

PERSONS AS NATURAL ARTIFACTS¹

Joseph Margolis

Temple University

josephmargolis455@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT: I take “modern” philosophy, which may be dated from the appearance of Kant’s first *Critique*, to be dominated and informed, whether knowingly or not, in its late phase (dated from the publication of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, 1859) by the novel evolutionary transformation of the human primate into a self or person, by the processes of inventing and mastering of natural language. The human person I take to be a hybrid artifactual transform of the natural-kind kind, *homo sapiens sapiens*. The notion is remarkably neglected in the history of thought; and yet it profoundly affects what it may be reasonable to say about the world and mankind’s place in the world. I track some of the principal implications of this new way of orienting philosophy and science and practical life and the possibility of radically revising the perspectives of contemporary thought.

I.

The hero of these lectures is the human primate: that’s to say, the human infant, who, by its native, seemingly meager prelinguistic gifts, masters, easily and quickly, any and every natural language as a first language and, in doing that, transforms itself metaphysically (so to say) into the uniquely hybrid artifactual creature we name “person” or “self,” signifying thereby the mastery of certain novel, utterly unmatched reflexive powers of thought and agency that mark the extraordinary career of the human race. We find ourselves confronted by a thoroughly naturalistic, encultured discontinuity within a palpable biological continuum of animal and human evolution, an anomaly that presages the all-too-hasty disjunctions of mind and body, thought and world, nature and spirit, law and history, invariance and flux, and the promise and limitations of the physical and human sciences that have bedeviled Western philosophy through the whole of its history.

¹ This paper is a shorter version of a text, which is forthcoming in a more extended form in Joseph Margolis’ book **Three Paradoxes of Personhood**, edited by Roberta Dreon. The book belongs to the series *Letture veneziane* (Venetian Lectures) directed by Luigi Perissinotto, published by Jouvence, Italy.

In a word, philosophy and science—all truth-seeking disciplines—find themselves obliged to confirm their coherence and adequacy in terms of accommodating matters of fact akin to the judgment I’ve just tendered. I mean: philosophies of mind and enlanguaged culture must make sense of the evolutionary conditions under which what may be called the “external” and “internal” *Bildung* of the human race (the bridge roles, respectively, of successive species of the genus *Homo* and successive cohorts of the infant members of *Homo sapiens*); they must explain the original creation of language and the normal development of the human person. Academic philosophy is largely opposed to such inquiries. The enterprise remains conjectural, of course, even question-begging, once we confront the puzzles of the paleoanthropological evidence that informs us about the powers of the mature primate members of any of the species of *Homo* or of the cognitive import of the phased invention and mastery of language. Thus, one acknowledged authority on “the history of human thinking,” Michael Tomasello, speculating on the unique distinctions of intelligence manifested by *Homo sapiens*, in accord with the views of “a small group of philosophers of action” (Tomasello’s phrasing: intended to feature his agreement with familiar figures like John Searle), has recently affirmed that

humans are able to coordinate with others, in a way that other primates seemingly are not, to form a “we” that acts as a kind of plural agent to create everything from a collaborative hunting party to a cultural institution.²

Tomasello, I suggest, has not thought carefully enough about the security concerns of elephant families committed to thwarting the affectionate kidnapping of baby elephants by rival families, or the coordinated hunting of lion sisters, or the deliberate sieges of African farms by baboon cohorts; and, of course, though oddly, he fails to feature the meaning of the achievement of

² Michael Tomasello, *A Natural History of Human Thinking* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), p.

³ Compare John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

language itself, which would have obliged him (and us) to justify the problematic demarcation between primate- and person-level skills.

By and large, this is a neglected matter among linguists and primatologists alike. Still, at least one small finding seems reasonably clear: Tomasello has too low an opinion of the “we” capacities of non-human mammals; he discounts too easily the intelligence of animals and he does not examine closely enough the meaning of the hard-won achievement of the human infant. The lesson I suggest we ponder is no more than this: natural language may be, at least on the sparsest of evidence, an exclusively human achievement—an invention in some important measure (admittedly unexplained), not an original biological gift of any kind (*pace* Chomsky); it’s a “mental” (say) biologically evolved or somehow suddenly contrived genetically achievement that, in the last analysis, is the *recto* side of the self-transformation of the primate members of *Homo sapiens* into persons (arguably, of *Neanderthalensis* and other barely glimpsed species as well); and, most important, its distinctive features answer always to the startling fact that, as cultural artifacts, persons can claim no natural niche or *telos* in the world they share with animals, compellingly fitted to some normatively enabling environment.

Their languages, I say, must be distinctly and conveniently flexible, in order to accommodate (as we discover) *whatever* continually invented novel ways of living in, and transforming, the world happens to mark the human career. My point is no more than that language and personhood defeat any chiefly biological model of evolution: man is a hybrid creature, mingling biologically and culturally acquired abilities, and the race itself must continually offset its penchant for fixity (both practical and theoretical) in a rapidly changing world. It seeks to preserve the functionality of ordinary language, by compromising with its seeming adequacy and precision, wherever its shortcuts and knowing inexactitudes appear benign enough and even advantageous. It tolerates a considerable measure of vagueness, error, indeterminacy, distortion, openness to diffuse usage, diversity,

inconsistency, contradiction, inexactitude, vacuity, and sheer ignorance, at the same time it pursues all the forms of precision, accuracy, strict conditions of truth and validity that it can muster. The first of these functional competencies I name “mongrel language”: I believe our survival requires its distinctive contribution, and therefore regard it as a profound mistake (memorably, Wittgenstein’s, in the *Investigations*) to think that the rational progress of our form of life (and language) requires the gradual elimination of mongrel and philosophical intuition. (I shall come back to this concession.)

But is Tomasello speaking of the *primate* creature (*homo sapiens*)—as, explicitly, he seems to affirm—or the enlanguaged transform (of human primates) that we call a “person”? His own allies have no access to mature prelinguistic human primates of any kind—nor does he, nor do we. There *are* no such creatures to encounter now, even if we concede the familiar stalemate that accompanies speculations about “wild children.” Tomasello does not answer: he cannot answer—on the strength of his own resources. There is no way to distinguish primate from person except by subtractive conjecture *from* whatever we now concede to be given by the acquisition of language. If we grant the conceptual and cognitive gap that Tomasello himself affirms, between the great apes and man (as we now encounter *Homo sapiens*—that is, ourselves), then it’s entirely reasonable to concede *both* that language is decisive for the formation of persons as well as for the fully determinate self-referential competences uniquely confined to *Homo sapiens* (if indeed they *are* uniquely manifested by humans) *and* that prelinguistic man was undoubtedly gifted (beyond the considerable, though still prelinguistic, communicative powers of the great apes) in some way that favored the initial onset of the invention of language.

Nevertheless, the putative “we” agent of which Tomasello speaks—which Searle and Margaret Gilbert and Raimo Tuomela (and similar-minded philosophers of diverse convictions) casually endorse—appears on both

sides of the primate/person divide, though in very different guises. The fatal error appears already in George Mead's classic analysis. Hence, what Tomasello says is trivially true on the language side and importantly mistaken on the prelinguistic side. Mead, of course, was unable to decide whether his dialectical use of the "I"/"me" schema modeled the functioning of well-formed persons *or* modeled no more than the enabling primate conditions leading to the very formation of persons. It's an extraordinary fact that Mead's confusion has been elevated to the rank of an essential resolution of the definitional question; in Mead's hands, the engine of the transformation rests with the acquired ability of humans to adopt the role of the "generalized other"—the source of Tomasello's and Searle's "we." But languageless apes and monkeys already show an ability to cooperate meaningfully, applying what they have learned (societally, culturally) without, yet, becoming persons. They lack language, but they possess "perceptual concepts"; and if they use such concepts intelligently and cooperatively, I cannot see how they can be denied a capacity for *judgment*. I don't deny that we find it difficult to spell out the structure of animal judgment in a fine-grained way, though its general functionality tends to be clear enough. (We proceed here, of course, along anthropocentric lines. But that's a subaltern question.) I also believe that human infants must rely on perceptual concepts in learning discursive concepts (I shall come back to this later.³)

³ McDowell's Kantianism has led him to make no more than some very tentative concessions in the direction of perceptual concepts; but he insists that animals are incapable of *judgment*—judgment, for McDowell, is thoroughly "discursive" (enlanguaged). I say rather that, although perception need not be perceptual judgment, concepts (of any kind) are plausibly and paradigmatically ascribed (in general and certainly Kantian terms) in contexts of operative judgment: hence, to admit (or not to deny explicitly) something of the nature of perceptual concepts to animals is to admit (or not to deny explicitly) something of the nature of operative judgment to animals. The evidence challenges McDowell's artful compromise. A considerable run of current analytic treatment of the concept/judgment divide (regarding

Mead characteristically fails to mark the strong disjunction, within the career of the species, of the functionalities of primate and person (and the reason for their all but ineluctable evolutionary sequence). In this sense, as we shall see, the concept of "self" or "person" is something of a mystery—in a way that suggests the relativization of the "actuality" of persons at different levels or registers of mastering discourse.

This allows for a more charitable reading of Descartes's *Cogito* than Descartes himself provides—which is, also, more stubborn, conceptually, than anything canonical rationalism could possibly confirm. Hence, I regard the reception of rationality as entirely compatible with advanced animal life (viewed species-wise), though enlanguaged thought is, trivially, and momentarily, confined to enlanguaged persons. Elephants, I suggest, are capable of elephantine rationality nevertheless, *in* cognition and understanding and conception and deed; they don't "think" as we think, though we ourselves are puzzled by our own ability as well as that of elephants.

You may protest that I've neglected animal "languages": the "language" of the honey bees, for instance, or that of dolphins or of whales. I acknowledge the disputed incipience, among chimpanzees and bonobos, of an elementary grasp of some dimension of human (natural) languages, as well as of proto-linguistic analogues of reference and predication among monkeys and apes. But I distinguish as forcefully as possible between linguistic and nonlinguistic communication, as with the semiotics of gestures (among wild dogs, that lack language) and humans (who have language). I'm prepared to yield ground wherever the evidence requires it. But, thus far, I see no need to yield much ground, and I mean to resist obscuring the theory of persons.

languageless animals) is usefully addressed in Carl Sachs, "Resisting the Disenchantment of Nature: McDowell and the Question of Animal Minds," *Inquiry*, 55, 131-147. I'm persuaded that McDowell stand in the Woodbridge Lectures is untenable—but then, so, too, is Kant, in the first *Critique*.

It's in this spirit that I claim that our best guess at an answer holds that, whatever incipencies approaching the determinate reflexive awareness of "oneself" *qua* self may be thought to arise among unlanguage animals, the determinacy of the paradigmatic self is assuredly inseparable from the mastery of language, is in fact an essential part of what, precisely, we master in mastering a fully developed natural language. I'm entirely willing, I should add, to concede that the very notion of a "self" may well have begun, theoretically, as a thin artifactual (even fictional—grammatically fictional) construct of an abstractly functional sort that only gradually acquires (through continual usage) the irresistibly practical sense and force of a thick and actual entitative identity. So that when Tomasello ventures his "shared intentionality hypothesis," which he characterizes as a sort of "we"-intentionality, he must be fudging (innocently, I would say, though not unlike Mead) between pre- and post-linguistic speculation.⁴ In any case, the intentional nature of acts performed by the great apes do indeed approach, incipiently, the feats of persons, without entailing the reflexive conjectures of the self itself. That threatens to count as an insoluble paradox for rationalists who insist on the discursivity of concepts (John McDowell, for instance.)

Of course, the matter is profoundly contested. More than that, the strictly biological evidence seems to confirm the cognitional (nativist) gap between the human primate and the great apes: it cannot, as matters now stand, confirm the continuum of the human and the animal, without confirming as well the gap between the prelinguistic cognitive powers of ape and man that would explain (in some measure) both the absence of true language among the apes and the unique ability of the human infant to master any natural language at all from a languageless vantage. I leave room here, also, for the surmise (which I confess I find neither implausible nor unattractive), namely, that the linguistically

exceptional bonobo Kanzi seems to have mastered—recognitionally, perhaps more than productively, but productively enough (so it has been claimed)—distinctly advanced linguistic skills, without explicit training: grammatically dependent clauses, for instance, and reference to the intentions and actions of other agents (whether bonobos or humans) not actually present (to ensure intended reference) in witnessed discursive episodes.⁵ But if this be admitted—Tomasello is impressed, Chomsky is not—then Kanzi must be at least a-more-than-barely-incipient person; and, in conceding that much, we signal the ontologically contested nature of the self and the vagaries of linguistic incipience.

It's entirely reasonable to suppose that there are unique biological capabilities on the part of the human primate that provide a proper foundation for the infant's skill in mastering language, without supposing that the reflexive powers of selves or persons are themselves completely entailed in such capacities. Most discussants are reluctant to advocate the thesis that the posit of the self as the determinate site of speech acts and (other) deliberate or intended acts (enabled by language) may be the artifactual but substantialized minimal outcome of an originally practical (or grammatical) nominalization on our own part (in theorizing about the self). In any case, the matter inevitably challenges standard evolutionary theory, even where it exceeds or corrects the general lines of Darwin's original account: say, among the so-called "philosophical anthropologists" (Helmuth Plessner and his associates and allies), who

⁴ See Tomasello, *A Natural History of Human Thinking*, Ch. 1.

⁵ See Michael Tomasello and Josep Call, *Primate Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). My sense is that Tomasello has strengthened his impression of Kanzi's (and other apes') ability to discern the intentions of bonobos and familiar humans; we cannot be entirely sure that the seeming limitations in Kanzi's use of language may not be an artifact of the conditions of testing and training: the matter is not entirely clear. See, further, E.S. Savage-Rumbaugh, *Ape Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); and E.S. Savage-Rumbaugh *et al.*, "Language Comprehension in Ape and Child," *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 58 (3–4), no. 233; also, Michael Tomasello, *Origins of Human Communication*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), Chs. 6–7 (taken together).

were still inclined to conflate the conceptual difference between primate and person⁶—as does George Mead among the classic pragmatists, John Searle among the “we-intentionalists,” and Tomasello among the primatologists. Because, if (as I’m persuaded) the self is the artifactual, though entirely naturalistic posit of the unified site of human thought and agency, then canonical evolutionary theory cannot possibly account for the standard forms of human development, without treating the evolution of the human being in hybrid, intertwined biological and enlanguaged (cultural) terms, that appear not to apply in the same way to other advanced animals. Viewed this way, it’s as reasonable (possibly, more reasonable) to regard the most fundamental physical sciences as disciplines *abstracted and idealized from the prior space of the human sciences and practical life*, as (or, than) it is to regard the inquiries of the human sciences and practical life as *extensions or modifications (of some sort) of the foundational inquiries and language of the physical sciences*. (I draw your attention, in passing, to the important grammatical liberty, or trickery, involved in fixing the reference – is it a merely mongrel reference? – to selves, which I return to in my second lecture.)

Here, I emphasize two caveats: one, that there can be no doubt that the invention or achievement of a natural language, which I take to be essentially a cultural feat open to natively gifted creatures—rather than an entirely unlearned, possibly minor genetic modification of the lining of the brain, that somehow yields a “mental organ” whose functionality manifests itself instantly as “linguistic”—cannot possibly have been realized without enabling *prelinguistic* competences, either evolutionary in a strictly biological sense or in the form of socially learned, socially transmitted, *cultural* improvements of

Homo sapiens’s native powers, even if shared (up to a point) with the great apes themselves; and, the second caveat, that it is unquestionably true that the primate *preconditions* of *Homo sapiens’s* gradual invention of language must include *pre-personal, proto-personal, ur-personal* stages of development that finally issue in paradigmatically person-level manifestations that may be difficult to distinguish clearly and determinately within the terms of a hybrid revision of the evolutionary continuum of the human primate and human person. My conjecture has it that *if* discursive concepts (problematically defined as “rational”) are (or are largely) artifactual, then it is well-nigh impossible to deny the existence of perceptual and other nonlinguistic concepts.

The truth is, we are unable to sort these resemblant forms in an entirely explicit way, in good part because the theory of mind is still so remarkably primitive (whether psychologically or rationally described), spanning, say, Descartes’s self-thwarting conjectures and those of current speculation. I do hold, however, that the enabled powers of normative ordering and of confirming the identity and reidentification of individuated things (*under different descriptions*) exceed any pre-personal primate competence. I see no reason to suppose we cannot gain a good deal of conceptual ground—in distinguishing between primate and person—by adding to such discoveries. True language itself, I urge, is inseparable from the formation of persons. My premise, you remember, is, precisely, that the societal invention of language and the individual mastery of language effectively constitute the same process that we reasonably characterize as the transformation of the human primate into a person; and that Darwinian models of evolution fail to account for the full emergence (and uniquely enlanguaged powers) of the human being: because they fail to acknowledge the inherent inadequacy of any merely biological theory to account for paradigmatic persons, and because they fail to interpolate the requisite capacities (call them intelligent, rational, [in a species-specific sense], and

⁶ For a reasonable summary of the “philosophical anthropologists’” inability or unwillingness to define the difference between primate and person, see Marjorie Grene, “People and Other Animals,” *The Understanding of Nature: Essays in the Philosophy of Biology* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974), pp. 346–360, particularly p. 358.

conceptual [though nondiscursive] on the part of the human infant), adequate for “internal *Bildung*.” We cannot, I submit, solve the puzzle of the human mode of being without conceding the depth of the conceptual revision of evolutionary theory that’s still needed.

It’s in this sense that I say the formation of persons is, effectively, a “metaphysical” change, a change of being, meaning (by that) a change so profound that we exceed the explanatory resources of the whole of material biology—in any sense confined to chemical or biochemical or genetic or epigenetic or standard explanations by purely physical or causal means. I suggest that the description and explanation of linguistic activity, however biologically enabled, cannot be given in biological or, for that matter, in languageless behavioral terms alone: what’s required is, in fact, profoundly incommensurable (though not incompatible) with physicalist discourse. There’s an important clue buried in this casual acknowledgement that I shall return to, bearing, of course, on the matter of “mongrel” language. But what I wish to emphasize particularly is the conjectural nature of the entire matter. My own intuition is committed to the thesis that personhood and natural language are radically novel developments, biologically and culturally inseparable “aspects” of the same “evolutionary” turn, that may well be unique to the human race (or to some small cluster of races that, except for ours, which seems to have been hybridized, have gone extinct). I begin with the entwining of biology and culture (or “mind”); others—Chomsky, most notably, begin with genetics and the computational functionality of the brain. At the moment there’s a democratic sparsity of strategically placed information adequate to discern the inevitability of any presently contrived theory. It’s entirely possible that better answers will have to conjure (finally) with the mind/body problem: the meaning of “emergent” and the extension of the “physical.” But that confirms again the naïve standing of the present state of play.

Let me say, by way of a provisional summary, that the infant’s intelligence must include prelinguistic

conceptual capacities (if discursive conceptual capacities are conceded to be socially acquired as well as essential in the successful mastery of language itself); and if that’s true, then we must have reasonably strong grounds for conjecturing that languageless animals of high intelligence may be characterized as rational creatures (in the species-specific sense), as possessing perceptual and experiential concepts (akin to those of the human infant), in virtue of which we cannot fail to attribute to them (on empirical grounds)—however anthropomorphized—powers akin to consciousness, inference, thinking, judgment, knowledge, confirmation, commitment, decision, and the like.

The human infant must be uniquely endowed within the evolutionary continuum of animal and human nature; and a phenomenology of the mental must be applicable, analogically, in *theorizing* about primate and nonprimate perception and experience, as well as at the level of human reportage. There is no other way to explain the bridge role of the human infant in understanding the achievement of enlanguaged persons. I emphasize the conjectural liberty we avail ourselves of here, largely because of the nearly Cartesian nature of recent applications of the Kantian treatment of discursive rationality and discursive conception—notably in the extreme reading of Kant advocated by John McDowell—in his Woodbridge Lectures and in his seeming (still extreme rationalist) “correction” of the Woodbridge Lectures, in, for instance, his essay, “Avoiding the Myth of the Given” (2009).⁷ But I must also mention in the same breath the effective omission of the *conceptual* powers of infants and animals in (to my mind) the more important, more fine-grained, more accurate and compelling account of the discursive treatment of rationality, conception, and consciousness (among enlanguaged persons) spelled out (along

⁷ The Woodbridge Lectures appear in final form in John McDowell, *Having the World in View: Essays on Kant, Hegel, and Sellars* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), Pt. I, pp. 3–65; “Avoiding the Myth of the Given” appears in the same volume, at pp. 256–272.

Husserlian phenomenological lines) by, for instance, Dan Zahavi. Zahavi's argument appears in his "Mindedness, Mindlessness, and First-Person Authority" (2013), which convincingly exposes the excessive claims of both McDowell and Hubert Dreyfus (in their well-known "debate" on the nature of the mental).⁸ I shall treat these discussions as symptoms of a residual Cartesianism (however innocently betrayed) that both McDowell and Zahavi (and nearly all contemporary discussants of the matter) share, as in the general use of the term "nonconceptual" to signify (without disjunction) both (say) phrases like "nonconceptual content" (as in the Kantian sense of distinguishing "sensibility" and "thinking" discursively) and what (contrary to Kant's and Husserl's usage) might have been defended in terms of the distinction between linguistic or enlanguaged concepts and specifically perceptual and experiential concepts that are either entirely prelinguistic or are conjoined with, or integrated into, discursive concepts. I take what I've already said—about the bridge role of human infants and the intelligence of the most advanced animals—that it must be a mistake to claim that prelinguistic infants (*a fortiori*, unlanguage animals) must lack altogether the use of nondiscursive concepts that appear to be essential to the abilities we cannot rightly deny them (on the empirical evidence). I'm persuaded that we cannot make sense of the abilities we attribute to humans who normally master speech, if we deny them the use of nondiscursive concepts. But, of course, the mere admission of nondiscursive concepts stalemates Kant's entire invention.

In any case, I see no way to explain discursive concepts if there are no perceptual or experiential concepts to build on. How could we possibly explain coming to understand the meanings of words and sentences? There's the strongest clue regarding the philosophical relevance of the Darwinian and post-

Darwinian discoveries. McDowell's theory (in the Woodbridge Lectures) counts among the most uncompromisingly Kantian approaches to the conceptual issue that must be addressed. From the start, Zahavi's treatment is simply restricted to the discursive form of rationality, though he gives the impression that he's speaking of concepts in unrestrictedly universal terms: that cannot possibly be true.

II.

I find it entirely plausible to construe an infant's ability to point meaningfully (in contexts of societal instruction or rearing), as both intentional and communicative, while remaining entirely prelinguistic. Laboratory apes have been taught to master human pointing as well; but that alone does not *confirm* that apes engage in discourse or are already persons. Tomasello confirms that apes in the wild also point intentionally. If so, then he defeats his own conjecture. I have already conceded that the solidarity of elephant troupes, baboon sieges of South African farmhouses, female lions hunting together among antelope show definite signs of learned planning and cooperation ("we"-intentionality, as Tomasello has it), without inventing or mastering or even requiring language—and, of course, without functioning as selves. Hence, when an "evolutionary anthropologist" like Tomasello declares: "Language is the capstone of uniquely human thinking, not the foundation,"⁹ I find it perfectly reasonable (though potentially confusing) to agree with him wherever he is able to demonstrate that there are (say) uniquely human biological gifts (or gifts modified by socially contrived *prelinguistic* learning) that we take to contribute to laying a proper ground for the invention and mastery of language (or something akin); but I believe Tomasello nonetheless fails to come to terms with the thesis of the artifactual nature of persons, *within* the bounds of the hybrid intertwining of biological

⁸ See Dan Zahavi, "Mindedness, Mindlessness, and First-Person Authority," in Joseph K. Shear (ed.) *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell-Dreyfus Debate* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 320–343.

⁹ Tomasello, *A Natural History of Human Thinking*, p. 127.

and cultural forces that yield no more than *prelinguistic* (though still distinctly semiotic) gains: the gains of prelinguistic infants, for instance, approaching some first steps in learning a language. I'm persuaded that Tomasello's own thesis—"the so-called shared intentionality, or 'we' intentionality thesis" (his own expression), which, as I say, he appears to share with theorists like John Searle and Margaret Gilbert—takes the confused, or equivocal form of mingling primate- and person-level expressions. For his part, Searle tends to endow *his* human primates with nearly all the essential capacities of evolved persons: the invention and mastery of language is therefore not a problem for him. Tomasello does not go that far, but he fails to explain the difference nonetheless.

But if this much is true, then I, for one, am prepared to concede cognitive powers to advanced, though languageless, animals—including the "use" of nonlinguistic analogues of inference, judgment, evidentiary confirmation and the like. Nevertheless, the discursive modeling of such processes *cannot be more than heuristic*, as we now understand animal intelligence. If you acknowledge Kanzi's achievements, then the bonobos may occupy a range of functioning comparable to that of the transitional powers of very young children beginning to acquire a language. If you allow the argument, then, I daresay, Kanzi and the human infant bring us to the edge of defeating Darwin and Kant (*a fortiori*, contemporary Kantians and Husserlians like McDowell and Zahavi) in the same breath.

Broadly speaking, any acceptable reconciliation of the opposed pairings I've begun with—mind and body, thought and world, law and history, and the rest—within the bounds of nature, without foundational or normative privilege of any kind, construing all such dualities coherently and consistently, preserving the continuum of animal and human powers, counts, in most of the idioms of the new millennium's philosophies, certainly in my own intrusive ideology, as thoroughly pragmatist in sweep, or at least as compatible or companionable with

same. My thought is that this presumption may very well define the most promising, most arresting philosophical ventures of our age. In any event, I confess I start from this corner of the world and find myself entirely open to provisional, selective, and functional recruitments (in terms of pragmatist affinities) among initially alien or opposed figures and doctrinal proposals that would have seemed impossible to countenance a short while ago: for instance, regarding Descartes, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Frege, Peirce, Russell, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Carnap, Quine, Strawson, Davidson, Sellars, and Wittgenstein at the very least. By and large, these are the salient figures I find I must conjure with especially—that is, genealogically, *not* in any way to prejudge the merit or importance of any of their contributions. But then, to suggest that there may be pragmatist affinities between such figures and the classic pragmatists will no longer seem odd.

Furthermore, *if* prelinguistic infants actually learn the remarkably complex languages that they do, then that already yields a more than plausible reason to think that language must preserve a relatively simplified channel of mongrel discourse (a kind of *lingua franca* or creole, within any home language), to ensure quotidian fluency—which, nevertheless, also enables progress in the direction of whatever complexities any viable home language is bound to introduce children, strangers (and others) to. It's my contention that the analysis of our quotidian world (the world of persons) is probably too difficult for man to fathom quickly or better than he fathoms any part of physical nature, to yield up the opportunistic instrumentalities of the verbal evasions, elisions, vacuities, compromises, doubtful nominalizations, even benign falsities of the mongrel discourse he learns to live with. Just try, for instance, to state clearly and simply what thinking is—supposing (always) that we do think! It seems we cannot function in ordinary life (as the rationalists suppose we can) if we must rely in some significant measure (as I suggest we must) on the admittedly risky resources of mongrel discourse—that's to say, with all the familiar

imperfections of ordinary language that we blithely accommodate. Cultural infancy surrounds us forever: I shall try to show, shortly (in the briefest way), that both Wittgenstein and Frege were profoundly mistaken at the very outset of their superb but irreconcilably opposed philosophical contributions regarding the adequacy of ordinary discourse.

Let me collect the summary force of the single premise I've begun with here, before proceeding further. I mean: the easy confirmation of the human infant's ability to master natural language and to take up its intended function as an apt member of a society of mature persons, who already share a language and a culture. To admit the human infant's empirical achievement—I call it empirical rather than innate or transcendental—is, I say, to implicate the impossibility of accounting for the emergence of the integral human being (as we characterize ourselves) in evolutionary terms wherever the story is strictly confined to biological processes alone (in effect, in accord with the defects and omissions of Darwin's original vision and neo-Darwinian achievements). But to admit that much reminds us of the strategic importance of perceptually and experientially grounded concepts (accessible to human infants and nonhuman animals alike, in their respective ways, *if* concepts are admitted at all, within the continuum of canonical evolution.

I add at once—opportunistically, though for good reason—that this single admission exposes a mortal weakness in Descartes's and Kant's (and, indeed, in all classical rationalist) theories of cognition, *of both* metaphysical and methodological sorts and reminds us (thereby) of the ultimate good sense of a cognate part of Aristotle's "metaphysics" of cognition (hence, of concepts laxer than the linguistic or discursive). For it may indeed be true—I take it to be true—that even the so-called mastery of "rational" (or enlanguaged) concepts (think, here, of "pure" and "applied" or "impure" arithmetic and geometric concepts, in the setting of Cartesian, Kantian, and Fregean speculation)

may well depend on the enabling mastery of perceptual and agentive fluencies, even where putatively "pure" concepts appear to have no direct conceptual entanglement with perceptual concepts—granting, always, of course, that there *are* concepts and that many animal species are capable of high intelligence: as in inference, memory, learning, invention, skill, instruction of the young, judgment, purposive behavior—in effect, in forms of rationality "below" (as we say) the level of linguistic competence.

There is, in fact a remarkably instructive passage excerpted from Wilfrid Sellars's "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," that Robert Brandom interprets along decidedly rationalist lines, that draws conviction, loosely, from jointly Kantian and Fregean sources, and that marks the resurgence (post-Rorty) of rationalism in our own time, as itself a form of pragmatism. I mean the somewhat muffled (various) rationalisms of the so-called "Pittsburgh School" (to include Brandom, Sellars, John McDowell, and, by courtesy, Richard Rorty), which, chiefly advanced by Brandom and Sellars, attempt to link in a fresh way Kantian and Fregean variants of the rationalist vision. That precise maneuver—which obliquely recalls Rudolf Carnap's (Frege's student's) related gesture during the positivist surge in the early decades of the twentieth century—is both alluring and difficult to isolate as genuinely autonomous in a way that might compare favorably with Frege's own treatment of mathematical reasoning in his *Begriffsschrift*: a matter more obscurely bruited in Sellars's early forays and reclaimed (never more than programmatically) by Brandom. (I'll come to the passage in a moment.)

But it's also meant to strengthen our sense of "discovering" laxer rational rigors of justified judgment regarding the normative "methodological framework" of reasoning, potentially among any and all inquiries, including the work of the human sciences and practical life, beyond any merely hit-or-miss search for first-order empirical evidence. I find a collision of motives here, that stamps the projects of these newly minted rationalists

(Kantians or Fregeans) of our own day, who envision a fusion or reorientation of pragmatism involving distinctly Fregean options. Their ventures need to be reappraised—though, frankly, I regard them, at best, as heuristic (when viewed as ideal possibilities) more than as evidentially reliable (if actually applied in the real world). The intended rationalist precision trails off into undeniable vagueness in Sellars’s treatment and appears as something of a mongrel intrusion in Brandom’s open admission that (as yet) we cannot support claims firmer than suggestive analogies (as with AI simulation).

Here, in a distinctly candid moment, Brandom goes to some lengths to qualify the would-be rationalist grounding of his own inferentialism—in particular, his version of “material inference” (Wilfrid Sellars’s term). He says, for instance, that “autonomous discursive practices *essentially* and not just *accidentally* involve...at least some material [that is, ‘nonlogical’—non-formal] inferences”; that they “must [also] have some vocabulary that can be used *observationally*, in reliably differentially elicited noninferential reports,” that pertinently bear on the appraisal of “materially good and materially bad inferences” (Brandom’s wording). Furthermore, and most important, Brandom concedes that, “material inference is in general *nonmonotonic*,” that is, “*defeasible*, by [reference to] collateral circumstances that thereby count as special [disciplines, *not* actually algorithmic or rule-governed or nomological: medicine, law, the human sciences, say, contrasted with ‘formal logical systems’, mathematical reasoning, and thoroughly mathematized physics perhaps].”

Brandom speaks here of “special sciences” (medicine, say) because, although they are “defeasible,” such disciplines are not completely determinate or closed in the way of rules or criteria or *ceteris paribus* clauses, by which their apparent claims, conjectures, and judgments may be reliably defeated. These, then, provide instances of “material inference” (in Sellars’s sense, coopted by Brandom), that are firmer than the quotidian inferences of ordinary pragmatic situations: so much so, I’m inclined to believe, that the latter tend to

dwindle into uncertain disputations. Here, speaking loosely, “defeasibility” is a consideration that applies improvisationally, case-by-case; but, if so, there may be no point in collecting such cases if what we want is a degree of rigor of at least the sort found among the “special sciences” or something akin. To put the point in the frankest way: the *Begriffsschrift* analogy loses persuasive force wherever our conception of what to count as material inference itself becomes quarrelsome, as, along observational and pragmatic lines, Brandom candidly concedes the point.

Roughly speaking, nonmonotonic inferences do not answer to any “definite totality of possible defeasors”; so-called *ceteris paribus* clauses mark “an unavoidable feature of ordinary material inference” and cannot be expected to convert the nonmonotonic into the monotonic.¹⁰ All such constraints point, inexorably, to the ineliminable influence of perceptual, experiential, intentional and other psychological factors in appraising the relatively unruly nature of Brandom’s (and Sellars’s) would-be inferentialism, as being in any way a reasonable and sufficiently convincing analogue of Frege’s mathematical reasoning.¹¹ This explains, in part, Brandom’s motive for merging (in some measure) Kant’s and Frege’s very different purposes.¹²

But then, having made these good-faith concessions, Brandom turns the tables on the loose empiricist impulse of classic pragmatism, by isolating, as well as possible,

¹⁰ Robert B. Brandom, *From Empiricism to Expressivism: Brandom Reads Sellars* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), pp. 163–164.

¹¹ Compare Danielle Macbeth, *Realizing Reason: A Narrative of Truth and Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), especially Ch. 7.

¹² For the briefest evidence of Brandom’s view of Carnap’s role in linking Kant’s and Frege’s rationalisms, see Brandom, *From Empiricism to Expressivism*, pp. 22–24. Brandom’s conjectures about the Fregean themes of both Sellars and Carnap appear to rest on very slim grounds. See, also, for some oblique references to Carnap’s and Wittgenstein’s responses to Frege’s logic, Daniel Macbeth, *Frege’s Logic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 182–184 nn6–7. Macbeth does not pursue the Carnap connection in her *Realizing Reason*.

the would-be *rationalist autonomy* of the inferentialism of the so-called “framework” of reasoning in *any* inquiry aspiring to scientific standing, that might compare favorably with the would-be autonomous (rational) rigor of mathematical thinking (largely *à la* Frege). There’s the regressive impulse that I espy; for there’s a world of difference (certainly, after Frege) between the autonomy of, say, arithmetic reasoning about “pure” numbers (or, better, about functions and higher-level law-like relations among functions), possibly even extending to parts of mathematized physics—though Brandom is dubious. What I say here (and mean to support, however obliquely, in closing this lecture and opening the second) is that our acknowledging that the human person is an artifactual transform of the human primate and that the invention of language is, whatever else it may have become, a *mongrel*, motley, multifunctional instrument for effective survival among the things the human being claims to perceive and manipulate for its own purposes: an insuperably limiting constraint on the would-be autonomy of rational thinking at any level of inferentialist construction. The conjectured inferential (“metaphilosophical”) structure of the “framework” (the logical space, so to say, of any well-ordered rational inquiry) is bound to be, I daresay, a Fregean-like self-deception if (as with Brandom) material inference is already acknowledged to be thoroughly nonmonotonic,¹³

¹³ The most up-to-date defense that Brandom offers appears in *From Empiricism to Expressivism*, Ch.4. on the significance of Frege’s mature conception of his own *Begriffsschrift*—logically and philosophically. I’m very much in debt to Danielle Macbeth’s *Realizing Reason* (already remarked) as well as her earlier, thoroughly convincing (more restricted) *Frege’s Logic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), especially Chs. 2–3. Nevertheless, in acknowledging Frege’s revolutionary conception of the “science of logic,” I confess I’m not persuaded that there is a similar “pure” structure at the “metaphilosophical” level governing “material inference” among any familiar empirically or agentively (intentionally) qualified disciplines, such as Carnap, Sellars, Brandom, and (if I read her correctly) Macbeth are inclined to favor. I take the pros and cons of such extensions, however, to define one of the most strategically placed philosophical disputes of our age. If I

by and large quarrelsomely defeated or justified, and likely to be explained ad hoc and individually.

I must apologize for the heavy language here. (It’s not my choice.) Nevertheless, one begins to see that the revival of Fregean rationalism—*a fortiori*, the much-too-easy union of Kantian and Fregean rationalisms (Brandom’s temptation, which he finds embedded in Sellars’s conjectures)—is ultimately regressive, certainly anti-Darwinian, not at all interested in the artifactuality of the human person or of natural language itself. The issue may seem alien at first, until you recall that Brandom believes he’s fashioning a rationalist version of pragmatism, the intended ground of his proposed inferentialism—an “analytic pragmatism,” as he calls it, partly based on his reading of Rorty and Sellars—meant to displace the executive role of the continuum of the animal and the human and the primacy of “experience” (at once animal and human), as they appear in both John Dewey’s and Charles Peirce’s accounts of the classic phase of pragmatism.

Turn back, then, to Sellars: Sellars’s sentences (the ones in question, which Brandom cites) run as follows: the first,

In the dimension of describing and explaining the world, science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is and of what is not that it is not. (§41)

the second,

[In] characterizing an episode or a state as that of *knowing*, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state, we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says. (§36)

Brandom’s gloss is instructive, even as it narrows the sense of what Sellars offers:

understand the issue correctly, the question that remains asks whether there are Fregean “thoughts” that govern all truth-seeking inquiries. I suppose that there are not. (See *Frege’s Logic*, §§4.5, 5.4). The upshot is that we remain constrained by the insuperable paradoxes of First Philosophy.

The first passage [Brandom says], often called the “*scientia mensura*,” expresses a kind of scientific naturalism. Its opening qualification is important: there are [he warns us] other discursive and cognitive activities besides describing and explaining. The second passage says that characterizing something as a knowing is one of them. And indeed, Sellars means that in characterizing something even as a believing or a believable, as conceptually contentful at all, one is doing something other than describing it. One is placing the item in a normative space articulated by relations of what is a reason for what. Meaning, for [Sellars] is a normative phenomenon that does not fall within the descriptive realm over which natural science is authoritative.¹⁴

There’s the fateful—and futile—argument: the authority of the thoroughly “rationalist” treatment of the inferentialist structure of the “framework” of any inquiry that rightly counts as “knowing” is indeed normative and, therefore, *not* descriptive (as remarked by both Sellars and Brandom), in spite of the fact that it *applies* to the descriptive materials of natural and human sciences and practical life in the large, and even in more informal inquiries (say, art criticism and historical interpretation). I cannot see the force of Brandom’s maneuver, which is well on its way to becoming a distinctly fashionable option in current philosophical circles. But is it really viable? I venture to say (without meaning to change the thrust of the question) that Brandom’s account may be even more anti-pragmatist (and regressive) than Rorty’s post-modernist rebuttal.

It’s precisely here (§36) that Sellars permits us to glimpse the unmarked “Fregean” themes that Brandom adopts in his own inferentialism: the escape from the reflexive *a priori* of epistemology, the dependence of the empirical sciences on a rationalist “metaphilosophical” platform, and the “Fregeanizing” of Kantianism itself.

¹⁴ The sentences cited from Sellars appear in Wilfrid Sellars, “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,” *Science, Perception, and Reality* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 127–196. (The essay is published also as a separate volume, edited by Brandom, under the same title, with Harvard University Press, 1997.) Brandom’s gloss appears in his *From Empiricism to Expressivism*, pp. 30–31.

Rorty’s charge maintains that pragmatism utterly fails wherever philosophy fails utterly; Brandom’s charge (which is partly Rortyan) argues that classic pragmatism’s empiricist inclination must be subordinated to the reclamation of pragmatism’s rightful rationalist ground (à la Kant, Frege, or what may still be recovered from Carnap, Wittgenstein, and Sellars—but not, at least not readily, from figures like C.I. Lewis, Quine, and Davidson, or, for that matter, McDowell). Brandom characterizes the project as “programmatically.” But I think that means that it need never be recovered as more than heuristic—which is to say, it remains effectively unsecured.

In any event, I see no way to explain the construction of a plausible “framework” argument (which Brandom hardly means to be a primal or privileged “foundation”), that may be viewed (instead) as a quasi-Fregean posit that enables us to see just how the natural sciences and the whole of practical reasoning may be brought back to their rationalist paradigm, without disallowing the play of dependent, non-inferential, empirical resources that count in important ways toward the realist success of our cognitive claims. There’s the plan Brandom believes he shares with Sellars. The “framework” applies to an empirical domain (however narrowly or generously construed) without the need for any equilibration between its rationalist and empiricist premises and powers.

Something analogous is said to obtain in mathematics, in spite of the fact that mathematical entities do not belong to the empirical world. Put more frontally: I take Brandom’s gloss to be, at the very least, intended to be a proper analogue of Frege’s mature reading of his own *Begriffsschrift*, applied (now) to the empirical and practical world (featuring the systematic primacy of material inference). I don’t, however, find any compelling evidence that the analogy *works*! I marvel at the *Begriffsschrift*’s achievement. I admit that theoretical physics is remarkably mathematized. I think we cannot refuse inferentialism an important place at the philosophical rostrum. I don’t deny that the law of identity ($a=a$) is, “transparently,” necessarily true. But

the whole of the argument falls short of the mark in several decisive ways: for one thing, there's no real progress in demonstrating that pragmatic contexts must yield promisingly on the monotonicity matter; and, secondly, there seems to be no close-enough analogy between "metalinguistic" reasoning drawn (say) from physics and from arithmetic.

You must bear in mind that "to place an item in a normative space" (as Sellars has it) is to place it (consulting doxastic or cognitive attributions that characteristically trigger nonmonotonic complications) in a decidedly uncertain—possibly unmanageable—inferential space. (Sellars is cannily silent here: Brandom is bolder, decidedly more voluble, distinctly more adventurous and unguarded.) In any case, I find no satisfactory argument in either Brandom or Sellars, or among their champions. In fact, Brandom himself emphasizes the chronic nonmonotonicity of "framework" speculations; Sellars effectively ducks the question. I mean the question, whether "rational" constraints on the "framework" of inferences within one or another science or practice of pragmatic know-how can be convincingly treated as free of any perceptual or experiential or cognitively qualified agentic considerations. Brandom's admission of the nonmonotonicity of such inferences would seem to belie any supposed such autonomy.

I therefore take the argument to fail, and with it the thesis of the would-be primacy of inferentialism itself: Brandom's doctrine cannot deliver the resource it promises: it puts in question pragmatism's animal grip on what has come to be called the realist "friction" of perception and experience. If you add to this the effect of the self-referential paradoxes of epistemology, the informal, fluxive, tacit, and abductive complexities of cognition, you become aware again of the completely unearned assurances of any would-be alliance between Kantian and Fregean rationalism. You must see that I'm combatting contemporary forms of rationalist regression in a post-Darwinian world. Hans Sluga pertinently reports that:

Frege believed that arithmetic is necessary for the justification of scientific induction. It is also necessary [he claims] for the formulation of the more abstract empirical laws. To prove that arithmetic truths are *a priori* is therefore to prove not just that there are isolated pieces of *a priori* knowledge, but that *a priori* knowledge is fundamental to empirical knowledge.¹⁵

Nevertheless, we must ask ourselves: should Frege's conviction be dismissed in the same spirit in which Quine dismisses the comic futility of Peirce's effort to support his infinitist fallibilism by the arithmetic of infinitesimals? Does Thomas Kuhn's now more-or-less admired conception of discontinuous paradigm shifts among the natural sciences count as a decisive objection to the presumption of Fregean "Thoughts"? I believe it should. Bear in mind that, in a relatively late paper (1918–19), "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry," Frege offers the following extraordinary claim:

All sciences have truth as their goal; but logic is concerned with it in a quite different way from this. It has much the same relation to truth as physics has to weight or heat. To discover truths is the task of all sciences: it falls to logic to discern the laws of truth.¹⁶

Extraordinary invention! What could possibly be said in support of, or in opposition to, the "extension" of the Fregean paradigm within ordinary science?

Of course, *if* Frege could have made the doctrine convincing, the *a priori* "ground" of science would have been confirmed. But is there any prospect of that? Here, the vulnerability of Frege's *a priori* more than matches the presumption of Kant's *a priori*. When, in *Making It Explicit*, Brandom qualifies his admiration for Wittgenstein's *Investigations*, by insisting that Wittgenstein was surely mistaken in denying that there is a "downtown" in a continually changing city—meaning

¹⁵ Hans D. Sluga, *Gottlob Frege* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 103.

¹⁶ Gottlob Frege, "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry," trans. A.M. and M. Quinton, in E.D. Klemke (ed.) *Essays on Frege* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968), pp. 507–535, at p. 507.

by that metaphor, as I conjecture, that Wittgenstein failed to grasp the Fregean import of his own figurative comparison with the analysis of language (particularly, the analysis of language games)—he rides roughshod over Wittgenstein’s more than dissatisfaction with what he (Wittgenstein) takes to be both Russell’s and Frege’s conceptual distortions.

I should perhaps also mention that it is relatively easy to see that Brandom largely follows Sellars in the latter’s well-known, very early paper, “Language, Rules, and Behavior,” (1949), in which Sellars is thinking of Frege’s doctrine, but pursues it in application to what he seems to treat as Kant’s anticipation of something akin to Frege’s rigor; and yet Sellars does not (if I remember correctly) actually mention Frege in the paper, or offer more than an enthusiastic affirmation of a doctrine (in good part) close to the Fregean notion I’ve cited. Sellars attempts there to explicate what he means (I conjecture), reading Frege, or Kant with Frege in mind, when he says:

The mode of existence of a rule is as a generalization written in flesh and blood, or nerve and sinew, rather than pen and ink. A rule, existing in its proper element, has the logical form of a generalization. Yet a rule is not *merely* a generalization which is formulated in the language of intra-organic process.... What do [the] special features in the formulation of rules indicate [that is, terms like “correct,” “proper,” “right”]? They give expression to the fact that a rule is an embodied generalization, which, to speak loosely but suggestively, tends to make itself true. Better, it tends to inhibit the occurrence of such events as would falsify it.¹⁷

This may well be the most Fregean of Sellars’s papers, though you sense its oblique indecision: what Sellars has in mind is the idea that, normatively, the laws of “thought” (Fregean “thoughts”) are the necessary rules of truth, but that if we treat them only empirically, they may be denied or defied—which we may override only if

¹⁷ Wilfrid Sellars, “Language, Rules, and Behavior,” *Pure Pragmatics and Possible Worlds: The Early Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, ed, Jeffrey F. Sicha (Atascadero: Ridgeview, 1980, 2005), pp. 117–134, at p. 123.

we grasp the rational function of the linguistic symbols we use in thinking “about *this* world in *every* rule-regulated respect”¹⁸: that is, *a priori*, as necessarily true. As far as I can see, neither Sellars nor Brandom—nor Frege, nor Kant—fulfills the promise of the necessary laws of truth, which would yield something more than the hope that there must be an analogue of the main argument of the *Begriffsschrift* governing the sciences and ordinary discourse. I believe that that is simply a mistake—and that Sellars and Brandom have followed Frege over the philosophical cliff. The best advice seems to be to return at least to the final, more manageable, more rewarding empiricist informalities of Peirce (which I collect under the terms of abductive reasoning—or even within the terms of the mythic, the less than perspicuous exuberance of Dewey’s and James’s empiricisms). In any event, the connective argument is plainly missing. No one can point to the “metaphilosophical framework”—the analogue of the *Begriffsschrift* model—that may be shown to constrain all truth-seeking inquiries.

I reject the *scientia mensura* thesis as flatly false and unsupported by Sellars’s own arguments. I have, elsewhere, shown that Sellars, effectively and fairly and against his own persuasion, undermines the likelihood that what he calls the “scientific image” will ever be able to replace (or eliminate) the conceptual vision of the so-called “manifest image”—in which such concepts as person, intentionality, normativity, language, and discursive cognition or judgment find their natural home.¹⁹ We cannot do without these notions *and* they are obviously irreducible in their own right. (This single theme haunts all of my own arguments and begins to explain what, in the second lecture, I take up in the

¹⁸ Sellars, “Language, Rules, and Behavior,” pp. 123–124.

¹⁹ See Sellars, “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,” p. 173. The argument appears in my “Reading Wilfrid Sellars’s ‘Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man’, with Robert Brandom at One’s Side,” forthcoming in *Wilfrid Sellars: Idealism and Realism* ed. Patrick Reider, with Bloomsbury Press. I address Peirce’s abductive alternative in my *Toward a Metaphysics of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2016), Ch. 3.

analysis of that all-important instrument we call ordinary discourse.)

If Sellars's argument favoring the "scientific image" over the "manifest image" fails, then Brandom's reading of the import of Sellars's "space of reasons" thesis also fails. There's a mortal gap in Brandom's brief, which, as far as I can see, Brandom nowhere fills successfully: it appears in different guises in Sellars and McDowell and haunts the whole of Western philosophy. The counter-consideration runs this way: that, although it's entirely reasonable to claim that normative disjunctions are not descriptive or explanatory, *their actual use* and application in the natural and human sciences and practical life characteristically require and presuppose the empirical world. (My own solution argues that if and when we place normativity within "the space of reasons," we *place* the space of reasons within the space of a "form of life"!)

In this sense, the extension of cognitive and rational abilities to languageless animals also warns us *not* to regard reason as a determinate cognitive "faculty" addressed, autonomously, to a "real" world (say, a world of numbers) *or* the "actual" world (*the* world we say we occupy and the sciences address—or, even more straitly, the actual world, completely enlanguaged). We must, therefore, make room, species-wise, for the rationality of animals.

My ultimate guess is that Kant was a less-than-secret member of the clan of rationalists he publicly opposed; that Frege was a reemboldened rationalist, with insufficient resources for extending the *Begriffsschrift* argument to broadly empirical or commonsense inquiries (as in the sciences and practical matters); that Sellars was a conflicted distant cousin of the rationalists, fashionably drawn to the Fregean option (perhaps by Carnap) but unable to confirm the common rationalism of Kant and Frege; that Brandom (somewhat poisoned by Rorty's destructive purism, but always his own man) simply commits himself heroically and impatiently to Frege, believing he will be able to provide a satisfactory

premise in his own time—that is, so as to reinterpret the entire narrative of Western philosophy in accord with a suitable union of Fregean and Kantian rationalism that need not deny empiricism's diminished resources. Furthermore, I believe that what all this would require is likely to be much too much to believe possible—and, thus, to be ultimately regressive (not altogether unlike Kant's original strategy).

How, for instance, could the Fregean model, or the Kantian, be reconciled with the contingent artifactuality of the human person? Or, alternatively, what metaphilosophical necessities are we bound by that could possibly disallow our relying on the salient vagaries of consensual experience—in favor of rationalism? I find no contest here. Canonically, pragmatism and rationalism are irreducibly opposed. Still, one hears it said, in our own time, that pragmatism requires a metaphilosophical "framework" of argumentative premises cast quite strictly in terms of rationalist necessities akin to the necessities of Frege's model; and, alternatively, that Kant himself is best construed in terms of a thoroughly naturalized or pragmatized transcendentalism. I hold instead that the first option is no more than a conceptual masquerade and that the second yields no more than a false Kant.