JOHN McDOWELL:

Reason and Nature

Lecture and Colloquium
in Münster 1999

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Preface

John McDowell is one of the most influential philosophers writing today. His work, ranging widely from interpretations of Plato and Aristotle to Davidsonian semantics, from ethics to epistemology and the philosophy of mind, has set the agenda for many recent philosophical debates.

In recent years, McDowell's views have been hotly discussed among students and faculty in Münster, too. Therefore, we were very glad when McDowell agreed to give the third *Münsteraner Vorlesungen zur Philosophie* in 1999. On May 5, McDowell gave a public lecture; on the following two days, he participated in a colloquium where students and faculty from Münster presented brief papers on his philosophy. McDowell listened carefully and responded to questions and criticisms. This volume contains McDowell's lecture, revised versions of the colloquium papers and McDowell's written responses to them.

I should like to thank John McDowell for coming to lecture in Münster, for participating in the colloquium, and for putting his responses in writing. Discussing his views with him has been stimulation and pleasure for all of us. Next, I want to thank the participants in the colloquium who worked hard to come up with interesting and challenging presentations. Further, thanks are due to Karsten Wantia and Florian Wessels for putting much effort and time in type-setting and designing this volume. And finally, I want ot thank the Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung in Nordrhein-Westfalen for funding the 1999 *Münsteraner Vorlesungen zur Philosophie*.

Throughout this volume, the abbreviation '*MW*' is used to refer to John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Cambridge 1994.

Münster, July 2000 Marcus Willaschek

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Part I

The Lecture

Experiencing the World[1]

John McDowell

1. I am going to begin by saying something about the frame in which I want to place a conception of experience as taking in the world.

Such an idea has obvious attractions from an epistemological point of view, and that is not irrelevant to my interest in it. But the main purpose to which I want to put the idea is not to reassure ourselves that we can achieve empirical knowledge, but rather to ensure that we are not beset by a difficulty about the capacity of our mental activity to be about reality at all, whether knowledgeably or not. I suggest that we can understand some of the central preoccupations of modern philosophy by making sense of a wish to ask 'How is empirical content so much as possible?' That would give expression to an anxiety about how our intellectual activity can make us answerable to reality for whether we are thinking correctly or not – something that is surely required if the activity is to be recognizable as thinking at all. The question whether some of our thinking puts us in possession of knowledge cannot even arise unless this prior condition, that our thinking can have empirical content at all, is met. I use the word 'transcendental', in what I hope is sufficiently close to a Kantian way, to characterize this sort of concern with the very possibility of thought's being directed at the objective world. And it is in this context of transcendental anxiety that I am primarily concerned with the question how we should conceive experience.

It is part of my point that people who are in the grip of the anxiety I am interested in typically do not clearly comprehend what is bothering them. One shape this unclarity can take is that one's problem strikes one as epistemological rather than transcendental. An unfocused sense of what is in fact a transcendental difficulty need take no more definite a form than a vague inkling that thought's hold on reality is coming into question. And the image of thought's hold on reality can easily seem to fit knowledge, as contrasted with, say, guesswork or plausible

[1]This lecture was conceived as an introduction to the conception of experience recommended in my *Mind and World* (McDowell 1994). I have also drawn on thoughts from my 1997 Woodbridge Lectures (McDowell 1998).

conjecture. This yields a misunderstanding of the difficulty one feels oneself falling into, though *ex hypothesi* only inchoately. In the misunderstanding, it seems that one needs a secure foundation for knowledge – as if one could take the contentfulness of one's empirical thinking for granted, and merely had to reassure oneself as to its credentials. Thus what would be revealed as a transcendental anxiety, if it came into clearer focus, can, through an intelligible unclarity attaching to a merely incipient form of it, underlie the concern with, so to speak, mere scepticism that shapes much modern philosophy. So I suggest that making sense of a transcendental anxiety can cast light on more of modern philosophy than one might at first suppose.

The anxiety in its focused, explicitly transcendental form is perhaps closer to the surface in what Richard Rorty calls 'impure philosophy of language' in chapter VI of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Rorty 1979). There he depicts a concern with how language hooks on to reality as a late-coming counterpart to an anxiety about how thought hooks on to reality, which according to Rorty has been a major deforming force in modern philosophy. Rorty himself, however, sees the deforming anxiety as primarily epistemological, rather than epistemological only in the guise of a defectively understood difficulty that is really transcendental, and that is just what I am resisting.

I understand the wish to ask the transcendental question, 'How is empirical content possible?', as expressing an attraction to a pair of thoughts whose implication, if taken together, is that empirical content is impossible. The thoughts impose a requirement for there to be empirical content, but ensure that it cannot be met.

The requirement is that empirical thinking must be subject to what W. V. Quine (in a strikingly Kantian phrase) calls 'the tribunal of experience' (Quine 1961, 41). The idea is that we can make sense of intellectual activity's being correct or incorrect in the light of how things are in the world only if we can see it as, at least in part, answerable to impressions the world makes on us, as possessors of sensibility. But this felt requirement can easily seem impossible to satisfy. The notion of the world's making an impression on a possessor of sensibility is on the face of it the notion of a kind of natural happening. As such it can seem to be excluded, on pain of naturalistic fallacy, from the special logical space – what Wilfrid Sellars calls 'the logical space of reasons'[2] – that we

[2]Sellars 1956. For the image of the logical space of reasons, see pp. 298–299.

would have to be moving in when we take things to be related as tribunal and respondent. Sellars introduces this image of the logical space of reasons in a context in which he is precisely warning against a naturalistic fallacy, which he suggests one falls into if one takes it that merely natural happenings can constitute a tribunal. Quine himself seems to succumb to just this pitfall, in trying to conceive experience as a tribunal even while he understands experience in terms of irritations of sensory nerve-endings.

It can thus come to appear that thought's being answerable to impressions is a condition for there to be empirical content at all, which, however, cannot be met because the idea of an impression does not fit in the logical space of reasons. What follows is the incredible conclusion that there simply cannot be empirical content. This is not a perhaps surmountable difficulty about how there can be empirical content – as if the question 'How is empirical content possible?' could receive a response that started like this: 'Good question; let me tell you how.' 'How is empirical content possible?', uttered from the frame of mind I am describing, expresses a temptation to believe the premises of an argument whose conclusion is that empirical content is not possible. Given that empirical content is possible, there must be something wrong with the premises. And once we identify a culprit and dislodge it, we shall be freeing ourselves from the frame of mind that seemed to find appropriate expression in the 'How possible?' question. The result will be, not an answer to the question, but a liberation from the apparent need to ask it.

However, it is easy to suppose that the 'How possible?' question, even if one's wish to ask it has the kind of background I am considering, expresses a difficulty rather than an impossibility. In this misunderstanding, one thinks one can leave one's background assumptions in place but still take on an obligation to try to force empirical content into one's picture, as it were against some resistance. Here we encounter a deeper sense in which, as I said, people who are in the grip of the anxiety I am considering do not command a clear view of what ails them. Not only do such people often mistake a transcendental anxiety for an epistemological one. The deeper misconception is to mistake an impossible conceptual bind for a tractable intellectual problem – something one might set out to solve without shifting one's background assumptions. The predicament is beautifully captured by a remark in Wittgenstein's

Nachlass: 'You are under the misapprehension that the phil[osophical] problem is *difficult* whereas it's hopeless. I want you first to realise that you're under a spell.'[3].

2. I have suggested the spell is cast by the attractions of a pair of thoughts: first, that empirical content depends on answerability to impressions, and, second, that impressions could not be the kind of thing to which something could be answerable, because the idea of an impression is the idea of a natural phenomenon. Dislodging either would in principle lift the spell. Donald Davidson, for instance, in effect retains the second thought, that impressions could not constitute a tribunal, and discards the first, that empirical content depends on answerability to impressions (see Davidson 1986, 307–319). That is to say: he discards empiricism, in one obvious sense. One might think of Davidson as offering an implicit argument by reductio, in which the impossibility of accepting that there cannot be empirical content is turned against the transcendental empiricism that is one of the premises from which that impossible conclusion can be derived, in a way that pivots on retaining the other premise.

But I prefer to try to explain away the attractions of supposing that impressions could not be the kind of thing to which something could be answerable. This makes it possible to hold on to the thought that empirical content depends on answerability to impressions.

The idea of an impression is indeed the idea of a kind of occurrence in nature. But only a conflation makes it seem to follow that impressions cannot constitute a tribunal. The idea of intellectual activity being answerable to a tribunal belongs in the logical space of reasons, to stay with Sellars's image. And Sellars is right to depict the logical space of reasons as special, by comparison with a logical space in which we make a quite different kind of move. I think the best way to understand this contrast of logical spaces is in terms of a distinction between two ways of finding things intelligible: on the one hand, placing things in a context of rational considerations for and against them (the sort of thing we do when, for instance, we make sense of behaviour as rational agency), and, on the other hand, finding things intelligible in the ways in which the natural sciences do, for instance by subsuming them under lawlike generalizations. On this view, then, Sellars is right to set the logical

[3]MS 158, 37f. (quoted by Baker and Hacker 1983, 228)

space of reasons in opposition to a contrasting logical space, and, given that we can gesture towards an identification of the contrasting logical space, as I have just done, by invoking the natural sciences, it can be almost irresistible to entitle it 'the logical space of nature'. This chimes with Sellars's warning against a naturalistic fallacy, and this is how it comes to seem that the idea of an impression, as the idea of a natural occurrence, has to be foreign to the logical space of reasons. But we can avoid the appearance by refusing to let the logical space that Sellars rightly contrasts with the logical space of reasons be identified as the logical space of nature.

It is intelligible that this identification should be hard to resist, given that one can mark the contrast of logical spaces, as I just did, by invoking the natural sciences. But in spite of the label, those disciplines need not be conceded ownership of the very idea of natural phenomena. The idea of an impression can be both the idea of a kind of natural happening and an idea that belongs in the logical space of reasons.

Impressions can fit in the logical space of reasons because impressions can be actualizations of conceptual capacities. Sellars glosses the space of reasons as the logical space 'of justifying and being able to justify what one says'.[4] The implication is that one comes to inhabit the logical space of reasons – to have conceptual capacities in the relevant sense – by acquiring command of a language. We can acknowledge that this enables our lives to contain goings-on warranting characterization in terms that are special, in just the way Sellars aims to capture with the image of the logical space of reasons. But this need not seem to remove those goings-on from the realm of natural phenomena. Acquiring command of a language, which is coming to inhabit the logical space of reasons, is acquiring a second nature. Given that the space of reasons is special in the way Sellars urges, ideas of phenomena that are manifestations of a second nature acquired in acquiring command of a language do not, as such, fit in the logical space of natural-scientific understanding. But there is no reason why that should rule out seeing those phenomena as manifestations of nature, since the nature in question can be a second nature. Actualizations of conceptual capacities, which as such belong in the logical space of reasons, can be natural in a different sense from the one that figures in the admittedly well-drawn contrast with the logical space of reasons.

[4] Loc. cit.

On these lines, we can acknowledge a correctness in the contrast of logical spaces that seems to make it impossible for impressions to constitute a tribunal, but take that appearance to be after all a mere appearance. There is no need to follow Davidson in discarding the other of the two thoughts that together generate the seeming impossibility of empirical content. We do not, after all, have materials for a reductio of transcendental empiricism, as Davidson implicitly suggests.

It may seem that Davidson's way of avoiding transcendental anxiety is symmetrical with the way of avoiding it that I have begun to sketch. He discards one premise of the inchoate argument that empirical content is impossible, whereas I discard the other. So why should anyone prefer my way to Davidson's? Well, there is, I believe, an intuitive appeal to the idea that empirical thinking must be answerable to impressions if it is to be contentful at all, and Davidson's approach does nothing towards explaining that away. In effect Davidson claims that since transcendental empiricism will not cohere with the status of impressions as natural phenomena, transcendental empiricism must be wrong. He does not offer a suggestion as to why it should nevertheless seem right, so that its attractiveness could stand revealed as an intelligible illusion. Suppose someone is really tempted to think both that empirical thinking must be answerable to impressions and that it cannot be. Davidson does nothing to help such a person. It is not helpful, if someone is really enmeshed in this bind, to say: 'Since impressions are natural phenomena, and the members of a tribunal would have to belong in the contrasting logical space of reasons, the transcendental empiricism that you find appealing must, after all, be wrong.' Suppose a victim of the bind became clear about its shape. She would know that something must be wrong in her thinking. Helping her would require showing her how some of her thinking *could* be wrong, not just ordering her, as it were *ex cathedra*, to repress this rather than that bit of it. Whereas on my side, I offer a story whose point is to acknowledge, but explain away, the attractiveness of the other of the two sources of the anxiety, the thought that impressions cannot constitute a tribunal. So there is after all an asymmetry. I explain away the attractiveness of the premise I discard, whereas Davidson merely discards the other premise, as it were by force, without saying anything to help someone who is captivated by it.

3. So much for a general frame; now let me say something about the

specifics of the conception of experience, as taking in the world, that my framing move is meant to make room for.

In an experience of the relevant kind, if things go well, some case of how things are impresses itself on a perceiving subject thanks to her possession of some suitable sensibility. Experience is receptivity in operation. To invoke the Kantian idea of receptivity like this is simply to begin elaborating the idea of an impression, in a way that is guided by the etymology of the word 'impression'. Any concept whose explication begins on these lines would have to be the concept of a kind of state or occurrence in nature. And this brings out sharply the apparent difficulty in conceiving impressions as constituting a tribunal, while respecting Sellars's point about the special character of the logical space of reasons. It can seem that if we try to confer a position in the order of justification on experience conceived as receptivity in operation, we must be falling into what Sellars attacks as the Myth of the Given. What Sellars attacks under that label extends more widely than this, but the main form of the Myth he discusses is precisely the attempt to give merely natural phenomena a position in the order of justification. It is common to read Sellars as holding precisely that as soon as one begins explicating a concept of experience by invoking something on the lines of receptivity, one is doomed to fall foul of the Myth of the Given.

Bracketing, for the moment, the question whether this is indeed Sellars's position, I can say that at any rate the thesis strikes me as simply wrong. Starting an explication of the idea of a perceptual experience by invoking sensory receptivity leaves us able, quite coherently, to go on to bring conceptual capacities into the story. Remembering that nature can be second nature, we can immunize ourselves against the idea that the naturalness implied by the idea of sensory receptivity would have to stand in tension with the placement in the space of reasons implied by the talk of conceptual capacities. This allows us a conception of perceptual experience as something we can place in the order of justification, while respecting the point Sellars makes by insisting that the space of reasons is special. What we need, and can have, is the idea of a case of receptivity in operation that, even while being that, is an actualization, together, of conceptual capacities whose active exercise, with the same togetherness, would be the making of a judgement. This is the idea of a case of receptivity in operation, an impression, that itself has conceptual content, the conceptual content that would be the content of the

counterpart judgement – the judgement one would be making if one actively exercised the same conceptual capacities with the same togetherness. There is no more difficulty about placing such a state or occurrence in the order of justification than there would be about placing the counterpart judgement in the order of justification. In particular, there is no question of the hopeless attempt that characterizes the Myth of the Given, to credit something with supplying rational or warranting force into the realm of the conceptually contentful from outside. The warranting item – the experience conceived in these terms – itself already has content that is just as firmly conceptual as the content of a judgement; in fact it just is the content of the possible judgement that I have been calling 'the counterpart judgement'.

For the idea of judgement as an act in which several conceptual capacities are exercised with a suitable togetherness – the model for this idea of experience – I would cite, in the first instance, a brilliant treatment of judgement offered by P. T. Geach in his book *Mental Acts* (Geach 1957). Geach there exploits an analogy between, on the one hand, the combination – the joint exercise – of conceptual capacities in acts of judgement and, on the other, the concatenation of sub-sentential expressions in a declarative utterance. Conceptual capacities exercised in a single act of judgement have a semantical or logical togetherness that is, on Geach's picture, to be understood on analogy with the semantical or logical togetherness of the corresponding words, in a grammatically structured form of words that would give expression to the judgement. What I am suggesting is that we can amplify Geach's conception of judgement, and understand experience through a second use of analogy. Geach shows how to model acts of judgement on declarative utterances, and we can model experiences on acts of judgement.

In making judgement pivotal, I hope I secure that the conception of concepts that is in play here is palpably Kantian. Our way into the very idea of a concept is through the thought that the paradigmatic actualization of conceptual capacities is their exercise in acts of judgement. Geach shows how we can domesticate this Kantian way of thinking of conceptual capacities within the post-Kantian form of philosophy characterized by what has been called 'the linguistic turn'. But one might suggest that this much of a linguistic turn is implicit in the already Kantian idea that conceptual capacities are exercised with a logical togetherness in acts of judgement, which are of course not necessarily expressed

in language.

Making judgement fundamental to our conception of concepts brings out at least part of the point of saying, with Kant, that conceptual capacities belong to a faculty of spontaneity. Judging is making up one's mind about how things are, as forming an intention is making up one's mind about what to do. Judging is like forming an intention in being an exercise of responsible freedom. But I formulated the Kantian anchoring of the very idea of a concept by saying that acts of judging are the paradigmatic kind of occurrence in which conceptual capacities are actualized. This leaves room for conceptual capacities, in the very same sense, to be actualized in non-paradigmatic ways, in kinds of occurrence other than acts of judging.

There are straightforward cases of this possibility. Consider, for instance, entertaining suppositions. This is perhaps not far removed from what I am describing as the paradigmatic case. For one thing, we should understand the capacity to entertain mere suppositions, in the first instance, in the context of thinking aimed at making up one's mind, and work out from there to the capacity for, say, idle fantasy. And in any case, even in idle fantasy conceptual capacities are exercised. To say that some activity is irresponsible, as one might about daydreaming, is exactly not to remove it from the scope of responsible freedom, but to criticize it as an irresponsible use of one's freedom to exercise one's conceptual capacities.

But with experience conceived as I recommend, we have a more radical departure from the paradigmatic case of conceptual capacities being actualized. An actualization of a conceptual capacity need not be an exercise of the capacity, so it need not be itself within the scope of responsible freedom, as even the exercise of conceptual capacities in daydreaming is. The point of talking of paradigmatic cases is that the kind of actualization of a conceptual capacity we need to focus on first, in order to understand what kind of capacity a conceptual capacity is, is indeed an exercise, an ingredient in an instance of the complex kind of act that judgements are. But once we have thus identified the relevant kind of capacity, we can countenance cases in which capacities of that very kind are not exercised, but are nevertheless actualized, outside the control of their possessor, by the world's impacts on her sensibility. That is just how I recommend conceiving experience.

I hope it is clear that it matters to keep the terms 'actualization' and

'exercise' apart. Conceptual capacities are capacities of spontaneity, but in one obvious sense there is no spontaneity in perceiving. It is not up to one how things, for instance, look to one. How things look to one does not come within the scope of one's responsibility to make up one's own mind. But this is consistent with understanding experience as actualizing capacities that belong to spontaneity, in the sense that to understand what capacities they are we have to focus on their being exercisable in judgement. It is just that that is not the kind of actualization that is involved in experience.

I introduced impressions, in the relevant sense, as cases of *how things are* impressing itself on a perceiving subject. The resources I have introduced enable us to give this wording full force. We can see the relevant case of how things are as encapsulated into the circumstance of being impressed as the subject is. Without these resources, we could conceive the being impressed only as something on the lines of receiving a dent in the mind's wax tablet. (It would make no difference if we replaced that image with some sophisticated physiology.) Perhaps a theorist could recover an aetiology for a dent from its configuration, but it would only be in some such sense that an impression could contain the relevant case of how things are, and such a sense would not make impressions suitable for a transcendental empiricism. This is just Sellars's point; the Myth of the Given, in the relevant form, is the hopeless attempt to make a mere dent in the tablet of the mind – not a fact about the dent but the dent itself – into a rational consideration. But with the conceptual resources I have introduced, an operation of one's receptivity can itself be having certain conceptual capacities passively drawn into operation by the impact of a fact on one's sensibility. So it can be having *that things are thus and so* – the conceptual content of the judgement one would be making if one actively exercised the same conceptual capacities in the same combination – borne in on one. But that things are thus and so can be how things are. So receiving an impression can be having how things are borne in on one.

There are two points here. First, we see how impressions can be no harder to place in the order of justification than judgements are, even while we fully respect Sellars's point about the Myth of the Given. Second, and more specifically, we see how we can take facts themselves to be available to a perceiving subject, as rational considerations relevant to her task of making up her mind. Thus, in the course of seeing how

to alleviate a transcendental difficulty, we equip ourselves with an idea that has a directly epistemological interest.

4. I bracketed the question whether Sellars himself thinks sensory impressions would have to be dents in the tablet of the mind. I used to read Sellars that way, but I now think that when, in 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind', he elaborates the image of experiences as 'containing' claims, he is best understood to be pointing towards a conception of experience on just the lines I have been sketching, as episodes of sensory consciousness that are constituted by actualizations of conceptual capacities.

This is not the only respect in which I think I am a better Sellarsian than some people give me credit for. In my book *Mind and World*, I allow myself to say the contents of experience are ultimate in the order of justification. In a 'Critical Study' of my book (Williams 1996), Michael Williams takes that to show that I am a foundationalist, in the sense that I hold a position Sellars attacks in passages like this: 'One of the forms taken by the Myth of the Given is the idea that there is, indeed must be, a structure of particular matter of fact such that (a) each fact can not only be non-inferentially known to be the case, but presupposes no other knowledge either of particular matter of fact, or of general truths; and (b) such that the non-inferential knowledge of facts belonging to this structure constitutes the ultimate court of appeals for all factual claims – particular and general – about the world' (Sellars 1956, 293). It may help to clarify my picture of experience if I try to say why this accusation misfires.

Sellars himself has a nuanced attitude to the image of foundations. He does not object to the idea of a stratum of knowledge that 'constitutes the ultimate court of appeals for all factual claims about the world'. The knowledge expressed in reports of observation plays just that role for him. Sellars's objection, in the passage I quoted, is not to that idea on its own, but to combining it with something else: the idea that the knowledge that constitutes the ultimate court of appeal is knowledge one could have all by itself, even without having a world view built on it. Thus Sellars says: 'the metaphor of "foundation" is misleading in that it keeps us from seeing that if there is a logical dimension in which other empirical propositions rest on observation reports, there is another logical dimension in which the latter rest on the former' (Sellars

1956, 300). This is not to object to the idea of a 'logical dimension' in which reports of observation are the support for everything else, but only to warn that a natural image for expressing that idea, the image of foundations, tends to make us forget the other dimension of dependence, in which reports of observation depend on the world view that rests on them as a building rests on its foundations. When I say experiences are ultimate in the order of justification, all I mean is that they are ultimate in the 'logical dimension' in which Sellars allows that reports of observation are ultimate. I simply put experiences in the epistemological position in which Sellars puts reports of observation. Experiences, in my picture, have conceptual content, and that means I have just the machinery Sellars does – a holism about the conceptual – to ensure that the other dimension of dependence is not lost. So I am not a foundationalist in Williams's sense.

5. I want to end by making a beginning on a large topic. Philosophers are prone to assume that mental occurrences are, as such or in themselves, *internal* to the person in whose mental life they take place, either quasi-literally internal (as in Descartes, for whom this spatial talk cannot be literal) or even literally internal (as in many contemporaries, who take themselves to be emancipated from Cartesian ways of thinking). Perceptual experiences are mental occurrences, so they come within the scope of such an assumption. The effect is to obliterate the conception of experience I recommend.

The assumption is operative in this expression of puzzlement, by Robert Brandom, about why I find my conception of experience so compelling: 'Sense impressions are 'behind' [judgements of observation] in a causal sense, and *facts* are behind them in a normative sense (as well as, in the favored cases, in a causal sense). What is the source of the insistence that there must *also* be some *internal* thing, the experience, that plays both these roles at once?' (Brandom 1996, 257.). By 'sense impressions' here, Brandom means something on the lines of Quine's conception: irritations of sensory nerve endings, the sort of thing no follower of Sellars would try to conceive as constituting a tribunal.

One might elaborate what Brandom is suggesting on the following lines. If experiences as I want them in the picture are not simply what Davidson calls 'perceptually acquired beliefs' under another name (so that their justificatory force is allowed for in Davidson's slogan 'noth-

ing can count as a reason for a belief except another belief' (Davidson 1986, 310)), then placing them justificatorily 'behind' perceptual judgements or perceptually acquired beliefs can only be a case of a familiar epistemological syndrome, in which we interpose something internal between perceivers and the facts they perceive to hold. On this view, my appeal to experiences is a case of what Davidson calls 'the Myth of the Subjective' (see Davidson 1989): the hopeless idea that we can start with what is *in here* (here we need a gesture of pointing with both hands into one's head), and entitle ourselves, on the basis of that, to beliefs about what is *out there* (here we need a gesture at the world about us). I protest that receiving an impression, on my account, is (or at least can be) a case of having an environmental state of affairs borne in on one. It is already an entitlement to beliefs about what is 'out there', not some inner occurrence from which one might hope to move to an outward entitlement. But the assumption that mental occurrences are internal risks making this protest inaudible. If experiencing, as a mental occurrence, is in itself 'in here', then, even supposing we can make sense of describing an episode of experiencing in terms of an environmental state of affairs, as having that state of affairs borne in on one, this mode of description cannot get at what the episode is in itself. We seem to be back with the idea of a dent in the mind's tablet.

My talk of impressions secures that we can see observational judgements as rationally responsive to the states of affairs they judge to obtain. This enables observation to occupy not only the epistemological role of which Sellars gives his nuanced picture, but also the transcendental role I have been concerned to protect, as the point to focus our attention on in order to find it unproblematic that our intellectual activity is answerable to the world. It is exactly not the case that impressions, as I conceive them, intervene between perceiving subjects and the states of affairs they observe to obtain. Rather, at their best impressions constitute an availability, to a judging subject, of facts themselves, which she may incorporate into her world view – perhaps by way of explicit judgement, or perhaps less reflectively – on the basis of the impressions.

I think the real villain here is the assumption that experiences, as mental occurrences, must be in themselves internal to their subjects. Davidson's protest against what he calls 'the Myth of the Subjective' is directed against a symptom, the tendency to postulate intermediaries, rather than against the underlying malady, which infects Davidson him-

self, even though he contrives to free his thinking from the symptom. The fundamental mistake is the thought that a person's mental life takes place in a *part* of her. Descartes thought it would have to be an immaterial part, and it is an improvement on that, at least in some respects, to make the seat of mental life a material part of the person (so that 'in here', with the pointing gesture, can be meant literally). But this modification does not fix the real problem. In Davidson's case, the monism that is part of his anomalous monism (see Davidson 1980b) implies a correctness for the 'in here' gesture, taken literally. But I think we need a way of thinking about the mental in which involvement with worldly facts is not just a point about describability in (roughly speaking) relational terms (like someone's being an uncle), but gets at the essence of the mental. The 'in here' locution, with its accompanying gesture, is all right in some contexts, but it needs to be taken symbolically, in the same spirit in which one takes the naturalness of saying things like 'In my heart I know it', which can similarly be accompanied by an appropriate gesture. If anomalous monism disallows this, then so much the worse for anomalous monism.

If we conceive experience as I recommend, our picture of subjects who are in a position to make observational judgements can take an attractive shape. We can see the facts in question as available to the subjects, as rational constraints on their activity of making up their minds. That is: we can see the facts as behind observational judgements in a normative sense, as Brandom puts it in the passage I quoted. Brandom's puzzlement is this: why do I want to place something else – something internal – normatively behind the judgements, over and above the facts? This leads into the idea of intermediaries, the target of Davidson's protest, but it misses the point. To make sense of how it is that the facts are normatively behind the judgements, we need the facts to be available to the subjects who make the judgements, as the rational constraints on judgement that they are. On my conception, to enjoy an experience in which all goes well is simply to have a fact available to one, so that it can be normatively behind a judgement one might make. Davidson thinks the subjective as such is a myth, and Brandom in effect follows him, because they cannot see anything for the subjective to be except the internal items that threaten to interpose themselves as intermediaries between subjects and the world. But in experience on my conception we have, not only something that is necessary for mak-

ing sense of the normative connection between facts and observational judgements that Brandom agrees we need, but also a paradigm of a kind of subjective state that is immune to the objections against intermediaries. So without defending what Davidson attacks, we can use the idea of experience to start on recapturing a hygienic idea of subjectivity. The benefits of conceiving experience as I recommend are not restricted to pre-empting transcendental anxiety and opening up a satisfactory epistemology for perception, but extend also into general concerns in the philosophy of mind.

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Part II

The Colloquium

Spontaneity and Causality: McDowell on the Passivity of Perception

Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter

1. According to McDowell, our judgments are free at least 'in principle' (McDowell 1998, 434) insofar as they are responsive to reasons. So even if we are inclined to judge that *p*, we are free to judge that not-*p*, if we are persuaded by cogent reasons that not-*p*. By contrast, in perception we are not free in this way. Although, according to McDowell, the contents of both perception and judgment are conceptually structured, in perception, the 'actualization of the relevant conceptual capacities, unlike the one that would be involved in the corresponding judgment, would be involuntary; that is why I say "actualization" rather than "exercise".' (McDowell 1998, 440) If there is a table in front of you, the only way to avoid seeing it is to close your eyes. Nevertheless, McDowell holds that perception is an actualization of capacities whose 'paradigmatic mode of actualization' is judgment, an activity that happens voluntarily and spontaneously. McDowell thus believes that there is an identity between capacities that are actively exercised in free thinking and capacities that are passively actualized in perception (cf. McDowell 1998, 439f.). I call this the Identity Thesis (IT).

2. In order to understand how IT applies to perception, we must distinguish two different ways of understanding it that correspond to two 'dimensions of passivity' in McDowell. In one sense, perception is passive insofar as it happens involuntarily. I shall call this the Involuntariness Claim (IC). In another sense, perception is passive, because it consists in an act of receptivity. I want to call this the receptivity claim (RC). In what follows I shall focus on two questions: first, whether it makes sense to regard perception as something that happens involuntarily; second, whether McDowell can link perception and receptivity without succumbing to the 'Myth of the Given'. In the first part of my paper I analyze the answers to these questions presented in his *Woodbridge Lectures*. In the second part I shall point out some difficulties for his account that I think require further 'constructive' clarification.

3. I shall begin with McDowell's presentation of IT, the identity thesis. This exposition takes its departure from a remark in the so-called 'Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories' in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*: 'The same function which gives unity to the various representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations in an intuition.' (B 104f.) McDowell glosses this claim as follows: 'An ostensible seeing that there is a red cube in front of one would be an actualization of the same conceptual capacities that would be exercised in judging that there is a red cube in front of one, with the same togetherness.' (McDowell 1998, 458) IT claims that perceptions are always 'conceptually structured' and thus actualizations of the same capacities that usually are exercised in judgments. So, for example, we are able to distinguish red cubes from other objects in our visual field, because in seeing them we actualize the capacity to distinguish red objects from objects of different colors (our concept of 'red') and the capacity to distinguish cubes from, say, pyramids (our concept of 'cube').

4. Although, according to IT, perception and judgment have much in common, they differ in certain crucial respects. These differences come out in IC and RC, which claim that percptual episodes, on account of the receptivity of perception, are involuntary and passive. The rest of my paper will examine the implications of describing perception as a 'triggering' of conceptual episodes in our receptive 'sensory consciousness'.

5. RC is introduced two steps. The first step consists in showing that perceptions, as conceptual episodes are somehow linked to sensory events, they are, as McDowell puts it, 'shapings of sensory consciousness'. 'What makes it [sc. an ostensible seeing, S. H.] an ostensible seeing as opposed to a conceptual episode of some other kind (for instance, a judgment), is that this actualization of conceptual capacities is a conceptual shaping of sensory (and in particular visual) consciousness.' (McDowell 1998, 460) This is the case because perceptions are caused by objects: 'Conceptual episodes of the relevant kind [sc. seeings and ostensible seeings, S. H.] are triggered by impacts from the environment on a perceiver's sensory equipment.' (McDowell 1998, 443) The receptivity of perception thus consists in the fact that perceptions (perceptive conceptual episodes) are triggered by the sensible presence of objects.

6. It might be helpful to consider an analogy. Let us suppose movie-hero Jackie C. has been practicing the martial arts for a long time. Thus he has, in his way of 'Bildung', acquired martial arts capacities. Let us suppose further that the paradigmatic mode of actualization of these martial arts capacities consists in the free, responsible beating-up of villains. Now C. might be trained in such way that he can 'apply' his martial arts capacities without deciding whether he wants to apply them. They are simply 'triggered' by the presence of certain objects, namely villains. So these martial arts capacities are actualized involuntarily (IC). Because they are triggered or necessitated by the presence of objects of a particular kind, their actualization may be ascribed to receptivity (RC). As in the case of perception, IC depends on RC: only if the application of capacities – capacities whose primary application is in voluntary acts – can be *triggered* by an impact on the subject's receptivity, does it make sense to suppose that the actualization happens involuntarily.

7. It might seem that according to McDowell, the question of whether we are responsible for a particular actualization of our conceptual capacities depends on whether it happens voluntarily or not. But matters are not that straightforward. It will be argued in a later paper (*Self-criticism as a way of life*), that on McDowell's account, freedom, responsibility and criticism are closely connected, so as free and responsible beings, we stand under a 'perpetual obligation' to submit our conceptual scheme to critical scrutiny. This allows for a finer-grained account of our responsibility in perception. Consider Jackie C. again. Since the application of his martial arts capacities is triggered by impacts on his receptivity, Jackie C. may not be responsible for particular instances of beating up villains. But Jackie C. certainly ought to ask himself whether his response to the sensible presence of villains is rational and adequate. One might argue that C. has a 'mediated' responsibility for his involuntary beatings since he allowed himself to be trained and does not try to undo the effects of that training. We may similarly be indirectly responsible for the concepts we involuntarily apply in perception. Of course, we cannot be responsible for the contents of our perceptual episodes, on account of the receptivity of perception. The rest of my paper will examine the implications of describing perception as a 'triggering' of conceptual episodes in our receptive 'sensory consciousness'.

8. Let me first consider an account of 'conceptual capacity' that

certainly is not McDowell's. Suppose that conceptual capacities are in general nothing but 'inference tickets', allowing to 'predict, retrodict, explain and modify [...]actions, reactions and states' (Ryle 1949, 124) of cognizers. A conceptual capacity would consist, among other things, in a disposition to behave in a certain way when confronted with objects of a certain kind. Let us suppose further that the ascription of conceptual capacities is nothing but an explanatory tool, describing non-strict causal dependencies that could, in principle, be explained by appeal to strict causal laws. Now if these capacities are actualized in perception, this would mean that if an object of the relevant kind is sensibly present to the subject, it triggers the relevant behavioral dispositions.

9. This picture has a certain similarity to Ryle's. The main difference between this Rylean picture and the one suggested by McDowell is, of course, that on this picture the triggering of perceptual concepts is not the triggering of capacities paradigmatically exercised spontaneously. Rather, the only possible employment of the relevant capacities is by being 'triggered' in one way or another. They would not belong to spontaneity, but to what McDowell calls the 'realm of law'. This important difference notwithstanding, these accounts do both appeal to a 'triggering-relation' between an object and the actualization of a capacity. My question is this: what kind of causal connection can there be between the presence of objects and the existence of the relevant conceptual episodes in the cognizer? I see three options for answering this question.

10. Here's the first option: there is strict causal regularity between the impact of an object on the sensory equipment of the cognizer, on the one hand, and the occurrence of a senso-conceptual episode on the other. In this case, conceptual capacities can be regarded as dispositions in the realm of law. The talk of 'triggering' would mean that not only the occurrence of some senso-conceptual episode, but its content is determined by the object. Impingements on our ears would trigger aural senso-conceptual episodes, impingements on our skin would trigger tactile senso-conceptual episodes, and so on. The content of these episodes would be determined by properties of the cognized object. The second option would be to consider the causal regularity between objects and conceptual episodes as a strict one, but to allow that it is subject-relative insofar as conceptual repertoires may differ from person to person. So the occurrence of a conceptual episode would be

triggered by an object, but its content could differ in different subjects. Third, talk of 'triggering' might presuppose only singular causal connections that do not imply any kind of invariant regularities. So one might regard conceptual capacities as dispositions and dispositions as irreducible to causal regularities.

11. Three questions have arisen in this analysis of McDowell's account of perception. 1. What precisely is involved in McDowell's concept of a conceptual capacity? 2. What theory of causality enters into McDowell's concept of the 'triggering' of conceptual episodes? Finally, 3. Could McDowell warm to the idea of a 'mediated responsibility' for involuntarily employed capacities?

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Ontological Troubles with Facts and Objects in McDowell's *Mind and World*

Christian Suhm, Philip Wagemann, Florian Wessels

1. Introduction

The aim of the following remarks is to discuss McDowell's conception of facts and to examine whether the overall philosophical position developed in *Mind and World* faces ontological problems concerning the relation between facts and particular objects. We shall *first* briefly sketch two main claims of Lecture II of *Mind and World*, that true thoughts and facts are identical and that the sphere of the conceptual is unbounded. *Second*, we shall discuss two conceptions of facts, both of which McDowell seems to invoke. *Third*, we shall consider what kind of relation McDowell believes there to be between facts and objects. The world, as he conceives of it, is a Tractatus-like[1] world, a system of facts that makes up the fabric of the world itself. But this ontology, we will argue, cannot support all of McDowell's philosophical goals. While it does underwrite his perspective on the relation between mind and world by building on the idea of the unboundedness of the conceptual, it does not cohere easily with a common sense conception of the world. We shall conclude that McDowell probably needs to be much more engaged in constructive philosophy than he seems to want to be; at the very least, he needs to further clarify the relation between facts and objects.

2. The identity theory of truth and the unboundedness of the conceptual

One of McDowell's central theses is the identity theory of truth, according to which a belief is true if and only if it is identical with a fact,

[1] By the terms 'Tractatus' or 'Tractarian' we refer to a philosophical position that equates the world with a totality of facts. We are not concerned with the proper interpretation of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* nor shall we consider McDowell's references to the early Wittgenstein in *Mind and World*.

or in McDowell's own words: 'When one thinks truly, what one thinks *is* what is the case.' This identity also holds for experience, as McDowell stresses:

> *That things are thus and so* is the conceptual content of an experience, but if the subject of the experience is not misled, that very same thing, *that things are thus and so*, is also a perceptible fact, an aspect of the perceptible world. (*MW* 26)

Thus '[e]xperience enables the layout of reality itself to exert a rational influence on what a subject thinks.' (ibid.) By means of this account, McDowell hopes to sidestep the dilemma of coherentism on the one hand and the myth of the unconceptual given on the other, which is his main purpose in *Mind and World*. On his view there is no unbridgeable gap between us and the world, because in experience we are in touch not just with mediating sense data, mere appearances, or other forms of a non-conceptual given, but in direct contact with reality itself. Since facts are conceptually structured and identical with contents of true thoughts, there is no need for any kind of *representational* content. According to McDowell 'the sphere of the conceptual' has no outer boundary. To assume an external or transcendental reality beyond our conceptual capacities would be just another failure caused by a 'sideways-on picture'.

It should be noted that the central assertions of Lecture II presented so far consist of two logically independent philosophical theories. First, according to the identity theory of truth, what is the case, i.e., facts, are identical with true propositions conceived of as conceptually constituted contents of thoughts. However, nothing is thereby said about the relation between facts and the world. An identity theory of truth is compatible with a conception of a realm of facts or Fregean propositions that is distinct from non-conceptual reality as well as with a more 'worldly' theory of facts. Second, according to McDowell's 'Tractarian' picture the world is everything that is the case. In a reply to Roger F. Gibson, McDowell has stressed unambiguously that it is his view '[...] that the world consists of the totality of potential contents of (true) thoughts [...]' (McDowell 1996, 284). The combination of the identity theory of truth and this Tractatus-like ontology of facts, finally, results in what McDowell proposes, namely a new picture of the relation between mind and world:

> [. . .] there is no ontological gap between the sort of thing one can mean, or generally the sort of thing one can think, and the sort of thing that can be the case. When one thinks truly, what one thinks *is* what is the case. So since the world is everything that is the case [. . .] there is no gap between thought, as such, and the world. (*MW* 27)

In the next section we shall ask whether McDowell's position implicitly oscillates between two incompatible conceptions of facts.

3. Two conceptions of facts

Julian Dodd has criticized McDowell for conflating two distinct identity theories of truth, a 'robust' and a 'modest' one (cf. Dodd 1995). According to the robust theory, facts are constituted of particular objects and their properties and relations, whereas on the modest theory facts are in a realm of senses, so facts themselves consist of Fregean senses instead of the objects that constitute the external world. We think that in Mind and World McDowell seems to endorse both conceptions of facts.[2] While McDowell must maintain that insofar as facts are thinkable they have a conceptual structure, he also maintains that these very facts constitute the world. If this account is correct, we are in contact with a reality that exerts not only a causal but also a rational influence on our empirical thinking. Since in experience itself we are supplied with contents, we need not engage in the conceptualization of a non-conceptual manifold given (cf. *MW* 26).

According to Dodd, McDowell's revision of the relation between mind and world requires that facts be regarded from contrary points of view. On the first point of view, facts are conceived as propositions, senses, contents of thoughts, or, in general, conceptually constituted things, whereas on the second, the totality of facts is identified with the external world itself, so facts serve to connect thoughts and the world directly. Dodd brings out the tension between these two conceptions in posing the following problem:

[2]It should be noted that McDowell has explicitly defended a Fregean conception of proper names according to which the role of singular terms is not limited to mere reference to particular objects but also includes presenting them in a certain manner; see for example McDowell 1977, 159–185, esp. 169. In accordance with this view, in Mind and World McDowell opts for a Fregean interpretation of the conceptual realm (*MW* 107). A 'robust' or more Russellian treatment of facts, where facts are composed of things and their properties, cannot be explicitly found in *Mind and World*.

> [. . .] facts (if worldly) and Thoughts are in quite different categories, and so the identification cannot be made good. And it is no use saying that senses *just are* objects and properties. Senses are modes of presentation *of* objects and properties; they cannot be identified with them. (Dodd 1995, 163)

Dodd assumes that McDowell wants to have both a 'modest' conception of facts, according to which facts as thinkables belong to the realm of sense, and a more 'robust' or 'worldly' one, according to which facts consist of particulars and their properties. But is this really, as Dodd claims, (ibid.) an incoherent position? Does McDowell actually conflate two identity theories of truth or, more precisely, two conceptions of facts, that do not fit together? Or can both conceptions be held consistently within the same theoretical framework? In order to give a satisfying answer to these questions we must consider how McDowell might explain the relation between particular objects and facts and what implications such a view might have for the identification of facts with the contents of true thoughts.

4. McDowell's realism and the relation between things and facts

McDowell is a realist in two significant respects. First, he considers facts to be identical with true thoughts, where thoughts are understood as 'thinkables', rather than 'episodes of thinking'. Reality, considered as a system of facts, is therefore independent of occurrent thoughts and is not constituted in an idealistic manner, but is as robust as a realist demands. Obviously, this view is akin to what McDowell calls 'minimal empiricism' (*MW* xii), i.e.

> [. . .] the idea that experience must constitute a tribunal, mediating the way our thinking is answerable to how things are, as it must be if we are to make sense of it as thinking at all. (ibid)

In experience we are confronted with an independently existing world to which our thinking is answerable, and we do not create or constitute the world in our minds. Second, McDowell is sympathetic to the common sense presupposition that things and their properties exist 'out there' independently of our minds. Common sense, of course, not only subscribes to minimal empiricism, but implicitly endorses the realist claim that the particular macroscopical objects we are familiar with in

our daily life make up the world. To a common sense realist, the world consists of an enormous variety of spatio-temporal objects. These two senses of realism involve, at least at first sight, two different ontological spheres, one composed of facts, the other composed of particular objects. Obviously, the two spheres must bear some relation to each other, if McDowell's Tractarian claim that the world consists of the totality of facts is to be sustained. Nevertheless, particular objects cannot be mere abstractions from facts, for they do not exist in a derivative way. From various passages in McDowell's writings[3] it can be seen that he assumes the mind-independent existence of spatio-temporal objects and is therefore, as we assume, interested, at least, in making philosophical theories and common sense compatible. But if he does not want to cast doubt on common sense realism, McDowell must bridge the gap between the two ontological spheres mentioned above by giving an account of the relation between facts and objects.

Here is one such possible account. Facts, which themselves stand in rational relations to one another, constitute the realm of sense, whereas objects are situated in time and space. Nevertheless, objects and facts are related, for a totality of objects and their relational and non-relational properties determine a corresponding totality of facts. Conversely, one might say that a complete and coherent system of facts fixes a set of objects. Thus facts and objects are like two sides of a coin, and one cannot have the one without the other. Now does this metaphor settle *ontological* questions? A 'robust' conception of facts, as Dodd presents it, requires that facts literally consist of objects and their properties, whereas the Fregean realm of thoughts invoked by McDowell is made up of senses and therefore intrinsically conceptual. However, it seems impossible to specify an ontological relation between facts belonging to a Fregean sphere of senses and spatiotemporal objects. In the postscript to Lecture V of *Mind and World* McDowell himself discusses a possible objection to his identity theory of truth with respect to particular objects conceived of as being outside the bounds of sense:

[3] Cf., for example, McDowell 1998, 468–470 or *MW* 104–107, where McDowell is concerned with singular reference and the question whether particular objects are excluded from the conceptual realm.

> Even if the image allows for a direct contact between minds and facts, it obliterates a certain possibility that we should not be willing to renounce, a possibility of direct contact between minds and objects, which must surely be external to the realm of thought.
>
> (*MW* 179)

But, according to McDowell, there is no mystery about how thoughts bear on particulars: 'Objects come into view for us in actualizations of conceptual capacities in sensory consciousness [. . .]' (McDowell 1998, 470). Consequently, in perception objects are immediately present to us. If we see that a tree is shaken by the wind, the tree, so to speak, is a constituent of the perception itself, and the perception is identical with a fact. The relation between a thinker and an object does not carry '[. . .] thought outside an outer boundary of the conceptual realm" (*MW* 107). However, this image strikingly highlights the problem of how to conceive of the ontological relation between facts and objects. Dodd's criticism of McDowell's conception of facts considered above in section 3 is grounded on this very problem. Even if one resists Dodd's conclusion that McDowell's identity theory of truth is incoherent, it still remains an open question how one may relate facts to objects in order to explain how direct realism and the unboundedness of the conceptual may both be coherently maintained. If McDowell rejects a 'robust' conception of facts and thereby sidesteps the alleged contradiction Dodd poses, it is even more pressing for him to give an account of how objects 'come into view for us' *inside* the conceptual realm. If objects are located in time and space and senses do not literally consist of objects and their properties, particulars may only be conceived of as *bare* particulars. But this again gives rise to the question of whether objects are excluded from the conceptual sphere. Furthermore, it seems extremely odd to say that the world, i.e., the totality of facts, presents objects to us, or more precisely, that the world contains modes of presentations of objects. On this account, objects seem to fall apart from the world.[4]

5. Conclusion

McDowell's conception of a direct relation between mind and world seems to lead to ontological troubles. In light of McDowell's Fregean

[4]The last two points have been contributed in discussion with McDowell by Michael Quante and Marcus Willaschek.

conception of senses, it is not at all obvious that it is 'a truism in high-flown language' (*MW* 27) to equate the world with the totality of true thoughts, i.e. with the totality of facts. What explanation can be given of the relation between objects and facts? Some philosophical clarification of this ontological question seems to be called for. To be sure, a philosopher like McDowell, who is sceptical about constructive philosophy, might well wish to refrain from doing ontology altogether. But in our opinion McDowell's position would benefit from some more constructive philosophizing about the ontology of facts and objects. Constructive philosophy is no threat as long as it is *good* constructive philosophy.

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On 'The Unboundedness of the Conceptual'

Marcus Willaschek

1. In Lecture II of *Mind and World*, John McDowell states a consequence of the preceding lecture by saying that reality 'is not to be pictured as outside an outer boundary that encloses the conceptual sphere' (*MW* 26). Instead, the conceptual is to be seen as 'unbounded' (*MW* 44). McDowell expresses the same idea by saying that 'facts in general are essentially capable of being embraced in thought' (*MW* 28) and that 'there is nothing outside' the conceptual (*MW* 44). I shall call this the Conceptuality Thesis or CT. The image of the unboundedness of the conceptual, like that of our being 'open to the world' , is meant to exorcise the 'confinement imagery' connected with Davidsonian coherentism. Unfortunately, it also suggests that we are cognitively omnipotent and thereby threatens to undermine our common sense confidence in the mind-independence of reality: it certainly seems that a world *essentially* within the reach of our thinking cannot be independent of our mental capacities. McDowell, keenly aware of this problem, devotes the greater part of Lecture II to arguing that CT does not jeopardize a sensible common sense realism. In what follows, I shall first explain why his argument leaves me unconvinced. In closing, I shall briefly explain why I believe that McDowell's major aims in *Mind and World* can be upheld without CT.

2. First we need to understand what McDowell means by the claim that the conceptual is unbounded. In Lecture II of *Mind and World*, responding to the possible charge of idealism, McDowell offers clarifications with respect to three points. First, he distinguishes between thoughts as acts of thinking and thoughts as thinkable contents (*MW* 28). That the conceptual sphere is unbounded does not mean that the world consists of, or depends on, *actual* employments of concepts or acts of thinking, nor does it mean that the world itself is conceptually structured, if this is to say that there are conceptual capacities that somehow belong not to human beings, but to the world itself (cf. McDowell 1998, 470). Rather, it means that the world is essentially *graspable* in conceptual thought. The world, McDowell insists, is everything that

is the case, where something's being the case is something *thinkable* – a *possible* content of thought. Second, the employment of concepts in experience requires that they be integrated in a picture of a world that extends further than our actual and even possible experiences of it (*MW* 29–34.). And third, there is a perpetual obligation to scrutinize and, if necessary, to revise our present system of concepts in the light of new experiences. Thus '[t]here is no guarantee that the world is completely within the reach of a system of concepts or conceptions as it stands at some particular moment in its historical development' (*MW* 40). Since our historical development is a highly unreliable process, there may even be aspects of reality which forever escape our conceptual capabilities.[1]

3. At first glance, there may seem to be a tension between the first and the third of these clarifications: how can the world be 'essentially capable of being embraced in thought' (28) when at the same time there may be aspects of it which might forever escape our conceptual grasp? We can dissolve the tension, however, if we understand the claim that the world is essentially capable of being captured in thought (i.e. the Conceptuality Thesis) as follows:

CT For every aspect of reality, there is a *possible* system of concepts that would allow its possessor to grasp the aspect in question.

Of course, everything now depends on what counts as a 'possible system of concepts' . In particular, the question is: possible for *whom*? There seem to be three options: first, possible for *some* kind of mind, including hypothetical 'superhuman' , or even infinite minds; second, possible for finite minds, which may differ from ours in the extent and efficiency of their conceptual capacities; and, finally, 'humanly possible'. I think we can rule out the first option simply because we don't have any clear understanding of what a 'superhuman' or infinite mind might be. The second option might seem to receive some textual support from McDowell's consideration of the possibility of 'Martians' who 'have an echo-locating capacity, which figures in the rational basis of their worldview in the same way our sense do in the basis of ours' (*MW* 123 n).[2]

[1] McDowell himself seems to make somewhat the same point by saying that 'the idea of an end to inquiry is no part of the position I am recommending' (ibid).

[2] McDowell maintains: 'I have no need to deny that there might be concepts anchored in sensory capacities so alien to ours that the concepts would be unintelligible to us.'

But we have to bear in mind that the Conceptuality Thesis is supposed to explain the possibility of human experience. If we want to understand how the world can be open to *our* kind of experience, it does not help to say that, even though there are aspects of reality *we* cannot grasp, there *might* be someone completely different from us who can. The relevant kinds of minds ought therefore to bear enough resemblance to our minds that *their* ability to conceptually grasp a particular aspect of reality allows us to understand *our* cognitive access to the world. (For instance, like McDowell's bat-like Martians they should have to rely on some kind of sense experience in order to gain knowledge about their environment.) On the third option, we would be left with a *very* narrow reading of CT, requiring in effect that every aspect of reality could be conceptually grasped by *human* beings. For present purposes, though, it won't be necessary to decide between options two and three, since in what follows I shall focus only on the finitude of the minds under consideration.

4. Even if one takes an optimistic view of what systems of concepts are available to finite beings like us, CT is a substantial metaphysical claim. In light of McDowell's 'therapeutic' approach to philosophy, it may seem odd to ascribe it to him. But anything weaker than CT would not amount to the claim, explicitly endorsed by McDowell, that the world is *essentially* open to our thought. If the conceptual is indeed unbounded, then nothing can *possibly* fall outside the reach of concepts available to us or beings similar to us. (From now on, the first person plural will refer to humans and other finite thinking beings relevantly similar to them.)

5. Does the Conceptuality Thesis, on this reading, respect the common sense belief in a mind-independent reality? I don't think so. To be sure, CT does not entail that reality depends on our *actual* system of concepts and its employment. But CT issues an *a priori* guarantee that nothing in the world is precluded from our conceptual grasp. Now if the world does not depend on our mental capacities, how can we *know* that we could acquire the concepts appropriate for grasping each and every of its aspects? Without a concept of reality tailor-made to fit our cognitive capacities, there is no way to exclude the possibility that the world might outrun our possible concepts.[3] If reality is mind-

[3] There might seem to be the possibility of an argument for CT compatible with realism. Such an argument would have to start from the idea of our conceptual capabilities and

independent, CT may still happen to be true – but it cannot be *known* to be true. Thus, I do not see how CT could be maintained without presupposing that the world, in some sense, depends on our minds.[4]

6. One might perhaps respond that the idea of stretches of reality that, by their very nature, escape us, is no part of common sense, but rather wild metaphysical speculation. One might even try to argue that it is meaningless or incoherent: the world is a world of facts, and the idea of facts impossible to grasp is incoherent. But I don't think that such an argument can be made: the possibility of inconceivable aspects of reality, whether we call them facts or not, follows simply from the obvious truth that our mental capacities are *finite*, together with the admission that reality may be infinite – infinitely large, infinitely small, infinitely intricate. Of course, if McDowell is correct to deny that there is a non-conceptual content of experience, then even if there were conceptually inaccessible aspects of reality, we would not notice them - our experience would never tell us. Thus we could not imagine a situation in which we would be perceptually *faced* with something we could not conceptually cope with. Moreover, for obvious reasons it is impossible to give an example of something absolutely inconceivable. Nevertheless we can construct the *idea* of something inconceivable by focusing on those features which make it difficult for us to understand something (size, complexity, apparent absence of order etc.) and imagine these features pushed to infinity. In an infinite universe, there just might be patterns, structures or properties too complex (large, small etc.) for finite beings to understand and, therefore, to detect. Thus there is nothing incoherent nor even particularly metaphysical about the idea of aspects of reality impossible for us to comprehend.

7. The idea that something might fall outside the conceptual sphere would fall into incoherence only if we were to attach any further epistemological significance to it – for example by appealing to non-conceptual contents of experience or unknowable 'things in themselves' . But

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go on to show that nothing tells against their being *indefinitely* perfectible. If such an argument could convincingly be made, it would yield the result that for every aspect of reality, there is a humanly possible system of concepts which would allow us to grasp the aspect in question. Such a claim would then be acceptable to the staunchest realist. I don't know of any such argument. And I don't believe there is one.

[4]Or perhaps both, mind and world, depend on something else that effects a pre-established harmony between our minds and the world. This has been argued by Leibniz, and in a different way, by Hegel.

the admission that our cognitive capacities are finite and therefore may not allow us to capture everything there is does not commit us to any such epistemological view. I do not doubt that much of reality – indeed *all* of reality that is of any interest to us – is capable of being fully embraced in thought and thus falls within the conceptual sphere. It may even happen to be the case that there is nothing outside the conceptual. But if this is so, it is because *we* are, as a matter of contingent fact, capable of embracing reality, not because *reality* is essentially embracable. In conclusion, I think it best to reject the Conceptuality Thesis, since it undermines our common sense reliance on the mind-independence of reality. In closing, then, I want to consider very briefly whether giving up CT would do any damage to McDowell's overall project – a project to which I am very sympathetic.

8. McDowell invokes the Conceptuality Thesis in two closely related contexts. First, he invokes it to explain how the world, as it impinges on our senses, can exert a *rational* control over our thinking. The idea is that in perceptual experience, the world itself 'saddles' us with a conceptual content that can serve as a justification for our beliefs. Second, McDowell invokes the Conceptuality Thesis to explain how the content of a veridical experience or true thought is something that really is the case: that is, when I see that the sun is shining, there is no 'gap' between what I see (that the sun is shining) and what is the case (that the sun is shining). This has come to be called the identity theory of truth. Both the idea that the world can saddle us with conceptual content and the so-called identity theory of truth may seem to require the Conceptuality Thesis. But as far as I can see, this is not so.

9. In order to understand how, in perceptual experience, the world can impress conceptual contents on us, all we need assume is that there are concepts which, once we have mastered them, may be employed both 'responsibly' in judgement and 'responsively' in perception. Our conceptual capacities, McDowell urges, can be actualized not only in judgements, but in the very workings of our sensible receptivity. This requires that we be trained in such a way as to respond, in perceiving a given situation, by 'automatically' (inadvertently) employing the appropriate concept. In this sense, the 'space of concepts' extends further than most empiricists have supposed (*MW* 10). But if I understand McDowell correctly here, such an extension of the space of concepts must be sharply distinguished from the Conceptuality Thesis, since it

concerns only a very limited aspect of reality, namely those processes that concepts can be *employed in*, such as judgings, perceivings or intentional doings. It does not (immediately) concern the question what these concepts can be *applied to*. The passive actualization of appropriate concepts in perceptual experience presupposes that, as a matter of contingent fact, we do possess an appropriate concept. But we need not assume, with CT, that there is an *a priori* guarantee that we can acquire such a concept.

10. In order to understand how experience and thought can be ways of taking in actual matters of fact, we must assume that our conceptual resources allow us to capture at least *some* of the facts. All thinking truly embraces a fact. But, obviously, from this it does not follow that all facts can be embraced in true thoughts. Again, a much weaker claim than CT would entirely suffice to ground the identity theory of truth.

11. These brief remarks only suggest the direction a more detailed argument would have to take, but I hope they suffice to show why I believe that the Conceptuality Thesis is not required by any of McDowell's central claims.

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Nature and Second Nature in McDowell's *Mind and World*

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In lectures IV to VI the notions of nature, and especially of second nature become central to McDowell's *Mind and World*. The first part of our paper consists of a very short survey of the history of the term 'second nature'. In the second part we discuss how McDowell tries to employ the notion of second nature in order to develop a naturalism that can account for human rationality without denying its *sui generis* character. In the course of this discussion we raise some questions that arise out of this account.

1. Second nature from a historical point of view

The notion of second nature is introduced in *Mind and World* by reference to Aristotle's ethics, and as McDowell repeatedly remarks 'is all but explicit in Aristotle's account of the acquisition of virtue of character' (McDowell 1996, 184; (*MW* 84)). So it seemed natural to investigate the historical background of this notion.

No term corresponding to that of 'second nature' appears in Aristotle's works. Nevertheless, the passages McDowell refers to show how his own use of 'second nature' should be understood as – at least roughly – relying upon some such notion. Aristotle argues that it takes habituation to evolve ethical virtue, for ethical virtue is not naturally given, but is based upon natural tendencies that are realized through habituation (Funke 1984, 484).

During the Hellenistic period the notion of *altera natura* emerges, first mentioned (as far as we know) by Cicero when he says that 'consuetudine quasi alteram quandam naturam effici' (Funke 1984, 484).

In Augustine the expression 'secunda natura' itself finally appears. It carries an evaluative connotation, however, that is foreign to Aristotle: 'secunda natura' is closely associated with 'mala consuetudo'. Augustine conceives of second nature as a bad habit, for second nature is a corruption of God-given first nature. For him second nature does not

develop from the potentialities inherent in first nature, but is a corruption of real human nature (Funke 1984, 485).

Throughout the next millennium the term 'second nature' had primarily a negative connotation. Even Rousseau, writing some 1300 years after Augustine, seemed to use the term in this way: his slogan 'Back to Nature' might well be understood as an exhortation to live in conformity with (first) nature, and he is best read as taking second nature to be a kind of alienation from first nature (Funke 1984, 486f.).

Until the end of the eighteenth century the term 'second nature' is predominantly used to signify the corruption of (first) nature. While there are suggestions in Aristotle – and to a lesser extent in Cicero – of how McDowell's use of 'second nature' might be understood, as noted above, the term itself does not appear. Only at the beginning of the nineteenth century does Hegel use 'second nature' in a way that might prefigure its meaning in McDowell's work. Like McDowell, Hegel employs the notion of second nature in connection with habit and *Bildung*. Hegel explains:

> Aber in der einfachen *Identität* mit der Wirklichkeit der Individuen erscheint das Sittliche, als die allgemeine Handlungsweise derselben – als Sitte, – die *Gewohnheit* desselben als eine *zweite* Natur, die an die Stelle des ersten bloß natürlichen Willens gesetzt [. . .]ist. (Hegel, 1821, §151)

For Hegel, as for McDowell, second nature is not at all 'bad'. This marks a considerable break with tradition.

In sharp contrast to McDowell, Hegel does not take second nature to be an actualization of first nature potentialities, but a liberation from first nature. Habit is a second nature, the nature of the mind:

> [. . .]einerseits ein Anderes als die Natur, also Befreiung, eine zweite Natur gegen die unmittelbare Natürlichkeit, andererseits ist sie Natur, ist ein Sein, ich bin so, das ist meine Gewohnheit, diese Qualität hat noch diese Seite der Natürlichkeit in ihr. (Hegel 1994, 125)[1]

There is a curious feature of Hegel's use of 'nature', which might easily look like an ambiguity (but, perhaps, did not look like one to Hegel). In the phrase 'merely natural will' ('bloß natürlicher Wille'), what seems to

[1] It should be noted that Hegel not only contrasts first and second nature, but also brings out a similarity between them. This reflects a difference in emphasis between Hegel and the rest of the tradition: Augustine and Rousseau speak of *second* (pseudo-)nature, but Hegel speaks of second *nature*.

be at issue is nature as a realm governed by natural laws. But the explanation that second nature is *nature*, because 'that is how I am' ('ich bin so') seems to point towards a quite different use of 'nature', according to which it is roughly interchangeable with 'essence'. Did Hegel have a notion of nature that covers both uses? The point is of interest, since McDowell's and Hegel's uses of the term 'nature' seem to be somewhat similar, as we hope to make clear in the following section.

2. Varieties of 'nature'

McDowell uses the term 'nature' with various qualifications. He speaks of 'disenchanted nature', 're-enchanted nature', 'first nature', 'second nature', 'mere nature', 'animal nature' and 'human nature'; among the 'enchanted' variety he distinguishes between 'fully re-enchanted' and 'partially re-enchanted' nature; he even talks of the supernatural ((*MW* 66–126 passim, 181–184); McDowell 1996, passim). The term 'nature' seems to have different senses depending on how it is qualified, so we shall now examine how some of these different senses are related.

A full re-enchantment of nature would be unsatisfactory, because we could not acknowledge the achievements of the so-called natural sciences which aim to uncover the general laws that govern reality. Whether something was a part of nature would consist in its meaningfulness to human beings, regardless of whether the thing in question conformed to general laws. This would amount to a lapse into 'pre-scientific superstition' ((*MW* 72, 85)), for nature in its entirety would be addressed to human beings.

The sciences conceive of nature as disenchanted, for they identify the natural with what is subject to natural laws. Although this conception has its merits in helping to overcome superstition about nature, it also severely limits the application of the term 'natural'. It does not seem to apply to the specific mode of living of human beings, whose thoughts and actions – as rationally structured goings-on – resist being understood merely as law-governed processes. [2] If nature is equated

[2]McDowell maintains that rational thought cannot be modeled as a process in the realm of law, since rationality manifests itself in the human practice of giving and demanding reasons for action and thought, and reasons being open to continuous re-evaluation cannot be reduced to laws. Now it should be remarked that it is not at all clear what conception of law McDowell endorses. We have throughout taken him to conceive of

with the realm of law while insisting that the space of reasons is *sui generis*, the latter must be conceived of as being outside nature, or supernatural.[3]

'Nature' taken most broadly seems to signify the totality of all that is natural. [4] One might think that something would be termed 'natural' or 'part of nature' by virtue of its conforming to some general criterion. To term something natural in this sense would be to highlight its continuity (in the relevant respects) with everything else that is in nature. Now on the disenchanted conception of nature, the criterion of naturalness is law-governedness. While McDowell seems to accept this for a wide range of phenomena, including mere animal life, he insists that it cannot capture human lives. He maintains that humans are natural beings [5], so their naturalness cannot consist exclusively in the fact that they are governed by laws.

McDowell suggests that we should conceive of nature as 'partially (re-)enchanted'. He insists that the realm of nature is not coextensive with the realm of law. So while responsiveness to the space of reasons has to be conceived of as a natural phenomenon, it must neither be reduced to the status of the phenomena treated by the natural sciences, nor extended to include worldly goings-on that bear no immediate relation to human thought and action, thus avoiding a *full* re-enchantment of nature. McDowell employs the notions of first nature and second nature in order to establish the adequacy of this position.

3. A naturalism without a gap?

According to McDowell, the sentience of mere animals 'is in the service of a mode of life that is structured exclusively by immediate biological imperatives' (*MW* 115). They cannot but follow their natural impulses, for they see no alternatives to acting according to them. That is, mere animals are entirely contained within the realm of law.

laws along the lines of the account in Davidson 1980b, but it is questionable whether this is the dominant notion of law in the natural sciences.

[3]The bald naturalist denies that the space of reasons is *sui generis*. If the space of reasons could be subsumed in the realm of law, the threat of supernaturalism would *ipso facto* not arise.

[4]In response to an earlier version of this paper McDowell remarked that 'it must be possible, if necessary by force, to use 'nature' in that sense'.

[5]See (*MW* 77): '[W]hat is specifically human is surely natural (the idea of the human is the idea of what pertains to a certain species of animals)'

McDowell introduces his own position as a 'naturalism of second nature' (*MW* 91). He points out that human beings share sensibility with mere animals, so their 'sensory interactions with their environment are natural goings-on' (*MW* 70). The fact that the properties of human beings that constitute their first nature are also found in other animals ensures that humans are indeed natural beings.[6] Still, they are distinguished from mere animals by virtue of the fact that their experiences and lives are essentially shaped by rational relations.

First nature properties are considered natural, because they do not belong exclusively to human beings, while the properties of mature humans that constitute their rationality are considered natural, because they are distinctive of human life. Since, according to McDowell, rationality just is human second nature, it constitutes the 'essence' of human beings,[7] distinguishing them from all other beings in the world. Now since the naturalness of all other things derives from their conformity to laws, human life is discontinuous with the rest of nature in this respect.

This might seem to give rise to a problem. McDowell says that his notion of second nature makes it possible for us to see 'that the way our lives are shaped by reason is natural, even while we deny that the structure of the space of reasons can be integrated into the layout of the realm of law' (*MW* 88). Since second nature may not be reduced to first nature, it would seem that there are here two distinct conceptions of nature that cannot be reconciled. If we insist that there must be some single unambiguous sense of 'nature', it seems difficult to conceive of rational life as natural without re-enchanting the whole of nature. In any event human beings seem to be curiously split since their naturalness depends on the satisfaction of two completely different criteria: law-governedness *and* rationality.

McDowell seeks to deal with this problem by insisting that the second nature of human beings – their 'habits of thought and action' – is natural because it has a 'foothold in the realm of law' (*MW* 84). Second nature should be understood as an actualization of 'potentialities that belong to a normal human organism' (*MW* 84), and McDowell seems

[6]There might be aspects of human first nature which cannot be ascribed to other animals; these aspects would, however, belong to the realm of law, and would be no different in kind from the properties of mere animals.

[7]See the remarks on Hegel's conception of nature in the first section.

to think this explains how we may regard rationality as continuous with first nature. Since human first nature includes the potentialities to acquire conceptual capacities that enable us to give reasons for our actions and to choose between different patterns of behavior, first nature would seem to be at least partly integrated within the realm of law. In this way human beings would seem to have a foothold in the realm of law.

On the face of it, it seems that first nature can provide such a foothold. But if we try to ground the distinctive features of humans that constitute their second nature in the continuity of their first nature with mere animal nature, we seem to be compelled to regard first nature facts as law-governed. Those aspects of our first nature that enable us to develop our second nature – our potentialities for acquiring conceptual capacities – would then have to be placed in the realm of law.[8] Another option might be to take first nature as only partially law-governed, i.e. with some capacities describable as law-governed and the relevant potentialities to develop a second nature placed outside the realm of law.

It thus seems that we must either acknowledge a gap between first and second nature or one within first nature itself. Since these options are both unsatisfying, it is worth seeing whether this gap may be avoided altogether.

To this end, McDowell avails himself of the notion of *Bildung*. *Bildung* is supposed to be 'a central element in the normal maturation of human beings' (*MW* 125), that transforms innate potentialities into second nature. This process enables human beings to acquire conceptual capacities and thereby become responsive to the space of reasons. Part of the process of acquiring conceptual capacities consists in learning what it is for an exercise of these capacities to be correct or incorrect: this seems to be what 'responsiveness to reasons' amounts to. But it is the normativity of *Bildung* that is at issue here. If we take law-governedness and spontaneity to be mutually exclusive, it is difficult to see how lawful goings-on may be transformed into something which is subsequently no longer law-governed. If first nature may indeed be completely described in the terminology of the natural sciences, how do those potentialities which are relevant for the development of sec-

[8] McDowell seems to identify the realm of law with the realm of natural science, thus ruling out natural-scientific investigation of the space of reasons. Since, according to McDowell, natural scientists are exclusively concerned with the *laws* of nature, they may not be concerned with the space of reasons which – insofar as it is realm of spontaneity and freedom – is not law-governed.

ond nature enter the human being's first nature? To be sure, there are potentialities, such as the capacity to learn how to walk, that may be countenanced by any natural scientist. However, this is not the sort of potentiality needed for the development of second nature. Indeed, it seems that on McDowell's understanding of the natural sciences, they cannot account for potentialities of this sort. And as long as there is no place for these potentialities in natural science, first nature does not really provide a foothold for second nature. Instead of a foothold we find a slippery surface.

Even if we grant that human beings are born into a community whose mode of life is already imbued with conceptual norms and grant that those supervising and directing the process of *Bildung* are rational beings (*MW* 95), this does not help us explain how infants themselves come to be responsive to reasons. To say that they are innately endowed with the potentialities to develop reason is just to say that *somehow* rationality can emerge from lawful goings-on. Perhaps we should suppose that the process of actualizing the relevant potentialities at least begins as a law-governed process. This would imply that law-governed processes can shape human capacities, although exercises of these capacities cannot be conceived of as law-governed. But in the process of *Bildung* the shaping of conceptual capacities apparently goes hand in hand with the exercise of those capacities one has already acquired. How, then, are we to distinguish what is law-governed in *Bildung* from what is not?

If first nature were only partly law-governed then there would be no problem in locating the potentialities necessary for the development of second nature within first nature itself. Since first nature would not be coextensive with the realm of law, the relevant potentialities could obviously be taken to be in that part of first nature that is outside the realm of law. But the notion of *Bildung* was not introduced to connect second nature with potentialities conceived in this way, but with potentialities that are placed in the realm of law (*MW* 84). So it does not even seem possible to provide a foothold for first nature potentialities – let alone second nature – in first nature. We do not find a foothold, but a swampy ground.

4. Concluding remarks

McDowell seems surely correct to insist that all of human life is natural in at least some sense. Insofar as the rational is irreducible to the law-governed it seems equally correct to insist that any conception of nature that cannot accommodate this sense of naturalness is bound to be misguided.

McDowell's aim is to provide a picture that can acknowledge that the lives of human beings are irreducibly structured by reasons without thereby admitting a non-natural ingredient into our conception of what it is to be human. His introduction of the notion of second nature seems like a plausible first step towards the development of such a picture. It accords with our intuition that we are distinguished from other animals by virtue of our conceptual capacities. The thought that to be natural the acquisition of a second nature must be essentially within reach of human beings due to potentialities they are born with might seem to block any inclination to view rationality as 'a mysterious gift from outside nature' (*MW* 88).

Still, this can only show that rationality is an essential part of *human* nature; it remains to be shown that human nature is part of nature in general, insofar as nature embraces both animate and inanimate things. We have seen that McDowell does not seem to have an account that could help to understand how second nature is supposed to fit into nature at large. Unfortunately it is no use turning to the philosophical tradition for guidance in this matter. Only in Hegel do we find a notion of second nature in any way comparable to McDowell's, but Hegel's conception of nature is unsuitable for paying the respect to natural science that McDowell considers proper.

It is clear that the notion of first nature is meant to play a crucial role in capturing the embeddedness of human beings in nature. But the notion is not sufficiently developed to make clear how it might be used to satisfy both the needs of natural science and the condition of grounding the acquisition of second nature. The notion of *Bildung* – vague as McDowell's account of it remains – seems to be of no great help either. It is less than obvious how it is supposed to effect a transformation of law-governed facts into norm-governed facts – which is required if we are not to have a gap in our notion of nature.

This problem seems to arise because McDowell seems to think that the only way to pay proper respect to natural science is to assign a sig-

nificant role to the notion of law-governedness in the characterization of human first nature. Might there be other ways of showing one's respect?[9]

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[9]We would like to express our gratitude to Niko Strobach for his assistance throughout the writing of this paper.

Is McDowell confronted with an Antinomy of Freedom and Nature?

Sean Greenberg and Marcus Willaschek

1. In *Mind and World*, McDowell sets out to dissolve a philosophical anxiety that derives from the recognition of what he takes to be two genuine insights, both of which derive from Kant: first, that rational thought is 'spontaneous' in that it is responsible only to rational constraints from inside the conceptual sphere; second, that for thought to have objective content, it must be empirically constrained by facts from outside thought. These insights give rise to an apparent dilemma: If we start from the first, there seems to be no room for empirical input to experience (*MW* 5); if we start from the second, it seems that the empirical input cannot count as a reason for belief (*MW* 8). Either way, we cannot understand how rational thought can make contact with reality.

2. The idea which allows McDowell to avoid this dilemma derives from Kant, too (*MW* 9): namely, we must think of sense experience as providing both a rational constraint (from inside the conceptual sphere) and an empirical constraint (from outside thought). To see that this is possible, however, we must acknowledge that the conceptual sphere encompasses the immediate deliveries of our senses and thus extends further than spontaneous thought. In experience, we allow the world itself to exert a rational influence on our thinking (*MW* 42).

3. Both insights McDowell starts from as well as his conception of experience derive immediately from Kant. Yet Kant also explicitly endorses a conception of nature as the realm of law (cf. *Prolegomena*, § 14). To McDowell, this is surprising, since it is this very conception of nature that, according to McDowell, blocks our way to a Kantian conception of experience. Thus McDowell thinks we should 'marvel' at Kant's insight (*MW* 97) and his holding on to it even though, for 'lack of a pregnant notion of second nature' (*MW* 97), 'he has no intelligible way to deal with it' (*MW* 98). Kant's own way of dealing with the insight that concepts and intuitions are inextricably combined in human experience seems unintelligible to McDowell, for Kant locates spontaneity outside nature in the context of a transcendental constitution of empirical reality. In contrast, McDowell himself advocates a combina-

tion of the 'Hegelian' view that nature itself falls within the conceptual sphere and thus is inherently 'thinkable' (*MW* 28) with the 'Aristotelian' idea that our conceptual capacities are themselves something natural.

4. Kant's main reason for locating spontaneity outside nature seems to have been that causal laws and spontaneous thought and action seem mutually exclusive. Kant formulates this problem as the third of the 'Antinomies of Pure Reason'. On the one hand, it is necessary to assume a 'causality of freedom', an 'absolute spontaneity of causes' within nature (CPR B472; B474). On the other hand, there can be no freedom since 'everything in the world happens according to the laws of nature' (B 473). Kant gives supposedly conclusive proofs for each of these contradictory claims. Although he first presents this as cosmological antinomy (concerning a first cause of the world), he goes on to explain that the relevant kind of spontaneity also occurs in the case of human action (B 476) and human thought (B 574–575). The only resolution of this antinomy, according to Kant, is through a distinction between the noumenal and empirical realms that enables us to see one as a realm of freedom and the other as a realm of law (B 560–587).

5. While distinguishing between these two realms may solve the cosmological antinomy, this distinction alone does not suffice to make comprehensible how human thought and action might be spontaneous. According to Kant, human thought and action may be completely explained by appeal to natural laws alone. But then the problem arises how a kind of spontaneity located outside nature might enable us to understand how our actions, located within nature, might be spontaneous. Kant's own solution to this problem is to conceive of our empirical characters as caused by and therefore as 'signs' of our noumenal characters (B 574). Even if this proposal proves ultimately unsatisfying, we can well understand the pressure on Kant to adopt it. On the one hand, he is committed to the idea that every natural event may be completely explained by appeal to the laws of nature; on the other hand, he is committed to the idea that human beings, although part of nature, are spontaneous. We shall refer to the tension within our conception of nature between law-governedness and spontaneity as the 'Third Antinomy'.

7. McDowell is alert, of course, to the problem of the Third Antinomy. Although he doesn't refer to the problem explicitly, he essentially identifies his task as that of overcoming it (*MW* 71, n. 2), and the

second half of *Mind and World* might well be described as an attempt to break out of the problem space in which the antinomy arises. On McDowell's view, one enters this problem space when one identifies nature with the realm of law – a conception that McDowell characterizes as the achievement of modern science and an accurate reflection of how modern natural science understands its subject matter. Such a 'disenchanted' conception of nature seems diametrically opposed to the conception of nature as a realm of meaning that it displaced, so if one begins from such a disenchanted conception of nature, as, for example, Kant does, there seems to be no room for spontaneity in nature.

8. McDowell seeks to escape this problem space by refusing to identify nature with the realm of law. He explains that 'even though the logical space that is the home of the idea of spontaneity cannot be aligned with the logical space that is the home of ideas of what is natural in the relevant sense, conceptual powers are nevertheless operative in the workings of our sensibility, in actualizations of our animal nature, as such' (*MW* 74). Since spontaneity does not fit into nature conceived as a realm of law, the Third Antinomy may not be overcome on its own terms. Nevertheless, spontaneity may be characterized as natural, insofar as the capacity for spontaneity is a part of human nature. To this end, McDowell proposes a 'radical rethinking' (*MW* 79) and 'partial reenchantment' (cf. *MW* 85) of nature. Nature must not be identified with 'the realm of law,' but so conceived as to allow room for 'second nature' (*MW* 84), of which human reason is a part. Our rational capacities are natural insofar as they depend on our biological endowment (our 'first' nature) and insofar as they are acquired during the normal human developmental process. They are second nature because we can acquire them only by being initiated into a cultural tradition. Nevertheless, being rational is as much a part of human nature as being biped.

9. Whereas Kant began with a conception of nature as a realm of law and was faced with the problem of finding room in that conception of nature for spontaneity, McDowell recommends beginning with a conception of nature that makes room for spontaneity. This enables him to sidestep Kant's version of the antinomy. But it is not immediately clear whether McDowell overcomes the antinomy altogether. Since spontaneity is recognized to be in tension with nature conceived as a realm of law, it is unclear whether we are entitled to conceive of nature as a realm of law at all. McDowell thus seems to be faced with a flipped

version of the Third Antinomy, for he must still find a way to reconcile the lawfulness of nature with spontaneity.

10. We may sharpen this problem by briefly considering McDowell's conception of nature. McDowell distinguishes several different senses of 'nature'.[1] First, there is the disenchanted nature of modern natural science (*MW* 70–71). Then there is the concept of 'second nature' (*MW* 84), which presupposes the concept of a 'first nature'. Finally, there is the concept of 'nature' as opposed to what lies 'outside' nature, the 'supernatural' (cf. *MW* 77–78).

11. How are these different conceptions of nature related? One possibility is that the first nature of human beings is identical to disenchanted nature. However, if this is so, how can we think of the first nature of human beings as containing 'potentialities that belong to a normal human organism' (*MW* 84) whose actualizations enable the human being to arrogate his second nature? A second possibility is that the first nature of human beings is already conceived of as partially re-enchanted. But if this is so, how may this first nature be subsumed in the realm of law in such a way as to enable us to 'satisfy any proper respect for modern natural science' (*MW* 84)? Thus we are still facing the question raised by the Third Antinomy: How can we conceive of nature as having room for both for spontaneity and natural law?

12. The only way Kant saw to reconcile disenchanted nature and spontaneity was to place spontaneity outside nature. Because Kant was so impressed by the success of modern science, he thought that if spontaneity could not be reconciled in this way with natural law, then freedom would have to go (B 564). McDowell wants to make room for spontaneity within nature, while satisfying 'any proper respect for modern natural science' (*MW* 84). If spontaneity cannot be reconciled in this way with natural law, will natural law then have to go?

[1] Cf. the preceding paper by Gubeljic, Link, Müller and Osburg.

Platonism and Anti-Platonism

Niko Strobach

1. Compromise philosophy

Let us say that a compromise philosopher is a philosopher who tries to mediate between two mutually incompatible extreme positions which he refuses to accept, but which he nevertheless believes both to be true and mutually compatible in certain respects. On this characterization, Aristotle was a compromise philosopher: he wanted to mediate between two positions which have traditionally been very roughly labelled 'materialism' and 'idealism'. Kant was also a compromise philosopher: he wanted to mediate between two positions which have traditionally been just as roughly labelled 'empiricism' and 'rationalism'. Certainly, trying to reach a compromise is not a bad idea if there are two partly attractive, but – without modification – mutually exclusive positions.

However, there are disadvantages to being a compromise philosopher. Compromise philosophers may be difficult to understand, because it is easier to formulate an extreme position than to formulate a compromise. It may sometimes be objected that it is very hard to see wherein precisely the compromise philosopher's compromise consists. Moreover, a compromise philosopher may also have difficulty resisting the attempts of the proponent of an extreme position to draw him to that side. For example, the proponent of an extreme position may argue that the compromise position does not *really* differ from the extreme position, but only nominally differs from it, and that the compromise philosopher does not *really* accept parts of the other extreme position, but only some of its vocabulary. A compromise philosopher may find himself in special trouble when proponents of both extreme positions try to claim him for their positions.

Those who have read *Mind and World* can hardly deny that John McDowell is a compromise philosopher. This becomes especially clear in connection with his concept of nature. McDowell is opposed to what he calls rampant platonism, and is also opposed to what he calls bald naturalism. Nevertheless, he conceives of a compromise between

the extreme positions which he sometimes calls 'naturalism of second nature' and sometimes 'naturalized platonism'.

Precisely because he is a compromise philosopher, both a radical platonist and a contemporary scientifically-minded anti-platonist might think that McDowell's position is not really different from their positions.

2. The platonist's claim

Here is what the platonist might say:

McDowell is one of us, although he claims that he is not a platonist (he even goes so far as to call 'rampant platonism' what everyone else just calls 'platonism'). He is not consistent in his rejection of platonism, though, as is evinced by the fact that he reserves for himself the label of 'naturalized platonism', which, upon examination, turns out to be what everyone else calls platonism. Whether he likes it or not, McDowell just is a platonist. (So was Plato, by the way, but historical questions don't matter here.)

McDowell maintains that there is a space of reasons which bears more than metaphorical resemblance to a platonic realm of forms. The space of reasons is there, regardless of whether we want to gain access to it. In other words, the space of reasons has a self-sufficient existence, independent of living, material beings. When McDowell describes the educational process called *Bildung*, through which one acquires a second nature, he uses a metaphor that is as platonist as can be: *Bildung* is an eye-opener. It opens the eyes to something that is already there. But more than that: in opening our eyes, we remove a material obstacle, the eyelids, so that afterwards we may receive the rays of light that inform us of distant things.

Of course, *Bildung* may effect material changes in us, since we are material beings. But these changes should not be regarded as a constructive process in which something is built up, but rather as a process of taking away, shaping, carving, removing. Since the way in which *Bildung* takes place has to do with our biological make-up, our 'first nature', this make-up defines the starting point for *Bildung* in us. In this sense it might be said that *Bildung* is the realization of our natural capacities.

However, this does not mean that *Bildung* can only happen with us. Suppose that there were 'intelligent' Martians with a biological make-up very different from ours. Should we rule out a priori the possibility that their eyes might be opened to the space of reason? I do not think so. Rather, only their *Bildungsgang* (their way of *Bildung*) would be different.

While *Bildung* turns out to be a removal of obstacles that enables us to gain access to the space of reasons, different obstacles are removed in different beings. This makes clear that the access which *Bildung* affords us is itself not a biological or physical connection; our connection to the space of reasons is not 'natural' in the sense that it might be adequately described in terms of biology or physics. Nevertheless, we are connected. And this connection is not occult: we are just so well acquainted with it. The space of reasons can be reached by means of that capacity of thinking which is not found in mere animals (*nous*) but which we simply have, provided that we have a decent Bildung. In this sense, participation (*methexis*) in the space of reasons is 'just natural'. What could be more platonist!

Unforunately, McDowell does not admit that he is a thoroughgoing platonist, on account of the residual effects of old-fashioned methodology that do not cohere with the rest of his picture. It is evident when he writes about a need to 'defuse the fear of supernaturalism' (*MW* 84), where 'supernaturalism' obviously means 'reference to some kind of occult power', of which he seems to be afraid. (It is unclear what sense of 'nature' enters into the term 'supernaturalism', but this is not our concern here.)

McDowell gives no criterion of occultness. However, what counts as occult depends on the notion of explanation one has. A regularity which a thoroughly empiricist scientist might reproduce a thousand times and predict with perfect accuracy might count as occult for a metaphysician who will not accept any explanation that falls short of the innermost working of things. (Theoretical models of physics are somewhere in between.)

Since McDowell wants to justify the existence of the natural sciences, one might think that he means by an 'occult' power a power that cannot be adequately described in terms of biology or physics. However, this is nothing for McDowell the platonist to be afraid of; what is occult for the natural scientist is just natural for the platonist.

On the other hand, McDowell should not give the natural scientist

too much hope of being very useful for the exploration of the space of reasons. Natural scientists may do useful and interesting work, but not necessarily such work as the platonist would be interested in. Socrates explains in the Phaedo (96e-97b) why he stopped studying physics: physics might tell us a lot about the process of chopping up a piece of matter, but it does not explain why we call the result two pieces of matter.

Thus the platonist.

3. The scientifically-minded anti-platonist's claim

And here is what the scientifically-minded anti-platonist might say:

McDowell is one of us. His talk of a space of reasons is purely metaphorical: there are not really two separate spaces, one of reasons and one of causes. Also, reasons are within the reach of the natural sciences. Otherwise in order to explain access to the space of reasons, one would need to invoke a completely occult power: i.e. a power for which there is no scientific explanation. Now certainly McDowell does not want to do this (cf. *MW* 84). He is afraid of 'supernaturalism'. So he must think that *Bildung* is a process that can be studied by natural scientists from the field of biology (in a wide sense), i.e., by educational psychologists. What he calls 'bald naturalism' seems to be deterministic materialism, a position that natural scientists have long since overcome and that is not essential to modern natural science, which is defined more by method than by metaphysics.

Thus the natural scientist.

4. The question

So the question arises: does McDowell have a notion of explanation that enables him to avoid being drawn to either side?

Self-Criticism as a Way of Life

Frauke Annegret Kurbacher and
Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter[1]

1. In 1691, the German philosopher Christian Thomasius published his 'Auszübung der Vernunftlehre, Oder: Kurtze, deutliche und wohlgegründete Handgriffe, wie man in seinen Kopffe aufräumen und sich zu Erforschung der Wahrheit geschickt machen [...] solle'.[2] Several years before, E. W. v. Tschirnhaus had published his renowned 'Medicina mentis'.[3] Both thinkers endorsed a conception of philosophy that McDowell might well find congenial. On their accounts, the aim of philosophical enquiry is not to solve metaphysical puzzles, but to develop a responsible way of thinking that fosters a (morally) good way of life.

There are some differences between these conceptions of philosophical therapy. Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus proposed a fixed set of rules that, as it were, guaranteed a 'healthy' way of thinking, in order to promote a more or less Cartesian ideal of rationality. In contrast, Thomasius believed that every individual must discover for herself how she can achieve a balanced attitude towards traditional ways of life and thought: a pragmatic approach to philosophical questions that takes the moral dimension of answers into account as well.

According to Thomasius, the first thing that must be done in this process of 'self-enlightenment' is to determine what parts of tradition are badly argued for, rely for their validity only on the opinions of authorities, etc.. Enlightenment for Thomasius consists in 'Selbstdenken', an autonomous critical activity that he contrasted with reliance on prejudice. 'Derowegen sol dieses die I. Lection seyn, Urtheile nicht von andern Schrifften oder Meinungen, wenn du noch nicht von deinen eigenen urtheilen kanst, das ist, wenn du die Geschickligkeit der Wahrheit selbst nachzudenken noch nicht besitzest, und in deinem Kopffe noch nicht auffgeräumet hast. Denn wie willstu von andern urtheilen, wenn

[1]The authors wish to thank Adriane Rickel for her assistance in the preparation of this paper.
[2]Halle 1691, repr. in: Ausgew. Werke vol. 9, Hildesheim 1998.
[3]Tschirnhaus, 1687.

du selbst noch keinen Grund hast nach dem man urtheilen soll ja wenn du selbst eigentlich davon zu reden noch kein Judicium hast, sondern von anderer Autorität dependirest, und dich in deinen eigenen Dingen noch praecipitirest.' (Thomasius 1691, 236) According to Thomasius, all cognitive activity requires 'aufräumen', whereby one orders and structures one's opinions and decides about their validity. In this first stage of German Enlightenment, two sorts of prejudice were distinguished: praejudicium praecipitationis, which consists in judgment when the thinker does not have the appropriate data, and praejudicium auctoritatis, which consists in a reliance on authority. Both kinds of prejudice were regarded as mistaken opinions, and contrasted with the knowledge reached by 'Selbstdenken', reasoned and responsible judgments.

In the later German Enlightenment, a different view of prejudice was developed. Johann Georg Walch, a pupil and follower of Thomasius, is said to have developed a theory of prejudices that only recognizes differences of degree between more and less reasonable prejudices.[4] Georg Friedrich Meier, the author of the Logic textbooks used by Kant in his courses, is another important figure in this movement. Although he acknowledges the duty of every learned person to discover the truth by 'Selbstdenken', he nevertheless accepts the inevitability of some of our prejudices, since at any given moment, we cannot submit all our knowledge to the sort of criticism required by 'Selbstdenken' (cf. Meier 1997, 239f.).

Kant summarized these historical developments in a theory of prejudice that followed Thomasius in focusing on self-criticism. Kant introduces a distinction between 'Vorurteil', or prejudice narrowly defined (following Thomasius) and the 'vorläufiges Urteil', or preliminary judgment. Preliminary judgments are crucial to science and cognitive life in general.[5] In the context of McDowell's philosophical enterprise, three aspects of the theory presented in the Logic lectures are especially important.

a) Preliminary judgments are indispensable because they set the starting point of any cognitive enterprise. 'Es sind die vorläufigen Ur-

[4]Such an interpretation has been put forward by Gadamer. Cf. Gadamer 1960, 254ff – McDowell himself adopts this stance, cf. *MW*, 81. Yet, Schneiders holds (Schneiders 1983, 21) that Gadamer's reading is unfounded.

[5]So Gadamer might perhaps have more appropriately looked to Kant instead of Walch in developing his account of positive prejudices.

theile sehr nöthig und eine besondere Stärke des Genies zeigt der, der aus wenigen Datis viel schlüssen kann. Ehe etwas zum Gegenstande der Untersuchung vorgenommen wird, muß jeder was vorläufig urtheilen.' (Kant 1966, 425)

b) Preliminary judgments are required for creativity: only by daring to entertain risky thoughts can we hope to find out something that we did not know before. But such a 'wild' way of thinking requires the standing readiness to submit one's thinking to (self-)criticism. 'Es hat nie einen Erfinder in der Welt gegeben, und ist keiner gewesen, der etwas erfand, der nicht zu gleicher Zeit ein Vorläuftiges Urtheil von seiner Erfindung, und der erfundenen Sache sollte gefället haben. Er war von der Sache nicht gewiß, sonderen das Urtheil bahnete ihm den Weg zu versuchen, und zu Experimentiren.' (Kant 1966, 162)

c) Prejudices in the narrow sense are not only bad because they tend to be false, but are dangerous because we acquire them only through the misuse of reason. The Logik Pölitz emphasizes this point in its analysis of the praejudicium auctoritatis: 'Man könnte beim Vorurteil der Nachahmung den activen und paßiven Gebrauch unserer Vernunft unterscheiden, denn Vorurteil aus Nachahmung ist nichts anderes als der Hang zum paßiven Gebrauch unserer Vernunft.'(Kant 1966, 548) Reason, for Kant, is the paradigmatically spontaneous exercise of our cognitive capacities. When we trust in authorities in the formation of our beliefs, we use our reason passively – primarily because of our laziness and cowardice.[6] This is why Kant insists: 'Sapere aude! Habe Muth dich deines *eigenen* Verstandes zu bedienen!' (ibid.).

2. In light of this historical background, we take McDowell to be located in the tradition of Enlightenment qua self-criticism and to be promoting it in late-20th-century post-analytical philosophy. We shall elucidate this thesis by examining McDowell's conception of (self)-criticism, which we take to be crucial to his project of escaping from the dilemma of coherentism and the 'Myth of the Given'. Strikingly, McDowell only devotes scattered remarks to this topic. In what follows, we shall propose a systematic framework for understanding these remarks and then raise some questions about the account of self-criti-

[6]Cf. Kant's famous paper on Englightenment, 'Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung' in: Kant 1923, 36: 'Faulheit und Feigheit sind die Ursachen, warum ein so großer Theil der Menschen, nachdem sie die Natur längst von fremder Leitung frei gesprochen [. . .], dennoch zeitlebens unmündig bleiben; [. . .]'

cism derived from these writings. According to McDowell, 'epistemic facts' (facts concerning intentionality and knowledge) are irreducible to 'natural facts' (facts concerning the 'realm of law' explored by the natural sciences). 'Epistemic facts' constitute a sui generis sphere, which Sellars calls the 'logical space of reasons'. According to both Sellars and McDowell, the intentionality of mental states or episodes depends on their being placed in a normative context (cf. *MW* xi.): there is no content without norms. McDowell uses this 'master-thought' of Sellars' to analyze the human activity of placing facts in the space of reasons, the activity of judging. According to McDowell, judgment is the paradigmatic exercise of our spontaneity. It is spontaneous, or free, primarily insofar as it is answerable to criticism (cf. McDowell 1998, 433f.). (Self-)criticism thus seems to be a 'condition of the possibility' of spontaneity.

3. In fact, according to McDowell, not only judging, but thinking in general is answerable to (self-)criticism: 'Active empirical thinking takes place under a standing obligation to reflect about the credentials of the putatively rational linkages that govern it.' (*MW* 12) Interestingly, although in Mind and World the primary notion of criticism is that of self-criticism, in the 'Woodbridge Lectures', criticism by others comes in for more attention. This may reflect the fact that the 'Woodbridge Lectures' emphasize the social aspect of making claims in the space of reasons. In any event, the ideas that in thinking and judging we are obliged to engage in self-criticism and that we must answer to the criticism of others are central to McDowell's line of thought.

4. Consider the following example: James sees and hence believes that there is a chair in front of him. According to McDowell, seeing a chair consists in a senso-conceptual episode, the conceptually structured perception of a chair. Insofar as it is conceptually structured, this episode may justify a belief. Now the intentionality of James' belief, that is, its being directed to a chair, is supposed to depend on the fact that seeing a chair can be put into a normative context. But what sort of context might that be? Is there a (morally) good and a (morally) bad way of believing that there is a chair in front of one? Certainly not. Rather, judgments about chairs are subject to certain cognitive standards, some of which they share with judgments about tables or cows, but some of which are peculiar to judgments about chairs. For example, something may be considered a chair only if it is meant to be sat on, if it

looks a particular way, has at least three legs, etc.. Whether James' judgment 'There is a chair' is correct or incorrect, justified or unjustified, depends on whether these standards are met. Let us call this relevance of norms to the factual correctness of judgments, the factual use of cognitive norms. Now, let us suppose that James is asked (or asks himself): 'Are you sure that is a chair?' There are many possible reasons for asking this question: Maybe the chair is quite far away, or maybe the chair is in the dark and so cannot be easily identified. Maybe James is a visitor in a foreign culture, and unsure whether the artifact he has encountered is used as a chair or as a low table or maybe even in a religious service (in which case it may even be taboo to sit on these objects or use them as tables).

5. It should be clear that there is a difference between the first and second sort of questions: the first sort of question is about the proper application of a given concept; the second sort of question is about what concept is properly applied. A further clarification needs to be made with respect to the second sort of question. When one asks whether certain given cognitive standards may be met in a particular situation (whether it is possible to see, or find out in some other way, whether something conforms to our concept of a chair), no question is raised about the cognitive standards themselves. When one asks such a question, one uses norms factually. But one may also raise questions about the very norms themselves. One may well ask, for example in a foreign culture, whether the very concept of a chair is even applicable. A norm of some kind is implicit in this question as well. It might be a warning against cultural relativity: 'Do not believe that things abroad are necessarily the way they are at home'. Such norms require us to distance ourselves somewhat from our usual conceptual scheme (as it is constituted by factually used cognitive norms). Let us call this use of norms the reflected use of cognitive norms. (We distinguish between two kinds of use of norms, rather than two kinds of norms, because it might be possible for the same norm to be used in both ways.)

6. If there are indeed two ways of using cognitive norms, there must be two ways of criticizing a cognitive activity such as judging. It may either be criticized without questioning the validity of the cognitive norms employed in the judgment or it may be criticized precisely by questioning the applicability of the cognitive norms that were employed. Accordingly, the first way of critique may be called 'factual cri-

tique', the second one 'reflective critique'. (To be sure, this distinction is an idealization, since in our cognitive practice both uses may be combined.) McDowell seems to overlook this distinction when he remarks that 'the bare idea of 'Bildung' [. . .] leaves no genuine questions about norms, apart from those that we address in reflective thinking about specific norms, an activity that is not particularly philosophical.' (*MW* 95) We believe that this is the case when one reflects on factual norms. However, the nature and adequacy of the norms that govern such reflection certainly is a philosophical topic. McDowell himself addresses it in the context of his 'hermeneutic' account of linguistic understanding ('fusion of horizons'). This part of his theory, it seems to us, presupposes the difference between factual and reflective use of epistemic norms and even stakes out a position with respect to it.

7. Does McDowell's theory of judgment require only factual criticism or does it also require reflective criticism? Would it be sufficient to reflect on the credentials of our knowledge claims without raising doubts concerning the validity of the standards themselves? One might well imagine a traditional society that allows questions about whether things are really as people believe, that is, factual questions, but is unwilling to accommodate new experience by changing its conceptual repertoire. Would McDowell consider this sort of society rational? Certainly not. 'Part of the point of the idea that the understanding is a faculty of spontaneity – that conceptual capacities are capacities whose exercise is in the domain of responsible freedom – is that the network, as an individual thinker finds it governing her thinking, is not sacrosanct.' (*MW* 12) The criticism of epistemic standards is thus central to McDowell's conception of (self-)criticism. So criticism cannot be exclusively concerned with the question of whether certain given standards are met, but must also be concerned with the very standards themselves: 'Of course the fact that a thought passes muster so far, in reflective examination of a way of thinking from within, does not guarantee that it is acceptable. The way of thinking, including its implicit standards for self-scrutiny [our emphasis], may have hitherto unnoticed defects, such as parochialism or reliance on bad prejudice.' (*MW* 81) This is of particular importance because 'our picture of the understanding's equipment could not be what it needs to be, a picture of a system of concepts and conceptions with substantial empirical content, if it were not already part of the picture that the system is the medium

within which one engages in active thought that is rationally responsive to the deliverances of experience.' (*MW* 33f) The fact that our thoughts can have empirical content thus depends on their being open, or 'rationally responsive', to criticism. McDowell maintains that this implies that there may be no end of inquiry. Only if our epistemic practice is at least in principle open-ended can we regard or judgments as spontaneous and free. This insistence on the provisional character of our thinking, on the fact that we may never rest content with a given picture of the world, highlights the element of spontaneity in McDowell's concept of (self)-criticism.

8. But McDowell equally emphasizes the 'givenness' of any reasonable form of (self)-criticism: criticism always presupposes a point of view, a given world-view, that remains largely unquestioned. 'The essential thing is that one can reflect only from the midst of the way of thinking one is reflecting about.' (*MW* 81) This way of thinking is determined by the way of 'Bildung', the form of tradition inherited in the acquisition of second nature. But other factors are important as well in 'making our home' in the 'space of reasons'. '[. . .] being at home in the space of reasons involves not just a collection of propensities to shift one's psychological stance in response to this or that, but the standing potential for a reflective stance at which the question arises whether one ought to find this or that persuasive.' (*MW* 125) 'A collection of propensities to shift one's psychological stance' is not sufficient to locate one in the space of reasons, but it is at least 'involved'. It seems to us that these propensities include not only habitualized forms of rational judgment, but also emotions and affective states. Rational human beings stand under the perpetual obligation to reflect on both their rational and their emotional sides if they are to make a home in the space of reasons. Those who believe that a timeless ideal of rationality is at least in principle attainable by us, forget that we are not merely rational, but also emotional beings. Those, in turn, who reject all forms of rational justification destroy any opportunity for (self-)criticism, because criticism always depends on the give and take of reasons. By emphasizing the non-rational side of human beings, we want to suggest that McDowell's conception of freedom, understood as answerability to criticism, relies on a conception of rationality as an enterprise of finite beings. McDowell stresses that our way into the space of reasons consists in learning a language: '[. . .] a natural language [. . .] serves

as a repository of tradition, a store of historically accumulated wisdom about what is a reason for what. The tradition is subject to reflective modification by each generation that inherits it.' (*MW* 126) We would like to insist that on this picture, the logical space of reasons need not be construed only as a space of logical reasons: our stance in the space of reasons need not be determined by appeal to a formal notion of rationality alone. To be sure, the justifications acceptable in this space must answer to certain formal standards of rationality; at the same time, they also depend on a way of life (partly) shaped by tradition.

9. According to McDowell, both language and the kind of reflective criticism it makes possible (criticism of oneself as well as of others) can be understood only as part of a form of life (habitus). Therefore, we can only bridge the gap between different languages, forms of life, and world-views, through a 'fusion of horizons'. 'When the specific character of her [sc. the other thinker's] thinking comes into view for us, we are not filling in blanks in a pre-existing sideways-on picture of how her thought bears on the world, but coming to share with her a standpoint within a system of concepts, a standpoint from which we can join her in directing a shared attention at the world, without needing to break out through a boundary that encloses the system of concepts.' (*MW* 35f.) McDowell does not explain whether he believes this fusion to be possible under any circumstances whatsoever or whether there may be limits to mutual understanding across language, such as a lack of charity towards one's interlocutor. Might there be people who are able to understand points of view that differ from their own, but nevertheless decide not to?

10. Of course, John McDowell's own philosophical work is not exempted from criticism (as this collection of papers attests). We shall conclude by reviewing the determining factors that enabled John McDowell to make a home in the space of reason. He inherited a certain atural language and acquired a deep knowledge of the roots of the occidental philosophical tradition as well as the sense that something was going profoundly wrong in contemporary philosophical practice. He defines his philosophical stance at least in part with respect to a dilemma he finds in contemporary (analytical) philosophy, formed by coherentism on one horn, the 'Myth of the Given' on the other. We wonder why this particular dilemma is so important that it determines the location of the home that he makes in the space of philosophical

reason. Is he simply responding to philosophical tradition or are there other, maybe non-philosophical reasons why McDowell believes this problem to be of such exceptional importance? In the language of the 18th century, the question might be put as follows: are skepticism and dogmatism really dangerous?

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Nature or Natures? Notes on the Concept of Second Nature in John McDowell's *Mind and World*

Christoph Jedan

1. The concept of second nature plays a key role in *Mind and World*. In what follows, I want to examine this concept. This examination consists of three parts. First, I give a rough sketch of the argumentative framework within which McDowell develops his conception of second nature. Second, I elucidate the Aristotelian background of this concept. I conclude by drawing on the Aristotelian theory to ask whether McDowell's own concept of second nature can successfully mediate between coherentism and rampant platonism.

McDowell sets out to diagnose some 'characteristic anxieties [...] that centre [...] on the relation between mind and world' (*MW* xi) by examining a philosophical illness that – at first sight – seems to allow us just two highly problematic and unconvincing options: an appeal to the 'Myth of the Given' or a withdrawal into coherentism. In *Mind and World*, McDowell tries to provide us with a cure by drawing an alternative picture of the relation between mind and world that allows us to avoid the difficulties of these options. While these apparent alternatives, the Myth of the Given and coherentism, share the common assumption that human spontaneity must be regarded as making a contribution to experience distinct from receptivity, McDowell insists that we should 'conceive experiences as states or occurrences in which capacities that belong to spontaneity are in play in actualizations of receptivity' (*MW* 66). This entails that '[a]t least with "outer experience", conceptual content is already borne by impressions that independent reality makes on one's senses' (*MW* 67). In this way, McDowell hopes not only to avoid coherentism's frictionless spinning in the void, but also to undermine the very idea of ultimate grounds implied by the Myth of the Given. In order to justify this approach, McDowell needs to specify the relation of spontaneity to nature so that he may avoid the extremes of 'bald naturalism' and 'rampant platonism'. McDowell believes that bald naturalism's attempt 'to domesticate conceptual capacities within nature conceived as the realm of law' (*MW* 73) is unconvincing, and

claims that 'the contrast of logical spaces' which a bald naturalism seeks to mitigate is in fact genuine (cf. *MW* 73). McDowell also disapproves of 'rampant platonism', claiming that

> we fall into rampant platonism if we take it that the structure of the space of reasons is *sui generis*, but leave in place the equation of nature with the realm of law. That makes our capacity to respond to reasons look like an occult power, something extra to our being the kind of animals we are, which is our situation in nature. (*MW* 83)

McDowell deploys the concept of second nature in order to give an account of the relation between spontaneity and nature that cannot be provided by the alternative positions. McDowell conceives of spontaneity as a natural capacity:

> Exercises of spontaneity belong to our mode of living. And our mode of living is our way of actualizing ourselves as animals. So we can rephrase the thought by saying: exercises of spontaneity belong to our way of actualizing ourselves as animals. (*MW* 78)

According to McDowell, this conception of spontaneity can avoid the problems faced by rampant platonism and bald naturalism (cf. e. g. *MW* 78).

2. McDowell derives his conception of second nature from Aristotle's ethics, and while he does admit that the term itself may not be found in Aristotle's works, he is confident that some basis for this theory may be found in those works. McDowell might even hold that Aristotle could have formulated this conception of second nature, had he not been 'innocent of the very idea that nature is the realm of law and therefore not the home of meaning' (*MW* 109). According to McDowell's Aristotle, '[t]he ethical is a domain of rational requirements, which are there in any case, whether or not we are responsive to them. We are alerted to these demands by acquiring appropriate conceptual capacities. When a decent upbringing initiates us into the relevant way of thinking, our eyes are opened to the very existence of this tract of the space of reasons. Thereafter our appreciation of its detailed layout is indefinitely subject to refinement, in reflective scrutiny of our ethical thinking.' (*MW* 82) The 'resulting habits of thought and action' which are built up by education are 'second nature' to human beings. Therefore they cannot 'float free of potentialities that belong to a normal human organism' (*MW* 84). McDowell terms this position 'relaxed naturalism' (*MW* 89), 'naturalism of second nature', and 'naturalized platonism' (*MW* 91). Given the importance of Aristotle to

McDowell's account, I want to take a closer look at the texts of Aristotle themselves. We learn in a footnote (*MW* 84, note 16) that McDowell derives the inspiration for his conception of second nature from the second book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*EN*). The subject of this book is the acquisition of virtues. In the first chapter, Aristotle explains that we acquire virtues by a process of habituation that develops our nature. The crucial lines read as follows: 'Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues (ἀρεταί) arise in us, rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.'[1] So virtues are a kind of habituation of our nature: Aristotle tells us again and again that they are fixed patterns of decision-making (ἕξεις), habits so deeply rooted that we cannot put them aside at will. They are truly a kind of 'second nature'. However, it seems that certain features of Aristotle's conception of second nature – if I may use the term – might well raise some difficulties for McDowell's account. Let us consider three of these characteristics here: First, virtue, from Aristotle's point of view, is the faculty for finding a mean between good and bad extremes. But the mean to be found is a mean relative to an individual person, situation etc., not a 'general' mean for mankind.[2] So Aristotle's notion of virtue allows for different people to live different good lives, and virtue is in fact something individual for Aristotle. Second, we should not consider one virtue in isolation. We all need a number of virtues in order to lead a good life. And certainly the claims of different virtues may conflict. Consequently, we cannot expect to be able to single out any one way to settle the claims of conflicting life patterns. Aristotle is far from denying this, for he allows for different life patterns (βίοι) whose elements have to be combined. While Aristotle does believe that there is a hierarchy of life patterns, because he believes that there are teleological structures in nature, he nevertheless believes that it is necessary to combine aspects of these life patterns to arrive at a conception of a good life.[3] Thirdly, we must remember that Aristotle characterizes both virtues and vices as habituated fixed patterns of decision-making.[4] From Aristotle's point

[1] *EN* II 1, 1103a23–26; the Revised Oxford Translation was quoted with a minor change (= Barnes 1984, 1743).

[2] This becomes obvious when Aristotle exemplifies finding the mean by finding an adequate diet for an individual athlete (cf. *EN* II 5, 1106a36–b4 [= Barnes 1984, 1747]).

[3] Cf. *EN* X 6 ff. (= Barnes 1984, 1859 ff.): Aristotle praises contemplative life but is fully aware of the fact that the human condition necessitates combining contemplation with elements of other life patterns.

[4] Cf. e.g. *EN* V 1, 1129a6–10 (= Barnes 1984, 1781).

of view, one has a second nature when one is sunk in vice. It seems that an Aristotelian concept of second nature might well allow for an irreducible *plurality* of 'second natures': Aristotle's ethics seems to suggest that there might be not only one second nature or one design of human rationality. The crucial question is whether McDowell's conception of second nature would lose some of its force if we could not assume that there was just one human second nature.

3. Our examination of Aristotle seems to reveal a more flexible account of second nature than McDowell seems willing to admit. It seems that while there are irreducible requirements to which we react in developing second natures, these might well differ in relation to the contexts in which we find ourselves. And if we are to avoid a relapse into Aristotle's innocence we must admit at least that we have no means of determining whether one single form of life is the best of all possible second natures. The point is not only relevant to moral philosophy, but has consequences for the central argument of *Mind and World*. Even if we do concede that there are 'real demands of reason' human beings can learn to be sensitive to (cf. *MW* 82), we should be aware that quite different 'decent upbringings' and quite different 'second natures' might enable us to meet those requirements. If we do not want to adopt a thoroughly teleological picture of the world, we may not have any criterion for choosing between second natures, provided they fulfil certain minimal basic criteria. But then it is difficult to see how we could possibly exclude another coherentism, provided that certain fundamental needs – which, for an Aristotelian, would include enjoying amiable friends, a dear partner, decent food, and sufficient resources – are satisfied. It seems that quite different ontologies and epistemologies may be compatible with the satisfaction of these needs. For example, it certainly would make no difference whether one adhered to, say, an Aristotelian conception of substances or a Berkeleyan idealism. Since quite different theories can meet these fundamental needs, the possibility of a plurality of second natures leaves us without a criterion for choosing between ontologies or epistemologies that satisfy those requirement. Perhaps the spectre of a frictionless spinning in a void remains to be exorcized.

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Moral Facts, Values, and World Views

Johannes Klaus Kipf and Frank Köhler

1. Introduction

John McDowell figures in recent publications as a prominent proponent of moral realism, a position according to which moral statements can (sometimes) be true.[1] Some philosophers who may be called 'moral realists' even hold that there are such things as moral facts, facts that verify or falsify moral statements.[2] In light of his ontological views, however, it seems likely that McDowell would tend to the latter, more robust version of moral realism.

McDowell would likely subscribe to the following statements:[3]

(1) If one thinks truly that *p*, then *p*.

(2) The world consists of facts.

A proponent of moral realism, either in the weaker or the stronger sense, would hold that it is possible to have true thoughts about moral questions and would therefore accept (3) as an instantiation of (1):

(3) If one thinks truly that it is morally good to f, then it is the case that it is morally good to f.

Finally, anyone who holds both (3) and (2) would certainly accept (4):

(4) The world consists of facts, including moral facts.

So McDowell should be willing to defend even the stronger version of moral realism.

[1] Cf. Smith 1993; for the German discussion Schaber 1997.

[2] A lucid discussion of the different (ontological, psychological, epistemological, and logical/conceptual) aspects of the debate over moral realism is to be found in Hare 1985. Hare himself is unhappy with the distinction between 'moral realism' and 'anti-realism' and proposes to replace it with a distinction between 'descriptivism' and 'non-descriptivism'. Cf. now Hare 1997, esp. 42, 47f.

[3] Cf. above the paper of Christian Suhm, Philip Wagemann, and Florian Wessels and McDowell's response to it.

Although *Mind and World* deals primarily with epistemological questions, there are several passages in the text that seem to bear on moral realism. Moreover, in a number of papers McDowell explicitly treats questions of the semantic analysis of moral statements and the existence of moral facts.[4] One of these papers, 'Are Moral Requirements Hypothetical Imperatives?' (McDowell 1978), although published sixteen years before *Mind and World*, may be read as a working-out of those passages of *Mind and World* (esp. in Lecture IV) that explicitly treat or suggest treatments of the truth-aptness of moral statements, the existence of moral facts and other questions of moral epistemology and meta-ethics.[5]

A full discussion of McDowell's arguments for a realistic view of moral demands lies far outside the scope of this paper; instead, we want to raise some questions that we have regarding his position and to confront him with two cases that might be problematic for a proponent of a robust version of moral realism. We hope to provoke him to give a more detailed response to certain central questions of moral realism than he has hitherto given.

First we want to present those passages of *Mind and World* that suggest that McDowell is a proponent of moral realism, and also to present some remarks drawn from McDowell's papers on moral philosophy that seem to be interconnected with the main thesis of *Mind and World*.

2. Meta-Ethical Implications and Statements in *Mind and World*

In chapter IV of *Mind and World*, John McDowell suggests an account of what may be called 'moral facts'. The main features of this account may be summarized as follows:

(1) Moral facts exist independently of our awareness of them.[6]

[4] See McDowell 1979, McDowell 1998a and McDowell 1998b.

[5] In his most recent contribution to questions of moral theory (*Mind and World*), McDowell speaks only of the 'rhetoric of ethical realism' (*MW* 192). This raises the question whether he considers the debate about truth in ethics to be a mere quarrel over words, or whether he thinks that a substantial philosophical problem lies behind the 'rhetoric of ethical realism'.

[6] Cf. 'The picture is that ethics involves requirements of reason that are there whether we know it or not.' (*MW* 79) and 'The ethical is a domain of rational requirements, which

(2) The ethical components of these facts are genuine features of them. They do not simply emerge through a philosophical reconstruction.[7]

(3) These facts are conceived by appropriate conceptual capacities. The capacities are shaped according to the specific cultural setting and subject to revision by the person who conceives them.[8]

For the moment, we wish to set aside any difficulties connected with (3) and concentrate on some difficulties regarding the objectivity of moral facts. These difficulties emerge when we consider a situation where the advocates of two different value-systems A and B meet. First we wonder if these advocates would conceive the same moral fact at all. Since no explicit answer is to be found in McDowell's writings, we would like to suggest two answers that may be open to him: (1) McDowell states that a moral person and a non-moral person conceive the same situation in different ways.[9] (2) The perception of moral facts presupposes the initiation into a given cultural and moral practice. This amounts to different facts for members of different cultures.

There seem to be two ways of putting McDowell's position: (a) Given a situation that includes moral requirements there is only one moral fact, but this fact is conceived in different ways by members of different cultures. (b) Given this situation there is one fact conceived by a member of A and one fact conceived by a member of B. These two possibilities to formulate McDowell's position are not unproblematic. What if A and B adhere to incompatible values? Consider the following

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are there in any case, whether or not we are responsive to them.' (*MW* 82) McDowell refers to Aristotle in these passages, but since he uses Aristotelian ethics as a model for his own conception of nature and in other publications treats ethical problems in terms of Aristotelian ethics, this interpretation may be justified.

[7]Cf. 'In Aristotle's conception, the thought that the demands of ethics are real is not a projection from, or construction out of, facts that could be in view independently of the viewer's participation in ethical life and thought, so that they would be available to a sideways-on investigation of how ethical life and thought are related to the natural context in which they take place.' (*MW* 83)

[8]Cf. 'We are alerted to these demands [of the ethical, F.K.] by acquiring appropriate conceptual capacities.' (*MW* 82) And: 'Like any thinking, ethical thinking is under a standing obligation to reflect about and criticize the standards by which, at any time, it takes itself to be governed.' (*MW* 81) With respect to the shaping of the conceptual capacities, cf. the role of language as a store of tradition (*MW* 126).

[9]In McDowell 1978, 16ff.

example: it is well known that in India, there is, or at least used to be, a practice of burning widows together with the bodies of their deceased husbands. It is probably less well known that at least some of those widows chose to die in this way.[10] Now suppose that a widow wants to be burnt and a British officer wants to prevent her from being burnt. According to her values it is impossible for her to keep on living after the death of her husband; the officer adheres to a different set of values, and according to them he has to interfere. So here we have one situation (a burning to come), two advocates (supposed to be virtuous according to the standards of their communities) and their different conceptions of what it is right to do. As long as we remain in one value-system, there is no problem about following the dictates of virtue. But given the set-up described above, we have two possible explanations depending on whether one prefers explanation (a) or (b): (a) If we assume that there is only one moral fact, at least one person involved in the example above must perceive this fact wrongly. Which one? According to their value-systems both are right. Or should we assume instead that there can be two contradictory although equally justified perceptions of one fact? And if there is only one true perception then there should be, of course, criteria for deciding which (if either) is the right perception and furthermore there should be a possibility for both parties to have the right perception. (b) If we assume that there are two different facts, the problem remains. Can two different facts contradict each other? If not, one of these facts is no fact at all. So which one? And since an initiation into a cultural setting is necessary for perceiving facts, are members of some cultures barred from perceiving them? If so, why? Different value-systems do exist, so we are forced to get along with their advocates. But how? Reference to (one or more) moral facts won't help, for both sides will claim that their judgements reflect them and there seems to be no possibility of settling the matter. The objection that two levels of examination (the ethical and a meta-ethical) have been confused here does not apply to our formulation of the problem. This division may be appropriate for theoretical considerations, but not (at least not always) for practical ends.

[10] For the Indian custom of burning widows cf. Hawley 1994 and the recension by Menski (Menski 1998).

3. Further Problems for Moral Realism

There remain several further questions unanswered in the framework of McDowell's moral realism, and new ones arise, if we consider some statements in his papers on moral philosophy. The idea that concepts and intuitions are indissolubly connected and consequently that perception is always conceptually structured might well be termed one of the central ideas, if not the main thesis of *Mind and World*.[11] Similarly McDowell criticizes in his contributions to moral theory, in the most analogous way to *Mind and World* in McDowell 1978, the non-cognitivist (cf. McDowell 1979, 345), anti-realist or non-descriptivist picture about practical, prudential reasoning and moral thinking, according to which a requirement of practical wisdom can be analysed into one belief or several beliefs about the world and an independent desire that is responsible for the motivational character of prudential requirement. On this picture, in moral thinking, there must be, besides the moral thinker's conception of reality, i.e. a cognitive state of mind, an independent non-cognitive, or orectic (cf. Gr. *orexis* 'desire') state, e.g., the wish to be a moral person or to respect and take into consideration other persons' interests. On McDowell's account, we should instead conceive of moral requirements as the product of 'the virtuous person's distinctive way of viewing particular situations' (McDowell 1979, 346), 'explicable by interaction between knowledge of how to live and particular knowledge about the situation at hand' (McDowell 1979, 344), and thus, fully cognitive: moral or prudential *knowledge*. According to this picture, desires (in practical wisdom or moral behaviour) are not substantial but only consequential to a specific world-view of the moral (or prudent) person,[12] i.e. his conception of the world. Our first question concerns this picture in general: Suppose person A sees person B in serious trouble and tries to help him. Person C sees the same situation but does not help because he is happy that A is in trouble. Should we really say that A and C see B's situation differently although both perceive that he is in trouble? Can we avoid saying that C lacks the *desire* to help deriving from another desire, ultimately perhaps, the

[11] Cf. *MW* 3f. citing Kant, KrV A 51/B 75: 'Thoughts without content are empty.' 'Intuitions without concepts are blind.'

[12] Cf. McDowell 1978, 17: 'The desire is ascribable to the prudent person simply in recognition of the fact that his conception of the likely effects of his action on his own future by itself casts a favourable light on his acting as he does.'

desire to understand oneself and to be accepted by others as a moral person? A second question arises with respect to the sketch of the development of ethical judgement given in McDowell 1998b.[13] After an (illuminating) reconstruction of the development of sensitivity to ethical questions, by developing virtue as a 'second nature' as opposed to biological 'first nature' (cf. McDowell 1998b, 188f.), McDowell indicates how moral thinking can (partly) free itself from uncritical acceptance of the standards acquired by moral upbringing through critical reflection.[14] But these statements remain mere affirmations, since there is no room to conceive of critical reflection in an analysis that presents moral requirements as categorical dictates of reason: a conflict between incompatible moral requirements cannot easily be accommodated on a view that presents moral requirements as silencing and not outweighing (cf. McDowell 1978, 26) all other demands. How can a person still be sure that he acts morally, or that he is still virtuous, especially if he has changed his mind about what he should do? McDowell's conception only accounts for the difference between immoral and moral actions. He asserts that people 'come unstuck from a traditional ethical outlook' (McDowell 1998b, 190). But his model, in particular in connection with the metaphors and comparisons used, leaves no room to conceive of a change in moral 'knowledge'.[15] How is it possible that someone who has followed moral requirements as 'dictates of virtue' (McDowell 1998b, 188f.), as 'reason's dictates' (McDowell 1998b, 197), might come to have a different conception of good and evil? Persons, once in the consciousness of being in 'duty's army as conscripts, not volunteers' (McDowell 1998b, 197), would have to feel like deserters or traitors before being able to be 'open to reflective questioning' (McDowell 1998b, 188). The picture might hold for converts of a restrictive religious community, but it seems much too strong to be an appropriate model for

[13] Again, this sketch of the development of ethical judgement is developed by means of an analogy with the transformation of tradition (*MW* 186f.) and the openness of our concept of reality by reference to the implications of the German concept of *Bildung* (*MW* 123–126).

[14] Cf. e.g. McDowell 1998b, 188: 'If the second nature one has acquired is virtue, the rationality of virtue simply is not in suspense, though it is always open to reflective questioning.'

[15] Needless to say, a moral anti-realist (or non-descriptivist) can deal with this problem easily, since the change is one in moral *attitude*, that might change with growing age, experience, and the like.

our ethical reasoning.[16] Dictates, especially in an army, are *never* 'open to reflective questioning' (McDowell 1998b, 188). So how can a moral realist account for conflicts of values and devlopments in moral judgements? And what can he object to someone who holds that desires irreducibly figure in an account of moral reasoning?

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[16] In fact, McDowell invokes religious conversion (already used by Plato) as an analogy for becoming virtuous in McDowell 1978, 347. But we have in mind negative conversion away from a religion or religious community as an analogy for the change from uncritical to critical acceptance of traditional moral requirements.

Secondary Qualities or Second Nature – which Reality for Values?

Christoph Halbig, Andreas Hansberger and Michael Quante

In 'Values and Secondary Qualities' John McDowell defends a version of moral realism based on a perceptual model of ethics in order to explain how it is that 'ordinary evaluative thought presents itself as a matter of sensitivity to aspects of the world' (McDowell 1997, 201). McDowell argues that his version of moral realism does not rest on an unacceptable moral ontology, and elaborates an extended analogy between moral qualities and secondary qualities in order to support his account of moral experience. Moreover, in this paper there is a suggestion of the identity theory of truth (McDowell 1997, 204) and – in McDowell's criticism of Mackie – a glimpse of a non-representational conception of intentionality (McDowell 1997, 204ff.).

In *Mind and World*, McDowell treats the problem of explaining the relation between mind and world so as to allow for the possibility of knowledge of the external world. Although the problem of values or moral realism is not at issue in this work, there are significant continuities between the earlier paper and the more recent work. First, the non-representational theory of intentionality and the identity theory of truth are central parts of McDowell's solution to the problem. Second, the dialectical situation presented in it Mind and World resembles that of 'Values and Secondary Qualities': in the former work, it is described as an oscillation between different versions of the 'Myth of the Given' and a 'frictionless' coherentism, while in the latter, the tension is between an understanding of values as primary qualities and projectivism of values. Moreover, McDowell seems to follow a similar strategy in both works: in it Mind and World he seeks to show that a merely causal phenomenon cannot play a justificatory role in epistemology and in 'Values and Secondary Qualities' he maintains that it is impossible that a phenomenologically neutral element of experience can serve to explain phenomenal experience itself (McDowell 1997, 203). There are other significant similarities between the two works: first, the alternatives seem to be versions of subjectivism or coheren-

tism; second, McDowell argues that there is a third option that only appears if certain key philosophical presuppositions – such as representationalism and scientific naturalism – are rejected; finally, McDowell seeks to replace sideways-on pictures of our being in the world, of our practices of ordinary evaluative thought and of intentional attitudes in general with the perspective of the participant who is 'in the game'.

Our discussion consists of two parts. In the first part, we argue that the secondary-quality analogy does not provide a suitable basis for moral realism. In the second part, we ask whether the general framework McDowell offers in *Mind and World* might provide a better starting point for a plausible moral realism. This is not to imply that McDowell himself is committed to some form of moral realism; we merely seek to develop an account of moral realism that might further the project begun in 'Values and Secondary Qualities'.

1. Values as secondary qualities

1.1. McDowell's position

McDowell takes a secondary quality to be 'a property the ascription of which to an object is not adequately understood except as true, if it is true, in virtue of the object's disposition to present a certain sort of perceptual appearance: specifically, an appearance characterizable by using a word for the property itself to say how the object perceptually appears' (McDowell 1997, 202). So we understand the ascription 'This shirt is yellow' to obtain by virtue of the shirt's being such as to look yellow (in certain circumstances). McDowell distinguishes here between the level 'of what property-ascriptions are understood to be true in virtue of' and the level 'of what they are true in virtue of' (ibid.). An analysis of 'being yellow' that did not mention how the object looked would not count as an ascription of the secondary quality 'yellow', for ordinary experience presents secondary qualities as 'properties genuinely possessed by the objects that confront one' (ibid.). McDowell explains the way that objects possess these qualities as follows: 'An object's being such as to look red is independent of its actually looking red to anyone on any particular occasion; so, notwithstanding the conceptual connection between being red and being experienced as red, an experience of something as red can count as a case of being presented with a property that is there anyway – there independently of the experience itself' (ibid.). McDowell

believes that this account of secondary qualities is 'faithful to one key Lockean doctrine, namely the identification of secondary qualities with "powers to produce various sensations in us" ' (ibid.), although he does not accept Locke's idea that the subjectivity of secondary qualities consists in their being 'mere figments of the subjective state that purports to be an experience of it' (McDowell 1997, 203). McDowell believes that secondary qualities are subjective insofar as they cannot be characterised without reference to subjective states (ibid.). McDowell therefore understands secondary qualities to be powers to produce certain subjective states in perceivers of a certain kind in certain circumstances, and believes that it is in virtue of this general power that secondary qualities may be independent of occurrent experience.

1.2. Tensions

In 'Values and Secondary Qualities' McDowell claims that we experience the facts themselves if the experience is veridical (McDowell 1997, 204). So, if I veridically experience the shirt to be yellow, it is a fact that the shirt is yellow. Similarly, if I veridically experience an action to be cruel, it is a fact that the action is cruel. How does this fit with the dispositional analysis of secondary qualities McDowell has offered so far? We think that there are two tensions.

i. First of all, not only do we not experience that the shirt *looks* yellow in these circumstances, we do not experience that the shirt has a power to cause a certain kind of experience in a certain kind of perceiver in certain circumstances. We simply experience that the shirt *is* yellow. This is the fact. We do not derive the idea that the shirt is yellow even if we were not to look at it from the fact that the shirt has a power to look yellow in certain situations; we think that the shirt would be yellow even if we were not to look at it because it is a fact that the shirt is yellow. Thus McDowell's dispositional analysis of secondary qualities does not seem to be faithful to the phenomenological data. Although it is compatible with this data, it is a philosophical analysis and does not therefore seem apt to capture the first-person phenomenology of experience.[1] McDowell's analysis seems to face the following dilemma: either it is meant to capture the phenomenology of experience, in which case it fails, or it is meant as a philosophical explanation

[1] For a similar line of criticism see Dancy 1986.

of this experience, in which case it does not seem to explain why we experience colours or values as in the world. One might diagnose this problem as an instance of a more general tension between philosophical analysis and common sense experience and beliefs; we think that the tension arises from the dispositional analysis of secondary qualities that is – as we argue below – abandoned in *Mind and World*.

ii. A further tension arises from McDowell's use of the Lockean idea that secondary qualities are powers or dispositions in order to explain how colours may be independent of actual experience. According to the identity theory of truth, if one veridically experiences that the shirt is yellow, it is a fact that the shirt is yellow. Now it is essential to the philosophical doctrine of secondary qualities that there is a causal relation between a power of an object and a subjective state caused in the experiencing subject by that power. Yet it is somewhat difficult to understand how it may be a fact that this shirt is yellow, although this fact is analysed in terms of a causal relation between an object and a subjective state in an experiencing subject. This aspect of the dispositional analysis of secondary qualities may lead one to identify colours or values with those primary qualities of objects in virtue of which they can cause the subjective states or with the contents of those states. But this would seem to restart the very oscillation McDowell wanted to stop.

1.3. In summary

We do not believe that McDowell's account of values by appeal to an analogy with this version of a dispositional account of secondary qualities is particularly satisfying. We believe that the dispositional account presupposes the very philosophical framework that McDowell wants to overcome, and therefore cannot provide a satisfactory foundation for moral realism. Nevertheless, we believe that McDowell's insight that properties which are 'not adequately conceivable except in terms of certain subjective states' (McDowell 1997, 203) need not be 'mere figments' (ibid.) of the subjective states that purport to be experiences of those properties, survives the failure of this analysis. Although we do not believe that the secondary- quality analogy supports this idea, we nevertheless agree with the idea itself. In the second part of the paper we shall examine whether the approach that McDowell adopts in *Mind and World* enables him to incorporate this insight in a better ac-

count of moral realism. Before moving on, however, we would like to know whether our line of criticism indeed finds its proper target in McDowell's position.

2. Values as Part of Second Nature

The leading question in *Mind and World* is to explain how empirical knowledge might be possible. McDowell seeks to achieve this end by overcoming the representational theory of the mind, showing that in experience conceptual capacities are operative passively and arguing for a 'relaxed naturalism' (*MW* 89).

2.1. The new framework

There are no representations mediating between the mind and the world. It is the world itself that is thinkable and experienceable. So veridical thought or veridical experience is related to thinkable or experienceable facts. The identity theory of truth essentially says that it is the fact itself which is the content of a true thought or a veridical experience (cf. *MW* 27).

In accordance with his program for showing how empirical knowledge is possible McDowell argues that experiences have conceptual content. To this end he defends the claim that in experience, the very concepts we use actively in judging operate passively. This explains how the thinkable world can restrict our thinking, and it explains how empirical knowledge is possible.

The third element of McDowell's approach, on which we want to focus, is to abandon the thesis of scientific or bald naturalism according to which everything that is accepted as real has to be conceived as properly describable in terms of natural laws. McDowell's relaxed naturalism takes spontaneity, intentionality and reason to be natural capacities of human beings, as part of their second nature. These capacities, which are dependent on some first-nature-apacities, arec ormally actualised in human beings who grow up in a society. They are not natural in the reductive sense of bald naturalism, but they are natural insofar as they are among the normal capacities of human animals. Second nature and the capacities arising from it are part of the way human animals live their lives. In McDowell's relaxed naturalism first and second nature

are accepted as equally real.[2] We may consider aspects of first nature as enabling conditions of second nature, but we need not accept that second nature is reducible to first nature.

2.2. Colours and Values

The following is a rough sketch of McDowell's discussion of colours. McDowell takes colours as his chief example of secondary qualities in 'Values and Secondary Qualities', so we want to examine the discussion of colours in *Mind and World*. Our aim is to determine whether this treatment provides a suitable model for an account of values.

Colours: Although one passage in *Mind and World* is reminiscent of the account of secondary qualities presented in 'Values and Secondary Qualities', it generally follows an altogether different line of argument. The accounts only share the idea that secondary qualities are aspects of things which cannot be understood without 'an understanding of what it is for something to look red' (*MW* 29).

McDowell's account of colours centers on three claims. First, he claims that in experiencing something as red, colour concepts are operative in a passive way. This explains why colours can be analysed as being out there in the world.

Second, although most concepts are 'integrated into a rationally organized network of capacities for active adjustment of one's thinking to the deliverances of experiences' (ibid.), colour concepts are only 'minimally integrated' (*MW* 30). Thus, according to McDowell, colours are not particularly central to our idea of a mind-independent reality. This explains their 'subjectivistic feel'.

Third, McDowell makes clear that we should resist the temptation to take as basic the use of colour concepts in which they are used to describe inner experiences (ibid.). If we were to take this use as basic we might understand colours as mere figments or projections. Indeed, we think that the account of secondary qualities as merely subjective phenomena may well arise from taking this '"inner" role of colour concepts' (*MW* 31) as a self-standing starting point. In *Mind and World* McDowell makes clear that the look-red condition in his account of

[2] As we read *Mind and World* things are not so clear. But we suspect that any asymmetry between first and second nature threatens to reintroduce scientific naturalism. Therefore, we take the symmetry-thesis for granted.

secondary qualities was meant to express the concept of outer experience, not as a special term for inner experiences (cf. *MW* 31, n. 7).

McDowell is thus able to explain why we take colours to be in the world, and to take the phenomenology of perception at face value without giving up the thesis that colour concepts cannot be adequately understood independent of subjective states.

Values: Values are not discussed in *Mind and World*. But it is worth considering whether McDowell's treatment of colour-concepts may be applied to value-concepts in order to develop an attractive moral realism.

The crucial difference between the new and the old accounts is that the phenomenal appearance that colours are out there in the world to be perceived is no longer explained causally by appeal to powers or dispositions.[3] It is instead explained by appeal to the distinction between the passive and the active way that concepts are operative in experience and thought and by appeal to the idea that all conceptual capacities are part of our rationally organized network of conceptual capacities. The latter distinction allows for different degrees of integration and therefore provides a flexible model, while the former can explain how colours are 'out there'. This is important in three respects.

First, concepts of values are better integrated into the 'active business of accommodating one's thinking to the continuing deliverances of experience' (*MW* 30) than colour concepts. Aesthetic, religious or ethical value experiences present values as mind-independent in some strong sense. We take the aspects of the world we grasp by these value-concepts to be essential parts of our world.

Second, the fact that this integration comes in degrees may help to explain differences between different values or kinds of values. This seems to be a much more plausible starting point for understanding our phenomenology of values than can be delivered by causal talk of powers, so it might help explain the difference between the 'raw feeling' impression of colour experiences and the more fine-grained phenomenology of value experiences.

[3]We do not want to claim that any dispositional analysis of secondary qualities will be infected with some remnants of scientific realism. There might well be some such possible account. One might be able to distinguish between different kinds of qualities without appealing to the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. But more importantly, no dispositional analysis that we know of provides a suitable account of phenomenal experience.

Third, the thesis that the same concepts are operative in experience and in judgements can be taken as the first part of a defence of the claim that there is an internal relation between values and intentional or volitional attitudes.

2.3. Towards a better moral realism

We think that replacing the version of moral realism based on the dispositional analysis of secondary qualities by one based on the theoretical framework of *Mind and World* is a step towards a more satisfactory moral realism. Like the old model, the new approach allows us to accept the phenomenology of values, allows us to defend a perceptual model of ethics, and it has the potential to relate 'passive' value experiences to 'active' intentional and volitional attitudes. Its foundation in a relaxed naturalism, motivated by arguments independent of the problem of moral realism, enables us to escape the pressure of the bald or scientific naturalism which remains in the background of the Lockean conception of primary and secondary qualities so crucial to McDowell's earlier account.

This account also avoids some objections that have been raised against the earlier approach. It is no longer possible to criticise the perceptual model of ethics by arguing against the analogy of values and secondary qualities in general (Blackburn 1997). The objection that the phenomenology of value is conceptually more fine-grained than the raw experiences of colours can be dealt with in the way we have suggested above (Wright 1989). And the idea that there could be a unified image of the world in which only primary qualities are included (Schaber 1997) is blocked by the distinction between first and second nature and the acceptance of a relaxed naturalism. The great virtue of the new approach is that it undercuts scientific naturalism, and thus clears room for the development of a moral theory freed from the seductive picture of a disenchanted world.

The overall conclusion of our paper is an optimistic one. Now we would like to ask whether our reading of *Mind and World* as a suitable basis for moral realism is congenial to McDowell. And we would be happy to learn how and whether he plans to develop his metaethics.

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Responses

John McDowell

First, let me express my gratitude to Marcus Willaschek for organizing the lecture and colloquium, and to all the participants for their attention to my work.

1. Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter

Heßbrüggen-Walter conveniently focuses his contribution in the three questions he poses at the end.

First, how do I conceive conceptual capacities? Here he gives the essential point himself. He is right that I do not see conceptual capacities as dispositions automatically triggered into actualization by appropriate stimuli. I see conceptual capacities as capacities of freedom, capacities whose paradigmatic actualizations are under the control of their possessors. That is what is conveyed by saying that those paradigmatic actualizations occur in acts of judgement.

I do not put this forward as a perhaps disputable thesis about some independently identified subject matter – as if we all know anyway what we are talking about when we talk about conceptual capacities, and the question is simply what is true of that agreed topic. The point is rather to fix the topic. For some purposes, in fact, it might be a good thing to use the label 'conceptual capacities' differently, so that it applies also to capacities that are never freely exercised, for instance the discriminative abilities that help determine the behaviour of simple organisms. But I think a certain sort of philosophical puzzlement comes interestingly into focus in the form of the question how there can be capacities of freedom whose exercises have empirical content, and that is just what empirical conceptual capacities are on the conception I work with.

Heßbrüggen-Walter is right that the core of my response to such puzzlements is what he calls the Identity Thesis – the claim that just such capacities are, besides being freely exercised in judgement, also receptively actualized in experience. This brings us into the area of the second question. The concept of receptivity is implicitly causal.

The receptive actualization of conceptual capacities in perceptual experience would have to be caused by environmental circumstances, and Heßbrüggen-Walter asks what theory of causality is in play here. To this I respond, no doubt frustratingly, that I see no need to embrace any particular theory of causality. The concept of something's being caused to happen is perfectly intuitive. We acquire it at our mothers' knees, when we acquire concepts such as those of dropping, breaking, denting, wetting, . . . (the list could go on and on). Why should we suppose we need a theory of what this utterly familiar concept is a concept of? What is supposed to be conceptually problematic about the idea, in particular, of actualizations of cognitive capacities that occur as effects of environmental circumstances?

It may help to remark that I do not take causality to be involved with conceptual capacities only in their receptive actualization. Their paradigmatic actualization, as I said, is not in receptivity but in acts freely undertaken, undertaken in response to reasons. And I follow Davidson's 'Actions, Reasons, and Causes' (1980a) in taking it that explanations in terms of someone's reasons are a species of causal explanations. So I see no opposition between causality and freedom, and there is no question of my exploiting the idea of causality to explain the distinctively receptive mode of actualization of conceptual capacities, as if their other actualizations were beyond the reach of causal understanding. Perhaps making it explicit that the concept of causality does not bear this explanatory burden in my thinking will lessen the inclination to suppose I need a theory of causality.

The third question is whether I welcome the idea of a mediated responsibility for capacities actualized involuntarily. Certainly. It is part of the point of my insistence on the obligation to subject our concepts to reflective scrutiny that, although actualizations of conceptual capacities in experience are not under a subject's control, it can be the case that a subject ought not to have some of the conceptual capacities that are liable to be triggered into operation in that way, and this use of 'ought' surely involves a notion of responsibility. The Jackie C. analogy is not a good fit for the kind of involuntariness that is relevant here, because, although seeing people as villains is no doubt a case of receptivity, it is difficult to conceive beating them up as itself an operation of receptivity, rather than a response (involuntary according to the story) to an operation of receptivity. But Heßbrüggen-Walter does not need anal-

ogy to make his point. Consider someone disillusioned by the Salem witch trials, who used to experience certain women as witches but now chides himself for having had such experiences. This seems to be just what Heßbrüggen-Walter wants. The experiences were not under the person's control, but the self-castigation, which might be quite intelligible, is precisely an acceptance of responsibility for having possessed the conceptual capacity that was involuntarily actualized in those experiences. (Of course there are questions about the appropriateness of attributing responsibility for concepts that are current in a person's culture.)

2. Christian Suhm, Philip Wagemann, Florian Wessels

In a context in which they are crediting me with the identity theory of truth as a thesis, Suhm, Wagemann, and Wessels quote my own words: 'When one thinks truly, what one thinks is what is the case.' Could anyone dispute what those words express? The so-called identity theory of truth is a truism, not a thesis, not a possibly contentious bit of philosophical doctrine.

What point can there be in affirming a truism? Just that keeping it in view helps to prevent unprofitable philosophical anxieties from arising.

Suhm, Wagemann, and Wessels follow Julian Dodd in taking me to be committed to both of two conceptions of facts: first, a 'robust' conception, in which facts are constituted of objects and their properties and relations; and, second, a 'modest' conception, in which facts are Fregean senses, with Fregean senses as their constituents. They diverge from Dodd, so far as this point is concerned, only in that they do not assume, as he does, that this immediately involves me in incoherence. They acknowledge in a footnote (29, n. 2) that only the second of these conceptions of facts is explicit in my work, but they nevertheless suppose I need the first as well.

Why? I think the answer is encapsulated in Dodd's use of the word 'worldly', which Suhm, Wagemann, and Wessels echo. I aim to combine the truism that when one thinks truly, what one thinks is what is the case, the so-called identity theory of truth, with a 'Tractarian' conception of the world as everything that is the case. Dodd thinks this Tractarian conception of the world requires the 'robust' or Russellian conception of facts, not the Fregean conception. He thinks that for facts

to seem capable of being constituents of the world – to seem suitable to count as 'worldly' – they would need to have as their constituents objects and their properties, not Fregean senses. And Suhm, Wagemann, and Wessels apparently follow him here.

I see no justification for this. We can understand the Tractarian pronouncement, 'The world is everything that is the case', as fixing a way in which the concept of the world is to be used. The pronouncement determines a perfectly natural way to conceive the world, even in advance of any inquiry into the content of the idea of something that is the case. But when we go on to look for an anchorage for the idea of something that is the case as it figures in the Tractarian pronouncement, the first thing to do is to affirm our truism, the so-called identity theory of truth. The idea of something that is the case just is the idea of something that it would be true to think, a true thinkable. And no one has genuinely improved on Frege's apparatus for thinking about thinkables. A true thinkable, conceived in Frege's way, is something that is the case, and as such it is itself 'worldly' in the only relevant sense. There is no need for the 'robust' or Russellian conception of facts.

Everything depends here on my claim that the Tractarian conception of the world is natural independently of any specific gloss on the idea of what is the case, so that it retains its naturalness when that idea is spelled out in a Fregean way. Of course this claim would be unacceptable if the resulting Fregean conception of the world could not be satisfactorily aligned with common-sense realism – if, in particular, there were no satisfactory way to see objects as, in some sense, figuring in the world so conceived. The question that arises here is the one that Suhm, Wagemann, and Wessels raise when they inquire whether I can be exonerated from Dodd's charge of incoherence. I think they make the question out to be more difficult than it is, and I think they are wrong to suggest that addressing it requires constructive ontology, unless merely spelling out what I described as Frege's apparatus for thinking about thinkables counts as producing constructive ontology. Since objects figure in the world by figuring in facts, which are true thinkables, the sense in which objects figure in the world, on the Fregean conception, is the sense in which objects figure in thinkables, in Fregean thoughts. And Frege's terminology of Sinn and Bedeutung is precisely suited for giving expression to this idea. We can introduce the terminology of objects figuring in thoughts, and hence in facts, by saying that for an object to

figure in a thought, a thinkable, is for it to be the Bedeutung associated with a Sinn that is a constituent of the thinkable. I see no difficulty in applying such a construal to (for instance) my talk of objects coming into view for us in actualizations of conceptual capacities. So I do not accept that I need to engage in ontology more than I do, on pain of having objects threaten to come apart from the world.

3. Marcus Willaschek

Willaschek is right that in order to depict perception as enabling the world itself to exert a rational control over our thinking, by making itself available to us in experience, I would strictly need to hold only that some of the world is within the reach of our conceptual resources, not necessarily that all of it is.

He could also justifiably make more trouble for me than he does over the question whose thought it is in which, according to the claim of mine that he considers, the world is essentially capable of being embraced. It cannot be thought that is shaped by our present concepts and conceptions, nor indeed thought that is shaped by human concepts and conceptions at any particular stage of their evolution. That is precluded by the fact that I insist on a standing obligation to be ready to revise our modes of thinking, and I resist the idea of an end to inquiry, a position in which there would be no more room for improvement. The thought in question cannot even be thought of which human beings, with their biological equipment, would be in principle capable. That is precluded by my acknowledgement that there might be facts capturable by secondary-quality conceptual capacities whose possession would be partly constituted by non-human modes of sensibility. And Willaschek is surely right that there would be no point in invoking conceptual capacities possessed by super-human, perhaps infinite minds. It is completely unclear what, if any, controls there might be on speculation about the reality-embracing powers of a super-human mind, so taken this way the claim loses any prospect of being interesting. Whose thought, then, is supposed to be able to embrace the world? And why do I make a stronger claim than my immediate purposes require about the extent to which the world is accessible to thought, ours or anyone else's?

We are again in the area of the issues raised by Suhm, Wagemann,

and Wessels about the so-called identity theory of truth. My claim is that we understand the idea of a thinkable and the idea of a fact – an element in the world, on the natural Tractarian conception – only together. It is not that we know anyway – independently of having the idea of a thought – what it would be for something to be the case, and work from there into a derivative understanding of what it would be for someone to think truly. Nor is it that we know anyway – independently of having the idea of a fact – what it is for someone to entertain a thought, and work from there, exploiting the idea of truth, into a derivative understanding of what it would be for something to be the case. Each of the two ideas is so much as intelligible only in the context of the other. What I was driving at, in the remarks Willaschek considers, is that we have no way of grasping the very idea of a fact except as the idea of something that could be truly thought to be the case.

It is important that neither side of this conceptual linkage is supposed to be independently intelligible, with the other side derivatively understood in terms of it. In his text (38) Willaschek says he does not see how, in maintaining the Conceptuality Thesis, I can avoid 'presupposing that the world, in some sense, depends on our minds'. But my claim is that the very idea of the world and the very idea of being minded in a certain way are interdependent, not that there is a one-way dependence of one on the other. In a footnote (ibid., n. 4) Willaschek does contemplate an alternative to grounding the Conceptuality Thesis in a one-way dependence of the world on our minds: 'Or perhaps both, mind and world, depend on something else that effects a pre-established harmony between our minds and the world.' But as far as I can see the mutual dependence I am envisaging does not require an external basis for the equipoise between the linked items. I should like to read Hegel, whom Willaschek mentions together with Leibniz in this context, on these lines rather than those that Willaschek implies.

Even granting that the very idea of a fact is interdependent with the idea of thought, the question still stands: whose thought? And one might think answering 'ours' uselessly postpones the issue, which now resurfaces in the shape of the question: who are we? As I have acknowledged, Willaschek accurately identifies an indeterminacy, or perhaps worse, in the answer to this question that can be gathered from my work. But even so, I want to suggest that there is something potentially illuminating about saying 'ours', and contenting ourselves with the in-

determinacy. Any grasp one can achieve of the very idea of a thinker necessarily centres on oneself and those with whom one can, for instance, have conversations, and moves out from there just as far as the idea of mutual intelligibility can take one. No doubt that delineates no sharp boundary. This centredness on oneself is inherited, via the truism that constitutes the so-called identity theory of truth, by any grasp one can achieve of the very idea of what is the case. The possibility that there might be secondary qualities undetectable by us does not seriously disrupt this image of centredness. What we are envisaging, when we envisage such a possibility, is subjects with some cognitive powers unlike ours, who are nevertheless recognizable as subjects at all only by virtue of being recognizable as more of us, as belonging in the circle of those whom we can speak of, and for, in the first person plural. The point here is of a piece with Davidson's thought in 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme' (1984), and also, I believe, with a fundamental thought of Wittgenstein.

4. Mischa Gubeljic, Simone Link, Patrick Müller, Gunther Osburg

I am grateful to Gubeljic, Link, Müller, and Osburg for their rehearsal of salient points in the history of the notion of second nature. It is intriguing to learn that it is not until Hegel that the notion occurs explicitly otherwise than as signifying a corruption of original human nature (as in Augustine).

In this context, they draw a 'sharp contrast' (42) between Hegel and me, in that Hegel represents human second nature not as I do, as an actualization of potentialities that are already there in human nature before a second nature is acquired (first nature), but as a liberation from first nature. I think there is a risk of overstating this contrast. It is just a matter of stressing one or another aspect of a single idea. I do not suppose Hegel would deny that achieving a human second nature is actualizing antecedent potentialities, and it would be easy to use an image of liberation in connection with my insistence on the *sui generis* character of responsiveness to reasons.

Before I address the general thrust of the paper, I want to introduce a couple of complications. First, in *Mind and World*, the only material I provide for a gloss on the idea of first as opposed to second nature is the

idea of the realm of law. Gubeljic, Link, Müller, and Osburg remark, justifiably, that it is not clear what conception of law I am working with (43–44, n. 2). But I think the problem is worse. Whatever one contrives to say in spelling out the idea of making phenomena intelligible by subsuming them under natural law, I think it will be a poor fit for a kind of intelligibility that is manifest in much of the behaviour of non-human animals (even before they have been trained by human beings; this will be the second complication, but we can leave it aside for now). A charitable reader might find a hint in this direction at *MW* 182, but the fact is that in the book I work with an unsatisfactorily monolithic conception of what is to be contrasted with the distinctive kind of intelligibility I try to bring into focus partly by means of this contrast, the kind of intelligibility for which responsiveness to reasons constitutes the framework.

That the idea of subsumption under law is inadequate for capturing the intelligibility of much of nature, as it comes into view before one takes account of any distinctively human phenomena, seems to be part of the point of the 'Observing Reason' section of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. So I doubt whether Gubeljic, Link, Müller, and Osburg are right to suppose that when Hegel speaks of a 'merely natural will' as part of what acquiring a human second nature liberates one from, he means something intelligible by subsumption under natural law.

The second complication is this. The only use to which I put the idea of second nature in *Mind and World* is to affirm that responsiveness to reasons as such is natural too. In this application, the idea of the second-natural coincides with the idea of what can be made intelligible by placement in the space of reasons. But the idea of second nature itself is not exclusively applicable to rational animals. It is no more than the idea of a way of being (compare Hegel's 'ein Sein, ich bin so', in one of the passages quoted by Gubeljic, Link, Müller, and Osburg) that has been acquired by something on the lines of training. It can be second nature to a dog to roll over, say, on the command 'Roll over'. And the intelligibility of this behaviour is not in any interesting sense *sui generis*, by comparison with the intelligibility of, say, pricking up the ears in response to a noise or chasing a squirrel. Apart from how it originates, the second nature of dogs is just like their first nature.

These complications may seem merely to exacerbate the problem posed by Gubeljic, Link, Müller and Osburg about whether I can sup-

ply a unified conception of 'nature at large'. There is already a disunity, I am acknowledging, in the realm of the natural not yet considered as including distinctively human phenomena. And the idea of second nature belongs on both sides of the distinction I am chiefly concerned with, between what can be made intelligible by placement in the space of reasons and everything else. The distinction cannot be equated with a division between first and second nature.

But, no doubt predictably, I want to sidestep the demand for a substantial unification. I regret the 'foothold' remark, which Gubeljic, Link, Müller, and Osburg quite reasonably exploit. That remark seems to promise more, in the way of a continuity between the naturalness of human responsiveness to reasons and the naturalness of phenomena subsumable under natural law, than my purposes require. I think the only unity there needs to be in the idea of the natural, as it applies, on the one hand, to the intelligibility of physical and merely biological phenomena (themselves needing to be differentiated for some purposes, as I have indicated), and, on the other, to the intelligibility of rational activity, is captured by a contrast with the idea of the supernatural – the spooky or the occult. I need only the bare invocation of *Bildung* – not the sort of thing Gubeljic, Link, Müller, and Osburg press for, a detailed story about how what happens in *Bildung* connects with phenomena characterizable in terms of conformity to natural law – in order to bring out an analogy between the acquisition of responsiveness to reasons and, for instance, the acquisition of secondary sexual characteristics. Both these developments are, in words that Gubeljic, Link, Müller, and Osburg quote from me, part of 'the normal maturation of human beings'. That should be enough to reassure us that, for all the *sui generis* character of responsiveness to reasons, there is nothing spooky about it, and that is all I need from the idea of second nature.

5. Sean Greenberg and Marcus Willaschek

I do not accept Greenberg and Willaschek's reading of my remarks about freedom and nature (*MW* 71, n. 2), according to which they amount to an undertaking, without qualification, to overcome Kant's Third Antinomy. The Third Antinomy has many dimensions, and I aim to deal with at most one of them. It is not in principle threatening to me that for some purposes more would need to be said. But in

any case, I am not convinced that Greenberg and Willaschek identify a point at which more needs to be said, a point at which philosophical anxieties can arise that are not alleviated by the moves I make. I would not dispute that there are such points, but so far as I can see they are not brought into view here.

As Greenberg and Willaschek make clear, a tension between nature and freedom arises as a potential problem for me because the conception of experience that I urge, in response to the dilemma I begin with, requires that capacities of spontaneity – freedom – can be actualized in operations of sensibility, which is surely part of our natural endowment. Occurrences conceived as conforming to natural law are, just as such, not conceived as involving freedom. So if what is natural is equated with what can be made intelligible in terms of its conformity to natural law, the involvement in sensibility of capacities belonging to spontaneity that figures in my conception of experience is ruled out. That is how I diagnose the fact that, for all its power to free us from puzzlement about the very possibility of thought's directedness at the empirical world, the conception of experience that I recommend has typically not been in view as an option. I aim to make room for the required combination of freedom and naturalness by rejecting the equation between what is natural and what can be made intelligible in terms of its conformity to natural law. In our contemporary intellectual climate, it is wholly unsurprising that the equation should be tempting. But, according to my suggestion, the temptation can be alleviated by a simple reminder that the concept of second nature easily fits our possession of conceptual capacities, without its application tending to undermine the justice of considering them as capacities belonging to spontaneity, capacities whose exercises are not bound by natural law. On a conception of the natural that is, on this account, readily available to us, though we tend to forget it under the influence of familiar features of contemporary culture, there is no tension between freedom and nature, even though we have to recognize a tension between freedom and conformity to law. As Greenberg and Willaschek acknowledge, with this move I 'sidestep Kant's version of the antinomy' (53).

As I said, I do not find it threatening that philosophical difficulties might still be felt after this treatment of the difficulty I consider. Something on such lines seems to be an inevitable feature of philosophical activity conceived, in the somewhat Wittgensteinian way I favour, as

'therapeutic'. In general it is only to be expected that a therapy will work only against its immediate target, and the impulse to find philosophical mystery will show up later – perhaps immediately – in a different form, needing a different treatment. It can be worthwhile to make piecemeal moves to alleviate puzzlement, without any pretence of being able to anticipate what might happen next in the to-and-fro between the impulse towards constructive philosophy and therapeutic responses to its manifestations, let alone a pretence of having dealt with everything that might give someone pause.

But the form in which Greenberg and Willaschek suggest that the antinomy might still be a live problem for me is this (53–54): 'Since spontaneity is recognized to be in tension with nature conceived as a realm of law, it is unclear whether we are entitled to conceive of nature as a realm of law at all.' And this seems to involve an equivocation on what it is to conceive nature as a realm of law, rather than some more interesting occasion for further philosophical therapy. If what it is for something to be natural is conceived as its conformity to law, then – granting the opposition between freedom and conformity to law – it is flatly impossible to incorporate spontaneity into nature. That is the point of my reminder that second nature is nature too: to dislodge that conception of what it is for something to be natural. But from this fact – that if what it is to be natural is equated with being law-governed, there is no room for spontaneity in nature – it does not follow that there is a problem, such as Greenberg and Willaschek suggest, about whether there is room for conformity to law in a conception of nature that counts phenomena that do not conform to law as natural.

An occurrence conforms to natural law, if it does, under a description. The idea of conformity to law is the idea of a framework of characterizations that can fit occurrences, characterizations under which they stand revealed as instances of the operation of law. Placing spontaneity in nature is insisting that some natural occurrences are describable in terms that function in a *sui generis* way, which displays those occurrences as intelligible otherwise than as conforming to law. This has no tendency to cast doubt on the applicability to at least some natural occurrences of descriptions that can serve to display the occurrences they describe as law-governed. Spontaneity will not fit in nature equated with the realm of law, and for that reason I say we should not equate nature with the realm of law. But this raises no question about our en-

titlement to conceive nature as a realm of law in the sense of containing law-governed occurrences.

In refusing to accept that Greenberg and Willaschek pose a still pressing antinomy for me, I have carefully skirted an issue that, as far as I can see, they do not raise. Greenberg and Willaschek quote Kant as saying 'everything in the world happens according to the laws of nature'. Reformulated in the terms I have been using, this would be the claim that every occurrence – everything that happens – can be described in terms that enable it to be subsumed under law. Formally speaking, this thesis leaves room for the move I have identified with placing spontaneity in nature; we could say that some of those occurrences - all of which, under other descriptions, are subsumable under law, according to the thesis – are also characterizable in the contrasting terms, terms that imply responsiveness to reasons and resist subsumption under law. This would be a position on the lines of the domestication of Kant proposed by Davidson in 'Mental Events' (1980b). But how genuine a space for spontaneity is provided by this formal move? If the occurrences that are (say) our actions are all, under some descriptions, displayable as cases of the operation of law, how can they count as free simply on the ground that they are also susceptible to other descriptions under which they are not subsumable under law? If one is impressed by such questions, the simplest move is to reject the Kantian thesis, saying that only some of what happens in the world is subsumable under natural law. But if we make that move, we do seem to need to say more about how the law-governed and the free are related, especially given how plausible it is that natural law holds sway at least over the sub-personal machinery that underlies our ability to act and think.

6. Niko Strobach

Strobach is right to bring out how, in the eyes of people who are convinced that we have to choose between a pair of incompatible ways of thinking, an attempt to combine insights from both will typically seem to each side to be merely a rhetorically misleading way of embracing its own position. In the kind of philosophy I aim to overcome, a third option is typically rendered invisible, so that whatever a person says will tend to be construed as expressing one or the other of the supposedly exclusive alternatives. It would be absurdly optimistic to suppose that

anything I can say now, in response to Strobach's representation of a rampant platonist's and a scientifically-minded anti-platonist's efforts to enrol me on their sides, might definitively discourage such attempts. So, to answer Strobach's concluding question: I am confident that I do not belong on either side, but it would be another matter altogether to purport to be able to convince someone who does not see room for the middle ground I urge.

I do not understand why Strobach's platonist says I claim not to be a platonist at all, though I inconsistently allow my own thinking the label 'naturalized platonism'. Strobach's platonist says that what I call 'rampant platonism' is what everybody else calls 'platonism'. I certainly do not accept what I call 'rampant platonism'; it figures in my thinking as something to be avoided. But – consistently so far as I can see – I try to preserve so many elements of rampant platonism that the resulting outlook is quite recognizably a kind of platonism. Accordingly, I never claim that I am not a platonist, and at *MW* 110 I seriously float the suggestion that the sense in which I avow platonism is the sense in which Plato was a platonist - that Plato was not a rampant platonist. I have no wish to play down the features of my thinking that Strobach's platonist plays up: the realism about the layout of the space of reasons, and the appropriateness of visual imagery for the access to it that we are enabled to have through *Bildung*.

Strobach's platonist, convinced for some reason that only what I call 'rampant platonism' deserves to be called 'platonism' at all, does not consider the specifics (such as they are) of my attempt to mark off rampant platonism as a species of platonism in general. When I introduce the label 'rampant platonism', I explain it in terms of a picture in which the space of reasons is 'constituted independently of anything specifically human' (*MW* 77). One might say that the realism about the space of reasons in rampant platonism is a transcendental realism. According to it, the the layout of the relevant reality is prior to, and independent of, our means of access to it. It just so happens that we can acquire abilities to take in the relevant facts. In these terms, the point of my distinction is that there can be a realism about the space of reasons – with the associated appropriateness for visual imagery about our access to it, and hence room for all the platonistic rhetoric that Strobach's platonist seizes on – that is more like the realism that belongs with transcendental idealism. ('Empirical realism' is not a good label here, but

the structure is analogous.) The relevant reality is not conceived as autonomously constituted, with the effect that our capacity to become aware of it takes on the look of a fortunate contingency, as in rampant platonism.

As usual with this kind of issue, some people will think nothing can be a genuine realism unless it is of the transcendental kind. Their idea will be that any less full-blooded crediting of independence to the relevant reality is fraudulent, and that the thought would be more honestly put by representing the 'reality' in question as a projection from the human capacities that are disingenuously conceived, in this so-called realism, as abilities to know its layout. By my lights, this is another case of the illusion that we face a forced choice between two alternatives. The idea is that either the reality must be prior, or the so-called means of access to it must be prior, in which case the so-called reality is not a genuine reality. The missing possibility is that neither is intelligible independently of the other.

Here Strobach's paper could be structurally duplicated, with a transcendental realist about the space of reasons, a rampant platonist, claiming that I am really committed in that direction, and a projectivist claiming that my so-called realism is really a projectivism. As I in effect said in my comments on Greenberg and Willaschek, there is never a last word. But I believe a first word in response to what Strobach's platonist has said so far is to ask, as I have done, for attention to how I distinguish rampant platonism from platonism in general.

Strobach's anti-platonist in effect refuses to grant me the thought I express by claiming that the structure of the space of reasons is *sui generis*. It is true that I make the claim easier to defend than it should be, by fixing on subsumption under law as the mode of explanation that is to be contrasted with placing goings-on in the space of reasons. There is justice in the suggestion that under the head of 'bald naturalism' I consider only a deterministic materialism, which is perhaps no better than a straw man. As I acknowledge in my response to Gubeljic, Link, Müller, and Osburg, I need a less monolithic conception of the kind of explanation that is to be contrasted with placement in the space of reasons. But I believe the '*sui generis*' claim retains its plausibility in the context of a less primitive conception of the (not particularly unified) kind of explanation that is characteristic of the natural sciences. And that is why I continue to think my relaxed platonism can be gen-

uinely distinguished from a scientifically inspired naturalism, however sophisticated.

7. Frauke Annegret Kurbacher and Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter

I am grateful to Kurbacher and Heßbrüggen-Walter for supplying a historical context for the feature of my thinking that they, rightly as it seems to me, describe in terms of my being 'located in the tradition of Enlightenment qua self-criticism' (61). Perhaps no one will be misled by their footnote 3 (60), which might seem to imply that I follow Gadamer, as against Schneiders, in crediting the idea of useful or even necessary prejudices to Walch rather than Kant. I am of course strongly influenced by what Gadamer makes of the tradition in question, but I lack the scholarly equipment for tracing the details of its development. Its characteristic conceptions show up on my pages already fully formed, so to speak. What is important for me is the availability to us now of the tradition's results – which can seem so evidently right that it it is possible to be surprised that such thoughts have a comparatively recent history.

I should like to change the emphasis a little, in the account Kurbacher and Heßbrüggen-Walter give of my insistence that intentionality or content depends on a normative context. It is not that I do not want to accord significance to such facts as that 'something may be considered a chair only if it is meant to be sat on, if it looks a particular way, has at least three legs, etc.' (62). But the first norm to mention in this connection, it seems to me, is the norm embodied in the so-called identity theory of truth. It is correct or incorrect to judge that something is a chair according to whether or not it is indeed a chair. No doubt when we set about saying what it is for that condition to be satisfied, we shall need to invoke inferential connections such as those cited by Kurbacher and Heßbrüggen-Walter. But going directly to them risks encouraging the thought – which is not one I am happy with – that insisting on a normative context for the idea of content amounts to undertaking to explain the idea of content in terms of the idea of inference, as in Brandom (1994).

This does not disrupt the distinction that Kurbacher and Heßbrüggen-Walter draw, between criticizing a judgement, say, on its own

terms and criticizing the norms embodied in the concepts it uses. Kurbacher and Heßbrüggen-Walter suggest (64) that I overlook this distinction when I say that 'the bare idea of *Bildung* [. . .] leaves no genuine questions about norms, apart from those that we address in reflective thinking about specific norms, an activity that is not particularly philosophical' (*MW* 95). But I do not see why this remark should seem to overlook the distinction – on which, as Kurbacher and Heßbrüggen-Walter acknowledge, I insist elsewhere. The point of the remark, in context, is that appealing to the idea of *Bildung* suffices to remove any appearance that the very idea of subjection to norms is spooky. There is no need for further philosophy to make us comfortable with the idea of normativity. And the not particularly philosophical activity that the remark leaves room for is reflection about (putative) norms, without discrimination as to what sort of norms are in question – that is, including higher-order reflection about the norms for reflection about norms in lower-order applications.

Kurbacher and Heßbrüggen-Walter imply that at a high enough order reflection becomes a philosophical activity. Of course I do not dispute that reflection is a philosophical topic. But I think critical reflection about the norms for critical reflection, for instance the norms for reflecting about the putative norms embodied in concepts that are in use in a branch of science, is an obligation that falls on a practitioner of the science as such, not as a philosopher. There may be a divergence here over what counts as philosophical activity, and, if so, I would not want to take a hard line. My point has only been to clarify what I was driving at in the remark that Kurbacher and Heßbrüggen-Walter criticize.

Kurbacher and Heßbrüggen-Walter are right to insist that the logical space of reasons is not to be taken as a space of logical reasons. Sellars's phrase 'logical space' functions in much the way a phrase such as 'conceptual space' might function. There is not meant to be any particular connection with (formal) logic in particular. (This casual use of 'logic' and 'logical' was common in analytic philosophy at the time when Sellars coined the phrase.) Sellars himself insists, against a formalism about reason, that material inferential connections, for instance the connection between smoke and fire, can underwrite rational transitions in their own right, not needing a supplied premise so that the transitions can be represented as formally valid. The point applies just

as well to material reasons for acting, in connection with which there is an especially evident appropriateness to something Kurbacher and Heßbrüggen-Walter urge: that the background for a conception of the space of reasons cannot exclude anything that helps to shape the relevant form of life, including emotions and affective states.

Do I believe a fusion of horizons is always possible? Yes; one way of putting the point of Davidson's 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme' (1984), which I think is right in spirit if not in every detail, is to say that if it is correct to think in terms of another horizon at all, it must be possible for it to be fused with ours. This is a possibility in principle. No doubt lack of charity or refusal to listen can make mutual understanding impossible in practice, in some cases, but this should not seem more interesting than any other untoward effect of human shortcomings.

Are scepticism and dogmatism really dangerous? I doubt it. I think scientism may be, in which case there may be, indirectly, a point to my work of the sort Kurbacher and Heßbrüggen-Walter end by looking for, something over and above continuing a tradition. But if scientism is dangerous, I do not think the reason is that it exacerbates philosophical puzzlement about the directedness of thought at reality. Such philosophical puzzlement is perhaps a waste of time, but not dangerous – as, say, human aggressiveness is. And it is the philosophical puzzlement that is, after all, the topic of my book.

8. Christoph Jedan

A minor matter: Jedan seems to imply that, according to me, Aristotle's innocence of the conception of nature as disenchanted accounts for the fact that he does not give explicit expression to the concept of second nature. But that is not my idea. I do not venture a guess as to why the concept is only implicit in Aristotle's thinking. (See the contribution of Gubeljic, Link, Müller, and Osburg for how recently we find explicit expression of a concept of second nature in what I claim is an Aristotelian vein.) The point about Aristotle's innocence is rather that the concept of second nature acquires a special philosophical significance in the context of a temptation to suppose that whatever is natural is as such empty of meaning. This is a significance that the concept of second nature could not have had for Aristotle, who was immune to any

such temptation. The significance is that the ease with which we can speak of second nature, in connection with capacities to find and make meaning, shows that we do not need to succumb to the temptation.

I suppose if one thought a concept could achieve explicit expression only if there was a special philosophical significance already available for it, one would take what I have said about Aristotle's innocence to yield an explanation of his not coining a phrase corresponding to our 'second nature'. But surely a concept need not be seen as having philosophical weight in order to find expression in language. So I do not think this is why it does not occur to Aristotle to speak of second nature in connection with his conception of ethical virtue.

Jedan says that 'an Aristotelian concept of second nature might well allow for an irreducible *plurality* of "second natures" ' (72). I think he is right about this, but wrong to think the point constitutes any difficulty for me. To focus on just one of the three aspects of Aristotelian ethics he considers: certainly a vice is just as much second nature to its possessors as a virtue. So what makes a virtue a virtue – a capacity to get things right in one's conduct – cannot be the fact that it is second nature to its possessors. What makes it a virtue must be the specific content of the way of seeing situations as calling for action that constitutes it, which is divergent from any way of seeing situations as calling for action that constitutes a vice. Just so with what I suggest we can model on an Aristotelian conception of an ethical virtue, namely knowing one's way around in the space of reasons. (In fact we can see an ethical virtue as a special case of that: knowing one's way around in a particular region of the space of reasons.) The point of saying that such a capacity is second nature to its possessors is not to suggest that we can exploit the fact that the capacity is natural in order to entitle ourselves to the idea that its possessors get things right. As Jedan rightly says, a second nature of just this sort can show itself equally in people's being wrong about what is a reason for what. The point of invoking second nature is only to insist that we need not accept an opposition between the idea of responsiveness to reasons and the idea of what is natural. Such an opposition would rule out the actualizations in sensibility, natural as that must be, of capacities belonging to spontaneity, reason-involving as that must be, that are needed for my way of avoiding the dilemma I begin with.

If it is not the invocation of nature, what does entitle us to talk of

some people being right and others being wrong about what is a reason for what? Entitlement to talk of someone's being right about such a question, according to the view I take, is not to be separated from entitlement to a response to the question itself. (This could be seen as an application of the so-called identity theory of truth.) So the question which (if any) of a set of competing second natures, for instance a putative virtue and its corresponding vices, equips its possessors with correct views of the relevant subject matter has to be addressed from whatever standpoint one has for addressing the subject matter itself. That will be a standpoint constituted by whatever second nature one has oneself acquired, from which one can perhaps gradually refashion the associated conception of the relevant subject matter by reflection that fits Neurath's image – the image of a mariner who has to repair a ship while staying afloat in it. (See *MW* 81.) In supplying Aristotle with a conception of correctness on these lines, I diverge from a genre of readings according to which the idea that a possessor of a virtue gets things right, whereas a possessor of the corresponding vices gets them wrong, really does depend on the idea that the virtue is somehow more in line with nature than the vices. What Jedan poses as difficulties for me are rather difficulties for this way of reading Aristotle, which I explicitly reject.

Neurath's image certainly makes coherence an important criterion for reflective adequacy. Perhaps the image warrants speaking, as Jedan does, of 'another coherentism' (72). But I do not believe this coherentism, if it is indeed appropriately so called, is problematic in the way Jedan suggests. This coherentism is not the denial of constraint by the world itself on our empirical thinking that figures in my opening dilemma. And it is not clear that this coherentism opens the door to a damaging relativism, as Jedan implies. Philosophically motivated positions such as Berkeleyan idealism should be dealt with by looking critically at their philosophical motivation. They should not be treated as results of Neurathian reflection starting from second natures acquired in being initiated into human forms of life, nor as competitors in the kind of clash between ways of thinking that we have only Neurathian reflection to adjudicate.

9. Johannes Klaus Kipf and Frank Köhler

Kipf and Köhler are right to suppose I am willing to talk of moral facts. My only problem with their discussion of this (73) is that they follow tradition in suggesting that countenancing moral facts is 'stronger' and 'more robust' than the minimal claim of moral realism, the claim that moral statements can be true. Given the conception of facts that I work with, I see 'Moral statements can be true' and 'There are moral facts' as simply two different ways of saying the same thing, not a weaker and a stronger claim. (See my responses to Suhm, Wagemann, and Wessels, and to Willaschek.)

In discussing the Aristotelian conception of ethics that serves as a model for my treatment of rationality in general, in *Mind and World*, Kipf and Köhler raise questions about what happens when different value-systems come into contact. As they note, I sometimes say (elsewhere) that virtuous and vicious people see the same situation differently, and one might extrapolate from that to a parallel claim about people with different cultural backgrounds. But obviously 'the same situation' here means the situation as it can be characterized before any ethical questions are addressed. So this does not impinge on the issue that Kipf and Köhler really want to broach: how to use the idea of taking in ethical facts - facts with an ethical dimension – in the context of this kind of meeting between cultures.

I hope it is clear straight off that there cannot be incompatible facts. Anything that really is the case had better be compatible with everything else that is the case. So if there are two views of a situation that really do contradict one another, at most one can be correct; at most one can count as taking in a fact, an element in the world. How, then, can we ascertain which? Kipf and Köhler say: 'there should be, of course, criteria for deciding which (if either) is the right perception and furthermore there should be a possibility for both parties to have the right perception' (76). But I do not see why we should accept either of these claims. Faced with the discovery that members of some other group take a different view of some kind of situation about which one thought one knew what to think, all one can do in order to reassure oneself that one's own view is right is to engage in Neurathian reflection about this particular deliverance of one's current outlook. (See my response to Jedan.) The result may be that one decides the others are more enlightened than one was, and accordingly changes one's mind, or that

one simply becomes uncertain. But it may be that reflection leaves one confident in one's judgement, in full awareness that it is not universally shared. This is not a matter of applying a criterion. And one's view, in whose correctness one has in this kind of case a confidence sustained by the best one can do in the way of critical reflection, may be simply unattainable by the others, culturally situated as they are.

It may be worth remarking that if one finds some custom abhorrent, that need not imply that one takes oneself to be obliged to prevent its observance. Much else is relevant to the question what Kipf and Köhler's hypothetical British officer ought to do than whether or not the practice of immolating widows is ethically acceptable.

Kipf and Köhler raise two further questions (77–79). As far as I can see, the first is no more than an expression of incredulity about my claim that an ethical reason for acting should not be analysed into a belief and an independent desire. 'Can it really be so?', Kipf and Köhler in effect ask, and I think I can respond 'Why not?', at least until they say more. The second question is whether I can combine the idea that ethical requirements are seen as categorical imperatives with the idea that one's conception of what is ethically required of one can change. I grant that the image of conscripts in an army, which I used as a counterbalance to Philippa Foot's imagery of volunteers, can be unhelpful in this context, given how easy it is to say that military orders are simply not to be questioned. But the point of the imagery was different. And in any case we surely need to qualify the idea that soldiers are never to reflect about what they are ordered to do. But, leaving the imagery on one side, I do not think there is a real difficulty about how one can allow oneself to raise the question whether something that presents itself as a categorical demand really is a categorical demand. If the content of an appearance includes a 'must', why should that prevent one from asking whether the appearance is illusory? Compare the way a reflective mathematician can see through an illusion of cogency in what presents itself as a proof. The supposed proof presents itself as compelling, but reflection discloses that thought is after all not compelled to go as the proof purports to dictate.

10. Christoph Halbig, Andreas Hansberger and Michael Quante

Halbig, Hansberger and Quante claim to detect a divergence between my paper 'Values and Secondary Qualities' and my book *Mind and World*. In effect they invite me to disavow the paper in favour of the book. But the divergence they see was not something I intended, and I decline the invitation.

The analogy between values and secondary qualities that I drew in 'Values and Secondary Qualities' was not meant to 'provide a suitable basis for moral realism', as Halbig, Hansberger and Quante imply (82). To argue for moral realism would be to argue that moral judgements can be true. (See the contribution of Kipf and Köhler.) By means of the secondary-quality analogy, I intended no more than to remove one supposed obstacle to that thesis, an obstacle that could be formulated by saying truth is objective whereas moral judgements are subjective. I argued that to represent such a thought as a ground for rejecting moral realism is to equivocate on the concepts of objectivity and subjectivity. The sense in which moral judgements are subjective, I claimed, is like the sense in which secondary-quality judgements are subjective. The concepts employed in such judgements are constitutively bound up with concepts of subjective states. To suggest that judgements that are subjective in that sense cannot be objective in the sense required for them to be true would be to suggest that a supposed property taken to be adequately conceivable only in terms of a certain subjective state could not genuinely be a property that things might really possess – that it could only be subjective in a different sense, a figment of a subjective state that masquerades as an awareness of it. Halbig, Hansberger and Quante concede to me that any such suggestion is wrong (84).

I want to stress that that is all I meant the analogy to show. Establishing that moral judgements can be true – providing a basis for moral realism – would of course require more than just undermining one supposed reason for thinking they cannot be true. It is correct, but entirely beside any point I intended to make by means of the analogy, that – for instance – value experience is conceptually more sophisticated than colour experience. The relevant respect of analogy is just the subjectivity of the concepts involved in, say, colour judgements and value judgements, and it is no problem that there are disanalogies in other respects.

In conceding to me that conceptually subjective properties can fig-

ure in judgements that are objectively true, Halbig, Hansberger and Quante deny that the secondary-quality analogy supports the point (84). But their comments in this first section of their paper are objections not to the idea that there is an analogy in the relevant respect between values and secondary qualities but to the details of the conception of secondary qualities that I sketched in 'Values and Secondary Qualities'. So far as I can see, they do not object to the idea that concepts of secondary qualities are subjective, in the sense of being not explicable except in terms of certain subjective states. As they note (86), a specific application of that idea is still in play in *Mind and World*, in the – as they think – different treatment, of colours in particular, that they prefer. So far as I can see, what they say contains no objection to the thought that the secondary-quality analogy, better spelled out than it was by me, would indeed serve the purpose for which I appealed to it, of undermining that supposed obstacle to moral realism.

They make two objections to the conception of secondary qualities that I sketched. The first is that the conception is not faithful to the phenomenology of, say, colour experience. I do not see that they justify this accusation. 'We simply experience that the shirt is yellow', they insist (83). I do not see why they think this rules out saying that what it is for a shirt to be yellow is for it to be such as to look yellow in suitable conditions – why they think this dispositional analysis ('such as to' marks the presence of a disposition) somehow deprives us of the idea that the colour itself is directly present to us in experience, at least in the right conditions. Why not supppose that the shirt's being such as to look yellow in the right conditions is just what is directly present to us when the shirt looks yellow to us in those conditions? Perhaps it comes to the same thing to say that I do not see why they think the formulation in terms of 'such as to look' is foreign to a common-sense conception of what colours are – a common-sense conception of what it is that we experience when we experience colours.

The second objection is that bringing a disposition into play imports causality, in such a way as to make it difficult to avoid identifying the property that a colour is with some primary quality of objects in virtue of which they present the appearances that figure in the analysis of the concept of the colour. Here too, the accusation strikes me as unwarranted. I see no problem in keeping the concept expressed by the 'such as to look' formulation separate from any concept expressible without

such allusion to subjective states. No doubt it is natural to assume that there is a causal explanation in primary-quality terms for any instance of the relevant subjective state, but that does not require us to identify the disposition attributed by the 'such as to look' formulation with an underlying primary-quality ground. (Complex questions arise here about how the identity of properties connects with relations between concepts of properties, and much more would need to be said in a full discussion.)

It is true that in *Mind and World* I do not explicitly use the 'such as to look' style of formulation. But its absence does not represent a tacit renunciation, as Halbig, Hansberger and Quante suggest. I do not believe that what they call 'the new account' of concepts of secondary qualities is inconsistent with the picture I gave in 'Values and Secondary Qualities', and they have not convinced me that it would have been an advantage if it had been.

There are many grounds on which people object to moral realism, and I am somewhat suspicious of the idea of a unified 'basis' for it. I do believe that opposition to the idea that moral judgements can be straightforwardly true can often be traced to the influence of something like scientism on reflection about truth. If that is right, anything that discourages scientism should make it easier for people to swallow moral realism. And it is certainly true that in *Mind and World* I try to undermine the attractions of a scientistic naturalism. That is as close as I come to falling in with Halbig, Hansberger and Quante's suggestion that my book afford 'a suitable basis for moral realism' (88). It is not very close; as they are of course aware, the context in which my book engages with scientistic naturalism is very different.

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