primates) that finally *yield* (somehow, even without language) the functional powers of the self. The evidence is against such a possibility. I suggest that the social (or interactional) model of cultural learning very neatly accommodates the continuum of the animal and the human, but it does not allow for the profound discontinuity of the linguistic (within the continuity of the social itself) or for the unique powers that the linguistic makes possible. (This also marks the fatal weakness of Searle's account of primates and persons—accordingly, his account of language's contribution.)

Adolf Portmann, who is a remarkably perceptive zoologist, offers (I surmise) a stronger thesis than Plessner's, though one still too ambiguous regarding the onset of personhood: Portmann holds that humans "are *biologically* formed to be *cultural* animals," and that we "take on the full human nature" when we manifest "three chief characters: upright posture, speech, and rational action," all of which must be learned by human infants very shortly after birth, through contacts with competent adults (principally, the mother or surrogate mother). So that, in accord with Grene's summary of Portmann's position (which I'm drawing on):

the whole biological development of a typical mammal has been re-written in our case in a new key: the whole structure of the embryo, the whole rhythm of growth, is directed, from first to last, to the emergence of a culture-dwelling animal, not bound within a pre-determined ecological niche...but, in its very tissues and organs and aptitudes, born to be *open to its world*, to be able to accept responsibility, to make its own the traditions of a historical past and to remake them into an unforeseeable future.⁷

My small complaint has it that the very skills Grene reports we *learn* (which Portmann favors)—possibly excepting upright posture—cannot be directly learned by way of prelinguistic skills; because the intervening *linguistic* skills cannot themselves be learned directly by mere prelinguistic skills. (There must be a continuum.) The onset of true language and personhood must be gradual, though at the greatly accelerated pace made possible in cultural as opposed to biological transmission. The best clue regarding this matter that I am aware of (in effect, the continuum of the prelinguistic and the linguistic) is entirely intuitive and informal: namely,

⁷ Grene, "The Characters of Living Things," in *The Understanding of Nature*, pp. 287–288. See, also, Adolf Portmann, *Animals as Social Beings*, trans. O. Coburn (London: Hutchinson, 1961); and *New Paths in Biology*, trans. A. Pomerans (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

the account given in the opening passages of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, where, as Wittgenstein explains,

A child uses... primitive forms [of language, such as Augustine suggests] when it [first] learns to talk. Here the teaching of language is not explanation, but training.⁸

Here Wittgenstein contrasts "explanation" (*Erklären*) and "training" (*Abrichten*). He means, precisely, that the child cannot yet understand the *use* of particular *words* (say, "red" or "five"), which would be learning a language in a manner too close to its full-bodied sense; at first, a child learns only to "act" in the right way (*handeln*). It does not grasp the "meaning" of the words it learns to mimic as utterances of sound.⁹ That apparently dawns later; and, with it, as I would argue, it begins to gain the incipience of those functional abilities that belong to persons proper. (I'm prepared to backtrack some, if the evidence demands it, to admit that monkey and primate communication are more advanced, "proto-grammatically," than informed observers suppose.)

In fact, Wittgenstein provides, in an unmarked way, something very close to the analogy (I'm proposing) among a number of natural/artifactual pairs: sounds/words; movements/actions, primates/persons; and, may I add (roughly), media/artworks and events/histories. If you allow all this, you have already begun to formulate the general outline of my intended ontology of nature/culture; and, if, with me, you concede that each of these conceptual spaces behaves in its *sui generis* way, then you also have the beginning of a comprehensive theory of interpretation (which I have not yet fully worked out) that I think takes its most interesting forms in literature and art, language, history, psychoanalysis, moral and legal appraisal, and cognate disciplines among the human and social sciences. So the mapping affords a great economy. Once you have this much in place, nothing is put at risk—if the evidence supports the conjecture that there may be *some* incipience of selfhood in the languageless primate world (including the world of human infants). I concede the possibility, to avoid needless rigidity: we are only at the beginning of our understanding of animal intelligence. I am, of course, quite prepared to concede diminished forms of cognition among a great many animal species; and, I submit, the incipience of selfhood among monkeys and apes would, if plausible, probably be correlated with the incipience of functional analogues

⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigation*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: 1953), I, §5. Compare §1.

⁹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigation*, I, §§1–2.

of vocabularies and basic grammatical distinctions such as reference and predication within sub-linguistic communication.

It's worth remarking—though it's something of an aside here—that, among the members of the so-called Pittsburgh School, who have re-examined the prospects of reviving a Kantian-inspired theory of mind and knowledge, Wilfrid Sellars is clearly open to the possibility of a perception-based form of cognition (below the level of discursive cognition), whereas John McDowell adamantly opposes the possibility (on grounds of incoherence)—each arguing as surprisingly sanguine Kantians.¹⁰ As far as I know, McDowell nowhere disputes the empirical evidence drawn from paleoanthropology and primate studies.

Allow me, then, to add two fairly important, relatively uncontested notions to my account, in order to give a proper sense of the amplitude of what I've now sketched: first, that, since, as I've already suggested, what is culturally artifactual by way of the mediation of language, is (transformatively) "second-natured," it is but a step to concede that what is second-natured is itself a distinctive part of nature; and, second, that the ontological strategy of permitting an individual thing of a more complex level of analysis to be indissolubly embodied or incarnate in an individual thing of a less complex level accommodates a clear distinction between the physical (or biological) and the culturally significant, without invoking any dualisms at all. It thereby affords a gratifyingly simple economy, without yielding to dualism or reductionism (hence, *contra* Immanuel Kant, P.F. Strawson, Wilfrid Sellars, Arthur Danto, Donald Davidson, Daniel Dennett, and others); and it obviates the need to be troubled by any claims of realism regarding thoughts, propositions, truth, meaning, and the like (for instance, in the manner of those who profess to be both naturalists and deflationists, in some deep or shallow degree: Paul Horwich and, more moderately, Huw Price, say).

I should add, as close as possible to the mention of Portmann's views about the inherently "incomplete" birth of the human infant, that this extraordinary challenge (or modification) of the Darwinian conception was made possible largely by the progress of embryology, almost entirely within the span of the twentieth century. Apparently, embryological studies were not pursued in any sustained way at the time of Darwin's speculations. But it is, precisely, Portmann's thesis that it is the development of the fetus that decisively confirms that the human species is, again in

¹⁰ I have explored the issue in an as yet unpublished paper, "In Advance of McDowell's Kantian Innovation."

Grene's summary, "*biologically* formed to be *cultural* animals."¹¹ Nevertheless, one cannot fail to notice that both Portmann and Grene mingle very different competences as indisputably biological, without accounting, for instance, for language, normativity, responsibility and the like—alongside, say, upright posture.

Hence, in some sense, Grene and Portmann surmise, the unfinished birth of the human infant is already preformed *for* the second-natured cultural (perhaps even linguistic) transformation of the primate neonate! Of course, the charge, which, taken at face value, seems perfectly reasonable, counts as a serious paradox for the Darwinian account. Even so, Portmann's emphasis seems to be largely on the side of post-natal sociality; whereas the paradox draws us to the puzzle of the biological source of language itself—of what, following Kant's own intuition, may be called discursivity. In any event, it is indeed, within the terms of this incompletely explicated puzzle, that we begin to see the deep sense in which the second-natured functionality of language provides a promising answer to the dubious metaphysical economies of the analytic deflationists, on the one hand, and the excessive hypostatization of the self or soul or *Geist* of the human being, according to theorists like Max Scheler, on the other.

The moderate thesis I recommend is simply that of the self's hybrid, second-natured artifactuality. But that's enough to lead us to a thesis of the greatest importance: viz., that the achievement of the functional powers of enlanguaged selves is "culturally emergent" but *not* "supervenient" in any sense akin to the skillfully contrived (but demonstrably inadequate) arguments of theorists like Jaegwon Kim. The *reductio* (of Kim's proposal) rests with the fact that there is, and can be, no strategy by which to specify *any* determinate neurophysiological (or related) correlates of commonplace, culturally specified, linguistically informed events (or actions) along the lines of either causal or conventional rule-like regularities. You have only to think of the indefinitely open run of materially definable ways by which to make a chess move.¹² But if the counterargument holds, then reductionism will have lost its first line of defense.

¹¹ Grene, "The Characters of Living Things," p. 285.

¹² See the definition of supervenience, in Kim, *Mind in a Physical World*, p. 9. Kim offers variants of his account in other of his books, but the essential criticism remains: he simply fails to explore the plausible differences between the physical and the cultural (hence, between the physical and the enlanguaged cultural)—a clear specimen of an apriorist speculation that masquerades as a kind of scientific empiricism.

III

We've reached a plateau of sorts in distinguishing (without disjoining) the biological and the cultural and the biological and the linguistic. I hazard the guess that the final placement of the vocal cords in the human throat (already apparent at the fetal level) suggests that, paleoanthropologically, the specifically linguistic use of finely distinguished sounds was a serendipitous development beyond what contributed to the continuing improvement of prelinguistic communication, that happened to make improvements in proto-language possible as well.¹³ That's to say, Portmann's conservative emphasis on the social rather than the specifically linguistic (the latter being Noam Chomsky's daring *biological* option—his innatism—now no longer featured in terms of a "universal grammar," but not abandoned altogether either)¹⁴ may have been (even quite recently) the most plausible (though still inadequate) middle ground on which we might have hoped to fathom (indeed, *did* once venture to explain) the true sense in which the engine of the evolution of distinctly human competences was distinctly biological, even if not convincingly restricted to any form of reductive genetics.

We see more clearly now that the biological, alone or primarily, cannot be adequate. (The amplitude and uniqueness of emergent human powers are against it.) But even the supposed fixities of biology—for instance, of a particulate genetics—are being steadily superseded. The nature of what passes for an autonomous biology will have to be adjusted. It's not the specific mechanism of biochemical genetics that's decisive: it's the false separation of its molecular and sub-molecular processes from the holisms of actual animal life that must be reconsidered. The paradox in the evolution of the human is, precisely, that it is itself a hybrid and increasingly artifactual process. The telltale clue lies with the extraordinary rapidity (and acceleration) of cultural change and the glacial rate of biological innovation.

¹³ Compare Steven Mithen, *The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind, and Body* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), Part II. Some of Mithen's conjectures may already be obsolete.

¹⁴ See Noam Chomsky, *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). In effect, Chomsky now denies that "universal grammar" is a biological organ. I should add that I have never been convinced by Chomsky's innatism or his biologism regarding grammar. It's important to remark that there are at least two distinct doctrines here. Chomsky has yielded on the innatism of grammar but not on biologism and not on the innatism of some deeper source of the systematicity of language.

It's the very idea of the unified (well, relatively unified) functionality of persons—which, in effect, extends the familiar "centeredness" of animal life (or organismic functionality, let us say) even where higher-order consciousness is not at stake—that provides the basic premise on which all of the more fine-grained analyses of the enlanguaged world finally depend. Correspondingly, the most fruitful lines of inquiry regarding the metaphysics of culture are bound to be more conjectural than the correction of the primitive notion that biological evolution is assuredly an autonomous discipline approaching, as well as it can, some ideal of "molecular biology."

One cannot fail to see, here, the striking analogy between the easy atomisms of the extreme forms of genetic explanation ("biologism," as Richard Lewontin names them)¹⁵ and the social atomisms of the moral and linguistic theories of early modern figures like Hobbes and Machiavelli and late modern figures like Quine and Davidson. Also, as an unexpected bonus, we learn that Kant's transcendentalism and its fatal dualism of causality and autonomous agency can pretend no longer to have remained faithful to its strongest empirical intuitions. It's now quite reasonable to suggest that transcendentalism (strictly construed) is incompatible with the discoveries of post-Darwinian paleoanthropology. Time and the unpredictability of conceptual imagination have completely dismantled Kant's splendid architectonic by the merest detour. Human autonomy (or freedom) must be causally engendered by the processes of "second-naturing" *Bildung*.

That's to say: the best way to defeat Kant's transcendentalism (or apriorism) is not by way of a direct attack on epistemological grounds but by invoking empirical discoveries that we're unwilling to disallow (for Kantian-like reasons), as in challenging McDowell's argument, in his Woodbridge Lectures, regarding the necessary discursivity of perceptual knowledge (which effectively entails that languageless animals are incapable of even a diminished form of knowledge). The defeat of transcendentalism proceeds by demonstrating how straightforwardly we take *a priori* claims to be vulnerable to empirical counter evidence, as in challenging the *descriptive* adequacy of Kant's treatment of the *a priori* standing of Euclidean geometry vis-à-vis Newtonian and post-Newtonian physics. I should add that I have no particular interest in attacking or defending "transcendental" variants that abandon apriorism—or effectively con-

¹⁵ See, for instance, the pop discussion in R. C. Lewontin, Steven Rose, and Leon J. Kamin, *Biology, Ideology, and Human Nature* (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

cede (say, along C.I. Lewis's lines) that the *a priori* may simply be an *a posteriori* posit.

The cultural (that is, the enlanguaged cultural) is itself necessarily hybrid (or so it appears); hence, so also are propositional thought and language. The fact remains that the emergence and evolution of persons is insuperably artifactual—in ways that begin to challenge our dawning grasp of more and more radical "revolutionary" possibilities—hybrid possibilities, of course, which will surely quicken in the near future—to experiment with the prospects of electronic modifications of neurobiological processes. There will be no clear line, finally, between natural and artifactual biology. Conjectures along such lines are already more than the whim of an insouciant commingling of science fiction and neuroscience. The hubristic rule remains provisionally valid, even if it is promethean: namely, that whatever biology lacks, technology will soon provide. In any event, the barest concessions of this sort confirm the laggard simplicities of both transcendentalism and reductionism.

If we allow these arguments to pass muster, then we cannot deny the blind contingencies of our own philosophical conjectures. Why should we now suppose that our present speculations will not similarly require conceptual revisions of a currently unimaginable kind? The great differences among the opposed theories of the past continually dwindle into minor variations. When I scan, unguardedly, the contemporary philosophical literature, I find I see less and less difference between the pioneer work of figures like Hume and Kant and Hegel and the strongest currents of (say) the last 70 years of "modern" modern philosophy: neither interval, let me suggest, features in a sustained way the artifactual, hybrid, historied, still radically evolving formation of the human person. Put metonymically: I doubt that what now passes for a reasonably adequate account of either science or morality will remain convincing in a fairly short span of time. You have only to think of Descartes's rationalist vision contrived under the shadow of Galileo's physics. (I concede that it's entirely possible I'm misjudging the inertial charm of entrenched theories, but that's not much of a rejoinder.) We need a more daring conception of philosophical imagination: the immense openness of our technologies entails the hubris of universalism; the empirical always trumps the transcendental.

There are, of course, clear signs of the human infant's unusual sociability, a biological gift open at once to artifactual transformation: passively, in its total dependence on the care of others; actively, in its inclination to track the movements of whatever moves in its social space, as well as

in its appetite for social play; also, uncomprehendingly, in the continual demands of its relentless crying. But nothing compatible with the initiatives of human agency is more socially efficient than language. So that the almost complete absence of adaptations for survival in the neonate may well be its greatest resource for survival: the intense, prolonged sociability that makes the successful mastery of language possible—the mastery of any human language, mind you, and in any human society—hence, also, bilingualism and agentive cooperation at any level of complexity. It's entirely possible that human neonates learn their first lessons in language by way of different native aptitudes than those that sustain maturity—and that those first abilities normally subside with maturation.

There's a fair sense in which the social insects form (again, not quite completely) a super-organism, of which diversely specialized, aggregated members comprise the living parts—very nearly a collective organism; in the human case, an artifactual language, reliably transmitted from generation to generation, never finally completed or closed and never completely mastered by any individual person or determinate aggregate of persons, constitutes something of a "collective" possession (accommodating diversity and change) by which every form of social or societal bonding is effectively enabled. There's nothing in the artifactual communities of the human world that functions like the queen in the natural collectivity of the bee world. But bees have their functional niches and humans have no *Umwelt* at all, which qualifies what we should understand by naturalism and normativity—which we capture by a bit of conceptual daring, in speaking of the artifactuality of the self.

I surmise that the ubiquity of bilingualism argues the presence of some subterranean biological commonality underlying the immense diversity of languages and cultural experience. We may reasonably suppose, therefore, that a person is indeed an individual creature, a "natural artifact" (to co-opt the phrase most favored by Plessner and Grene but now read in a way that outflanks their own uncertainty), that acquires, in acquiring its second nature (effected, you remember, by the mastery of a home language), a "collective" aptitude and sensibility (as we may say) that does not restrict (actually, facilitates) its individual freedom and spontaneous initiatives.

Accordingly, persons, I surmise, exhibit something of the collective functionality of the language they share and of whatever of their practices their language subtends and informs. Certainly, distinct biological drives contribute to the same movable solidarity: sexuality, preeminently. But although I see no reason to suppose that some sort of collective identity

is (at this moment) an impossible achievement for the hybrid artifact that persons are (supplemented perhaps by science fiction's as yet unrealized inventions), persons *are, now*, individual creatures that possess something of a collective—something of a second—nature. That's to say: collectivity in any psychological or social respect seems to be restricted to what we predicate (as attributes) of distinct individuals and aggregates of individuals. I see no reason to yield, for instance, to anything quite like Emile Durkheim's *conscience collective* (collective consciousness or conscience) or Wilfrid Sellars's inchoate flirtation with "collective intentionality" along somewhat Durkheimian lines.¹⁶ But what is lacking biologically is already on its way to being invented by our technologies. There is no collective mind now, but I'm inclined to believe that there could be; and, if that's true, then I think there will be. Think of a military force scattered in battle, sharing almost instantaneously (telepathically, if you like, though by way of technological modification) the same evolving experience, planning, critique, and commitment of a difficult maneuver: imagine doing so by activating electronic chips embedded in the bodies and brains of the force's members. Small-scale experiments along these lines are, apparently, now already underway.

I take note of these possibilities and conceptual temptations because we must concede that what we mean by the solidarity of relatively well-demarcated human societies depends, in good part, on what we mean by the *sittlich* (hybrid, artifactual) practices and shared forms of understanding of historically evolving societies. Human infants, confronted with the task of mastering their home language (*and its concepts*) are ineluctably immersed in the *sittlich* (collectively shared) practices "always already present" in their ambient world. Hence, there is no practical possibility that, in the normal course of societal *Bildung*, we are likely to be unable (in any massive sense) to understand one another when we function, in public, as the linguistically apt creatures that we are, though (I concede) we possess private mental lives as well. I'm convinced that it was part of Wittgenstein's intention to expose the deep incoherence of opposing the idea (even before we venture the extreme proposal of a "private language,"). But I also see no way to make sense of the correction without admitting the collective import of *sittlich* life itself. Wittgenstein's correc-

¹⁶ See Wilfrid Sellars, "Imperatives, Intentions, and the Logic of 'ought'," in Hector-Neri Castañeda and George Nakhnikian (eds.), *Morality and the Language of Conduct* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963). See, also, Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. Sarah A. Soloway and John H. Mueller (New York: Free Press, 1938).

tion is often grossly ignored or opposed, as when bilingualism and the condition of mastering a language are not invoked at all: as, for instance, in the very different but distinctly bizarre (notably influential) views of such important theorists as Quine, Davidson, and Searle.¹⁷

Of course, no one familiar with Charles Peirce's concept of a person will fail to see the more than incipient convergence between Wittgenstein and Peirce. You have only to recall Peirce's daring formulation at 5.421 (of the *Collected Papers*) to grasp the force of his double remark: "a person is not absolutely an individual"; "a man's circle of society... is a sort of loosely compacted person in some respects of higher rank than the person of an individual organism." In fact, it's the union of these two notions that (on Peirce's own view) confirms the true sense in which "absolute truth" and "what you do not doubt" are, effectively, one and the same doctrine (a brilliant aside on the meaning of realism and Idealism.)¹⁸

IV

I mean these small forays to count primarily toward a sketch of a larger argument. But they already provide enough of a sense of how the argument should go, to allow us to shift our attention safely to another level of explication needed to bring a sense of closure to the normativity question.

Frankly, I've been addressing the most basic and orderly part of the argument, the part that focuses on the jointly (even, intertwined) bio-

¹⁷ See, for instance, Willard Van Orman Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960); Donald Davidson, "Radical Interpretation," in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), particularly pp. 134–135; and John R. Searle, *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); and his earlier *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1995). See, also, the brief discussion of Searle in my *Pragmatism Ascendent: A Yard of Narrative, A Touch of Prophecy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), Ch. 3.

¹⁸ *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934, 1935 [1962, 1963]), "What Pragmatism Is," §5.421. See, also, Vincent M. Colapietro, *Peirce's Approach to the Self: A Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), Chs. 2–4 (especially Ch. 4). Colapietro essentially applies the thrust of Peirce's argument against Umberto Eco's account of signs and of Eco's reading of Peirce's thesis. See Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Exploration in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979). Colapietro is on the right track here, but does not press the matter far enough to begin to expose just how remarkable Peirce's semiotic may be. See, for instance, §5.424, at which Peirce suggests that "an" experiment is a "part" of a "single collective experiment" in a sense akin to that in which an "individual person" is a "part" of a "loosely compacted person... of higher rank" (a society). "What Pragmatism Is" is one of Peirce's most instructive papers. A single person is rather like a single sign or a single quality, effectively ineffable, or "negative."

logical and cultural evolution of the continuum embracing the late development of the hominid primates, gradually transformed (through the companion—equally gradual—invention and mastery of true language) into functional selves or persons, creatures that thereby acquire important new (artifactual) competences that cannot be accounted for by reference to biological factors alone.

I'm speaking of the evolutionary phase at which we first acknowledge the appearance of a uniquely new kind of entity—beings, "things," phenomena, functional competences, even attributes (let us say), things that evolve, emerge, or are deliberately produced in novel ways, things said to possess, inherently, culturally significant or significant import or meaning, "Intentional" things (reading "Intentional," with capital "I," as a term of art).

These are things often loosely (and inadequately) collected as, or as manifesting, "intentionality" (with lower-case "i"), answering (*instead*) to the well-known but altogether different psychological or phenomenological claims advanced by Brentano and Husserl. "Intentional" (with capital "I") is a distinction I offer as a sort of typographical convenience, meant to range, at least ontologically, over a sweep of artifactual, hybrid things and their distinctively adequated attributes—preeminently, persons, societies of persons, actions, linguistic texts, texts and utterances of cognate sorts, speech, artworks, histories, technologies and what may be produced by them, traditions, institutions, suitably attributable meanings and complex properties incorporating meaning or meaningful structures (as in expressive music, representational paintings, speech acts), legible or discerned exclusively by persons; things that appear as indissolubly embodied or incarnate in selected *materiae* (physical or animate things) that lack full Intentionality themselves—hence, things that emerge or supervene in distinctly *sui generis* ways. I count this a reasonable first pass at a sketch of the neglected ontology of the complex, uniquely enlanguaged world of societies of selves and of what selves do, make, produce, create, alter, and effectuate.

On my reading, a proper grasp of the ontology ventured entails, at one stroke, the artifactuality of language, discursivity, normativity, rationality, agency, cognition, realism, and the historicity of the human form of life, that is, everything that is unique to human culture. It qualifies, therefore, all of our presumptions regarding the objective and realist standing of our pertinent claims in every sector of human interest. But since, as far as we know, we are the only creatures capable of pursuing such in-

quiries, we take our labors to be capable of yielding no more than "second-best," interest-driven, instrumentally enabling, somewhat heuristic, perspectival "pictures" of the world that we nevertheless count as having realist import—"constructed," therefore, though not in the guise of detachable representations (Lockean or Kantian, say) that we might test or correct from some putatively independent or neutral cognitional vantage. These "pictures" of the world are not to be construed as *epistemological intermediaries* (*tertium*) of any kind between ourselves and the world; they are, rather, the historied expression of our putatively realist grasp of the world (Hegelian or pragmatist, I dare venture), which cannot be traced to their separable evidentiary sources in cognizing agent and cognized world. Our judgments, here, take an "internalist" form that is indissolubly symbiotic rather than a subjectivist (let us say, a Kantian) form. (I find it suggestive to say that our "pictures" of the world are "monadic" rather than "dyadic." They produce no regress or paradox, but they are forever provisional without being tentative, forever poised to be superseded by a shift in vision or experience.)

What I mean by this is no more than what I mean by the conviction that we emerge as persons through the mastery of language, freighted with the contingent baggage of societal memory and entrenched habits and beliefs that language makes possible: which is to say, enabled and constrained by the *sittlich* aptitudes of our functional understanding and sense of agency shared with other selves similarly second-natured, addressed primarily to the relatively assured things of the common world to which we've been already fitted.

What we must still consider, however briefly, in order to gain a proper sense of the functional novelty (so to say) of a thoroughly enlanguaged culture, is at least an inventory of what is most alien, even discontinuous, vis-à-vis the continuum of animal and human evolution. In a way, the answer has already been given: viz., that the artifactually transformed powers that we acquire, which are made accessible uniquely and (it seems) exclusively by the very creation and mastery of true language and the Intentional import of the *sittlich* world we thereby inhabit, are, as far as we can see, *the condition of our own survival and viability*. No doubt we've drawn important parts of the animal world into our *sittlich* world (as with dogs and horses, but also with crows and apes and tigers). But whatever it is such creatures understand of our behavior and form of life, they understand only in their own perception-bound, languageless ways. They cannot, for instance, ever know, as persons can, that today is Wednesday

and we're meeting in Helsinki. They cannot discern at all what I've been calling the uniquely Intentional nature of human culture. And yet the higher animals assuredly possess and depend on cultures of their own (or on hybrid, partially artifactual cultures, as with domesticated dogs and horses).

I suppose it's impossible to single out what, within our *sittlich* world, are its most important processes and interests. Perhaps no more than the maintenance and extension, or the continual change and yet stability, of that world (or worlds, since human societies are distinctly plural—sometimes, even wildly diverse). But within any such viable world, we do successfully introduce new infant cohorts to the accepted cognitive, emotive, agentive (and however otherwise construed) *Sitten* of our contingent world. By "*sittlich*," then, I understand the quotidian routines and habits of doing everything we do, as selves, in that extraordinary sense in which we understand and are reflexively aware of the Intentional import of whatever it is we do, spontaneously and standardly, in practical, causally and normatively qualified ways—which we willingly support in accord with our grasp of the received practices and traditions of doing just that. I also understand "*sittlich*" to extend to the revision of whatever deliberate changes in our "always already present" practices and interests we champion as improvements of our *sittlich* ways, which (in turn, in time) settle into *sittlich* practices themselves.

Hence, the self-corrective or revisionary tendencies of human societies are as *sittlich* as those that precede them. The difference between these two phases of the *sittlich* are temporal and critical—in what I'm calling "Intentionalist" (or symbiotized) ways—a matter of considerable philosophical importance, since it signifies that the continual transformation of the norms of knowledge, understanding, commitment, and critique, no matter how far such changes may seem to depart from the *sittlich*, may be fairly regarded as belonging to the *sittlich* world itself. The process requires something of Peirce's sense of the collectively enabled (and "effective") "higher" self of which he speaks. This is an idea essentially opposed to Durkheim's thesis as much as to Umberto Eco's and John Searle's.

What's decisive here is the provision of higher-order levels of the normative reflection affecting everything that claims objective, valid, or legitimate standing.

The thesis is neatly captured by conceding: (a) that normativity cannot but be discursively enabled and constrained (a Kantian thesis), though active only within *sittlich* contingencies, which are themselves artifactual

(a doctrine utterly incompatible with Kant's philosophical intentions); and (b) that, accordingly, our would-be norms—bearing on any and all forms of knowledge, intelligence, understanding, rationality, judgment, commitment, agency, responsibility, critique, appreciation and the like (once again, a Kantian run of interests)—cannot, given the artifactuality of the self, claim any normative standing beyond the "second-best" (which, is itself utterly incompatible with Kant's philosophical intentions). These theorems (if I may call them that) confirm, therefore, the sense, already remarked, that Kant's entire program, construed as transcendentalist, is completely incompatible with my reading of the philosophical import of post-Darwinian paleoanthropology.

It's in this sense that normativity takes a constructivist form, drawing on *sittlich* stabilities already in place and on whatever, arguably, may be introduced on "internalist" grounds (long-standing interests, for instance), as reasonable revisions and adjustments of prevailing *Sitten*. Ultimately, normative validation is consensual—though not criterial in any privileged sense and, hopefully, not arbitrary or regressive. In any case, there are no independent sources of normative discovery to be had (in nature at large): pertinent (second-order) responses to perceived threats to survival, quality of life, capacitation, and the like are essentially reflexive concerns, plausible (if plausible at all) only in the extended *sittlich* manner I've just sketched. In short: if, being the artifactual beings that we are, we have no natural *telos* to consult (*pace* Plato), we cannot reasonably claim independent normative grounds for maintaining or improving societal life that are not effectively entrenched or perceived to be prefigured in the *sittlich* way; nevertheless, we cannot deny the deep contingency and diversity of the viable forms of life that human persons confront.

Survival, a measured sense of societal stability and quality of life, and the absence of any deep or widespread repudiation of the *sittlich* interests and objectives we accept are as much as we can hope for in validating the purposes we champion. What's decisive here is that all such reflections take an "internalist" form that cannot be shown to be unconditionally binding on ourselves, or universally binding on the entire race. The forms of human life domesticate the alien quality of reflexive life itself by constructing the inertial powers of second-natured practice as nature's own. I take the normative (but not the merely valuative) to be inherently discursive (language-bound), though I leave the argument to that effect for another occasion. If that's the right way to go, then there's a profound asymmetry or division among Kant's primary concerns: cognition and

agency take distinctly different forms among animals, but there is no animal normative. This goes against the insinuated but not developed thrust of Alasdair MacIntyre's well-known argument.¹⁹

V

I've now provided, very slimly I admit, two essential features of the artifactually hybrid world of enlanguaged persons—a world invisible to all but persons or, by a conceptual courtesy, to include the first glimpses of those languageless primates (effectively, neonates) who, dawningly, will come to engage the same world we ourselves engage. That world, I suggest, requires a dual sense of *Bildung*: first, "external" *Bildung*, the longitudinal process of intertwined biological and cultural evolution by which hominid primates first "invented" (and mastered) true language and transformed themselves (into persons) in the bargain; and, second, "internal" *Bildung*, the inter-generational process by which neonates are enabled to enter the lists of a supportive society of apt persons, as persons themselves, precisely by mastering the language and practices the mature members of their society already share. The first signifies the endless variety of the manifestations of *Intentionality* that, ontologically, qualifies all that belongs to the artifactual world of persons and that, accordingly, is accessible, cognitively and agentively, to the members of one or another such society; and the second signifies the spontaneous familiarity of the habits, practices, customs, norms, behavior, and alterability of the *sittlich* stabilities of any Intentional world, such that, as with bilingualism, the *Sitten* of every culture are in principle intelligible and defensibly revisable in accord with the historied life of some pertinent society. Intentionality, then, is the unique and ubiquitous feature of the ontology of enlanguaged cultures, and *Sittlichkeit* is the most basic ground for the appraisal of the normative standing of any and all kinds of supposed values. Persons, then, are aggregated beings who manifest in their hybrid "natures" the collective linkages they require in mastering a natural language and the *sittlich* culture that that subtends.

Here, I must remind you of a final claim, already hinted, which helps to explain the strategic importance of a third feature of human cultures that I have yet to propose. I have in mind the finding that the cultural world emerges from (or "supervenes" on) the physical world in ways en-

¹⁹ See Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Humans Beings Need the Virtues* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999).

tirely different from the ways in which we suppose, in principle, macroscopic physical phenomena may be taken to be theoretically identical with appropriately selected microtheoretical entities if the properties and behavior of the first may be satisfactorily analyzed in terms of the nomologically regular properties and behavior of things of the second kind (lightning, say, in terms of suitably characterized, ionized molecular structures). It is enough for present purposes to take note of the fact that Intentional phenomena normally do not yield to inter-level theoretical identities of the sort applied to purely physical "things"—the salient reason is the absence of anything like exceptionless causal laws in the Intentional world (which we typically claim may be confirmed with respect to physical nature). But the deeper reason rests with the difference between the very emergence of a macroscopic material world and the emergence of a macroscopic Intentional world that manifests properties that do not obtain in any natural world that lacks language. This is not a disjoint or dualistically structured "world," of course, but the kind of emergence Intentionality manifests defeats reductionism—and constrains naturalism, deflationism, and the analysis of normativity hands down.

The simple fact is that the Intentional description of the things of the cultural world cannot (normally) be reduced in any known way to permit analyses open to reductive identities of the sort just mentioned. Hence we treat cultural entities (if we admit them at all) as ontologically different from mere physical entities; although, as we have seen, they can usually be matched in a regular way with things appropriately drawn from physical or biological nature; so that Intentional entities (and their adequated properties) may be seen to be embodied or incarnate in corresponding natural entities and their properties (for instance, paintings and painted canvases, actions and bodily movements, spoken words and uttered sounds, persons and members of *Homo sapiens*), but are not reducible in merely physical terms.

If, furthermore, we allow that the natural sciences are (as, of course, they are) cultural undertakings themselves, constrained in whatever ways the conceptual and cognitive powers of human persons are constrained, then it will not seem unreasonable to suggest that all the sciences are, finally, human sciences insofar as they make systematic claims about the true facts and the explanation of such facts regarding natural things. This shows the way to conceding that everything belonging to the natural world may be trivially "transformed," verbally, by merely making a natural thing the subject of scientific description and explanation. Thus, the

sedimented strata of the Olduvai Gorge may be *interpreted* so as to confirm Louis Leakey's dating of the fossil remains of early forms of the genus *Homo*, in spite of the fact that the Gorge itself is not, in any otherwise pertinent sense, an Intentional thing. By a counter-process, certain forms of schizophrenia may be redefined in terms of hormonal or other biochemical imbalances in such a way as to retire their would-be Intentional standing. (I take the latter guess to provide an important clue to the continuity, and difference, between agency and causality, which Kant confounds.)

Here, we may claim a triple clue regarding substantial differences between the natural and human sciences that spells *finis* to the immensely influential, notorious, but misguided, unity-of-science thesis, which, at the same time, accounts for the enormous importance of various interpretive inquiries favored among the human sciences and cognate disciplines. I have already identified the essential difference between natural and linguistically qualified cultural things, namely, *Intentionality* (written with capital "I"), which defines the scope of the cultural world itself; I have also collected the entire range of the intelligent, cognitive, rational, practical, agentive, and interpretive ways of engaging the natural and culturally transformed worlds open to all the practices favored by societies of selves, now construed as so many diverse forms of *Sittlichkeit*. In this way, I acknowledge the continuum of animal and human evolution, which, signifying the survival and viability of the human race, obviates all the canonical demands of familiar regress arguments affecting the validation of realism and the objective standing of normativity itself. Given the symbiotized sense in which animals survive within their ecological niches (so to say) and the otherwise baffling sense in which persons (being the artifactual creatures that they are) have no such *Umwelt*, the minimal sense in which we live, adaptively, in the world is, in a perfectly plain sense, the only viable space in which questions regarding realism and the objectivity of normative provisions are intelligible at all. Answers to each and both are, as I say, no more than second-best.

The clue to the third schematized distinction of the encultured world rests with the finding that the forms of emergence confined, disjunctively, to "merely" natural things are fundamentally different from the forms of emergence open to the hybrid forms of whatever exhibits Intentionality and is characteristically governed or guided by the historied forms of *Sittlichkeit*. Once again, that difference rests, metonymically, with Intentional and normative attributions. But, here, *if*, as argued, the In-

tentional world cannot be reduced or explained in ways open to whatever emerges in the "merely" physical world (the world without "second-natured" things)—because the distinctive properties of the enlanguaged world depend on the uniquely artifactual nature of language (and what language makes possible), and because there are no known nomological or algorithmic regularities joining natural and pertinently emergent cultural phenomena (except, perhaps, what may be deliberately introduced by human persons, as in playing chess or communicating by a secret code, or operating an adding machine or by other such "second-natured" means).

Hence, the explanation of the things of the cultural world, analyzed, redescribed, explained, explicated, interpreted in ways addressed to the specifically Intentional and *sittlich*, must be pursued in accord with the categories of the perceived Intentional world itself (or some extension or modification of same). But that, of course, is not to preclude the play of natural causes *in* the encultured world (for instance, as in the recently reported, unintended tear of an immensely valuable Picasso painting or the effect of a bad cold on the received meaning of a delicate courtship).

There are at least two fundamental distinctions that separate the physical and the human sciences: for one, the irreducibility of human agency (as a form of causality or as incorporating causality in a uniquely complex way) to any of the usual forms of causality admitted within the natural world; the other (partly as a consequence of the first), the ineliminability of interpretive disciplines addressed to the different forms of explicating the import of anything Intentional that belongs to the encultured world (as in grasping history, the critical analysis of artworks, the practice of the law, and the fluent comprehension of an improvised conversation).

I mean these last remarks to introduce the vast openness of the most distinctive features of the human world—what I think Roland Barthes must have meant by his term, *l'ouverture* (already present in Lévi-Strauss): namely, the dependence of all the forms of human agency on our perspicuous powers of *interpretation*, in the arts and sciences and in practical and theorizing life, as well as the dependence of the endless novelty of interpretation itself on the inventive posits and products of human intervention. I take all of this to yield the essential clues to our own historied second nature.

All that I've assembled under the cover of the metaphysics of culture now leads back to the theory of the human self and its endless preoccupation with interpreting (coming to understand) itself and the Intentional

world it creates and continually transforms. Thus, I regard the innumerable disciplines of interpretation to be far too diverse and too responsive to emergent history ever to be satisfactorily systematized. Nevertheless, they are all fulgurations of one endeavor: that is, to understand ourselves and our earthly career and how we have changed our world and ourselves in the process. Interpretation, I suggest, is the articulation of the Intentional in all its forms. You cannot find a single method here: our strategies are no more than second-best, in the same sense in which normativity itself is second-natured.

The modes of interpretation must be adequate and adequated to the variety of interests of the entire race: the devices of psychoanalysis cannot be the same as those of applying positive law to criminal cases, or either of these to the practice of art and literary criticism. In any event, the distinctive rigor of viable forms of diagnosis, analysis, and interpretation in any given discipline must be adequated to the distinction of the specimen instances we take ourselves to be obliged to address. The same precept applies in the physical sciences, of course, and for cognate reasons. But I can offer at least two summary constraints that bear in an essential way on appraising the sufficiency of any conception of interpretation applied to the exemplary instances of any standard practice regarding Intentional things. Every interpretive effort will seek some objective order of Intentional coherence, of course; but it cannot be found in any would-be paradigm instances—if, as is true, human life is itself profoundly historied. It can only be proposed in the general sense in which whatever we interpret is, finally, a form of self-interpretation—a hermeneutics—that is, a way of understanding how we understand ourselves essentially as persons, through what we do and produce and how we function.

Accordingly, in doing that, we find ourselves enabled and constrained by the discovery that what is Intentional (culturally significant, let us say) is, as enlanguaged or “lingual,” *determinable rather than determinate*—meaning by that that (as with language itself) there is no assured sense in which the import that we take ourselves to fathom, in whatever way we interpret the world, *has* a single, uniquely correct, objectively discernible sense to plumb. If what is interpretable is open in the historied way I suggest it is, then interpretations are themselves constructions fitted, evolvingly and multiply, under the condition of the historied artifactuality of the effort itself. Here, again, interpretation is inherently consensual though not strictly criterial. There may be relatively determinate facts to be ascertained, of course—for instance, the date of Abraham Lincoln’s as-

sassination; but the interpretation of the meaning of the last phase of Lincoln's life cannot be determined with anything like that sort of specificity. What it is will be various, changeable, diversely (possibly incompatibly) formulable, and open to further transformation in ways we discover we are unwilling to do without. Hence, interpretation may be rightly deemed to be the most compendious and absorbing activity of the human self, in a sense that also completes this first sketch of the metaphysics of culture. All the things of the human world, I should say, are Intentional, *sittlich*, and determinably so.

Now, to admit such a finding is also (I suggest) to admit, at least incipiently, a reasonable paradigm of human cognition addressed to the world. For, for one thing, there cannot be any source of epistemic confirmation separable from our reflexive powers as persons, regarding the Intentional import of whatever we take to be thus qualified; and, for another, nothing that we take to have Intentional attributes (as they've been characterized) can have public standing, among us, except as indissolubly incarnate (according to our lights) in some discernible *materia*. I am quite content to argue that if we admit the plausibility of trusting to a corrigible grasp of linguistic practices—including constructed claims addressed to what, reflexively, we avow in the phenomenological sense (already sketched)—then whatever we are prepared to defend as a viable realism will, of course, be adequate enough in the *sittlich* way in which avowals are already shared.

This is not meant to yield any *apriorist* certitudes about the way the world is or the confirmed status of human knowledge; but it does convey the sense in which our claims about the world are not weakened in any discernible way by merely conceding that we know no way of avoiding the sheer contingency of their advent or the normal informality of the evidentiary sources of assurances that we have come to rely on. Given *that*, then once we abandon cognitive privilege and foundational assurances of any kind, we cannot hope to defeat the familiar forms of skeptical demands; and given that claims about the nature of truth, knowledge, reality, meaning, confirmation and the like cannot (then) disallow the matched pertinence of the usual forms of reflexively iterable challenge (which is itself tantamount to incipient skepticism), we cannot hope to establish the validity of such claims beyond what is merely "second-best"—namely, whatever serves, confirmationally, in the *sittlich* way.

My thought, here, is that normativity itself, in all its forms, cannot exceed a merely *sittlich* form of confirmation; but, then, also, that such laxity is normally sufficient for human purposes. By such means, we hold

skepticism and transcendentalism at bay, without disordering the normal practices of the human world. Thus, if we add a further conjecture: viz., that the line of reasoning that leads to the conclusion just drawn includes what—with Charles Peirce, I should now call an “abductive Hope”—is not itself an argument that can be evidentially tested or confirmed in any way, though it usually yields testable claims. The crisp claims of philosophy, like those of science and practical life, trail off and finally morph into the compelling (but obviously contingent, historied, possibly accidental) “constancies” of societal lore. Philosophy is holistic in this sense; hence, also, then, incapable of being recast as a closed system of determinate principles and arguments of the sorts attempted by Kant and the post-Kantian Idealists.²⁰

In fact, I take the “abduction” just summarized to be a variant of the convergent (but distinctly different) “abductions” advanced (in the guise of testable assertions) by the classic pragmatists, Charles Peirce and John Dewey. It spells out my conviction that very nearly the whole of Western philosophy prior to the post-Darwinian application of the import of Darwin’s evolutionary discoveries (even if contested in the way I’ve reported) has been effectively deprived of a fresh way of conceiving the “nature” of a human being—and, as a consequence, a fresh way of conjoining the Darwinian and Hegelian themes (otherwise, the post-Darwinian paleo-anthropological and post-Kantian Idealist themes) in effectively combating the threat to the viability of philosophy, drawn from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources. It’s a threat that still looms in the middle of the nineteenth century and, I should add, even in the second decade of the twenty-first century. I take the proposal I’ve advanced to be the leanest and most promising way of confronting skepticism and the opposition of other contemporary philosophies—a new form of “pragmatism” (so to say), freed from its own parochial beginnings, an answer that depends on a fresh conception of the metaphysics and epistemology of culture.

²⁰ I take this to be an answer to the question posed by Kant and the Idealists’ response to Kant, along the lines spelled out in an extraordinarily clear way, in Paul W. Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), especially chs. 1–2.

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PART I

PRAGMATISM

Margolis's Pragmatism of Continuity

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It is my privilege and honor to examine and criticize the work of Joseph Margolis with you, and him, today.¹ This is a happy occasion. It has been quite meaningful for me to know Joe (as a philosophical fellow-traveler) over the years; his encouragement and support of my work has been supremely valuable. He has taught me so much.

Because Margolis's oeuvre is so magisterial, I feel I can relieve myself of an obligation to refute him; to borrow a sporting metaphor, *I refuse to wrestle out of my weight class*. Instead, I draw attention to themes in his work especially important for pragmatism's future and to raise one fundamental question about the starting point of Margolis's own pragmatism. Because the question raised (toward the end of the essay) may perhaps be my only critical contribution here, let me introduce it briefly now and then return to it after some explication of those points in Margolis's work relevant to it.

Entertain, if you will, the following statement about Hegel by American philosopher John E. Smith. I shall insert, for rhetorical effect, the name "Margolis" alongside Hegel to telegraph the gist of my critical question. Smith writes,

One of the problems to be faced by anyone seeking to understand and to evaluate Hegel's [Margolis's] treatment of other philosophers is that he [Margolis] never seems to regard their thought as having any tenure beyond the framework of his own philosophical account of the history of philosophy. All philosophical standpoints and systems are

¹ This essay is a slightly expanded version of the paper given at the "Metaphysics of Culture: The Philosophy of Joseph Margolis", in Helsinki, Finland, 21 May, 2013.

understood by him in terms of his own comprehensive philosophy of spirit".
 Smith 1973, 438

In no way does Margolis deserve the full cutting force of Smith's remark, here. Still there is a way in which Margolis's overarching design is to sum up everything which has gone before him—philosophies and histories and the full sweep of human biological and cultural development—in order to present us with a Pragmatism capable of ferrying us into the 21st century. On one hand, this is a magnanimous gesture, made possible only by decades of Margolis's unfailing dedication to systematic thinking; on the other hand, this gesture is very much in tension with the active, piecemeal, instrumental, and melioristic starting point initiated by the scientific Peirce, effloresced by the humanist James, and put to work by the activist-educator Dewey. The concert of their pragmatisms, as I hear it, is one which decries any philosophical approach beginning from a theoretical starting point. This is not simply the matter of a philosopher relying on a priori stipulations; Margolis is seasoned enough to eschew such crutches. Rather, it is 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.

The essay proceeds as follows. First, I briefly rehearse Margolis's recent constructive efforts in pragmatism, with some focus upon his central notion, the "artifactual self". Second, I discuss the larger context for this artifactual self, namely, Margolis's "continuity thesis", which re-situates familiar philosophical terms (such as subject and object, experience and language) onto a continuum. This continuity thesis, I explain, helps mediate a tension amidst pragmatists that is especially acute right now. Finally, I raise the aforementioned question (about Margolis's own philosophical stance) by comparing it with Dewey's. Evidence is offered which indicts Margolis's approach as theoretically-loaded and, at a deep level, more continuous with the tradition of philosophical system-making than the pragmatist radicals with whom Margolis unquestionably self-identifies. Further evidence is then offered to, perhaps, exculpate Margolis from the charges raised. Thus, the essay concludes in something of an aporia.

I. Recent efforts: moving beyond philosophy's three-sided agon

Because Margolis's project draws together so many threads with so many implications, I can best set the stage for my questions if I first provide a potted account. Margolis is not one to hide his main game; his advocacy of philosophical pragmatism is broadcast clearly with titles announcing that pragmatism has a "trajectory", an "advantage", and is "ascendent". We must see why he uses these terms.

Margolis identifies what he calls "a three-legged contest" among the philosophical movements he collects as *pragmatists*, *analysts*, and *continentals*. Through interpretation and critique, he illuminates the groups' similarities and differences to force hard decisions about which ingredients should be included in any philosophy that takes on the circumstances and challenges of the new century. There is much to be kept and much to be cut; indeed, all three movements have real handicaps. But each movement also has more local failings which also must be excised:

The reductionism of the analysts seems likely to fail to accommodate the unique emergence of our historicized, enlanguaged, and encultured world; the extranaturalism of the continentals may be ruled out by the actual facts of the evolution of a particular species [...] that has invented its own mode of being. [...] And the pragmatists, though they plainly rely on Darwin's discovery, have hardly begun to articulate the conceptual linkages and differences between the metaphysics of physical nature and the metaphysics of human culture in any fine-grained way.

Margolis 2010a, 10

This gives a fast sense, I trust, of why no movement can, by itself, simply lead philosophy forward. However, pragmatism is the least encumbered of the three movements because pragmatists believe "that analysts are likely to favor scientism and that continentals are likely to exceed the bounds of naturalism, and both tendencies are more extreme or extravagant than their policies require". (Margolis 2010a, 3) Margolis is quite forthright about a revitalized pragmatism's potential to sweep away contemporary philosophical garbage—removing at a single stroke, he says, "Aristotelian essentialism and teleologism and Kantian transcendentalism" along with "analytic philosophy's scientisms". (Margolis 2010a, 56, 57)

More positively, of the three movements, classic pragmatism is equipped with an apparatus most worth preserving. Of chief importance are the classic pragmatist emphases upon, as Margolis puts it,

the primacy of the practical, the historicity of the human, the instrumental and provisional nature of conceptual categories, the absence of fixity in the encultured human world, the artifactual nature of knowledge and understanding, a sense of passing order endorsed within continual change, a tolerance for the endless diversity and contingent conflicts among norms, principles, theories, convictions of every kind affecting practical and theoretical matters, the holism of such a vision, and the deep informality on which all the forms of precision rest.

Margolis 2012a

That last remark, about pragmatism's "deep informality", stands out, for it gestures toward a topic I will elaborate upon a bit later, namely pragmatism's practical starting point. In this context, we can see that a pragmatic attitude provides the best fulcrum to leverage the tradition.

As Margolis puts it,

pragmatism's best intuitions have been applied to eliminating the extravagances of its Kantian sources (by Charles Peirce) and of its Hegelian sources (by John Dewey) in such a way as to lead us back to the ordinary aptitudes of *human beings* (ourselves) viewed within a generously Darwinized ecology, without transcendental, revelatory, or privileged presumptions of any kind.

Margolis 2010a, 13

1.1 The artifactual self

What, one might wonder, can move philosophy beyond this three-sided impasse? A new conception of the self, Margolis answers, for "the analysis of what it is to be a human self" is "philosophy's most essential reflexive question" (Margolis 2012b, x); he adds that it is "disputes about the right analysis of the self [which] are precisely what distinguish in the most pointed way what separates the pragmatists, the analysts, and the continentals in our own time". (Margolis 2010a, 6)²

In an 1893 review Peirce published in *The Nation* Margolis finds the inspiration he needs to reformulate our conception of the self. That motto is

² Indeed, he identifies this analysis of the self as the "most important" and "most neglected" aspect of present and future philosophy: "What beckons beyond all that is the attraction of the concept of the artifactual self and all that that may contribute to enhancing pragmatism's new ascendancy. Of course, we must bear in mind that the analysis of the self, of the enlanguaged and encultured human world, of the very idea of historied existence, is the most neglected—incomparably the most important—part of current and future philosophy: suppressed (thus far) by the saliency of the most reductive tendencies of analytic philosophy during the very interval in which pragmatism suddenly revived". (Margolis 2010b, 191).

"Darwinizing Hegel and Hegelianizing Darwin." This encapsulates Margolis's idea that an adequate account of the self must avoid choosing between a scientific biological/naturalist approach and one which stresses culture and history to the exclusion of empirical facts. Both approaches, in combination, are necessary. As he puts it:

the most reasonable key to the entire unity of the Eurocentric movement lies with *the historicity and artifactuality of the self and the self's encultured world*; I take this to provide the most straightforward paraphrase of Peirce's motto that can be imagined. Margolis 2012a

Margolis argues that his account "constitutes an utterly new chapter [...] sparked by "plain facts" rather than philosophical ideologies". (Margolis 2010a, 57) Put another way, Margolis is interested in *both* the way societies acculturate their young ("internal Bildung") as well as how, in fact, *homo sapiens* have evolved to have that capacity ("external Bildung"). It is the import of this latter process, external Bildung, which Margolis says "is the metaphysically decisive novelty that Darwinian evolution makes possible but cannot rightly explain" and which "the entire trajectory of Western philosophy has barely explored". (Margolis 2010a, 11)³ Again, it's important to understand that in Margolis's view, the classic pragmatists only *started* us down this path. "The trouble", he writes,

is that the original pragmatists somehow sold us short with regard to both historicity and enculturation and with regard to the artifactuality of the self favored by a naturalistic reading of Hegel along lines made possible by Darwin's innovation but not confined to any sort of biologism. [...] [A]s a single movement pragmatism is a disappointing hodgepodge that must be redirected. Margolis 2010a, XIV, 13

Younger pragmatists need to understand, Margolis urges, that unless they pay attention to the questions raised by other movements, there is the very real danger that pragmatism will squander its resurgent popularity. Pragmatism's present esteem, Margolis warns, comes to it *gratis*—that is,

³ "The entire tradition from the beginning to its provisional end [...] Is committed to what we may call "internal Bildung"—the effective process of instructing the young of a human society in some preferred way of living [...] drawn from that societies more inclusive cultural resources....[However, Margolis notes] the entire trajectory of Western philosophy has barely explored the import of what I shall call "external Bildung", the long evolutionary process that accounts for the emergence of the unique primate gifts [...] that bridge [...] the advanced forms of primate communication and their transformation into [acculturating, self-reflexively cultural] true speech" (Margolis 2010a, 11)

without it “advancing any fresh doctrine in its own behalf in a satisfactorily ramified way”. He warns “it will die a second death if it cannot redeem its revival convincingly”. (Margolis 2012a)

The advantage which pragmatism find itself with, in other words, can only be sustained if a new vision is constructed. Margolis provides a preliminary sketch of that vision to help identify the locus for future pragmatist efforts; as mentioned earlier, this entails devising an ontological account of

the human self as a “natural artifact”, an evolutionarily new form of “being” that depends on the *sui generis* emergence of true language; and the capacity to use language and the cognate cultural resources that it makes possible develop along lines that can no longer be explained in terms confined to the physical and the biological—in accord with which, in truth, *we* actually constitute ourselves (developmentally), both individually and species wide, as selves. [...] We have become the continual re-creation of our own technologies.

Margolis 2010a, 52, 57⁴

Still, it is worth noting that while Margolis’s account will not *confine* itself to the physical or biological sciences, it will also not neglect the possible significance of any of their relevant discoveries, nor those of other more culturally oriented ones, either.⁵

⁴ This account by Margolis offers a revised version of Mead’s dialectic between the “I” and the “Me”. About that duality, Margolis writes, “My own account has it, as I’ve suggested, that the self is a cultural artifact, defined functionally first, “naturally” generated by the invention and generationally transmitted mastery of language and the enlanguaged culture that the first makes possible; hence, that the dialectic of the “I” and the “me” is the very life of the self-viewed dynamically, not the prior effectivity of social forces (not already thus qualified) by which the self is first formed”. (Margolis 2012a). See also Margolis, 2012b, 140–1.

⁵ As Margolis explains, an account of the artifactual self requires both biological and cultural sources. The “the explanation of the natural artifactuality of the self I take to require a Darwinian or (better) a post-Darwinian account of the continuum of prelinguistic and linguistic evolution (essentially cultural rather than biological) spanning at least the cultural competences of prelinguistic human species (early species of the genus *Homo*, very probably then early phases of *Homo sapiens* as well) and proto-culturally apt human societies that have been able to bridge the difference between prelinguistic and linguistic communication. I name the enculturating process that first formed language and (therefore) the human self, “external *Bildung*” and the intergenerational processes by which language and its associated culture are transmitted to new cohorts of the infant (or primate) members of *Homo sapiens*, “internal *Bildung*” (Margolis 2012a)

II. Margolis's experience/language continuity thesis

As we have seen, Margolis calls for contemporary pragmatists to offer a bold vision capable of meeting the challenges of the new century. Since I have clearly not offered such a vision myself, I will just comment upon what the attractions of Margolis's thesis and the questions it provokes.

Margolis's thesis of continuity (between experience and language) is of immediate interest and value because it provides resources which *might* help mediate tensions between those pragmatists who take language to be a sufficient fulcrum for pragmatism and others who see experience as enduringly central.⁶ Margolis's developmental account depicts experience and language upon a continuum, and he enlists a range of empirical facts of human development for support.⁷

From my point of view, this naturalistic account appeals, because it simultaneously shows why neopragmatist efforts (to eliminate "experience" from pragmatism) are misguided while *also* refuting outrageous claims (e.g. by Rorty) that experience-centered pragmatist accounts (such as Dewey's) amount to metaphysical panpsychism!⁸

His language-experience continuity also helps establish a crucial point about pragmatic fallibilism: namely, that fallibilism is not merely a clever dialectical move by the classic pragmatists but constitutes, indeed, a full-bodied, naturalistic *Weltanschauung*.⁹ As Peirce explained, continuity and fallibilism are two sides of the same coin. He wrote, "The principle of continuity is the idea of fallibilism objectified. For fallibilism is the doctrine that our knowledge is never absolute but always swims, as it were, in a con-

⁶ Examples of the first group could include Rorty, Huw Price, and Robert Brandom. The second group could include Richard Bernstein, Thomas Alexander, Douglas Brown-ing, William T. Myers, Gregory Pappas, and myself. For a collection of essays addressing this specific question, see the *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, 6:2 (2014), edited by David Hildebrand.

⁷ As Margolis points out, "Darwinian evolution applied to consciousness, thought, belief, language, and knowledge entails the continuity (in the context of survival of the species) of the sentient and the nonsentient, the conscious and the non-conscious, the conceptual and the nonconceptual, the linguistic and the nonlinguistic, the cognitive and the noncognitive". (Margolis 2002, 119)

⁸ See Margolis 2007, 21.

⁹ Contrasting Dewey and Peirce, Margolis writes that "for Dewey, philosophical adequacy mirrors animal survival and evolving human purpose within the life of a viable society; for Peirce, it requires an additional mythic reconciliation between what is 'given' in experience in the here and now and what, in accord with our seemingly changeless instincts of inquiry, yields a plausibly spare but ample picture of how the 'habits' of nature might evolve into universal laws (ultimately governing the entire cosmos)". (Margolis 2007, 238)

tinuum of uncertainty and of indeterminacy." (Peirce 1897, 171) Dewey, too, understands fallibilism in the light of the practically possible—that is to say, the melioristic. Dewey's formulation of a fallibilism both useful and comfortable in the mundane world is one to which Margolis happily cottons.¹⁰

Finally, Margolis's continuity thesis helps pragmatism lay claim to having a viable "realism", and one which can be repurposed along more effective lines. By attending pragmatically to the contributions of both nature and culture (and all their dynamic entanglements) Margolis can confidently claim *why* a constructivist realism is (nevertheless) a "realism" after all.

In short, it is our *embeddedness* in situations of inquiry, especially our inquiries into truth and reality, which together make *this* realism. I believe—and this is something I will seek to confirm in my final section, coming up—that Margolis, like Dewey, views our embeddedness *not* as a posit borne of architectonic requirements; rather, *it is how we find ourselves in the world*. This is what Dewey means by *experience as method*, or, if you will, "the denotative method". It is what I (and others) mean by *the practical starting point*. We find ourselves—presuppositionlessly—in and amongst a changing (or "fluxive") world, one which visits upon us occasions for both inquiry and enjoyment. *Our description* of this condition—for example "as being embedded in a fluxive world"—*is, however, an instrumental act*; it is the deployment of descriptive tools which, depending on the inquiry, may or may not take us where we want to go.

III. The question of Margolis's standpoint

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 in John Dewey. I raise it in order to gain clarity about where, on this issue, Margolis stands.

To get hold of Dewey's starting point, consider his attacks on "intellectualism" in philosophy of all stripes—that tendency to use the results of past theorizing as a way to "take" (or "pre-judge") new encounters.

¹⁰ Margolis writes, "Dewey's fallibilism (a fortiori, his pragmatism) makes no use of the notion of infinite inquiry, though inquiry remains open ended, lacks any assignable limit, and is thoroughly constructivist. Ascriptions of truth, knowledge, the actual and the real are characteristically provisional, practical, instrumentalist, and never rely on assumptions of nomological or normative invariance or the disjunction of reality and thought". (Margolis 2007, 238)

Again—I cannot emphasize this enough—this is *not* merely the recognition that the new experiences we have are somehow “funded” with the results of past inquiries. It is *not* simply an observation about how meanings become integrated into habitual actions. It *is*, rather, Dewey’s insistence that philosophers actively fight the predilection toward imposing theories upon primary experience before those experiences have had a chance to unfold. (“Act as if novelty were real”, one might say.) As Dewey put it,

Philosophers have exhibited proper ingenuity in pointing out holes in the beliefs of common sense, but they have also displayed improper ingenuity in ignoring the empirical things that everyone has; the things that so denote themselves that they *have* to be dealt with.

Dewey 1997 [1925], 374

By fighting this predilection, Dewey argues, philosophers can retain a pragmatic sense of why knowledge has power:

If we start from primary experience, occurring as it does chiefly in modes of action and undergoing, it is easy to see what knowledge contributes—namely, the possibility of intelligent administration of the elements of doing and suffering. We are about something, and it is well to know what we are about, as the common phrase has it.

Dewey 1997 [1925], 29

Dewey, then, commits to a practical (natural, living, and social) starting point which eschews positing anything as metaphysically absolute or essential. “We must begin”, Dewey writes, “with things in their *complex entanglements*” (Dewey 1997 [1925], 387, emphasis mine), with “gross experience” that “is loaded with the *tangled and complex*” (Dewey 1997 [1925], 32, emphasis mine). Unlike our theories, which are by nature structured to the point of completion, experience at the starting point has “*potentialities in reserve* [...] [and] *potentialities which are not explicit*” (Dewey 1997 [1925], 32, 28, emphasis mine)

Let us turn back, now, to Margolis to investigate the nature of his philosophical starting point. In several places, Margolis announces his own program in terms which sound “intellectualistic”, in Dewey’s sense of that word. In “A Pragmatist Trajectory” he writes that

the future of pragmatism lies with themes centered, first, on the analysis of the self and its encultured, enlanguaged, and historied world, and, second, on the analysis of the metaphysics and epistemology of the entire range of human inquiry within the terms of the self’s “natural artifactuality.”

Margolis 2012a

In *Pragmatism's Advantage*, he states that

[Pragmatism] isolates as distinct the question of the right analysis of the human being as such, in the very context in which we arrive at a realistic picture of the world ample enough for all intelligent life... Pragmatism is committed to bringing the account of the human down to scale [...]

Margolis 2010a, 18

Finally, in *Historied Thought, Constructed World* Margolis writes that in light of analyst's insistence that

reality must possess invariant structures, and [...] that the structure of language may be examined independently of the structure of the world [...] [pragmatism can offer an alternative, namely that] language and world form an indissoluble symbiosis: the "world" is "language," and "language," is "worlded"; effectively, the analysis of the world and the analysis of language are one and the same.

Margolis 1995, 70

These quotations collect together familiar motifs: the self as artifactual, the world as encultured, enlanguage, and historied. Together, they suggest that pragmatism contributes to the question of "the right analysis of the human being as such" and offers a vision of an indissoluble symbiosis between language and world. Put otherwise, pragmatism's future, as Margolis projects it, lies primarily in the shape it will take as a *theoretical* object more than an ameliorative plan-for-action in the world. Margolis's conception of pragmatism—leaning, as it does toward the abstractive-theoretical and against the concrete-practical—finds expression not only in his more proleptic theses but also in the way he assesses the figures of classical pragmatism.¹¹

¹¹ For example, William James's "anthropocentric excesses" leads Margolis to call him "the weakest of the classic figures". Commenting on the overall thrust of the classic pragmatists emphases, Margolis writes, "In effect, Dewey marks out a middle ground between Peirce and James, siding with James in the direction of limning a world congenial to human interests (conduct), though without James's anthropocentric excesses". Still, while James has these excesses, Margolis retains respect for him: "But though many see James as a heroic figure favoring an anthropocentrically contrived world, he must be counted as the weakest of the classic figures, at the same time his courage in broaching unfashionable themes deserves our admiration". (Margolis 2012a) This rank ordering is a bit puzzling; James was inspirationally central (along with Jane Addams) in urging Dewey (who Margolis champions) away from theoretical apriorisms, toward a philosophical stance capable of greater humanism and melioristic outcomes. Given Margolis's own strong commitment against apriorisms (of all kinds) one imagines he would give greater credit to James for establishing a direct connection between empathy for human interests and the philosophical innovations he finds estimable in Dewey, and pragmatist method more generally.

My question, then, is simply this: 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? Considering that Margolis is proposing what is *itself* supposed to be a *pragmatism*, it is important to ask about the role of these posits *vis a vis* the starting point of inquiry.

This is not my own, original, question. In a review of Margolis's 1995 book, *Historied Thought, Constructed World*, Douglas Browning raised this issue. But I do not know Margolis's position, which is why I seek it. About Margolis's 1995 thesis Browning wrote, approvingly, that

Among other things, [Margolis's thesis] means 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. Browning 1997, 180

Nevertheless, Browning believed that implicit in Margolis's thesis there *was* an assertion of cognitive privilege (even as it decried it in others). Browning writes,

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". Browning 1997, 183

The difference between Dewey and Margolis, according to Browning, is that Dewey successfully avoids this philosophical bad faith but Margolis does not. He writes,

Dewey could not take as his starting point anything quite so commissive or theoretically privileged as Margolis' symbiotic, holist, and historicist perspectives. [...] Dewey's starting point is pre-theoretical; Margolis' is not. Browning 1997, 183

In essence, Browning's claim is that while Margolis is very consciously trying to avoid concocting yet another totalizing philosophy, he winds up doing just that. This is caused by his philosophy's neglect of a genuinely practical starting point. This results in a position less distinguished from contemporary neopragmatist and analytic peers than Margolis explicitly prefers. Because this is a serious charge, and easily misunderstood, please forgive me for restating the point.¹² It has become conventional wisdom

¹² This restatement paraphrases Browning from his review, cited earlier.

that our experience is "intractably 'theory-laden,'" and that it no longer makes sense to peel away those theories in search of a theory-neutral "given." (The same goes for the language or vocabulary-laden nature of experience, too.) Thus, this conventional wisdom goes on to assume that given the inaccessibility of neutrally given experience—as well as the fact that experience is laden with the accretions of "our varied social, cultural, and historical backgrounds"—we may therefore conclude that "our experience is variously 'interpretable' *all the way down*". (Browning 1997, 184)

This final conclusion—that experience must be endlessly interpretable—violates, in Browning's view, the edict against cognitive privilege. As Browning put it,

My point in bringing this up is not to criticize the theory [Margolis's] at hand [...] [but] rather to emphasize that *it is a theory about our experience* which is acceptable only to the extent that it is adequate to that about which it is framed as a theory. As such, it is open to considerations of warrant, support, acceptability, legitimation (whatever) which cannot be such as to assume the theory itself.

In spite of this obvious point, some contemporary philosophers seem to think that we should simply start our new philosophical endeavors with a view of experience as theory-laden and go on from there. Margolis' problem lies along this track. We cannot start where he starts without begging the question. We cannot start where he claims we must start without accepting the cognitive privilege provided by a theory.

Browning 1997, 184

I am unsure of how Margolis would (or did) respond to this charge—that is, to the charge that his view is theory laden and, in a sense, invariant. Knowing his response could help make clearer why, as mentioned earlier, the classic pragmatists "sold us short" regarding the historied and artifactual nature of the self.

Still, I am ambivalent about whether Browning's charge can stick because I also see evidence in Margolis to the contrary. There are, in contrast to the passages just cited, many places in Margolis's work where he recognizes and seeks to formulate a pragmatism which (I think) avoids this trap. In *Pragmatism's Advantage*, he distinguishes two types of "given" and supports (as Dewey's) one which is "presuppositionless in intent, hence not privileged in any epistemic way though finally accessible to human inquiry". (Margolis 2010a, 23)¹³

¹³ To economize, I won't cite additional examples but I will mention that elsewhere, recently, we can find Margolis defending Dewey and James against the charge of cognitive

Moreover, in "A Pragmatist Trajectory" he attempts to tamp down the expectations usually raised by large philosophical visions, writing that

we cannot do more than construct (according to our lights) what seems best in whatever direction we choose to press our inquiries [...] without foreordained purpose [and] corrected in piecemeal ways within the shifting limits of human tolerance and interest and rational imagination.

Margolis 2012a

I confess to a hung jury—I am uncertain how to judge the issue. I see clearly how Dewey's starting point—his presuppositionless primary experience—functions in his philosophy. It provides philosophy with a way of utilizing theory and conceptual abstraction by tying them to the future amelioration of problems. Dewey addresses such problems (of education, war, labor relations, etc.) in many writings. There is no vicious intellectualism in Dewey because theories subsist only insofar as they can demonstrate how their energies connect up with the wider arena of living, problematic situations.

As I read Margolis, I sense an intense and caring moral presence—and also an unsparing critic of those pragmatists (Putnam, for example) who, fearing relativism, retreat to Reason rather than extend the ethical import of their own pragmatic themes.¹⁴ What I simply confess is that I have a much harder time grasping, specifically, how Margolis's elaborate meditations have energies which extend to a world he'd seek to heal.

IV. Conclusion

To conclude, this paper has tried (a) to offer a brief summary of Margolis's recent metaphilosophical themes as they relate to pragmatism, (b)

privilege by insisting on the correct notion of given just mentioned. Viz., "The general charge of cognitive privilege has been made regarding James and Dewey's emphasis on what is "given" in experience, but I think it depends on an equivocation on the meaning of "given" (phenomenologically): if you read the pertinent texts and Hegel's sense rather than in the empiricists', you cannot fail to see that "given" is likely to be presuppositionless rather than privileged". (Margolis 2010a, 47)

¹⁴ See, for example, this critique of Putnam by Margolis: "Our remarkable appetite for the dictates of Reason, which already appears at the beginning of Western philosophy, is a dreadful trap that has siphoned off our energies from the better prospects of what to believe and do under the conditions of practical life. Putnam is the victim (it seems) of a deep longing that apparently will not subside, it takes the form (in him) of worrying whether our grip on objectivity could possibly survive admitting any form of relativism. At the very least, it is a little startling to find that he senses no incongruity between the ideal function of his *Grenzbegriff* and the standard pragmatist resistance to invariances of any kind". (Margolis 2010a, 105–6)

to offer an appreciation for how his theme of continuity might mediate a contemporary debate among pragmatists about the role of language and experience, and (c) last, I have tried to raise what I take to be a central methodological question for any pragmatist, that of the starting point.

The point of philosophy, as Dewey put it, was to make choice less arbitrary and more significant. Choice, Dewey wrote,

becomes significant when reason for the choice is found to be weighty and its consequences momentous. [Choice becomes] [...] an experiment to be tried, not an automatic safety device.

Dewey 1997 [1925], 35

Margolis does not offer us safety; he has labored to detail the dangers and dead ends of the past and to suggest which paths might be worth following. From reading his work, I am most clear about the nature of *past* dangers; I am more uncertain about what Margolis is driving towards. I am uncertain as to the purpose of a *rapprochement* between the three movements—is it to advance a new conception of the self? Or is the new conception of the self the key to achieving *rapprochement*?

And regardless of the order of means and ends, what is the further purpose of these things? Margolis says he seeks "the main lines of an acceptable theory of the human world". (Margolis 2010b, 200) I suppose the pragmatic question is "Why?"

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Margolis on the Progress of Pragmatism

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1. Philosophy's past and future

There are three major moments in the structure of Joseph Margolis's book, *Pragmatism Ascendent: A Yard of Narrative, a Touch of Prophecy* (2012). Considering the last several hundred years of philosophy as background to his forecast for the future of the discipline, Margolis develops the following stackable interpretive components, presented in this order as the book's argument unfolds:

1. Favorable discussion of Hegel's criticisms of Kant's Critical Idealism, in which Hegel's humanized approach to knowledge triumphs over Kant's excessively rationalist, persistently dogmatic, and finally, in support of the above criticisms, internally insupportable apriorist methodology.
2. Favorable discussion of Peirce's pragmatist (pragmaticist) theory of knowledge, and in particular of Peirce's fallibilistic epistemology and regulative concept of truth as a preferred model for implementing Hegel's criticisms of Kant's apriorism.
3. Optimistic prediction about the future course of knowledge theory as involving a Hegelianized pragmatism or pragmatized Hegelianism. A humanistic practical social evolutionary structure is envisioned that in its exercise of an approved knowledge-ascertaining methodology is self-conscious of its fallibility, and of the extent to

which its conception of problems, directions for and methods of inquiry, and all explanatory apparatus, are encultured, and in particular enlanguaged, and hence of the extent to which its truths are relative, its discoveries and conclusions human sociological artifacts.

As I understand the book's divisions, items (1) and (2) are the *yard of narrative* Margolis promises in the subtitle, covering Hegel versus Kant (1), and Peirce (2), respectively. The critical-historical philosophical narrative in (1) and (2) in turn prepares the ground for moment (3), in which Margolis presents an optimistic future direction for a Hegel-humanized Darwin-influenced pragmatic philosophy in his *touch of prophecy*. The following discussion tests the historical assumptions of Margolis's expectations for the future of philosophy. Margolis's prophecy for the future of philosophy is predicated on progress in the directions he would like to see for a Hegel-friendly pragmatism. The future he divines can be at least as adequately if not more advantageously supported by a Kant-friendly theory of knowledge, based on a more sympathetic reading of Kant, than from Hegel's critique of Kant's supposedly unconditional apriorism.

2. German idealist philosophical background to Peirce

Margolis marks the epoch with the temporary ascent of Kant's late eighteenth century transcendental Critical Idealism. Kant's philosophy is cut down in its prime less than a century later, according to Margolis's interpretation, by Hegel's observations about how knowledge is actually acquired by real time investitures of human inquiry.¹ This is not Kant's topic, nor the focus of his philosophical interest in establishing the transcendental synthetic *a priori* foundations of these human cognitive activities.

Kant's epistemology remains answerable in principle to the objection that it may not be sufficiently defeasible and relativistic. But only if it can first be shown that greater defeasibility and relativism are virtues rather than defects of a scientific metaphysics of the sort to which Kant aspires, and only if Kant's philosophy is rightly interpreted as troubled with these defects. In the first instance, someone will have to attack Kant's philosophical aspirations, which we do not find Margolis's Hegel trying to do, and for the sake of which we will need more clearly to understand Kant's purpose in advancing the method and conclusions of his Critical Idealism.

¹ Throughout, I assume Margolis's exposition of Hegel at face value, and I do not question Margolis's interpretation of what Hegel in particular thought or dig into Hegel's texts to ascertain his exact criticisms of Kant.

Hegel seems to accept Kant's objective, at some fundamental level, for which he presents what he considers an improved alternative completion where Kant's philosophy failed to honor its noble ambition. The question for Margolis's exposition is therefore unavoidable, whether Hegel's criticism of Kant as Margolis presents it is sound, fair and accurate in its attribution of philosophical positions to Kant as targets of criticism, and generally whether the objections to Kant's Critical Idealism that Margolis finds in Hegel are just, whether they are about Kant and what Kant teaches and practices in the first place.

If the choice for the philosophically most intriguing dance partner for Peirce in the mid-nineteenth, early twentieth century is a great German thinker of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, then I think that I would break out of the limited choices Margolis considers in favor of Arthur Schopenhauer, first, and then Kant, anyway, before Hegel. Peirce seems to have read Schopenhauer, but not to have taken much documented interest in his metaphysics. Schopenhauer is no ideological or methodological opponent of pragmatism. Quite the contrary, Schopenhauer's dual-aspect metaphysics of the world as Will and representation, and his account of the explanation of all individualizable spacetime phenomena under the fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason, fit very comfortably within the Peircean scientific model of explanation. Direct philosophical influence does not seem to be the issue for Margolis's polemical design anyway. The question is rather who makes the most promising German predecessor to put together with Peirce in the most promising imaginary collaboration for the future direction of philosophy.

A Kant-friendly version of Margolis's (1)-(2)→(3) works as powerfully with Kant in place of Hegel as Peirce's ultimate ideal philosophical collaborator. Margolis describes a trajectory leading up to Peirce in the philosophical background of the previous century. He seeks road-building precedents in predominant currents of thought somehow preparing the way for Peirce. Among the most important movements in philosophy during the period historically this can only mean Germany. Hegel is chosen enthusiastically over Kant, and the interesting question is why. Hegel should not be preferred merely because he is a great German thinker of the nineteenth century who cast a shadow across the Atlantic, and hence also over Peirce. There is no sufficient reason to partner Peirce with Hegel merely for the reason that Hegel seems to have shown that Kant overlooks what in retrospect is the obvious fact that it is human beings who try to know, and that in so doing in real time to the best of their limited abilities they can make mistakes.

Margolis in proposing a synthesis of Hegel with Peirce does not exploit any specific features of Hegel's phenomenology of world spirit and its historically inevitable progression toward self-realization. Margolis makes Hegel no more than the boy who saw emperor Kant in his new clothes, hawking an insupportable apriorism that Hegel and Margolis after him must falsely assume Kant intended to be unconditional. On the same grounds, it appears in Margolis's first half-yard of narrative that the defects of Kant's apriorist epistemology and metaphysics are so glaring that anyone could have done history of philosophy the same meager service as Hegel in pointing out this fact. Kant's howling mistakes, if such they are, significantly do not seem to be uniquely accessible to or dependent on any of the rest of Hegel's philosophy. Hegel makes a grandstanding cameo in Margolis's narrative only incidentally from the specific standpoint of his later suitability for passing the torch of humanized epistemology to Peirce's fallibilism later in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Hegel proves that a certain type of apriorism is unworkable. His attack is directed against an unconditional apriorism that Kant never accepts. The contrary is true. Kant presents the apriorism of Critical Idealism as conditional on specific explicit assumptions. He takes the development of natural science conditionally as given, and asks what must then be true in order for what is given to be possible. It is only by the *must* in the consequent of the above conditional that any necessary conclusions are supposed to enter into Kant's metaphysics. The method of transcendental reasoning stands in stark contrast with that of dogmatic rationalists, therefore, whose conclusions Kant is trying to expose as inadequately supported by reason or experience in developing a correct application of synthetic *a priori* metaphysics as science. 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.

This is a very different kind of apriorism from that which Margolis applauds in Hegel's critique of Kant. Kant's purpose is to critically examine the absolute presuppositions of received natural science. His inquiry is conditional at every step, applying the method of transcendental reasoning to uncover the presuppositions of a given natural science. Kant begins for obvious reasons in his time with the System of the World, in New-

ton's (1687) *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*. Kant proposes to expose the synthetic *a priori* truths in metaphysics that must hold *if* Newton's System of the World is to be possible. Kant does not try to make any unconditionally *a priori* conclusions part of any scientific metaphysics. Kant may finally accept that there are unconditionally *a priori* truths. However, outside of mathematics, he may agree only when the statement is limited to true analytic *a priori* judgments, such as the tautologies of logic, but not to include the true substantive synthetic *a priori* judgments of metaphysics. As a further sign of Kant's conditional apriorism, it is significant to find that Kant is not interested in what would be true *if* Newton's System of the World were *not* taken as given, or if perception were *not* the given experience of discrete objects distributed and causally interacting in space and time, that most linguistically competent perceiving subjects report, and as a complete unconditional apriorism would need to consider.

Kant understood that his conditional synthetic *a priori* conclusions could get things wrong. He says that others might advance an improved alternative to his Critical Idealism. This is the point where one would think an unconditional apriorism would need to stand on its utmost guard, at the very heart of Kant's scientific philosophical enterprise. Kant insists only that future thinkers not ignore his questions, and the need to provide adequate answers to the problems he has raised. If this is not rhetorical flourish for Kant, who doubtless thinks he has already gotten everything right, Kant thereby acknowledges precisely the kind of fallibilist sensitivity in philosophy generally, in metaphysics and theory of knowledge, and philosophical anthropology, that jointly support a humanization of knowledge. It can be more especially appreciated in comparison with the classical rationalist epoch against which Kant valiantly rebels. It is arguably the same humanization of knowledge that Margolis seems to think comes about in the history of philosophy only with the advent of Hegel's critique of Kant's apriorism. The American Transcendentalists, beginning with Ralph Waldo Emerson, already have Hegel, insofar as some of them were expecting a new age of dawning transcendental consciousness in the universe, much like Hegel's world-soul or Absolute. Kant, on the present interpretation of these contentious matters, is as suitable and in some ways more appropriate than Hegel as the German giant underwriting Peirce's later Brown Decades contributions to American pragmatism.

3. Kantianized pragmatic ideal

The proposal throughout is that Margolis's description of the progress of pragmatism proceeds more convincingly from Kant's theory of knowledge, sympathetically and correctly interpreted, than from Hegel's misdirected critique of Kant's apriorism. By this is not meant that Hegel's humanized epistemic stance is wrong, as against that of Kant's apriorism, but only that Hegel's advocacy of a humanized epistemology is not reasonably considered the polar alternative to Kant that Margolis takes from his reading of Hegel.

The first step along the way will be to distinguish between conditional and unconditional apriorisms. The next is to argue on this basis that Margolis's support of Hegel's objections to Kant apply only to an *unconditional* apriorism to which Kant is not actually committed. Kant accepts instead a modally weaker *conditional* apriorism that stands outside the reach of Hegel's and Margolis's criticisms. Kant additionally voices his support explicitly for philosophical anthropology, and hence for an important place in philosophy for the humanized perspective that for Margolis is supposedly unrepresented until Hegel, rather than and historically in opposition to Kant. Again, the historical basis for this interpretation is not equivocal, but clear in its support of Kant, despite Hegel's mistaken criticisms. Finally, Kant in the *Prolegomena* argues that his conclusions could in principle be overturned by those with better insights into the questions he has found indispensable to metaphysics as a science or *Wissenschaft*, in the sometimes overly generous sense of this German word.

We can arrive on the basis of such a rationale instead at a parallel version of the above argument attributed to Margolis, modified now as $(1') + (2') \rightarrow (3')$. It is modeled on fundamentally the same expository structure, after substituting positive for negative references to Kant, and making Kant rather than Hegel the best philosophical precursor and cross-decades potential intellectual collaborator with Peirce in progressing toward a mature future pragmatism. The alternative application of Margolis's historical explanatory and predictive scheme can then be charted in this explicitly and deliberately parallel Kant-friendly adjusted form:

- 1'. Favorable discussion of Kant's Critical Idealism, in which Kant's humanized approach to knowledge triumphs over Leibniz's excessively rationalist, persistently dogmatic and finally, in support of the above criticisms, internally insupportable apriorist methodology, in a process started by the Leibnizian, Christian Wolff, in which Kant also plays a role toward a subjective epistemology.

- 2'. Favorable discussion of Peirce's pragmatist (pragmaticist) theory of knowledge, and in particular of Peirce's fallibilistic epistemology and regulative concept of truth as a better model for implementing Kant's *conditional* apriorism, to the improvement of scientific knowledge and philosophical understanding.
- 3'. Optimistic prediction about the future course of knowledge theory as involving a Kantian pragmatism or pragmatic Kantianism, further integrating Darwin's natural selection theory of speciation, as applicable to competition in the social world as in the biological habitat. A humanistic practical social evolutionary structure is envisioned that in its exercise of an approved knowledge-ascertaining methodology is self-conscious of its fallibility, and of the extent to which its conception of problems, directions for and methods of inquiry, and all explanatory apparatus, are encultured, and in particular enlanguaged, and hence of the extent to which its truths are relative, its discoveries and conclusions are human sociological artifacts.

The burden of argument here is not immediately to support the proposition that Kant's Critical Idealism makes a better, but at first only an equally acceptable, partner for Peirce's pragmatism, in comparison with Hegel's anti-Kantian anti-apriorism. Kant applies his method of transcendental reasoning to something given. He does not also make what is given, and his method is not responsible for what it is given. Were that true, then, trivially, by definition, it would *not* be *given*, whether in experience or in working out the metaphysics of a special science whose transcendental grounds Kant's method is supposed to reveal.

If anyone takes issue with what Kant describes as given, say, in the Transcendental Aesthetic, in an immediate moment of vivid perception, then they are always welcome to apply the method to whatever is given to them instead. If their experience is very different than the eighteenth century Enlightenment bourgeois German bachelor philosopher takes his to be, then critics might in principle uncover interestingly different transcendental grounds of their experience in hammering out an alternative to Kant's Critical Idealism. The same thought is considered in more detail below in application to Kuhnian scientific paradigm shifts during periods of conceptual revolution in science, say, from Aristotle to Galileo, Descartes, Leibniz and Newton, Einstein, Heisenberg, and beyond. Not only is Kant's apriorism not dogmatic or excessively rationalistic by virtue of being conditional rather than unconditional, but the method is also plas-

tic in its implications, depending in every instance on the givens to which it is applied, which are generally logically contingent rather than in any sense necessary.

Synthetic *a priori* judgments in the metaphysics of science are justified by transcendental reasoning, and Kant in demonstrating the method of transcendental reasoning intelligently chooses Newtonian science as the given for analysis. The assumption is that, like anything else theoretical, Newtonian science is a product of human ingenuity. Kant is not going to be shaken by that information, and he knows that his own Critical Idealism is equally a product of human ingenuity. He knows in all these cases then that Critical Idealism is subject to all the frailties, intrusions of correct and incorrect judgments, and the like, to which human ingenuity is prey. The specific features for which Margolis credits Hegel in moving beyond Kantian apriorism are already present in Kant, however invisible they remain to Hegel, once Kant's apriorism is understood as undogmatically conditional rather than dogmatically unconditional. If Hegel has objections to Kant's method, or to Kant's applications of the method, then he would more profitably concentrate his criticism on these supposed failings of Kant's Critical Idealism. Margolis withholds the juicy details, on the basis of which alone we can judge whether and when Hegel scores anything more than a polemical point against Kant.

4. Critique of Margolis's historical narrative and prediction

To proceed it may be worthwhile to suggest, *first*, that Margolis, like Hegel, is too hard on Kant, by virtue of targeting Kant as committed to an unconditional rather than conditional apriorism. Margolis follows Hegel all too easily here, and does not consider the substantial resources and resilience of Kant's Critical Idealism in responding to Hegel's objections. *Second*, I argue that Kant properly understood is a potential *ally* rather than a road-bump in the history of philosophy on its way to the kind of hybrid two-part pragmatism that Margolis forecasts as part of the subject's most promising future possibilities. Margolis's overall picture of the progress of pragmatism can thereafter be regarded as strengthened by the consideration that it holds up in essentials equally well with Kant as with Hegel in his critique of Kant, partnering down the road with Peirce, under the broader cultural impact of Darwin's effectively abductive explanation of the evolution of species by natural selection.²

² The literature on Peirce and Darwin or Darwinism is vast. Recommended in particular, despite their vintage, are Skagestad (1979), and Fisher and Wiener (eds.) (1972).

Since Kant did not have the pleasure of reading Hegel, such a defense can only be considered by commentators judging the matter after the fact. Kant's apriorism is not to be denied, only correctly understood, in this first part of critically evaluating Margolis's Kant-Hegel narrative and Hegelian-Peircean prophecy. More sympathetically interpreted, Kant's Critical Idealism already brings the knowing subject into the explanation of perception, knowledge, and other intentional relations to the given contents of the subject's sensorium. Knowledge of the world is subjectified for Kant, but from beyond that given starting-place, it is transcendental in uncovering the necessary presuppositions of whatever is given. Kant is the real pioneer of human subject-based philosophy of knowledge, already in the previous century at the height of the *Deutsche Erklärung*. Kant does precisely what the rationalist tradition from Plato on had scorned to do, by bringing explicitly into philosophy the conditions for the subjective experience of what a science assumes as its phenomena to explain, in the same generally humanized way for which Hegel and Margolis rightly but not always relevantly campaign.

Unconditional apriorism, with some justice, is epistemically objectionable on the grounds of being inflexible, impractical, empirically insupportable, and otherwise circular. Kant, however, is no unconditional apriorist, but emphatically adopts an explicitly conditional apriorism. Hegel's and *a fortiori* Margolis's salvos ostensibly against Kant are widely misaimed insofar as they apply only to an unconditional rather than conditional apriorism. It is not that Kant does not humanize knowledge and Hegel does. Both philosophers humanize knowledge, albeit in different ways. One might not approve of Kant's humanization of knowledge, but Kant cannot be informedly criticized for failing to humanize knowledge in the Transcendental Aesthetic, full stop. Kant, exercising the method of transcendental reasoning, does not assert dogmatically, as Descartes, Leibniz, Newton and others unhesitatingly do, for example, that the world of phenomena exists in an infinitely extended and infinitely divisible rectilinear Euclidean space and time receptacle. Kant says only that *if* the world is as Newton explains it, *then* these and what follows are among the transcendental synthetic *a priori* truths that must be the case in a comprehensive metaphysics and transcendental grounds of the mathematics needed for Newton's System of the World to stand as a possible description of the phenomenon of physical objects in motion.

Infinite rectilinear space and a unidirectional passage of continuous time are not to be found as such in experience for Kant. Nor does Kant

dogmatically produce them as a conjury of pure reason. The very opposite. Kant is among the first thinkers to notice and comment upon the fact that if we make the phenomenological experiment of trying to perceive space or time, looking however hard and with whatever perfect acuity we may, we never perceive space or time themselves, but only physical things distributed and moving in space and time. The explanation of the cognitive status of propositions about space, time, and causation, precisely because they are nonetheless real for falling outside the limits of immediate perceptual experience and pure reason, is nevertheless as philosophically compelling for Kant as it seems to be psychologically irresistible as a problem of inquiry. Kant finds that space and time are subjective preconditions of sense perception, which we could never empirically discover within experience, as we can come upon a new previously uncatalogued species of insect in our field net, if we were not already appropriately equipped with these transcendental necessities of three-dimensional experience. Perception in this respect is like the other passions, which are objective only in an attenuated sense, derived from agreements among different perceiving subjects effecting with greater or less success to communicate the properties of their subjective experiences in a common language to clarify and try to share their impressions.

5. Margolis's anti-Kantian argument

Margolis admits that there is a pragmatic undercurrent in Kant, just as there is in Hegel. This makes a good start, although it is tempered by the consideration that there must be an element of pragmatism in all serious thinkers if pragmatism is true. Margolis nevertheless unmistakably favors Hegelian pragmatism over Kantian, and the reader must wonder why.

The only reasonable answer seems to be that Margolis is convinced by Hegel's criticism of Kant's apriorism. We have seen that if Kant's conditional apriorism is not effectively refuted as failing to yield up the proper synthetic *a priori* conclusions in Kant's applications. If Kant's method of transcendental reasoning is not more directly undermined as somehow godlike or superhuman, then there is no reason why Margolis could not encourage the development of a more Kantian pragmatism as the gateway to Peirce and the prophesized future human-science oriented pragmatic synthesis. Especially is this so because Margolis knows that Peirce read with admiration and instruction Kant's *Critique* virtually every day of his mature philosophically active life, or says he did, anyway. Peirce

describes himself on the evangelical religious analogy as a reconstructed Kantian. We have no comparable declarations from Peirce concerning his reading of Hegel, which we nevertheless know he did. We find no recognition in Peirce himself of a shared dissatisfaction with Kant's apriorism that would have driven him toward Hegel and what Margolis describes as Hegel's anti-Kantian unqualified anti-apriorism.

According to Margolis, Kant got it wrong by adhering to apriorism and transcendentalism in coming to Newton's metaphysical rescue. Hegel called Kant on these untenable assumptions, thus reversing Kant and clearing the field for his brand of post-Kantian idealism involving the unfolding of the Absolute world-soul. Never mind the Absolute world-soul business, Margolis forges ahead by concentrating exclusively on Hegel's negative criticism of Kant. Margolis focuses in particular on what he takes to be Hegel's inaugurating a new era in the history of philosophy, in which subjective conditions of perspective are made a precondition for philosophical investigation, in a way that Kant could never have allowed. Margolis writes in a key passage:

The essential paradox (in Kant), then, is this: that although Kant abandons canonical rationalism's epistemological and metaphysical presumptions (restricting his own reflexive analysis to what is "possible" for humankind alone), he manages to recover the universalism of the rationalists "by other means," by reclaiming it (illicitly) in the work of human reason itself. There you have one way of formulating the essential premise that Kant's transcendentalism cannot possibly supply, that Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Hegel (and, in effect, Peirce and Ernst Cassirer) confirm from entirely different vantages.

Margolis 2012, 90

Kant further limits the Transcendental Aesthetic to the presuppositions of an absolute infinite and rectilinear Euclidean geometry of space and time as a playing field for physical projectiles under the applied mathematical principles of a Newtonian kinematics. Kant's reliance on Newton as a starting place for transcendental reasoning in the *Critique* is supposed to be further evidence of Kant's impacted way of thinking. It is the iron grip of apriorism that was historically broken only by Hegel's rejection of the transcendentalism of Kant's Critical Idealism. Here is reason, then, briefly to take up the relation of Kant's reliance on Newton.

Kant's commitment to Newton's presuppositions for the experience of a world of moving objects in infinitely extended and divisible rectilinear space and orthogonal time, as the basis for transcendental reasoning as

to what must be true in order for the experiential given to be logically possible, is sometimes cited as proof that Kant's methodology was too hide-bound to adapt to changing scientific discoveries and commitments to new facts. The shift from Euclidean to non-Euclidean geometries in physics and from absolute space and absolute time to relative spacetime in Einstein's relativity physics after Kant's era is mentioned in this connection as evidence that Kant's methodology itself must be faulty. Faulty in another way Kant's method of transcendental reasoning may yet be, but it does not appear that Kant himself would need to have been troubled by these scientific "paradigm shifts", as Thomas Kuhn would later call them in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). Kant, predictably, could simply apply the method of transcendental reasoning to these new givens instead, as presuppositions of an evolved science, rather than to the presuppositions of an outmoded Newtonian physics.

Before turning to the textual evidence in Kant's writings to support this interpretation, consider only a mostly unasked but vitally important question in criticism of Kant's procedure in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Imagine that Kant is called upon to apply the method of transcendental reasoning to Einstein's instead of Newton's physics, given the presuppositions of each of these alternatively relativistic versus absolutistic views of space and time. Kant, in this fantasy scenario, now asks the same questions of Einstein's worldview that he had previously asked of Newton's. How different, then, if different at all, are Kant's conclusions concerning the Transcendental Aesthetic? Would not Kant, we ask rhetorically, equally conclude within the non-Euclidean relativistic framework of the new science that spacetime is not empirically discovered? Einstein's revolution in physics, relativizing physical properties to moving and inertial frames of observers of physical phenomena, in preference to Newton's fixed space and time universalism, only makes Kant's general observations even more poignantly and persuasively.

Kant does not maintain that space and time are infinite in Euclidean rectilinear extent and divisibility. He takes it conditionally instead as a given for the method of transcendental reasoning. He does the same for a very different given, in proposing his (1785) *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*. There Kant's method of transcendental reasoning uncovers the transcendental ground underlying the possibility of moral responsibility judgments as given. Give, start out with, a different given, and the same method of transcendental reasoning produces different consequences, as does any proper method. Since we do not expect the same

transcendental ground to be uncovered by Kant's method of transcendental reasoning in the case of physics as in the case of axiology and moral thinking more generally, why should we not anticipate that Kant's method of transcendental reasoning applied to Einsteinian rather than Newtonian physics could also potentially yield different transcendental consequences, and hence that Kant's Critical Idealism is conditional rather than dogmatic.

Kant might be expected to conclude once again, if that is what the method reveals, that space and time considered as spacetime is a pure form of intuition, albeit non-Euclidean and relativistic rather than Euclidean and absolute. Kant might after all draw something like this inference. It is no mark against Kant's humanized method, especially as compared with his immediate philosophical antecedents among the classical rationalists, if it makes no difference to the general conclusions of the Transcendental Aesthetic whether one takes as given a Newtonian or more modern or contemporary starting place in the physical sciences for an exercise of transcendental reasoning. Kant's transcendental method is not to blame for the incongruence of his original Newton-based conclusions with developments in recent science and the changing presuppositions in the scientific conceptual landscape against its metaphysical background. The method of transcendental reasoning is applied in these instances to a science in which commitments to Euclidean or non-Euclidean geometry are *part of the given*. Transcendental reasoning is responsible for the synthetic *a priori* conclusions it advances with respect to an assumed given, but it is not responsible for the given itself. Given what is given, transcendental reasoning asks, what must be true for the given to be possible? The choice of a given in applying the method of transcendental reasoning is a matter of philosophical interest. Kant primarily chooses then prevalent Newtonian physics and moral judgments as the givens of two of his most significant exercises of the method of transcendental reasoning.

Kant's method and the synthetic *a priori* propositions of his Critical Idealism, accordingly, cannot reasonably be blamed for the fact that a Euclidean infinitary applied mathematics is given along with the science whose presuppositions are chosen to be uncovered by the transcendental reasoning of a scientific metaphysics. Those assumptions are included in this instance in the Newton package that Kant's method takes as given in the first *Critique*. A different package, different in the right sorts of ways, could in principle support a different set of synthetic *a priori* judgments, although it would not always need to, depending conditionally on the

sciences taken as given to which the method of transcendental reasoning is applied.

6. Kant's *Prolegomena* conditionalization of the *a priori*

The Kant that Margolis presents is not familiar. Perhaps Margolis, and possibly even Hegel as Margolis reads Hegel, have misjudged Kant and withheld from him sufficient credit for the flexibility of his method and adaptability to precisely the kinds of considerations that Margolis sees arriving on the philosophical scene only with the rise of Hegelianism, and especially in Hegel's criticism of Kant's apriorism. These are features that may have been concealed virtues of Kant's methodology all along. Margolis concludes:

In this way, Hegel summarily rejects Kant's apriorism, though without disowning its newfound legitimative function (if suitably revised). At the same time, Hegel attempts to redefine the inchoate paradigm he finds in Kant, which Kant's own transcendental "prototype" disables. Implicitly, Hegel deflates all the needless conceptual extravagances of the entire Idealist company (himself included), who (following Fichte and Friedrich von Schelling) correctly understand the intolerable muddle of remaining at the point of Kant's uncompromising subjectivism. Margolis 2012, 26

Kant provides the essential clue to the more charitable interpretation, not in the first *Critique*, where he later tells us his method needs to be synthetic, but in the more analytic metaphilosophical (1783) *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics that Can Come Forth as Science*. There Kant writes:

I offer here such a plan which is sketched out after an analytic method, while the *Critique* itself had to be executed in the synthetical style, in order that the science may present all its articulations, as the structure of a peculiar cognitive faculty, in their natural combination. But should any reader find this plan, which I publish as the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, still obscure, let him consider that not everyone is bound to study metaphysics. . . Kant 1977, 8

[T]hat many minds succeed very well in the exact and even in deep sciences more closely allied to intuition while they cannot succeed in investigations dealing exclusively with abstract concepts. In such cases men should apply their talents to other subjects.

Kant 1977, 8-9

Then, most revealingly:

But he who undertakes to judge or, still more, to construct a system of metaphysics must satisfy the demands here made, either by adopting my solution or by thoroughly refuting it and substituting another.

Kant 1977, 9

Kant in this key passage admits that he would be satisfied in principle were his Critical Idealism to be refuted, and another synthetic *a priori* metaphysics-cum-epistemology offered in its place. Kant is sufficiently gratified even in such an event that he has in any case set the terms by which metaphysics can proceed thereafter, *if* metaphysics is to be an epistemically respectable *Wissenschaft*, rather than just an imaginative literary exercise. Kant is fully prepared to be reversed in the conclusions of his constructive efforts to present 'a system of metaphysics', if his metaphysics is thoroughly refuted and another stronger and a better system substituted in its place.

Kant's only fixed expectation is that his Critical Idealism be replaced by something superior within the *Prolegomena* framework of meta-theoretical metaphilosophical demands to be satisfied by metaphysics as a science. Scientific metaphysics could be different for Kant than it was in his time, as he knows it is different from what it has been in the past. Science itself can evolve, and in authoritative judgment, improve. However, what it means for metaphysics to be a science Kant thinks must remain unalterable. Naturally, Kant must stand for something. It is the choice that matters. Kant does not try to put his foot down about how many substances there are, or whether space and time are Euclidean rectilinear infinitely extensive and divisible physical dimensions. Kant can envision his metaphysical system being replaced, and he presumably knows that it would need to do so if science changed significantly in the right sort of ways. Kant will be content, or so he says, provided that his successor supplanting Critical Idealism better meets the requirements for any metaphysics as science that the *Prolegomena* prescribes. From this chain of interpretations, it seems reasonable to conclude once again that Kant is not rigidly bound to any of the contentful details of any of his theoretical philosophy. He does not practice an unconditional apriorism, amounting to the dogmas of classical rationalism he rejects. His requirement is only the method and aggregate of meta-theoretical demands to be fulfilled by any metaphysics as science, as he characterizes them in *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Prolegomena*.

Historically speaking, Newton is not the dispensable basis for Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic. Kant is obligated by the exercise of transcen-

dental reasoning in its historical-cultural context to take Newton as his starting place. Had Kant been active instead in 1930, he most probably would have inquired instead about the absolute metaphysical presuppositions of Einstein's rather than Newton's physics. Kant is nevertheless not wedded by his method to any of Newton's empirically unsupportable absolute presuppositions about space, time, or even causality. There is no reason within Critical Idealism for Kant to deny that transcendentalism is achieved from, by and for the human encultured, enlanguaged, perspective. That is precisely where the given is to be found. Kant's starting place is always the perceiving, thinking, morally and aesthetically judging subject, the moments of consciousness that the method sometimes requires him to examine. Whether or not he officially renounces specifically Kantian transcendentalism, Hegel in many places does the same thing. The method by now is in our philosophical blood. It may always have been there if Kant's particular style of argument by contradiction or *reductio ad absurdum* is as pervasive as appears, although many philosophers do not know or do not want to acknowledge that it is Kantian. The point is that such a method is explicit in Kant, where it depends on a rigorous argument structure for verifying the necessary existence of a transcendental ground in order for something given to be possible.

Margolis acknowledges that Hegel does not get everything exactly right. Else there would be no need for a contemporary or still future grand synthesis of Hegel and Peircean pragmatism to complete Margolis's narrative arc (Margolis 2012, especially 36-41; 48-49). Kant is not the dogmatist of any single predetermined choice of supposedly logically necessary unconditional *a priori* conclusions. His thought throughout, as repeatedly emphasized, is an explicitly and deliberately mannered *conditional* apriorism: *If* the best science teaches *p*, he proposes, *then* the absolute presuppositions of *p* are revealed by transcendental reasoning as necessary *a priori* truths required by the *given* science in order for proposition *p*, not yet to be true, but merely logically possible. Nothing delivers these modalities except methods of argument as powerful as *reductio*, and that is how Kant's arguments proceed. The method of transcendental reasoning allows a practitioner to choose any historically presented given, and consider what must be true in order for the given to be possible by systematically reviewing the relevant *reductios* that might be made against candidate transcendental grounds. Only what is logically necessary leads to a logical contradiction with the assumption of anything given in a *reductio ad absurdum* inference structure.

The Transcendental Aesthetic and Transcendental Analytic of Kant's Critical Idealism, are conditioned in all their conclusions by their givens. If Newton's science is given, you might arrive at Kant's *Critique*. Choose another science, say, Einstein's, and Kant or a later Kantian may or may not return the same exact conclusions in an updated *Critique*+. Kant or protégé can now say that non-Euclidean spacetime is a pure form of intuition. Then the original conclusions based on Newton's Euclidean geometrical physics as given and articulated in Kant's first *Critique* would continue to remain the ideal model in addressing the same kinds of questions for new theories as science progresses, at least perhaps for the conceivable future. The key words remain 'condition', 'conditional' and 'conditioned'.

Do we need a different Transcendental Aesthetic for Einstein as for Newton? Who has seriously undertaken the task of answering this question on Kant's behalf? What is remarkable in part about Kant's Critical Idealism, is that it seems a necessary intellectual task to be undertaken whenever there is what in the days after Kuhn is often called a significant scientific paradigm shift. Science may live through that sort of conceptual reorientation in transitioning from Newtonian to Einsteinian physics to quantum mechanics and relativistic quantum theory. If our conception of physical reality departs further and further from the Newtonian, then eventually, if we are Kantians, we must consider rewriting Kant's *Critique*, as with correct foresight he surely would have wanted, regardless of the outcome for metaphysics in relation to Kant's first efforts. One might say that this is what Hegel tries to do, in order to refashion Kant, before a new science is in place. Whether or not anyone does so, the fact that some may feel the need for a new Critical Idealism is in that sense already a triumph of what and how Kant hoped to re-instate metaphysics as a genuine science. Kant need not expect an evolved Critical Idealism to stand or fall with the historical acceptance of any particular science. Kant's transcendental reasoning is conditioned in its conclusions in precisely the evolving, pragmatically sensitive way that Margolis holds out only for the latter Peircean inheritors of Hegel's insights about what are portrayed as Kant's insupportable apriorism.

Since, as we have seen, the mechanism of Kant's apriorism as implemented by the method of transcendental reasoning is nothing other than a particular style of *reductio* inference, does Hegel propose to dismiss *reductio* reasoning generally on the grounds that it is also too inhumanistic? That arguing for anything by *reductio* is inherently objectionable because it is excessively rationalistic and *a priori*? It is hard to see where Hegel is

supposed to get his hold on Kant, the latter of whom is considerably more subtle than his erstwhile critic. What does Hegel have to complain about? Kant begins where Hegel and Margolis want to begin, with what is given to real culturally contexted thinking subjects. Is it a misguided project to ask what must be true in order for something given to be possible? Is it inappropriate to offer *reductio* reasoning in support of a candidate transcendental ground of a philosophically interesting given? Are there problems with this manner of reasoning in any of its particular applications in Kant's inquiries? If so, we always have Kant's open invitation to do a better job, to choose a different given or to discover different transcendental grounds than those his *reductios* have revealed. If we are unable to refute the reasonableness of asking what must be true in order for something given to be possible, however, if we are unable to refute the method of *reductio* reasoning in general terms, or as an instrument for discovering synthetic *a priori* (the *a priori* has to come from somewhere) transcendental grounds of any particular given, and if we are unwilling or unable to produce a plausible alternative to Kant's Critical Idealism, then we are not criticizing Critical Idealism, but merely venting frustration at the inability to uncouple Kant's wagons.

If we think of Kant as truly making metaphysics a science that takes natural philosophy as found for its starting point in transcendental reasoning, then, had Kant lived to see Einstein's relativism triumph over Newton's absolutism in physics, and with it Riemannian non-Euclidean geometry over Euclidean geometry in the applied mathematics of relative physical spacetime, it remains an open, scientific, question as to what a neo-Kantian Transcendental Aesthetic would look like, conditional upon the details of Einstein rather than Newton to which the method of transcendental reasoning is then applied. By this route, we may or may not reach the same general Kantian conclusion that space and time are not objective or discovered within real-time moments in the experience of objects—in Einstein's world as much as in Newton's. If spacetime turns out to be a synthesis of transcendent, subjective pure forms of intuition, regardless of whether space and time are absolute, Euclidean rectangular, or curvilinear, or topologically open or closed surface, finite or infinite in divisibility and extent, as applied mathematical dimensions in which phenomena occur, and in which science must seek to explain them, or relative and non-Euclidean, Riemannian, or something yet again. If and when respectable science in the future were to take another dramatic turn, then certain parts of Kant's Critical Idealism might in principle stand in

need of an upgrade, as Kant understands. This is then a Collingwoodian interpretation of Kant's project in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Can Come Forth as Science*, based on Collingwood's *An Essay on Metaphysics* (1940). Collingwood presents what he takes to be a Kantian model for metaphysics as the uncovering of any discipline's absolute presuppositions. The present interpretation reads this purpose back through Collingwood into Kant as its independently confirmable source of inspiration.

Kant understands his project as in some sense a modernized Enlightenment version of the kind of metaphysical service Thomas Aquinas had already rendered to Aristotle's ancient Greek science. Kant does approximately the same kind of thing, but with enormous improvements and avoidances of Aristotelian naiveties, in light of Newton's then dominant geometrical analogical System of the World. Since Kant knew that Aristotle could be supplanted by Descartes, and Descartes by Newton, he was presumably capable of understanding that Newton could be supplanted by yet another, later and still more perfected science of physics. Kant's transcendental method is designed to apply conditionally to any such development, for which it can wait indefinitely patiently as science takes its course alongside other cultural phenomena. As such, Kant's Critical Idealism can hardly be charitably described as anything but humanized, contextualized, enlanguaged and encultured, in precisely the way that Margolis sees as the valuable contribution to philosophy only in the future unfolding of pragmatism. Kant's Critical Idealism tracks science in arriving conditionally at synthetic *a priori* judgments of metaphysics that result when the method of transcendental reasoning takes something inquiry-appropriate as its given.

Kant is moreover the progenitor of *philosophical anthropology*, giving it the name *pragmatischer Anthropologie* for the first time in German in his (1798) book, *Anthropologie*. As is often the case, Kant is not the sole inventor, but can number among his predecessors Jean-Jacques Rousseau, David Hume, Etienne de Condillac and even Voltaire. Kant no doubt believes that in the first *Critique* he has understood everything exactly right. His conclusions nevertheless remain only conditional on the starting places with which his inquiry expressly begins, and on which his assumptions epistemically depend. If, as *Prolegomena* allows, Kant imagines someone else to undertake the investigation more satisfactorily, more penetratingly, perhaps, albeit along the same lines that he believes himself to have first properly identified, then the synthetic *a priori* judgments sys-

tematized in and as his Critical Idealism cannot consistently be considered dogmatic or excessively rationalistic. If Kant is not so rigidly bound, as Margolis's Hegel seems to believe, and if we can consider Kant's method being applied to later developments in the natural sciences, uncovering their metaphysics of absolute or transcendental presuppositions by means of transcendental reasoning, then we need not excessively admire Hegel's criticism of Kant's philosophy. Kant's method and framework of meta-theoretical demands generally are either irrelevant to, or can fully accommodate, Hegel's objections as represented by Margolis.

These points of interpretation are emphasized, not because one imagines Margolis does not know his Kant. The hope is rather that in seeing Kant's philosophical virtues and advantages, portrayed in this way, especially for Margolis's purposes, presented in support of an alternative historical-philosophical narrative, Margolis might soften simultaneously his opposition to Kant and advocacy of Hegel, as the best predecessor German idealist philosopher to partner later synthetically imaginatively with Peirce. Why, however, as philosophy moves forward into the new millennium should we expect it to take any particular direction? Why should philosophy, as it enters new territory, with new topics and expertise, not remain joyously splintered? Philosophy thereby does what philosophy does best, what makes it irreplaceable by any science or nonphilosophical belief system, which is to pilot the free exploration of conceptual space. Do we want to know what are the real options for the future of philosophy, and how can we assess their advantages and disadvantages in choosing a good course? Margolis provides an answer, but no argument to suppose that his sense of things, to be taken seriously and respectfully, is the only or even the best answer. Surely there are possibilities worth considering that do not include Peirce as part of the picture at all, and others built on Peirce in very different ways, that do not include either Hegel or Kant as part of their prominent philosophical foreground. Margolis, for all the sensitivity of his thumb on the throbbing pulse of philosophical trends, in the end offers only a tunnel vision view of its future. Where there are so many unconsidered alternative possibilities that we would need to compare in order to pretend to know the course philosophy will take, we can accept Margolis's prophecy for the ongoing direction of philosophy only if we recognize that there are many other tunnels through which a very different but in many instances equally compelling glimpse of the future of philosophy can also be viewed. Some of these imaginable futures might even be found equally appealing in comparison with any that synthesize

or transition ideologically or methodologically historically from Hegel in particular to Peirce.

7. Methodological concerns in Margolis's inquiry

Margolis, finally, owes further clarification as to why following the past as a clue to the future in philosophy has any expectation of leading to a probable or even plausible truth about philosophy's next great step. Why should it do so?

It is surprising to find Margolis relying on the interpreted past as a model by which to predict the future course of philosophy, without first trying to justify the category of explanations it is supposed to afford. Margolis, of all recent writers on topics in ontology, has repeatedly demonstrated what itself may be a cultivated, certainly an educated, sensitivity to the cultural contexts in which philosophical concepts are advanced, distinctions made, principles articulated, defended and applied, arguments constructed and considered, and inferences drawn.

Why, then, does Margolis turn to the nineteenth century, with its astonishingly different social and material culture, not to mention intellectual climate, for an explanation of what is likely to occur in the history of philosophy as we enter more fully into a new millennium and look to the horizon for the future? Does the same model explain the emergence of empiricism out of rationalism in the transition from seventeenth to eighteenth century philosophy? Does it explain the classical opposition of Plato and Aristotle over twenty years of Aristotle's association with the ancient Academy, through the course of what must have often been an entertaining student and teacher dialectical interaction? Why not say that we are still living in the more powerful synthesis of Plato and Aristotle than anything to be made up out of Hegel and Peirce? Why not describe contemporary analytic philosophy as a kind of grand synthesis of Plato's rationalism in philosophy of logic and mathematics, and Aristotle's empiricism, functionalism, and physical substance realism, in a dualistic ontology of physically real and transcendently ideal entities? Real atomic particles, Aristotelian primary substances, are posited, on the one hand, allowing though not necessitating a naïve realism in the applied epistemology of empirical science. Platonic transcendently ideal logical and mathematical entities, propositions, properties, and the like, are included without a blush on the other, claiming the modality of an appropriate necessity that Kant generally reserves for the *a priori*. If the existence of

these entities, including propositions, are in any sense necessary, then why not should the apriorism watchdogs be concerned if the synthetic *a priori* propositions of Kant's Critical Idealism lay title to the same necessity?

Nor need analytic philosophy automatically get swallowed up in a rav-
enous Kantian pragmatism, when analytic philosophers move to adopt
a Kant-based pragmatic stance. There can be a Kantian pragmatic ana-
lytic philosophy, and there can be a Kantian analytic pragmatism. The
two are no more logically exclusive than are the categories of realist ana-
lytic and analytic realist, or idealist and constructivist philosophy, or the
like. Ludwig Wittgenstein is already a prime example of a rigorous Kan-
tian pragmatic analytic thinker, both in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and
in the posthumous writings, beginning with the *Blue and Brown Books* and
Philosophical Investigations. Analytic philosophy continues to evolve a dis-
tinctive synthesis. It stands defiant against detractors who would like to
depict it as being caught hopelessly on the thesis or antithesis side of
philosophical deadlock. There is on balance no further reason in support
of Margolis's intuitive sense of things to suppose that analytic philosophy
cannot transform itself and emerge in this centuries-long competition in
the marketplace of ideas, as contributing to another more significant and
philosophically attractive future Kantian-[Darwinian]-Peircean synthesis
or further elaboration of the more eminent, virtually irresistible, Platonic-
Aristotelian synthesis.³

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³ A previous version of this essay was read at the Conference on The Metaphysics of
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The Poverty of Neo-Pragmatism: Rorty, Putnam, and Margolis on Realism and Relativism

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1. Introduction

In his 1993 paper on "Hilary Putnam and the Relativist Menace," Richard Rorty wrote that "I entirely agree with, and fervently applaud, [Putnam's] relativist-bashing remark: 'Relativism, just as much as realism, assumes that one can stand within one's language and outside it at the same time.' But I do not see how this remark is relevant to my own ethnocentric position" (Rorty 1998 [1993], 51). Rorty's statement was part of an effort to clear himself from Putnam's charge that his own (Rorty's) position was a form of relativism (Putnam 1990, 18–26). In effect, Rorty argued that his position could not be relativist because, as "ethnocentrist" (in Rorty's special sense of that term), it denied even the coherence of supposing standards of truth to be relative to "conceptual scheme," in agreement with Donald Davidson's well-known argument for that conclusion (Davidson 2001 [1974]). Putnam, on the other hand, while consistently denying relativism (though not a similar position he has called "conceptual relativity"—see Putnam 1987, 16–21; 2004, 33–52; 2012, 56–58, 63–65), and while always defending one form of realism or another, has also changed his mind about which versions of realism he accepts or rejects several times in the course of his career (for an overview, see Putnam 2012, 51–71, 72–90, 91–108). In contrast to, and in dialogue with, Putnam and Rorty, Joseph Margolis has consistently defended a position that is self-avowedly both realist and relativist (Margolis 1986, 1992, 2002).

My aim in this paper is to clarify Margolis's own position on realism and relativism in contrast to those of Rorty and Putnam. I am generally sympathetic to Margolis's position and convinced by his arguments, and near the end of the paper I will say something about what I think we should take from them. Provocatively put, the position I defend amounts to the view that one *can* "stand within one's language and outside it at the same time" (which both Putnam and Rorty had claimed to be impossible). One attraction of a realist relativism along Margolis's lines is due to the epistemological significance of just such unusual standpoints.

2. Putnam and Margolis on Realism

Though the precise definition of realism itself is controversial, perhaps its defining commitment is that there is a world or reality apart from our thought or language that that thought or language is at least sometimes about, and which makes a difference to whether that thought or language is true or false. The versions of realism that Hilary Putnam has defended from the 1970s to today include *metaphysical realism*, *internal realism*, and *natural realism* (Putnam 1981, 1987, 1992, 1994; see Putnam 2012, 51–108 for review).¹ Putnam defended metaphysical realism briefly in the 1970s before rejecting metaphysical realism and defending (instead) internal realism through the 1980s (Putnam 1975, VIII–XI, 272–290; Putnam 1981, 1987, 1992).² But in the early 1990s Putnam publically abandoned internal realism and began defending a position he has called "natural realism" (also "naïve realism"), which he claimed to be inspired by William James, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and John McDowell (Putnam 1994, review in Putnam 2012, 58–62).

The *metaphysical* realist is distinguished, among other things, by his or her claim that our sentences and beliefs are true or false, when they are, because they correspond to, or fail to correspond to, the world as it is in itself. According to "the perspective of metaphysical realism," Putnam writes,

¹ See also Pihlström 1998, 49–59, and Hildebrand 2003, 155–162, for discussion.

² In a recent text, Putnam distinguishes his consistent adherence to *scientific* realism (which is a position in the philosophy of science concerning how to construe scientific theories) from his changing opinions about metaphysical, internal, and natural realism (which concern the more general realism issue in metaphysics and epistemology) (Putnam 2012, 51–56). Putnam writes that, contrary to many misreadings of his position, he has always been a scientific realist, even after he rejected metaphysical realism in the early 1980s (Putnam 2012, 51–56, 91–103).

the world consists of some fixed totality of mind-independent objects. There is exactly one true and complete description of 'the way the world is.' Truth involves some sort of correspondence relation between words or thought-signs and external things and sets of things. I shall call this perspective the *externalist* perspective, because its favorite point of view is a God's Eye point of view.

Putnam 1981, 49 ³

By contrast, the *internal* realist claims that the idea of our thought or language corresponding to a world entirely independent of our thought and language is incoherent (Putnam 1981, 1987). Whatever we imagine in using phrases like "the mind-independent world," such phrases cannot effectively refer to anything, since, in referring, they would thereby demonstrate that the object referred to did not match the intension of the concept (that is, would not be entirely mind-independent).⁴ Despite the rejection of metaphysical realism so construed, the internal realist affirms that there is still a meaningful sense in which we can say that our thoughts and language refer to reality, so long as we also recognize that the reality referred to is identified solely by means internal to our interpretive framework (Putnam 1981, 49–74; 1987, 16–40; and see Putnam 2012, 53–56, for review). Putnam describes the internal realist view as follows:

[I]t is characteristic of this view to hold that *what objects does the world consist of?* is a question that it only makes sense to ask within a theory or description. Many 'internalist' philosophers, though not all, hold further that there is more than one 'true' theory or description of the world.

Putnam 1981, 50

In an internalist view ... signs do not intrinsically correspond to objects, independently of how those signs are employed and by whom. But a sign that is actually employed in a particular way by a particular community of users can correspond to particular objects *within the conceptual scheme of those users*. 'Objects' do not exist independently of conceptual schemes. We cut up the world into objects when we introduce one or another scheme of description. Since the objects and

³ See Boyd 2013, 39–43, for a helpful list of distinguishable (arguably logically independent) commitments that define what Putnam calls "metaphysical realism." These include "truth is correspondence truth," "there is one true theory and one true ontology," "the objects of the true ontology are mind-independent," "reference is determined purely causally," and "bivalence holds for all sentences in the one true ontological vocabulary."

⁴ This is one implication of Putnam's "brain-in-a-vat" argument, in Putnam 1981, 1–21, and the main conclusion drawn at 49–50. I have left out of consideration Putnam's stronger but more complicated "model-theoretic" argument, for reasons of space. Putnam now rejects the latter argument (Putnam 2012, 74–80).

the signs are alike internal to the scheme of description, it is possible to say what matches what. Putnam 1981, 52

Finally, the *natural* realist affirms the validity of everyday notions of truth, reality, the world, and the direct relationship between our perception, action, thought, and discourse and the world (including, perhaps, correspondence or correspondence-like relations). Natural realism is a defense of the "realism of the common man."⁵ It treats our epistemic situation as one of "unmediated" contact with, or "openness" to, a mind-independent world (Putnam 1994, 488–490 and *passim*; Putnam 2012, 61–62).⁶ Furthermore, the views on all sides of the traditional realism/anti-realism debate (including metaphysical and internal realism) natural realism treats as relying on unjustified and highly problematic assumptions about perception, exemplified (among other places) in phenomenalism and verificationist semantics, but whose origins can be traced to the early modern period (Putnam 1994; and 2012, 58–62, 65–69, for review).

In what follows, I will compare Margolis's realist position to Putnam's internal realism (this section) as well as Putnam's natural realism (next section).

There have been at least three distinguishable strategies of argument for the conclusion that realism of something like the traditional kind (such as metaphysical realism) ought to be abandoned: (1) a (Cartesian) skeptical argument, linked to the impossibility of stepping outside our epistemic situation in order to evaluate the functioning of this situation in terms of a relation or lack of relation between mind and world; (2) the "incoherence of completely external reference" argument recounted above, which turns on the (putative) incoherence of supposing that our thought or language could refer to something entirely independent of our thought or language (as concluded on the basis of the famous "brain-in-a-vat" thought experiment, in Putnam 1981, 1–21); and (3) an argument that emphasizes the *prima facie* "incommensurability" (in the sense of Kuhn 1962 or something similar) of epistemic criteria. The last argument concludes, on the basis of (1) the incommensurability characteristic of varying competing accounts of what we might call "criterial" concepts like "truth," "justifi-

⁵ The phrase is from William James, cited in Putnam 1994, 454.

⁶ "I should not[in my internal realist phase] have seen us as 'making up' the world (not even with the world's help); I should have seen us as *open* to the world, as interacting with the world in ways that permit aspects of it to reveal themselves to us. Of course, we need to invent concepts to do that. There is plenty of constructive activity here. But we do not construct reality itself" (Putnam 2012, 61–2).

cation," "reality," "world," and so on (distinguishing these second-order, "criterial" concepts from first-order, "factual" ones), and (ii) the lack of any objective (that is, not historically contingent and historically local) way to settle disputes between advocates of one or another such criterial notion, that (iii) the validity of the ideas that the world or the facts are any particular way is inexorably contingent upon such historically local criteria of evaluation, themselves inexorably contingent.⁷

Among other things, Putnam intended his internal realist position to provide a more satisfactory position than either metaphysical realism or well-known "anti-realist" positions, such as Michael Dummett's verificationist anti-realism, on the one hand, and the "post-modern" views that Putnam then associated with Thomas S. Kuhn, Michel Foucault, and Richard Rorty, on the other (see Putnam 1981, ix–xi, 49–54, 113–126, 214–216; 1992 [1990], 18–26). But given that internal realism "relativizes" the reality described or referred to by any epistemic agent to that agent's experience, one might wonder what distinguishes Putnam's view from those he criticized during this period as "relativist" and hence "anti-realist." In fact, this is a charge that Rorty levelled at Putnam explicitly (in Rorty 1998 [1993]): Putnam's internal realism lacks resources to guard against such relativization; and Rorty's escape from such relativization (on his own account) derives not from preserving any component of realism, but rather from treating even the idea that there are open questions about alternative experiential frameworks, criteria, or conceptual schemes, as itself incoherent (following Davidson 2001 [1974]). This is the position Rorty dubs "ethnocentrism."

In an effort to guard against the collapse of his "internal realism" into either metaphysical realism or relativism (that is, to preserve both realism and internalism consistently), Putnam (a) distinguished between "truth" and "rational acceptability," (b) denied that we're ever in a position to evaluate the truth of our views directly, and (c) suggested that the notion of truth itself could be elucidated as "an *idealization* of rational acceptability" (Putnam 1981, 55). His reasoning in favor of the last identification was that "truth is expected to be stable or 'convergent'; if both a statement and its negation could be 'justified,' even if conditions were as ideal as one could hope to make them, there is no sense in thinking of the statement as *having* a truth-value" (Putnam 1981, 56). And, in at least one place, Putnam appeared to say that this point applied equally well to criterial claims as

⁷ See Kuhn 1962, Chs. 9–11, for an influential version of the original argument, and Baghramian 2004, 180–211 for discussion.

to factual ones: "[t]he very fact that we speak of our different conceptions as different conceptions of *rationality* posits a *Grenzbegriff*, a limit-concept of ideal truth" (Putnam 1981, 216). Rorty argued that Putnam's definition of truth as idealized rational acceptability, and his notion that discussion of truth or rationality itself implied a *Grenzbegriff*, were insufficiently supported, since nothing could guarantee us, from within the perspective defined by Putnam's commitment to internalism, that such convergence would or could occur in each case of disagreement, nor that the answers converged upon, if these answers were to converge, would necessarily be demonstrably superior to conceivable alternatives in general (Putnam 1981, 56, 216; Rorty 1998 [1993], 43–62; see also Margolis 2002, 30–34, for review). Putnam himself abandoned internal realism in the mid-1990s, partly (it seems) for this reason (Putnam 1994, 456–465, esp. 462), and partly due to Putnam's later rejection of the verificationist semantics that were the starting point of his argument for internal realism (Putnam 1994, 461–462; 2012, 58–60, 74–82, for review).

In a comparison of Putnam and Margolis on the realism/anti-realism issue, it is instructive to note that Margolis's position, which he calls "constructive realism," is quite similar to Putnam's internal realism, though without the assumption of a *Grenzbegriff* (Margolis 2002, 24–53, discussed below). At least this far, Putnam's internal realism *sans Grenzbegriff*, Margolis's constructive realism, and Rorty's (self-avowedly) non-realist and non-relativist "ethnocentrism" are on common ground. But further examination reveals important differences.

On Margolis's account in "Cartesian Realism and the Revival of Pragmatism" (2002), constructive realism is the view that we can meaningfully speak of a correspondence or aboutness relation between at least some of our thoughts or utterances and their objects. We must understand the objects in question, however, as accessible to us only in a way that is bound up with our constructed posits—our theories, practices, models, and conceptual schemes (Margolis 2002, 41–45). So far, Margolis's position appears very similar to Putnam's internal realism, with just three modifications: (I) absence of commitment to the definition of truth as "idealized rational acceptability," (II) absence of commitment to the view that a *Grenzbegriff* is implicated in our use of criterial notions, and (III) emphasis upon something called "construction," which at least implies reference to material practice and historical contingency in a way that is lacking in Putnam's internal realism.

The principal non-constructive form of realism from which Margolis distinguishes his constructive realism, he calls "Cartesian realism." This, he claims, includes the basic accounts of the relation between knower and known defended by Descartes, Locke, and Kant, as well as (more contentiously, I would say) those of Putnam in his internal realist phase, Dummett, and Davidson. Margolis describes the contrast between Cartesian realism and his constructive realist alternative as follows:

Cartesian realism [...] [i]n its most conventional form [...] is correspondentist in some criterially explicit regard, favors cognitive faculties reliably (even essentially) qualified to discern the actual features and structures of independent reality, is context-free and ahistorical, strongly separates human cognizers and cognized world, and is committed to one ideally valid description of the real world [...] Any doctrine that favors the objectivist drift of this sort of realism [...] counts in my book as 'Cartesian' Margolis 2002, 38

This view closely corresponds to what Putnam describes (and rejects) under the heading of metaphysical realism, though Margolis intends his category to include quite a few more figures than Putnam's, as noted above. Constructivism, on the other hand,

means at the very least that questions of knowledge, objectivity, truth, confirmation, and legitimation are constructed in accord with our interpretive conceptual schemes—the interpretive qualification of the indissoluble relationship between cognizer and cognized; and that, though we do not construct the actual world, what we posit (constructively) as the independent world is epistemically dependent on our mediating conceptual schemes. It is but a step from there to historicizing the entire practice Margolis 2002, 22

And,

[c]onstructivism holds that the objectivity of our beliefs and claims about the world *is itself a constructive posit* that we impose holistically and without privilege of any kind. It proceeds dialectically as a *faute de mieux* ["for lack of a better"] maneuver. Nothing hangs on it 'except' two very modest but all-important gains: (1) that we must (and may) put away every Cartesian longing [that is, every hope for a "correspondentism" consistent with "Cartesian realism"]; and (2) that, admitting (1), we must conclude that the appraisal of every logic, every semantics, every metaphysics and epistemology, proceeds only within the holism of our constructive posit: it never exits from it

Margolis 2002, 45

Given the apparent similarities between Margolis's constructive realism and Putnam's internal realism, what are their differences? Among the most significance of these is, as just noted, that Margolis rejects Putnam's notions that truth is "idealized rational acceptability," as well as the notion of an unavoidably implicated *Grenzbegriff* (Margolis 2002, 30–34). I would argue, however, that there is another crucial difference between Putnam's "internal realism" and Margolis's "constructive realism": namely, that for Margolis, the matching of beliefs and the world that is recognized within the realism position is far more *robust* in the sense that it implies both a more concrete (say, materially, artifactually, socially and practically), and more historically and culturally contingent, instantiation than in Putnam's internal realism.⁸

When Putnam claimed (in his internal realist period) that the truth of a statement is internal to a language, he was inspired in large part by Dummett's verificationist anti-realism (Putnam 2012, 74–82, for discussion). One of the tasks that Putnam's internal realism was intended to fulfill was to answer the skeptical worry that we cannot know for sure that any of our beliefs match the world in itself (that is, anti-realist argument (1) above). Putnam's response is that the skeptical worry cannot be coherently stated (Putnam 1981, 1–21—in other words, anti-realist argument (2) above). Admitting as much, he argues, requires further admitting that we treat the words "truth," "reality," "world," and so on, as having meaning only from within the perspective afforded by our sense-data and experience and whatever interpretations we bring to that sense-data and experience. It would be fair to construe Putnam's internal realist view as a version of Kantian transcendentalism, a construal consistent with Putnam's frequent expressions of sympathy with Kant's views during this period (for instance, Putnam 1981, x, 16, 60–64, 118; 1987, 41–52).⁹

⁸ See, for instance, Margolis's description and defense of "robust relativism" as a view that combines a more or less traditional realism about a certain core of first-order truth-claims, while also accepting a relativistic indeterminacy about the truth-values of other first-order claims, as well as second-order legitimative (criterial) claims, in Margolis 1986, 9–34; and his sympathetic presentation of both a "minimal realism" (shared even by so-called anti-realists like Dummett) and a more "full-blooded" (read "robust") realism that recognizes the epistemic relevance of non-deflated criterial notions like "truth," "correspondence," and the like, without denying potential incommensurability in how these are applied and evaluated, in Margolis 1986, 109–124.

⁹ This sympathy was not unqualified, however, particularly regarding Kant's view that the notion of a "thing-in-itself" is coherent and cognitively indispensable, either formally (as in Kant's epistemology) or substantively (as in Kant's moral philosophy): see Putnam 1987, 36, 41–44.

At least some of Margolis's arguments for his constructive realism, on the other hand, have a different starting point from that of Putnam's arguments for internal realism.¹⁰ They proceed not from verificationist assumptions, or the similar assumptions of the Cartesian skeptic with only his or her experiences or sense-data to go on, to a Kantian denial of the sensibility of speaking or thinking about "things-in-themselves," but rather from what might be called a *third-personal* and *first-order* perspective of a sort like those of Kuhn, Benjamin Whorf, and the theoretical traditions of history of ideas and cultural anthropology in the late 19th and 20th century (without Margolis claiming to be engaged in original, first-order research himself, of course). Such a third-personal, first-order perspective characterizes, for instance, the approach of historians of science like Kuhn to case-studies like the Lavoisier-Priestley debate.¹¹ Margolis, following Kuhn in *Structure* (Kuhn 1962), presses the third rather than the second of the anti-realist arguments distinguished above: in other words, he takes it that our first-order studies of events of truth-claiming should motivate us to think of criteria for evaluating truth-claims as necessarily constructions of one sort or another, and, for the same reason, to think of our own convictions about reality, the world, or the facts as constructions of one sort or another. The first-order inquiries convince us that there is no room for insisting on a single privileged view of at least some of the matters with which philosophers have traditionally been concerned—including truth, reality, the world, linguistic meaning, or belief. And from this argument about the incommensurability, and lack of objectively demonstrable superiority between, "conceptual schemes," a conclusion is drawn about the merely relative objectivity of the factual claims made within these schemes. By parity of reasoning, we must understand our own criteria, theories, and beliefs as constructions of merely relative validity, just as we (for reasons drawn from our first-order inquiries) see those of the foreign tribes or past scientific research communities that social anthropologists and historians of science study.¹²

Beginning from such a first-order, third-personal perspective rather than from Cartesian skeptical or Kantian transcendental worries, Margolis's constructive realism then draws implications for the way we address the second-order, transcendental and first-personal, epistemological ques-

¹⁰ Some do, some do not. Compare, for instance, Margolis 1986, Chs. 1 and 5.

¹¹ See Conant 1957 and the discussion in Kuhn 1962, 52–65, 118.

¹² See, for instance, Margolis's brief tally of the positive arguments in favor of relativism in Margolis 1986, 24–28.

tions. These in turn are taken to show the merely relative objectivity of first-order claims.

For reasons closely related to the reasoning just recounted, Margolis is not much attracted to the arms-race towards a greater and more consistent "internalization" of the acceptable evidence for philosophical theses that characterized the Rorty-Putnam debate, and led each to the rejection of so much of realism and relativism as it did. Putnam's later natural realism, as well as aspects of the views of Davidson, Rorty, and many others, take the argument from the incoherence of external standards (anti-realist argument (2) above) to problematic extremes. Minimalism, deflationism, and quietism are manifestations of such "internalization" tendencies, and Margolis is not generally sympathetic with those positions (see Margolis 1986, 109–124; Margolis 2003, 77–104). Rather, he emphasizes the profound cognitive and epistemological significance of the concepts of truth, reality, and correspondence, and recommends an enrichment of these notions in our analysis of human thought and belief (Margolis 2003, 77–104), while also emphasizing that, per the pressure of first-order evidence that any such concept is a construction, we cannot expect any such analysis to be the final word or to invalidate even apparently rival or inconsistent models of our cognitive situation (given the just mentioned first-order arguments for incommensurability about criteria).

3. Putnam and Margolis on Relativism

While Putnam and Rorty denied that they were relativists at the same time they rejected the label of (at least certain kinds of) realism, Margolis has affirmed both realism and relativism, though realism and relativism of a special sort. Margolis argues against a simple "relationalist" form of relativism: that is, a view wherein truth or falsity is relativized to languages or conceptual schemes, such that "true" is understood to mean "True-in-L₁," "True-in-L₂," and so on, or "Truth-relative-to-conceptual-scheme-A," "Truth-relative-to-conceptual-scheme-B," and so on (Margolis 1992; 1986, 9–34). Such a view, Margolis argues, is either incoherent or uninteresting. This is because such a position must (on pain of self-contradiction) ascribe truth to its own account that there are such relative truths. This, however, would be either (I) incoherent (if this truth is treated as more correct than these various relative truths) or (II) self-defeating (if this truth is treated as no more true than logically incompatible alternatives, and thus anti-relativism is admitted as true as relativism) or (III)

uninteresting (if the meaning of truth is treated as ambiguous between "absolutely true" and "relativistically true"). But Margolis goes on to argue that there are forms of relativism that do not fit the simple relationalist model. These include a view that drops the law of excluded middle, thereby acknowledging truth-values apart from true and false; and this is the form of relativism that Margolis favors.

In the previous section I suggested that Margolis's position is motivated by the sense that first-order inquiries have revealed the contingency of epistemic criteria. This contingency suggests that there are cases wherein some epistemic commitments are incommensurable with equally viable alternatives (at least in a particular epistemic context). In particular, in the kinds of cases Kuhn describes, the meaning of criterial terms or concepts like truth, validity, reality, world, and so on, appear to be infected by this contingency. One might wonder, therefore, whether the incommensurabilist argument about criteria (anti-realist argument (3), above) is not itself a version of the relationalist relativism Margolis rejects, and thus whether Margolis's position is inconsistent on this point. But acknowledging incommensurability and rejecting bivalence (the law of excluded middle) for discourse about matters affected by the incommensurability are logically compatible. Such incommensurabilities would not be *known* to be irreconcilable, yet also perhaps not actually ever "objectively" and univocally reconciled or reconcilable. The relativism supported by such cases is not self-contradictory in the way simple relationalist forms are bound to be. In particular, it escapes the objection that relativizing the meaning of truth to conceptual scheme is self-contradictory, as argued by Davidson (2001 [1974]). The fact that (A) the comparability of conceptual schemes is a condition of possibility of saying that (I) two cognitive practices diverge and that (II) there is no clear way of assigning superiority to either (as the legitimacy of Kuhn's account, and his own practice, in Kuhn 1962, requires), does not entail that (B) (I) the practices do not really diverge, nor (II) we must assume there *is* an objective way of assigning superiority to either. We can merely insist that cases of Kuhnian incommensurability, construed in the manner just indicated, allow for comparability.¹³

Margolis's version of relativism may be instructively compared to Putnam's notion of "conceptual relativity," which the latter has stressed since the late 1980s (Putnam 1987, 16–21; 2004, 33–52; 2012, 56–58, 63–65). Putnam argues that there cannot be a single correct way of conceiving of

¹³ Margolis employs this line of defense against Davidson's criticism of Kuhn in Margolis 1986, 36–38, and Margolis 2003a, 42–76.

reality because there are cases where two entirely different conceptions describe only and exactly the same set of data. Consider the all-too-familiar case wherein two philosophers direct their attention to a table. One claims that the table is composed of five parts: four legs and a surface. The other claims that the table is composed of just one part, which is identical to the shape and volume inside its outermost surface. Putnam argues that these two views are equally correct, yet inconsistent, and that this shows that the world does not itself provide criteria of truth or falsehood for at least some meaningful questions we might ask.¹⁴ Putnam writes,

Our concepts may be culturally relative, but it does not follow that the truth or falsity of everything we say using those concepts is simply 'decided' by the culture. But the idea that there is an Archimedean point, or a use of 'exist' inherent in the world itself, from which the question 'How many objects *really* exist?' makes sense, is an illusion.

If this is right, then it may be possible to see how it can be that what is in one sense the 'same' world (the two versions are deeply related) can be described as consisting of 'tables and chairs' (and these described as colored, possessing dispositional properties, etc.) in one version and as consisting of space-time regions, particles and fields, etc., in other versions. To require that all of these must be reducible to a single version is to make the mistake of supposing that 'Which are the real objects?' is a question that makes sense *independently of our choice of concepts*. Putnam 1987, 18; see also Putnam 2004, 2012

Margolis points out that Putnam's conceptual relativity works as it does by assuming that the world itself is invariant across the different conceptual schemes compared, as well as that there is a common standpoint from which these two views can be evaluated in terms of the binary truth-values of their assertions (Margolis 2002, 151–154). The cases of relativity that are most instructive for Margolis's position do not involve either assumption. Putnam's relativism is thus considerably less radical than Margolis's.

The distinction between Putnam and Margolis, on the issues of relativity and relativism, can be even more clearly seen when comparing Margolis's view to that of Putnam in his latest, natural realist phase. Here Putnam appears to adopt a more third-personal and first-order perspective on our epistemic situation, emphasizing (as had Dewey) a "transaction" between human organisms and their environments, without questioning the assumption that human perception and action puts the human organ-

¹⁴ This argument may be compared to Quine's related arguments for the indeterminacy of translation and for "ontological relativity."

ism (and hence, the human epistemic agent) in direct, epistemologically justified connection with a real, mind-independent world. So far, Putnam appears to have converged on the more third-personal, first-order view that characterizes Margolis's premise set. But Putnam's articulation of this "transaction" is largely put in naturalistic and organic terms, at the expense of consideration of the social, historical, artifactual and symbolic mediation of our relation to the world.¹⁵ This contrasts sharply with Margolis's appeal to the indispensability of a recognition of, and analysis of, *interpretive tertia* (contingent and variable mediating structures, such as language, conventions, institutions, artifacts, and so on), within effective philosophical reflection upon our epistemic situation.¹⁶ When Putnam describes his current position in the philosophy of mind, which he calls "liberalized functionalism," he emphasizes the connection between human minds and natural environments without mentioning any mediation of or modulation of this connection by conventional (historically contingent social, institutional, and symbolic) structures. Putnam writes:

The liberalized functionalism I advocate is an antireductionist but naturalist successor to the original, reductionist, functionalist program. For a liberalized functionalist, there is no difficulty in conceiving of ourselves as organisms whose functions are, as Dewey might have put it, "transactional," that is, environment involving, from the start.

What I have in mind in speaking of a 'liberal functionalist' is someone who, like me (or like me today), accepts the basic functionalist idea that what matters for consciousness and for mental properties generally is the right sort of functional capacities and not the particular matter that subserves those capacities, but (1) does not insist that those functions be 'internal,' that is, completely describable without going outside the organism's 'brain' (thus Gibsonian 'affordances' and Millikan's 'normal biological functioning' in an environment can all be involved in the description of the 'functional organization' of an

¹⁵ But see Putnam 1994, 502–505, 516, for brief discussion of how scientific instruments and language can "extend" our natural perceptual capacities.

¹⁶ Given that Putnam claims to draw much of the inspiration of his "natural realism" from the views of John McDowell, it is significant, for understanding the difference between natural realism and Margolis's constructive realism, that Margolis takes issue with the account of "second nature" (or *Bildung*) in the final chapter of McDowell 1994 for being problematically thin on precisely this point. According to Margolis's criticism, McDowell's view of second nature problematically underestimates its plausibly relativistic consequences by implying, through the comparison with Aristotle, a fixity to its content, and also fails to adequately precisely articulate the place of second nature within nature more generally—a story that would require at least passing reference to, for instance, paleoanthropology (Margolis 2002, 47–53).

organism); (2) does not insist that those capacities be described as capacities to compute (although she is naturally happy when computer science sheds light on some part of our functioning); and (3) does not even eschew intentional idioms, if they are needed, in describing our functioning, although she naturally wants an account of how intentional capacities grow out of protointentional capacities in our evolutionary history.

Putnam 2012, 82–83

Though Putnam perhaps opens the door to consideration of the issue in his allowance of “intentional idioms,” what is still missing from this picture is a sense of the way in which contingent artifactual factors such as language, technology, learned gesture, and social institutions, mediate or constitute these functional capacities, and that the changing fortunes of these factors may change the history of human beings, human societies, human norms and convictions, and human minds in an epistemologically significant way.¹⁷

4. Rorty and Margolis on Realism and Relativism

As is well-known, Richard Rorty was a longtime critic of the familiar idea that there is an epistemologically fruitful sense in which the relations of correspondence or of representation between our words and ideas, on the one hand, and the world, on the other, can be analyzed (Rorty 1979, 1992, 1998 [1993], 1999). But from a constructivist, realist, and relativist perspective such as that adopted by Margolis, this rejection of the epistemological relevance of correspondence and correspondence-like relations is too quick. One can begin to see why by considering Margolis’s emphasis on the epistemic significance of “intermediaries,” which he also calls “interpretive *tertia*.” According to Margolis, Rorty, following his adopted ally Donald Davidson, “rule[s] out all constructivist intermediaries, even those ‘intermediaries’ that disallow any initial separation between consciousness and reality,” whereas Margolis, rather than ruling out consideration of such intermediaries, actually emphasizes their epistemological significance (Margolis 2002, 46). Relatedly, Margolis’s view is more amenable to talk of correspondence or representation than is Rorty’s, though this allowance must be carefully qualified. From the perspective of this interpretation, Margolis’s advocacy of the mind-world relation as “symbiotized” rather than Cartesian—that is, as disallowing any “initial separation between consciousness and reality” (Margolis 2002, 46)—would have to be

¹⁷ But, again, see Putnam 1994, 502–505, 516,

understood in such a way that *non-initial* separations—separations conducted, one might say, *in media res*, from within one or another position in a “symbiotized world”—are not so excluded.

One can articulate the possibility of meaningful (and usefully analyzable) correspondence and representation relations from the vantage point of the relativist realism Margolis advocates as follows. Consider a phenomenon one might call *Hegelian externality*: namely, the possibility of distinguishing between the *Für-sich-sein* (the way things seem to be, to a subject) and the *In-sich-sein* (the way things “actually” are, at least from a vantage point that seems, to an external evaluator, more comprehensive than the subject’s own), where the details of this distinction are always relative to one or another local phenomenological position.¹⁸ This is a relation that characterizes an adult’s perspective on the beliefs and experiences of his or her childhood; an ethnographer’s perspective on the cosmological beliefs of the culture he or she is studying; a historian’s perspective on the beliefs and decisions of historical actors; and a clinical psychologist’s perspective on the beliefs of his or her patients. Even after admitting the impossibility of a fully external perspective on the event of belief and knowledge (what Putnam calls a “God’s eye view”), it is possible to distinguish a consciousness *B* and reality *C*, from the vantage point of a consciousness *D* observing consciousness *B* and reality *C*. Note that in order for a case of Hegelian externality to be operative, consciousness *B* and consciousness *D* must *not* share some properties or contents ($m_1, m_2, \dots m_n$), even while they *do* share other properties and contents ($r_1, r_2, \dots r_n$).¹⁹ In this case, why not describe the relation between consciousness *B* and reality *C* as one of correspondence between consciousness and reality, or a representation of the former by the latter, even if this is not a correspondence or representation that can ever be evaluated from a fully external (that is, completely non-subjective and non-relative) position?²⁰

¹⁸ This phenomenon is named after G. W. F. Hegel’s well-known procedure in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel 1977 [1807]).

¹⁹ This argument for the possibility of *differences* between conceptual schemes, on the basis of familiar cases such as those of the adult-child or ethnographer-tribe, could be read as the obverse of Davidson’s argument for the incoherence of incommensurability on the basis of the principle of charity. Compare Kuhn’s argument for not just the historical actuality, but the *necessity* of incommensurability and non-cumulative change in the sciences (“revolutions”), given the characteristic pattern of change we see in the sciences from a first-order, history-of-science perspective (Kuhn 1962, Ch. 9).

²⁰ For the examples of Hegelian externality given above (the ethnographer and the tribe, the psychologist and the patient, and so on), I have deliberately chosen cases where there appears to be a difference of “epistemic authority” between the two consciousnesses. This does

Thus when Rorty writes that “[p]hilosophy, the attempt to say ‘how language relates to the world’ by saying what makes certain sentences true, or certain actions or attitudes good or rational, is, on [my] view, impossible” (Rorty 1992, xix), a constructivist armed with awareness of the possibility of Hegelian externality may ask, “Why suppose that this is impossible, or even not useful?” When Rorty counsels against an “impossible attempt to step out of our skins—the traditions, linguistic or other, within which we do our thinking and self-criticism—and compare ourselves with something absolute,” which he also describes as a “Platonic urge to escape from the finitude of one’s time and place, the ‘merely conventional’ and contingent aspects of one’s life” (Rorty 1992, xix), the Hegelian externalist can respond: Maybe so, but is it not possible to “step out of our skins” *in any way*? Surely we can become aware of our beliefs in a way that *contextualizes* or *recontextualizes* them (similar to what Hegel recognized when he described various perspectives as more comprehensively contextualized, or “sublated” [*aufgehoben*] outcomes of others). Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how we could avoid such procedures in the process of earnestly seeking to orient ourselves to matters of great practical significance, including any effort (epistemological, empirical, or moral and political) to understand how our language use enables us (and might best enable us) to “cope with” the world (Rorty’s preferred project).

Now about relativism. In “The World Well Lost,” Rorty argues that the suspicions about the “given” that accumulated in the course of twentieth-century philosophy—where “the given” signifies those “bare facts” that are supposed to justify inferences: the sensory intuitions that Kant held to support empirical judgments; the observations that the positivists took to confirm or disconfirm theories and general laws; and the analytic truths that both Kantians and positivists have believed were inviolable and supported deductive inferences—should ultimately lead not to the recogni-

not preclude the possibility that this authority could be overturned from another perspective (say, consciousness E), nor does it presume an objective, external standard by which relations of epistemic authority can be evaluated. All that is really required for the phenomenon of “Hegelian externality” in question to hold, I would say, is that (i) consciousness D perceive consciousness B, and its relation to reality C, differently than consciousness B perceives its own relation to reality C; and that (ii) consciousness D can also adopt the standpoint of consciousness B—that is, can “place” consciousness B’s own perspective within the perspective that characterizes consciousness D. There is undoubtedly some vagueness attaching to both requirements. The intended lesson of my appeal to Hegelian externality is only that, even from a relativist position or from a perspective otherwise like Rorty’s, the analysis of correspondence and representation relations via cases of Hegelian externality makes sense and is plausibly a fruitful activity.

tion of a multiplicity of equally well-justified, but mutually inconsistent, conceptual schemes (a familiar kind of nominalist or relativist conclusion, which is hinted at by Quine, among others), but rather (following Davidson) to a rejection of the scheme/content distinction itself and thus to the rejection of precisely this familiar relativist notion of radically different conceptual schemes (1992, 3–18). In other words, the rejection of “the given” ought to lead us, on Rorty’s view, to a more fully and coherently bounded ethnocentrism.²¹ If we accept this proposal, Rorty argues, we will continue to evaluate and revise our vocabularies, and acknowledge the legitimacy of these practices of evaluation and revision, but we will cease to suppose that we can evaluate the relation of these vocabularies to “reality” (as attempted by various realisms) or even to one another in any way that exits our own vocabulary, as Rorty supposes relativisms must try to do.

From a constructive realist perspective that acknowledges the possibility of Hegelian externality, however, we may suspect that Rorty’s view underestimates the extent to which we *can* and do “exit” our own vocabularies, at least insofar as we can change our mind or acquire a new perspective that reveals the partiality of an earlier perspective. Relatedly, Rorty’s rejection of the epistemological relevance of interpretive *tertium*, and his associated rejection of both realism and relativism, lead to the result that we problematically and arbitrarily limit ourselves in the project of explaining how and why it is that theories of various kinds function to produce one or another result. These results may include those that we “want”—thus, Rorty’s restriction will plausibly limit the successful achievement even of his own proposed instrumentalist goals for intellectual activity. The construal of the functioning of our theories in terms of correspondence or representation between beliefs and extra-bodily reality may have had problematically restrictive consequences in the past, but an appropriately relativistically qualified realism promises to provide resources for avoiding these common pitfalls.

²¹ It should be noted that this proposal is qualified by Rorty’s commitment to the (contingent) liberal value of open-mindedness to one’s cultural “others,” as when Rorty writes “I use the notion of ethnocentrism as a link between antirepresentationalism and political liberalism. I argue that an antirepresentationalist view of inquiry leaves one without a skyhook with which to escape from the ethnocentrism produced by enculturation, but that the liberal culture of recent times has found a strategy for avoiding the disadvantage of ethnocentrism. This is to be open to encounters with other actual and possible cultures, and to make this openness central to its self-image. This culture is an *ethnos* which prides itself on its suspicion of ethnocentrism—on its ability to increase the freedom and openness of encounters, rather than on its possession of truth.” Rorty 1991, 2, quoted in Hildebrand 2003, 164.

For Rorty, the philosophical and/or epistemological effort to map the relations between linguistic conventions and the world is ruled out as impossible, passé, or counter-pragmatic. Yet one might say that this mapping (along with the transcendental and other epistemological puzzles that arise in regard to it) has long stood and still does stand as a productive challenge to philosophy, and does so in a way that is pragmatically relevant, perhaps even pragmatically indispensable. When Michel Foucault or Hans-Georg Gadamer (for instance) show us some dimension of our traditions and our assumptions that have restricted our self-interpretation and self-understanding, this involves an exploration of precisely the middle ground between our beliefs and the world—a middle ground that is—because contentious—both empirically articulated and epistemologically relevant.²² This line of reasoning suggests that, despite Rorty's own avowed intention to promote a more scientifically and politically satisfactory "post-philosophical culture," his denial that analysis of correspondence or representation relations between language and world, or of mind and world, could be useful, has implications that would keep at least a good many attractive cultural projects from being realized.

It could be argued that Rorty's objection to the employment of "representation" or "correspondence" notions is limited to their epistemological use. But here one would have underestimated the extent to which one's understanding of human perception, cognition, and action, as these occur in natural and social environments, could have epistemological import. Indeed, Rorty's own conception of the available theoretical alternatives here seems surprisingly narrow. He writes that the

Davidsonian way of looking at language lets us avoid hypostatizing Language in the way in which the Cartesian epistemological tradition, and particularly the idealist tradition which built upon Kant, hypostatized Thought. For it lets us see language not as a *tertium quid* between Subject and Object, nor as a medium in which we try to form pictures of reality, but as part of the behavior of human beings. On this view, the activity of uttering sentences is one of the things people do in order to cope with their environment. The Deweyan notion of language as a tool rather than picture is right as far as it goes.

Rorty 1992, xix

²² For instance: Foucault 1994 [1966]; Gadamer 2004 [1960]. This middle ground may, and often does, have transcendental import. The same argument could be made for Marx, Nietzsche, and many other historicist thinkers.

But, as I have been arguing (consistently, I think, with Margolis 1986, 141–163; 2002, 54–83), the description of language as a *tertium quid* or a *medium*, or even as a “picture,” and the description of language as a tool, as part of the behavior of human beings, are not at all incompatible. In fact, it could well be argued that neither can be understood without the other.²³

5. Conclusion: Towards an Enriched, Unbounded, and Mediated Realism

The foregoing survey has distinguished quite a variety of philosophical realisms, anti-realisms, and relativisms. In particular, we’ve noted Putnam’s opposition to *metaphysical realism*, Putnam’s defenses of *internal realism* and *direct realism*, Rorty’s *anti-representationalist anti-realism*, and Margolis’s defense of *constructive realism*. Intimations of relativism (of various kinds) have appeared throughout the analysis as well: Putnam’s “conceptual relativity”; Kuhn’s incommensurabilist relativism; Davidson’s argument that incommensurabilist relativism of the Kuhnian sort is incoherent; and Margolis’s defense of a special construal of incommensurabilist relativism—which turns on abandonment of the principle of bivalence as an appropriate requirement or expectation for all meaningful discourse—against Rorty, Putnam, and Davidson.

In what follows I will describe a position that, like Margolis’s constructive realism and unlike Rorty and Putnam’s self-avowedly non-relativist anti-realisms, enriches the account of epistemically-relevant mediating structures in human cognition—what Margolis calls “interpretive *tertia*”—in a manner consistent with relativism, yet without denying or violating the possibility of a commitment to realism either.

To begin with: Why reject the commonplace view according to which we do have access to a real world, but only have access to it “mediately”? The discussions considered so far have really only suggested four arguments against that commonplace view: the (1) skeptical, (2) incoherence-of-externalism, and (3) incommensurability arguments (summarized in section 2 above), as well as (4) the Davidsonian ethnocentric argument that alternative conceptual schemes or paradigms cannot sensibly (again, on pain of incoherence) be imagined, and hence that there is no alternative to considering things as we do in fact consider them: hence, the very questions of realism and relativism cannot (coherently) arise.

²³ This is part of Margolis’s point about the need to “restor[e] the bond between realism and truth” (Margolis 2003, 77–104).

Neither (1) nor (2) show that realism is incoherent. To use a well-known example from the discussion of Kant's epistemology: (1) and (2) provide no proof that "things in themselves" do *not* have the spatial and temporal structure that characterizes (one or another) human experience. Perhaps they show that we can't have *justification* for a positive belief in realism, or, anyway, not justifications of certain kinds; but this does not demonstrate the falsity of realism itself. Furthermore, (4), the ethnocentric argument, must at the very least be qualified by recognition of the prevalence of the phenomenon of Hegelian externality: for instance, that we sometimes change our minds and come to see an earlier set of beliefs as incomplete and inadequate in comparison to a later perspective. Likewise, thinking of alternatives to our present "conceptual scheme" is not an impossible exercise; such efforts at thinking of things in very different or unusual ways are sometimes harbingers of major changes in the sciences and in other speaking and thinking human communities. Ethnographers, ethologists, novelists, and theoretical physicists, among others, have long taught themselves and others how to think in such previously foreign and unaccessed ways.

This leaves (3) as the only convincing argument against the "mediate realist" view described, which is an argument against only the "realism" side of the view. A question that is raised but not directly answered by Kuhnian incommensurability arguments, however, is whether "nature" or "reality" itself, and the entities (the objects) within "nature" or "reality," are themselves constructed or unconstructed: that is, do these exist in a manner relative to, or not relative to, a conceptual scheme (in Kuhn's language, a "paradigm")? At first glance, it would seem that, just as in the case of (1) and (2), so here as well, the argument does not put realism (even metaphysical realism) to rest. The fact that we can't decisively determine whether our theories do or do not correspond to reality is no proof that they *don't* correspond to reality.

But by emphasizing the mediation of our access to reality or nature by constructed, historically-contingent entities (paradigms or conceptual schemes), Kuhn's argument has a stronger bite. Whether we say that our theories do or do not capture (or represent, or "relate us to," in whatever epistemically-desirable way one would like to treat) one or another aspect of nature, reality, or the world, we must recognize—for *first-order*, "empirical" reasons drawn from the history of science—that the notion of "capturing" (or representing, or relating to) is *criterial*, and that its validity is relative to whatever ensures the validity of such criteria. On the early

Kuhn's account, this is the historically contingent consensus of a scientific community. If the validity of criterial notions is relative to community agreement, then it is impossible that some criteria could be supplied independently of, and free from the relativism attendant upon, this contingency. On the other hand, one could indeed say that, *so long as these criteria are set*, the question of whether one or another specific claim is true (or corresponds, or whatever else the criteria specify) might indeed be settled decisively. Thus, we can acknowledge a relativism about *criteria* while nonetheless maintaining a realism about particular claims (let us call these claims "factual" ones), so long as we evaluate each claim by one or another criterion. Then, by forming a catalogue of criterially-defined perspectives (or "paradigms"), we could say that there is (perhaps) not one nature, or world, or reality, but many, yet be realists about all of these separate (or perhaps partially overlapping) natures, worlds, and realities. However, this risks putting us in the position of affirming a simple "relationalist" relativism, which has been shown to be problematic (in Section 3 above).

Furthermore, just as a realist can argue from (i) the possibility of realism about criterially-settled "facts" to (ii) the possibility of realism about criterially-indexed sets of such facts, so also an anti-realist can argue from (i) the apparent impossibility of a trans- or sub-criterial realism about criteria to (ii) the impossibility of any non-relativist view about the "facts" themselves. If we assume that realism and relativism are opposed positions, here we have a standstill we have no way of reconciling.

The response to this situation that I propose is (consistently, I think, with the views of Margolis and the early Kuhn) to abandon "hard" or "uncompromising" incommensurability, as well as "hard" objectivity (that is, any standard of truth that is necessarily free from fallibilist or relativist undecidability). This means only that we neither rule out the possibility that some future or other conceptual scheme would classify apparently incommensurable judgments otherwise, such that they fit into a single, coherent picture of reality, nor that they will not be permanently incommensurable. At the same time, if the incommensurability argument about criteria holds, we will never be in a position to know, *sans* all relativity of standpoint, the superiority of one picture or another. And none of this entails that our thoughts and beliefs *do not* refer to (or represent, or correspond to) mind-independent "facts" or reality (by one or another sense of the terms "refer," "represent," or "correspond"). This is a standpoint from which realism and relativism are not mutually exclusive.

Relatedly, I think we should avoid “bounded” realisms, such as Putnam’s internal realism, as well as “non-realisms” such as Davidson’s and Rorty’s, and instead favor what might be described as an *unbounded*, *mediated*, and *enriched* realism, which is also a form of relativism. Such a view finds allies or near allies in many historicist thinkers: Hegel, Kuhn, Margolis, Gadamer, Foucault, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche, for instance. Such a view recognizes and emphasizes the epistemological significance of epistemically mediating factors, often if not always *contingent* rather than *necessary*, *local* rather than *global*, and *constructed* rather than *innate*. The presence and co-functioning of these factors is recognized to be subject to variation across time, history, community, psychology, and so on, and the events of knowledge, reflection, and evaluation are constituted and mediated in part by their presence and their functioning. A decisive difference between this view and those of Putnam and Rorty, as well as those of metaphysical realists, verificationists, and deflationists, lies in its emphasis on the epistemological significance of these contingent mediating factors, so that the interpretive intermediaries that both connect us to the world, and limit our access to it, are understood as variables whose role and functioning is epistemologically relevant, but can vary and change from one historical or phenomenological situation to the next. Finally, our entire conception (as philosophers, as representatives of other disciplinary frameworks, or simply as reflective human beings) of this contingent opening and closing of our access to one or another world whose existence exceeds that access itself, must itself be understood as a contingently mediated perspective. It is merely our own “best guess” about how this access works: an answer, *faute de mieux*, to an epistemological puzzle that has appeared again and again throughout our history.

Perhaps at this point it would be fair to conjecture that there is no principled, universal limit to our cognitive access that we could ourselves identify and articulate—including that limit that would rule out one or another kind of correspondence between our beliefs and a mind-independent world—but there is always a *de facto* limit, brought about by contingent factors that constitute the conditions of our experience at any given place and time.²⁴

²⁴ Thanks to the Helsinki Institute for Advanced Studies for the opportunity to present the paper, and to John Dyck, Dirk-Martin Grube, and Joseph Margolis for feedback on early drafts.

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"Languaged" World, "Worlded" Language: On Margolis's Pragmatic Integration of Realism and Idealism

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Introduction

Joseph Margolis has argued for decades, against mainstream forms of realism and antirealism, that the world is "languaged" while our language is "worlded" (e.g., Margolis 1994b, 523; cf. also Margolis 1993b, 323). What this means, in a first approximation, is that reality and the language(s) we use to categorize it are inseparably entangled, and there is no epistemically accessible language- or categorization-independent way the world is, even though the world cannot simply be regarded as a human construction, either. Analogously, the epistemic and the ontological dimensions of the realism issue, as well as realism and idealism as general philosophical perspectives, are deeply integrated. We cannot reach *die Welt an sich*, but we should not maintain that *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*, either.

This paper will examine issues that are themselves entangled and cannot, I think, really be separately addressed. First, Margolis's synthesis of realism and idealism will be interpreted as a version of *pragmatic realism* (which is, given the entanglement of realism and idealism as articulated by Margolis, also a version of pragmatic idealism).¹ I will also briefly show how it differs from some other pragmatic realisms, here exempli-

¹ Note, however, that Margolis does not subscribe to "pragmatic idealism" in Nicholas Rescher's (1992–94) sense. Rescher's idealism is... well, more realistic. Another essay would be needed for a detailed study of the similarities and differences of these two pragmatic realism-cum-idealisms. For Margolis's take on Rescher, see Margolis (1994c).

fied by Philip Kitcher's views (2012). Secondly, it will be investigated whether, and in what sense, this pragmatic realism-cum-idealism can be regarded as an instance of *pragmatist metaphysics*, especially—given Margolis's emphasis on the embodied yet constructed and historical nature of cultural entities—of pragmatist metaphysics of culture. Margolis's notion of *emergence* will also be briefly revisited in this context. Thirdly, it will be suggested 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*, and that Margolis's (broadly Hegelian) criticism of Kantian transcendental philosophy therefore remains problematic. In any event, the blurring of the boundary between the empirical and the transcendental will be crucial to the success of this overall project.²

Margolis as a pragmatic realist

One starting point for the present contribution is the recent exchange I had with Joseph Margolis in the *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* (vol. 4, no. 2, 2012). This exchange occurred in the context of a book symposium on Margolis's *Pragmatism Ascendent* (Margolis 2012a; see also Margolis 2012c for a related essay). While I very sympathetically discussed Margolis's integration of realism and idealism (or "Idealism", as he prefers to write it) as a version of pragmatic realism, I also suggested that Margolis had failed to do full justice to Immanuel Kant's transcendental considerations.³ One reason for this is that, although I very

² Note that I will not discuss in any detail either the historical readings of other philosophers Margolis offers (and there are many of them, as his reflections canvass the entire history of Western philosophy) nor the developments and changes in his own positions (that would be a topic for a monograph rather than an essay). Indeed, I agree with Margolis (2005, 11) that realism is "the master theme of the whole of modern philosophy"; it would be impossible to capture it in a single paper.

³ In addition to my essay in the journal (Pihlström 2012), see my more recent paper on pragmatic realism (Pihlström 2014), which incorporates the same basic arguments. One might wonder why we should worry about getting Kant right in this context—that is, the context of developing pragmatism and pragmatic realism and naturalism further in contemporary philosophy. Well, perhaps it doesn't matter that much. However, Margolis himself says that the "Darwinian effect", that is, "the import of the bare evolutionary continuum of the animal and human", yields the "single most important philosophical challenge to Western philosophy since the appearance of Kant's first *Critique*" (Margolis Forthcoming, 5). Insofar as it is pragmatism, especially John Dewey's naturalistic pragmatism, that takes seriously Darwin's influence on philosophy, and insofar as pragmatism can thus be seen as a critical synthesis or fusion of Darwinism and Kantianism (cf. Pihlström 2003), it does seem

much appreciate Margolis's Hegelian and Peircean project of "pragmatizing" and historicizing Kant, I remained (and still remain) slightly suspicious of his criticism that Kant does not introduce "a working distinction between appearances and the objects they are appearances of" (Margolis 2012a, 19). A "one world" Kantian response to this charge is obviously that appearances are appearances *of* things in themselves; these are not two different classes of objects (as more traditional "two worlds" interpretations maintain) but, rather, the "same" objects considered from two different perspectives, or articulated through two different types of considerations.⁴

Moreover, I argued in the same essay that Margolis does not pay due attention to the distinction between the quite different *empirical* and *transcendental* ways in which, say, space and time can be said to be "in us". He partly relies on P. F. Strawson's (1966) relatively conventional interpretation which has been heavily criticized by "one world" Kantians. Margolis thus claims repeatedly that Kant's transcendental project is incoherent from the very start, but he never (as far as I can see) explains in any great detail, or in full communication with relevant scholarship, why this is so. This is a serious setback in his otherwise admirable treatment of the realism issue (and we will come back to this matter in due course). *Pace* Margolis, the story of the emergence of pragmatism could, it seems to me, be told by starting from Kant—and perhaps at least partly skipping Hegel—just as it can be told (and is generally compellingly told by Margolis) by beginning from Hegel's historicization of Kant. Such a story, even when it remains more Kantian than Hegelian, may also join Margolis's story in rejecting any "principled disjunction between the empirical and the transcendental".⁵ In brief, I still remain somewhat unconvinced

to matter to our story about how this happens, and how indeed it is possible, whether we get Kant right or not. I am certainly not making any interpretive claims about Kant (or other historical classics) here; what I want to insist on is a certain way of integrating Kantian transcendental idealism into the story about the importance and relevance of pragmatism to the contemporary debate on realism and idealism.

⁴ See, e.g., Allison (2004). I am not saying that Allison is right about Kant, but for a pragmatist Kantian, his reading is helpful and makes it easier to render transcendental idealism compatible with pragmatism. Whether this is in the end a pragmatic virtue of one's reading of Kant cannot be assessed here.

⁵ This is what I try to do in Pihlström (2003). Margolis briefly comments on my effort in his previous book, *Pragmatism's Advantage* (Margolis 2010), especially 110–111. Cf. also Margolis (2014b, 6): "[...] there is, then, no principled difference to be made out between 'transcendental' discovery and broadly 'empirical' conjecture". From this, however, I would not infer, as Margolis does, that transcendental "demands" would no longer play any "con-

by Margolis's idea that only Hegel, rather than Kant, offers a sustainable version of the inseparability of realism and Idealism. Kant rejects such an exclusive disjunction as firmly as Hegel.

I further argued, in the same paper, that when Margolis writes that Peircean "Idealism" is "construed 'epistemologically' (in the constructivist way) rather than 'metaphysically' (disjunctively)" and is thus restricted to "our constructed picture" of reality rather than the "actual 'constitution' of reality itself" (ibid., 91), one might ask whether he isn't himself resorting to new versions of dichotomies or disjunctions he wants to set aside. Instead of the realism vs. Idealism dichotomy (which, reasonably, he wants to move beyond), we now have (still) the one between metaphysics and epistemology, and also the corresponding one between our picture of reality and reality in itself. Note that these dichotomies—or, to be fair, more absolute versions of them—are standardly used in the kind of mainstream analytic philosophy that Margolis wisely wants to leave behind. In my view, all these dualisms should be critically examined in terms of the pragmatic method and thereby *aufgehoben* as different versions of the age-old subjective vs. objective disjunction. This disjunction needs to be given up (at least in its conventional forms) in any viable post-Kantian (and post-Hegelian) pragmatism.⁶

stitutive' role vis-à-vis the cognizable world" (ibid.) but only that they may continue to play that role in a naturalized and pragmatized form. Similarly, I would be happy to reinterpret Kant's "transcendental dualism regarding autonomy and causality" (ibid., 7) as a *compatibilist* entanglement: autonomy is part of human nature, seen through Kantian-Darwinian double spectacles. Note, furthermore, that even though I have frequently defended something I like to call "transcendental pragmatism", this approach significantly differs from the much better-known views of philosophers like Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas, who, according to Margolis, are "the final regressive advocates of Kantian fixities among the Frankfurt school" (ibid., 22).

⁶ Yet, my proposed re-entanglement of the metaphysical and the epistemological at the transcendental level—the level at which constructivism provides a framework for any viable realism—must somehow also accommodate the (re-)entanglement of the transcendental and the empirical. Here I see the real challenge for the current pragmatist who wishes to develop further the insights of naturalized transcendental philosophy and apply them to the realism debate. However that challenge can be met, the pragmatist can certainly agree with Margolis's "précis": "[W]e must, as realists, replace representationalism with some form of constructivism; [...] we must, again as realists, avoid characterizing reality as itself constructed [...] and hold instead that what we construct are only conceptual 'pictures' of what we take the real world to be [...]; and [...] we must acknowledge that the realism thus achieved is itself cognitively dependent on, and embedded in, our constructivist interventions." (Margolis 2012a, 55.) This can, I think, be offered as a useful characterization of the program of pragmatic realism, insofar as we are able to give up Margolis's in my view too sharp distinction between (the construction of) reality itself and our pictures of it. When

In his "Replies", Margolis reacts to my requirement of a "fuller statement of [his] treatment of realism and idealism" (Margolis 2012b, 202) as follows:

He [Pihlström] clearly sees that I reject what Kant rejects, what Kant calls 'transcendental realism', as well as what Putnam calls 'metaphysical realism', all the while I favor a constructivist form of realism that "accepts the idea that there is... a reality independent of us," viewed solely from human perspectives. Pihlström is cautiously open to my preferring Hegel to Kant, though I believe he takes me to have misread Kant's resources in the first *Critique*: he signals (so it seems) that I might have secured my own claims within the bounds of Kant's vision. (On my view, Kant's transcendental idealism ultimately requires what he names transcendental realism.) [...]

I, however, am quite persuaded that Kant, committed to his 'transcendental idealism', found it impossible to pass from subjective (or mental) appearances to empirically real things without investing (factly, I would say) in some form of 'transcendental realism', which was surely a doctrine he strenuously opposed. Ibid.

He then goes on to explain, once more, why this is so. Kant is still committed, according to Margolis, to a dualism between the subjective and the objective and cannot overcome it remaining on "this side" of the divide (ibid.). He repeatedly argues that transcendental idealism presupposes metaphysical necessities and invariants in a manner unacceptable to pragmatists (cf., e.g., Margolis 2005, 14).

The same theme continues in some of Margolis's most recent essays.⁷ He maintains that "Kant's constructivism yields an intractable paradox regarding our cognitive access to the intelligible world, that is in principle completely relieved (if not entirely resolved) by restricting the constructivist aspects of human intervention to whatever falls out as a consequence of the artifactual emergence of the functional self itself" (Margolis 2015, 5–6). Now, a naturalized transcendental philosophy would be happy with this: it is indeed the emerging functionality of the human self, in its various linguistic and other symbolic and representational (and therefore inescapably normative) articulations, that "constructs" the cat-

developed in Margolis's way, pragmatic (constructivist) realism is reflexively conscious of its own status as a human pragmatic posit rather than an imagined God's-Eye View picture of how things absolutely are.

⁷ Margolis (2015) and (Forthcoming). He presented early versions of both papers at the conference, *Metaphysics of Culture*, which was organized in honor of his philosophy at the University of Helsinki in May, 2013.

egorizations of reality we are able to use for our purposes (themselves constructed through the same historical processes).⁸ Moreover, the phrase "intelligible world" is problematic here, because Kant himself denies that we have any cognitive access to the "intelligible world" (*mundus intelligibilis*), as our cognition is not purely intellectual (i.e., we human beings do not possess the capacity of intellectual intuition) but also sensible. Kant, as much as Darwin and the pragmatists, is concerned with what human beings, given the kind of beings they (we) are, are capable of; philosophical anthropology, hence, is at the heart of the realism issue itself—and this, moreover, is in my view a fundamental unifying feature between Kantian and pragmatist approaches to realism and idealism. The pragmatist, in any case, can fully endorse Margolis's view that an "artifactualist" picture of the self can overcome what he regards as "Kantian dualisms" (if there really are any such pernicious dualisms in Kant) and that a kind of artifactuality characterizes both normativity and the self (*ibid.*, 8–9).⁹

However, Margolis continues:

Kant seems, effectively, to have equated the intended realism of the noumenal world (a completely vacuous, even incoherent conjecture) with the realism of a "subject-ively" (but not solipsistically) "constructed" world that, according to Kant's own lights, is the "only world" we could possibly know (a completely self-defeating posit [...]). What Kant requires (I suggest) is the notion of an "independent world" (neither noumenal nor confined to "subject-ive" construction) that we may discern (though we deem it to be ontologically independent of human cognition). But, of course, to concede this would already obviate the entire labor of Kant's "transcendental idealism."

Ibid., 6.

I will later turn to Margolis's own previous writings in order to suggest that there are, *within* his philosophy, resources to develop a (quasi-)Kantian softly transcendental approach to realism as well as other "second-order"

⁸ I will briefly return to the notion of emergence below. Moreover, note that 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" (Margolis 2015); this, clearly, is exactly what my version of naturalized transcendental philosophy seeks to do (though perhaps dropping the word "simply").

⁹ This is compatible with admitting that there may be vestiges in Kant of what Margolis (2002, 38) regards as Kant's "Cartesian" representationalism. For a different critical discussion of Margolis's own vestiges of Kantianism, focusing on Husserlian transcendental phenomenology rather than Kantianism *per se*, see Hartimo (2015).

legitimation questions of philosophy. This leads to *a* version of transcendental idealism, but without pernicious dualisms, unpragmatic apriorisms, or illegitimate commitments to the transcendent or the noumenal.

Note also that it is a bit hard to understand why, and how, Kant's transcendental idealism should, or even could, be based on transcendental realism, as Margolis maintains. Aren't these two mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive alternatives, as Allison (2004), among others, has argued? This leads to the traditional opposition between Strawson's (1966) and Allison's interpretations of transcendental idealism all over again: while the former found the "metaphysics of transcendental idealism" problematic or incoherent—and is joined by Margolis who maintains that transcendental idealism presupposes transcendental realism—the latter regards transcendental idealism as "merely methodological", albeit (*contra*, say, Strawson) necessary for the Kantian system as a whole. For the pragmatist Kantian, as I have argued on a number of occasions, the truth lies in the middle (whether or not this accurately captures Kant's own position): the epistemological or methodological, on the one side, and the metaphysical or ontological, on the other side, are themselves deeply entangled here.

This inseparability of the epistemological and the ontological in the formulation of pragmatism and transcendental idealism is in fact something that Margolis is explicitly opposed to in my previous attempts to articulate a pragmatist version of transcendental idealism (see Margolis 2010, 110–111). He says I am going too far here. I am not sure whether a fundamental disagreement like this can be argumentatively settled. It is in the end related to the stronger point I would like to make (but cannot argue here) about not only the epistemological but also the *ethical* grounds of ontological inquiry—in pragmatism and more generally (cf. Pihlström 2009). It also seems to me that this mild dispute may be related to Margolis's and my own different preferences regarding the old pragmatists: while Peirce and Dewey are clearly the two key pragmatist classics for Margolis—the former because of his uniquely insightful (re-)entangling of realism and Idealism, the latter because of his Darwinization of Hegel—for me James is, clearly, number one.¹⁰ However, I will not dwell on these differences but will try to move forward in our dialogue.

¹⁰ For the record, it might be added that for the same reason, it seems to me that Margolis does not pay sufficient attention to the central role philosophy of religion plays in classical pragmatism. It is, of course, most prominent in James. I discuss pragmatist philosophy of religion in some more detail, also in relation to the realism vs. idealism issue, in Pihlström (2013).

Conflicting versions of pragmatic realism

Let me therefore continue the exchange and critically reintroduce Margolis's specific contribution to the debates over realism, idealism, and pragmatism by contrasting his pragmatic realism and idealism with a position recently defended by another major contemporary pragmatist and realist, namely, Philip Kitcher. I will do this by briefly addressing Kitcher's argument in his recent book, *Preludes to Pragmatism* (2012).

Kitcher's defense of realism begins from what he (with reference to Arthur Fine's notorious "Natural Ontological Attitude") calls the "Natural Epistemological Attitude" (NEA): we form action-guiding representations of the world around us; that is, the world "puts human beings into states that bear content" (ibid., 72), and while we often represent things accurately, we also occasionally misrepresent them. By "double extrapolation", what Kitcher labels "real realism" follows from this commonsensical point of departure as soon as we acknowledge that we can accurately represent things far removed from everyday observation and that we can thus meaningfully also speak of "a world of objects independent of all subjects" (ibid., 74). It is from these relatively simple beginnings that Kitcher launches a detailed argumentation countering the semantic and epistemological worries of both empiricist and constructivist antirealists. He argues that the accuracy of our representations is an objective matter in the sense that an external observer could in principle observe that a subject's representational relations to an object either obtain or fail to obtain independently of that subject, and this can be generalized—or extrapolated—to situations in which there is no observer present.

Kitcher's "Galilean" extrapolation argument says, in brief, that "our purchase of the idea that some objects are independent of some of us (although observed by others) suffices to make intelligible the thought that some objects are independent of all of us, that they would have existed even if there had been no humans (or other sapient creatures), even though, had that been so, there would have been no observation of them or thought about them" (ibid., 97).¹¹ Kitcher's pragmatism, however,

¹¹ At this point Kitcher's critic (such as, possibly, Margolis?) might argue that while this may suffice to make "intelligible" the realistic thought about the independence of some objects from all of us, it is another matter whether this thought is rendered more plausible than its denial by this argument—or whether the intended contrast between realism and antirealism really makes sense. A critic of (strong) realism like Hilary Putnam would not oppose the idea that in any relevant sense of "independence", some objects (e.g., stars) are independent of us all and would have existed even if there had never been humans; see, e.g.,

crucially supplements his realism as he accepts the constructivist's view that relations of reference obtain "in virtue of what speakers (writers, cartographers, thinkers [i.e., anyone using representations]) do" (ibid., 98). This, however, need not be construed antirealistically. The realist may insist, against straightforward constructivism, that patterns of causal relations among objects, representations, and human behavior constitute sign—object connections. Accordingly, the relations of reference are independent of observers.

This, however, reinvokes the debate between, for example, Putnam and his metaphysically-realistic critics. Putnam argued in the 1980s against philosophers like David Lewis and Michael Devitt that the causal structure of the world (as postulated by the "metaphysical realist") cannot by itself single out any referential or representational relations; to believe it does would be to subscribe to something like "medieval essentialism" (cf. Putnam 1990). Kitcher here takes the side of Putnam's realistic critics but wants to do this in a pragmatic and metaphysically minimalistic manner. Margolis, in contrast, seeks to transcend the entire controversy, but is actually closer to Putnam—and, hence, idealism (perhaps against his own will, it seems).

While being sympathetic to causal accounts of reference, Kitcher admits (with Putnam) that a certain kind of *interest-relativity* is at work in the notion of causation itself. In our causal talk, "we do make an interest-relative selection from the total succession of states that make up complete causal chains" (Kitcher 2012, 101). Here, however, the Galilean strategy, showing "how real realism begins at home, and how it never ventures into the metaphysical never-never-lands to which antirealists are so keen to banish their opponents" (ibid., 105), can again be employed:

Even though our notion of reference gains its initial application in circumstances in which an observer is explaining the behavior of a subject, we should not conclude that the notion applies only to situations when there is an observer present. For, given the observer's interests, there is a particular set of relationships that constitute reference and there is no reason for thinking that the obtaining of those relationships depends on the presence of the observer. Ibid., 101.

Putnam's exchange with Michael Devitt in Baghramian (2013). Moreover, this independence is something that *we* can intelligibly commit ourselves to only given that we are indeed here to make such a commitment; Kitcher's critic could maintain that in a world without humans it would make no sense to say that the world is independent of subjects. The pragmatic realist with a constructivist (Kantian) orientation could, hence, still argue that the realist's "independence" is itself humanly constructed.

The basic claim seems to be that the constructivist cannot block the realist's appeal to the independence of causal relations constitutive of reference by invoking the idea of the interest-dependence of causation. It is right here that pragmatic realism accommodates both independence and interest-relativity. While the constructivist may try to accuse the realist of assuming a heavy metaphysics of essences or "mysterious noumena" (which comes close to Margolis's occasional criticisms of various versions of metaphysical fixities), the "real realist's" pragmatic response is that what we represent are no such metaphysical entities but "the things with which we interact all the time" (ibid., 103). For the realist, there is "no causally relevant difference" between situations in which properties of things can be observed and situations in which they cannot.

Just as I would like to defend Kant against Margolis, I am not entirely convinced that Kitcher succeeds in refuting Kantian-inspired *transcendental* arguments against (metaphysical, transcendental) realism and in favor of a certain kind of (transcendental) idealism—that is, arguments that we may attribute, possibly, to Kant himself and to some post-Kantian philosophers, including arguably Wittgenstein and even the pragmatists (e.g., Putnam).¹² When Kitcher argues (like Margolis?) that there is no helpful distinction to be made between objects as experienced and objects in themselves (e.g., ibid., 102), he employs the Kantian-sounding distinction between appearances and things in themselves in a non-transcendental manner. A transcendental employment of this distinction would already involve transcendental idealism.¹³ When Kitcher maintains, along his Galilean line of thought, that there is no *causally* relevant difference between situations in which observers are present and those in which there are no observers, from the Kantian point of view he illegitimately helps himself to the category of causality as if it were available independently of the human cognitive capacity and applicable to the world in itself. The Kantian *Dinge an sich selbst* are individuated neither as objects nor as causal relations; the notions of objectivity and causality only apply to appearances.¹⁴ Similar problems in my view trouble Margolis's project, albeit from an opposite direction, so to speak. Kitcher overemphasizes metaphysical independence at the cost of the historicized constructive ac-

¹² Only Kantians would be happy to call this argumentation "transcendental", though.

¹³ See again Allison (2004), especially chapters 1–2.

¹⁴ It is misleading to speak about the things in themselves (*Dinge an sich selbst*) in the plural—or in the singular—because any such way of speaking already seems to presuppose individuating them as object(s). This should here be understood as a way of speaking merely.

tivity of subjectivity, while Margolis overemphasizes the latter at the cost of transcendentality.

In any event, Kitcher is correct to distinguish his view from Putnam's internal and metaphysical realisms. His real realism, again like Margolis's version of pragmatic realism, is something different. It agrees with pragmatic pluralism and what Putnam calls conceptual relativity in maintaining that the divisions we make in nature reflect our purposes—and here there is certainly a Kantian ring to it. However, again, this does not sacrifice realism: "Once we adopt a language, then some of the sentences in that language will be true in virtue of the referential relations between constituent terms and entities that are independent of us. The adoption itself, however, is guided not only by nature but by what is convenient and useful for us in describing nature." (Ibid., 108–109.)

Margolis would presumably endorse this combination of realism and linguistic or conceptual relativity, championing a sophisticated version of relativism (see especially Margolis 1991). Furthermore, Kitcher also offers us a plausible rearticulation of James's pragmatist arguments in the context of contemporary debates, integrating pluralism and constructivism (as well as the view that truth "happens" to an idea) with scientific realism. The realism again comes into the picture when we admit that, although the world that is independent of us is not "pre-divided into privileged objects and kinds of objects" (ibid., 136) and the divisions depend on our interests, nevertheless "given particular capacities and particular interests, some ways of dividing up independent reality work better than others" (ibid., 137).

But why? What is—and this is, obviously, a question that Margolis could also ask—"independent reality", after all? Does it, prior to any human categorization, possess *some* structure, and if so, is that fundamental ontological structure pre-organized independently of our interests? Putnam, for example, might find Kitcher's argument a version of the "Cookie Cutter Metaphor" he criticized in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see, again, Putnam 1990). The world is compared to "dough" from which we cut "cookies" by using different conceptual "cutters". But then the dough itself must already have some structure. Margolis avoids this problem by rejecting any humanly accessible yet ahistorical and construction-independent structure. But then he needs something like the constitutive activity of the transcendental subject upon which any historical process of structuration depends.

Kitcher perceptively notes that pragmatists need to take for granted a language identifying capacities and interests when stating their thesis about the interest-relativity of the languages used for identifying objects relevant to us. *That* language will then "invite a reiteration of pragmatist pluralism" (Kitcher 2012, 138). There is an infinitely deep reflexivity in pragmatism: "Pragmatic pluralism invites us to take a stand by committing ourselves to a particular way of speaking, while recognizing that the uses of that language to recognize and appraise other linguistic choices could legitimately give rise to a parallel scrutiny and appraisal of the commitments that have been presupposed" (ibid., 138). This, however, also applies to our talk about "independence". It is a human way of speaking, presupposing a language used to categorize the world as categorization-independent. We may view Margolis's arguments as an extended attempt to lead us to appreciate this point. There is no language-neutral way to *any* insights about reality, including the reality of human language(s) and their uses in our attempts to speak about language-independence.

It is right here that we should re-emphasize Margolis's sophisticated view of *realism itself as a human posit*. Far from being a metaphysical feature of mind- and discourse-independent reality *an sich*, realism is itself (along with language, discursivity, normativity, rationality, agency, and cognition, among other things) one of the "artifactualities" Margolis posits (Margolis 2015, 29). This is one of Margolis's crucial advantages in comparison to many contemporary realists, who somehow still seem to hold on to a metaphysical conviction about realism itself being somehow the world's "own" account of itself.

So how does Margolis deal with the realistic "independent world" that he still in some (redefined) sense needs? He says, among other things, that the independent world is "neither Kant's noumenal world nor any constructed (would-be realist) world: it answers to what we conjecture, constructively, is our best 'picture' of the world. Its realist standing depends on our epistemology [...]." (Ibid., 6.) It is to this entanglement of epistemology and ontology at the core of the constructivist reconceptualization of realism that we now need to (re)turn, also drawing help from some of Margolis's earlier pronouncements.

Constructivism: transcendental idealism by other means

Margolis has argued for decades that ontological and epistemological questions are inseparable in the pragmatist vindication of (historicized,

constructivist) realism. He repeatedly characterizes realism as the view that there is a cognitively accessible yet mind- and inquiry-independent world (Margolis 1986, 111, 215–216), arguing that realism and “robust relativism” are reconcilable (Margolis 1986, 1991). The general idea is that we must view reality through our historically and culturally conditioned, hence practice-laden, epistemic perspectives; there is no God’s Eye View available, no epistemic neutrality to be achieved in metaphysics. The world is not transparent, or describable in abstraction from our constantly developing local perspectives. 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” and our understanding of it is “historied”; what we are dealing with (and living in) is a Kantian-like “symbiotized” world in which the subject and object are mutually dependent on each other, never to be fully separated.

In this context, Margolis has also interestingly discussed—arguably somewhat more carefully than other neopragmatists, including Putnam and Kitcher—a more specific case, Peirce’s *scholastic realism*. He has tried to show that Peirce’s insistence on realism of generality can be appreciated from a considerably less realistic (or at least less metaphysically-realistic) and more historicist point of view than Peirce’s own. He suggests that a realism that preserves the Peircean (triadic) “resemblance” between human thought and the structure of the “intelligible reality”¹⁵ is possible only on a constructivist and historicist basis, connected with a Kantian-inspired symbiosis of “subject” and “object”:

The world is intelligible because its structure is constituted [...] through the very process of our experiencing the world. Things share real generals in the symbiotized world; but there *are* no antecedent generals formed in the world, separated from human experience, *that* experienced things are discovered to share. Margolis 1993b, 323.

The ancient quarrel about universals is a great confusion; we need no more than “real generals” to secure objectivity. But then, “real generals” have no criterial function either; they are no more than a (nominalized) shadow thrown by objective discourse. That is, *if* we admit objective truth-claims, then predication must have a realist function. In *that* sense (alone), there are “real generals.” But there are none that can be antecedently discerned, *in virtue of which* objectivity maybe con-

¹⁵ See, however, the critical remarks on this concept above.

ferred. [Real generals] are implicated in the *lebensformlich* viability of natural-language discourse. Margolis 1995, 128.

Realism of generality can, and should, then, be regarded as inseparable from, or inherent in, our thinking, language-use, and forms of life (Margolis 1993b, 325–326).¹⁶ In short, 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". Our social, open-ended, thoroughly historicized practice of language-use—i.e., our practice of applying general predicates in describing our world—must be the (non-foundational) ground of our realism of generality. Realism can only be grounded in such predicative practices, which are inevitably in flux, historically changing.¹⁷

More generally, Margolis, as a pragmatist, seeks to avoid the strong ("robust", "metaphysical") realism favored by many contemporary realists and "naturalizers" of philosophy. Throughout his writings, he sets against each other two quite different forms of realism: the first assumes a "freestanding priority" of the changeless over the changing or historical, whereas the second, Margolis's own pragmatic, constructive, and historicist option, finds any such prior, first-philosophical claim about what reality *is* apart from what we take ourselves to know or to believe to be true as arbitrary, thereby questioning the alleged necessity of maintaining that reality must be changeless and that change itself is intelligible only in terms of the changeless. Naturally, the defense of the second kind of realism is closely related to Margolis's numerous explorations of the historicity of thought and of what he calls the doctrine of the "flux" (cf. Margolis 1993a, 1995, 2000b, 2003b).

Although Margolis does not subscribe to any Kantian transcendentalism (as has become clear above), it is again worth noting that he should be classified as one of the key contemporary naturalizers and historicizers of Kantianism. Like Kant, he certainly turns toward the *conditions* for the possibility of our being able to cognize the world, albeit historically developing ones. This is so even though he does not want to explicitly speak about transcendental conditions or arguments. Moreover, he teaches us

¹⁶ See also Margolis (2000c), focusing on Husserlian phenomenology rather than Peircean realism.

¹⁷ It is, again, beyond the scope of this presentation to examine any specific problems in Margolis's historicist and relativist views. Margolis's constructivist modification of Peirce's realism has raised some controversy (which I discuss, referring to Carl Hausman and Douglas Anderson, among others, in Pihlström 2009, chapter 6; cf. Anderson and Hausman 2012).

an important lesson about the unavoidability of normative, second order questions of legitimation regarding realism and the way in which pragmatism, too, is intimately connected with the Kantian aspiration of avoiding both robust realism (or what he calls objectivism) and skepticism (see also Margolis 1999).¹⁸

Margolis has also emphasized the difference between the rather trivial denial of "a fixed, necessary and sufficient, transparent, certain, or presentational access that human cognizers have to the world, reality, Being, or the like" and the almost equally trivial, albeit actively forward-looking, recognition of there being "a reasonable, reliable, functioning, operative sense in which human cognizers find their way around the world" (Margolis 1994a). It is this distinction that according to Margolis gives us a clue to appreciating some major differences between Jacques Derrida and the later Ludwig Wittgenstein. In postulating an "'originary' origin" and rightly denying that we could ever discover it, Derrida (possibly deliberately) confuses "the false realism of a completely transparent metaphysics with the mundane realism of actually functioning societies which it would be merely mad to deny" (ibid., 176). Both Derrida and Wittgenstein reject "transparent realism", but the latter maintains a "pragmatized realism" (ibid., 178).

¹⁸ Let me, however, note here that even though I sympathize with most of the things Margolis says about pragmatic realism, historicity, etc., I have some doubts about his at least occasional ontological intolerance toward entities such as universals, propositions, facts, meanings, and thoughts. He seems to regard them as fictions, claiming that these things do not exist. An alternative pragmatic strategy would be to dispense with the univocity of "exist(ence)" and admit that many different kinds of things exist, or are real, in quite different ways, depending on the pragmatic, constructed, historically evolving frameworks within which we regard them as existent. This, indeed, is what Margolis's reconstruction of Peirce's realism should, in my view, amount to. It should be noted, furthermore, that Margolis is not alone in his historicist, constructivist doctrine of generality. Tom Rockmore distinguishes, in a related manner, between ahistorical (Platonic) essences or universals and general ideas or "generals", by which he means "ideas, or concepts, which are not beyond time and place but that derive their cognitive utility from their temporary acceptance at a given time and place" and that are, hence, "mutable, impermanent, malleable, alterable", "come into being and pass away". Such historicized generals "emerge from, and remain relative to, the sociohistorical context". (Rockmore 2000, 54–55, 57–59.) I want to leave to dedicated Peirce scholars the quarrels regarding how close Peirce's actual position (at different phases of his philosophical development) may have been to the view Margolis proposes. In any event, as Margolis's reference to the "Kantian-like" symbiosis of subject and object suggests, the critique of metaphysical realism has been an important theme in the Kantian tradition of transcendental philosophy; indeed, the rejection of such realism is *the* key Kantian theme at the background of the pragmatist tradition.

As has become clear, Margolis has throughout his career sought to articulate a form of realism taking seriously not only pragmatism and idealism but also constructivism. This theme figures strongly in, e.g., a series of books he published about a decade ago (cf. Margolis 2002, 2003a). I will now argue that it is only by integrating Margolis's constructivism into a (pragmatically naturalized) transcendental idealism that we have a real alternative to a more mainstream pragmatic realism such as Kitcher's.

While maintaining that realism must "take a constructivist form", Margolis criticizes some other pragmatists and constructivists for maintaining that we must still distinguish between the epistemic and the ontic: "the inseparability of the subjective and the objective applies to the epistemic and not to the ontic aspects of realism" (Margolis 2002, 15).¹⁹ For the (pragmatic) transcendental realist, the ontological (rather than the merely "ontic") will be inevitably epistemic precisely because ontology itself is a transcendental matter. However, we should not, *pace* Margolis's repeated insistence on our not constructing the actual world, understand the pragmatist metaphor of the mind or language (or, more generally, human practices) as "organizing" the world in a "constituting ('idealist') way" (ibid., 17) as (merely) ontic but as (genuinely) ontological. That is, I fear that Margolis himself ultimately applies to a non-constructivist dichotomy between the epistemological and the ontological. Constructivism, according to Margolis, is not idealism (see also, e.g., ibid., 39; Margolis 2003a, 55); however,

Constructivism means at the very least that questions of knowledge, objectivity, truth, confirmation, and legitimation are constructed in accordance with our interpretive conceptual schemes—the interpretive qualification of the indissoluble relationship between cognizer and cognized; and that, though we do not construct the actual world, what we posit (constructively) *as* the independent world *is* epistemically dependent on our mediating conceptual schemes. Ibid., 22.²⁰

¹⁹ The specific target of Margolis's (2002) criticism in this context is Putnam's internal realism. See also, e.g., Margolis (1986), (1991), and (1993a) for his earlier criticisms focusing on Putnam's notion of truth as an epistemic *Grenzbegriff*. (See also Margolis 2002, 143.)

²⁰ See also Margolis (2002), 43, and (2005), 89. In a somewhat more detailed way, Margolis (ibid., 41) concludes: "(1) every viable realism must be a constructivism (or a constructive realism), in the sense that there can be no principled disjunction between epistemological and metaphysical questions, no neutral analysis of the disjunctive contributions to our science drawn from cognizing subjects and cognized objects; (2) the admission of (1) precludes all necessities *de re* and *de cogitatione*; (3) the admission of (1) and (2) disallows any principled disjunction between realism and idealism, as these are defined in the Cartesian tradition [...]. I wonder why the epistemology—metaphysics entanglement is acceptable while the world's "ontic" construction by us is still denied. In short, I am not convinced we need

This constructivism, I take it, is, according to the pragmatist Kantian, just transcendental idealism by other means, or perhaps only in other words. The transcendental idealist in this sense is happy to join Margolis in maintaining that "the objectivity of our beliefs and claims about the world *is itself a constructive posit* that we impose holistically and without privilege of any kind" (ibid., 44). The "independent-world-as-it-is-known-(and-knowable)-to-us" is again something we construct (ibid., 45).²¹ In his *The Unraveling of Scientism*, Margolis makes the relevant notion of construction somewhat clearer: what he now says (again in the context of redefining constructivism, coming close to the 2002 pronouncements) is that whatever is constructed as *ontically* independent of human inquiries is *epistemically* dependent (Margolis 2003a, 51). But I fail to see why this is not equivalent to the Kantian synthesis of empirical (factual) independence and transcendental (epistemologico-ontological) dependence. I see no reason why the *transcendental idealist* (unlike some other type of idealist) would have to maintain that the world is "ontically dependent" on us (*pace* ibid., 54). I would, rather, drop the category of the "ontic" altogether as a mere placeholder for something that is always already constructed in a historical and practice-embedded way—albeit often constructed as independent.

Margolis's (ibid., 13-14) claim that transcendental idealism "confuses matters by conjoining constructivism and idealism" and cannot be reconstructed in naturalistic terms is, in my view, refutable by his own words. 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. I agree that we need not maintain that "reality is constructed by the human mind" by maintaining that we construct "what we *take* to be independently real" (ibid., 100)—to do so would precisely be to conflate empirical with transcendental constitution—but 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 transcendental construct.

the category of the (merely) "ontic" at all, if we endorse Margolis's position. Furthermore, see Margolis's critique of Putnam's pragmatic pluralism as insufficiently epistemic (ibid., 105-106; Margolis 2005, 46-48).

²¹ In a slightly different (Deweyan) context, Margolis (2002, 128) speaks about the constitution and reconstitution of objects and situations. I would again reinterpret this as a process of transcendental constitution in which the practices of resolving (Deweyan) problematic situations play a transcendental role.

Emergence

As the frequent references to historicity and temporality suggest, the notions of *evolution* and *emergence* are central to Margolis's pragmatism, constructivism, and pragmatic realism. It should be obvious that his version of realism-cum-idealism (or pragmatism) cannot in the end be separated from his realistic account of emergence and cultural entities. There is a complexly arranged picture of the emergence and embodiment of cultural entities (such as artworks, but also persons and, presumably, values) in Margolis's earlier (Margolis 1978, 1980, 1984) as well as more recent work (Margolis 1995, 2002, 2003a). According to Margolis, cultural entities are embodied yet autonomous "tokens-of-types". They need a material basis, but they cannot be adequately accounted for in any naturalized theory restricted to that basis. "Naturalizing" strategies, according to Margolis, desperately fail as theories of culture—and as theories of the mind.²² We should be able to ascribe to cultural entities a causally relevant (and thus also explanatorily relevant) role—in this sense, they must be seen as autonomous, without sacrificing the materialist demand for a material basis of embodiment (see Margolis 1984, 14). Furthermore, we should view the human self itself—the subject of world-structuring—as an historically emerging perspective of constructive world-engagement.

Indeed, I already pointed out above that philosophical anthropology is crucial for the realism issue. Characterizing human persons and other cultural formations, such as works of art, as emergent, embodied tokens-of-types, neither identical to nor reducible to their material composition, Margolis argues that our ontology of cultural entities ought to recognize these entities as *real*, while being compatible with materialism and allowing cultural entities to enter into causal relations and to support causal explanations (ibid.). He thus favors a form of "downward causation" as a key element of his pragmatic emergentism. Instead of reviewing his discussions of the concept in detail, I just quote from one of his numerous publications:

By an **emergent** order of reality [...] I mean any array of empirical phenomena that (i) cannot be described or explained in terms of the descriptive and explanatory concepts deemed adequate for whatever more **basic level** or order of nature or reality the order or level in question is said to have emerged from, and (ii) is causally implicated

²² See especially Margolis (2003a) for a devastating critique of scientistic assumptions in twentieth century American philosophy.

and cognitively accessible in the same "world" in which the putatively more basic order or level is identified

Margolis 1995, 257; original emphases.²³

In this sense, human cultural constructions, such as normativity and values, can be said to constitute, or belong to, an "emergent order of reality" insofar as they cannot be fully accounted for in terms of merely factual concepts at a "more basic" level, even though they are fully natural—entangled with natural facts—in the sense of belonging to the "same world" with the latter.²⁴ Margolis emphasizes the link between realism and the emergence of the self in a particularly helpful manner in relation to Robert Brandom's and Richard Rorty's in his view highly problematic versions of neopragmatism that are both indebted to Wilfrid Sellars's ideas:

The fatal weakness in Sellars's argument—very possibly in Rorty's (and, it may be added, in Robert Brandom's "Rortyan" treatment of Sellars)—lies with the metaphysical standing of language itself: it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to treat selves eliminatively (as Sellars does) *and* yet allow the continued objective standing of truth (and language) in the scientific realist's sense. You cannot find in Rorty or Sellars [or, we may add, Brandom] any explanation of how to admit language without admitting the realist standing of mind.

Margolis 2002, 61.

While his criticism of Brandom here remains implicit, hidden under the more explicit criticism of Rorty and Sellars (see also, e.g., Margolis 2000a), Margolis makes a very important point: the pragmatist ought to be a (pragmatic) *realist* about the various normative structures, including language and the mind (or the self), which s/he anti-reductionistically acknowledges. In Margolis's preferred terms, the emergence of cultural entities (including language), and hence the emergence of human world-*construction*, should be genuinely acknowledged—and human selves should also be seen as cultural products in this ontological sense, yet fully real, *contra* the kind of eliminativism we find in the work of Brandom's and Rorty's

²³ See also, e.g., Margolis (1995), 219.

²⁴ Margolis's position, while giving us an idea of what a pragmatically understood concept of emergence may look like, is by no means the first pragmatist elaboration on the idea of emergence; on the other hand, emergence theories have never been part of the mainstream orientations of pragmatism, nor vice versa (see, e.g., El-Hani and Pihlström 2002). I have argued elsewhere at some length that the concept of emergence ought to be employed within pragmatism, too (and partly explicated through pragmatism).

quasi-pragmatist hero, Sellars.²⁵ This adds a further reason for seeking (for instance) a pragmatist account of emergence, or alternatively, an emergentist reconceptualization of pragmatism (more specifically, of pragmatic realism about irreducible cultural entities we need to commit ourselves to ontologically). Moreover—and here I depart from Margolis—the transcendentalism of the historically emerging self must itself be seen as an emergent feature of the evolving of human *Lebensformen*. Margolis returns to emergence in some of his most recent writings. He now maintains that there are "two entirely different forms of emergence, both within nature". One is the "Intentional transformation of natural-kind kinds, collecting the irreducible emergent of the specifically human world", while the other is restricted to the (merely) "natural emergent" of the physical world. (Margolis 2015, 11.) However, is this dualism between two types of emergence just a replacement of more traditional substance or attribute dualism? How well does it go together with Margolis's desire to avoid *any* dualisms (including the Kantian ones discussed in the beginning of this essay)?

When Margolis (Forthcoming, 11–12) comments on Sellars's influential views on the manifest and the scientific image (as articulated in Sellars's "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man", in particular; see Sellars 1963, chapter 1), he perceptively draws attention to the notion of "placing" in Sellars's project of placing the human being in the scientific image. Here a natural follow-up question is *who places?* To place something or someone into a certain kind of image is already to move within the space of reasons (to continue 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.

²⁵ Margolis frequently claims (and I am tempted to agree with him) that Rorty's and Brandom's attempts to put Sellars's work to do a pragmatist job fails. Sellars, he says, "cannot be made into a pragmatist of any sort (as Rorty and Brandom pretend to do) except by deliberate deformation—which I'm bound to say both are willing to embrace" (Margolis 2003a, 5; see also 107, 142–143). The reason for this, from Margolis's perspective, is Sellars's stubborn scientism, according to which "manifest image" entities such as tables and chairs and human persons do not exist in the ontologically privileged "scientific image".

Conclusion

We hence return to the transcendental—Kantian—picture of realism and idealism that we started out from when beginning to examine Margolis's peculiar version of pragmatic realism. The issues concerning the artificiality of the self and of normativity, and the related pragmatic metaphysics of culture, are all in the end indistinguishable from the basic issue of realism vs. idealism, as examined in relation to the entanglement of the "language world" and "worlded language". Let me quote Margolis once more:

Realism [...] is a late artefact of our reflections, *not* a first principle of any kind; hence, never more than provisional, perspective, "interested," "instrumental" [...], fluxive, constructed, lacking any invariance or necessity or essential *telos* or privilege or unique validity.

Margolis 2002, 117.

Accordingly, realism itself is emergent. Furthermore, the metaphysics of emergence, as well as of emergent normativity and mentality, itself emerges historically through our practices of categorizing reality, as does ultimately our realism itself, both our general pragmatic realism about reality and our more specific pragmatic realism about processes of emergence (understood as human "posits", i.e., as our ways of making sense of the "independence" of the world we live in). It is with this pragmatically holistic and reflexive as well as, I hope, genuinely Margolisian thought that I wish to conclude.²⁶

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²⁶ I should like to thank the participants of the conference in honor of Joseph Margolis. I was pleased to be involved in organizing at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki (May, 2013)—especially Professor Margolis himself—for valuable discussions of several ideas addressed in this paper, as well as Dirk-Martin Grube and Robert Sinclair for the opportunity to submit the essay to the conference volume. Thanks are also due to Aili Breshanan for the kind invitation to deliver a related paper in the conference in honor of Professor Margolis's 90th birthday at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA in May, 2014.

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PART II

MARGOLIS AND OTHER PHILOSOPHERS

Margolis and Popper on Cultural Entities

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In spite of different philosophical backgrounds, Joseph Margolis and Karl Popper share an important insight: they both use nonreductive materialism to give an account of persons and other cultural entities. In this paper, I give a critical survey of some interesting points of convergence and divergence between these two remarkable thinkers. Their main agreement concerns human persons: Margolis compares them to cultural artifacts, and Popper also concludes (or at least should conclude) that self-conscious persons are World 3 entities. Even though Margolis has worked more systematically on art and aesthetics, I will argue that Popper's notion of World 3 offers better resources for understanding the ontological status of human-made abstract entities, among them some works of art, social institutions, and mathematical objects.

Two philosophers of culture

Joseph Margolis (b. 1924) is a prolific author who has discussed a wide range of topics both in Anglo-American and Continental philosophy. His approach in epistemology and philosophy of mind is pragmatist, historicist, and relativist. In *Art and Philosophy* (1980) he deals with conceptual issues in aesthetics. Already in *Persons and Minds* (1978) Margolis explores the prospects of nonreductive materialism in his cultural treatment of human persons. The same theme is developed more generally in *Culture and*

Cultural Entities (1984), which outlines an ontological theory of culture, and in the recent essay "Toward a Metaphysics of Culture" (2015).

Karl Popper (1902–94) is primarily known as a philosopher of science with contributions to political philosophy. Popper emphasized his realist and unorthodox Kantianism against the Viennese positivists (see Popper, 1974). His ontology of "three worlds", first announced in the lectures "Epistemology without a Knowing Subject" in 1967 and "On the Theory the Objective Mind" in 1968 (see Popper, 1972, Chs. 3–4), is based on emergent materialism. It led to a book in the philosophy of mind, *The Self and Its Brain* (1977), written jointly with the neurophysiologist John Eccles, and somewhat scattered remarks on cultural human-made entities in World 3 (see Popper, 1974, 1980, 1994).

Popper would never have called himself a pragmatist—even though he shared many views with Charles S. Peirce: the method of hypothesis, fallibilism, evolutionary growth of knowledge, and probability as propensity (see Niiniluoto, 1978). In his *The Truth about Relativism* (1991), Margolis took issue with Popper's criticism of relativism. So Margolis and Popper have quite distinct philosophical backgrounds and profiles. But both are nonreductive materialists—and in this respect criticized by reductive materialists like Mario Bunge (1979, 1981). Further, both agree that philosophical accounts of human persons and cultural entities go together. This similarity is acknowledged by Margolis (1978), 245–246, in his references to Popper's *Objective Knowledge* (1972).¹

Popper's three worlds

According to Karl Popper's classification of three worlds (see Popper, 1972, 1974, 1980), *World 1* consists of physical things, events, and processes in space and time, including lawlike relations between such entities. This is

¹ To give a report of my own views, I became interested in Popper's thesis about World 3 via my critical assessment of his rejection of induction (cf. Niiniluoto, 1978). I wrote about World 3 entities in Finnish and English in Niiniluoto (1984a, 1984b), and in the expanded version of the former paper (in Niiniluoto, 1990) I referred to Margolis (1984). In Niiniluoto (1988), I appealed to Margolis (1978) to argue that the human self is a World 3 entity. Other attempts to relate Popper and Margolis are not known to me. I discussed mathematical objects in World 3 in Niiniluoto (1992), and used Popperian terminology in my *Critical Scientific Realism* (1999). Popper's exposition of his ideas is suggestive but not always systematic. My interpretation and critical defense of Popper's nonreductive materialist theory of culture was presented in the Popper centennial conference in Vienna in 2004 (see Niiniluoto, 2006). I hope this paper shows how these two great philosophers—Joe and Sir Karl—have influenced my own thinking.

the domain of inorganic and organic nature, studied by physics and biology. *World 2* includes subjective mental states and events (e.g., beliefs, emotions, and volitions) in individual human minds. This is the domain of human psyche, studied by psychology and cognitive science. *World 3* contains the public products of human social action, such as languages, cultural objects, social institutions, and abstract entities like propositions, arguments, theories, problems, and numbers. This domain is studied by the cultural and social sciences, logic and mathematics.²

With this classification in place, three monistic metaphysical doctrines can now be identified (cf. Broad, 1925; Niiniluoto, 1999). *Materialism* in its radical eliminative form claims that everything real belongs to World 1. Reductive materialism states that reality is reducible to World 1 entities and their complexes. For example, eliminativism claims that there are no beliefs or feelings, while reductionism takes them to be identical to some kinds of material brain states. Eliminative and reductive materialism are forms of *physicalism*. Emergent or nonreductive materialism takes World 1 as primary, but admits that sufficiently complex material systems may have "emergent" non-physical properties. *Subjective idealism* makes parallel claims about World 2. Its eliminative and reductive forms constitute the doctrine of *spiritualism*, but emergent idealism is also a possible view.³ *Objective idealism* in its classical versions has taken some non-material and non-subjective entities (such as Plato's forms, thoughts of supernatural gods, and Hegel's objective spirit) as the ultimate source of all being, but more mundane variations could replace them by some abstract World 3 entities. Idealist views (e.g. phenomenism, social constructivism) are ontologically anti-realist, as they treat the material reality in World 1 as mind-dependent or human-made.

Besides such monistic views, *dualist* ontology may accept World 1 and World 2 as two independently existing domains of reality. In the Cartesian tradition initiated by Descartes, matter and mind are two substances which can be in causal interaction, while parallelist dualists deny the possibility of such interactions. Another kind of dualism could accept Worlds 1 and 3 without World 2 (e.g. some anti-humanist post-structur-

² Popper's three worlds are all included in *one* reality, but his choice of terminology reflects two assumptions: three kinds of entities can be conceptually distinguished from each other (even though they can causally interact), and the respective domains or "worlds" are irreducible to each other.

³ Rudolf Carnap's "auto-psychological" phenomenalist constitution system in his *Aufbau* in 1928 formulates subjective idealism on the level of language (see Carnap, 1967).

alists urge that the subjective ego or consciousness is only an illusion). *Trialist* doctrines accept the reality of all three worlds.

The traditional mind-body -problem concerns the relation between World 2 and World 1. Unlike Eccles, who as an ontic dualist supported the independent existence of a spiritual self, Popper declared to be agnostic about such religious questions. At the same time, he criticized sharply reductionist approaches which identify mental states with brain states (Popper and Eccles, 1977). His views thus clearly belong to the tradition of *emergent materialism* (see Niiniluoto, 1994): in his evolutionary account Popper sees World 2 as a historical product of World 1 (Popper, 1994). It could not exist without the material World 1, but it has achieved a relatively independent status by being able to influence material entities by a causal "feedback mechanism". Here Popper appeals to our everyday experience (we can influence our bodily movements by our decisions), theory of evolution (human mind has given advantage to our species in the struggle for existence), and cognitive psychology (holistic mental states can influence brain processes and behavior by "downward causation").⁴ Popper's interactionist philosophy of mind thereby accepts "property dualism" (cf. Margolis, 1984, 17) and the idea of mental causation (cf. Kim, 1996).

Similarly, Margolis (1978) advocates nonreductive materialism: mental states are emergent, causally efficient properties of sufficiently complex material systems (like the brain). He rejects radical materialism and behaviorism, the identity thesis, and Cartesian dualism, and is committed to the reality of mental phenomena. His treatment of the interaction between the mental and physical is cautious: there are psychophysical laws, but, granting the irreducibility of the intentional, such laws cannot be nomic universals (*ibid.*, 223).

For Popper World 3 is a product of biological and cultural evolution from World 1 and World 2. It is a natural, often unintended creation of human beings using language, real or relatively independently existing because of its causal feedback mechanism upon us. Similarly, Margolis (2015) emphasizes the "Darwinian effect" in the biological and cultural construction of the collectively possessed emergent domain of Intentionality.

When Popper introduced his theory of the third world, Mario Bunge was shocked that in 1967 Popper had a sudden "conversion to objective

⁴ The psychologist R.W. Sperry, who defends "monistic interactionism", is cited both by Popper and Margolis.

idealism" (Bunge, 1981, 138). However, while Popper admitted the existence of abstract entities, like propositions and numbers, his position is a kind of "poor man's Platonism", since these abstractions are created or constructed by human action (see Niiniluoto, 2006).

As World 3 entities are human constructions, they have a historical origin in time. Popper noted that his World 3 resembles more Hegel's historically developing objective spirit than Plato's eternally unchanging domain of ideas (Popper, 1972, 125). In Hegel's dynamic system, the objective spirit is spiritual from the beginning, but it does not know this before it is first alienated to nature and then developed toward the self-conscious absolute spirit by the activity of individual minds and the cultural stages of law, morality, economy, family, civil society, state, history, art, religion, and philosophy (see Taylor, 1975). Popper and Eccles (1977) describe a journey to self-consciousness which is comparable to Hegel's "phenomenology of the spirit". Popper's World 3 contains all the elements that Hegel included in his account of objective and absolute spirit. The important difference is that Popper's theory of culture is based on emergent materialism, so that cultural World 3 entities could not emerge and exist without causal links to Worlds 1 and 2, while Hegel was an objective idealist.

In his Autobiography Popper tells that his distinction between World 2 and World 3 was influenced by his early discovery between "subjective and objective music", between Beethoven and Bach (Popper, 1974, 47–53). While Popper later admits that his interpretation of the two composers was exaggerated, he felt that music is "an instrument of self-expression" for Beethoven, but Bach "forgets himself in his works". This discovery was inspired by the young Popper's studies in classical music and composition. Even though Margolis (1980) mentions musical works in his aesthetics, he is more interested in the fine arts and literature. We shall see in Section 4 that this different emphasis leads to some interesting consequences in the ontology of art works.

Margolis (1984) briefly mentions Popper's "speculations" regarding World 3, but does not elsewhere use this term in his nonreductive materialist treatment of culture. For example, he speaks about Intentionality with capital "I" and the "second-natured hybrid artifactuality" of the independent but non-noumenal domain of culture (see Margolis, 2015). So one might think that the two philosophers are in fact expressing the same view in their own vocabularies. Yet, a more detailed comparison with the Popperian view is feasible and instructive, since they share some important

paradigmatic examples: human persons, works of art, and material artifacts.⁵ As we shall see in the next sections, the main differences between these two theories of culture can be found their respective accounts of human-made abstract artifacts.

Human persons

We have seen that both Popper and Margolis defend emergent materialism in their philosophy of mind. But their similarity goes even deeper: when Margolis (1984) compares persons to cultural artifacts, his claim can be expressed by saying that persons are World 3 entities (see Niiniluoto, 1988; 1990, 113; 1994). Popper agrees (or at least should agree) with this thesis.

While for David Hume the human mind is just a bundle of sensations without a centre (see Broad, 1925), Immanuel Kant stressed the unity of consciousness. This idea of unity is often expressed by saying that the human Ego or the Self is a *person*. The dualists and idealists explain this personhood by the independent existence of the Ego as a spiritual substance, but for other philosophers the criteria of personal identity include the brain where the person is embodied or the continuous memories of a human individual (see Shoemaker and Swinburne, 1984).

For Popper it is important that World 3 can have causal influence on the level of World 2. This allows us to explain the constitution of the self without supernatural or metaphysical factors. The historical evolution of sentient and conscious animals is followed by the emergence of self-consciousness in human beings which presupposes such World 3 entities like language and a theory of time (see Popper, 1980, 167). A parallel process can be found in the development of individual members of our species. According to the "social theory of mind", the ego of a child is constituted by her cultural and social interaction: the psychological birth of a person becomes possible through the learning of a first language (Popper and Eccles, 1977, 111). In this sense, the child is "to some extent a World 3 product" (*ibid.*, 49).

While Popper repeats that human beings are "World 3 products", his writings are somewhat ambiguous about the question whether the human self belongs to World 2 or World 3. According to Popper, animals

⁵ Margolis' (2015) thesis about the artifactual nature of normativity translates to the view that values and norms belong to World 3 (see Popper, 1974, 155; Niiniluoto, 2009). The reality of values as World 3 entities implies that human beings as morally responsible agents are ontologically more than merely physical things. This supports Margolis' (1978) criticism of Wilfrid Sellars' reductionism.

are conscious but they do not have selves, while the self-conscious human mind constitutes "the human second world" (Popper, 1974, 151). Also Popper and Eccles (1977) use many formulations which suggest that self-consciousness is a higher-level phenomenon in World 2, even though its emergence requires causal interaction with "thought contents" and other cultural and linguistic World 3 entities. But they also state that "the self is anchored in World 3" (*ibid.*, 144). Maybe Popper's tendency of associating the subjective—objective divide to the distinction between World 2 and World 3 has encouraged the view that the human self belongs to World 2. But Popper also stated that "the self or the ego is the result of achieving a view of ourselves from outside, and thus placing ourselves into an objective structure" (see Popper, 1994, 115). Thus, in my view, it is more consistent with the Popperian account to contend that as a cultural construction a human person *is* a World 3 entity (Niiniluoto, 1988). Indeed, at least sometimes Popper admitted that "we ourselves may be included" in the third world (Popper, 1974, 155).

For Margolis (1978) persons are sentient beings capable of the use of language and self-reference. They are culturally emergent entities which exist only in cultural contexts. The invention of language plays a crucial role in "the artifactual transformation of the human primate that yields the functional self or person",⁶ and there is "a very strong analogy between the creation of an artwork and the *Bildung* of a person" (Margolis, 2015). Thus, persons can be compared to works of art, artifacts, words, and sentences: they are embodied in physical bodies but have also emergent cultural properties. This account of persons has been accused of unnecessary reification by Bunge (1979), 184, who states that "there are no disembodied (or even embodied) minds, but only *minding bodies*". For Bunge, only material bodies exist as entities, but these bodies have "minding" activities.⁷ In my view, it is indeed correct to emphasize that the human mind is a process so that a person or a self is not a substantial or thing-like "pure ego". Rather, it is a temporary, fragile, and ever changing construction of mental events with cultural and social relations.⁸ Still this construction sustains something which is able to be conscious of itself.

⁶ As a philosopher and cognitive scientist, Peter Gärdenfors (2006) gives a careful analysis of the evolution of *Homo sapiens* with a rich inner world, imagination, memory, intentionality, ability to read other people's mind, self-consciousness, and symbolic language.

⁷ Popper gives a similar treatment of physical objects in his preferred process ontology of World 1 (see Popper and Eccles, 1977, 7).

⁸ We shall see in Section 4 that Bunge (1981) repeats this argument against reification in his materialist theory of culture.

This nature of individual personhood is captured by saying in Popperian terms that persons are World 3 entities (together with a material body in World 1 and subjective experiences in World 2) or with Margolis (2015) that they are “hybrid artifacts”.

Margolis on works of art

For Margolis persons and works of art are similar as they are both culturally emergent hybrid entities: Churchill is embodied in his body in the same way as Michelangelo’s *Pietà* in its marble. The same relation of *embodiment* holds between the word ‘good’ and printed ink marks. More generally, if A is embodied in B, then A and B are not identical, A could not exist without B, both share some properties, but A has also some intentional or functional properties (Margolis, 1978, 234; 1984, 13).

Again there is close agreement between the two philosophers: Popper would not accept unembodied spirits in his ontology, and his World 3 includes *material artifacts* such as furniture, clothes, books, sculptures, and painting. Such artifacts have as their kernel or core a physical object with perceptible and measurable physical properties together with non-physical relational properties involving relations to human practices. For example, *Pietà* as a physical World 1 entity has a spatio-temporal location, material, form, weight, and color, but as a World 3 entity it is a work of art with a function and esthetical and economical value due to its relations to the sculptor, owner, users, and audience. Written and spoken sentences are physical objects, but through their relations to the linguistic community they have propositional content and meaning in World 3 which can be grasped by experiences in World 2. This means that artifacts with cultural properties do not supervene on their material properties in Kim’s (1996) sense, since two materially identical objects may have different cultural properties (cf. Margolis, 2015).⁹ Popper and Margolis also agree that the causal powers of World 3 entities depend on their cultural properties: an utterance has a special causal force to those who grasp its propositional import (see Margolis, 1984, 9; cf. Niiniluoto, 2006, 66).

Margolis argues further that cultural entities are *tokens-of-a-type* that exist embodied in physical objects (Margolis, 1980, 20–24). In Margolis (1978), 231, he associates this thesis with embodiment: physical particulars (tokens) instantiate abstract particulars (types), which is different

⁹ For example, the word ‘aura’ (as a written World 1 entity) has different meanings in English and Finnish.

from the instantiation of universals. Unlike universals, types are created and destroyed, and they are heuristically used for individuating tokens as instances of the same kind (e.g. alternative performances of Beethoven's sonata). There are no types of art without some token-instances, and insofar as an artist creates a type, she must make a token (*ibid.*, 232–233).¹⁰ But, properly speaking, "there *are* no types" (Margolis, 1984, 14).

Here a clear divergence between Margolis and Popper emerges, since the Popperian framework applies to a much larger domain of cultural objects. Margolis claims that his treatment covers *all* cultural entities, but it seems to work well only for those artifacts which have a unique physical object as their embodiment. This is the case with paintings and sculptures: da Vinci's original *Mona Lisa* is located in Louvre, and any perceptually similar entities are simply copies or forgeries without the same cultural status. But it does not apply to musical and literary works: Beethoven's symphony *Eroica* or Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina* are works of art which can be copied, recorded, and reproduced, and distributed in various forms. Using terms introduced by Rudolf Carnap already in 1928 (see Carnap, 1967), these works of art can be *documented* by physical objects in World 1 (prints on a paper, notes on a score, recordings on a tape or disc, acoustic waves in the air) and *manifested* by psychological objects in World 2 (author's intentions, reader's memories, listener's experiences). Similarly, great artistic works of design, such as Alvar Aalto's chair or Tapio Wirkkala's glass *Ultima Thule*, are prototypes which can be reproduced, copied, and sold as many industrial replicas.¹¹

One might say that such works of art have multiple "embodiments". But it would be completely arbitrary to identify these abstract objects with any of their documentations in World 1 or manifestations in World 2, or any set of them (see Niiniluoto, 2006, 63). Therefore, instead of saying that they are tokens-of-a-type, it seems more natural to contend that they are *types-with-multiple-tokens* (Niiniluoto, 1990, 33). This explains why there is only one *Eroica* symphony, in spite of the multitude of its recordings and presentations. But such types in World 3 are not Platonic entities, since they can be created and annihilated: if all documentations and manifestations of a cultural object disappear, the entity in World 3 is destroyed (cf. Margolis, 1980, 75).

¹⁰ Popper agrees that authors create World 3 objects by writing them as texts in World 1: we have no reason to think that *Hamlet* was in the mind of Shakespeare before it was actually written down (see Popper, 1994, 22).

¹¹ This aspect of modern art was emphasized by Walter Benjamin in his 1935 essay "Das Kunstwerk in Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit".

Bunge also emphasizes that cultural objects exist only relative to their creators and users. But his materialist account differs radically from Popper and Margolis, since for him cultural objects do not include poems as such but only the activities of writing, reading, and citing poems (Bunge, 1981, 135). This gives a theory of cultural *activity* but not of the outcomes or *products* of such activity. Poems can be repeatedly produced, reproduced, and performed, but there is *one and only one* entity which is T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

Even more complex structures are exhibited by *social institutions*, such as the University of Helsinki (established in 1640) and the Philosophical Society of Finland (founded in 1873). They have a continuous existence as particular World 3 entities, but the associated physical objects (such as written statutes, facilities, staff, and members) are not tokens of the society in any interesting sense. The analysis in terms of types and tokens is not relevant here at all. Reductive materialism also fails here. As these physical elements are always changing without altering the identity of the institution, Bunge's (1981) attempt to reduce such social entities to merely material systems is inadequate. For example, if a society would be a set or a system of its members together with their activities, all changes in the membership would bring about a new different society. Again, the World 3 account allows us to say that there is, and has been, only one Philosophical Society of Finland.

Unembodied abstract objects

This brings me to the final difference between Margolis and Popper. Besides embodied World 3 objects, Popper accepted "unembodied" ones (see Popper and Eccles, 1977, 41). For his philosophy of mathematics, with emphasis on open problems, it is important that there are not yet examined natural numbers which no one so far has written down on a paper (in World 1) or thought about in her mind (in World 2) (see Popper, 1972, 116). An example would be the next prime number to be found by mathematicians (see Niiniluoto, 1992), which has the property of being prime already before it has been found and examined. Donald Gillies (2010), who accepts constructive realism in mathematics, calls Popper's position "constructive Platonism", while his own "constructive Aristotelianism" requires that mathematical objects are embodied by physical instances. In my view, Gillies' requirement is too strong, since the set of

natural numbers is infinite but there can be only finitely many of embodied natural numbers.

But of course one should avoid the danger of including in World 3 all elements that *can* be thought, since that would lead us back to Platonism. Popper is not very clear about this point, but we should accept in World 3 only actually composed symphonies, not all possible or conceivable ones. My proposal is that we may include in World 3 human-made well-defined totalities, such as the infiniteset of natural numbers, whose all elements or parts have not been studied yet (see Niiniluoto, 2006, 65). Such so far unexamined elements are real by Peirce's "scholastic" criterion of reality: their characters are "independent of what anybody may think them to be" (CP 5.311, 5.405) (cf. Niiniluoto, 1999, 33).¹² A similar treatment can be given to well-defined but not yet completely known totalities like a scientific theory (i.e. a deductive closed set of theorems derivable from a set of axioms) or legal order (i.e. all consequences or commitments of basic legal principles accepted in a community).

Even though World 3 entities are human creations, they are not completely transparent to us: no one can have complete maker's knowledge about them (see Niiniluoto, 1984b, 219). "We can get more out of World 3 than we ourselves put into it" (Popper, 1994, 31). This is why the world of culture and society—from material artifacts to works of art, from historical institutions to mathematical structures—is so fascinating domain of investigation and interpretation.

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¹² Peirce used his criterion to distinguish real things from fictions (or "figments of imagination"). So the realist account of World 3 entities can be combined with the view that fictional entities (such as Donald Duck or Santa Claus) are not real (see Niiniluoto, 2006).

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In Defense of Transcendentalism: Vestiges of Kantianism in Margolis' Naturalism

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Introduction

In a relatively recent paper, Joseph Margolis characterizes his favourite view of naturalism with a list of truisms, which are such that "they will certainly be opposed by those who oppose the conception of naturalism that I favour" (2009, 36). The first one of these is that there should be no privileged cognitive faculties of any kind. Such privileged cognitive faculties, so Margolis, are relied on, in different ways, by, for example, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant and Husserl. The problem with the latter two is that their faculties of transcendental reason yield "substantive necessities of thought that empirical science must accommodate" (ibid., 28). The cornerstone of Margolis' naturalism is then that these "privileged cognitive faculties yielding indubitable or necessary synthetic truths, whether 'natural' or transcendental, must be defeated or replaced or reinterpreted along a posteriori lines; and doctrines that clearly exceed the limits of finite inquiry and intelligence and the cognition of what is true ... must either be rejected outright or construed as no more than heuristic, rhetorical, confined to rational hope, or otherwise diminished" (ibid., 28).

In this paper, I will first show that Husserl's "faculties" do not yield necessities of thought that empirical science must accommodate. Thus I will show how transcendental philosophy is developed along a posteriori lines in phenomenology. If we then disregard the mere terminological differences between the two views, Margolis' naturalism and Husserlian

phenomenology will turn out to be in many respects remarkably similar in spirit. The differences between the two approaches are typically in the level of generality of their respective descriptions: where Margolis paints in broad strokes, on a general level, Husserl analyzes in exhausting, minute detail. A closer analysis of course reveals differences between the two approaches. To put it somewhat provocatively, I will claim, that compared to phenomenology, it is Margolis's naturalism that has some vestiges of Kantianism.

Having discussed Margolis' non-reductive naturalism and Husserlian phenomenology in general, I will focus on the discussion of normativity in both views. Margolis' criticism of the Kantian dualisms culminates in his discussion of normativity: "transcendentalism," he says,

cannot rightly anticipate the defense and vulnerability of its most compelling posits in the face of evolving empirical discoveries: it cannot, for instance, know a priori how it will be obliged to revise its conception of space or the relationship between causality and freedom in the light of unanticipated scientific findings; here, post-Newtonian physics and post-Darwinian paleoanthropology have obliged us to weigh the need for deep revisions among Kantian-like necessary conditions of cognition or the advantage of abandoning the sternest versions of Kant's entire strategy. The analysis of normativity, I claim, is profoundly hostage to such considerations. Forthcoming b, 2–3

On the other hand, Husserl's view of normativity, especially in his mature texts, is cast in Aristotelian—Hegelian terms of teleology and examined through a historical reflection of the genesis of a tradition. Again, the two approaches are similar enough to admit an interesting comparison. Both locate the norms to culture, tradition, and customs rather than to a priori reasoning. A more detailed examination reveals differences. In Husserl's view, normativity has its origin already in our pre-predicative experiences and is thus more pervasive phenomenon than what it seems to be to Margolis. Again, some aspects of Margolis's view of normativity raise in a phenomenologist a suspicion of Kantian vestiges in his view. But most important difference is that Husserl's careful analysis of normativity enables him to develop an approach with which the norms can be critically evaluated. To be sure, Husserl's criticism is *internal*, it does not rely on any external foundations. Thus it is not incompatible with Margolis's aspirations, but it goes beyond them to offer guidelines for internal criticism of the practices.

2. Transcendental phenomenology is empirical

Husserl developed the phenomenological method initially to study epistemological foundations of logic. His method as well as his explicit conceptualization of it developed gradually, but if we take the concept of "phenomenological reduction" to be essential to it, its inception can be traced to 1905. The phenomenological reduction is a change of attitude in which the philosopher moves from his everyday naturalistic attitude to the attitude of philosophical reflection. Nothing is lost in the reduction, the philosopher continues to have the same naturalistic world he/she had before the reduction. Instead of living in it, he/she now reflects upon it. Thus phenomenology is essentially philosophical reflection of the naturalistically given world.

In the phenomenological reduction the objective sciences are so to say bracketed. "Within this epoche, however, neither the sciences nor the scientists have disappeared for us who practice the epoche" (1970, §35), Husserl explains. And one indeed wonders, how else we could examine the sciences phenomenologically. While we can, and indeed, should, practice phenomenology of science, the motivation of the epoche of the objective sciences prevents us from using the methods of objective sciences in philosophy. Thus, its purpose is to safeguard phenomenology from the scientism typical to analytic philosophy and strongly opposed by Margolis. To be sure, the epoche should be performed also regarding the normal life. Again, this does not mean an annihilation of the life world, but a change in attitude with which it is studied (1970, §40).

Even though phenomenology uses various kinds of reductions, it is not reductionistic. The subject matter remains in our experience as it is initially given to us. Indeed, Husserl holds that he is more positivist than the positivists themselves (1983, §20). By this he means that phenomenology describes the experiences as they are given, *not* as reduced to mere given sense-data. The world is given as conceptualized, or in Husserl's terms *constituted*. The constitution of our consciousness makes the world intelligible: structured in certain ways, we see things *as* something and as organized into states of affairs. The purpose of the phenomenological reduction is not to take anything away from the world, but rather to make our constitution of the world visible.

Furthermore, one of the corner stones of Husserl's philosophy is the so-called "Principle of all Principles," according to which one is supposed to describe only what is given (1983, §24). Thus, in phenomenology, like in

Margolis' naturalism, one should not postulate any extra-naturalist truths or objects either. In this respect phenomenology, like Margolis' naturalism, falls between hypostatizing extra-naturalism and reductionism.

Contrary to Margolis' naturalism, however, the task of the phenomenological reduction is to open the transcendental point of view from which to examine the naturalistically given world. This does not call for any extra-naturalist modes of cognition, as Margolis seems to suppose. Transcendental phenomenology is transcendental because it examines the conditions of the possibility of the naturalistic experiences. In other words, transcendental phenomenology examines what is required of consciousness in order for us to have the experiences we have. The consciousness constitutes the experiences and the task of the transcendental examination is to make the constitution explicit. The examination is a posteriori, it starts from the fact of experience and from it goes back to the constitutive activities of the consciousness. Thus the transcendental phenomenologist asks transcendental questions that range from "what is required of consciousness that we can perceive objects?" to "what are the conditions of possibility of perceiving other persons?", or to "what are the conditions of possibility of logic itself?"

The answers to such questions aim at giving general structures of such constitutive activities. It would not make sense to give a detailed account of every individual experience, but the attempt is to describe experiences in general so that we can all agree to have such experiences. The answers are the so-called eidetic structures of the constitutive activities: for example, that the experiences have a certain structure in time with their protention and retention, that we are embodied and aware of, e.g., whether we are in an upright position, and that we have a history of previous experiences. To be sure, the description of experience does not yield indubitable truths:

The possibility of deception is inherent in the evidence of experience and does not annul either its fundamental character or its effect; though becoming evidentially aware of deception 'annuls' the deceptive experience or evidence itself. The evidence of a new experience is what makes the previously uncontested experience undergo that modification of believing called 'annulment' or 'cancellation'; and it alone can do so.

Husserl 1969, §59

Description of the constitution of our consciousness characterizes Husserl's approach in the *Ideas I*. In Husserl's more mature texts transcendental phenomenology remains empirical, but it is complemented and extended by

further aspects that are additionally taken into account in the descriptions. First of all, Husserl realizes that the achievements of the previous generations are present as sedimentations in our experience. For example, sciences are not constituted from the beginning by ourselves, but we inherit the scientific world view from the previous generations. For Husserl we are "second-natured" as Margolis puts it.

In his later texts Husserl divides the world of natural attitude into the life-world and the scientific world. We live in a life-world, and the sciences are included in it in various ways. Yet their view of the objective reality is different from the one we have in our life-world. For example, in our life-world the sun rises in the morning, yet we know that, scientifically speaking, the earth revolves around the sun. Moreover, when we conduct a scientific experiment or examine, say, archeological findings we are in the life-world and construct the picture of the objective reality on the basis of the experiences we have in our life-world. Indeed, the life-world is a presupposition of the sciences. As Husserl puts it:

science is a human spiritual accomplishment which presupposes as its point of departure, both historically and for each new student, the intuitive surrounding world of life, pregiven as existing for all in common. Furthermore, it is an accomplishment which, in being practiced and carried forward, continues to presuppose this surrounding world as it is given in its particularity to the scientist. For example, for the physicist it is the world in which he sees his measuring instruments, hears time-beats, estimates visible magnitudes, etc.—the world in which, furthermore, he knows himself to be included with all his activity and all his theoretical ideas. 1970, §33

Guided by the norm of truth, the scientists collaboratively examine the objective world on the basis of the evidence found in the life-world. The scientific objectivity thus becomes constituted in the scientific institutions that have been established for the sake of finding out the truth about the objective world. The questions in science "rest upon the ground of the elements of this pregiven world in which science and every other life-praxis is engaged"(1970, §33). Margolis expresses this as follows:

[s]cience and knowledge are themselves critical constructions of some kind relative to what, presuppositionlessly, but affected in ways that are admittedly prejudiced and horizoned nevertheless, *is* admittedly *given*, reportorially, in public experience. 2009, 36

Like for Margolis, also for Husserl our view of reality is constituted from what is given in the thoroughly historicized life-world. Nevertheless, we

do not construct reality into existence, it is found to be this or that way. Even though Margolis does not isolate the transcendental point of view, the outcome of his analyses is largely in agreement with the phenomenological ones: The world is constituted but not constructed. Margolis probably finds a phenomenologists' attempt to capture structures of any kind to border on postulating suspicious "fixities." However, phenomenologists do not posit them but find them in experience. They are not eternal but revisable fixities. The necessity related to them has been characterized as "factual". Accordingly Husserl's Kantianism is Kantianism in the sense of the Third Critique, not in the sense of the First Critique (cf. Tengelyi 2014).

3. Margolis' naturalist view of culture and vestiges of Kantianism

Like in phenomenology, in Margolis' view, the definition of the human self and the analysis of the human world and the form of life have a central role. Margolis analyses the self as a "second-natured transform" of a natural kind. The self is enlanguaged and encultured like it is in Husserl's mature philosophy. Margolis finds Kant to fall prey to "fatal dualism of causality and autonomous agency" and holds that it cannot "pretend to have remained faithful to its strongest empirical intuitions" (2015, 19). Similarly Husserl complains that

Kant does get involved in his own sort of mythical talk, whose literal meaning points to something subjective, but a mode of the subjective which we are in principle unable to make intuitive to ourselves, whether through factual examples or through genuine analogy.

1970, 114

In the attempt to overcome the Kantian dualism, Margolis argues that the humans are "hybrids", thoroughly historied natures, shaped by the *Bildung* that has taken place for centuries. Likewise Margolis describes the world to be artifactual, and like Husserl, Margolis is quick to point out that it nevertheless is not a construct (2015, 4). Persons are hybrid artifacts: they are culturally formed natural kinds. They are, like artworks, sentences, and histories, thoroughly interpretable and discernible by and only by persons (2015, 7). They are not like it when they are born, but a human neonate starts acquiring the artifactual practices and shared forms of understanding of historically evolving societies from birth. To become functioning persons they have to master the culturally invented language. We "emerge as persons through the mastery of language, freighted with the contingent baggage of societal memory and entrenched habits and

beliefs that language makes possible" (26), Margolis writes in his article for the present volume. A phenomenologist would not disagree on this either, but would try to make more fine-grained distinctions among the developing accounts of intersubjectivity.

But, most importantly, a phenomenologist would argue that in viewing persons as hybrids, made out of humans as natural kinds and their acquired second nature, the dualism between mind and body is not completely overcome. Already the term "hybrid" suggests that the person is made out of two different, even if interdependent, kinds. Phenomenology teaches us that only a transcendental approach to personhood helps us overcome the dualism between mind and body. A transcendental clarification of a person shows him/her to be thoroughly encultured but also embodied. We are in the world in a certain place, in a certain position with certain distances from others, and, most importantly, with a bodily awareness of all that. In comparison to phenomenological approach to persons, Margolis' "hybrids" seem to be rather theoretical constructs. Margolis bases his view on post-Newtonian physics and post-Darwinian paleoanthropology, which he then combines with a Hegelian view to form his hybrid account of a person.

The problem with the scientific views of human being is that they offer only narrow glimpses to one particular dimension of the personhood. Rather than focusing on a person as a whole, they look at her through the lenses of different methodologies. It is not clear whether one can reach a complete account of personhood in such a roundabout manner. Instead of relying on the fractured views of a person given by different sciences, the phenomenologist draws from our own experience of what it is to be a person in a life-world. Somewhat ironically, when looked at from the phenomenological point of view, Margolis' criticism of Kant's dualism and Kant's "profound limitation [...] of what it is to be a flesh-and-blood person" (Forthcoming, 9) can be directed at himself. Margolis' view has a vestige of some sort of Kantian intellectualism: He draws on the results of the several empirical sciences and then tries to combine them into a coherent and whole picture of the person. That is a complicated detour to analyze a person, which we are to begin with. In response to this, a phenomenologist could well claim that such Kantianism should be reinterpreted along a posteriori lines and be replaced with a direct analysis of experience. We find ourselves to be embodied persons, here and now. It is the sciences that give narrow and fragmentary views of persons, the views that are important but secondary to what the persons are in the life-world.

Hence, Husserl writes that Kant should have "tackled in a truly radical way the problem of a priori knowledge and its methodical function in rational objective knowledge. This would have required a fundamentally and essentially different regressive method from that of Kant, which rests on those unquestioned assumptions: not a mythically, constructively inferring method, but a thoroughly intuitively disclosing method, intuitive in its point of departure and in everything it discloses" (1970, §30).

4. Margolis on normativity

Let us next examine the issue of normativity. Neither naturalists nor phenomenologists can postulate extra-naturalist norms. The vexing question is where do they locate them? Margolis, the naturalist, holds that the Kant's view of normativity is entirely incompatible with his project. He develops his view of normativity by way of critique of the Pittsburgh School, Wilfrid Sellars, John McDowell, and Robert Brandom, in particular. His main criticism is that their views are too Kantian and thus based on a dualistic account of persons that sees persons as mere sites for linguistic intentions. In contrast, Margolis admits "perception-based concepts, non-discursive forms of rationality, intentionality, agency, valiative and (at least some) evaluative capacities (taste and simple preference, for instance)" (Forthcoming, 16–17). As we will see, a phenomenologist would agree with all this. On the basis of evolutionary and paleoanthropological grounds, Margolis then claims that the human primate is not able to engage neither discursivity nor normativity, even though it is capable of some rationality (*ibid.*, 29). Margolis agrees with the Pittsburgh school Kantians in holding discursivity and normativity to be inseparable. But since normativity is inseparable from discursivity, it is artifactual, culturally generated "second-natured" transform of animal valuation (*ibid.*, 35). The problem with Kant and the Pittsburgh school is that they fail to link their accounts of discursive and the normative to the issue of the formation of the human person (*ibid.*, 30). Consequently, to Margolis, normativity is not a matter of an a priori reasoning, but it builds on the "sittlich" forms of normativity that happen to prevail in the society, confined to the form of life to which the person belongs.

Margolis divides normativity into two forms: enabling and agentive. The enabling norms relate to the questions of truth, meaning, inference, evidence, and pragmatic consistency. The agentive norms, in contrast, relate to questions of commitment, the choice of goals and purposes, and,

for example, the appraisal of competing visions (*ibid.*, 36–37). The enabling norms are acquired together with the mastery of language. In contrast to them, the agentive norms bind us in a way that requires practical conformity to an independent obligation (*ibid.*, 38, 41). Both, having a language and agentive behavior, are entirely natural in being second-natured. Thus Margolis' answer to the location problem is entirely naturalistic.

Margolis believes that we cannot provide the compelling conditions by which to validate our having found the objective norms of human life. Instead, he holds we are within a form of life, bound to certain *sittlich* norms. These *sittlich* norms are continually tested and challenged in terms our understanding of the history of such efforts. We may also try to rationalize them in many ways. They may conflict with other norms. Possible higher-order norms, such as those behind repudiation of slavery, are simply the ones that are valid on grounds apart from the mere *sittlich* sources. If I understood Margolis' view correctly, there are no independent higher-order norms, but arguments to change our *sittlich* norms. Norms are embedded in cultural formations and as such revisable.

5. Husserl on norms

In Husserl's view, normativity is a more general and pervasive phenomenon than what it is to Margolis. He discusses normativity in terms of teleology and strivings related to it. To him intentionality is pervaded by normative strivings. Indeed, Husserl writes that

[i]ntentionality is not something isolated; it can be observed only in the synthetic unity that connects every single pulse of psychic life teleologically, in the unity-relation to objectivities—or rather in the double polarity, toward Ego-pole and object-pole.

1969 §100, 262/232

For Husserl, the normative strivings can be on a very "primitive" passive level, such as when, as if automatically we read a book or look at the computer screen from such a distance that we can see the text optimally. Our activity is geared toward optimality that gives a norm for perceiving something well. We may have momentary and changing goals. In the other end of spectrum there are overall goals, "highest ends" that we may subject our lives to and which determine a structure of the lower level goals. For example, we may be guided by an overall goal in life to live a life of a philosopher. Such a goal determines other goals we may have, such as writing a paper for an edited volume. It may be something we

have chosen for ourselves as a life-vocation, "or it can be one that we have somehow drifted into through our upbringing" (1970, 379). In such a case, our environment has chosen our goals for us. Furthermore, we may have contradictory goals, as we have different goals as parents, citizens, and professional philosophers. "We are at once fathers, citizens, etc." (1970, §35). These vocations may determine their own "worlds" and what is correct and true or what is mistaken and false in them. Ultimately the situation is typically unfortunately messy:

The scientific world... , like all other worlds [determined by particular] ends, itself 'belongs' to the life-world, just as all men and all human communities generally, and their human ends both individual and communal, with all their corresponding working structures, belong to it. 380-1

Husserl uses the term "teleology" to describe the normative structures that direct our conscious life. Margolis has written that his naturalism favours the denial of teleologism and fixed or final values (2006, 8). I take it that by teleologism he here means a fatalistic development towards certain predetermined telos, where the telos is fixed and given from the outset. This sense is very different from the way in which Husserlian teleology should be understood. Husserl's teleology refers to the norms that guide the practices, to what the given practice aims at. Husserl's teloi do not predetermine us, at least not necessarily. We may choose our goals by ourselves, although sometimes we do not choose them but adopt them more passively.

Whereas Margolis distinguishes between the enabling and agentive norms, Husserl makes no such distinction. To be sure, Margolis remarks that in pragmatic contexts the distinction between the two is not easy to make (Forthcoming, 38). Yet he complains that Habermas, for example, conflates the two (ibid., 41-42). Early in his career Husserl was primarily focused on what Margolis calls "enabling norms," i.e., with the notions like meaning, truth, consistency, etc. At the time, for Husserl they *were* enabling, their role was to give the necessary conditions for the possibility of sciences. For Husserl, logic is the field that studies these norms. Husserl's famous arguments against psychologism aimed at showing that logic gives an independent foundation for sciences, and thus provides the norm for sciences. The *Logical Investigations* then give detailed analyses to the notions like meaning, truth, evidence, consistency, etc.

Later, and to some extent already within the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl changes his view of logic as an enabling norm setter to view it

more like an agentive norm that relates to agents' choices of goals. Husserl thus starts to regard the notions like meaning, truth, consistency as "agentive norms", as agents' desiderata. Especially in his later texts logic is a norm setter for the views that belong to persons who live in the life-world. The meanings are construed as "ideal exemplars" and coherence and truth are something striven for. The change in Husserl's view is connected to Husserl's development towards more "personalistic" approach both in logic as well as in ethics. In terms of the former, he realizes that the persons and the life-world are the fundamental presuppositions of logic. To him, logic still examines meaning, truth, evidence, coherence, and the like, but these norms are regarded as agents' goals rather than as conditions for possibility of knowledge. Margolis, presumably finds such a view problematic. I will discuss this in more detail below, but let me here express the initial suspicion that perhaps Margolis' view of the enabling norms as distinguished from agentive norms is another vestige of Kantianism in Margolis' view.

6. Anthropology of norms

What distinguishes Husserl's and Margolis' approaches is that Husserl is continuously extremely conscientious about the methods with which he approaches his subject matter. Not only does he formulate the phenomenological reductions, but he also specifies an empirical method with which to examine the normative structure of individual and communal activities. He does this in his *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929) where he introduces the notion of *Besinnung*, translated into English as "sense-investigation". It is hermeneutic reflection with which to critically examine an activity with respect to the norms guiding it. The sense-investigation aims at finding out the goal, the sense of the activity. The senses as norms determine the activity and guide them as providing the goal for the activity in question. According to Husserl, if we are to find out the norms governing the activity we have to participate in the activity in question, so that we can understand what it aims at, explicitly or only implicitly. Husserl writes:

whether sciences and logic be genuine or spurious, we do have experience of them as cultural formations given to us beforehand and bearing within themselves their meaning, their 'sense': since they are formations produced indeed by the practice of the scientists and generations of scientists who have been building them. As so produced,

they have a final sense, toward which the scientists have been continually striving, at which they have been continually aiming. Standing in, or entering, a community of empathy with the scientists, we can follow and understand—and carry on 'sense-investigation' [Besinnung]

1969, 8–9

Thus, logic does not offer us the conditions of possibility of knowledge but we have to find out the norms governing the scientific enterprise by going out into the field, to carry out an anthropological study of the sense of the activity in question. In *the Formal and Transcendental Logic* Husserl claims, apparently on the basis of such *Besinnung*, that logic divides into three strata: on one level it establishes the goal for grammatical correctness, on another level it establishes the goal of coherence, and yet on the third level the goal of truth amounts to empirical verification. If indeed Husserl's analysis is based on *Besinnung* as he claims, this means that Husserl has found out, in "a community of empathy with the scientists" that they strive toward grammatical correctness, coherence, and in empirical sciences also truth. Since the basis for Husserl's claim is empirical *Besinnung*, even more norms guiding the scientific research could be found out, but these are what Husserl takes to be most universal.

In principle, I think, Husserl's strategy of basing the analysis of norms on *Besinnung* is presumably largely compatible with Margolis' naturalism. It shows how norms are embedded in cultural formations that have developed for generations. Likewise, Margolis construes them as "the formative Sitten of diverse societies" (Margolis 2006, 246). On both views, the norms are internal to the practices. They are not found out by a priori reasoning, but they are located in people's explicit or implicit intentions. This allows for a kind of pluralism in Husserl's approach that Margolis also defends. But whereas Margolis' approach is rather abstract and general, Husserl suggests that in order to carry out a philosophical study of normativity one should go into the field, to "enter the community of empathy" with whatever group one is examining. Husserl is also more specific about where the norms are located. Whereas Margolis speaks about the Sitten of the society, for Husserl the norms are ultimately located in persons' intentions. To be sure, these intentions are historically and socially conditioned, and they may overlap and even contradict each other in various ways.

Margolis would agree with this, but to him this suggests that the bivalence of logic should be given up. For example, we may find out that

alternative incompatible claims may both be valid. Margolis holds that such beliefs are incongruent,

meaning by that that they would be incompatible on a bivalent logic but not on a many-valued logic in accord with which the alternative claims cannot be jointly true but may yet be reasonable or objectively valid or the like, without producing a paradox. 2006, 247

To Husserl in different life-worlds different "facts" may pertain: he explains that in the life-world, together with those we live with, we arrive at "secure" facts that are undisturbed by any noticeable disagreement. But, he holds,

when we are thrown into an alien social sphere, that of the Negroes in the Congo, Chinese peasants, etc., we discover that their truths, the facts that for them are fixed, generally verified or verifiable, are by no means the same as ours. 1970, §36

Our life-world and an alien world may thus have incompatible facts. According to Husserl, we may recourse to science for rescue:

if we set up the goal of a truth about the objects which is unconditionally valid for all subjects, beginning with that on which normal Europeans, normal Hindus, Chinese, etc., agree in spite of all relativity—beginning, that is, with what makes objects of the life-world, common to all, identifiable for them and for us (even though conceptions of them may differ), such as spatial shape, motion, sense-quality, and the like—then we are on the way to objective science. 1970, §36

In the sciences objectivity is made a goal so that the relativities of the life-worlds are surpassed. Such a goal is governed by already mentioned norms of truth, coherence and grammatical rigor.

Whatever may be the chances for realizing, [...], the idea of objective science in respect to the mental world..., this idea of objectivity dominates the whole universitas of the positive sciences in the modern period, and in the general usage it dominates the meaning of the word 'science.' Husserl 1970, §34d

Part of what it means to be a science is to be guided by truth, coherence, and verification. There are presumably other more local norms that determine sciences as well.

Husserl's view of the world is thus rather pluralistic, but so that the idea of the universal objectivity in the sciences offers us an ideal limit and thus an eternal task. But, does it mean that we should abandon the principle of bivalence that the statements are either true or false? According to

Husserl, principle of bivalence is in fact a presupposition of the sciences, and hence holds in logic. The scientists' enterprise would not make sense, if they could not think that their claims are either true or false. The transcendental analyses show that we have such a presupposition already in our life-world. Indeed, the life-world shares the same general structures as what the objective sciences presuppose: "these are the same structures that they presuppose as a priori structures and systematically unfold in a priori sciences, sciences of the logos, the universal methodical norms by which any knowledge of the world existing 'in itself, objectively' must be bound" (1970, §36). Thus even though different worlds in which we live may have different facts, there is a universal a priori that demands coherence and truth from us. Principle of bivalence pertains in it, and indeed, is an important presupposition of the scientific inquiry. Husserl however is not claiming that our claims are actually true or false. Rendering them so is the eternal task that we are facing. Truth is thus to Husserl like an ideal point in geometry: postulated for the needs of investigation.

Margolis on the contrary writes that his relativism "obliges us to retreat from bipolar truth-values or *tertium non datur*—but *not* globally, not indiscriminately, not on an all-or-nothing basis" (Margolis 1987, 7). A consequence of this view for Margolis is that we may inquire into an independent world but we cannot state its nature as it is independently of our inquiries. At least the latter claim is also very much Husserl's claim. Thus, the ultimate difference between the two on the matter of the bivalence resides presumably in their respective views of logic and the role of logic in their overall views. Whereas for Husserl logic gives the agentive norms, towards which the scientists should strive, for Margolis, logic is an enabling condition for expression of the theories. This difference is related to their respective views about the role of logic. For Husserl, the primary role of logic is to describe coherent structures, whereas Margolis presumably views logic as the first order predicate logic which emphasizes the deductive role of logic (cf. Hintikka 1996). Husserl had an algebraic view of formal logic the task of which was to study forms of possible theories (see Hartimo 2012). Whereas, for Margolis, logic is the source of rules for valid reasoning, for Husserl it unravels patterns that we aim at in our investigation. Hence, the concepts related to logic in Margolis' view are enabling norms, whereas Husserl would view them as agentive norms, being agents' goals. Thus, in Husserl's view the principle of bivalence is perfectly compatible with Margolis' view that the world is not cognitively transparent. When the two discuss the principle of bivalence, they are talking about different issues.

In general I find the views of the two quite similar with respect to realism—anti-realism issue. Admittedly, Margolis proudly calls himself “relativist,” while Husserl argues against psychologism and historicism in favor of objectivity and holds that the realism-idealism debate does not really apply to his philosophy. To a considerable extent the disagreement however appears to be merely verbal.

Nevertheless, Husserl’s view of our different vocations and different norms that create different “worlds” suggests that even a single person may be conflicted with “incongruent” sets of validities. To overcome such a situation Husserl’s solution is to refer to the eternal negotiation between different universal norms. Ultimately, we can rely on nothing else but reason:

[R]eason is precisely that which man *qua* man, in his innermost being, is aiming for, that which alone can satisfy him, make him ‘blessed’; that reason allows for no differentiation into ‘theoretical,’ ‘practical,’ ‘aesthetic,’ or whatever; that being human is teleological being and an ought-to-be, and this teleology holds say in each and every activity and project of an ego; that through self-understanding in all this it can know the apodictic telos; and that this knowing, the ultimate self-understanding, has no other form than self-understanding according to a priori principles as self-understanding in the form of philosophy.

1970, 341

7. Internal criticism

We found out above that Husserl’s analysis of the norms reveals a possibility that we are not necessarily entirely clear about what we are doing and why. For Husserl, this is roughly a source for the Crisis in the European Sciences, and demands *Besinnung* and critical reflection of the norms that guide us. Thus Husserl offers us a method with which the fatalism that comes with the straightforward acceptance of the inherited *sittlich* forms could be avoided.

As encultured and embedded individuals we inherit most of the norms from the previous generations. This holds of both Margolis’ and Husserl’s view. But I am not sure I completely grasp Margolis’ answer to the question of how, on basis of what, we could criticize the inherited normative practices. He seems to think that we certainly can argue that an activity is wrong. That is how slavery was denounced in the United States and more recently the views about the same sex marriage are being discussed.

But what are we then referring to? Margolis does not explicate in more detail on what basis the activity can be criticized in the absence of external criteria to do so. It just can be done, and has been done.

Husserl would agree with Margolis in holding that we cannot recourse to the dictates of reason or external points of view when discussing rightness or wrongness of an activity. Instead Husserl offers a detailed and subtle method with which such criticism could be carried out. The criticism is entirely internal: it does not require any extra-naturalist posits or foundational points of view. Instead it requires transcendental clarification of our experiences as well as examining the historical genesis of the activity in question. I will start by discussing the transcendental reflection.

7.1 Transcendental reflection

Besinnung as such is not transcendental reflection, but it should be carried out in tandem with transcendental clarification. Transcendental clarification examines the presuppositions of the sciences from within the activity. For example, sciences, as any other experience, presuppose the constitution of objects on part of consciousness. We do not experience data, but a structured and intelligible world where there are objects. Furthermore, scientific investigation presupposes that there is truth to the matter. Without such presupposition sciences would not make sense. Furthermore, it shows that the sciences presuppose the life-world in which everything takes place.

The transcendental examination of the norms of sciences show for example that there are different kinds of evidences that yield fulfillments to the intentions in question. Husserl distinguishes between the three different kinds of evidences that belong to the different levels of logic. The fulfillment one receives from a grammatical articulateness and correctness of a sentence is a different kind of evidence than the fulfillment that one experiences in connection of a non-contradictory sentence. Both of these differ from the experience one goes through when one perceives a state of affairs that agrees with one's intentions.

Husserl's further analyses of pre-predicative experiences show that the norms of logic guide us already in our prepredicative experiences. For example, the origin of negation is in the disappointment of an intention, when the observed object turns out to be something else than what was initially expected. Such experience presupposes a prepredicative process of *explication* where objects are determined as objects that belong to a type

that is already known, even if vaguely. Also the relative determinations, such as that the pencil is beside the inkwell, or that it is longer than the penholder are apprehended prepredicatively (1973, §22). In general, the origin of logical categories is already on this prepredicative level.

It is true, we can only begin to speak of logical categories in the proper sense in the sphere of predicative judgment, as elements of determination which belong necessarily to the form of possible predicative judgments. But all categories and categorical forms which appear there are erected on the prepredicative syntheses and have their origin in them.

Husserl 1973, §24a

The transcendental examination shows that the logical categories are not applied to formless contents, but the origin of logic is in perception. What is interesting is that in Husserl's analyses the norms do not appear as rules that guide us. No rules or principles 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 view point external to the pre-predicative consciousness. Rules or principles appear to be a part of an *explanatory machinery* used to *explain* the normativity, i.e., what Husserl only *describes* from within.¹ In his approach the norms do not tell the ego what to do, rather they serve as goals or ideals towards which we are pulled. Husserl speaks of an interest that is awakened when we start looking at an object. According to him, it is "a *moment of the striving* which belongs to the essence of normal perception" (1973 §20). It is linked to feeling of satisfaction that guides us to take a better look. According to Husserl, on a higher level, this act of striving becomes a *will to knowledge* (ibid., §20). It is thus something that we, human beings, as rational beings do. Margolis in contrast construes the enabling norms by means of rules. That is not necessarily incompatible with the phenomenological description of them. Yet, without going deeper into that (massive) discussion, I would want to express a suspicion that viewing normativity in terms of rules and laws is another Kantian vestige, further fueled by the Fregean tradition of

¹ In the *Formal and Transcendental Logic* Husserl discusses the norms, i.e., the logic, that governs the transcendental description itself. Transcendental investigation is governed by certain norms: in it judgments are made, it is supposed to be coherent, one has empty and fulfilled judgments. This logic furnishes logic for the transcendental investigations. It is transcendental-solipsistic doctrine, with subjective logic "with an a priori that can hold good only solipsistically" (§102, 270). This logic again does not postulate principles but it is the source for norms that guide the view of what we think is a good explication. Logic gives us norms as desiderata, not as rules.

viewing logic as a study of inference rather than as a study of possible forms of theories discussed above, that prevails in the 20th century view of normativity. In such a view norms are expressed by rules or laws that give the external and "objective" conditions of rationality, whereas in the Aristotelian-Hegelian-Husserlian view norms are related to the teleological view of human beings who by their nature aim at the fulfillment of reason.

7.2 Historical genesis

Aside from the transcendental reflection on the used concepts, norms, and evidences, Husserl thinks that we should examine the historical genesis of the activity in question. While we inherit much of our habits and customs from the previous generations, the inherited baggage may conceal the original sense of the activity in question. In the *Crisis*, Husserl applies *Besinnung* to philosophy itself discussing the development of the sciences and the role of philosophy with respect to them. According to him, still in the Renaissance, according to Husserl, European humanity is guided by the ancient model of rationality, in which philosophy and universal knowledge are striven for as the telos of the mankind, thus providing the mankind the autonomy of being guided by reason. But, today, sciences have lost their original sense. Instead, they emphasize whatever can be calculated and have become techniques that are efficient in producing facts but are one-sided and empty in meaning. Margolis's complaints about the attempts to eliminate the human factor from the scientific inquiry appears to converge with Husserl's views in this regard.

Husserl's historical reflection thus shows, according to him, the distress of the present situation. It also reminds us of the original task of philosophy. Thus the quest for the Rückfrage:

What is clearly necessary [...] is that we *reflect back*, in a thorough *historical* and *critical* fashion, in order to provide, *before all decisions*, for a radical self-understanding: we must inquire back into what was originally and always sought in philosophy, what was continually sought by all the philosophers and philosophies that have communicated with one another historically; but this 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

The historical reflection gives us a point of view from where to reflect on the present situation and the sense of our activities in it. Its task is

to remind us of why we engage in certain practice to begin with. Thus while Margolis emphasizes the positive effects of enculturation and the *Bildung* across the generations, in Husserl's view what Margolis refers to as the "*sittlichkeit*" embedded in the social activities can be misguided. The original sense of the activity in question may have been forgotten a long time ago, and whatever we do may have become a blind habit.

7.3 Radical sense-investigation

In critical *radical sense-investigation*, sense-investigation and transcendental phenomenology meet: both examine the same phenomena, for example, the norms of the sciences, but from different points of view. One examines the norms of the sciences as they are given to the scientists in their strivings, from a natural, if not anthropological, point of view, taking into account their historical genesis. The other examines these norms from a transcendental point of view, making explicit the presuppositions and achievements of our consciousness that make the sciences possible. The two methods are interdependent and they proceed "zig-zag", back and forth from one to the other. By combining the two methods they can be used for critical purposes so that this or that phenomenon is found to be *genuine* or not, that is, whether it agrees with its essence, original sense. The norms guiding the practice will be reflected upon and thereby renewed. To be sure, Husserl's method does not provide us with yet another *technique* to be applied. In the end we have to think through the phenomena in question by ourselves and take the full responsibility of the situation. Thus Husserl is able to say that his approach yields freedom through the autonomy of reason.

If Husserlian philosophy of science were practiced today, it would mean that we should first go among the researchers to find out what the researchers in certain disciplines are striving for. One should examine the historical genesis of the normative ideals of the discipline in question. We should find out why it was originally established the way it was. Furthermore the discipline in question should be examined transcendently. On that occasion we should for example, find out what are its presuppositions and how it constructs its objective view of the world on basis of the experiences in the life-world. The outcome should be a critical evaluation of the reality of the discipline in question. In such "radical sense-investigation" the criticism is entirely internal to the human practice, no external gods, experts, laws, principles, theories, nor mechanisms are relied upon.

8. Conclusion

Phenomenology and Joseph Margolis' naturalism share a lot: neither is reductionistic, nor, in Margolis' words, extra-naturalist. Both aim at faithful description of the phenomena without postulating any posits unfounded by intuition. Consequently, both emphasize the historicized, "second-natured" view of human beings. Similarly, the sciences are viewed as human constructs, but neither completely denounces objectivity either. Both embrace pluralism and humanism while opposing to foundationalism and scientism. Admittedly, Margolis is more comfortable about being a relativist than what Husserl would be. In closer examination, for better and for worse, Margolis' view appears to be more "Kantian" than what Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is. In comparison to Husserl's view Margolis' roundabout way of discussing persons as "hybrids" appears rather "intellectual". Husserl would base his analysis directly on our experience. Moreover, Husserl's view of normativity falls more clearly within the Aristotelian-Hegelian tradition in comparison to Margolis' view of enabling norms. In general, in contrast to Husserl's detailed and involved analyses, Margolis' view of normativity is rather abstract and general. He also seems to be more conservative regarding the Sitten embedded in our forms of life, while Husserl was troubled by the crisis of the European sciences.

There are thus also many differences between the two approaches, probably more than what I have managed to detect here, but in conclusion one can say that the two views are close enough to benefit enormously from a more intense dialogue between the two approaches.

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Margolis on Quine: Naturalized Epistemology and the Problem of Evidence

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1. Introduction

In his recent *Pragmatism's Advantage*, Joseph Margolis locates W. V. Quine's work within the set of failed projects found in analytic philosophy or what he alternatively labels 'scientistic reductionism' or 'analytic scientism' (2003, 2, 7–8; 2010, 14–16). He further explains that analytic scientism rests on three basic commitments: first, the world is independently determinate and knowable in such terms, second, this determinate world can be correctly captured in physical terms alone, with the rest of our 'human world' fully described in such terms, and lastly, given these first two commitments, human beings are viewed as in principle no different from inanimate objects (2003, 13–14; 2010, 26–27). In contrast to this failed perspective, Margolis offers pragmatism as a viable alternative that rejects these three commitments by emphasizing that the determinate world is a human construction where the mental, linguistic, cultural and historical elements of the human world cannot be reduced to physical terms. He further emphasizes the key pragmatist insight that what is taken as true about the world is epistemically and practically dependent on the active human community of inquiry (2003, 13–14; 2010, 26–27).¹

This paper offers some reasons for questioning this general characterization of Quine's philosophy as a form of analytic scientism by developing

¹ Margolis also takes these commitments to inform his understanding of 'continental philosophy' (2003).

a reply to Margolis's more specific criticisms of Quine's naturalized epistemology.² By examining these detailed criticisms we will further see that Quine's overall view has much in common with the pragmatist position that Margolis himself favors. It will also become clear that Margolis's critical interpretation of key Quinean passages is largely correct when these passages are taken at face value. Responding to his criticisms will then involve some careful interpretive reconstruction concerning what Quine should have said, especially once we highlight other important features of his mature epistemological view.

The breakdown of this paper is as follows. The next section outlines Margolis's main criticisms of Quine's scientific conception of epistemology, focusing especially on his claim that Quine's use of sensory stimulation cannot account for the evidential support of scientific theories. Section three looks more carefully at the motives behind Quine's use of sensory stimulation and its connection to the central role that observation plays within his account of how evidence supports scientific theory. Section four then examines the connections between observation and theory in order to demonstrate the specific ways in which Quine's naturalized account of knowledge remains concerned with the normative view of evidence that Margolis finds missing in Quine's account. Finally the last section attempts to synthesize these conclusions about Quine's constructivist view of knowledge arguing that it has a greater affinity with Margolis's pragmatism than he may think. If I am right about these shared pragmatist affinities then there remains some questions concerning what explains their apparent disagreement. I conclude by briefly suggesting that there remains a basic disagreement concerning the proper scope and function of pragmatist philosophy, indicating how this is reflected in Margolis's criticism of Quine's naturalism. This disagreement is so profound as to make neutral adjudication of this dispute unlikely.

2. Margolis on Quine's epistemology

Since Margolis's most important criticisms focus on some alleged gaps in Quine's naturalized account of knowledge, it will be helpful to begin with a brief characterization of Quine's position.³ Quine's philosophical

² It may well be that Margolis assigns these scientific commitments to Quinean inspired positions rather than to Quine's view itself. He claims that Quine favors a form of scientism, but also states that he affirms a scientism of 'conviction' rather than commitment (2003, 6; 4).

³ I will pass over his detailed critical discussion of Quine's indeterminacy argument, which I think is unhelpfully intertwined with his criticisms of Quine's epistemology. Mar-

treatment of the "problem of knowledge" is offered as a scientific account of how humans have developed a systematic scientific understanding of the world. Here is a late passage where he summarizes his conception of epistemology:

The business of naturalized epistemology, for me, is an improved understanding of the chains of causation *and implication* that connect the bombardment of our surfaces, at one extreme, with our scientific output at the other.

1995c, 349, my emphasis

Quine's account of knowledge then seeks to provide a better scientific account of the connections between the activation of our sensory surfaces and our theoretical discourse about the world. His core epistemological project gives a detailed, if still speculative, genetic account of how our cognitive discourse about the world is systematically related to sensory stimulation. In addition, his emphasis on the logical implications between sensory stimulation and scientific theories suggests that he maintains an interest in scientifically clarifying what he himself describes as the "the question of evidence for science" (Quine 1992, 2).

Margolis, if I understand him correctly, cannot see how such a project could ever work. The central issue concerns Quine's use of stimulation at our sensory surfaces as a stand in for the empiricist's favored use of the term 'experience'. The problem is most readily seen with the following passage also highlighted by Margolis:

We were undertaking to examine the evidential support of science. That support, by whatever name, comes now to be seen as a relation of stimulation to scientific theory. Theory consists of sentences, or is couched in them; and logic connects sentences to sentences. What we need, then, as initial links in those connecting chains, are some sentences that are directly and firmly associated with our stimulations. . . The sentence should command the subject's assent or dissent outright, on the occasion of a stimulation in the appropriate range. . . a further requirement is. . . the sentence must command the same verdict from all linguistically competent witnesses of the occasion. I call them *observation sentences*.

Quine 1992, 2–3

In this passage (which we will revisit in later sections) Margolis explains that Quine "assigns occasions of stimulation (of our sensory organs) an ev-

golis thinks Quine's entire project stands or falls with the viability of his thesis of the indeterminacy of translation (Margolis 2003, 111). However there is reason to think that very little of Quine's overall project would be affected by whether indeterminacy holds or not, see Hylton 2007, 225–230.

identitary role that captures 'empirical content' of some kind" but then proceeds to "erase...altogether anything like empirical (or "empiricist") sensory evidence" severing his possible links to, for example, Carnap's logical empiricism (2003, 111). Quine's project then takes on the appearance of an epistemological account with an apparent interest in the evidential status of physical stimulation, but fails to explain how such sensory stimulation "acquires" any evidential standing (2003, 112). Margolis's more detailed critical points build on this general theme. Quine is further presented as offering sensory stimulation or 'stimulus meaning' as a replacement for the protocol sentences of the logical empiricists (roughly first person reports of sensory experience). Here Quine seeks to preserve the objective empirical basis needed for science and common-sense, what Margolis further describes as having "cognitive force prior to and without benefit of, any interpretive or theoretical intervention" (2003, 111).

The problem is that on Quine's own account this pristine pretheoretical empirical basis cannot be located without the prior use of resources officially disallowed by his theory. Here, the key issue turns on the assigning of sensory stimulation to reports of sensory observation (what Quine calls observation sentences). Margolis wonders about the rationale for such assignments and their bearing, if any, on the problem of perceptual evidence? More pointedly, he wonders why such identifications are thought to be more reliable than the ordinary perceptual resources already needed to identify them in the first place (2003, 119). If I read Margolis's main critical line correctly, or at least, one crucial thread in his overall argument, he thinks Quine's needed retreat from the cognitive privilege afforded by empirical givenness suffers from restrictive, scientific constraints that have no evident advantage over our ordinary perceptual resources. There is then a general worry concerning the evidential status of Quine's appeal to neural input and observation sentences and a more specific concern over the rationale and motives of this approach especially when compared with the resources found in what Margolis refers to as 'ordinary observation' (2003, 126). Like Kim and Davidson before him, Margolis isolates what appears to be a serious problem for Quine's naturalized account of knowledge, where Quine seems to confusingly (and inexplicably) mix the causal with the evidential (Kim 1988; Davidson 1982; 1990; 1997). The challenge set by Margolis is then the central one of clarifying the precise roles of the causal and evidential within Quine's epistemology. As we will soon see, this involves defending an alternative interpretation of Quine's remarks, one that requires clarifying a few of Quine's own misleading statements of his account.

3. Stimulation, observation and evidence: some preliminaries

In responding to Margolis's worries, it is useful to focus on Quine's attitude to the problem of sensory evidence and how it is related to his more general scientific viewpoint. This will help to explain the motives behind his appeal to, for example, sensory stimulation and also, and perhaps more significantly, indicate why his framing of key issues is often so misleading and at times somewhat inaccurate.

Briefly stated, Quine's specific standpoint in philosophy, his so-called 'naturalism', rejects any kind of knowledge other than that found in common sense and science. As a result, 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. This further means for him that philosophy (as a knowledge producing activity) must adhere to the same standards of clarity, evidence, and justification to be found in science more generally (Hylton 2007, 2–3; Quine 1970b, 2–3; 1981b, 72).

Given this perspective Quine proceeds to treat the philosophical question of the evidential support for science as a scientific question. We can frame the initial question in these terms: how do we come to know anything about the world? Quine's general answer is because of relations to sensory stimulation or more specifically, because of the way language is related to such stimulation. But why focus on sensory stimulation? He claims that our only source of information about the world is found with the energy that impacts our sensory surfaces. For example, the sensory stimulations I receive right now are themselves correlated with my surrounding environment at this moment. It is, Quine thinks, a scientific finding itself that we come by information about our surroundings through sensory stimulation of our nerve endings (Quine 1957, 228–230). He takes this claim as a well-confirmed scientific fact, even a scientific vindication of empiricism. It is something that we know in a relatively straightforward way and more abstractly by appeal to well confirmed scientific theories (like perhaps psychology and neurophysiology) (Hylton 2007, 12–15; 87–89; Quine 1981c, 39–41).

How does this then bear on the problem of evidence and observation? 'Observation' remains central for Quine's epistemology since it gives us whatever evidence we have for the support of our theories (Johnsen 2014a, 333; Quine 1974, 37–38). But Quine further explains that observations themselves prove unhelpful in the attempt to scientifically clarify

how observation plays this central evidential role. The problem and its solution are outlined in this lengthy passage:

What are observations? They are visual, auditory, tactual, olfactory. They are sensory, evidently, and thus subjective. Yet it was crucial to the use of observations, both as evidence and as semantical starting points, that they are socially shared. Should we say then that the observation is not the sensation after all, but the shared environmental circumstances? No, for there is no presumption of intersubjective agreement about the environing situation either; two men will assess it differently, partly because of noticing different features and partly because of entertaining different theories.

There is a way out of this difficulty over the notion of observation. . . I propose that we drop the talk of observation and talk instead of observation sentences, the sentences that are said to report observations: sentences like 'This is red', 'This is a rabbit'. No matter that sensations are private, and no matter that we may take radically different views of the environing situation; the observation *sentence* serves nicely to pick out what witnesses can agree on. 1974, 38–39 ⁴

Understanding the relationship between theory and evidence requires that we specify *both* in sentences and as we can see here, Quine suggests that it is observation sentences that state the evidence. Despite Quine's occasional references to experience, observations and even stimulations as evidence, in attempting to spell out the connections between evidence and theory, evidence needs to be formulated in terms of sentences (Johnsen 2014a, 334; Quine 1997, 575–576).

Quine then focuses on how our knowledge arises from the stimulation of our sensory receptors, responses to these stimulations and observation sentences which are closely related to these responses (roughly, observation sentences are those we are willing to accept or reject simply on the basis of present stimulation). Here, once again, we see the way Quine interprets the question of evidence in what he takes to be scientifically acceptable terms. We are faced with the following question: How do we acquire information about the world? And the answer will be informed by what science teaches us about our contact with world, namely, we come to know about our surroundings through stimulation at our sensory surfaces. By framing the issue in this way Quine has, I suggest following Hylton, redefined the basic question (2007, 89). Much of traditional epistemology offers a conception of sensory evidence where it has a kind of epistemic

⁴ For more detailed discussion of this and related passages see Johnsen 2014a, 333–340.

priority, which then supports other types of knowledge. Quine's account offers no such starting point, he, of course, thinks that there is no such independent epistemic perspective available (Hylton 2007, 89). Epistemology becomes science self-applied, where scientific resources are brought to bear on a scientific question concerning how we create theoretical knowledge on the basis of meager sensory contact with our surroundings.

So, one way to think about Margolis's worry about the motives for the use of sensory stimulation is to recognize the scientific outlook that informs the question. Quine's rationale for using stimulations and observation sentences is a scientific one. From that perspective it is, for him, a straightforward finding of science that the world impacts us through our senses. If one is interested in understanding how theories are related to observation, or how utterances come to be about the outside world, then this mundane scientific finding concerning the main source of information about our surrounding environment has epistemological significance.

Nevertheless, Margolis key critical concern remains. How can the stimulation of our senses provide evidence for our theories? Margolis rightly expresses serious reservations concerning Quine's emphasis on the idea that such sensory stimulation constitutes our evidence for what we know about our environment. The problem is highlighted when Quine claims that "The stimulations of his sensory receptors are all the evidence anybody has had to go on, ultimately, in arriving at his picture of the world" (1969, 75). This comment is even more puzzling since we have seen that it is observation sentences that must state our evidence for our theories. In addressing this problem we can begin by borrowing a key interpretive insight from Johnsen in his recent defense of Quine's theory of knowledge (Johnsen 2014b). We have noted that Quine describes sensory experience, neural input and observations all as evidence. As a naturalized epistemologist or scientific philosopher he sees these as three manifestations of a basically unitary phenomenon, our sensory contact with the world. As his discussion shifts from one context to another he then moves from one aspect to another.⁵ However, empiricism as the scientific view that emphasizes that information comes through the triggering of our sensory equipment is compatible with different philosophical views about what constitutes evidence. Johnsen further notes that except relative to a specific context of inquiry, Quine is uninterested in adjudicating between these three theories. The key point for him, is the truth of empiricism,

⁵ For further examples and discussion of this point see Johnsen 2014b.

and he further recommends that we then think of stimulations, observations and sensory evidence as three different way our senses 'evidence' our local environment (Johnsen 2014b, 981).

While this helps us understand why Quine makes these various claims concerning evidence it still does not explain why he thinks stimulation can count as evidence for theories. We must, I think, agree with Johnsen on this point and conclude that Quine's own view shows this claim to be untenable. Consider Quine's Humean view of inductive inference. Here observations, or observed facts, cannot by themselves provide evidence for our theories. It is only by taking these observations as evidence (in conjunction with theory) that they can serve this role, but in order to do so we must be aware of those observed facts. But as Quine acknowledges we are not aware of our sensory stimulations and so cannot take such stimulations as evidence for our theories (1981c, 40; 1993, 413). On Quine's own view stimulations or neural input cannot then serve as evidence for our theories (Johnsen 2014b, 983).

But what could Quine then mean when he claims that sensory stimulation is the evidence anyone has for their picture or theory of the world? To make this statement consistent with Quine's view we need to take it as speaking solely of physical objects. Human beings when considered as physical objects only have resource to physical stimulation in coming to cope with their local environment.⁶ Here, Quine is not discussing how we theorize about the world given the evidence but only how a human physical object when stimulated responds to this sensory input. Quine then misspeaks when he mentions evidence in this context.⁷ The stimulation of John's receptors is not evidence for his theory but they are the inputs to his sensory equipment from his local environment. They are assigned to him by scientific researchers or the naturalized epistemologist as they investigate the question of the sensory contact with a subject's surrounding environment. This sensory stimulation is the concern of these investigators but is of no concern to John who is unaware of them (Johnsen 2014a; 2014b).

We are thus lead to wonder about the relationship between this sensory stimulation, the causal physical impact on sensory receptors, and the

⁶ Johnsen also makes this point. For further discussion see his 2014b. Quine's perspective is perhaps best captured in the starting paragraphs from his 'The Scope and Language of Science' (Quine 1957, 228–229).

⁷ As we will see below this interpretation is also supported by Quine's response to Davidson's criticism of his use of 'evidence' in (Quine 1997, 575–6).

evidential support for our viewpoint. Does Quine offer a unified account of the causal and evidential aspects of his theory of knowledge? The problematic passage cited by Margolis and quoted in part in section 2 is Quine's somewhat awkward attempt to do so. We can however state the connection in this brief way.⁸ Our evidence consists of observable knowledge of facts about our immediate environment expressed in the form of observation sentences. Sensory input consists of the physical events of which we are unaware but which are causally responsible for the beliefs which get expressed in observation sentences, and which then further serve as support for such beliefs (Sinclair 2007, 464).

This details, provide, I think, a compelling response to Margolis's criticism of Quine's characterization of sensory stimulation as evidence. Quine departs from standard philosophical approaches to perceptual evidence in favor of his scientific reformulation of the question. As I have indicated he thinks there is nothing especially controversial about his use of sensory stimulation since he takes it as a well confirmed scientific claim concerning our source of information about the world. And despite some occasional missteps in characterizing his view, he does not equate this stimulation with observation or evidence. Evidence must be stated in sentences, specifically observation sentences since we are aware of them and can use them as evidence for our theories. Given Margolis's emphasis on the way Quine's use of sensory stimulation is unavoidably theoretical, it may be useful to wonder if his scientific rendering of 'evidence' is, in any way, independent from theory (2003, 127). In a fairly straightforward way it is, since regardless of whether we possess a theory about sensory stimulation, it remains that case that energy bombards our sensory surfaces further activating our sensory receptors. Here, stimulations are independent and prior to our current theory about them, but, of course, our knowledge about them is not (Hylton 2007, 89). This knowledge takes the form of a scientific theory couched in sentences which is further supported by evidence that consists of observed facts that are also expressed in sentences.

⁸ For more detailed accounts see Hylton 2007 and Johnsen 2014a; 2014b. Johnsen's view offers a surprising but still plausible defense of Quine's needed endorsement of introspective knowledge. He further defends a corresponding distinction between subjective observation sentences based on introspective evidence and objective observation sentences based on observed facts.

4. Observation, theory and evidence⁹

In responding to Margolis's criticisms, the previous section provided a preliminary discussion of the motives behind Quine's use of sensory stimulation, further clarified his claim that it be viewed as evidence, and provided a summary sketch of the way observation in the form of observation sentences should be properly seen as the evidence for our theories. However, skepticism may remain concerning whether Quine's view can adequately account for the evidential support of science. In order to then provide a more developed response to Margolis's criticisms, this section further builds on the details seen in the last section by giving an account of Quine's later treatment of the evidential support of scientific theory.

While not central to his later work, Quine does at time consider the relation between theory and evidence in more abstract, logical terms. From this standpoint he claims that our theory implies its evidence (1975). Here, like many others, he is accepting hypothetico-deductive method as central to science (1992, 9). We have seen that evidence must, for Quine, be couched in sentences, leading to observation sentences as the prime candidates for playing the role of evidence within Quine's account. When Quine considers the implications between theory and observation he comes to realize that he cannot simply appeal to observation sentences as evidence since they cannot be implied by theory (1975).¹⁰ This is because observation sentences are also 'occasion sentences', true on some occasions and not others, while our theory consists of standing sentences that are true regardless of time or place. There are then no direct inferential relations between our theoretical claims and observation sentences, so in terms of theory implying its evidence, observation sentences cannot by themselves count as evidence for our theory (Hylton 2007, 178; Quine 1981a). But observation sentences are causally linked to sensory stimulation, so whatever sentence is to play this evidential role, must be closely connected to observation sentences.

Quine addresses this inferential gap between theory and observation with what he calls 'observation categoricals':

⁹ This section draws on previously published material found in Sinclair 2014.

¹⁰ This is related to an additional problem that Quine would later acknowledge: Observation sentences cannot be simply responses to sensory stimulation (Hylton 2007, 135). Margolis is then right when he questions the claim that stimulation is enough to learn the proper use of an observation sentence (2010, 125). Hylton argues that mastery of a response to stimulation while only a beginning can through additional learning progress to the point where something close to adult mastery is achieved (Hylton 2007, 135–143).

An observation categorical is a generalization built onto observation sentences, to say that fulfillment of the one observation sentence is invariably attended by the fulfillment of the other. Examples: "Whenever it rains, it pours". "Wherever there's smoke, there's flame"... The observation sentences... were occasion sentences directly linked to sensory stimulation. The observational categoricals, now, are standing sentences directly linked to observation sentences.

Quine 1986, 330–331

Each observational categorical then contains observation sentences as parts, which themselves are directly linked to sensory stimulation. But the categorical itself is a standing sentence and so can be implied by background scientific theory. The inferential gap between observation sentences and the standing sentences of a given theory is then bridged with the implication of a categorical that through its parts is linked to observation sentences. The importance of these categoricals for Quine's attempt to capture the logical relations between theory and observation is highlighted when he describes them as the "lifeline of science", since they serve as "the ultimate empirical checkpoints of science generally" (Quine 1995a, 44).

These categoricals further epitomize what happens in experimental situations when a hypothesis is being tested. What is crucial here is their ability to express the general expectation that whenever one observation sentence holds, the other will also (Quine 1995a, 25). Theories can then be tested through deducing an observational categorical. The categorical is itself put to the test by setting up the first observable situation and then waiting for the second to materialize. If it does then the observation categorical is tentatively accepted as true and becomes part of our existing theory. If not, then it is rejected.

Quine offers as an example, a team of mineralogists deliberating as to whether a newly found mineral is litholite (1992, 9). A hypothesis concerning its chemical make-up is established, which further allows them to infer that if this hypothesis is true, then this piece of litholite should emit hydrogen sulfide when sufficiently heated. Here we have the two observables that make up the categorical and illustrate the test of a hypothesis: If this pinkish piece of mineral is litholite then it should emit hydrogen sulfide when heated above 180 degrees Celsius. The mineralogists can then make the necessary observations and then proceed to test their colleague's hypothesis. Observation categoricals both bridge the inferential gap between theory and observation and further show how evidence

and justification is found for a respective scientific hypothesis implied by our background theory: "The scientist deduces from his hypotheses that a certain observable situation should bring about another observable situation; then he realizes the one situation and watches for the other. Evidence for or against his set of hypotheses ensues, however inconclusive" (2000b, 411). The consequences predicted by the observation categorical indicate how observation sentences through their conditioning to stimulus conditions yield evidence for our hypotheses about the world. In response to critics, Quine elaborates on this point in these terms:

Some of my readers have wondered how expressions that are merely keyed to our neural intake, by conditioning or in less direct ways, could be said to convey evidence about the world. This is the wrong picture. We are not aware of our neural intake, nor do we deduce anything from it. What we *have* learned to do is to assert or assent to some observation sentences in *reaction* to certain ranges of neural intake. It is such sentences, then, thus elicited, that serve as experimental checkpoints for theories about the world. Negative check points.

1993, 413

This passage provides further support for the interpretation sketched at the end of the previous section when it was emphasized that sensory input consists of physical events that we are unaware of but which are causally responsible for the beliefs that get expressed as observation sentences. Observation sentences are able to provide support for hypotheses in virtue of their connections to neural input and by serving as the needed components of a categorical that is the logical implication of prior theory. This then, for Quine, clarifies the basic idea that prediction of observed events is what permits the testing of scientific theories.

These various points can be brought together by considering one of Quine's most explicit response concerning the location of 'evidence' within his naturalized account of knowledge in this case directed at Davidson:

'Evidence' is a term that I have used informally in introductory or summary formulations. I have not found it useful in more detailed inquiry. But let me now see what, more precisely, I would make of it. My stated overall problem has been the quasi-epistemological problem, within natural science, of man's construction of natural science on the datum base of neural intake. The intake is not what we are aware of and infer from, but it does encompass our 'information', in the computer engineer's sense, as to what is going on around us. It is perhaps a candidate for the title of evidence, but it does not meet

Davidson's dictum that only a belief can be evidence for a belief. The runner-up for the title is the observation sentence that has been conditioned to that neural intake. Evidence in this sense meets Davidson's condition. Quine 1997, 575–6

This statement confirms what we have seen in earlier sections. First, in attempting to provide a scientific-philosophical account of the connections between sensory stimulation and scientific pronouncements, the term 'evidence' is too unclear to serve as part of a well formed, if still speculative, empirical hypothesis about human knowledge¹¹ Similar to the concepts of 'knowledge' and 'belief', Quine rejects it because it fails to meet the standards of clarity required for genuine scientific explanation.¹² However, in contrast to his critics, Quine maintains that his scientific analogues of 'sensory input' or his more recent use of 'neural input' can be thought of as evidence in terms of the causal source of information present in our local environment. Here, as we have seen, he must be describing the standpoint of the scientific epistemologist who proceeds to examine subjects solely as physical objects in a physical world. He also notes that neural intake does not serve to justify our beliefs, because we are not aware of this sensory input, nor can we then infer anything from it. This type of 'evidence' is of a piece with Quine's naturalistic rendering of the causal connections between our sensory surfaces and theory. While it remains quite central for his own genetic account of the route from stimulus to science, his debates with Davidson have made clear to him that it fails to address other worries about 'evidence'.¹³ He then clearly shows that he does not confuse the causal links between theory and stimulation with an

¹¹ This explains Quine's agreement with Davidson that in his theory of evidence 'evidence' is not clarified and plays no role (Quine 1990). We have seen that it is such considerations that motivate his discussion at the start of *Pursuit of Truth* when he claims that we can examine the evidential support of science without appealing to 'evidence' as a technical term (1992, 2).

¹² This is brought out in this passage: "My position is that the notions of thought and belief are very worthy objects of philosophical and scientific clarification and analysis, and that they are in equal measure very ill suited for use as instruments of philosophical and scientific clarification and analysis. If someone accepts these notions outright for such use, I am at a loss to imagine what he can have deemed more in need of clarification and analysis than the things he has thus accepted" (1981d, 184). For Quine's rejection of the concept 'knowledge' on similar grounds, see his 1984, 322.

¹³ In response to Gibson, Quine notes that Davidson's critical remarks on his use of evidence led him to "fight shy of the word" (1994, 502). He makes similar comments in a reply to Grayling (2000a, 411).

evidential relation since he is well aware that sensory stimulation cannot stand as a reason for a belief.¹⁴

An additional type of evidence, one that better conforms to Davidson's and Kim's standards, and what Quine himself describes as evidence in the "strict sense" (Quine 2000b) is found with observation sentences since, as we have seen, they can serve as experimental checkpoints that test theory. We remain unaware of our neural input, or sensory stimulation, but this neural activity causes us to assert *that* something is the case, which is then fully expressed with the utterance of an observation sentence. Once uttered observation sentences become objects of awareness from which inferences can be made where such inferences allow the respective test of a prediction and hypothesis. Davidson's strictures on evidence are then addressed by Quine's use of observation sentences, which are conditioned to sensory stimulation. While observation sentences then meet Davidson's standards for evidence, we have seen that by themselves they cannot properly address Quine's interest in the logical implications between theory and observation. Observation sentences can serve as evidence and experimental checkpoints only once they have the appropriate logical connections to theoretical sentences. In meeting this demand, Quine then further articulates the logical implications of scientific theory in terms of observation categoricals that, as we have seen, contain observation sentences as parts. Evidence is then found in observing, or failing to observe, the conjunction of the truth of observation sentences, as they are described within the appropriate categorical (Hylton 2007, 186). Given these details, Quine then thinks that observation remains the locus of evidence (2000b, 412).

5. Conclusions: Quine's pragmatism

Previous sections have clarified Quine's view of evidence and further indicated how this informs his recent remarks on the logical implications between theory and observation. The result is a more plausible account of the relations between theory, observation and evidence that acknowledges much of the force of Margolis's critical remarks. The result is, I think, a better overall interpretation of Quine's leading claims demonstrating why he finds epistemological significance in sensory stimulation,

¹⁴ Quine makes a distinction between neural input as strictly causal and observations sentences as containing processed information in his 'Grades of Theoreticity' (1970a, 3). He further notes the difference between the causal and evidential in Quine and Ullian 1978 (14–15).

and how, despite some misleading statements, he can be interpreted as offering a plausible attempt at normative epistemology.

In this concluding section, I want to briefly suggest how this interpretation of Quine's view draws him closer to Margolis's kind of pragmatist constructivism.¹⁵ This view is offered as a viable alternative to analytic scientism and emphasizes the key pragmatist insight that what is taken as true about the world is epistemically and practically dependent on the active human community of inquiry. This active constructive role of the human community in establishing truth theories of the world is a basic component of Quine's epistemology. In accounting for the pragmatist's place in empiricism, Quine largely endorses the idea that truth is a human creation rather than something found. He elaborates on this view in the following way:

Popper and the rest of us who celebrate the hypothetico-deductive method depart from Schiller's humanism, it may be supposed, in thinking of it as a method of finding truth rather than making it. *But I cannot agree.* Despite my naturalism, I am bound to recognize that the systematic structure of scientific theory is man-made. It is made to fit the data, yes, but invented rather than discovered, because it is not uniquely determined by the data.

Quine 1981e, 32, my emphasis

This human made character of true scientific theories carries over to their evidential connections. One way to see this is to recognize Quine's claim that there are no logical connections between theory and its evidence (neither deductive nor inductive), and if we want to understand how they are related, we should examine how we are capable of constructing theories from the available evidence. By learning the psychological truth about how we relate evidence to theory through the use of scientific method, we are learning the philosophical truth concerning how evidence is related to theory by the use of scientific method (Johnsen 2005, 84; 87; 2014b). In other words, evidential connections to theory are ones that humans have actively constructed. More specifically, the connections that exist between theory and evidence are ones that we have made through our following the set of norms that loosely make up what is called 'scientific method'.

Given these affinities between Margolis's and Quine's pragmatism we might wonder if there is any remaining point of disagreement between

¹⁵ This connection is perhaps less surprising if we remember C.I. Lewis's influence on Quine's developing views. For recent accounts of this connection see Sinclair 2012 and 2015.

them. Margolis's criticisms show resistance to Quine's scientific formulation of philosophical issues routinely claiming that it remains unclear why these formulations are needed in addressing the philosophical issues in question. Here is where I suggest, in a rather brief exploratory way, we can locate a fundamental divergence between Quine and Margolis. Consider Margolis's following claim:

Put in the simplest terms: Quine has no use for the idea that human persons are 'second-natured,' transformed by the processes of enculturation. But then, there's no point to a philosophical rapprochement through strengthening naturalism's hand, if naturalism doesn't return us to the analysis of the puzzles of cultural life. 2010, 43

This I think is right, or very close to being right. Quine is not interested in the puzzles of cultural life; indeed, he advocates a conception of philosophy that takes its main problems as distinct from, perhaps even devoid of, any larger social, cultural import. Put more specifically, he is interested solely in understanding human theoretical activity but not human culture more generally (Hylton 2007, 7). Margolis's criticisms are informed by a view that is interested in understanding these broader features of human culture, and that sees Quine's account as clearly far too impoverished to address such concerns (Margolis 2015). On its own terms, Quine may be able to show how it is possible to move from stimulus to science, but not from stimulus to culture, or the emergent cultural self. I want to suggest that the key dividing line here is not Quine's specific scientific constraints, or his 'scientism' because we have seen that with regard to the issue of 'evidence' these constraints do not remove any of those considerations that Margolis takes as central to the evidential support of science. Rather it is the question of whether philosophical concerns can be properly handled exclusively in scientific terms that is the basic dividing point between them.

Seen with this question in mind, the dispute between Margolis and Quine involves a basic disagreement over the aims of philosophy, where this is further and more deeply linked to a conflict between scientific and cultural conceptions of philosophy or philosophical practice. Margolis argues that philosophy needs a rejuvenated naturalism that addresses the cultural dimensions of human life. My portrayal of his disagreement with Quine suggests a more fundamental issue, which wonders if philosophical reflection should be confined to the professional, scientific and intellectual

demands of philosophers or should play a more explicit cultural role in addressing current social and moral concerns.¹⁶

Look at from Quine's perspective, Margolis's own cultural view of philosophy itself lacks an independent argument for why the demands of these cultural concerns must be met by philosophy. While Margolis would perhaps claim, rightly I think, that Quine's technical, scientific vision simply places such issues outside the purview of professional philosophy. How are we to then adjudicate this fundamental metaphilosophical disagreement? I don't know. However it appears that the acceptance of these contrasting conceptions of philosophy is so basic and thorough as to make any neutral adjudication unlikely.¹⁷

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¹⁶ For further relevant discussion concerning the metaphilosophical perspective informing Margolis's position see Hildebrand 2015.

¹⁷ I would like to thank Joseph Margolis and my co-editor Dirk-Martin Grube for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

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Protagoras and Margolis on the Viability of Ancient Relativism

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In this contribution, I explore the understanding of ancient relativism that Joseph Margolis has provided us with in his ground-breaking *The Truth about Relativism* (Oxford 1991). In doing so, I have two main aims, namely to show how, in contrast with more celebrated handlings of it, Margolis' interpretation of ancient relativism offers a sensitive understanding of Protagoras' views, as the latter are presented in Plato's *Theaetetus* and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Book 4. Secondly, I shall try to maintain not only that Margolis' interpretation of ancient relativism is highly plausible from an historical point of view, but also that he is perfectly legitimate to defend the viability of that relativism in light of his own concept of 'robust relativism'. By drawing on Margolis' more recent works and on personal correspondence, I will end by illustrating a possible disagreement between Margolis' own understanding of ancient relativism and mine.

Before entering into the details of ancient relativism, let me say something more personal on my initial encounter with Protagoras. In 1998–2001 I was a doctoral student at Durham University (UK) when I first approached Protagoras' relativism. I had been (and still I am) attracted to ancient relativism by its evident philosophical strength. I was very discomforted when I realized that some celebrated ancient philosophy scholars argued much against Protagoras, being ready to show the sheer implausibility, defectiveness, and self-contradiction (to say the least) of his doctrine. My supervisor, a great and well-known Platonist, was himself perhaps not very interested in Protagoras' relativism. To help me out of such despair, how-

ever, he gave a book to me, saying that in it I could have founded a hand guiding me out from the labyrinth. The book was Joseph Margolis' *The Truth about relativism*. Ever since, I have often come back to it to feel, once again, the freshness and sense of liberation that I originally felt when I first read it back in 1998. Relativism was a noble philosophical option and one that had its deep roots in its ancient version, Margolis' book taught me. I was then ready to reinforce Margolis' interpretation of ancient relativism by plunging into a detailed reading of ancient sources on Protagoras, a reading never disjointed by the revisionary approach to relativism I learned when I first encountered Margolis' book.¹ I am very grateful to Margolis, among other things, also for having written that book. At the same time, I am extremely pleased to offer this essay as a tribute both to his originality as a philosopher and to his innovative capacity to read the history of philosophy under a truly refreshing light.

1. Protagoras' relativism in Plato's Theaetetus

Protagoras is the patriot saint of ancient relativism. All ancient sources uniformly link the doctrine of relativism to his name. He was a celebrated sophist, the greatest of all, and a figure of extraordinary relevance in the political and intellectual life of the fifth century BC Greece. Close to Pericles, the innovator of Athenian democracy, Protagoras was also the first author whose books were burnt in the public square, not because they professed relativism but because they defended a sort of agnosticism about the existence of gods.² It is one of the most damaging losses in all the history of ancient philosophy that there are not extant works of Protagoras, a prolific philosopher on all counts. We have only nine fragments of him preserved *ipsissima verba*, among which there is the famous dictum that "Man is measure of all things" (Gergel & Dillon, 9 ff.), which is taken to expound, although cryptically, his relativism.

In order to reconstruct his views, we have thus to revert to the treatment that both Plato and Aristotle devoted to him, respectively in the

¹ The main outcome of my effort on this respect is *Protagoras and the Challenge of relativism. Plato's subtlest enemy*, London: Ashgate, 2007; Chinese translation 2012.

² See the fragment 4 in the Diels-Kranz standard collection (here after DK) on the Pre-socratics and the sophists: 80DKB4 (translated in Gergel & Dillon eds., *The Greek Sophists*, London: Penguin, 2003, 21): "Concerning the gods, I am not in a position to know either that they exist, or that they do not exist; for there are many obstacles in the way of such knowledge, notably the intrinsic obscurity of the subject and the shortness of human life".

Theaetetus and in *Metaphysics* book 4.³ The fact that Plato and Aristotle dealt with Protagoras in two of their major works shows how much his relativism was important in the context of ancient thought. Yet, both Plato and Aristotle authoritatively represent what Margolis calls the ‘archic canon’ in taking reality as a truly fixed item, to be known objectively.⁴ Given their philosophical commitments, they strongly oppose Protagoras’ relativism, and aim to show how incoherent it is. Their philosophical opposition, however, does not prevent them from presenting Protagoras’ views in fairly trustworthy terms, that is, without distorting the proper content of his relativism. They really want to show that Protagoras got things wrong but before showing this (unsuccessfully on my and—more importantly—Margolis’ account)⁵, they provide us with a credible reconstruction of the kind of relativism Protagoras is likely to have endorsed. We really have to be grateful to Plato and Aristotle for having saved the traces of ancient relativism in some key-sections of their works. Some scholars tend to focus on those key-texts only to see how criticized/able relativism is, without realizing that the essential element of Plato’s and Aristotle’s testimonies on Protagoras is the fairly accurate exposition of his philosophical views, not (only) the criticism that they level against it.

We just have to read Plato’s and Aristotle’s testimonies without submitting to the archic canon. Let us begin with the *Theaetetus*. The *Theaetetus* is one of Plato’s greatest dialogues and one to which contemporary philosophers often turn their eyes: I just here mention the name of John McDowell, who has contributed an illuminating commentary (and a very reliable translation, which I use in this essay) of the dialogue for Oxford in 1973. The dialogue is an investigation into the nature of knowledge and ends with no real answer to the question with which it opened: ‘what is knowledge?’ Socrates is helped in his enterprise aimed at give birth to the notion of knowledge by a young and promising mathematician, Theaetetus. He in turn provides Socrates with three definitions of knowledge that some of us would perhaps happily accept but that Socrates shows to be

³ Plato (especially) and Aristotle provide the most detailed and wide-ranging analysis of Protagoras’ relativism but Sextus is an important source too: see *Outlines of Scepticism* I 216–19 (=80DKA14=Gergel & Dillon, 13); *Against the Mathematicians* VII 60–4; 388–90 (=80DKA15=Gergel & Dillon, 14–5).

⁴ Margolis (1991), 2–3. He says: “one version of the canon takes the following form: that is possible, under real-world conditions, to discern what, tout court, is true or false about things. But what is true, it is said, is timelessly true, even if it addresses what is transient”. On the archic canon, see also Margolis (1991), 87–99.

⁵ Margolis (1991), 70–77; 149–53; Zilioli (2007), chapter 4.

ultimately untenable.⁶ The three definitions are respectively the following ones: knowledge is perception (*Tht.* 151e3), knowledge is true belief (*Tht.* 187b5–6) and knowledge is true belief with an account (*Tht.* 201c9–d1, something close to Gettier's 'knowledge as justified true belief').

Now, Theaetetus' first definition that knowledge is perception is first equated by Socrates to Protagoras' slogan that "Man is the Measure of all things, of those that are, that are, of those that are not, that are not".⁷ Protagoras' maxim is, in turn, given a relativistic reading, which we had better read in the original wording of Plato. I quote a full excerpt (*Tht.* 151e9–152c7: *passage 1*) from the first section of Plato's *Theaetetus*:

SOCRATES: Well, it looks as though what you've said about knowledge is no ordinary theory, but the one that Protagoras, too, used to state. But he put the same point in a different way. Because he says, you remember, that a man is the measure (*metron*) of all things (*chrēmātōn*): of those which are, that (*hōs*) they are, and of those which are not, that they are not. You've read that, I take it? (151e9–152a4)

THEAETETUS: Yes, often.

SOCRATES: and he means something on these lines: everything is, for me, the way it appears to me, and is, for you, the way it appears to you, and you and I are, each of us, a man? (152a6–8)

THEAETETUS: Yes, that's what he means.

SOCRATES: Well, it's plausible that a wise man wouldn't be saying something silly; so let's follow him up. It sometimes happens, doesn't it, that when the same wind is blowing one of us feels cold and the other not? Or that one feels slightly cold and the other very? (152b1–3)

THEAETETUS: certainly.

SOCRATES: Now on those occasions, shall we say that the wind itself, taken by itself, is cold or not cold? Or shall we accept it from Protagoras that

⁶ Theaetetus' attempts to define knowledge are actually four: the three I am about to list and a preliminary one, which aims to define knowledge by indicating singular instances of knowledge such as geometry, the art of the shoemaker etc. (*Theaetetus*= *Tht.* 146ac–147c. I quote the *Theaetetus* rather conventionally, that is, by indicating the old pagination of Plato's *Editio Princeps*, the one prepared by Henry Stephanus in Geneva in 1578. The same pagination numbers are to be found on the margins of every modern translation of Plato's dialogues). Socrates dismisses such a preliminary account of knowledge by saying that he wants one definition of knowledge, not a list of items of knowledge.

⁷ The Greek of Protagoras' maxim is highly ambiguous, both in the lexicon and in the syntax. An alternative reading could be: "man is the measure of all things: of those which are, because they are, and of those which are not, because they are not".

it's cold for the one who feels cold, and not for the one who doesn't?
(152b5–7)

THEAETETUS: that seems plausible.

SOCRATES: Now it appears that way to each of us?

THEAETETUS: yes.

SOCRATES: and this 'appears' is perceiving?

THEAETETUS: yes.

SOCRATES: so appearing and perception are the same, in the case of that which is hot and everything of that sort. So it looks as though things are, for each person, the way he perceives them. (152c1–3)

THEAETETUS: that seems plausible.

SOCRATES: so perception is always of what is, and free from falsehood, as if it's knowledge. (152c5–6)

In these brief extract Socrates affirms—and persuades Theaetetus—that Protagoras' maxim is a form of perceptual relativism, for which something (a perceptual item in the material world, such as the wind) is perceived as hot by someone and by cold by someone else, and that both perceivers are correct in their perception. Therefore, as Socrates highlights, "things are, for each person, the way he perceives them". At a later stage in the dialogue, Protagoras' relativism is openly extended, more generally, to judgments (not only to perceptual grasping).⁸ But that Protagoras' relativism had a broad range of judgmental application is evident also from the very section I have quoted. The Greek term '*aisthēsis*' and the cognate verb '*aisthanomai*', which have been uniformly translated as 'perception' or 'to perceive' in the text above, are very broad in meaning and they may also cover such items as 'beliefs deriving from mere perception', 'judgments' and such activity as 'to judge'.⁹

2. Self-refutation, weak relationalism, robust relativism

In his initial treatment of Protagoras' doctrine, Plato insists on the epistemological aspect that Protagoras' relativism displays and also highlights the self-refuting character of that relativism and, by extension, of any relativism that restricts itself to epistemological concerns. More in particular, in the *Theaetetus* for the very first time in the history of philosophy Plato formulates the famous charge of self-refutation against relativism

⁸ See e.g. *Tht.* 166a–168c5; the section of self-refutation we are just about to read; 171d–172c.

⁹ Zilioli (2007), 44.

that since then anti-relativists of any time and age have in different fashions too often proposed. Let us read Plato directly on this (*Tht.* 171a6–c7, *passage 2*):

SOCRATES: Protagoras agrees that everyone has in his judgments the things which are. In doing that, he's surely conceding that the opinion of those who make opposing judgments about his own opinion—that is, their opinion that what he thinks is false—is true.¹⁰ (171a6–9)

THEODORUS: [a mathematician and Protagoras' friend from Cyrene, who acts as his defender in this part of the dialogue]: certainly.

SOCRATES: so if he admits that their opinion is true—that is, the opinion of those who believe that what he thinks is false—he would seem to be conceding that his own opinion is false? (171b1–2)

THEODORUS: he must be.

SOCRATES: but the others don't concede that what they think is false? (171b4)

THEODORUS: no.

SOCRATES: and Protagoras, again, admits that that judgment of theirs is true, too, according to what he has written. (171b6–7)

THEODORUS: evidently.

SOCRATES: so his theory will be disputed by everyone, beginning with Protagoras himself; or rather, Protagoras himself will agree that it's wrong. When he concedes that someone who contradicts him is making a true judgment, he will himself be conceding that a dog, or an ordinary man, isn't the measure of so much as one thing that he hasn't come to know. Isn't that so? (171b9–c2)

THEODORUS: yes.

SOCRATES: Well then, since it's disputed by everyone that, it would seem that Protagoras' *Truth* [the title of Protagoras' lost book on knowledge] isn't true for anyone: not for anyone else, and not for Protagoras himself. (171c5–7)

This argument has been much celebrated and has its modern analogue in the claim that, as Margolis puts it, "it is impossible to formulate the thesis (sc. of relativism) consistently or coherently" (*The Truth*, 1). Relativism is an epistemological doctrine on knowledge and truth—Plato argues—and is, as such, self-defeating.

¹⁰ In the whole passage, perception is replaced, more generally, by the term '*doxa*', that is, 'opinion, belief, judgement'.

One first problem with Plato's self-refutation argument against Protagoras in the *Theaetetus* is that it is logically faulty: Plato does not insert the qualifying phrase 'true for' in crucial stages of his own reasoning against Protagoras (for instance at 171a6–9, 171b1–2, 171b4), hence begging the question and saddling his own argument in a fatal way. Gregory Vlastos famously noticed the point, followed by many other scholars who think that Plato did get things wrong against Protagoras' relativism.¹¹ But in another much celebrated article Myles Burnyeat has insisted that, although he does not insert the qualifying expression 'true for' at crucial stages of his own reasoning, Plato is not guilty of any *ignoratio elenchi* and that his argument against relativism is thus successful.¹²

I will not here be concerned with a formal analysis of Plato's self-refutation argument. What I wish to bring about is that every analysis of Protagoras' relativism that takes it to be a purely epistemological doctrine betrays the philosophical spirit of ancient relativism. Plato himself will show this to us. I will demonstrate the point shortly, not before having noted however that the version of Protagoras' relativism that grows out from the passages of Plato that I have brought to attention is the weakest version of (ancient) relativism, namely what Margolis calls relationalism. He defines 'relationalism' in these terms: "in one [sc. version of relativism], truth-values or truth-like values are themselves relativized, or, better, *relationalized*, so that (for instance) 'true' is systematically replaced by 'true in Lk' (for some particular language, perspective, habit of mind, social practice, convention or the like, selected from among a set of relevant alternatives ['k'] that might well yield otherwise inconsistent, incompatible, contradictory values when judged in accord with the usual canonical bivalent values ('true' and 'false'), themselves taken to range over all such k's" (*The Truth*, 8). Taken as a form of relationalism, Protagoras' relativism is confronted with some insoluble problems; as Margolis puts it, if taken as a relationalist, "Protagoras would certainly be defeated at a stroke" (*ibidem*).

Relationalism is the kind of relativism that is centered on exquisitely epistemological concerns and is thus doomed, in adopting truly bi-polar values, to be internally self-refuting. But this is not what Protagoras

¹¹ In his critical analysis of Plato's self-refutation argument in the *Theaetetus* Vlastos (1956) was anticipated by Grote (1875) and followed by e.g. Runciman (1962), Sayre (1969), McDowell (1973), Polansky (1992).

¹² Burnyeat (1976). In his subsequent commentary on Plato's *Theaetetus*, he seems to be more careful on the alleged success of Plato's argument against Protagoras' relativism (Burnyeat 1990, 30).

was up to, his relativism being best seen as the offspring of *ontological* and alethical concerns. More perspicuously, Protagoras' relativism is the stronger version of relativism, namely what Margolis calls 'robust relativism', the latter being a philosophical view that, while adopting a set of many valued truth-values, is characterized as a global view (alethic, epistemological, ontological). Protagoras' robust relativism is best interpreted as a doctrine that rejects bi-polar truth-values and adopts a quite strong view of the material world (a view that goes much against the archic canon of Plato and Aristotle). Margolis provides us with a nice definition of Protagoras' robust relativism: "protagoreanism [...] is the thesis that: (1) man is the measure of reality, knowledge and truth; (2) there is no independent invariant reality that man can claim obtains or that he knows, consistently with affirming (1); (3) the conjunction of (1) and (2) is viable, not incoherent, not self-contradictory, not self-defeating; and (4) judgments of what is true and false, within the space of (1), disallow any disjunction between knowledge (*episteme*) and opinion or belief (*doxa*)" (*The Truth*, 82).

While we have to wait until Aristotle's own handling of Protagoras' doctrine in *Metaphysics* 4 to learn how ancient relativism dissociated itself with the use of the principle of non-contradiction, the most interesting point of the whole discussion about Protagoras' doctrine in the *Theaetetus* is that Plato himself shows us that the relativism of the sophist is a form of robust relativism. So far I have been excessively selective in presenting the main evidence on Protagoras' relativism in Plato's *Theaetetus*, since I have up to now focussed on those passages of Plato's dialogue that highlight the epistemological aspect inherent to Protagoras' doctrine. But Plato makes clear that Protagoras' relativism is not only an epistemological view, but it is also, and mainly, a metaphysical doctrine.

3. Protagoras' Secret doctrine.

The first hint that Protagoras' doctrine is also a metaphysical thesis may be grasped by Socrates' own reference to the example of the wind in the first passage of Plato's *Theaetetus* that I have quoted (*passage 1*). If we grant each individual the incorrigibility for his own perceptions, as Protagoras wants—Socrates observes—what will we say about the ontological status of the blowing wind? As he puts it, "shall we say that the wind itself, taken by itself, is cold or not cold? Or shall we accept it from Protagoras that it's cold for the one who feels cold, and not for the one who doesn't?"

(152b5–7). Protagoras' epistemological relativism is here explicitly rooted into a metaphysical view, which in turn tells us that the wind is neutral with regard to its properties: it is neither cold nor hot. To use a term that is recurrent in contemporary debates, the wind is metaphysically indeterminate. How do we need to understand that indeterminacy?¹³ Another passage from Plato's *Theaetetus* sheds new light on the metaphysical features of Protagoras' doctrine.

After having shown Theaetetus the epistemological meaning of Protagoras' relativism at 151e9–152c7 (*passage 1*) Socrates immediately says that Protagoras had a Secret doctrine that imparted to his closest disciples (*Tht.* 152c8–10)¹⁴. What is Protagoras' Secret doctrine? Here it is what Plato make Socrates say of it (*Tht.* 152d1–e1: *passage 3*):

SOCRATES: It is certainly no ordinary theory: it's to the effect that nothing is just one thing just by itself, and that you can't correctly speak of anything either as some thing 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 [...] are coming to be; because nothing ever is, but things are always coming to be.

There are some different ways to read this passage and, hence, several ways to interpret Protagoras' Secret doctrine.¹⁵ What Plato's exposition of Protagoras' Secret doctrine makes clear, however, is that the relativism of the sophist has a metaphysical root-source: "nothing is just one thing just by itself", further glossed as "nothing is one—either one thing or qualified in one way".

According to this view, each of us is perfectly legitimate and correct in his perceptions because there is no fixed reality with we all are objec-

¹³ I now stick to 'indeterminacy' when I refer to Protagoras' commitment in metaphysics: in the last section of the paper, I will deal with the question whether indeterminacy raises problems for Protagoras' relativism.

¹⁴ With 'Secret doctrine' I take Plato alluding to the hidden meaning of Protagoras' relativism, that is, to the metaphysical view that lies at the root of it and that he (Plato) is just about to reveal. That Protagoras' maxim has an overtly metaphysical significance is clear from its reference to "the things that are, that they are" and to those "that are not, that they are not". But this metaphysical significance is not evident at a first hearing of the maxim, hidden as it is under the oracular tone that Protagoras chose to use when declaring his slogan.

¹⁵ See McDowell (1973), 122–9 for an excellent overview of the various philosophical interpretations of the Secret doctrine.

tively confronted. Protagoras is here seen by Plato to reject his (Plato's) and Aristotle's archic canon: the world is not populated by discrete objects that we come to know by means of our epistemological skills and capacities. We can discriminate between correct and mistaken perceptions. For Protagoras, the world is not changeless but it is in constant flux and in perennial change, so that no object can be really said to exist as such (more radically) or no object is qualified in a determinate way (more mildly). In other words, for Protagoras the world is, more or less radically, metaphysically indeterminate.

The metaphysical flavour of Protagoras' doctrine is reiterated once again by Plato in another important section of the *Theaetetus*, where Socrates reports a peculiar theory of perception that, as in a system of Chinese boxes, shows at a full extent the ontological commitments of Protagoras' Secret doctrine.¹⁶ The theory is fully expounded at *Theaetetus* 156a3-157c1, in a section of dense and captivating philosophical theorizing. For reasons of space I will not be able to quote it entirely but let me address the key-points of that theory. The material world, including persons, is seen as in constant flux and change. According to that theory, there are two kinds of change, "each unlimited in number, the one having the power of acting and the other the power of being acted on" (*Tht.* 156a7). From the intercourse of these two powers, there come to be twin-offspring, "of which one is a perceived thing and the other a perception, which is on every occasion generated and brought to birth together with the perceived thing" (156b2-3). In this picture, the material world is seen as a world of powers and processes, not of objects; perceptions and perceived things are the momentary result of temporary encounters. On the occasions of these encounters, both things and individuals may be understood as displaying an identity, of which they are immediately deprived once those encounters come to an end.

As Socrates says, in summing up the entire new theory and in reconnecting it to the Secret doctrine of Protagoras (156e7-157a7, *passage* 4):

We must take it that nothing is hard, hot, or anything, just by itself—we were actually saying that some time ago [sc. when for the first time

¹⁶ In Zilioli (2012), 47-71; 86-90 I offer reasons for attributing such theory to Protagoras' philosophical heirs in Plato's own time: the Cyrenaics, a Socratic school based in North Africa, whose leader was Aristippus, a close associate of Socrates. It has been objected that Cyrenaic subjectivism and Protagoras' relativism differ significantly (Tsouna 1998, 124-37). I answer to this objection by saying that, although there are surely differences between the two theories, in the *Theaetetus* Plato insists on the close analogies between the two: see Rowe (2014).

Socrates illustrated to us Protagoras' Secret doctrine: passage 3 above] but that in their intercourse with one another things come to be all things and qualified in all ways, as a result of their change. Because even in the case of those of them which act and those which are acted on, it isn't possible to arrive at a firm conception, as they say, of either of them, taken singly, as being anything. It isn't true that something is a thing which acts before it comes into contact with the thing which is acted on by it; nor that something is a thing which is acted on before it comes into contact with the thing which acts on it.

I cannot imagine anything more distant from Plato's and Aristotle's conception of reality. If the latter philosophers subscribe to what Margolis calls the 'archic canon' in believing into a changeless world of either (Platonic) Forms or (Aristotelian) essences, Protagoras' Secret doctrine and the perceptual theory deriving from it will become the paradigm of the anti-archic canon in postulating a world of processes and powers, where objects and persons have so transitory an identity to be actually best understood as not-existent (as single and stable items). The conjunction of Protagoras' anti-archic view of the material world and of the epistemological doctrine that descends from it makes his relativism a form of robust relativism. As such, if interpreted correctly on the basis of the evidence (Plato's *Theaetetus*), ancient relativism will not suffer from the usual self-refuting problems that afflict relationalism, in so far as Protagoras' doctrine offers a global (that is, epistemological, ontological and alethic, to use Margolis' terms)¹⁷ theory. Before discussing further the scope of Protagoras' relativism, let us turn briefly to Aristotle's handling of it in *Metaphysics* 4.

4. Protagoras' relativism in Aristotle' *Metaphysics*

Aristotle treats Protagoras' relativism in the context of his discussion of the Principle of Non-Contradiction (hereafter, PNC) in sections 3–6 of *Metaphysics* 4. In particular, he focuses on Protagoras' relativism in sections 5 and 6.

Aristotle offers three versions of PNC: "For the same thing to hold good and not to hold good simultaneously of the same thing and in the same respect is impossible (1005b19–20=PNC1).¹⁸ The second version is

¹⁷ Margolis (1991), 7–8.

¹⁸ After enunciating PNC1, Aristotle adds the following specifications: "given any further specifications which might be added against the dialectical difficulties", which he further

as follows: "It is impossible for anyone to suppose that the same thing is and is not" (1005b23–24=PNC2). The third and last version is to be found at 1011b13–14: "the opinion that opposite assertions are not simultaneously true is the firmest of all (PNC3). PNC1 is a metaphysical version of PNC, for it states a principle about how things in the world are and must be. PNC2 is a psychological and epistemological version of PNC, since it states a principle about how our beliefs and judgments are or must be.¹⁹ PNC3 is a logical version of PNC, since it states a principle about how our linguistic assertions must be.

Although he offers three versions of the same principle or different ways to apply the same principle to key areas of reality and thought, it is clear from the arguments of *Metaphysics* 4, 3–6 that Aristotle is most concerned with PNC as mainly PNC1 (that is, as a principle that shows how things are and must be) and, consequently, with PNC as PNC2 (that is, as a principle that shows how we think, and have to think, of things). Of course, how things are and how we think of them is, so to speak, reflected in how we speak of them, so the discussion of PNC1 and PNC2 involves discussing PNC3. Since according to him PNC is the firmest of all principles of reasoning and reality, Aristotle does not claim to be able to prove it, since the eventual demonstration of PNC would have to rest on something more fundamental than PNC and this is impossible.²⁰ What Aristotle aims to do, then, is to defend PNC by first identifying the philosophical views of those philosophers who do not accept PNC and by later showing that such views are inconsistent. The main philosophical views that Aristotle identifies thus are two: one is phenomenalism (the view that all appearances and beliefs are true), the other is relativism (the view that all appearances and beliefs are true for those who hold them). In the course of his analysis and critique of them, Aristotle treats such philosophical positions as mainly metaphysical positions and/or as epistemological positions. In short, Aristotle treats phenomenalism and relativism as mainly metaphysical and epistemological positions and, hence, his defense of PNC is mainly, although not exclusively, a defense of PNC as PNC1 and as PNC2.

specifies at 1011a22–24. See also *De int.* 17a33–37 and *Soph. El.* 167a23–27; and compare Plato, *R.* 436d4–e7. As for the translation of *Metaphysics* 4, I mainly follow Kirwan 1993.

¹⁹ It is not clear whether PNC2 is to be viewed as a descriptive claim about human psychology or as a normative one, that is, about what it is rational to believe; on the point, see Gottlieb 1994, 2–3.

²⁰ See 1005b8–b 34; 1005b35–1006a27.

The characterization, on Aristotle's part, of the defense of PNC as the defense of PNC1 and PNC2 not only marks a great difference with contemporary discussions of PNC (where PNC is conceived of as mainly a law of thought and language, that is, as PNC2 and PNC3), but it also signals from the very start that what is being discussed in Aristotle's defense of PNC are views like phenomenalism and relativism, which are mainly metaphysical and, at the same time, epistemological views. Since Protagoras is the key figure against whom Aristotle builds up his defense of PNC and to whom Aristotle ascribes both phenomenalism and relativism, this shows that, like Plato in the *Theaetetus*, Aristotle believes that Protagoras' doctrine is a combined metaphysical and epistemological doctrine and, hence, a robust philosophical doctrine. Whether this robust doctrine is a form of relativism will become clear from a brief analysis of the treatment that Aristotle reserves to phenomenalism and relativism in his defense of PNC.

The doctrine of Protagoras is mentioned at the beginning of section 5; Aristotle clearly identifies it with phenomenalism, namely with the view that all appearances and beliefs are true. He connects Protagoras' doctrine with the negation of PNC: if all that is believed or perceived is true, "it is necessary that everything is simultaneously true and false", that is to say, PNC is not true, since "many people have mutually contrary beliefs, and regard those whose opinions are not the same as their own as in error, so that it is necessary that the same thing should both be and not be [i.e., PNC1 is not true of things]" (1009a9–12). This is plainly true; Aristotle notes that the converse also holds: if everything is simultaneously true and false, then every appearance and belief is, at the same time, both true and false. By this argument Aristotle establishes the full logical equivalence between phenomenalism and the negation of PNC.

Aristotle's identification of Protagoras' doctrine as a form of phenomenalism on the basis of which all appearances and beliefs are true (with no further specification) strikes any reader of Plato's *Theaetetus* who is well acquainted with the idea that Protagoras' doctrine amounts to a form of relativism. Burnyeat observes: "after Plato [...], in Aristotle, Sextus Empiricus, and the later sources generally, Protagoras is understood rather differently: not as a relativist but as a subjectivist whose view is that every judgment is true *simpliciter*—true absolutely, not merely true for the person whose judgment it is."²¹ I agree with Burnyeat that, on the standard interpretation, ancient sources offer two seemingly alternative accounts of

²¹ Burnyeat 1976, 46.

Protagoras' doctrine, that is, relativism and phenomenalism. I claim, however, that, on another kind of interpretation, these seemingly alternative accounts can be reduced to one, since phenomenalism inevitably leads to relativism. This is at least Aristotle's strategy in *Metaphysics* 4, section 6.

5. Aristotle on phenomenalism and relativism

In *Metaphysics* 4, section 6 Aristotle provides us with the connection between phenomenalism and relativism:

But if it is not the case that all things are relative (*pros ti*), but there are also some things that are themselves by themselves (*auta kath' hauta*), then it will not be the case that all appearance is true. For an appearance is an appearance for someone. So those who claim that all appearances are true make all being relative. For this reason, too, those who want to trace the force of the argument, and who at the same time are prepared to submit to argument, must take care to assert not that appearance is true [i.e., phenomenalism], but rather that appearance is true to the one to whom it appears, and at the time when it appears, and in the respect in which it appears, and in the way in which it appears [i.e., relativism] (1011a17–24: *passage* 5).

Before attempting to understand the reasons why Aristotle believes that relativism is the source of phenomenalism, it is worth stressing that the first half of the passage just quoted provides us with a metaphysical argument: Aristotle speaks of things and beings that are relative (1011a17 and 20), contrasted with things that are themselves by themselves, namely things that are what they are in virtue of themselves and not in virtue of the relation they have with other things (1011a17–18). The contrast here is once again, as developed in the Secret doctrine of the *Theaetetus*, between (Plato's and Aristotle's) archic canon and (Protagoras') anti-archic one.

In light of the ontological distinction between these opposed conceptions of reality, the second half of the passage offers an epistemological argument: Aristotle suggests the phenomenalist some specifications he had better adopt to avoid trouble when he declares that every appearance is true. Those specifications (person, time, respect, way), initially referred to when Aristotle first formulates PNC (1005b18–21), are such as to make the phenomenalist a full relativist. On the basis of this passage, it is clear that Aristotle shows again that phenomenalism and relativism are both ontological and, at the same time, epistemological positions. But why does phenomenalism lead to relativism?

Later in section 6, Aristotle goes back to these specifications a phenomenalist has to add to his pronouncements in order not to get caught in contradictions (1011b3). He adds: "It is necessary [for the phenomenalist] to make everything relative to something, i.e., to opinion and perception, so that nothing either has come to be or will be without someone first having that opinion; and if things have come to be or will be, it is plain that not everything can be relative to opinion" (1011b 4–7). When at 1010b2–1011a2 he gives his counterarguments to phenomenalism, Aristotle remarks:

In general, if in fact only the perceptible exists], nothing would exist unless living things existed; for there would be no perception. Now it is doubtlessly true that neither perceptible things nor sense-impressions (which are an affection of a perceiver) would exist; but that the subjects which produce perception would not exist, even in the absence of perception, is impossible. For perception is not of itself, but there is some other thing too apart from perception, which is necessarily prior to perception; for what changes something is prior in nature to the thing changed, and this is so no less even if they are called these things with reference to one another.

1010b30–1011 a 2: *passage 6*

Aristotle here criticizes phenomenalism by adopting a causal theory of perception that makes the objects of perception prior (as regards their existence) to the perception of the perceiver who perceives them. He does so because he believes that phenomenalism is a doctrine that goes against the archic canon in taking the material world as not existent prior to our own perception of it. This makes the existence of the objects of perceptions be dependent upon the presence of perceiver (metaphysical claim), as well as making the perception of the perceiver, *qua* itself, knowledge of the perceived object (epistemological claim).²²

Aristotle therefore seems to believe that phenomenalism leads to relativism because they both have the same root, that is, the negation of both the archic canon and of a view of the material world as an immanent and objective structure, always there for us to be discovered. In particular, if one thinks deeply about phenomenalism, one will soon be persuaded that relativism best represents the philosophical features that are typical

²² Aristotle's greatest commentator, Alexander of Aphrodisias, remarks on the passage in the following fashion: "What he says could also be said in reply to the view of Protagoras, who, thinking that only things perceived by sense exist, said that things perceived by sense were produced in some sort of relation of sense-perception to external things; this is why Protagoras said that a thing is for each person such as it appears to him (In Arist. Met. 316. 11–150 Hayduck)".

of phenomenalism. As seen in *passage 6*, when he criticizes it by offering a causal theory of perception, Aristotle characterizes phenomenalism as a doctrine where the object of perception and the perceiver "are called these things with reference to one another" (1011a1–2). The object of perception and the perceiver are, in the context of phenomenalism, correlative in so far as the former presupposes the latter. But if this is the case, Aristotle observes, the best doctrine that puts correlativity at its core is relativism, where each thing is supposed to be conceived and understood only in relation to another. As Aristotle initially put it (1011a17–18: *passage 5*), "if things are not themselves by themselves but are relative, this will make every appearance true, for an appearance is always an appearance for someone".

Aristotle's discussion of Protagoras' doctrine in *Metaphysics 4* shows us that, like Plato in the *Theaetetus*, Aristotle conceives of such a doctrine as a robust doctrine, that is, as a doctrine that inevitably combines epistemological and metaphysical claims. More in particular, Protagoras is initially depicted by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* section 5 as a phenomenalist and in section 6 as a relativist. I have provided reasons for suggesting that this is the case because Aristotle thinks that phenomenalism inevitably leads to relativism, on the ground that the latter view best expresses the anti-archic features of Protagoras' doctrine. According to Aristotle, Protagoras conceives of the world as a world of processes, where the perceiver and the perceived thing stay correlatively, each one depending both epistemologically and ontologically one from the other. The perceiver and the perceived thing create their own momentary linkage during the perceptual act and the former is, as Protagoras taught us, the measure of the latter. The myriad of such sub-atomic, relativistic worlds stand in sharp contrast with Aristotle's own view of the material world.

Much the same has to be said for Plato. He conceives of Protagoras' views in the same way as Aristotle does. The Secret doctrine that Plato attributes to Protagoras in the *Theaetetus* tells the same metaphysical story that Aristotle's treatment of Protagoras in *Metaphysics 4* offers: the material world is a vast array of processes, where objects and persons as stable items are denied to exist. In that world, nothing is one—either one stable thing or qualified in one determinate way. Both perceptions and perceivers are best seen as the two poles of a correlative process, which is temporary and wholly transient. In that process, the perceived thing, the perceiver and the perception have their own lives only within that very process—and just in it. It is in the context of this metaphysical picture,

strongly opposing both the archaic canon and whatever idea of a fixed and immutable reality there could be, that Protagoras' relativism makes full sense: each of us is correct in his perceptions because that perception is the relativistic measure of what we are and of the world around us.

In his global treatment of ancient relativism in *The Truth about relativism* Margolis delivers much the same interpretation of Plato's and Aristotle's treatments of Protagoras' doctrine that I have here provided. Margolis does not envisage any contradiction between respectively Plato's and Aristotle's handling of Protagoras' relativism. In doing so, Margolis has shown himself to be a sensitive historian of ancient thought. In addition, by conceiving of Protagoras' relativism as a form of robust relativism, Margolis suggests that the idea of multiple worlds that is so typical of contemporary relativism (such as incommensurabilism) may be already accommodated within ancient relativism.²³ Ancient relativism was born not as a weak creature but it may be properly seen as the philosophical father of the most promising conceptions of relativism circulating nowadays.

6. Persons

I conclude this essay by taking up a possible point of disagreement between Margolis' own analysis of ancient relativism and mine. While I follow him—as shown in ample details in this essay—in taking Protagoras' relativism as a form of robust relativism, I have referred to 'indeterminacy' when I have identified it as the possible metaphysical fulcrum of Protagoras' Secret doctrine. In other words, the world of processes that constitutes the backbone of Protagoras' metaphysical outlook may be interpreted in terms of metaphysical indeterminacy, a doctrine that has some well-known advocates today in contemporary analytic philosophy.²⁴ The interpretation of Protagoras' metaphysical commitments in terms of indeterminacy is possible because Plato seems to point in that direction when he makes Socrates give the details of Protagoras' Secret doctrine; Aristotle too suggests that this could be a good way to understand Protagoras' metaphysical views.²⁵

In the *Truth* Margolis often speaks of indeterminacy when he refers to Protagoras' relativism but the issue is not pressed further there; in any

²³ Margolis (1991), 87–118.

²⁴ See, above all, Van Inwagen (1990) and Merricks (2003).

²⁵ See section 3 above and Aristotle's own reference to indeterminacy as the common view behind all the various doctrines that do not accept PNC: *Metaphysics* 4, 1010a1–4.

case, the emphasis I give to indeterminacy as Protagoras' fundamental view in metaphysics is much stronger than Margolis'.²⁶ In addition, I see a commitment to metaphysical indeterminacy more widespread in ancient philosophy than usually thought of, linking for instance Protagoras' relativism with Pyrrho's scepticism.²⁷ In private correspondence, Margolis warns me that to refer to indeterminacy may raise the issue of predictability, but he also adds that this problem may be solved with a bit of theoretical effort. The main point of Margolis' worries for indeterminacy taken as the key-feature that lies behind Protagoras' robust relativism is that it puts both persons and material things other than persons on a par. I think this is fairly evident in the theory of perception that Plato constructs out of Protagoras' Secret doctrine at *Tht.* 156e7–157a7 (*passage 4*) and in Aristotle's emphasis of correlativity as central to Protagoras' own doctrine at *Metaphysics* 4. 1010b30–1011a2 (*passage 6*).

Margolis, however, points out that between persons and other material things there is a substantial difference: much of his more recent work, from *Selves and Other Texts* to his 2013 recent paper 'Towards a metaphysics of culture', makes this very clear. And I think he is fully right on this aspect. He writes to me: "persons may exhibit emergent properties that mere material things do not. Here, I claim that all culturally generated 'things' akin to persons and the rest may be said to possess or manifest 'determinable' but not strictly 'determinate' properties [...]. I call all such culturally generated attributes and things 'intentional', meaning by that, 'culturally significant' or 'significative' ". Indeterminacy as developed by Protagoras (at least on Plato's and Aristotle's testimonies, plausibly interpreted) does not recognize the substantial difference between mere material things and persons, both groups living in to a world of total flux and change. This is a point of weakness, I believe, of ancient relativism, because persons have to be (and actually are) ultimately responsible, also within the framework of Protagoras' relativism, for the way we make sense of things. For Protagoras, man is the measure of all things—he cannot be a mere thing, among other things. Either Plato or Aristotle have misunderstood Protagoras on this or contemporary relativists have grasped something that ancient ones did not. If the second option is correct, we shall be grateful to Margolis, once again, for pointing this out to us.²⁸

²⁶ Margolis (1991), 51–3; 122–5; Zilioli (2007), 38–42.

²⁷ Zilioli (2012), 98–100.

²⁸ I thank Joseph Margolis for having encouraged me to go back to Protagoras and relativism once again and for his insightful comments on this paper; Dirk-Martin Grube and Rob

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PART III

ART, CULTURE, AND RELIGION

How Artistic Creativity is Possible for Cultural Agents¹

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1. Introduction

Joseph Margolis holds that both artworks and selves are "culturally emergent entities". Culturally emergent entities are distinct from and not reducible to natural or physical entities. Artworks are thus not reducible to their physical media; a painting is thus not paint on canvas and music is not sound. In similar vein selves or persons are not reducible to biology and thought is not reducible to the physical brain. Both artworks and selves thus have two ongoing and inseparable "evolutions"—one cultural and one physical. Rather than having fixed "natures" that remain stable for any purpose other than numerical identity, artworks and selves have "careers" due to their cultural evolution that change with the course and flux of history, interpretation and reinterpretation.

The question for this essay is how a Margolisian encultured artist, who is also an individual "self", can construct an identifiable "career" that is both from culture and that develops culture constructively in a way that involves an individual, as well as collective, contribution. In answering this question I will provide a theory that shows how Margolis' work on the artist as cultural agent leaves room for creative innovators within

¹ A shorter version of this paper was presented on May 21, 2013 in Helsinki for the conference, "The Metaphysics of Culture—the Philosophy of Joseph Margolis" entitled, "The Artist as Cultural Agent: A Theory of Artistic Practice Extrapolated from the Philosophy of Joseph Margolis" sponsored by the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, The Philosophical Society of Finland, The Finnish Society for Aesthetics and The Nordic Pragmatism Network.

a cultural context. In short, I claim that Margolis' idea that a person is a thinking-and-doing practitioner that emerges from and works within a cultural context does allow for the agent to use that same context to acquire the tools and skills necessary to make something new. I will then consider how this innovation might be possible by making recourse to some theories of creativity from neuroscience and psychology.

This essay will focus on Margolis' theory of the creative artist as cultural agent as supplemented with an account of the nature of the human being as a raw set of genetic materials and capacity for acquiring cultural competence. My claim is that this is the site for an adequate account of how some encultured persons are able to create exceptional innovations in artistic domains and others are not. I agree with Margolis that it is true that innovation is not possible by any pre- or non-encultured self but I also think that extremes of cultural mastery and innovation, as in the case of highly creative and innovative artists, are not possible without an inborn potentiality to develop to a high level of cultural ability under the right conditions. This is not to deny Margolis' theory of artists as cultural agents. Indeed, I accept Margolis' view of the deep importance of culture to the development of the self and to the creative artist wholeheartedly. I also agree that this is a crucial aspect of artistic agency and creativity that has been given short shrift in analytic aesthetics. My intention here is only to answer one question that is still left unanswered after understanding and acknowledging the importance of culture: How do we account for the disparity in ability in cultural agents and artists that cannot be attributed to cultural training and socio-historical factors? How do we account for the existence of the exceptionally creative artist in a situation where the cultural and socio-historical factors are roughly equivalent for others who demonstrate lesser amounts of creativity?

Indeed, Margolis himself is a philosophical analog for such an exceptionally creative artist, being both a product of his culture and historical era and a master craftsman and inventor. He has woven strands from both analytic and continental philosophy into philosophy that is at once made of culture and emergent from it in a way that can be construed as a development rather than as a restatement of what has gone before. In continuing his work into the realm of artistic innovation this essay thus aims at both cultural (philosophical) emergence and Margolis-emergence: it is an exercise in both interpreting Margolis and reinterpreting Margolis in an attempt to carry his philosophy of art, and of culture, into what I hope will be the next historical era in the philosophy of art. One in

which the activity of the artist, not just the artistic product and not just the appreciation of the spectator, will come to the fore.

I will begin with a synopsis of Margolis' view of the artist as cultural agent. I will then follow with an exploration of how the artist as cultural agent creates. This will include both Margolis' view on this and the supplementation of his view suggested above, one that includes two additional components: 1) an account of natural endowment in the sense of raw materials from which an encultured, agentive self develops and emerges as found in the work of neuroscientist, Nancy Andreasen; and 2) an account of the environmental conditions that are favorable for the development of a high level of culturally-development creativity as identified by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and others. These supplementations allow for there to be a role for science in a full picture of what it means to be a cultural agent. One can do this in a Margolisian way as long as one recognizes the extremely limited role such accounts play in the picture of cultural agency that Margolis has provided. In short one must understand that the raw materials for the self's capacities can never operate on their own without cultural development and that once they are culturally developed they are transformed into something that is no longer reducible to these materials in any of the intentional actions or decisions of these encultured selves. It also brings in an account of how differences in the environment in which the enculturation process takes place can make a difference in the level of creativity an artist ends up having. The whole picture, then, will be one in which certain natural endowments, in conjunction with culturally trained capacities, in certain environmental conditions, operate to allow an encultured self to make the most of the opportunities for becoming master cultural agents who can innovate in exceptionally creative ways.

2. Margolis' view of the artist as cultural agent

Margolis' ontology of artworks and of selves awards pride of place to culture. An artwork, and a self, is above all a culturally emergent entity, one that emerges in a *sui generis* way from the physical and biological world (see 1999, 68, 2001, 35 and 134 and 1995b, 255). A person, a *self*, is not reducible to his or her physical biology, is not adequately described as a *Homo sapiens*, even though s/he is physically embodied, because s/he has emerged from culture (1995a, 224; see also 2015, 14–15). Culture here can be broadly understood as human culture, although it is also affected

by the natural, environmental influences in which a person develops and lives. *Homo sapiens* alone can be understood to refer to a person's biological natural capacities to do, make and act that are conceived in abstraction away from the capacities of any particular person, or self, who is born as a hybrid of nature and culture who then continues to interact with others and develop competencies and understandings based on that interaction (see 1999, 97, and 1995b, 236–7²).

Enculturation is the process by which a *Homo sapiens* acquires language, along with the ability to make him- or herself understood to others by use of that lingual capacity and other non-verbal, language-like capabilities that may or may not have a formal grammar, such as dancing, making love and baking bread (2001, 139; see also 2010b, 5). This enculturation process is captured in a number of different ways in Margolis' work. Sometimes he refers to it as the process of acquiring a "second-natured self", following Marjorie Grene's usage of the term. Here, a self is construed as a "natural artifact" that is "evolutionarily endowed with the capacity to acquire further capacities that cannot be developed by purely biological processes" (2010b, 7, citing Grene, 1974, 10, 90, and 120; See also Margolis 1999, 35 and 130, and 2001,3). Margolis also characterizes the self as one that has "second-order powers," although he reminds us that first-order and second-order cognition are not separable in the human person (1995a, 238). As Margolis cogently remarks in *Interpretation Radical But Not Unruly*, " 'The' self is not just another specimen for an expanding zoo of observable things, it is the site of the aptitude for conceiving any such zoo" (1995a, 237).

In his later books Margolis says that his theory of the encultured self is an effort to "Darwinize Hegel" (see 2010a, 11, and 2012, 119–20). Specifically he separates Hegel's idea of *Bildung*, which he defines as *Geist's* progressive self-discovery, into what he calls "internal" and "external" *Bildung*. *Internal Bildung* refers to the process of explicitly instructing a person in a mode of cultural practice (such as teaching a young person the codes of cultural morality). *External Bildung* refers to a person's stage in a situated, human evolutionary and culturally developed process which enables him or her to be a " 'second-natured' site of linguistic and cultural competence" (2009a, 33; see also 39–42, 2010a, 10–11, 2009b, 103–4

² Here Margolis cites C.S. Peirce 1934 and 1932 for holding the idea that persons and words (or signs) constitute the self and that the human being and the self reciprocally educate each other.

and 2012, 119–23³). It is *external Bildung*, an evolutionarily and culturally derived competence, Margolis points out, that makes *internal Bildung*, the learning of a specific cultural practice, possible (2012, 131). It is the human primate's capacity to reinvent itself while growing and developing that allows for new forms of neural and agentic fluency, such as that needed to create art (2015, 2–4).

Culture is thus a deep and inseparable part of our selves. Responding to Daniel Dennett on this point, Margolis explains that

The cultural world cannot be the mere effect of any interpretive or self-referential or rhetorical flourish applied externally to the things of the physical world or, worse, projected as a fictive description by the brain itself "reflecting" on its own mode of functioning.

2010b, 93 and footnote 2 at 195; for more critique of Dennett see 76–89

In short, this means that culture cannot be conceived as a separate add-on to the human person. Margolis also faults Jaegwon Kim for providing a philosophy of mind that acknowledges the cultural world without adequately addressing how it is connected to the physical world (2010b, 11–2). Margolis maintains that all our conceptualizing and cognizing powers are themselves culturally emergent parts of ourselves, "*incarnate* in the biological structures to which our *innate* mental capacities are directly ascribed" (1995a, 229). As such there can be no dualism between the physical and cultural worlds for two main reasons: 1) Human agency is irreducible to any kind of natural causality, and 2) Human agency is *dependent* on powers of interpretation that are only available by means of immersion in the cultural world (see 2015, 38). By "agency" here we can assume a minded sort of thinking and doing that Margolis calls "Intentional", an idea to be fleshed out further below.

Margolis includes the making of art among the encultured capacities of the self, with an artwork serving as a culturally emergent utterance or expression that is not limited to the expression of emotion (see 1999, 61, 1995b, 134–42, and 2010b, 7, 57 and 60). An artwork, as a product of a self, thus acquires what Margolis calls "Intentional properties", which are the properties of artworks and other culturally emergent entities that bear the mark of culture. "Intentional" with a capital "I" is a neologism that is meant to capture both the sense of 1) "intentional" with a "t" in the middle and with the lower-case "I" that Edmund Husserl and Franz Brentano used to signify a thought that is "about" something or directed outward

³ For Hegel's usage of the term *Bildung* see Hegel 1977 [1807].

and 2) "intensional" with an "s," in which a property has a meaning due to its internal structure (1999, 92).⁴ Combining both the intentional (with a "t") and the intensional (with an "s") into Intentional (with an upper-case "I") thus gives us both an utterance with a meaning directed to something in the world and imbues it with the cultural meaning provided by competent speakers of a language who understand the meanings provided by the internal structures of that language's utterances.

The mark of Margolis' Intentional properties with a capital "I" is that they have semiotic significance, available in the public world as part of an utterance like an artwork, which can be understood and interpreted by speakers of the lingual system or society of which it is part (see 1999, 92, and 2010b, 34 and 49). Like human selves, Intentional properties are not reducible to the physical, which means that even when embodied in an artwork they emerge from the artistic materials or medium but are not reducible to them (see 1999, 76). For example, stylistic (such as Baroque) properties, aesthetic properties (such as elegant or graceful) or artistic properties (such as representational or expressive) all count as Intentional properties. If we say that "symmetry" and "proportion", for example, are features of the Classical style of architecture then those features might be in the structural arrangement of a Greek temple, let us say, but they would not be identical to the marble of which they are made even though they undoubtedly emerge from marble. If all you had was marble you would not have a classical temple—at best all you would have is the raw material for building such a temple. Neither is "harmony" to be found by investigating the chemical composition of a marble block. What counts as "harmony" is culturally constructed.

Thus, like selves and artworks as a whole, Intentional properties within artworks and other utterances are inseparable and hybrid artifacts of nature and culture (see 1999, 119–21). Artworks exist only as embedded in and relative to human culture, with Intentional properties demonstrating what Margolis calls the "*geistlich*" features of the intelligible world (2010b, 48 and 188, fn 3). Again, in a world without culture, without lingual utterances of culturally competent selves, no classical temples (or classical music for that matter) would exist. When they do exist, however, they are available in the world for discussion and interpretation, and they contain both intentional meanings of the artist and have semiotic meanings that encultured appreciators can understand. Thus Margolis has not only Dar-

⁴ For more on Margolis' view of intentional and intensional meanings see Margolis, 1977.

winized Hegel but he has perhaps Wittgensteinized Hegel as well in the sense that human self-constructed meanings and their relationships and interconnections are what constitute the cultural world.

An artwork is thus a vehicle of inter-human-cultural utterance and communication, although each artwork also bears some connection and relation to the individual artist who uttered it, having come from the artist's particular thought, intentions, training, and both cognized and non-cognized activities and decisions.⁵ An artist is thus a cultural crafts-person and agent who communicates something to others by uttering an artwork that, like the self, is also a living, embodied entity that exists and develops and changes over time (see 1999, 68, 2010b, 42, 44, 56 and 121, 1995a, 88–9 and 245, 1995b, 233, and 2001, 31–4). What this means is that even though an artwork is originally uttered by an encultured artist with a particular purpose at a particular place and time in history the meaning of the work itself, an artwork's career is not limited by the time, place or artist/parent of its creation—it can gain or lose meanings, values and interpretations over time in conjunction with what its Intentional properties come to mean as human culture develops and changes (see 2010b, 56 and 2001, 149).

One of the features of the Intentional, then, is that it is understood as marking the "flux" inherent in history and cultural life (see 1999, 65). Intentional properties are thus grounded and entrenched in what Margolis sometimes calls the "life-world" or *Lebensformen* (following Wittgenstein 1963) of human beings, but as this world changes the Intentional properties in culturally-tied entities like artworks change as well (see 2001, 149–50, 1995a, 109 and 205, 1999, 98, and 1995b, 234). This explains why neither the life-world of human beings, nor selves, nor artworks, have fixed "natures", but instead have ever-changing "histories" or "careers" (1995a, 142 and 190; see also 1999, 129).

When I first encountered Margolis' work on art, which happened before I entered graduate school in philosophy, I was at the point in my own cultural development in which I had far more years of training as a ballet dancer behind me than I had training as a philosopher. The particular kind of ballet I had spent ten years learning was George Balanchine's neo-classical style; one he had developed as co-founder and director of

⁵ Margolis' use of the word "utterance" can be attributed to his idea that the making of an artwork is a lingual, culturally communicative act akin to (but not identical to) speech. I say "lingual" rather than "linguistic" because for Margolis lingual refers to communicative activities like dancing, making love and baking bread and notto speech alone.

The New York City Ballet and its attendant ballet school, The School of American Ballet. My ballet training focused on learning this style and incorporating it into my repertoire of performable movements. At the time of my training I understood the deep debt that I owed to both Balanchine and to the teachers who helped me to incorporate his style and method into my tastes, my abilities and my capacities as a dancer and performer. And yet I somehow also believed that any artistic contribution I made as a performer was exclusively *mine*, from *my* effort, my talents, my work, my thought, my blood, my sweat, and my tears. I believed in an individual agency. So what of this? Was I simply mistaken?

After reading Margolis' theory of the artist as cultural agent that I encountered in his books I tried to salvage this sense of individual agency. I set out to prove Margolis wrong through demonstrating that I could make something entirely unique that was not fully a product of my "enculturation". Alone in my apartment I tried to make up an entirely "original" dance. I then realized immediately that I was using dance vocabulary, in some places imitating patterns that I had learned in ballet class. I then tried to write a poem. And what happened? Iambic pentameter—another form learned in culture. Then I got angry. Slam Poetry! Even more distressing was the reflection that on Margolis' theory even that rebellious instinct that belief in solitary personal achievement, can be construed as nothing more than an attitude inherited from my cultural upbringing. Truly, this was a moment of crisis: How could I reclaim the individuality of the artist and her ego? How could I justify all of the ways that I had celebrated greatness in those artists and philosophers who I held in the highest of esteem as singular paragons of excellence?

There is no doubt that my encounter with Margolis' theory of the primacy of culture in the creation of art ended my romantic visions of the artist as demi-god or as conduit for the gods or the Muse. No person exists in a vacuum, or is who he or she is apart from the deep-seated influences of culture, teaching and learning, and the shared life of a community. At first it seemed that something important had been lost, the truly unique and individual "I". And yet, creativity in the arts does not seem to follow rote cultural patterns or schools of thought even where there are historical trends and styles that can be seen and traced. There is still an astounding disparity in both kinds and levels of artistic production, and exciting growing and changing diversity. The good news is that accepting that excellence in the arts involves becoming a master cultural agent does not mean that now we must see the creative work of

the artist as limited to the refining of technical prowess only along certain historically and culturally-mandated lines. History and culture instead changes as a result of group dynamics and trends but also as the result of innovation by exceptional individuals.

This leads us to the question asked in the next section of this paper: How can a culturally emergent self who is understood as an "agent" of that culture "create", by which I mean make something novel, or new, that advances culture rather than just reflecting what has come before? As mentioned in the introduction to this paper here I will suggest with the help of neuroscientist Nancy Andreasen that we might consider that the individuality identified can be attributed to biological genetic differences that precede and that underlie enculturation. I will follow this with the idea developed by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and others that a person's having optimal environmental conditions in which this enculturation takes place can also account for the development of individual capacities into cultural competence that can develop in exceptional and novel ways. I will re-emphasize here that my claim will *not* be that there is some sort of activity that is outside of culture, understanding as I do through my Margolis enculturation that no intentional human activity lies outside of culture in the adult person.

3. How can the artist, as cultural agent, "create"?

Let us begin by first looking closely at a couple of examples that Margolis has given of the process of artistic creation and performance.

In *Selves and Other Texts* Margolis uses the example of Michelangelo's creation of the sculpture, "Moses", in order to explain how artists make artworks emerge from what was hitherto nothing but physical material prior to the artist's involvement. He explains that "Moses" is "instantiated" by Michelangelo's artistic activity, thereby giving the artwork Intentional properties it would not otherwise possess (2001, 134). This is not unlike the example given in the previous section of building of the classical temple. Michelangelo's work is not reducible to his building materials, and the "agency" of the artist here both comes from and produces a culturally emergent artifact.

When we are dealing with something that we can encounter in the physical world through touch and sight, like a temple or a sculpture, it is often easier to see how the cultural is distinct from the physical. So let us consider another example, this time from music, in which Margolis

claims that the "physical" material is sound but where the "music" produced is not reducible to sound and is instead instantiated in a musician's performance. In *The Cultural Space of the Arts and the Infelicities of Reductionism* Margolis tells the reader about an experience he had listening to a performance by violinist, Joshua Bell:

I had never heard Bell play before; his way of penetrating the music bowled me over. What struck me was that in Bell's hands, the score might almost have been a disembodied "utterance", a performance waiting to be brought to life by the breath of a magician who transforms himself at will into an incarnate voice that sings that particular song as if giving expression to his own soul—and does so altogether effortlessly again and again, moving from one inert piece to another across the entire expanse of Western music. I'm aware of course, that this way of speaking is too purple to be trusted, though it's hardly inapt applied heuristically to individual artworks, whether at the point of individual creation or composition or performance [...]

2010b, 47–8

In referring to the expressive properties of Bell's performance Margolis is referring to what he would call Intentional properties, uttered by a culturally competent musician for culturally competent listeners. I think the reason that Margolis uses the word "uttered" rather than "created" here to signify the nature of artistic making as something that comes from a person's self and that communicates with others. Since utterances are learned in and derived from culture it also is used to underscore how the making of artworks and performances is communicative cultural activity. Artistic activity is therefore not "creating" for Margolis in the sense of making something separable from cultural training and communication. It is also semiotic. But I ask here, are these expressive properties creditable in their *entirety* to the culture from which Bell emerged? What of the "soul" that Margolis uncharacteristically mentions above? Of course Margolis means nothing like a "real" eternal, fixed, unchanging "soul" but is using this as a metaphor for Bell's "self". But the question remains: How can we account for whatever it is that Bell has "added" to his cultural training in order to produce this singular, exceptional experience?

Margolis' theory seems to leave us hanging at the idea that Bell is just a very good cultural agent, a master agent. However, it says nothing in answer to any question one might have about why Bell was able to become such a master agent when others with similar cultural influences and training did not rise to his level. Margolis has spent a lifetime estab-

lishing the validity and importance of the cultural influence and agency he describes. This is certainly a major contribution. But once we adopt his view here, once we learn it and adapt it and accept it as a coherent view of the cultural world and of the communicative nature of art the question of how the artist as cultural agent can be exceptionally creative remains.

Here I want to first point out that there is no contradiction between an artist's activity of instantiating an artwork, or performance, through the skilled mastery of cultural competence, and the same ability by that artist to do so in an extraordinary, and dare I say it, "transcendent" way that leads to the sort of blissful appreciation that Margolis described in the Joshua Bell passage above. We need not find that the performance is an expression of anything that could be called a "soul" in any traditional sense but we can acknowledge that unique contribution to the arts is possible, even while ingrained and entrenched in culture.

So, again how, precisely, can we account for the Michelangelos and Joshua Bells of the world, the Joseph Margolises, while still maintaining that these exceptional creators are properly conceived as cultural agents? Here is where I will suggest that enculturation provides enough uniformity to allow for communication and understanding, but not so much that it disallows an encultured self from interpreting and employing those cultural competencies in innovative ways. Further I claim that this creative ability is due primarily to two things: 1) natural, genetic endowment in conjunction with cultural competency and 2) ability to develop that endowment through fortunate environmental (cultural) and societal opportunities and support.

Let us begin with the first component.

3.1 Natural endowment in conjunction with cultural competency

It seems unlikely that anyone would contradict the idea that there are some people who demonstrate an extraordinarily high level of creativity. Indeed, many of these highly creative people have been labeled "geniuses" throughout history, criticism of the term's being applied unfairly and primarily to wealthy, white men notwithstanding (see, e.g., Bloom 2002).⁶ Indeed, everyone who is familiar with the creative activity of spontaneously or deliberately constructing new sentences while speaking a learned language understands that some people are better at this than others (see Andreasen 2005, 63; see also Chomsky/Foucault 2006, 19). It follows from

⁶ For a feminist critique of the term "genius" see Battersby 1990 and DeNora 1997.

this that the same can be said of different levels of natural ability that inform the creation and performance of art.

This does *not* mean, however, that one must construe cultural agency as some sort of "add-on" to the natural. To acknowledge the natural endowment basis for the hybrid of nature and culture that comprises the human self and artist does nothing to violate Margolis' theory of the artist as cultural agent. Indeed, one can pay attention to the natural substrate of the artist, just as one might pay attention to the quality of the marble to be used in a sculpture, without reducing the artist or the sculpture to that substrate. As Margolis has put it:

[T]he ontological strategy of permitting an individual thing of a more complex level of analysis to be indissolubly embodied or incarnate in an individual thing of a less complex level accommodates a clear distinction between the physical (or biological) and the culturally significant, without invoking any dualisms at all. 2015, 19

I thus gingerly offer some empirical evidence from the research of Nancy Andreasen, a neuroscientist and psychiatrist who was also a literature professor that might explain how the physical substrate from which the artist emerges in conjunction with his or her cultural agency works. My goal here is to use this research *not* in the way the Andresen undoubtedly intended it to be used (not in order to provide a causal explanation for artistic and other forms of creativity). Instead my goal is to suggest how a Margolisian theory of the artist as cultural agent might use scientific research in a way that supplements the account of the crude materials from which a person emerges. More specifically, we can take note of what is happening neurologically when an artist is "creating" through his or her culturally emergent capacities.

Andreasen studies the neural bases of creativity in highly creative people. In her book *The Creating Brain: The Neuroscience of Genius* Andreasen claims that the seat of creativity is not just in conscious thought, but that it also lies in the capacity of the unconscious mind to freely associate, thus developing novel ideas that can form the basis for artistic and other kinds of creative inspiration (see 2005, 67–78). In this book Andreasen consults the testimony of "geniuses" Neil Simon, Samuel Coleridge, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and Henri Poincaré about the experience of what happens to them during the creative process. All of these people at various times described situations of having an exceptional creative insight occur to them suddenly, unbidden,

as if a gift from the gods, during periods of time in which they were not aware of conscious, effortful thought (see 2005, 75–77).

Andreasen then connects this testimony with a study that she conducted where she used neuroimaging technology (positron emission tomography or “PET”) to measure the cerebral blood flow of people in “free association” brain states when they were daydreaming, brainstorming, or letting their minds wander freely (see 2005, 70–73). The neuroimaging results showed that the most active parts of the brain during free association are the frontal, parietal, and temporal lobes (the “association cortex”), the areas that “gather information from the senses and from elsewhere in the brain and link it all together—in potentially novel ways” (Andreasen 2005, 73). These are the parts of the human brain that are particularly complex and “human” (they are much larger than those found in other highly intelligent primates) and they are the last regions to finish developing in human beings, developing new connections into early adulthood (2005, 73).

From here Andreasen hypothesizes that the difference between extraordinarily creative people (geniuses) and ordinarily creative people (regular folks who can learn and speak language) is twofold: 1) extraordinarily creative people are able to access their unconscious states in ways that others cannot through intense focus and dissociation; and 2) geniuses have a “discontinuous trait or group traits that occur uniquely in a few extremely gifted individuals”—in short, they have brains that are better at creating free associations (see 2005, 26–27, 37 and 78). Andreasen does not say that this is the sole factor that accounts for exceptional creativity—she acknowledges environmental factors similar to the ones I will provide in the next section as well—but that the “natural” component to exceptionally creative people is one that she also finds significant.⁷

If we accept Andreasen’s hypothesis here we can apply it to Margolis’ theory by suggesting that artists and selves, hybrids of nature and culture who are not reducible to physical matter or brain activity, can be seen to include people who are simply born with better physical materials from which to culturally emerge. While their “intense focus and dissociation” might be culturally derived it cannot come from culture alone. An innovative artist might be unusually creative due, at least in some measure, to having been born with exceptional materials with which to create.

⁷ See 2005, 108–132 for Andresen’s list of the cultural conditions that she says help to encourage and nurture creative brains.

This neurological account might also explain some of the phenomena explored by the philosophical tradition on artistic genius and creativity beginning with Plato, extending through Kant and the Romantics and continuing even today.⁸ Perhaps it is the free-associative brain state that Andreasen mentions, for example, that creates the experiential feeling of the "Muse", the "God within" or the feeling of "free play" of creativity and understanding unencumbered by forefront consciousness. A natural capacity of the subliminal sort might feel like a god is "channeling" through us, as if we are creating effortlessly with a force not our own. In Plato's dialogue, *Ion*, for example, Socrates attributes the ability to create exceptional poetry to either a madness that overtakes the poet ("a Bacchic frenzy"), possession by the Muse, or both. In either case the poet is "not in his right mind" (see Plato 380 B. C. E., §§533e–534a, 941–2). Could this be a philosophical account of the free association activity of the brain?

Harold Bloom, a literature professor at NYU and self-professed "Bardolator" (referring to "The Bard", William Shakespeare) locates genius not in "the gods" but in us (2002, 814). This account, too, fits with Andreasen's account of how creativity is evidenced in the brain. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Bloom points out, also viewed genius as the God within, or the Self (2002, 11). In addition Bloom quotes Victorian Scottish author Thomas Carlyle, who said in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, "If called to define Shakespeare's faculty, I should say superiority of intellect, and think I had included all under that" (2002, 9).

The idea that creative ability is a natural endowment is also found in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. As philosophers Berys Gaut and Paisley Livingston point out, for Kant "... it is nature in the artistic genius that gives the rule to art" (2003, 14, citing Kant 1987 [1790], §46, Ak. v). Kant holds that this nature is innate but "supersensible" (not knowable through experience) (2003, citing Kant 1987 [1790], §57, Comment I, Ak. v). This means that the process the genius engages in when creating a work of exceptional art cannot be an experiential one for the artist (see Gaut and Livingston 2003, 14; see also Guyer 1994, 278). If this means that the artistic genius is not "aware" of her process while she is creating art then this account does seem to fit, in a loose way, with Andreasen's neurological account of exceptional creativity being part of a subconscious, free-associative brain state.

⁸ As I discuss Plato and Kant here I am not following their lead in making claims about the eternal world of the Forms or the conditions of human understanding.

Andreasen's account (again, using the evidence as descriptive of the biological part of the creative process alone and not as the entire explanation) is also compatible with Margolis' culturally emergent self. Margolis acknowledges, for example, that the human infant is born with an "unusual sociability", a biological gift that makes cultural transformation possible (2015, 24). It is a short step from there to the idea that some of these infants may have exceptional biological capacities for cultural transformation and that we might locate this difference in the natural materials of the brain with which the baby was born.

Margolis does nothing to exclude the role of genetics and of the brain in the capacities and resources this self has at his or her disposal. All that Margolis would deny is that the entire story could be explained relying *solely* on causal, neuronal accounts that do not include Intentionality or recourse to the ways this brain is different because of its development within a cultural world. In addition we must remember here that on Margolis' view there are no causal laws that operate without exception in the Intentional world, even though natural causes of course exist within the cultural world (see 2015, 37). A classical temple, for example, could be destroyed as a result of being hit by lightning. In this case Margolis would agree that the temple's destruction by lightning was due to purely causal and natural, rather than Intentional, forces, assuming that he does not believe that lightning is the result of the Intentional activity of Zeus.

In addition, on Margolis' view whatever standards Andreasen used to determine the "geniuses" she identified who created "exceptionally creative work" might give way to cultural changes about how we construe what it means to be exceptionally creative. Further, there is nothing one could discover via the review of physical evidence, such as the PET scans, that can identify the Intentional properties of whatever artworks exceptionally creative people produce. If someone wrote a "powerful" or "devastating" poem, for example, these would be Intentional properties that could not exist in any natural world that lacks language, or in some feature of the soon-to-be-exceptionally creative baby's brain (see Margolis 2015, 34–35). It is this Intentionality I will attempt to capture in the section to follow on cultural choices and opportunities.

We turn now to environmental conditions that can either enhance or restrain the development of the high degree of cultural agency necessary for exceptional innovation and creativity to occur.

3.2 The importance of the cultural environment for artistic creativity

On Margolis' view art is created in the cultural context in which a person learns to live, work, play, interact and communicate with others. It is thus as part of a moving, developing system that a person picks up the tools of his or her trade. Here a musician learns the piano scales that will strengthen her fingers for symphonies to come, a dancer conditions his body to spin without dizziness and jump with power and height, a writer learns how to craft stories with dynamic plots and emotional depth and a painter or photographer learns how to articulate a visual scene through stylistic techniques that may highlight such things as use of color, light and perspective.

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has a theory of the cultural conditions for creativity that is consistent with Margolis' theory of how innovative artworks are created. He maintains that all creative work (including artistic work) is produced with training, skill and effort within a particular discipline or domain (see 1997, 8). No one can be an exceptional Odissi dancer, for example, who does not perform any of the highly formalized and ornate structural patterns that belong to this East Indian form of traditional dance. In the same way one cannot say she is a "violinist" if the instrument she is playing is a harmonica. Finally, even in a loose sense even the most innovative art usually "begs, borrows and steals" (to quote a dance teacher I had as a child) from what has gone before (see also Bloom 2002, 6, quoting Emerson: "Only an inventor knows how to borrow".) But there are notable exceptions.

Within any given domain it is possible to produce highly creative work without mastery of the *entire* tradition of the domain at issue or, indeed, may borrow inspiration and training across domains. Thus an "outside artist" like Jean-Michel Basquiat, one who did not develop his skill within the formal training the rules and methods of a recognized art school, can produce exceptionally unique paintings, a dance choreographer like Twyla Tharp might experiment with new kinds of movement that were not learned or developed in a traditional school, or an artist may cross-over from training in one genre to excellence in another. In cases of exceptionally creative work, then, a domain might move back its borders to accommodate innovative, nontraditional art that meets, at least minimally, the criteria of its genre (or at the very least acknowledge the birth of a related genre).

Any talent, however, no matter how great, can wither or die without proper cultural support and environmental nourishment. Of course an

artist who has died prematurely due to violence, disease or lack of food cannot create art. Some potentially great art was undoubtedly lost when unwanted infants were exposed to die on hilltops in Ancient Sparta, or when people sold into slavery died in the holds of Middle Passage ships between Africa and the United States, or when artists were killed in genocides, wars and holocausts. Less dire cultural circumstances can also prevent artistic innovation, as when a child cannot develop as a ballet dancer because her parents cannot afford the high price of private lessons or of pointed shoes or where a boy's parents will not allow him to study ballet at all for the mere reason that he is a boy.

And yet, psychologist and concentration camp survivor, Viktor Frankl, believes that the will to create innovative art is irrepressible despite such adverse conditions. In short, Frankl holds in *Man's Search for Meaning* that the desire to engage in meaningful work, which may include the creation of art, is needed for our survival, since it is this engagement that makes life worth living at all. He describes the concentration camp cases he witnessed where actual physical survival depended on this sense that life had meaning. When inmates gave up, he notes, their bodies shut down and they succumbed to malnourishment or disease. A prisoner could also "give up" by refusing to work, a decision that in most cases led to his being shot on the spot. Frankl concludes that the people who struggled to survive the hostile conditions of the concentration camp did so if they felt they had something to live for. "A person with a *why* to live", Frankl says, "can bear with almost any *how*" (Gordon Allport quoting Viktor Frankl quoting Nietzsche in Frankl 1985, 12). Thus a person who feels that life still expects something from him or her has a "why" to live. This "something" that life expected could be religion, work, obligations to loved ones or the creation of art (see Frankl 1985, 61–62 and 93–101).

A person's cultural and other environmental influences, then, can profoundly affect her skill-development, including those skills pertaining to artistic creation, but they are not the whole story. That they are not the whole story does suggest the existence of something that one might want to call an individual soul but that one could be persuaded to call, in Margolisian terms, a *particular* second-natured self or career. Perhaps this particularity is due to the sort of biological, neurological, psychological and cultural endowments discussed above. Of course this is just one of many ways in which the question of exceptional creativity might be answered. The point has simply been that empirical work from the sciences, used in the limited way described, can indeed contribute to an under-

standing of how a cultural agent can create something new and not just utter something that has been uttered before. Both physical nature and the good fortune of the right cultural conditions (although these need not be optimal in all cases) may also have a part in cultural agency. To the extent that the sciences can shed light on these components of a human self they might be relevant to a full understanding of how cultural agents can create something new. They may explain how an artist not only utters but creates.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, there does not seem to be any reason to suppose that a Margolisian account of the artist as cultural agent means that no artistic innovation and creativity is possible. An artist's innovation is certainly encultured but may go beyond any strict dictates of that culture. An artist and self may still be unique, in terms of exceptional natural capacities to conjoin with cultural influences and in terms of his or her particular life experiences and opportunities. And as such the art that s/he creates will bear the stamp of that individuality.

The primary proviso limiting artistic creativity in Margolis' work seems to be, understandably, that innovation, if it is to be understood both for the communicative, artistic features it possesses and *as* a novel contribution, must be couched in Intentional properties with relevance to the interpreting culture.⁹ This is what it means for artworks and other utterances to be cultural artifacts in Margolis' view. In some important sense they do not just belong to the individual, particular artist but are what they are because of the interpretive work of the cultural community from which they derived and in which they are embedded. Perhaps it is now clearer just why Margolis does not understand artworks and artistic creativity in any way that specifically recognizes individual natures and contributions. There is no non-cultural place from which to even begin to analyze anything (like material natures) that underlie culture once interpretation of what it even means to be a material nature or novel or particular is culturally embedded. This is the difficulty with which anyone who wants to use evidence from the sciences as part of a Margolisian perspective is faced.

⁹ Much more can and should be said about what is involved in the "uptake" or interpretation of artworks by a community of appreciators and how it is relevant to both our understanding of and definition of art. For Margolis' view on this I refer the reader to 1995a, 1995b, 1999, 2001.

In this paper I have only taken one tiny step towards solving the puzzle of how artists as cultural agents can create, and how these creations are to be understood, and much more remains to be said that cannot be handled adequately here. Suffice it to say in closing that it is often the case that radically innovative creation in art and, indeed, in philosophy, is sometimes so exceptional that it outpaces the understanding of the majority of the interpreters within a particular community. But in that case our task is clear—to exert our best efforts to understand and accommodate the new utterances of those who are outpacing us so that we may fully understand and incorporate the new horizons that stretch out before us as seen through the eyes of these creative masters. This collection of essays, I suggest, is precisely such an endeavor. We are, in this volume, attempting to understand and accommodate Joseph Margolis.

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Experiencing Culture: Reconsidering the Danto/Margolis Debate

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1. Introduction

It is a peculiar claim for one noted theorist of the arts to claim that another denies the reality of the cultural world. Even more so if the target of that claim is Arthur Danto, whose work set the agenda for the majority of Anglo-American philosophical inquiry into the arts for the last half century. Even if the charge against Danto were merited on philosophical grounds, it would still stand in serious need of qualification if, for no other reason, Danto's second career as the art critic for *The Nation*. It would be odd, at the very least, if a theorist and critic of the arts were to imply that the objects of his criticism were somehow unreal, while simultaneously offering evaluations of their merits and meaning as artworks. Yet, this is exactly the criticism that Joseph Margolis has leveled against Arthur Danto. To be fair to Danto, Margolis does not claim that Danto himself denies the existence of paintings only that "his theory precludes their existence" (Margolis 2009b, 131). If true, Margolis's criticism would strike at the very heart of Danto's achievements as a philosopher and art critic and since Margolis's criticism stems from his own pragmatically informed theory of the arts, the best way to understand the nature of the criticism is to put it in the context of the two aesthetic theories writ large.

Margolis's criticism targets Danto's well-known theory of the indiscernibility of a work of art and a "mere real thing" and the dispute rests on the vexed questions of what one perceives when they experience a work of art. If the claim Margolis makes against Danto is correct, then the theory of perception required to maintain the indiscernibility thesis is precluded

by Danto's very own theory of art. If it can be shown that Danto is committed both to his core thesis about art as stated in "The Artworld" paper of 1964 and *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* of 1981, and to what Margolis claims to be his "phenomenal account of perception," then Margolis has exposed a severely damaging inconsistency at the heart of one of the most noted theories of art in the second half of the 20th century. This paper is a reconsideration of the Danto/Margolis debate especially as it pertains to the differing accounts of perception that form the basis of the disagreement between Danto's and Margolis's theories of art. I shall argue that Danto is committed to a theory of perception that is more closely aligned with the phenomenological theory of perception put forward by Joseph Margolis than with Danto's own theory that postulates the perceptual identity of a work of art and a mere real thing.

2. Two theories of perception

Margolis frames the issue in a question when he asks "what shall we say when leading theorists of the arts—Arthur Danto, most notably—commit themselves to the *denial* of the reality of the cultural?" (Margolis 1999, 57). Since the mere statement of the charge is less than illuminating on its own it will first be necessary to understand what Margolis means by the "reality of culture" and how this understanding may or may not be ruled out by Danto's theory. The central issue rests on a difference between Margolis's and Danto's theories of perception and the use to which Danto puts his account in the formulation of his indiscernibility thesis. Put more generally the two differ on what it is exactly that we *see* when we perceive a work of art.

For Danto, to see something as a work of art requires something that he famously said "the eye cannot descry, an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (Danto 1964, 580). This conclusion follows from the perceptual indiscernibility of a work of art and a "mere real thing." Danto's argument runs as follows: 1) if art theory is required to see something as art, then discerning something as a work of art cannot be done by perceptual means alone. 2) Since there are both actual and hypothetical instances of indiscernible works of art and mere things that cannot be told apart by mere looking, then 3) the artworld provides the necessary theoretical framework by which one can determine which of two indiscernible objects is a work of art and which one is not. Danto's argument requires the support of what Margolis has

termed a *phenomenal account of perception*. By this Margolis means that the indiscernibility thesis commits Danto to a view of perception in which all we perceive when we look at a work of art are sensory, as opposed to cultural, properties. If artworks are "embodied meanings" or "cultural emergents" the favored terminology of Danto and Margolis respectively, then Danto's account of perception requires that the culturally emergent meanings that defines something as a work of art cannot be accounted for on the basis of perception. Contrary to this view, if it were possible to perceive cultural properties then, while a work of art and a mere thing may share all relevant sensory or phenomenal properties, and may be indiscernible in that restricted sense, they would fail to share all relevant cultural properties and are thus not truly an indiscernible pair. This is what Margolis calls a *phenomenological account of perception*, where what he calls Intentional (cultural) properties (which distinguish the cultural world from the merely biological or physical) are readily perceivable along the model of the perception of speech.

Danto has stated the divergence between himself and Margolis as follows: "the issue between Margolis and me has to do with the limits of perception, hardly a small subject in philosophy. He approaches it through the phenomenology of cultural experience, I through the analysis of cultural language. My interest is in truth-conditions, his in the richness of culturally enriched minds" (Danto 1999, 331). It is not surprising that a philosopher primarily considered to represent the analytic tradition in aesthetics would view his work as focused on providing truth-conditions while a philosopher informed by the Pragmatic tradition in philosophy would focus on cultural experience. However, what is at stake in this debate is not the validity of Analytic or Pragmatist approach to aesthetics generally, but rather which account of the perception of art best captures the way in which human beings perceive art as it is actually experienced. Margolis's charge is that Danto cannot have anything coherent to say about the truth-conditions for the application of a cultural term such as "art" in the absence of an understanding of the nature of culturally enriched human selves. Yet according to Margolis, the fact that Danto says plenty about the nature of art, without having provided an account of culturally enriched selves, leads him to hold incoherent positions. It is not a matter of justifying varying philosophical approaches to theorizing about the arts that is at stake but rather whether or not that theorizing about art requires a deeper commitment to an account of what culture is. This deeper understanding of the metaphysics of culture cannot be ac-

completed in the absence of a theory of human selves, a project that has been central to Margolis's philosophy for a number of years. To see the difference between the two theories is to see the overarching philosophical significance of what Margolis dubs the "penetration" thesis, the process of enculturation that results in the creation of "selves," which turn out to be, metaphysically, biological-cultural hybrids and are thus irreducible to merely natural or physical phenomena. The same thesis applies to the cultural products of such hybrid selves like artworks, and (allegedly) makes the artwork/mere real thing perceptual identity untenable given the nature of culture itself. To deny this thesis, is for Margolis, to be guilty of reductionism, and therefore to deny the *sui generis* nature of the cultural world. In what follow I shall defend the penetration thesis and show how, if true, it rules out the account of perception that Danto relies on in constructing the indiscernibility thesis. The result of this argument is that indiscernibility cannot be a central component in a definition or theory of art as Danto supposes.

3. Arthur Danto's theory of art

Arthur Danto has described his theory of art as emerging from, and responding to, two nearly contemporary crises—one in philosophical aesthetics and the other internal to art itself. The beginning of the second half of the 20th century has been called the "neo-Wittgensteinian" moment in aesthetics, when the very attempt to formulate a definition of art, expressed in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, was viewed as misguided. The most we could hope for in way of a "definition" of art was a gesture to a series of family resemblances that more or less connect the diverse members of the class "work of art" together.¹

Meanwhile, art practice had been undergoing its own implicit investigation of its nature and had come to manifest the idea that there need not be any perceptual difference between a work of art and a mere thing. Danto's revelation at the Stable Gallery, brought on by an unusual encounter with a brillo box, was to come to understand that art need not look any different from non-art. According to Danto, this amounts to art

¹ See Morris Weitz "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 15, No. 1. (Sep., 1956), pp.27-35, William Kennick "Does Traditional Aesthetics Rest on a Mistake?" *Mind*, 67, (July 1958), pp.317-334 and Maurice Mandelbaum "Family Resemblances and Generalizations concerning the Arts" *American Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 2, No. 3. (Jul., 1965), pp. 219-228.

coming to the realization of its own philosophical self-consciousness and signals the end of art understood as progressing in its own internal development. This is not to say that art making has coming to end, only that the art being made after the end of art cannot be seen as the continuation of the narrative of various attempted concepts of art being overturned by new artworks that challenge that definition in a more or less orderly succession. Art after the end of art, according to Danto, is a radical pluralism where anything is possible because art practice is no longer preoccupied with the task of challenging the prevailing conception of its own nature.

The conjunction of these two historical moments impressed upon Danto the dire need for a real definition of art that could both overcome the deflationary Wittgensteinian account of art and provide an answer to why Warhol's *Brillo Box* was art, whereas seemingly perceptually identical brillo boxes in a supermarket were not. These two motivations, although conceivably distinct enough to be understood as unrelated developments, are for Danto, intertwined in such a way that the very conditions necessary for countering the Wittgensteinian position first became conceptual possibilities only after art practice itself had achieved the realization that its own nature is not tied to perceptual criteria. One cannot understand Danto's theory of art without understanding his response to both of these crises and the inter-relations between the two. If art can look exactly like something else that is not art, then only theory, and not perception alone, can tell us what is art and what is not.

There is a Hegelian eloquence disclosed when we view Danto's theory of art in the light of the two motivations that inspired it. Danto's theory of art could not have arisen in any other period in the history of art. Nor could a definition of art have been more needed than at the time when the prevailing view was that there can be no definition of art. It is the confluence of these two occurrences, and perhaps the presence of a painter turned philosopher hanging around the art world of New York in the 1950's and 1960's, that account for the possibility of Danto's theory at all. This section will present Arthur Danto's theory of art by exploring the role of the indiscernibility thesis in the formulation of the definition of art. However, before turning to the examination of those views it will be useful to explore briefly Danto's 1964 paper "The Artworld." This paper is important because it represents Danto's first foray into the philosophy of art. Also, more significantly, it provides the initial statement of the issues for which the rest of Danto's writings on art is the fuller specification.

The two most central ideas in Danto's overall theory of art first expounded in "The Artworld" are the coinage of the term *is of artistic identification* and the assertion of the dependency of artworks on theory. Since it is the case for Danto that in order to identify an object as a work of art requires having mastered the use of this special "is", any definition of art will be dependent on theory because the mastering the use of the *is of artistic identification* requires knowing a fair amount about the history and theory of art. The closest thing to an explicit definition of art that Danto offers in "The Artworld" is just this discussion of the *is of artistic identification*. Although he does not here yet offer a fuller specification of his definition of art, he does suggest that in the very least it is a necessary condition for something to be a work of art that it is described using the *is of artistic identification*. Danto puts it as follows.

For want of a word I shall designate this the *is of artistic identification*; in each case in which it is used, the *a* stands for some specific physical property of, or physical part of, an object; and, finally, it is a necessary condition for something to be an artwork that some part or property of it be designable by the subject of a sentence that employs this special *is*.
Danto 1964, 577

The *a* to which Danto is referring in this passage is one that would figure in the sentence "That *a* is *b*." By using sentences that employ the *is of artistic identification* it is possible to render consistent the claims that (1) "*Brillo Box* is a *brillo box*" and (2) "*Brillo Box* is not (merely) a *brillo box*." In the first sentence the "is" is one other than the *is of artistic identification*. These two sentences are compatible because in the second claim the use of the *is of artistic identification* marks off the property mentioned in the first claim as a part of the work of art *Brillo Box*, but also that it possesses properties that mere *brillo boxes* lack. The part of *Brillo Box* that is designable by the *is of artistic identification* cannot be the same part that is identified in the first sentence. That is, through being the subject of a sentence using the *is of artistic identification*, *Brillo Box* possesses properties of a kind that *brillo boxes* cannot. Further, the use of the *is of artistic identification* underlies the interpretability of a work of art. One hallmark of Danto's definition of art is that art is the sort of thing of which it makes sense to ask what it is about. It is the characteristic aboutness of works of art that make it possible to interpret an artworks meaning(s). It makes no sense to provide an interpretation of a supermarket *brillo box* because, insofar

as it cannot be described using the *is of artistic identification*, it does not demand interpretation.²

Danto's discussion of the *is of artistic identification* is of further significance because it provides the framework in which his distinction between a work of art and a mere real thing takes shape. It is the relationship between theory and art that supports the claim that not all things can be art at all times. It is important to note the close relationship between the identification of something as art and the dependence on art theory. In the following passage Danto asserts the dependence of art on theories of art.

What in the end makes the difference between a Brillo box and a work of art consisting of a Brillo Box is a certain theory of art. It is the theory that takes it up into the world of art, and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it is (in a sense of *is* other than that of artistic identification). Of course, without the theory, one is unlikely to see it as art, and in order to see it as part of the artworld, one must have mastered a good deal of artistic theory as well as a considerable amount of the history of recent New York painting. It could not have been art fifty years ago. But then there could not have been, everything being equal, flight insurance in the Middle Ages, or Etruscan typewriter erasers. The world has to be ready for certain things, the artworld no less than the real one. It is the role of artistic theories, these days as always, to make the artworld, and art, possible.

Danto 1964, 581

What Warhol had achieved with *Brillo Box* was the needed example that illustrates how an artwork can be comprised of a real object (a mere real thing) as a constitutive part and yet not be identifiable with that real thing. This is the case because identifying an artwork that is indiscernible from a real thing *as* that real thing is to use an "is" other than the *is of artistic identification*. *Brillo Box* is a brillo box if what we mean by "is" is just that *Brillo Box* is partially constituted by a real brillo box.³ But *Brillo Box* is not merely a real brillo box because the use of the *is of artistic identification* in describing it provides the theoretical underpinning that constitutes it as a work of art. Without a theory of art to do so, there is no way to tell apart artworks from the mere real things that they look exactly alike. This is not a philosophical theory that could have been formulated without instances of artworks that could not be perceptually discerned from real things that

² As we shall see it is not clear if Danto maintains this claim in his own art criticism.

³ This is not to claim that a real Brillo Box was a *physical* constituent of *Brillo Box* (it was in fact made of plywood), but that *Brillo Box* is both conceptually and perceptually constituted by a real brillo box.

they both are and are not. In fact in order to see this as failing to be an explicit contradiction, one needs a fair amount of philosophical theory, and most importantly, the *is* of artistic identification at their disposal. Art is dependent on theory in the sense that a theory of art is required in order to tell that something is a work of art. Theory is dependent on art in that certain philosophical theories about art (notably Danto's own) were not possible until the artworld had posed the question about the essence of art in terms of the perceptual indiscernibility of a work of art and a mere real thing. There could not be Danto's theory of art without there first having been Warhol in the same way that there could not have been, as Danto states, Etruscan typewriter erasers.

What then is Danto's definition of art? In summing up the gains achieved in his seminal *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* Danto has claimed that there are two necessary conditions for something to be a work of art. Namely, (1) that it be about something and (2) that it embody its meaning. Art then, according to Danto, is an embodied meaning that exhibits aboutness. It is appropriate to ask what a work of art is about and how it goes about embodying that meaning, where it is not appropriate to ask these questions about mere things. These two conditions likewise serve as the guiding principles for Danto's art criticism.

In commenting on Danto's statement of his definition of art in *After the End of Art*, Noel Carroll focus on what Danto left out of his definition rather than the two conditions that comprise it. Namely, Carroll is surprised that Danto did not include a third condition along the lines of the claim about the necessity of art theory for the existence of art made in "The Artworld." Carroll proposes that the third omitted necessary condition for something to be a work of art that it "be an instance of an art theory or an intelligible episode in the sort of narrative that such theories generate" (Carroll 1997, 386). According to Carroll, the omission of a condition connecting artworks to theory in conjunction with the fact that the two conditions Danto does supply fail to be jointly sufficient, leaves Danto's definition of art in the embarrassing position of being unable to address the guiding philosophical question of Danto's aesthetics, namely the distinction between a work of art and a mere real thing. Since real brillo boxes are about something (brillo) and they convey that brillo is "clean, bright, modern and that it is associated with freshness, dynamism and liveliness" they seem to fulfill Danto's definition (Carroll 1997, 387). On Danto's proposed definition, then, a distinction could not

be drawn between Warhol's *Brillo Box* and real brillo boxes.⁴ If Carroll's reading of Danto is correct, then the very moment in art history that Danto makes such grand use of as the primary example of the coming to self-consciousness of art's own essence, could not be understood in terms of his own theory. Danto could respond to Carroll by claiming that although real brillo boxes fulfill the two conditions of his definition of art they fail to do so in the right way. That is, what real brillo boxes are about is not properly embodied in brillo boxes in such a way as to convey the meaning in the way necessary for it to be a work of art. To work out what constitutes the way that meaning is to be embodied for it to count as a work of art would seemingly require the addition of a third condition to Danto's definition. Since Danto thinks that the way that art embodies its meaning is determined by the mode of presentation being, at least, adequate to that meaning (where being adequate is understood as being in accordance with a theory of art which explains the relationship between the meaning of work and the presentation of that meaning) it would appear as though the required third condition would be something very similar to Carroll's proposal.

A more serious issue with Danto's definition of art involves the relationship between the definition of art and the end of art thesis. If it is true that Danto's theory of art could only have occurred after art, itself, asked the question of its own identity in the form of an indiscernibility problem, then the failure of his definition of art to distinguish between *Brillo Box* and real brillo boxes would undermine the motivation for the theory in the first place. Carroll describes the tension between these two aspects of Danto's overall theory of art in the following way.

In Danto's view, the philosophy of art had to await that point in art history when the problem of indiscernibles raised its hydra head. That moment arrived when artists like Warhol presented artworks like *Brillo Box* that were indiscernible from their ordinary counterparts. At that point, the question of the nature of art was allegedly put in its proper philosophical form, ready to be answered by theorists like Danto, and art history, as the progressive interrogation of the nature of art, came to an end.

Carroll 1997, 389

The adequacy of Danto's definition of art hinges on the truth of the end of art thesis. If Danto's theory of art is only another in the series of art

⁴ In a subsequent section we shall see how Danto himself seems to concede his point in his art criticism where he claims that both *Brillo Box* and brillo boxes are cultural "emergents", a term which he takes from Margolis.

theories that make up the "progressive interrogation of the nature of art" then his definition of art could not be said to pick out the essential nature of all and only artworks at all times. The support that Danto gives for the end of art thesis is that art had come to see that it need not look any different from non-art. That is if art could look exactly like something that was not art, then it is theories of art alone that can distinguish the two. This theory would capture this essence of art because art has exhausted the search for its own meaning and had posed the question of its nature in a philosophical form.

Danto's aesthetics elevates the problem of indiscernibles to the central problem in the philosophy of art. Without this problem Danto could not support his claim regarding the end of art. However, it is less than clear how Danto justifies the assertion that indiscernibility is the central question of the philosophy of art without invoking the theory of art that indiscernibility is meant to provide. While it is no doubt interesting and compelling, it may only represent a small corner of philosophically interesting questions about art and thereby should not be taken as disclosing the essence of art. This is the exact position that Margolis takes on the question of the place of indiscernibility cases in the philosophy of art and, as we shall see, one motivation for his criticism of Danto on perception. Yet, if Danto's elevation of the problem of indiscernibles is mistaken, if the problem of indiscernibles can be explained as a part of a larger art theory, then Danto's end of art thesis loses its primary motivation. The difficulties regarding the relationship between Danto's essentialist definition of art and his historicism strike at the center of the question of the consistency of Danto's theory. As such, the next section shall examine Danto's denial of the historicity of perception as a final prelude to the presentation of Margolis's alternative view.

4. The historicity of perception

Before turning our attention to the specifics of the charge Margolis levels against Danto there is one aspect of Danto's essentialism that warrants consideration at this point because it bears on the dispute with Margolis in a direct way. Significantly, Danto denies the historicity of the eye and by extension the historicity other perceptual modalities as well. In doing so, he equates perception with the physiological attributes of the eye, which, as biological, are not subject to cultural change. It is this claim which most closely serves as evidence for what Margolis calls, in his own idiom,

Danto's *phenomenal account of perception*—the denial that cultural concepts can penetrate perception and thereby inform, at a fundamental level, what we see. This strikes at the heart of the disagreement between Danto and Margolis, so it is important to take note of the claims that Danto has made in this regard.

The thesis that the eye itself is as historical as human knowledge itself—that there are changes in visual perception indexed to and possibly reflective of historical changes, and that there is a history of seeing entirely analogous to changes in artistic production—attributes, in my view, a far greater plasticity to our optical system than the facts of perception seem to me to allow. . . At a level higher than that of optical reality, there is no doubt that people see the same things differently at different cultural moments—the hot springs seen by devout medievals as evidence of hellfire are seen by nineteenth-century entrepreneurs as thermal sanatoria waiting to be exploited—but a robust theory of the eye as historical would require that whatever accounts for these differences penetrates the optical system in such a way that the eye itself changes with history so that, at the level of ophthalmology, individuals see the world differently, or even, in the strongest version of the thesis, see different worlds.

Danto 2001,1

It is clear that Danto identifies the "optical system" narrowly just to include the physiological functioning of the eye. That is, seeing is essential devoid of any conceptual content. This narrow identification leads to the bifurcation, the dualism, between "optical reality" and a "higher reality", which accounts for the differences in seeing at different historical moments. This distinction, however, is an equivocation about the meaning of *seeing*, the very same confined sense of perception that Danto relies on in making his distinction between an artwork and a mere thing in *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*. But in admitting that devout medievals and romantic era entrepreneurs see hot springs differently is to admit that there is, in fact, a history of seeing, which deeply informs the way that different historical periods will perceive the same phenomenon. In order to maintain the claim that the eye itself does not change (which is trivially true in a biological sense—the question is what counts as a complete perceptual system) Danto has to accept that what we see is uninfluenced by our historically informed cultural situatedness—the very thing that he denies! On this view we would have to make an inference on the basis of sensations devoid of concepts to the presence of hot springs whether construed as a religious symbol or a moneymaking opportunity. That percep-

tion functions in this way, devoid of any use of concepts is questionable. Yet, this is the price that Danto has to pay in order to maintain his entire philosophy of art based on indiscernibles. If concepts do indeed penetrate perception then there is a strong case for the historicized nature of perception that allows for the perception of cultural properties within the confines of a constructivist and historicist account of realism. As Margolis has put the point "the cultural world and the Intentionally qualified things of the cultural world are 'there or exist' in a robustly realist sense so as to be open to being objectively perceived or understood" (Margolis 2009a, 92). There is no other way to account for the claim that artworks are embodied meanings without offering an account of how those meanings might count as being objectively perceived. For Margolis, this means recognizing that objectivity cannot be anything more than a "constructed norm subject to indefinitely extended, historicized revisions" (Margolis 2009a, 94). Since the contributions made by either the historicized perceptual subject, or the equally historicized object of perception cannot be isolated in any single cognitive act on anything like privileged grounds, one cannot, as Danto supposes, make a distinction between different meanings of the same object at different historical times without accepting the penetration of perception by culturally informed, historicized concepts. But to accept this much is to give up on the indiscernibility of artworks and mere things. The same hot springs are objectively perceived, at different historical moments, as either signs of Hellfire or as an economic opportunity because the very notion of objectivity is itself informed by the same forces which account for the history of seeing.

The grounds on which Danto maintains that there is a difference between ocular reality and cultural reality are not clear. But he must maintain this claim at all costs or risk the incoherence of his philosophy of art. Danto has staked everything on this account of perception, which contains, as I have suggested, an equivocation regarding the use of "seeing" but also a questionable distinction between ocular reality and cultural reality, between an ocular system that is limited to the physiological function of our biological equipment and one that extends to include cultural concepts which inform what it is we see when we see anything

5. The charge

Having provided the necessary background to fully comprehend the scope and nature of Margolis's disagreement with Danto it is now possible to

turn to the criticism itself. The clearest statement that Joseph Margolis has provided of his criticism of Danto's aesthetic theory goes as follows:

Danto *cannot*, consistently, treat the Intentional properties of artworks (as I've named them) *as* (that is, referenced in) imaginatively qualified *phenomenological* descriptions of *such works* and, at the same time, *as* only figurative ways of construing (or imagining) the *phenomenal* properties of *mere material things*. . . But that's to say, Danto's theory *precludes* our actually *seeing the Intentional properties of artworks*: and that's to say, his theory precludes the reality of artworks—and thus he fails! He remains silent about persons, but clearly persons cannot be "mere material things." There's the *reductio*.

Margolis 2009b, 130

It is important to note that one fault Margolis finds with Danto's theory is that "he remains silent about persons." This is not simply to fault Danto for failing to be interested in providing a theory about what constitutes a person, because for Margolis, artworks (and other cultural entities) attain their status as metaphysical hybrids (physical/cultural) because they are the *utterances* of encultured selves. Margolis is not providing an argument by analogy from persons to artworks. Rather, he is attempting to provide an analysis of culture that can accommodate and explain the metaphysical nature of both persons (selves) and artworks. The commonality between the two, and the thrust of Margolis's argument, relies on the "penetration thesis" (that is, the process by which the member of the natural kind *Homo Sapiens* are "transfigured" metaphysically by the process of language acquisition (enculturation) into persons and selves and which requires that they be analyzed in a non-reductive way). This thesis will be examined shortly. First though it will be prudent to deconstruct Margolis claim in some detail.

Danto's thesis about the perceptual identity of a work of art and a mere real thing requires that he treats the Intentional properties of artworks (which include the interpretative, representational, semiotic, expressive, symbolic, creative, in short the aesthetic and artistic properties of an artwork) as figurative transformations of the phenomenal properties that are shared by perceptually indiscernible artworks and mere real things (e.g. *Brillo Box* and brillo boxes). Danto himself, in a discussion of the aesthetic difference between brillo boxes and *Brillo Box* claims that the aesthetic difference presupposes the ontological difference. That is, a theory of art is required to tell the difference between the aesthetic qualities (properties) of the two objects. But Danto continues, with the seemingly

damaging admission that the Brillo box is not a "mere real thing" but rather an embodied meaning (he is writing here in the early 1990's, well after the publication of the seminal statement of his theory). The interesting task as he puts it is to "show how the meanings of these two cultural emergents differ, and hence how their aesthetics differ. Or better: to show the difference in the art criticism of these two objects" (Danto 1994, 384). This should already appear at odds with Danto's analysis of the two objects in "The Artworld," as well as with the doctrine that the ontological difference presupposes and accounts for the aesthetic difference. Instead he seems to be claiming that the difference in *meanings* (which would make each ontological equivalents since both are cultural emergents or embodied meanings), and not an ontological difference (between a work of art and a mere real thing), accounts for the aesthetic difference. In "The Artworld" Danto claims, "what in the end makes the difference between a Brillo box and a work of art consisting of a Brillo Box is a certain theory of art. It is the theory that takes it up into the world of art, and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it is (in a sense of *is* other than that of artistic identification)" (Danto 1964, 581). The *is* which indicates the being of the Brillo box in "The Artworld" paper, along with a certain theory of art, keeps the work of art that is perceptually comprised of a Brillo box from collapsing into the *real object* that it is, in the same way that say, it is a theory of art that keeps any painting from collapsing into the Stokes of paint that it *is*. Yet, it appears sufficiently clear that we perceive that a painting, in virtue of being about something other than paint, is not identical to the physical medium that composes it. We do not need a theory of art to tell us something that we can plainly *see*. This conclusion is in direct opposition to Danto's further claim that "it is the role of artistic theories, these days as always, to make the artworld, and art, possible" (Danto 1964, 581). Margolis's difference with Danto is captured by Margolis's insistence that it is encultured selves that make both art and theories about art possible, and further that it is from this source that art derives its metaphysical status. The charge then amounts to the claim that Danto's recent view of artworks as embodied meanings is in direct opposition to the theory of art proposed in "The Artworld" and enumerated in more detail in *Transfiguration*.

To see the point is just to read Danto as treating the Brillo box not as a mere real thing in *Embodied Meanings* but rather as a "cultural emergent" which embodies meanings, seemingly in virtue of the way Margolis describes that process. The difference then, between it and *Brillo Box* is

no longer an ontological difference but rather a difference in meaning, a difference in the kind of art criticism that is appropriate for each object. If they are both *art* (or at the very least as beings of the same ontological kind—that of cultural emergent), although artworks are of a different genre, then it is not clear how the ontological distinction between art and non-art can now account for the aesthetic difference. Either Danto has given or must give up the distinction between a work of art and a mere real thing (as exemplified in the case of a brillo box and *Brillo Box*) on which his whole theory of art rests, or he is illicitly making use of *phenomenological* descriptions of these objects for the purposes of art criticism. Take, by way of an example, the description that Danto provides of the meaning(s) of the two objects.

The “real” Brillo box, which actually houses Brillo pads, was designed by an artist, James Harvey, who was a second-generation Abstract Expressionist more or less forced to take up commercial art. It has a very marked style, which situates it perfectly in its own time and in fact there are some very marked connections between it and some of the high art styles of that time. Its style, however, differs sharply from that of Warhol’s *Brillo Box*, which has almost no connection to those very high art styles at all. Where Warhol’s is cool, it is hot, even urgent, in proclaiming the newness of the product it contains, the speed with which it shines aluminum, and the fact that its twenty-four packages are GIANT SIZE. Speed, gigantism, newness, are attributes of the advertising world’s message. . . But none of this pertains to Warhol, who felt no such influence and had no such message. . . Warhol just took all this over without participating in the meaning at all. For him, at best, it would be the sheer banality of the box that was meaningful, and this, internal to his box, would be an external assessment of the commercial container. But to Harvey the box was not banal at all. In any case, in point of meaning the two could not be more different.

Danto 1994, 385

Danto is offering a *phenomenological* description that accounts for the difference in meaning of the two perceptually indiscernible boxes. In treating Harvey’s Brillo box as an artwork (or at the very least as an culturally emergent entity) Danto cannot appeal to the *phenomenal* properties of the object alone to account for its meaning, since otherwise Warhol’s *Brillo Box* would at least be a strong candidate for sharing the same meaning. Since the meaning of the two could not be more different, Danto has to have recourse to a phenomenological account of the Intentional properties of both objects (in this case he makes heavy use of the stylistic differences) because

no difference is at all possible on a phenomenal account of the properties of the two objects! Either Danto's art criticism requires abandoning the distinction between art and non-art, or accepting Margolis's account of the cultural penetration of perception. In the latter case the two objects are not indiscernibles at all, since one embodies the meanings of newness, speed and gigantism and the other embodies the banality of a box through which art has achieved a critical, philosophical self-consciousness of its own meaning. It isn't at all clear how Danto could get all that from the two objects unless he were to *see* it, understanding perception in the phenomenological sense as the means through which the meaning of an object can come to be known. Cultural objects and perception itself are both products of the historicized activities of human agents. As such, we can *perceive* meaning for the same reasons we can *make* meaning. Both abilities rely on the underlying metaphysical transformation of nature into culture achieved through the unique abilities of human selves. These human powers, in turn, ought to function to inform our best speculations about the nature of the world which we create. Danto can't, or so Margolis claims, have it both ways. Either the phenomenologically informed art criticism quoted above has no grounding in the reality of the objects Danto is describing, or they are not truly perceptual indiscernibles.

All this hinges, of course, on the claim that we can perceive the intentional properties of cultural entities and that the possession of such properties marks off the cultural world from the material world. In order to understand this claim it is essential to understand what Margolis means by the "penetration" thesis in more detail. The issue at hand is:

the matter of the cultural penetration of perception, for instance by linguistic and other enculturing processes—viewed as the direct consequence of the "originary" *Bildung* of human consciousness (in Hegel's sense), that is, the encultured ("second-natured," "external") transformation of the members of *Homo sapiens* into apt selves or persons: hence, also, the answer to the ontological relationship between "content" and "matter" in the arts (again, in Hegel's sense) and, in general, the answer to the difference between material nature and human culture.

Margolis 2009b, 109

The penetration thesis provides the answer not only to the account of perception that is essential in seeing the difference between Margolis and Danto but also to the relationship between culture and nature. *Bildung*, in the sense that Margolis is using the term, is the process of cultural education, which penetrates all the way down to perception, which, in

turn, enables us to *see* the meaning of culture (or to *hear* the meaning of speech) in one perceptual act rather than as something that must be inferred from the content of mere biological processes (perception narrowly construed phenomenally). This culturally informed perceptual ability is a consequence of the metaphysical transformation from a mere biological self to a culturally fluent (encultured) self. Thus, education in this sense is not merely the process of becoming culturally literate (that is, learning about the history and objects that comprise the cultural world) but is rather nothing less than the creation of a human self through our ability to understand language and meaning. In other words, we become self-consciously aware of ourselves as cultural entities, imbued with meaning and as a consequence capable of producing meaning in other entities through transferring our "originary *Bildung*" to them through the act of creation or interpretation.

A further consequence of the penetration thesis is that it makes any reductionist metaphysics incapable of adequately addressing the nature of either human selves or cultural entities as "metaphysical hybrids." This is the core of Margolis's theory of cultural emergence. If you take emergence seriously then it metaphysically rules out reductionism. While it is necessarily true that culturally emergent entities share some properties with their physical or material embodying mediums, their metaphysical complexity cannot be completely understood in those terms. Thus, physicalism is false, and cultural entities can exhibit unique causal capabilities that resist explanation in reductionist terms. Here again is a statement of the penetration thesis, this time stated in terms of the relationship to the emergence of the cultural from the material.

The *sui generis* emergence of the Intentional world entails the contingent "penetration" of the material world by enculturating forces—for instance, the enlanguaged transformation ("transfiguration," in the metaphysical sense Danto opposes) of the biologically determined mental and agential capacities of the members of *Homo sapiens* in whatever way may be demarcated as thinking, perception, affects of behavior.

Margolis 2009b, 134

The natural kind "human," in virtue of the enculturation process, is metaphysically transformed in whatever way is required by the possession of thought and language. Yet, I think Margolis has the direction of entailment reversed. The penetration of the material by the cultural is a *pre-supposition* of the emergence of the Intentional (cultural) world. If not for the unique abilities of human selves, which extends beyond the mere de-

terminated biological limitations persons possess in a material sense, emergence would not be possible. It seems then that there are two cases of emergence that it is important to keep conceptually distinct. The first is the emergence of human selves from their biologically determined base as described by the penetration conjecture. Margolis calls this "internal Bildung". This case of emergence corresponds to the emergence of the cultural world from the physical. The second, and more foundational case of emergence for the existence of the Intentional world is the emergence of the cultural world from mere natural materials based upon the abilities engendered to human beings by the capability of thought and language (the result of the first instance of emergence). This is external bildung. Margolis's account of emergence is best understood in the light of Dewey's use of continuity in his metaphysics. Culture is continuous with nature in that there are no breaks or gaps between the two categories yet; the admission of the reality of culture precludes reducing it to nature understood merely as physical and mechanical processes. The cultural world emerges from emergent selves. That this process cannot be experienced in time, as we find ourselves thrust into an already existing cultural matrix, does not obscure the logical point that human selves presuppose human culture and that human selves require an ontological transformation from the physical to the cultural. Thus, in one sense Margolis is right to say that the emergence of the Intentional world entails the penetration thesis because from the fact that we find a world that is already rich in Intentional properties it must follow that there are competent human selves. Nevertheless, the objection that there was never a time when there were human selves without an emergent Intentional world does not mean that the cultural word existing logically presupposes the existence of its author.

6. Conclusion

The disagreement between Arthur Danto and Joseph Margolis is concerned with how we experience culture. Whereas Margolis's theory of culture explains how concepts penetrate human perception and experience, Danto's theory of art rests on a theory of perception that requires that the difference between art and non-art is imperceptible. As I have argued above, Danto's own art criticism requires accepting a theory of perception that precludes the possibility of the essence of art hinging on the indiscernibility of art and mere real things. Following Margolis, the unique human abilities that account for the possibility of making meaning explains

the perception of meaning as well. The importance of the Danto/Margolis debate is not localized to the narrow question of the essence or definition of art. Rather, the debate points us to an understanding of the nature and power of culturally enriched human selves that make both art, and the philosophy of art possible. The lasting philosophical contribution of Joseph Margolis is that in looking beyond the narrow problems of various philosophical subfields he was able to formulate a richly compelling theory of the human person. Any philosophical attempt to understand the nature of art and the human selves that create is deeply indebted to the work of Joseph Margolis. In fact, there is no better testament to the depth and complexity of the human ability to make meaning than the philosophy of Joseph Margolis.

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Margolis's Critique of Bivalence and its Consequences for the Theory of Action and a Pluralist Theory of Religion

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In the following, I discuss Margolis's critique of bivalence and its consequences for ethics and the philosophy of religion. In particular, I reconstruct Margolis's views in section I, discuss his thesis of the link between alethics and ontology/epistemology in section II, draw out its moral consequences in section III, and demonstrate how it can be used to sketch a pluralist theory of religion in section IV.

I Margolis's Critique of Bivalence

1

At least, since his 1986 book "Pragmatism without Foundations. Reconciling Realism and Relativism" (see 56–8, 73–5, 99–100 et al.), Margolis has become famous for his defense of relativism. He uses the term "robust relativism" which will play an increasingly important role in his later work. In commenting on the difference between the kinds of relativism Quine and Goodman favor, he distinguishes "robust" from "radical relativism" (1986, 21–2). Although Margolis' use of the term "robust relativism" changes later slightly (see below), relativism is connected to truth-related concerns at this point already.

This relation of relativism to truth-related concerns is preserved in his systematic defense of relativism in his 1991 book "The Truth about Rela-

tivism". There, he calls relativism an *alethic* thesis. By this term, he means that it is "a thesis about the nature of truth or about constraints on the use of the values 'true' and 'false' or similar truth-like values"¹. Since it is on the *nature* of truth or its use, it is a *second-order* thesis. That is, it is not a first-order thesis on different ways to distribute truth-predicates over given phenomena. An example of the latter would be a theory of cultural relativity which emphasizes, say, cultural differences in distributing truth predicates. Margolis's relativism differs from theories of relativity of that sort by focusing on second-order, i.e. *metareflections* on truth rather than on first-order reflections concerning its actual use (and possible differences implied in it).

Margolis distinguishes between two different kinds of alethic relativism: In 1991, robust relativism is contrasted with relationalism. According to *relationalism*, truth-predicates are to be relativized to a particular language, perspective, or something along those lines. What are considered to be contradictions under conditions of bivalence, i.e. under the assumption that only the values 'true' and 'false' exist, can under relationalist auspices be reconciled with each other: What is considered to be true in language 1 does not necessarily have to be true in language 2. It may be false.

Margolis rejects relationalism for the well-known paradoxes it implies. It leads to self-referential inconsistencies since the relationalist must presuppose at least one *non-relational* proposition in order to get her theory off the ground, viz. the proposition that all truths are to be relationalized to a language. This proposition holds not only in the relationalist's language or perspective but in non-relationalist languages or perspectives as well.

Thus, the relationalist is confronted with a dilemma: Either she stops being relationalist when it comes to legitimizing her own relationalism. Or, else, she is relationalist all the way down—in which case she forfeits the basic legitimation for being relationalist.

Since relationalism is plagued by this problem, Margolis abandons it in favor of its alethic relativist alternative, *robust relativism*. This kind of relativism does not relationalize truth values but systematically *replaces the bivalent values with logically weaker truth values or truth-like values*:

¹ Margolis, 1991, 7. Later, he explains the alethic domain to be concerned with the "choice, assigned meaning, and formal constraints on the use of truth and truth-like values" (Margolis, 1995, 66).

...[W]here, on the bivalent model, logical inconsistency or contradiction obtains, now, on the replacement model and in accord with appropriate relevance constraints, such logical incongruences (as we may call them) need no longer be treated as full logical inconsistencies, incompatibilities, contradictions, or the like.

Margolis 1991, 8; original italics

Those weaker truth values are *many-valued as a matter of principle*, i.e. not only as a concession to contingent circumstances, such as a temporary lack of evidence. This being the case, they are principally different from probabilistic values which remain committed to the bivalent ideal (c.f. Margolis, 1991, 9).

I understand this to mean that probabilism is not excluded on a priori grounds, according to Margolis's robust relativism. Where appropriate, probabilistic values may be applied. Yet, his point is that they should not be squeezed into the straitjacket of a bivalent ideology. Probabilism is not a convenient way to avoid acknowledging the reasons that speak in favor of abandoning bivalence (see below). This being the case, probabilism can be applied *within* the parameters of a many-valued logic.

Margolis does not criticize bivalence as such but only its alethic monopoly. It should not be applied universally. He does not then suggest abandoning bivalence but, rather, that in certain domains of inquiry it should be replaced by a many-valued logic.

This many valued-logic embraces values such as 'undecidable' or 'indeterminate'. Margolis's point is that the indeterminacy involved is not just an emergency measure, say, caused by a temporary lack of cognitive capabilities, to be remedied by further research. Rather, his point is that the distribution of truth values is indeterminate as a matter of principle *because of the nature of the objects* at stake: Certain objects are of such a kind that the values 'true' and 'false' cannot be reasonably applied to propositions pertaining to those objects.

...[T]here is a run of phenomena—events and particulars—that 'have natures' that intrinsically include complex *intentional* properties, such that those natures or features are vague or indeterminate enough to invite incongruent judgments regarding what they are, or such that their natures and properties are so alterable by interpretation alone that incongruent judgments cannot be avoided in specifying them. The principal site of such phenomena is, of course, the world of human culture—artworks, actions, histories, the psychological nature of persons, institutions, theories, practices, and whatever is similarly

affected when colored by cultural interests (even the schemes for individuating natural phenomena, for instance). Margolis, 1991, 20–1²

Certain "events and particulars" have thus intentional³ properties which are intrinsically complex to such an extent that a bivalent logic has to give way to a many-valued logic. In addition to the "world of human culture", other phenomena come to mind, such as (certain interpretations of) quantum theory: Given that the "nature" of the phenomena at stake cannot be construed as being logically independent from the observer's point of view according to those interpretations, they are prime candidates for being "alterable by interpretation alone" so "that incongruent judgments cannot be avoided in specifying them".

In sum, there is a range of phenomena which belong to domains of inquiry in which bivalence has to give way to a many-valued logic.

2

How does Margolis's critique of bivalence relate to comparable points of view, such as Michael Dummett's? Dummett rejects "the semantic principle of bivalence", viz. that "every statement is true or false". The reason for his rejection involve scruples concerning the question of decidability regarding determinate statements (Dummett, 1978, xxviii–xxix).

Yet, Dummett distinguishes between bivalence and the "law of excluded middle" or *tertium non datur*. The latter implies that no statement is neither true nor false. Dummett preserves the latter in spite of having sacrificed bivalence. He suggests that—once the question of decidability is answered positively—*tertium non datur* holds. He explains that for no statement "can we *ever* rule out both the possibility of its being true and that of its being false, in other words, the principle that there can be no circumstances in which a statement can be recognized as being, *irrevocably*, neither true nor false" (Dummett, 1978, xxx; emphasis mine). Margolis criticizes Dummett by taking up the issue of decidability. He provides the example of Clerk Maxwell who thought that the question of the velocity of light is indeterminable, thus that the velocity of the ether is undecidable.

² Other domains include more specifically "literary and art criticism, . . . the interpretation of history, . . . moral, legal, and prudential matters, and wherever explanatory theories are thought to be radically underdetermined in principle" (Margolis, 1991, 20).

³ In his later writings, Margolis combines intentional with intensional under the heading "Intentional" (uppercase I; see e.g. Margolis, 2010, 34) which has become something of a trademark of his thinking (see e.g. Aili W. Bresnahan, How Artistic Creativity is possible for Cultural Agents, in this volume).

But shortly thereafter Michelson invented a procedure for observing a signal of light on the earth by which to study its motion, and he did indeed calculate its velocity. Now, did light *have* a determinate velocity at the very moment Maxwell thought the question undecidable? It seems difficult to deny that it did... Margolis, 1991, 45

This example draws on a point Margolis had raised in "Pragmatism without Foundations" (1986, 118–23) already, viz. that focusing on decidability is vacuous unless indexicalized: Unless we come up with reasonable time-constraints and related considerations, telling us that something is not undecidable as a matter of principle is not telling us very much. And the same holds for Dummett's promise that nothing is "irrevocably neither true nor false". In the absence of reasonable time-constraints, decidability or effective decidability has no operational value. Margolis thus shows that Dummett's confidence in *tertium non datur* is misplaced. It shares the same fate as bivalence does: It has to be abrogated—at least, its universal pretensions have to be abrogated.⁴

Yet, although Margolis's 1991 critique of Dummett resembles his 1986 critique, its purpose changes. In 1986, Margolis' critique of *tertium non datur* was directed primarily against one particular tenet in Dummett's approach, viz. against Dummett's treatment of the realism/anti-realism issue. From 1991 onwards, though, Margolis puts this critique in the service of more comprehensive purposes: He argues now against all attempts to fix alethic considerations in abstraction from considerations on the objects at stake. He suggests now that "decisions about the logic of any inquiry are not unconditionally *a priori* to that inquiry... They are instead internal to and part of the cognitively pertinent characteristics of the domain itself" (1991, 42).

This point is of crucial relevance to Margolis's approach. He insists that the alethic question concerning whether we are capable of distributing bipolar truth values over pertinent statements cannot be answered satisfactorily without taking into account the nature of the objects at stake. Thus, Margolis's point is that *alethic considerations cannot be fixed indepen-*

⁴ See Margolis, 1987, 7. I agree in principle but would like to restrict this critique explicitly to questions of operationalizability: Unless indexicalized, Dummett's insistence on *tertium non datur* is pointless for operational purposes (as will become clear below, in section 5). Yet, in other respects, this insistence may make a difference. For example, if we muse about the metaphysical structure of the world, human cognitive capabilities, etc., the promise that no statement "can be recognized as being, irrevocably, neither true nor false" may have some payoff.

dently from ontological considerations. I call this point Margolis' rejection of alethic *a priori*ism.'

The rejection of alethic *a priori*ism is a thread which runs through Margolis' later works as well. For example, in his "Historied Thought, Constructed World" from 1995, he holds that "the choice of truth values... assigned... to any sector of inquiry is a function... of what we take the nature of the domain in question" (65) to be. This choice is thus conceptually linked to the domain in question and the ontological characteristics of the objects of which it consists.

Furthermore, the question what sort of truth values to apply is not only dependent upon the nature of the objects at stake but, also, upon how we are able to access them. Thus, ontology and epistemology determine the alethic choice. In "What, after all, is a Work of Art" from 1999, Margolis goes even so far as to declare that alethic, ontic, and epistemic considerations are "no more than distinct aspects of a single indivisible inquiry" (45). In sum, *Margolis rejects alethic a prioriism in favor of alethic a posteriorism.*

Margolis's account as described above, i.e. what he calls "relativism"⁵, can thus be summarized by two main theses:

First, a rejection of alethic *a priori*ism in favor of alethic *a posteriori*ism. He suggests that our reflections on truth are not conceptually independent from what we think reality to be like in a given domain of inquiry and how we think we are able to access it.

Second, given alethic *a posteriori*ism, he suggests that bivalence should be abandoned in certain domains of inquiry in favor of a many-valued logic.

In the following, I will comment on both theses: In section II, I will take up alethic *a posteriori*ism, in sections III and IV, I will draw out the consequences of abrogating insistence on bivalence into ethics and philosophy of religion.

⁵ Although I follow Margolis' critique of bivalence and his thesis of the link between alethics and ontology/epistemology, I do not follow him on his use of the label 'relativism'. The critique of bivalence and this link can be had without using this provocative label.

II The Link between Alethics and Ontology/Epistemology

3

I will begin my discussion of alethic *a posteriorism* through what I view as a useful detour, viz. by discussing *semantic issues*. By "semantic considerations (issues)" I mean the activity of representing reality in language or some other form of expression.

It is hard to deny that semantic considerations are conceptually dependent upon ontic and epistemic ones. Our ability to represent reality depends upon what aspects of reality are at stake and how we think we have access to them. Whether the phenomena under consideration are middle-sized physical objects or foundational physical ones, quantum-mechanical phenomena, objects of art, religious ones, etc. makes a difference in the way in which we regard ourselves as capable of representing them.

And the same goes for the way in which we conceive ourselves to be capable of accessing the phenomena under consideration: Whether we are direct realists, anti-realists, choose a middle-position between both extremes, are realists with regard to some aspects of reality but not to others—say, realists with regard to middle-sized physical objects but not with regard to religious phenomena—affects the way we conceive ourselves to be capable of representing the reality at stake.

Let me provide an example which may seem to be rather exotic at first glance but will help to make this dependency clear: Karl Barth, one of the foremost Protestant theologians of the 20th century, suggests that there is an infinite distance between God and human beings. Given God's transcendence and human sinfulness, there is no way from humanity to God. God can thus not be cognized by humans and cannot be represented adequately in human language (Barth 1958, 200vv).

My point is obviously not that those presuppositions about God and his cognitive (in)accessibility are true but rather, that *if* you presuppose ontic and epistemic assumptions of this sort, it cannot but have consequences for the semantic realm. If you presuppose that God is radically transcendent, that human beings are cognitively incapable to grasp this radically transcendent God and that there is no relationship between this God and humanity, you will necessarily have to raise doubts about the capability of human language to represent the transcendent state of affairs in an adequate fashion. My contention is thus that there are conceptual linkages between the semantic realm and the ontic and epistemic realms.

Yet, I do not suggest the existence of one-to-one relationships between those realms. For example, Barth draws from the above mentioned ontic and epistemic assumptions the consequence that, since humans cannot cognize God, God can only be cognized by God himself.⁶ Others may simply draw the consequences that it is impossible to represent God adequately in human terms and suggest that this is precisely the reason why we shouldn't try. Still others will acknowledge that but will claim an exception for certain forms of knowledge, mostly *immediate* ones, which allow for some kind of mystical perception of the transcendent. Still others will hold that the transcendent can indeed not be cognized and represented adequately but that it fulfills *transcendental* functions and, thus, although not being cognizable, must be *postulated* in Kant's sense.

Thus, the onto-epistemic⁷ presuppositions do not fully determine the semantic choices made. The question what sort of semantic choices are made precisely depends thus upon the background assumptions held: Coming from his background assumptions, the Barthian chooses different semantic options than somebody coming from atheist or agnostic background assumptions, and the mystic and Kantian will make different semantic choices as well. Thus, onto-epistemic presuppositions do not fully determine semantic considerations. Yet, they determine them to a significant extent. For example, coming from Barths' presuppositions it would be impossible to suggest that humans are capable of representing the transcendent reality in a straightforward, direct fashion. In sum, *onto-epistemic considerations determine semantic ones* to a significant extent.

4

Where does the insight that onto-epistemic considerations determine semantic ones to a significant extent leave us with regard to our initial question concerning alethic *a posteriorism*? I think that it does not definitely settle the question but goes a long way towards providing a reasonable answer. The reason is that, once we acknowledge that semantic

⁶ See Barth, 1958, 200. This is for Barth a convenient way to introduce Jesus Christ as the God through whom true knowledge of God can be acquired. His "solution" is to substitute the Cartesian "cogito" with a "cogitor", a "being recognized" from God's side. The human task consists only in following epistemically and semantically that which has been made possible by the "cogitor" (Barth suggests the term "*Erkenntnisgehorsam*" in this context; see Grube, 2008, 120–4).

⁷ For the purposes of this paper, "onto/epistemic" serves as a summary term including the ontic and epistemic realms which are to be distinguished from the semantic and alethic realms.

considerations are conceptually depend upon ontic and epistemic presuppositions, it is natural to suggest that alethic ones are dependent in a similar fashion.

Let me formulate that point more precisely:—If it is acknowledged that our capability to represent reality adequately is conceptually dependent upon what we think the reality at stake to be like and how we are able to access it—and hold that the rationale behind alethic issues is some kind of semantic relationship since the notion of truth is intimately linked with the activity of representing reality⁸ it would be counterintuitive to suggest that our conceptualizations of truth have nothing to do with onto/epistemic considerations. Thus, the most obvious conclusion is that since onto-epistemic considerations affect the semantic realm, they must affect the alethic realm as well. Thus, alethic *a priorism* should be rejected in favor of alethic *a posteriorism*.

The above argument does not provide a knock-down case against alethic *a priorism*. Yet, it makes clear where the burden of proof lies: It lies with him who rejects alethic *a posteriorism* in favor of alethic *a priorism*. Thus, the above argument shows that the burden of proof rests upon the shoulders of the person claiming that how we conceptualize truth is independent from how we think to be capable of representing reality. He⁹ must provide reasons why he thinks that our alethic considerations should be construed in abstraction from our semantic plus onto/epistemic considerations. Unless he provides those arguments, we have good reason to believe in alethic *a posteriorism*.

⁸ I presuppose here that the basic rationale behind the discussion of the notion of truth lies in the human need to orient oneself properly in one's environment and to use this orientation as a foundation for action. *This* is the reason why representing reality is important. This importance lying at the roots of the notion of truth is independent from the issue of its *definition*: It is not linked to a correspondence theory of truth nor any other definition of it. It is even consistent with the rejection of all attempts to provide a definition of truth—as long as the basic rationale mentioned is maintained (which e.g. Richard Rorty fails to do so that his musings on truth are ultimately pointless).

⁹ I use the male pronoun deliberately because I think that insistence on bivalence is related to a certain ideal of "masculinity": There *must* always be a truth to the matter because if there weren't we would not be in control of things but would have to admit being uncertain—and losing control and admitting uncertainty is what a "good man" seeks to avoid at all costs. However, here I will not delve into that issue more deeply—nor into Margolis' account of how the fear of what (he calls) relativism is related to fears about reality having a variant rather than invariant structure, admitting the flux of history, thus, contingency, etc. (see 1991, xi–xvi). Let it suffice here to say that I reject the search for invariant structures as much as I reject this ideal of "masculinity".

Embracing *a posteriorism* implies giving up all universal alethic pretensions. Above all, we have to give up a principled insistence on bivalence. Rather, we have to look at the ontological characteristics of the objects at stake and their epistemic accessibility and make the question whether or not to insist on bivalence dependent upon those onto/epistemic presuppositions.

In the following sections, I will further investigate what consequences giving up a principled insistence on bivalence has for the theory of action (III) and the philosophy of religion (IV).

III Bivalence and Action

5

In the philosophy of arts, the moral significance of our alethic choices is usually very limited. At least, under normal circumstances, making wrong alethic choices in the arts will be considered only to be imprudent or something along those lines but not to be morally irresponsible.

Yet, there are realms of inquiry in which making wrong alethic choices is morally highly relevant. Examples are some of the realms of inquiry Margolis mentions under the heading "Intentional" (see above, section 1). They belong predominantly to the domain of the human sciences. In the following, I would like to make a case which belongs to the domain of *nature* and in which making wrong alethic choices is morally highly relevant. In my view—which is not at all at odds with Margolis'—there exist certain objects of inquiry which are not susceptible to bivalent treatment and where insistence on bivalence has morally dubious consequences. I will explain the basic features of those objects of inquiry first in this section before demonstrating why insistence on bivalence is harmful in those cases in the next section.

Within the realm of nature, there are cases which are highly complex because they consist of a significant number of sub-phenomena which are contested or of sub-phenomena which inter-react with each other to such an extent that, given our current knowledge, the consequences of this inter-reaction are difficult to predict. An example is the question whether the current changes of global weather patterns¹⁰ are caused predominantly by an increase of CO₂ and other pollutants. The statement

¹⁰ I mean the phenomenon of "global warming". Yet, since this term and its implications are sometimes contested, I use the more neutral "changes of weather patterns" or simply "weather-changes".

that they *are* predominantly caused by this increase is an example of a statement on highly complex cases. Given our current knowledge, we are incapable of distributing the bipolar pair of truth values over it.¹¹

Within the set of highly complex cases over which we cannot distribute the bipolar pair of truth values, there are some where we can 'wait and see'. These are cases in which not much is at stake. An example may be the question whether extraterrestrial life exists. At least, under normal circumstances—i.e. unless it is assumed that this life exists and e.g. threatens all life on earth—the answer to this question satisfies our curiosity but does not possess a significant existential relevance. In this case, it is reasonable to suggest that we should 'wait and see' with providing an answer until we do know the truth (if ever).

Yet, there are other instances within the set of highly complex cases where we *cannot* apply the 'wait and see' -maxim. These are instances in which we have to take action one way or the other and cannot wait too long with it. I will call them '*burning issues*' in the following.

The question of the changes of the weather patterns is an example of such a burning issue. The reason is that if we fail to take action, the exhaustion of CO₂ and other pollutants will continue and if they are indeed predominantly responsible for the changes of the weather patterns, those patterns will change further. The result will be that the living conditions on the earth will seriously deteriorate—or, according to some scenarios, life on our planet will become next to impossible for large numbers of people.

This is not to suggest that the weather-changes *are* predominantly caused by the increase of those pollutants. Yet, it is to suggest that the uncertainty on the issue does not relieve us from our obligation to act. The reason is that failure to act implies having made a decision on the issue already. That is to say, if we fail to act, the status quo will be prolonged and CO₂ and other pollutants will be continued to be emitted. Yet, this is morally legitimate only under the provision that they are not predominantly responsible for the weather changes. If, however, they *are* predominantly responsible for those changes and we fail to reduce them,

¹¹ Being very concerned with environmental issues, I would like to point out that there is sufficient evidence suggesting a causal connection. The claim that this is not the case is unwarranted (see e.g. Roser/Seidel, 2013, 9). Yet, the *extent* to which the changes of our weather patterns are caused by the increase of pollutants is contested (see *ibid.*). Thus, the question whether they are *predominantly* caused by this increase is currently undecidable to my knowledge.

we act in a morally highly reputable fashion since this failure is the cause of the deterioration of the living circumstances on earth.¹²

In sum, there exist highly complex cases whose truth is difficult if not impossible to decide. Some of those cases are "burning issues", meaning that we cannot wait for too long with taking action on them one way or the other. In the next section, I will analyze how this feature is related to making alethic choices.

6

Truth and (the provision of reasons for) action are obviously related to each other. The relation is complex, though, and I will not discuss it extensively here. Let it suffice for our current purposes to suggest that it is intuitively clear that holding the statement *x* to be true is action-relevant for many kinds of *x*: Given that *x* is specified in a relevant fashion, say, as the statement that a particular individual is responsible for the Lockerbie bombings, *x* is undoubtedly action-relevant.¹³

Given this link between truth and action, insistence on bivalence can have morally very questionable consequences. It can be used as a *license for inaction*. The reasoning to that effect can be made as follows: "Truth provides reasons for action. In a given case, *y*, however, we are incapable of distributing the bipolar pair of truth values over *y*. Since we are incapable of determining *y*'s truth and truth provides reasons for action, we fail to have reasons to act." I will summarize this reasoning by the maxim '*no bivalent truth, no action*'.

The '*no bivalent truth, no action*'-maxim may be prudent in some cases, such as e.g. highly complex cases for which the '*wait and see*'-maxim is applicable (say, that of the existence of extraterrestrials; see above, 5). Yet, in other cases in which '*burning issues*' are at stake, it is very imprudent. Using the link between truth—i.e. the capability to distribute the bipolar pair of truth values over a given statement—and

¹² I neglect here suggestions which are prominent in the US, viz. to invent climate engineering-measures, such as introducing "Carbon Dioxide Removals" on a grand-scale (see e.g. Roser/Seidel, 2013, 36–42). All I wish to say here on the issue is that, even if we believe in their success and the insignificance of their side-effects, it may still be necessary to reduce pollution.

¹³ My point is *not* that *x* is a foundation for action in any foundationalist sense of the word. The foundation of action is some kind of moral framework. Yet, within almost all moral frameworks, what we hold to be true in this case makes a difference with regard to the particular course of action to be taken: If we hold that individual to be responsible for the bombing, we will treat him differently than as if we hold him to be irresponsible for it.

action as a legitimation for inaction means falling back on the default status. Falling back on this status means *de facto*—i.e. independently from whatever intentions are involved—prolonging the *status quo*. Yet, as indicated above, prolonging the *status quo* as a means to avoid taking action is imprudent or morally irresponsible in case ‘burning issues’ are at stake.

Furthermore, there is also the risk that a bivalent conception of truth can be put into the service of morally reputable intentions: The link between truth-construed-along-bivalent-lines and action has a history of being (ab)used for questionable purposes. This history goes back, at least, to the days when the statement that smoking causes cancer was considered to be still under dispute. That is to say, the maxim ‘no bipolar truth, no action’ can be easily abused as a blank check for legitimizing reputable economic, political, and related purposes.

Thus, people benefiting from the *status quo* can use this maxim for their purposes. For example, the person who benefits from exhaustion-intensive production-processes can use it for his purposes: ‘Since we do not know for sure that the climate changes are predominantly caused by the exhaustion of CO₂, we should not take action on the exhaustion of CO₂—or should not take action as strongly as if we would know’.¹⁴ Another example is the first-worlder who thinks that it is not worth sacrificing part of his wealth for measures against global warming because it will not affect him anyway¹⁵: Both can abuse the maxim ‘no bivalent truth, no action’ for their morally doubtful purposes.

¹⁴ Most current environmental ethicists suggest that we *do* know that the climate change is human-made (see Roser/Seidel, 2013, 9). Although I sympathize with their goals, I find their reasoning questionable at times. For example, when they suggest that it is *scientifically proven* that the reputation of those who dispute those claims is ‘*signifikant schlechter*’ (ibid.), significantly worse, I am worried about the (ab)use of the notion of science as an instrument of power to silence deviating voices. After the insights on science and its abuses as instruments of power which were developed by Thomas Kuhn, Michel Foucault and others, we should be very careful with such crudely scientific presumptions. Positions such as that of Roser/Seidel have to retreat to such crude scientist measures because they have deprived themselves of the resources to handle the problem of deviating voices in a more responsible fashion. Below, I will provide an argument for enriching our argumentative resources by pointing to mechanisms which allow to take rational action under conditions of uncertainty and thus allows to deal with the problem of deviating voices in a more responsible fashion.

¹⁵ The consequences of global warming will be more serious for poorer countries than richer ones. The reason is that the richer countries will be better capable to protect themselves against the rise of the sea level, the floods resulting from it, and other comparable consequences. But apart from the question whether first-world countries will really remain unaffected in the long run—think e.g. of increase in migrations from more affected to less affected countries—it is obviously morally questionable to contribute to the misery of the disadvantaged in order to increase or maintain one’s level of wealth.

Given '*abusus non tollit usus*', I do not suggest that this critique provides a knock-down argument against bivalence. The possibility that it can be abused does not categorically rule out the possibility of its proper use. Yet, it increases the burden of proof on the shoulders of its defender. As indicated above (see 4), the defender of bivalence must carry the burden of proof, not its critic. That being the case and given the above argument for its potential to be abused easily, the defender must provide even stronger arguments for a principled insistence on bivalence.

At some point, the defender of bivalence should ask himself whether the burden of proof is so heavy that defending a principled insistence on bivalence is too strenuous (if not hopeless). He should ask himself whether it is not wiser to devote his energies to more promising endeavors, such as developing mechanisms for rational decision-making under uncertainty. I will make a suggestion for that below.

7

Fears about admitting contingency, a certain concept of masculinity (see above, f. 9), and probably a number of other phenomena¹⁶ have contributed to implant the belief of the universal applicability of bivalence in modern men (and women). Yet, I would like to suggest that we should follow Margolis in being skeptical about its universal applicability. We should be prepared to admit that, given certain objects of inquiry, we are not capable of distributing the bipolar pair of truth values over them and will probably not be able to do so in the foreseeable future. These are cases in which we are either uncertain on the truth of those statements as a matter of principle—as is presumably the case concerning statements on arts—or cases in which the probabilities available are so low that they do not warrant the ascription of the predicates 'true' or 'false'—as is the case with statements on highly complex phenomena, such as that of the CO₂ pollution being the cause of the current weather-changes. If those statements are in addition also 'burning issues', we should reject the insistence on the bipolar pair of truth values.

We should rather follow Margolis' proposal to retreat to a many-valued logic in those cases. This logic admits the possibility of there being a third value (or even more than three values, if required). This value can be specified as 'objectively indeterminate', 'indeterminate to the best of our current knowledge' or in a similar fashion.

¹⁶ For example, the success of computer technology, being based upon bivalent presuppositions.

The point of retreating to a many-valued logic can be brought out in a comparison with comparable suggestions, such as Putnam's notorious introduction of the Polish Logicians' insistence on "mereology": Their point is that not only physical objects are candidates for being individuals but also "the calculus of parts and wholes"¹⁷. Putnam emphasizes that in order to point out that the notions of 'object' and 'existence' have a multitude of meanings. The "idea that there is an Archemidean point from which the question "'How many objects *really* exist?'" makes sense is an illusion"¹⁸. Putnam presses this point into the service of his well-known critique of metaphysical realism in the name of an internal realism.¹⁹

Insofar as Putnam's internal realism is more than a purely semantic affair, i.e. moves in a pragmatist direction, I think that he is on the right track. Yet, I would like to emphasize more strongly than Putnam does that the introduction of a many-valued logic has at its purpose the recognition of the *limits of logics*. That is to say, my point is not primarily to suggest that logic is relative in some sense but, rather to suggest that the invocation of the value 'indeterminate' serves as an invitation to go *extra-logical*. Distributing this value over a given statement implies to (at least, consider seriously the possibility to) *move beyond the logical realm into the pragmatic realm*.

By 'pragmatic realm' I mean for our current purposes resources which go beyond syntactic logical and semantic truth-related questions and have to do with developing mechanisms which regulate action. More precisely speaking, I think of *decision-theoretical* and related action-regulating resources. My point is thus that in cases in which the value '(objectively) indeterminate' is distributed over a statement (or set of related statements), we should consider developing decision-theoretical and related mechanisms which help us to act in a rational and morally responsible fashion.

In order to avoid a possible misunderstanding at the outset, let me point out here that I do *not* mean cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit²⁰ analyses nor anything of that sort by 'decision-theory'. Rather, I think of '*rules of wisdom*' which help us make rational decisions under (a significant amount of) *uncertainty*. One such mechanism would be the example of a rule to proceed as cautiously as possible under conditions of (a significant amount of) uncertainty and where much is at stake.

¹⁷ Putnam, 1989 (174).

¹⁸ Putnam, 1989 (175).

¹⁹ See (Putnam, 1981, 49–56) and Honenberger's contribution in this volume.

²⁰ See for the difference between both e.g. Marc McCarthy, 1985 (333–6).

There has been quite some discussion on rules of this sort²¹ and they would certainly need to be specified in order to be helpful for guiding action in the case of the weather changes.²² But whatever the outcome of that specification is: My point is that we will potentially benefit from invoking decision-theoretical and related pragmatic resources. Going extra-logical in this fashion will provide us with *additional resources* for determining reasons for action in a rational and morally responsible manner once our bivalent logical resources are exhausted.

My prime concern lies with securing the possibility of invoking pragmatic resources of the kind suggested when our bivalent logical resources are exhausted. That is, I wish to avoid the (ab)use of bivalence as a license for inaction and suggest that action and the provision of reasons for it should be secured along different than strictly logical lines, where necessary.

To *that* end, I suggest to introduce the third value '(objectively) indeterminate': Distributing this value over a given statement (or set of related statements) is meant to be an invitation to go extra-logical. Thus, I suggest to use *intra*-logical considerations, viz. the introduction of a third truth value as replacing the bipolar pair, as a springboard for pragmatics.

At least, in principle, the introduction of the extra-logical, pragmatic dimension can be secured via a different strategy as well. This strategy consists in insisting on bivalence but admitting at the same time that its *applicability* is restricted. A defender of this strategy can reject the suggestion to introduce a third truth value and insist on bivalence and at the same time admit that this insistence is incapable of handling cases such

²¹ I think e.g. of John Rawls' famous theory of justice (see 1971, in particular, pp. 152–3, the discussion of the "maximin rule", i.e. the rule to choose under uncertainty in such a way that even the worst possible outcome of our choice is still acceptable) and critiques of it, such as David Wong's (1986, 147–8).

²² Rawls's theory of justice and this case differ in significant respects. For example, the person having to decide on questions of the distribution of economic goods under Rawls's 'veil of ignorance' is predominantly affected *herself* from her decisions. Yet, in the case of the weather changes, all humanity (including future generations) is potentially affected. Thus, moral issues enter into the discussion over and above prudential ones. This being the case, the argument that 'maximin's' acceptance depends upon the psychological make-up of the chooser—a gambler by nature will be inclined to take more risks than a more cautious person—loses much of its relevance. In the case of the weather changes, the gambler is not only affected herself from her decisions but other people are affected as well, among them many who are thus far marginalized anyway. Considering this should make her more careful in following her inclination to accept high risks. Differences such as this one would have to be taken into account when applying 'maximin' to the case of the weather changes.

as highly complex, 'burning issues', Intentional phenomena (in Margolis's sense) and a whole range of other cases.

Although both strategies are conceivable in principle, I have doubts about the latter strategy. The reason is that insistence on bivalence has a 'questionable record' in my view. Historically, this insistence has been (ab)used for immunizing logics from critique rather than to acknowledge its limits—and, by extension, as a convenient means to avoid acknowledging the limits of using syntactical resources and the necessity to augment them with pragmatic ones. For example, the admittance of '*truth value gaps*'²³ has been used in the history of philosophy as a means to neutralize critical questions concerning its universal applicability rather than to admit that we should augment logical with extra-logical resources in order to maintain our capability for rational action and decision-making.

Thus, a principled insistence on bivalence does not necessarily undermine our capability for rational action. When coupled with an acknowledgement of the limits of its applicability, it does not necessarily do so. Yet, this acknowledgement is all too easily 'overlooked' and 'overlooking' it can be put into the service of some 'logician' ideology (of a Russellian or related sort) which refuses to acknowledge the limits of logics which I do not wish to support.

IV Bivalence and Religion

8

I think that Margolis's approach in general offers a whole range of interesting consequences for the pursuit of the philosophy of religion. Generally speaking, his critique of excessive empiricist claims—say, along the lines of emphasizing the Intentional (in Margolis, i.e. capitalized sense)—without, however, falling into irrationalism is of particular interest: It provides the possibility of construing this philosophy as a safe passage between the Scylla of reducing religion to some kind of empiricist endeavor without all metaphysical pretensions and the Charybdis of licensing irra-

²³ I wish to thank Dale Jacquette for bringing up the notion of 'truth value gaps' in the discussion following the presentation of my paper. Yet, when reconstructed in e.g. a Russellian sense, I reject this notion. The reason is that Russell attempts to reconstruct questions of reference (see 1905, 485–93) in such a way that suits his 'traditional British Empiricis[t]' (Rorty 1982, 113) agenda rather than to admit that they raise questions about the universal applicability of logical resources such as the principle of bivalence.

tionalism with regard to religion—as is the case in much postmodernist and some Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion.

Thus, I have applied several of Margolis's suggestions to religion on a number of different occasions.²⁴ Here, however, I restrict myself to applying his contentions that were investigated above, viz. his critique of bivalence and his suggestion to introduce a third truth value, 'indeterminate'.²⁵ In particular, I will restrict myself to analyzing its consequences for a *pluralist theory of religion*. Before delving into that in the next section, however, I will first explain this theory.

In the philosophy of religion, one of the currently most pressing issues is that of characterizing the relationship between different religions and their at times deviant or even contradictory truth claims.²⁶ The standard way to map the different fashions is to distinguish between *exclusivism*, *inclusivism*, and *pluralism*: The exclusivist holds that only *one* religion is the true one, viz. her own. The inclusivist softens that absolutist position somewhat, e.g. by suggesting that there is only one true religion but different ways to achieve the goods religion has to offer, such as salvation.²⁷ The pluralist holds that other religions than her own religion contain truths as well and provide viable ways to salvation.

Those of us who are interested in a pluralist option of one kind or another²⁸ are faced with a problem, though: The standard ways to legitimate

²⁴ For example, I have applied his 'non-relational theory of reference' (see Margolis, 1989, 257–62) for the purposes of suggesting that the references of theological terms should be construed without all realist pretensions (see Grube 1998, 218–20) not because I necessarily think that they have no realist import but, rather, because I think that the field of reference is not the proper field to discuss the issue of realism.

²⁵ In passing, I would like to point out that the alethic *a posteriorism* that follows from Margolis' suggestions is also useful for a constructive treatment of religious issues: It can be used as frame of reference for discussing the theologians' complaint that truth is too often construed in an 'imperialist' fashion which fails to do justice to the onto/epistemological specifics of theological claims (see e.g. Paul Tillich, 1956, 121–4).

²⁶ Let it be noted that for many European countries which have a strong Muslim population the question how the relationship between the different religions to each other is characterized has serious political implications. The reason is that *the* very tool to neutralize the political consequences of religious claims prevailing in the us, viz. the distinction between the public and the private, is unavailable in Europe—at least, it does not have the same operational value in Europe as it does in the us

²⁷ The standard example being Karl Rahner's concept of 'anonymous Christians', embracing the set of people who are nominally not Christians but, by way of their conduct or patterns of belief, will still receive salvation (see e.g. Peterson, 1998, 270–3; for a discussion of the distinctions between exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, see 262–78).

²⁸ In a sense, I happen to belong to this group although I have serious doubts about the viability of the distinction between pluralism, in- and exclusivism. Here, however, I cannot

pluralism in religion are found wanting. I will demonstrate that by way of a short analysis of *the* most influential defense of pluralism, John Hick's theory of religions.

Hick holds that the empirical religions—at least, some of them—are manifestations of what he calls the '*Real an sich*' which is construed analogously to Kant's *Ding an sich*.²⁹ Being only manifestations of it and not the absolute reality itself, the followers of those religions should abstain from making exclusive truth claims.³⁰ The difference between the empirical religions and the *Real an sich* is thus the theoretical foundation for a pluralist theory of religions and everything that follows from it, such as tolerance.

Yet, by construing the *Real an sich* analogously to Kant's *Ding an sich*, Hick imports the problems of Kantianism into his theory of religion. More precisely speaking, what is a serious difficulty in Kantianism, viz. to squeeze some operational value out of the postulate of the *Ding an sich*, becomes hopeless in Hick's hands. The reason is that, by using it as a basis for his theory of religious pluralism, Hick manoeuvres himself into the following dilemma.

Either the *Real an sich* is ineffable indeed (Hick's own solution, if I understand him correctly). In this case, however, nothing meaningful can be proposed about it, certainly not that the empirical religions, let alone only *some* of them, are manifestations of it.

Or the *Real an sich* is ultimately not ineffable. Yet, in this case, Hick owes us an explanation by what means he thinks to be capable of accessing it cognitively. And if cognitively accessible, it should become the prime source of religious claims: If Hick believes to be capable to access the *Real an sich*, then he should make *it* the basis for his religion—in which case Hick would not have invented a new theory of religious pluralism but a new religion.

Hick fails to realize that there is a serious difference between his postulate of a *Real an sich* and Kant's *Ding an sich*:³¹ Whereas for Kant this postulate stands in the service of—in a sense—securing the basic possibility of human cognition, nothing comparable is at stake in Hick's case. In Kant's hands, the transcendental apparatus is necessary for securing the possibility of well-structured cognition, of making meaningful syn-

delve into this point more deeply. Let it thus suffice to say that I am interested in some of the consequences of a pluralist theory of religions, such as the possibility to tolerate and interact constructively with religious claims which differ from one's own claims.

²⁹ Hick (2004, 233–46).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 362–76.

³¹ See the discussion in Hick, 2004, XIX–XXVII.

thetic (e.g. scientific) claims. Thus, Kant's argument is that, if we wish to be able to make those claims, we need to make certain transcendental postulates.

Yet, where for Kant a basic epistemic category is at stake, viz. the possibility of human cognition, nothing comparable is at stake in Hick's case: As desirable as a pluralist theory of religion is, it has obviously a different epistemic status than securing the possibility of human cognition. The latter is—in a sense—logically indispensable, the former certainly not. Thus, whatever transcendental postulate is necessary to secure the possibility of human cognition has much more important epistemic functions than whatever is necessary to secure the possibility of a pluralist theory of religion.

Thus, there is a straightforward counterargument available against Hick which is not available against Kant. In Hick's case, the critic can argue 'no pluralist theory of religion, no necessity to postulate a *Real an sich*.' Yet, the critic can on pain of self-contradiction not argue 'no human cognition, no necessity to postulate a *Ding an sich*' (at least, according to Kant). That is, the possibility of human cognition cannot be sacrificed as easily as the possibility of a pluralist theory of religion. There are thus no overriding logical reasons why the transcendental postulate of the '*Real an sich*' and the pluralism it is supposed to secure should not be abandoned whereas there are good reasons not to abandon the transcendental postulate of the '*Ding an sich*' and the possibility of human cognition it is supposed to secure.

In sum, Hick fails to recognize the serious functional asymmetry between his '*Real an sich*' and Kant's '*Ding an sich*'. This undermines the basis of his pluralist theory of religions—a fate Hick's account shares with most other pluralist theories.

9

The question I wish to raise is whether Margolis's suggestion to substitute a bivalent logic with a many valued logic can contribute to providing a better basis for a pluralist theory of religion. In the following, I will sketch how an argument for pluralism can be construed along the lines of introducing a many valued logic being based upon values such as 'aptness'. I will do so by falling back on two of the arguments provided above and by using them as a platform for my argument.

First, it should be acknowledged that alethic *a posteriorism*—at least in the absence of convincing argument to the opposite (see above, section 4)—is to be preferred over alethic *a priorism*. That is to say, alethic considerations are to be fixed by taking into account the onto/epistemic peculiarities of the domain of inquiry at stake.

Second, given alethic *a posteriorism*, it should be acknowledged that there exist certain domains in which bivalence should be abandoned. Examples are the theory of arts and, more general, Intentional phenomena in Margolis's sense of the word. As suggested above, highly complex phenomena which are 'burning issues' are another example.

I wish to propose that religion or, at least, certain religious claims, belong also into the category of claims for which bivalence should be abandoned. Examples are religious claims for which there is insufficient evidence in order to determine their truth or falsity.

Abrogating bivalence provides a promising basis for a pluralist theory of religion, in my view. The reason is that, if the believer considers her beliefs to be true under bivalent parameters, she must by definition conceive all competing religious beliefs to be false. And given that we have a right or even obligation to maximize true beliefs and avoid false ones, she is in her epistemic right to reject those competing claims in favor of her own religious claims. Thus, conceiving one's own religious claims to be true under bivalent parameters has, at least, the potential to denigrate competing religious viewpoints. Given a link between denigrating alternative religious viewpoints and intolerance, making religious truth claims under bivalent auspices has a potential for promoting intolerance.

However, if the believer conceives her own religious claims under the parameters of a many valued logic which relies on values such as 'aptness', this will make her potentially more sensitive and tolerant towards competing religious claims. Under those parameters, she is *not* forced to denigrate other religions: Holding her own religion to be apt, does not necessarily imply to hold other religions to be not apt.

Thus, a many valued logic provides a better environment for tolerating deviating religious claims than a bivalent logic. *A many-valued logic is therefore a suitable candidate for providing a basis for a robust theory of religious pluralism.*

I wish to conclude by suggesting that considering religious truth claims to be 'apt' rather than 'true' is *not* hostile to the religious inside-perspective. It does *not* imply the abandonment of those claims. But the believer can continue to be entitled to hold on to her beliefs.

The master story for how the religious believer can be entitled to hold on to her beliefs while leaving the question of truth proper open is Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's ring-parable: Lessing suggests that the truth of the three competing religious claims, viz. the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic claims, is indeterminate. Yet, he suggests that this does not imply that the believer would have to abandon her right to continue believing in her Jewish, Christian, or Islamic beliefs.

Lessing is capable of securing the possibility that the believer can legitimately pursue her beliefs by separating issues of truth proper from issues of justification: Although questions of truth are not (yet) fixed for the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic belief³², the believer can still be justified in holding on to her Jewish, Christian or Islamic faith on other grounds.³³

In sum, I hope to have demonstrated that a robust theory of religious pluralism is possible which avoids the pitfalls of the standard theories, such as Hick's. The basis for it is Margolis' suggestion to abandon bivalence: Under bivalent parameters, holding a religion to be true implies by definition to hold all other religions to be false. This is not necessarily the case under the parameters of a many-valued logic which relies on values such as 'aptness'. And relying on those values does not imply that the believer would have to give up her beliefs, as the example of Lessing shows.³⁴

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³² That Lessing focuses exclusively on those three religions has to do with the specifics of his narrative: The ring parable is part of the theater play 'Nathan the Wise' which is situated in Jerusalem during the crusades and where all three Abrahamic religions encounter each other. Yet, apart from the constraints that this narrative provides, the basic rationale for tolerating other religions can be extended beyond those three religions. That is, it can be applied to non-Abrahamic religions as well.

³³ This is at least the way I reconstruct Lessing: By way of historicizing the theory of justification, he is able to provide the notion of *trust* a fundamental place within our legitimacy resources (see Grube, 2006, 41–6).

³⁴ I wish to thank Rob Sinclair for valuable corrections and comments on this paper.

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PART IV

MARGOLIS RESPONDS

Replies

Joseph Margolis
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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 "noncognitive", 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 Jacquette 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 Jacquette'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 Jacquette'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 our 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, 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 imminent 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 Jacquette 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 Jacquette is right, then I conclude: (i) that Kant's apriorism is completely aposteriortist; (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 Jacquette 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 1). (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") *tertia*—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 *thea 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 than "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 *tertia* 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 (abbreviationally) 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-*

transcendental 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 boundaried; 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 entwinement 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 boundaried, 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 counter-moves 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 tome 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 storied 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 artifactually 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-improverishing 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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