ABSTRACT

John McDowell's debates about concepts with Robert Brandom and Hubert Dreyfus over the past two decades reveal key commitments each philosopher makes. McDowell is committed to giving concepts a role in our embodied coping, extending rational form to human experience. Brandom is committed to defining concepts in a way that helps make rationality distinct. And Dreyfus is committed to explaining how rational understanding develops out of lesser abilities we share with human infants and other animals (I call this "Dreyfus's challenge"). These commitments appear irreconcilable. I argue to the contrary that they are, in principle, reconcilable, provided we give up their shared "rationalist" commitment to the idea that the rational use of language is necessary for having concepts. First, I exploit Brandom and McDowell's debate to motivate abandoning the rationalist commitment. Next, I exploit Dreyfus and McDowell's debate to establish the need for a broader notion of concepts to answer Dreyfus's challenge. I turn to Elizabeth Camp's broader notion of concepts as spontaneously, systematically recombinable representations, and establish that it lacks resources for distinguishing human rationality. To resolve that weakness, I integrate Camp's notion of concepts with John Haugeland's theory of objectivity, which does make rationality distinct. Finally, drawing my integration of Camp and Haugeland, I propose a way to answer Dreyfus's challenge, which I call "relaxed holism." The core of relaxed holism is a cumulative, developmental sequence of three related cognitive abilities: representation, concepts, and metacognition. I argue that relaxed holism also reconciles both McDowell's commitment to giving normatively governed concepts a role in embodied coping, and Brandom's commitment to defining concepts in a way that helps make rationality distinct.

ANSWERING DREYFUS'S CHALLENGE

Toward a Theory of Concepts without Intellectualism

by

Kevin Temple

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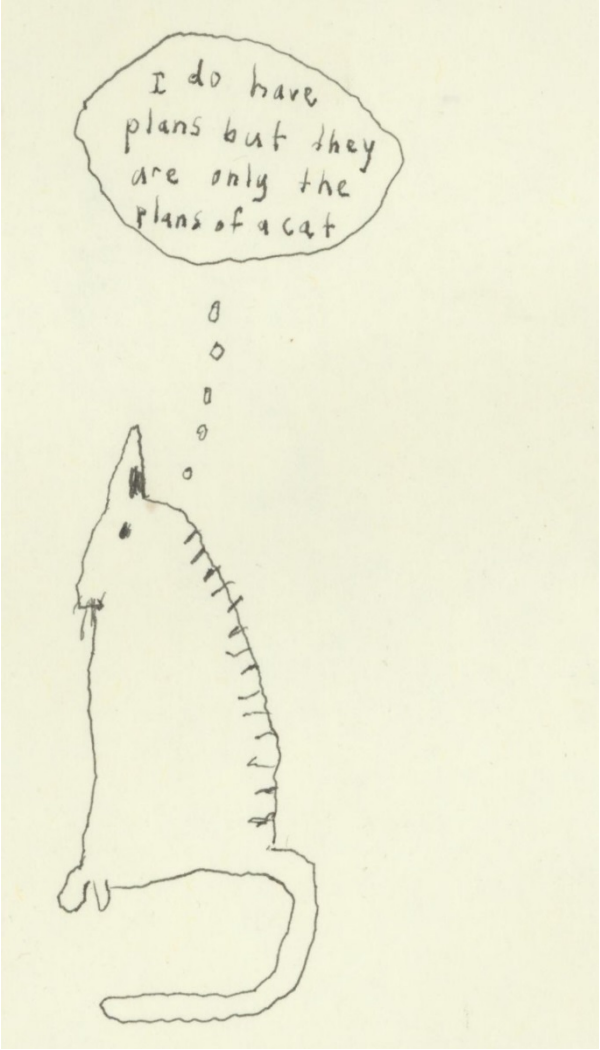
In abstract, nothing prevents us from dissecting surrounding material into fragments constructed in a manner completely different from what we are used to. . . . [W]e could build a world where there would be no such objects as ‘horse,’ ‘leaf,’ ‘star,’ and others allegedly devised by nature. Instead, there might be, for example, such objects as ‘half a horse and a piece of river,’ ‘my ear and the moon,’ and other similar products of a surrealist imagination.

— Leszek Kolakowski, “Karl Marx and the Classical Definition of Truth”



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For Martha, Liam, and Helena,
with love and gratitude for their support and herculean patience.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Roughly, in order of appearance:

Hubert Dreyfus

OMM	"Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers Can Profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise."
RMM	"The Return of the Myth of the Mental"
MPM	"The Myth of the Pervasiveness of the Mental

Robert Brandom

SDR	"The Structure of Desire and Recognition: Self-consciousness and Self-constitution"

John McDowell

MW	*Mind and World: With a New Introduction*
WM	"What Myth?"
MMD	"The Myth of the Mind as Detached"
AMG	"Avoiding the Myth of the Given"

Elisabeth Camp

PTW	"Putting Thoughts to Work: Concepts, Systematicity, and Stimulus-Independence"

John Haugeland

IAS	"The Intentionality All-Stars"
TRF	"Truth and Rule-Following"

Josef Perner

URM	*Understanding the Representational Mind*

INTRODUCTION

1. The Manifest Image

One of the central problems of modern philosophy of mind is a conflict between two ideas. The first idea is that we have rational, objective knowledge of the world. In order to be rational and objective, our capacities for such knowledge must somehow rise above biological necessity and stand up as distinct from the natural, physical order of the world. The second idea is that because we are nonetheless part of the natural order of the world—a particularly successful (so far) species of great ape—these same rational capacities must be in some sense continuous with those of other animals, most immediately with those of other great apes. I assume that we cannot give up either idea. How can both ideas be true?

Wilfrid Sellars offers an answer to this question in his "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man." To Sellars, these two ideas represent two "complete picture[s] of man-in-the-world" that constitute "two differing perspectives on a landscape," and the solution is to embrace a "stereoscopic vision" in which they "are fused into one coherent experience."[1] The "manifest image" of "man-in-the-world" is committed to the first idea I introduced above, emphasizing our self-understanding, our rationality, our ability to think and "measure one's thoughts by standards of correctness, of relevance, of evidence" (ibid. 6). The manifest image embraces an "irreducible discontinuity" in the world, i.e., a "radical difference in level between man and his precursors" (ibid.). Moreover, "the

[1] Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," 4.

primary objects of the manifest image are persons," making them inextricable components of the landscape onto which it opens us (ibid. 9). Finally, the manifest image contains the alleged paradox that "man couldn't be man until he encountered himself" and—in a delightful phrase—this paradox evinces "the last stand of Special Creation" (ibid. 6). In other words, to put it glibly, our commitment to making human rationality distinct, and all the complicating factors that come with that move, constitute a kind of religious hangover: we let the gods die but cling tenaciously to the god-given guarantee of our knowledge and rationality.

The "scientific image" of "man-in-the-world," by contrast, is committed to the second idea I introduced above and finds the difference between "man and his precursors" to be "reducible" (ibid.). While the manifest image is philosophical, critical, rational, and even fairly scientific, what makes the scientific image unique by comparison is that only the latter, Sellars claims, proposes "imperceptible entities, and principles pertaining to them, to explain the behavior of perceptible things" (ibid. 7). Today, armed with this scientific technique, we are surrounded by astonishing advances in comparative psychology and ethology, neuroscience, artificial intelligence, genomics, and biophysics that assume no such difference between us and our precursors and are succeeding at least in part because they assume no such difference.

How are we to fuse these two perspectives into a unified, stereoscopic vision? The task, in part, is to *not* allow one perspective to dominate or reduce the other—we cannot "look through a stereoscope with one eye dominating" because to do so is to distort the other image (ibid. 8). Rather, we must see how the two images join together and mutually reinforce one another (ibid. 40). The manifest image contributes rational intentions,

persons, and communities and the scientific image is left to define, explain, and characterize everything else (ibid.). In other words, "by construing the actions we intend to do and the circumstances in which we intend to do them in scientific terms, we *directly* relate the world as conceived by scientific theory to our purposes, and make it *our* world and no longer an alien appendage to the world in which we do our living" (ibid.).

One could argue that Sellars does unfairly squint into his stereoscope after all, that with this resolution he distorts the manifest image by putting undue emphasis on the scientific one. Instead, I would like to challenge something more basic to his scheme, namely, the idea that the manifest image can rest content with its paradox, its special creation, that it is simply a fact of the manifest image that it must have this internal incoherence. That is, I aim to spell out—in at least a preliminary way—how this irreducible discontinuity, this paradox of the manifest image, can be overcome, by explaining the steps involved in becoming rational in a novel way. And while it goes beyond the bounds of what I can defend here, I suspect that without that curious mark Sellars gives the manifest image, his distinction between it and the scientific image must collapse.

2. Three Incompatible Commitments about Concepts

While I have begun with Sellars, it is not my intention to engage him directly in this dissertation. Rather, I focus on three contemporary philosophers who have been influenced by Sellars, each of whom takes a different attitude toward the prospect of reconciling the two ideas I began with—again, the idea that there is something distinctive about rationality that sets it apart from other cognitive abilities and the idea that human

cognition must be in some sense continuous with that of other animals. The three thinkers are Robert Brandom, John McDowell, and Hubert Dreyfus. These philosophers share a number of ideas inherited from Sellars, not least of which is a rejection of the Myth of the Given, i.e., the idea (in its epistemological form) that it is possible for mental contents or a mental state to serve as a foundation for knowledge and yet be completely independent of all of our other knowledge. I join them in rejecting the Myth of the Given. For my purposes, though, the most important mark of Sellars's influence on them is a commitment these three philosophers make to the ontological priority of language, i.e., the idea that to have a concept is to have mastered the use of a word.

Along with this shared commitment, each of these three philosophers makes a further commitment that appears irreconcilable with the commitments of the others. Briefly, Brandom is committed to clearly defining the function of concepts in a way that helps make rationality distinct. His goal is to differentiate and demarcate rationality from all other animal or mechanical capacities, and he defines concepts narrowly, to explicitly support that goal. McDowell is committed to a minimal form of empiricism that gives normatively governed concepts a role in experience and action. His goal is to make coherent the idea that, sometimes, to experience something is to experience it as a reason for thinking something is true. In the extended debate between Brandom and McDowell that began in the 1990s, it becomes clear they agree that their two commitments are irreconcilable. That is, they agree that one cannot both define concepts in a way that helps us clarify what makes rationality distinct and also retain a minimal form of empiricism.

Dreyfus—the least Sellarsian of this trio—is committed to explaining how rational, conceptual understanding emerges out of lesser abilities we share with human infants and other animals. In making this commitment, Dreyfus breaks with the Sellarsian view in an important way, because his commitment asks us to overcome the paradox Sellars finds in the manifest image. Explaining how rational understanding develops out of lesser abilities step-by-step would effectively eliminate the apparent discontinuity that Sellars thinks characterizes the manifest image. Dreyfus inherits this commitment from his existential phenomenological heroes, Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. He reads them—as do I—as committed to overcoming the discontinuity in what Sellars calls the manifest image. Importantly, though, he notes that neither succeeds in keeping that commitment, and nor does he himself offer a solution. Rather, in his critique of McDowell's *Mind and World*, Dreyfus issues a general challenge to the philosophical community to find a way to keep this commitment. He closes out his critique thus:

> The time is ripe … to begin the challenging collaborative task of showing how our conceptual capacities grow out of our nonconceptual ones—how the ground floor of pure perception and receptive coping supports the conceptual upper stories of the edifice of knowledge. Why not work together to understand our grasp of reality from the ground up? Surely, that way we are more likely to succeed than trying to build from the top down.[2]

McDowell, for his part, rejects the challenge. In his view, to be seized by this challenge is to have failed to understand *Mind and World.* In the extended debate between Dreyfus and McDowell that Dreyfus prompts with his essay, it becomes clear that their respective commitments are just as irreconcilable McDowell's and Brandom's. And although

[2] Dreyfus, "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers Can Profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise," 61. This is the challenge that names and defines the task of this dissertation.

Dreyfus and Brandom have not had a debate, Brandom makes it quite clear that he rejects Dreyfus's challenge too.

I accept Dreyfus's challenge. However, I also think Brandom's and McDowell's respective commitments are worth keeping; and therefore, work that aims to reconcile all three commitments is worth doing. Brandom's commitment to the idea that, whatever concepts are, our definition of them ought to help us understand what is distinctive about our rational grasp of the world is intuitively right and appealing for anyone inclined to retain what is best about what Sellars calls the manifest image. McDowell's commitment to the idea that our experience is imbued with concepts and thereby takes on a rational form is also intuitively compelling because, thereby, he saves the basic, empiricist insight that experience provides a rational constraint on what we believe. And Dreyfus's commitment is intuitively compelling too, insofar as one agrees that it is untenable to accept a paradox at the heart of the manifest image. If these three commitments are incompatible, we must reject some or all of them. If they can be reconciled, there is hope for overcoming the paradox in the manifest image. But, can they be reconciled?

My claim is that they can. In this dissertation, I aim to show that one can answer Dreyfus's challenge while retaining Brandom's and McDowell's respective commitments by rejecting the crucial Sellarsian commitment all three make to the idea that having language is necessary for having concepts. Abandoning that idea opens up the space required for redefining concepts in a way that helps to make rationality distinct, explaining how normatively governed concepts play a role in our experience and action, and giving a step-by-step account of how discursive, rational understanding comes on the scene. I am not proposing a step back into the Lockean atomism about concepts that

Sellars critiques, but rather, I am proposing a step forward that offers a richer and more complex account of the conceptual holism that Sellars, Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus all espouse.

Atomism and holism (not to mention molecularism) are discussed in many ways in philosophy of mind, from a variety of perspectives.[3] I appropriate the terms for my own use in the following way: atomism is the idea that concepts can have a meaningful use independently of other concepts, whereas holism is the idea that concepts only have a meaningful use insofar as they are recombined with other concepts. Astringent holism—the view held by Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus—is the idea that the capacity for explicit, rational discourse is necessary for the meaningful use of concepts to be possible. Relaxed holism holds that the meaningful use of concepts does not require a capacity for explicit, rational discourse. The view I propose in Chapter V is a form of relaxed holism because the animal use of concepts in problem solving requires that representations that count as concepts are systematically recombinable: all use of concepts derives meaning from systematically recombining concepts with other concepts. One advantage of this view is that, on the whole, it complements rather than undermines Sellarsian ways of thinking about linguistic meaning.[4]

3. Outline

In Chapter I, I investigate the debate between Brandom and McDowell and make two main arguments. First, I argue that McDowell's idea that concepts function in our

[3] For a useful overview, see Jackman, "Meaning Holism." For a discussion of atomism as the abstractionism set forward by the "Lockean Picture," and the responses this view elicits from Sellars, Brandom and McDowell, see also the chapter on belief in Maher, *The Pittsburg School of Philosophy: Sellars, McDowell, Brandom*, 20–41.
[4] This advantage, I hope, becomes clear in Chapter V.

experience does not make sense under an intellectualist (Sellarsian) definition of concepts. Second, I argue that Brandom's denial that concepts can function in our experience leads to a bizarre dualism in human awareness: we must have two distinct forms of awareness, but these two forms cannot contribute anything to each other. If we accept their debate on its own terms, there appears to be a forced choice between these two problematic positions. Yet I argue that rejecting their shared, intellectualist approach to concepts suggests a way to avoid the forced choice while also retaining their two respective, attractive commitments about concepts, i.e., the role McDowell gives to concepts in experience and Brandom's idea that our definition of concepts should help us explain what makes human rationality distinct.

Chapter II takes a similar approach to the debate between Dreyfus and McDowell, also involving two main arguments. First, I argue that Dreyfus's rejection of McDowell's conceptualism involves a notion of concepts so narrow that it would prevent Dreyfus—should he ever attempt it—from answering his own challenge. Second, I argue that while McDowell's notion of concepts is broader and more flexible than Dreyfus's, it does not offer resources for answering Dreyfus's challenge either (admittedly, this is not a surprising result considering that McDowell rejects Dreyfus's challenge).

Taken together, Chapters I and II suggest an alternative, non-Sellarsian, non-intellectualist approach to concepts will be required if there is any hope of answering Dreyfus's challenge while reconciling Brandom's and McDowell's attractive commitments. Here I turn to the work of Elisabeth Camp, who makes concepts instrumental in the problem-solving abilities of intelligent animals, including (it appears) great apes, corvids, elephants, and cetaceans. Camp argues that, on an empirically useful

approach to concepts, conceptual cognition is a capacity with distinct advantages, shared by a small cadre of species. However, only in humans do concepts come to be incorporated into a capacity for explicit error recognition and an objective understanding of the world. Crucially, she draws on the intellectualist tradition to require that, to count as conceptual, cognitive abilities must be capable of functioning independently of environing stimuli. She defines concepts as revisable representations that can be spontaneously, systematically recombined. That is, to use concepts is to think, and to think is to have active control over what we represent and when. Camp's definition of concepts lays the groundwork for relaxed holism, which I propose as a way to reconcile the respective commitments of Dreyfus, McDowell, and Brandom in Chapter V.

While Camp critiques the Sellarsian, intellectualist tradition for setting the bar for having concepts too high, she does not answer their epistemological motivation for doing so. Consequently, her instrumentalist theory of concepts leaves us wondering how objective knowledge is possible. In Chapter IV, I turn to the work of John Haugeland—another intellectualist by Camp's standards—and argue that Haugeland's theory of objectivity can be profitably integrated with Camp's theory of concepts.

Armed with the combined strengths of Camp's theory of concepts and Haugeland's theory of objectivity, in Chapter V, I return to the commitments of Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus, to reconcile them under the banner of relaxed holism. First, I propose a way of answering Dreyfus's challenge, explaining in a series of steps how our rational understanding develops out of lesser abilities we share with other animals, by drawing on both instrumentalists and intellectualist insights into our

cognition. I then argue that my proposed way to answer Dreyfus's challenge allows me to accommodate both McDowell's and Brandom's respective commitments.

4. Shared Components

The view I defend holds that concepts are components of our rational form of cognition, but that we nonetheless share these components with nonrational animals. This is not an especially intuitive idea, even perhaps for philosophers willing to embrace *some* kind of continuity between human and other animal minds. After all, human and other animal minds can be continuous in other ways (say, with respect to perception or emotion), yet discontinuous with respect to the components of rational thought. Before I begin, then, let me try to motivate the idea that we share the parts of our rational, objective comportment to the world, but not rationality itself, with prerational humans and nonhuman animals.

The idea that "rationality" is a thing we have whose parts are *not* shared with other animals should be at the very least disturbed by the reasonable assumption that objectivity—in the sense of explicitly holding that our thoughts may be true or false independently of what we believe of them—is perhaps only a few thousand years old. So what was there prior to objective knowledge? Think of all those tens of thousands of years of linguistic activity that was certainly "instrumentally rational" (spontaneous, goal-oriented, problem-solving) without being objective. I imagine this takes us back into the worst (yet, perhaps historically, the most powerful) way of settling beliefs that Charles Peirce lays out: following the leader.[5]

[5] I refer to Charles Peirce's "The Fixation of Belief," where he suggests the "method of authority" for fixing our beliefs stands behind many of the greatest monuments of human history (Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Volume V: Pragmatism and Pragmaticism*, CP 5.379-80).

In light of our natural history, from an evolutionary perspective, it is surely more reasonable to suggest that our cognitive abilities have been selected for conformism and normativity and socially instituted rule following, and not for a rational, objective grasp of the world in any robust sense. For evidence that nature has selected an irrational, un-objective set of cognitive proclivities—ways of using our conceptual grasp of the world—see the extensive array of cognitive biases that keep us half-blind even when we are adept at recognizing them. The full-blooded objectivity that makes rationality *rationality* in the robust sense that animates Sellars, Brandom, McDowell, and Haugeland, is essentially tradition: a tradition of negotiating our existential commitments.

To me, this suggests that the elements of human cognition, upon which we depend for everything rational we do, did *not* evolve for us to have objective knowledge of the world at all. Rather, it evolved for us to adapt to and navigate our physical and social environments—to survive. How different is the cognitive ability to entertain multiple representations of things and situations one encounters (an ability seen in all great apes and likely other species too) from metarepresentation, i.e., the ability to represent representations as representations?[6]

Assuming our metarepresentational abilities are shaped and constituted in large part by social practices suggests there must be, in our natural history, a mutual dependence between the development of metarepresentational practices and the concurrent development of our neurobiology. Like climbing a vertical rock chasm, suspended between two walls, we gained the heights of human rationality through exerting sustained pressure on two sides: advancing ever-more demanding cognitive

[6] I refer to the notion of metarepresentation developed by Josef Perner, which I explain and put to use in Chapter V, §2.3.1. See Perner, *Understanding the Representational Mind*, 7.

practices, on the one hand, and naturally selecting for greater neurobiological capacities, on the other hand.

The point is that our human, metarepresentational, rational abilities—even though they no doubt require a neurobiological architecture that only we have—depend upon a presumably unbroken *tradition* of humans attributing to each other what Josef Perner calls a representational theory of mind. Without that tradition, we would fall back into a merely animal form of life. We share the components of our rational cognition because our rational, human grasp of the world is something we do with and for each other as humans, with only animal capacities—specialized though they must be—with which to do it. To appropriate and complicate Gadamer's metaphor of distance: nature supplies us with some distance from our environment, as the conceptual grasp of our surroundings we deploy in our problem-solving; yet a human form of life opens up a second, further distance from our own conceptual grasp of an environment, giving us a world, a product of human culture so powerful it has been written into the neural architecture of our bodies.

CHAPTER I: BRANDOM VERSUS MCDOWELL

1. Epistemological Intellectualism

John McDowell and Robert Brandom have long debated whether experience contributes anything to knowledge. Nonetheless, they share an epistemological concern: both view traditional empiricism as a failed enterprise, leaving open the question of how we can justify our empirical judgments. Traditional empiricism fails because, in their view, it presupposes mind-independent foundations of empirical knowledge where there can be none.[7] Without a coherent alternative to traditional empiricism, it's not clear how we can have empirical knowledge at all. This shared epistemological concern leads both to focus on the conditions for the possibility of having objective knowledge of the world. Both define concepts and judgments narrowly, as functions for knowing the world, for the express purpose of explaining just how it is that we can justify empirical knowledge. To this end, they treat the rational use of language as necessary for having concepts and making judgments, and thereby treat concepts and judgments as the exclusive domain of rational animals. I'll call this their rationalist commitment.

The problem with their rationalist commitment is that it leaves them with the problem of explaining how our ability to perceive and responsively adapt to the world could be something we share with other animals and prelinguistic humans, thereby creating and enforcing a gap between rational and all other animals. That is, by emphasizing what is distinct about rational cognition, Brandom and McDowell enforce a

[7] In this, they follow Sellars's critique of the "Myth of the Given." I spell out the issue in detail, below.

strong break between it and nonrational forms of cognition (using "cognitive" in a broad sense).[8] An excessive emphasis on the epistemological dimension of human cognition can make it seem as if capacities that aren't involved in objective knowledge shouldn't qualify as cognition at all or are wholly different from our intellectual form of cognition. I'll call Brandom and McDowell's enforcement of a gap or break between rational and nonrational capacities or animals "intellectualism." Brandom and McDowell's intellectualism is a direct result of their rationalist commitment, i.e., the commitment to making the rational use of language necessary for having concepts.

Intellectualism is nothing new, and neither is opposing it. McDowell himself has encountered a fair amount of resistance to the version of it that he espouses.[9] Against their intellectualism and the rationalist commitment it arises from, it is intuitively appealing that rational and nonrational animals share some cognitive abilities because the cognitive capacities of rational individuals develop by degrees from their prerational infancy, and the cognitive capacities of our species developed by degrees from our prerational ancestors. Put simply, our rational form of cognition is surely distinct, but

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[8] As I explain below, the "break" between the rational and the nonrational occurs in different places in McDowell and Brandom. McDowell makes the break primarily between rational and nonrational *animals*, because he thinks the perception and action of rational animals belongs to their rationality. Brandom makes the break primarily between rational and nonrational *capacities*, and restricts rational capacities to linguistic capacities of rational animals; for him, the perception and action of rational animals involve only nonrational capacities.

[9] Hubert Dreyfus accused McDowell of intellectualism, sparking their debate (see Dreyfus, "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers Can Profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise"). Ironically, Dreyfus himself buys in to aspects of intellectualism, as respondents to their debate have recently pointed out (Noë, "On Overintellectualizing the Intellect"; Rouse, "What Is Conceptually Articulated Understanding?"; Siewert, "Intellectualism, Experience, and Motor Understanding"). Noë, Siewert, and Rouse all draw on Merleau-Ponty's broad critique of intellectualism in *Phenomenology of Perception*. In Chapter III, I draw on another attack on Brandom and McDowell's intellectualism arising from research into animal cognition that offers compelling reasons to attribute concepts to animals, in Camp, "Putting Thoughts to Work: Concepts, Systematicity, and Stimulus-Independence." Camp, arguing against McDowell and others, usefully defines concepts as representations that can be actively deployed independently of environing stimuli and spontaneously recombined in various ways, showing how concepts thereby satisfy Gareth Evans' generality constraint "in a robust way" ("Putting Thoughts to Work: Concepts, Systematicity, and Stimulus-Independence," 291).

intellectualism seems like an excessive way of making that distinction. If there were a theory that made rationality distinct and answered the epistemological concern that motivates Brandom and McDowell without the rationalist commitment that leads to their intellectualism, then this theory would be much more compelling: it would provide the advantage of intellectualism—securing a theory of knowledge that responds to the failure of traditional empiricism—without the drawbacks of intellectualism.

To be fair to Brandom and McDowell, both admit the cognitive capacity of rational animals must be, in some sense, a development of more basic animal capacities, but they tend to be vague and evasive as to how while over-emphasizing the break between rational and nonrational capacities. Again, this break frustrates any appeal to similarities between nonrational and rational cognitive capacities that can help to explain the development of the latter from the former. It is by defining concepts for the exclusive purpose of making and justifying knowledge claims that Brandom and McDowell enforce this gap. In their view, the essential function of concepts lies in the normative activity of "giving and asking for reasons," and because no nonrational animals give and ask for reasons, they have no use for concepts. Therefore, they do not have concepts, no matter how intelligent they seem. Putting things this way overlooks the considerable nuance of Brandom's and McDowell's respective views, but it nonetheless presents the core of their intellectualism.

Here again are three terms I've introduced:

(i) Epistemological concern: Brandom and McDowell's shared concern that traditional empiricism has failed, requiring a new account of how we can justify our empirical judgments.

(ii) Rationalist commitment: Brandom and McDowell's shared commitment to defining concepts and judgments as essentially functions of the rational use of language and objective knowledge.

(iii) Intellectualism: A specific result of the rationalist commitment that imposes a break between rational and nonrational forms of cognition.

Part of the aim of this dissertation, again, is to show that we do not need Brandom and McDowell's rationalist commitment to satisfy their epistemological concern, which means we can respond to the failure of traditional empiricism without embracing their intellectualism. Rather than impose the difference between rational and nonrational cognition by granting concepts to the former and denying them in the latter, I propose to give concepts to both, and explain the difference in terms of the self-relation of conceptual capacities that underwrites language, self-consciousness, and rationality.

Brandom alludes to and dismisses as a dead end something similar to what I am proposing here. However, when Brandom considers the option of overcoming the break between rational and nonrational capacities, he only considers it in the context of upholding the rationalist commitment. Thus, for Brandom, the challenge is to "assimilate conceptually structured activity to the nonconceptual activity out of which it arises," and he argues that to emphasize assimilation is to be "in danger of failing to make enough of the difference" between the conceptual and the non-conceptual.[10] Later, he characterizes John Dewey's attempt at assimilation as failing to "demarcate," i.e., to define and explain, the difference between conceptual and non-conceptual practices.[11] To be clear, this challenge that Brandom defines is not the one I am taking on, at least, not exactly. Unlike Brandom, I am giving up the rationalist commitment, leaving me free to take up

[10] Brandom, *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism*, 3.
[11] Brandom, *Perspectives on Pragmatism: Classical, Recent, and Contemporary*, 28.

what Brandom sees as the challenge of assimilating the conceptual to the non-conceptual as, instead, the challenge of assimilating the rational form of the conceptual to the nonrational form of the conceptual. This is not a merely terminological dispute. The substance of the dispute is over whether the rationalist commitment is necessary for answering the epistemological concern. If it is not—if some revision of their respective ways of answering the epistemological concern can be made to work without the rationalist commitment—then the rationalist commitment can be discarded, and with it the problem of intellectualism should evaporate.

Part of the aim of this dissertation is to give an outline for a theory that answers the epistemological concern that motivates Brandom and McDowell to make their rationalist commitment without, myself, making it. The aim of this chapter is to work through the debate between Brandom and McDowell to assess advantages and disadvantages of their respective views (for my purposes), and to foreground the rationalist commitment as a shared assumption that blinds them to the kind of view I aim to develop. In §2, I give an overview of their debate to highlight issues that pertain closely to my concerns. In §3, I address Brandom and McDowell's disagreement over whether or not concepts are exclusively functions of judgment. There I show that while McDowell's minimal empiricism is intuitively appealing, his ideas about how concepts function in experience—his older idea of propositional form and his later idea of conceptual intuition—contain serious problems. By comparison, I show that Brandom's clarity about the function of concepts in judgment makes a much stronger case for his position. In §4, I illuminate a strange and overlooked aspect of Brandom's position that requires rational animals to have two distinct forms of awareness, and compare it to

McDowell's position, showing that the latter is more intuitively appealing. Finally, in §5, I draw attention to their shared rationalist commitment, and suggest that rejecting that commitment offers a way to retain strengths from both Brandom's and McDowell's positions while avoiding the intellectualism that makes the views of both philosophers unattractive. Brandom's strong commitment to making rationality distinct, and McDowell's commitment to retaining a minimal form of empiricism can be reconciled—despite all appearances from their debate—provided one can answer their epistemological concern without their rationalist commitment.

2. Overview: Externalist Rationalism vs. Minimal Empiricism

Brandom and McDowell both follow Wilfrid Sellars in rejecting the "Myth of the Given." The Myth of the Given, again (in its epistemological form), is the idea that it is possible for mental contents or a mental state to serve as a foundation for our knowledge and yet be completely independent of all the rest of our knowledge.[12] While they both reject the myth, Brandom and McDowell have engaged in nearly two decades of debate over how to reject it. In print, this debate began shortly before the publication of McDowell's *Mind and World* and Brandom's *Making It Explicit*. McDowell attacked the kind of epistemological externalism that Brandom went on to endorse in *Making It*

[12] Sellars develops his rejection of the Myth of the Given in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*. Willem deVries gives a clear, general statement of the myth that covers different forms it takes: The Myth of the Given takes the given to be both (1) "*epistemically independent*, that is, whatever positive epistemic status our cognitive encounter with the object has, it does not depend on the epistemic status of any other cognitive state. Notice that epistemic independence does not follow from immediacy (not being inferred from other knowledge) unless the only form of epistemic dependence is actual inference"; and (2) "*epistemically efficacious*, that is, it can transmit positive epistemic status to other cognitive states of ours" (DeVries, *Wilfrid Sellars*, 98–99). Carl Sachs argues that one can attack the epistemological myth and miss the deeper target Sellars means to attack: a more general, semantic form of the myth that is "upstream" from epistemological concerns. The semantic Myth of the Given takes certain elements of cognition to have the "form and content" required to play a role in rational discourse while also supposing they are wholly independent of other elements of rational discourse (*Intentionality and Myths of the Given: Between Pragmatism and Phenomenology*, 22).

Explicit, and Brandom responded to that attack.[13] Their debate continued with four exchanges in which they review each other's monographs and reply to each other's reviews.[14] Eventually, this conversation grew to encompass roughly fourteen essays, covering questions about what counts as a rational constraint on observational knowledge, what counts as an observation report, and including a detailed, exegetical dispute over how to read Sellars.[15]

McDowell is committed to a form of minimal empiricism that retains an epistemological role for experience in justifying perceptual judgments.[16] His Sellarsian twist on empiricism is to claim that what we perceive in experience depends in a certain way upon prior learning and knowledge. Brandom boldly rejects empiricism by denying any role for experience in justifying perceptual judgments.[17] He understands justification to come externally in a form of reliabilism: perceptual judgments can only be justified from another perspective that takes into account the reliability of the perceiver.

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[13] See McDowell, "Knowledge and the Internal"; Brandom, "Knowledge and the Social Articulation of the Space of Reasons." Brandom's epistemological externalism is his claim that perceptual judgments are not justified "internally" by appealing to the contents of one's experience, but rather only externally, in the endorsement of the judgment from another perspective that takes into account the reliability of the perceiver.

[14] Respectively, Brandom, "Perception and Rational Constraint: McDowell's Mind and World"; McDowell, "Reply to Gibson, Byrne, and Brandom," 290–98; McDowell, "Brandom on Representation and Inference"; Brandom, "Replies," 189–93.

[15] Brandom revises his initial review of *Mind and World* as "Perception and Rational Constraint." He expands on his criticism in a contribution (best known by its unpublished title, "No Experience Necessary: Empiricism, Non-inferential Knowledge, and Secondary Qualities") to a volume on *Mind and World*, in which McDowell also responds (see Brandom, "Non-Inferential Knowledge, Perceptual Experience, and Secondary Qualities: Placing McDowell's Empiricism"; and McDowell, "Responses," 279–81). Around the same time, Brandom looks to shore up his externalist view through a close reading of Sellars in "The Centrality of Sellars's Two-Ply Account of Observation to the Arguments of 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind.'" McDowell responds with "Why Is Sellars's Essay Called 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind'?" These arguments McDowell revises in an essay for a volume on Brandom's *Making It Explicit*, in which Brandom, in turn replies (see McDowell, "Brandom on Observation"; and Brandom, "Reply to John McDowell's 'Brandom on Observation': Chicken-Sexers and Ryleans").

[16] This is a central claim in his *Mind and World: With a New Introduction*. Henceforth MW followed by page number.

[17] This is an important idea in his *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment*.

McDowell agrees with Brandom that there may be some cases where justification only comes externally,[18] but insists we can justify typical perceptual judgments by appealing to experience. Their years of debate have not shifted Brandom's rationalist externalism nor McDowell's empiricist internalism. Neither gives any ground and it is difficult to see how either could convince the other to change his mind. [19]

The reason neither gives ground is that aspects of their respective commitments are fundamentally irreconcilable.[20] One central issue concerns how each understands rational constraint on empirical knowledge. Without rational constraint of some kind, we cannot have true beliefs about the world. McDowell is wholly committed to the idea that an observer is not merely constrained by the facts in what she can think about the world, but *rationally constrained.* Whatever we perceive in experience, we perceive it as shaping and limiting what we can rationally think is true of the world. As McDowell puts it, "responsiveness to rational constraint" means the observer has in view not just what

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[18] McDowell, "Reply to Gibson, Byrne, and Brandom," 297.

[19] McDowell does eventually modify his position and, while one could argue that it is a small concession to Brandom, it is not a concession that ameliorates his opposition to Brandom's view. Rather than suppose that an experience involves all of the concepts one can use in forming an explicit judgment, McDowell comes to think it enough that only some of the concepts be involved in the experience (McDowell, "Avoiding the Myth of the Given," 258). He suggests that the concepts we have for the proper sensibles of the senses (such as shape for sight) and common sensibles (that allow us to unify what is properly sensed) are the ones at play in experience. And rather than suppose that conceptual content is "propositional," i.e., that experiences arrange these concepts into propositional form, McDowell now thinks that the conceptual content of experience is "intuitional" ("Avoiding the Myth of the Given," 260). McDowell's revision in no way concedes Brandom's rejection of the epistemological import of experience. McDowell's view remains that our conceptual experience delivers intuitions of how things are such that we can, when appropriate, discursively judge that they are in fact how they appear to be.

[20] While it does not resolve their dispute, it is worth also noting their methodological differences. Brandom is explicitly engaged in a strongly reductive approach to see how far it goes, to see what we can learn; i.e., he sees himself as embracing "good Popperian methodology" ("Replies," 189). In his view, if we can see how rational constraint on perceptual judgments is possible without the complication of appealing to experience, then appealing to experience is an extravagance that requires its own justification ("Perception and Rational Constraint: McDowell's Mind and World," 255). McDowell's consistent, "quietist" approach to philosophy—aiming merely to show the fly the way out of the fly bottle—stands opposed to Brandom's more "scientific" approach. For McDowell, the fly bottle in question is the interminable oscillation between the Myth of the Given and positions (like both coherentism and Brandom's externalism) that attempt to remove experience from our epistemological picture. The simplest way to show the fly out of the bottle, McDowell thinks, is to concede that experience involves concepts. Given their respective approaches, neither thinker can find a reason to concede ground to the other.

she observes but also its "status as a rational constraint."[21] This is the kind of rational constraint that the Myth of the Given promised but failed to deliver (owing to its internal contradictions), and part of McDowell's mission from *Mind and World* onward is to retain the myth's rational constraint without the myth. To show how it is we have this kind of rational constraint without the myth, McDowell endows experience with a conceptual form of awareness to which we can appeal in justifying our perceptual judgments. From McDowell's perspective, to give up on this form of rational constraint means giving up precisely what empiricism got right about the relation of a mind to the world.

By contrast, Brandom takes the failure of the Myth of the Given to invite a wholesale rejection of empiricism and the kind of rational constraint that the myth had promised. It is enough to have causal constraint on our noninferential perceptual judgments about the world, and rational constraint on the justification of these judgments supplied by an external perspective. On this account, there is no epistemological need for McDowell's form of rational constraint, and therefore no need to imbue experience with concepts. That is, there is no need for McDowell's "notion of *conscious experience* that is prejudgmental, but nonetheless through and through *conceptually* contentful."[22] Brandom thus denies that experience can involve concepts because to involve concepts means to involve judgments. On Brandom's view, "to be aware of something … is just to apply a concept to it—that is, to make a judgment."[23] Concepts, as he defines them, have no function outside judgment.

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[21] McDowell, "Reply to Gibson, Byrne, and Brandom," 293.
[22] Brandom, "Perception and Rational Constraint," 369.
[23] Brandom, "Non-Inferential Knowledge, Perceptual Experience, and Secondary Qualities: Placing McDowell's Empiricism," 97.

This disagreement over rational constraint and the relation of experience to knowledge is a fundamentally irreconcilable aspect of Brandom and McDowell's mutual opposition. My aim in this dissertation is, in part, to defend something like McDowell's position insofar as the view I develop retains human experience as a rational constraint on knowledge. The problem with McDowell's position, however, is that his definition of concepts and conceptual form is at best unclear and at worst incoherent. By contrast, Brandom's definition of concepts, and the clear function he gives them, recommends his view over McDowell's even if McDowell's view is more intuitively appealing. The purpose of §3 is to bring out this contrast. In §5, below, I propose that abandoning Brandom and McDowell's shared rationalist commitment to defining concepts as essentially functions of a rational understanding of the world will make it possible to give a functional definition of concepts that matches Brandom's view for clarity and concision, while supporting McDowell's contention that normative, conceptually imbued human experience serves as a rational constraint on knowledge.

3. Against Propositional Form and Conceptual Intuition

For both McDowell and Brandom, concepts are *essentially* functions of rational, discursive judgment. This contention lies at the heart of their rationalist commitment because, under that commitment, concepts are essentially bound up with a rational, discursive understanding of the world, such that it makes no sense to attribute concepts to nonrational animals. Concepts are essentially functions of judgment insofar as it is only by learning to make explicit, discursive judgments that we come to possess concepts at all, and the function of a concept in a judgment—the use we make of it in giving and

asking for reasons—defines its meaning. McDowell and Brandom both endorse the Sellarsian idea that having a concept means mastering the use of a word.[24] Only as we are drawn into the normative world of language use, learn the language games of our community, and practice giving and asking for reasons do we come to have concepts at all. Thus we acquire concepts by acquiring the use of words. By claiming that for McDowell and Brandom concepts are *essentially* functions of linguistic judgments, I mean to highlight two commitments they make: (1) we only come to have concepts by performing acts of linguistic judgment that put words in propositional form; and (2) whatever other functions concepts might have (if any), their function in linguistic judgments is fundamental and basic to what a concept is.

While McDowell and Brandom agree that concepts are *essentially* functions of rational, discursive judgments, they disagree over whether concepts are also *exclusively* functions of judgment. By embracing the idea that concepts play a role in embodied coping, McDowell rejects the "exclusivity" view by assigning a role to concepts outside their essential function in judgment. By contrast, Brandom rejects the role McDowell assigns to concepts in experience, maintaining that concepts are not just essentially but exclusively functions of judgments. The reason Brandom restricts concepts to judgments is because, on his view, rejecting the Myth of the Given means abandoning empiricism altogether and thereby giving up on the idea that experience has any kind of epistemological function. The upshot is that Brandom recognizes no role or function for concepts in experience. McDowell extends a role for concepts outside judgment, again, to

[24] Brandom often repeats this mantra that to have a concept is to have mastered the use of a word. It never appears explicitly in Sellars (to my knowledge), rather, it is Brandom's way of parsing Sellars's argument in section "III. The Logic of 'Looks'" in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, 32–46. For examples of commentary where Brandom deploys his talk of "mastering," see Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, 146–47.

retain an empiricist grip on the world that does not fall into the Myth of the Given: it gives us experience that, because imbued with concepts, can function as a rational restraint on our empirical knowledge.

What I aim to show here is that, while preserving a minimal form of empiricism is more intuitively appealing than Brandom's wholesale rejection of it, McDowell's notion of concepts as operative in both experience and judgment creates significant problems for his view. The most glaring of these problems, for my purposes, is that by assigning his notion of concepts to experience and perception (beyond judgment) he undermines the distinction between experiencing and judging. If experience and perception are not clearly distinct from judgment, McDowell loses the friction between mind and world, the very source of the spark by which he means to keep empiricism aflame. In light of this problem, my aim in this section is to show that Brandom's more restrictive view of concepts is more compelling because it is much clearer and more coherent than McDowell's view. If we wish to uphold McDowell's commitment to retaining a minimal form of empiricism, we will need a more substantive explanation of how experience and judgments are distinct, which suggests we need a different notion of concepts than the one on which McDowell relies.

3.1 McDowell's View

According to McDowell, once we acquire concepts through normative linguistic practices, some of these concepts can come to have a life outside judgment, in experience.[25] That is, in the episodes of perceptual awareness enjoyed by sapient animals, some of the same concepts deployed in discursive judgment come to be involved in

[25] As I noted, McDowell revised his original view to now claim that only some of the concepts required for an explicit judgment play a role in our experience, and he suggests that these may be concepts covering proper and common sensibles.

embodied coping, *outside* of their role in judgment. Although McDowell's view has changed since *Mind and World*, he maintains this basic commitment. The embodied coping of sapient animals is rational insofar as it makes use of concepts that we use when we make discursive judgments.

The advantage McDowell sees in this view is that it marks a space between the Myth of the Given and coherentism by allowing what appears to be "given" in experience to be conceptual. This way, what we experience is already conditioned by concepts that are also involved in our justified, true beliefs; the rational, normative, systematic conceptual apparatus through which we think is drawn into giving rational shape to the very appearance of the world in our experience. For something to appear at all is for it to appear under or through a concept or concepts, and thereby have a place in this conceptual system. What recommends McDowell's view, according to him, is that experience—because conceptual—can function as a rational constraint on what we think of the world. As McDowell puts it, we need "reassurance that when we use our concepts in judgment, our freedom—our spontaneity in the exercise of our understanding—is constrained from outside thought, and constrained in a way that we can appeal to in explaining the judgments as justified" (MW 8). Things can and usually do (barring occasional instances of illusion) appear to us the way they actually are, such that it is left to us only to endorse or dismiss these appearances in making explicit, linguistic, perceptual judgments. Experience, imbued with concepts outside their role in discursive judgments, thereby becomes a tribunal for these judgments by providing rational constraint on what we can think of the world.

The ideas that make this view appealing are the same ones that make the Myth of the Given so appealing: the common-sense ideas that (1) our experience generally captures how things are such that (2) we can appeal to our experience to justify our empirical judgments and (3) our freedom of thought is rationally constrained by experience. McDowell retains what is intuitively right about the Myth of the Given while avoiding its internal contradictions and staving off what is intuitively unappealing about coherentism and Brandom's own advance on coherentism.

McDowell has presented two ways to support his common sense view—his original view from *Mind and World* and his more recent, revised view—and while both have attractions, both have flaws that make them difficult to accept, even for philosophers who join him in rejecting the Myth of the Given. Again, the crucial flaw (for my purposes) is that assigning concepts to experience and judgment undermines the distinction between them by making perception a form of judgment in all but name. This threatens the transcendental friction required for McDowell's minimal empiricism.[26] I'll treat both views in turn.

3.1.1 Propositional Form in Mind and World

In *Mind and World*, McDowell attributes rational form to the experience of rational animals. Experience is rational when articulated by normatively governed and propositionally structured conceptual content. On this view, the conceptual content of an experience, about which one might pass an empirical judgment justified by that experience, includes all of the concepts that would be involved in the judgment. Thus, if I had an experience that could support the judgment, "the water in the swimming pool is

[26] I am indebted to a work in progress by Jacob Browning and a conversation with Zed Adams for thinking through various critiques of McDowell's revised view in "Avoiding the Myth of the Given."

warm," then all of these concepts would have to be part of the experience, including "water," "swimming pool," and "warm." Moreover, these concepts would need to be propositionally structured in the experience itself, a specific instance of the general form *x is y*. This is what McDowell means when he claims "[t]he relevant conceptual capacities are drawn on *in* receptivity" (MW 9). He continues,

> We should understand what Kant calls "intuition"—experiential intake—not as a bare getting of an extra-conceptual Given, but as a kind of occurrence or state that already has conceptual content. In experience one takes in, for instances sees, *that things are thus and so*. That is the sort of thing one can also, for instance, judge. (MW 9)

For McDowell, seeing "that things are thus and so" means that perception takes a propositional form incorporating all of the concepts one would need to make an explicit judgment warranted by that experience. But what does it mean that experience has a propositional form? And if perception takes a propositional form, how is it different from judgment? McDowell largely declines to unpack and explain this idea in *Mind and World*, and problems arise when one attempts to make sense of it (assuming that McDowell's quietism is too quiet). Many commentators have attacked the idea that experience has a propositional form—including those who are sympathetic to the idea that experience is imbued with concepts.[27]

When McDowell proposes that the conceptual content of experience and perception takes on a propositional form, he starts with explicit judgments and then *retrospectively* supposes that the prior experiences that inform and can be made to justify those judgments involved the same propositional form and concepts. That retrospective

[27] See, for example Crary, *Inside Ethics: On the Demands of Moral Thought*, 98–99. As another example, Crary points to Collins, "Beastly Experience," 375–80.

move makes his proposal sound reasonable. The problem comes to light when we start with experience or perception and consider *prospectively* the nearly infinite possibilities of the explicit judgments that could be made with respect to the experience or perception in question. As Alice Crary puts it, "the descriptive possibilities [of a given experience] are unlimited, and none in particular is given."[28] Moreover, the countless, overlapping propositional forms that would have to shape all aspects of one's experiences about which one could later make explicit judgments have no function at all in the embodied coping itself, i.e., they have no role to play as we navigate the world.[29] We only ever actually make use of a tiny fraction of these otherwise useless propositional forms in the explicit, discursive judgments we make. The idea that our experiences are tagged with (what one might call) propositional and conceptual metadata for every possible judgment one might make in virtue of that experience is decidedly counterintuitive, even if it is working in service of the intuitive idea that some form of minimal empiricism is true. McDowell cannot motivate his view as a common sense approach while harboring this idea.

A second option for unpacking what it means for experience to have a propositional form avoids the indefinite array of propositional forms and concepts crowding experience by letting experience and perception function as an act of discrimination. On this option, only the concepts and propositional forms that I will actually come to use in a judgment are involved in the experience or perception. The problem is that there is no longer anything substantial to distinguish perception and judgment. An experience that is determinately shaped by concepts and propositional form

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[28] Crary, *Inside Ethics: On the Demands of Moral Thought*, 99.
[29] Dreyfus repeatedly makes a similar point in rejecting McDowell's conceptualism throughout their debate. I return to Dreyfus's critique in Chapter II, §§2-3.

is a judgment in all but name. There are no resources in *Mind and World* that allow us to differentiate them, on this option, other than the claim that experience and perception are passive and judgment is active, and McDowell leaves this distinction underdeveloped (again, for quietist reasons). He claims that, "In experience, one finds oneself saddled with content. One's conceptual capacities have already been brought into play, in the content's being available to one, before one has any choice in the matter. The content is not something one has put together oneself, as when one decides what to say about something" (MW 10). In practice, however, things are not so distinct. Consider the experience and perception of a bird watcher actively and eagerly watching birds—does she really find herself "saddled with content," passively undergoing a rearrangement of her concepts? Or consider the work of reading, wherein we may be saddled with content yet actively engaged in saddling ourselves, or in other instances of reading something very familiar, we may find ourselves actively thinking other thoughts while undergoing our own intonation of the words we know so well. Passivity and activity are evasive, not least because we can find ourselves to be passive with respect to our own ostensible activity. One can quibble with these and other examples, but the point is the ambiguity that leaves room for the quibbling. If the only thing separating experience and judgment is the distinction between passivity and activity, then experience and judgment are not sufficiently distinct because passivity and activity are not sufficiently distinct. At the very least, the distinction between passivity and activity in perception, judgment, embodied coping, and even rational discourse, is enormously complicated and thin appeals cannot suffice for McDowell's purposes.

Charles Travis critiques McDowell, more or less, for this failure in his "The Silence of the Senses."[30] On his view, by giving propositional form to experience, McDowell has essentially conflated experience and judgment. McDowell credits Travis with convincing him to give up on the idea that experience and perception have propositional form, leading him to revise his view.

3.1.2 Conceptual Intuitions in McDowell's Revised View

To spell out how his view has changed, McDowell writes:

> I used to assume that to conceive experiences as actualizations of conceptual capacities, we would need to credit experiences with *propositional* content, the sort of content judgments have. And I used to assume that the content of an experience would need to include *everything* the experience enables its subjects to know non-inferentially. But both these assumptions now strike me as wrong.[31]

Rather than suppose that an experience involves all of the concepts used by an explicit judgment it warrants, McDowell now thinks it enough that only some of the concepts involved in the explicit judgment are involved in the experience (AMG 259). Which concepts? Drawing on Aristotle, McDowell now suggests that we ought to "conceive experience as drawing on conceptual capacities associated with concepts of proper and common sensibles" (AMG 260). That is, our perceptual episodes of awareness are shaped by concepts that allow us to make distinctions in each of our senses (e.g., color concepts for vision) and concepts that compare and draw our senses together to yield our awareness of things in the world (ibid.).[32] And rather than suppose that conceptual content is "propositional," i.e., that experiences arrange these concepts into propositional

[30] Travis, "The Silence of the Senses," 79ff.
[31] McDowell, "Avoiding the Myth of the Given," 258. Henceforth AMG followed by page number.
[32] As for the common sensibles of vision, for example, concepts involved may include those of "shape, size, position, movement or its absence," ibid. 261.

form, McDowell now thinks that the conceptual content of experience is "intuitional" (AMG 261). Here, drawing on Kant, McDowell claims that the capacity to bring unity to representations in a judgment also brings unity to our representations in an intuition. It is worth quoting McDowell at length as he helps himself to aspects of Kant's view:

> In intuiting, capacities that belong to the higher cognitive faculty [of judgment] are in play. The unity of intuitional content reflects an operation of the same unifying function that is operative in the unity of judgments, in that case actively exercised. That is why it is right to say the content unified in intuitions is of the same kind as the content unified in judgments, that is, conceptual content. We could not have intuitions, with their specific forms of unity, if we could not make judgments, with their corresponding forms of unity. We can even say that the unity-providing function is essentially a faculty for discursive activity, a power to judge. But its operation in providing for the unity of intuitions is not itself a case of discursive activity" (AMG 264).

Setting aside how different this view is from Kant's, McDowell's idea is that, once we gain the vocabulary and rational, linguistic ability to make discursive judgments, the same conceptual ability to bring unity to our judgments engenders in us a kind of reflex that brings unity to all our intuitions. All (or almost all) of our experience and perception reflects this unity. On this view—although McDowell does not quite put it this way—concepts are defined as a function of cognitive unity. The concepts for proper and common sensibles make up the contents of intuitions, insofar as such content "is in the intuition in a form in which one could make it … figure in discursive activity" (AMG 265). In other words, experience and perception are made up of intuitions, where an intuition is a unified bundle of concepts, the same concepts we use to get a grip on proper and common sensibles when we make explicit, discursive judgments.

If the conceptual unity of a judgment takes a propositional form, and the conceptual unity of intuition is, by definition, not propositional, then the question remains in what does the conceptual unity of an intuition consist? McDowell's answer is that intuitions, with their conceptual content, allow us to experience or perceive the presence of an object:

> The concept of an object here is formal. . . . A formal concept of … a kind of object is explained by specifying a form of categorial unity, a form of the kind of unity that characterizes intuitions. (AMG 265)

McDowell's example of a possible, formal concept that captures the categorial unity of an intuition, inspired by the work of Michael Thompson, is the concept "animal" (AMG 265).[33] The idea is that when we are confronted by certain arrangements of shapes, colors, and movements, etc., these impart in our minds an intuition wherein the concept "animal" supplies the category under which other concepts for proper and common sensibles that typically pick up features of the animal are unified. Or as McDowell puts it, what he wants to say is that, in experiencing an animal,

> it is given to me in such an experience, not something I know by bringing a conceptual capacity to bear on what I anyway see, that what I see is an animal—not because "animal" expresses part of the content unified in the experience in accordance with a certain form of intuitional unity, but because "animal" captures the intuition's categorial form, the distinctive kind of unity it has. (AMG 261)

Again, the concept "animal" constitutes the unity of the intuition, whose contents presumably include other concepts for proper and common sensibles. But it is important to McDowell that we are not actively applying the category "animal" to other things

[33] The work McDowell has in mind is Thompson, "The Representation of Life."

already in view, rather, the whole picture is given at once, in an intuition. And again, experience and perception comprise such intuitions.

On his new view, then, McDowell has replaced the specific unity of propositional form with a more general kind of unity, the categorial unity he thinks characterizes the intuitions of rational animals. One advantage of McDowell's new view is that he has banished the problem that arose with my first way of unpacking his old view: by abandoning propositional form and all but a few, special concepts that play a role in experience, McDowell alleviates the worry that experience is plagued with superfluous "metadata" for every possible judgment one could make about it. However, McDowell's new view does not evade the problem that arose with the second way of unpacking his old view: McDowell is still relying on an altogether vague sense of the distinction between passivity and activity to separate experience and judgment. It is true that he can appeal to experience being intuitional, non-discursive, and armed with only a limited array of concepts, whereas judgment is propositional, discursive, and capable of deploying all kinds of concepts, but passivity and activity are essential to the distinction between experience and judgment. They are essential because, in order to get the kind of friction with the world that is the essence of McDowell's minimal empiricism, experience must be passive in clear contradistinction to the cognitive activity of judgment. And by characterizing experience and perception as involving intuitions that enfold in a categorial unity an array of concepts associated with proper and common sensibles—where concepts are the signature of the spontaneous activity of the mind in the Kantian tradition he draws from—McDowell undermines the distinction between the passive and

active use of concepts. Much like propositional perceptions before them, McDowell's conceptual intuitions are silent judgments in all but name.

3.2 Why Brandom Makes Concepts Exclusively a Function of Judgment

Brandom, contra McDowell, maintains that concepts are *exclusively* functions of judgment. Like Donald Davidson (whose "coherentist" view McDowell attacks in *Mind and World*), Brandom responds to the Myth of the Given by rejecting any role for experience in his epistemology. Thus, for Brandom, a mere environing stimulus (which, by itself, is nothing for us) doesn't yield a form of awareness in which something is "given" to us such that we passively receive it already clothed in our concepts, but rather, the environing stimulus prompts or elicits a reliable disposition to actively make a non-inferential judgment that something is the case.

Recall that the reason McDowell thinks concepts have a role in experience, outside judgment, is to get the kind of rational constraint on our perceptual judgments he thinks we need. For Brandom, who has an externalist view of rational constraint, there is no motivation to assign a role for concepts outside judgment, in experience. That is, for Brandom, McDowell's view appears to harbor an exotic, unwarranted assumption.

By making concepts exclusively functions of judgments, Brandom's account is more straightforward than McDowell's treatment of concepts. Brandom provides a wholly clear, definition of what concepts are and what they are for. It is this feature of Brandom's approach that McDowell's notion of concepts is lacking, and without a clear, definition of concepts that makes sense of how they play a role in experience, McDowell's minimal empiricism will remain a much weaker position than Brandom's bold rationalism.

4. Forms of Human Awareness

McDowell's idea that concepts play a role in experience belongs with his view that rational animals enjoy a single, seamless form of sapient awareness that involves both our embodied coping and the reflective form of awareness we have with discursive judgments.[34] All of it belongs to our rationality. I'll call this view "awareness monism." Brandom rejects awareness monism, leading him to an unattractive commitment: that rational animals have two distinct and disconnected forms of awareness (sentient and sapient). For Brandom, sentient awareness is a basic form of non-conceptual, nonrational awareness of the significance of things that guides the embodied coping of both rational and nonrational animals, whereas sapient awareness is rational and only comes with explicit, discursive judgments. I'll call Brandom's view "awareness dualism."

Awareness monism is attractive is because, on reflection, it seems intuitively right: it does seem as if we have a single form of awareness as we move between our embodied experience and reflecting on that experience to make discursive judgments about it. Awareness dualism is unattractive because it suggests that, contrary to our intuitions, the kind of awareness we have in our embodied coping is wholly separate from the kind of reflective awareness we have with discursive judgments.

In this section, first I show how Brandom's rejection of a role for concepts in embodied coping leads him into his awareness dualism, then show how McDowell's endorsement of a role for concepts in embodied coping yields his monism about awareness, before returning to what is attractive about awareness monism.

[34] Sapience is not one of McDowell's preferred words, but I use it interchangeably with rationality in reference to awareness. Following Brandom in my use these terms, there is no distinction between sapient awareness and rational awareness.

4.1 Brandom Excludes Concepts from Embodied Coping

Brandom denies that concepts play a role in our embodied coping. He argues our embodied coping is non-conceptual, governed by mere reliable, differential responsive dispositions. Therefore, in our embodied coping, we are a lot like many other animals, insofar as we share a basic form of awareness that Brandom calls sentient awareness. Sentient awareness is wholly distinct from the sapient awareness that we have in making discursive judgments and giving and asking for reasons.

4.1.1 Sentient Awareness

Sentient awareness, as Brandom understands it, is a mode of awareness enjoyed by sentient animals motivated by desire. Because sapient animals are also sentient, we should not be surprised that sentient awareness is also enjoyed by sapient animals, although Brandom does not make this feature of his view explicit. Sentient awareness is not, for Brandom, *meaningful* because it involves no concepts, no awareness of the inferential roles of words or of making normative commitments or claims.[35] Brandom reads both Heidegger and Hegel as putting forward non-Cartesian notions of sentient awareness as practical, behavioral classification.[36] I'll focus on Brandom's reading of Hegel as it pertains more closely to the issues I want to raise.

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[35] Brandom usually plays down sentient awareness, presenting it as just a dim, physiological function, a medium made up of "causally covarying sense impressions" that change with the variation of environing stimuli according to processes governed by physical and biological laws ("Perception and Rational Constraint: McDowell's Mind and World," 255). Elsewhere, however, he is more sensitive to the role of animal desire and the contingent significances that sense impressions can thereby yield. For the purposes of this paper, I am going to simply set aside this ambiguity in Brandom's work, to focus on his sophisticated development of sentient awareness understood in relation to animal desire.

[36] See Brandom, "Heidegger's Categories in Being and Time," 392; Brandom, "The Structure of Desire and Recognition: Self-Consciousness and Self-Constitution," 132 (henceforth SDR followed by pager number). It will be open to Brandom, of course, to complain that his view is not Hegel's view and that I am saddling him with what is just his take on Hegel's treatment of desire. I see my move as licensed by the fact that his brilliant reading of Hegel in this essay largely brings the theory of desire and recognition in the *Phenomenology* into conformity with his inferential semantics.

In working out the relation between desire and recognition in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Brandom draws attention to the form of awareness enjoyed by animals that desire such that *things can be something for them* (SDR 132). By this, Brandom means animals for which a thing can take on a significance for the animal based on the thing's ability to satisfy the animal's desires. These significances are revisable on the basis of the ability of what they pick out to satisfy the desire motivating the classification in question. If a thing taken to have a given significance satisfies the appropriate desire, that significance is reinforced; if the desire is not satisfied, the thing may lose that significance for the animal. This is the essence of what Brandom calls the "tripartite structure of erotic awareness": an attitude of desire, an action, and a significance (for example, hunger, eating, and food, respectively) (SDR 133). *Hunger* leads the animal to treat or classify something *as food* by *eating* it. This constitutes the erotic awareness of the thing eaten.[37]

Two points bear mentioning. First, a merely sentient animal might deploy a handful of such significances, for example, food (prompting eating), a predator (prompting flight or hiding etc.), and a mate (prompting mating behavior), but these significances can never form a system, a whole for the animal, because merely sentient awareness has no means to unify them as such. Second, sentient awareness is not awareness of a thing *as an object* properly speaking. In taking something to be food, the significance "food" constitutes the entirety of the awareness of that thing; it is not a substance with properties or a particular instance of a general kind of thing, as we understand things when we judge them explicitly, with language. All desire does is

[37] One advantage of Hegel's view is that it restricts awareness to a particular class of RDRDs; if all RDRDs generate awareness, Brandom remarks, then we are stuck with panpsychism and "pansemanticism" (because, for example, iron would be aware of water) (SDR 132).

classify things encountered in the world as either having such significance or not. By contrast, in our sapient, conceptual awareness, we have access to the thing taken to be food from multiple angles beyond our desire; i.e., the thing is an object with properties or a particular example of a universal. With sapient awareness, we can be disinterested; in merely sentient awareness, disinterest is not possible.

4.1.2 Sapient Awareness

Outside his work on Hegel, Brandom mostly discusses sentient awareness as a foil to help make sapient awareness distinct.[38] In doing so, he generally plays down his powerful insight into sentient awareness discussed above. Giving a clear account of sapient awareness has been one of his central aims for the past two decades. One place we can see that aim is in Brandom's efforts to summarize Kant's ideas in a way that directly expresses his own. For Brandom's Kant and Brandom too,

> the minimal unit of experience in the sense of sapient awareness is the judgment (proposition). For that is the minimal unit of responsibility. Concepts are to be understood top-down, by analyzing judgments (they are, he said, "functions of judgment," rules for judging), looking at what contribution they make to the responsibilities undertaken by those who bind themselves by those concepts in judgment (and intentional agency).[39]

The idea is that we only gain sapient awareness with a judgment that makes an explicit claim in the space of reasons. We are responsible for judgments in that we are expected to know the implicit commitments we are making by making such an explicit judgment, so that we can give reasons for holding them and know how to use them in making

[38] See the countless instances in which Brandom brandishes his parrot that can say, but not mean, "red."
[39] Brandom, "Intentionality and Language: A Normative, Pragmatist, Inferentialist Approach," 354.

inferences to other claims. Sentient awareness, by contrast, involves no judgment, no concepts, no responsibility, and no rules.

Another place to see Brandom's focus on making sapient awareness distinct is in his *Articulating Reasons*. There, he aims to provide

> a clear account of sapient awareness, of the sense in which being aware of something is bringing it under a concept … [i.e.] making a claim or judgment about what one is (thereby) aware of, forming a belief about it—in general, addressing it in a form that can serve as and stand in need of reasons, making it inferentially significant.[40]

Again, unlike sentient awareness, sapient awareness involves concepts, explicit judgments, and awareness of the inferential roles of words. We gain sapient awareness of a thing we encounter when our various environing stimuli reliably cause non-inferential perceptual judgments that actualize our conceptual capacities. Another thing this quote makes clear is that Brandom is not simply investigating our sapient awareness, but rather he sets out to make it absolutely clear and distinct—i.e., to demarcate it—from mere sentient awareness.

4.1.3 Brandom's Awareness Dualism

So far I've only shown that Brandom distinguishes sentient and sapient forms of awareness. Now I want to show that Brandom is at least implicitly committed to the idea that sapient animals have both sapient awareness and sentient awareness. The idea is that we move between these two forms of awareness as we make language-entry and language-exit moves. When we are not engaged in language use (either as inner speech or vocal expression), we are not sapiently aware, which suggests by default that we engage in all of our non-linguistic, unreflective activities by sentient awareness alone. Brandom

[40] Brandom, *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism*, 16.

nowhere (to my knowledge) denies that sapient animals have experience; he only denies that experience makes a contribution to our knowledge of the world. Experience, in this sense, is just what he calls sentient awareness, as described above.

The reason to think that sapient animals also have sentient awareness on Brandom's account—awareness, via environing stimuli, of significances shaped by desire—is that we, like other intelligent animals, perform many learned and complicated acts unreflectively. If the means to explain those acts in merely sentient animals is to appeal to sentient awareness, it follows that the same is true for sapient animals. The claim—implicit in Brandom's thought—is that sapient animals engage with their surroundings through merely sentient awareness, when between language-exit and language-entry moves, i.e., anytime we are *not* making anything explicit.

Can the significance of an entity in our sentient awareness positively contribute to that entity being conceptualized through an explicit judgment, and thereby register in our sapient awareness? Brandom seems committed to saying no. Sentient contributions to sapient awareness would run against his two-ply view of observation that non-inferential, perceptual judgments are directly elicited by environing stimuli.[41] It would introduce a third ply, the sentient significance: non-inferential, discursive judgments, at least in some cases, would not be directly caused by environing stimuli but would follow from sentient significance, an intermediary which itself was caused by environing stimuli. But Brandom nowhere considers this possibility. Rather, Brandom is committed to two claims. First, he is committed to the claim that sapient animals have two possible responses to environing stimuli: sentient awareness of the significance of things for

[41] Brandom, "The Centrality of Sellars's Two-Ply Account of Observation to the Arguments of 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,'" 349–50.

action and sapient awareness of the meaning of things for thought and discourse. Second, Brandom is committed to the claim that sentient significance makes no contribution to sapient thought, i.e., awareness dualism.

Brandom is not troubled by his awareness dualism. There are certainly methodological reasons that he does not try to bridge the gap between sentient and sapient awareness,[42] but there are also substantial reasons. Brandom argues we cannot make clear what is distinctive about rationality if we do not entirely separate it from everything we do when we are not explicitly deploying concepts in making discursive claims. Anything that can be counted as sentient awareness in sapient animals is just unimportant in the task of making rationality distinct. And if we don't get clear about rationality, we can't get semantics and epistemology right; we risk skepticism about meaning and knowledge.

4.2 McDowell Includes Concepts in Embodied Coping

McDowell endorses the idea that concepts play a role in our embodied coping. He does so for reasons already discussed, namely, to retain the idea that experience provides rational constraint on our empirical beliefs. Concepts with which we grasp the world in thought give rational form to experience. It is the involvement of concepts in our

[42] Brandom uses the conceptual as the point of demarcation between the rational and merely physical aspects of being human. So, for example, in discussing rationality, we can focus on its emergence (whether ontogenetic or phylogenetic) out of merely animal capacities, or we can focus on "leverage," i.e., what makes rationality wholly distinct from animal capacities. Brandom's project consistently rallies around leverage, ignores emergence, and uses conceptuality as the point of demarcation that sets rationality apart and makes it distinct (Brandom, *Perspectives on Pragmatism: Classical, Recent, and Contemporary*, 26–9). Along the same lines a decade earlier, Brandom opted to play up the discontinuity between rational and nonrational animals, rather than attempt to balance it with the evident continuity (*Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism*, 2–3). Another methodological reason for the separation is that Brandom's project of inferential semantics is a reductionist one, which leads to a theory of empirical knowledge that can explain justified true belief without appealing to experience. From his perspective, if we do not need to appeal to experience to make sense of empirical knowledge, then we need a good reason to keep the idea of justificatory experience around. For Brandom, the *intuition* that experience does play a role in the explanation and justification of empirical knowledge is not enough.

unreflective experience and action that enfolds embodied coping in our sapience, our rational view of the world. In this section, I flesh out why McDowell takes this view and show how it yields a kind of monism about awareness that is preferable to Brandom's awareness dualism.

4.2.1 Conceptual Form in Embodied Coping

By giving conceptual form to embodied coping, McDowell can retain what is attractive about the Myth of the Given without the myth. Experiences, insofar as they are given, are only given through engaging the conceptual apparatus with which we think. The result is that we do not just perceive aspects of our environment, but also perceive them as rational constraints on what we can think is true of the world.

McDowell does not give many examples to illustrate this position in *Mind and World*. One example he does give is of color. Here his point is that the capacities involved in experience must also be involved in making explicit judgments about the world (MW 11-2). One cannot make an observational judgment of the kind 'x is red' without a "necessary background understanding" of, for example, the appropriate conditions for making such a judgment (MW 12). But in *Mind and World*, McDowell also wants to claim we can have an experience such that 'x is red.' On this view, the necessary background understanding that makes the judgment possible also functions to give shape to the experience itself in two ways: (1) All of the concepts one can deploy in a judgment that can be justified by appealing to an experience must already be involved in the experience; and (2) it is part of McDowell's view that, as Brandom puts it, we can

"experience *that* things are thus and so," i.e., in taking on a rational form, experience has a propositional form.[43]

As I discussed in §3.1, above, McDowell has revised his view since *Mind and World*. He now rejects the ideas that (1) experiences involve propositional content, and (2) all of the concepts used in an empirical judgment must be involved in the experience it judges. Despite these revisions, McDowell has not given up on the basic idea of *Mind and World*. He still maintains that experience has a rational form to which we can appeal in justifying empirical judgments, such that experiences rationally constrain what we think is true of the world. McDowell's view remains that our conceptual experience delivers intuitions of how things are such that we can, when appropriate, discursively judge that they are in fact how they appear to be. A series of familiar sounds, colors, shapes, and movements comes to grip my attention only through an array of concepts of common and proper sensibles. And, in experiencing these sounds, colors, shapes, and movements, McDowell wants to say, one experiences them as constraints on what one can think, because these concepts belong to one's rational understanding of the world. One can then draw the same concepts into a judgment and appeal to those features of one's experience to justify it. McDowell has scaled back the role of concepts in experience—he has further minimized his minimal empiricism—but he has not shifted his basic position or given up the core commitments of *Mind and World*.

4.2.2 McDowell's Awareness Monism

On Brandom's view, sapient awareness is the rational, reflective awareness of the inferential roles of words in the game of giving and asking for reasons, and it is made possible by the role of concepts. McDowell agrees that a sapient form of awareness is

[43] Brandom, "Perception and Rational Constraint," 369.

made possible by the role of concepts, but because he thinks concepts are involved in experience, he extends sapient awareness to include experience as well as our reflective awareness of the inferential roles of words. And because the use of concepts in both embodied coping and discursive judgment is governed by the rational, linguistic norms of a community, their role in experience enables us, under the right circumstances, to experience the world as it is. In this way, experience stands as a tribunal for judgment: we appeal to our experience in order to justify perceptual judgments. This is an important connection between McDowell's view of rational constraint on empirical knowledge and his idea that sapient awareness includes both discursive judgment and embodied coping.

Within this extended form of sapient awareness, what makes the moves between embodied coping and discursive judgment *seamless*? In McDowell's view, concepts function in our embodied coping to make features of our surroundings perceptible to us. As we move through the world—experiencing and unreflectively performing familiar tasks under familiar circumstances—environing stimuli draw on our conceptual capacities so as to yield a rational, conceptual form of awareness of the world in experience. Concepts are involved in experience without words insofar as embodied coping involves neither vocal expression nor silent inner speech. That concepts play a role in embodied coping without the words that designate them is important. Concepts without words bring the world into view without our awareness of the concepts as concepts, whereas the same concepts deployed with the words that designate them bring the concepts into view, i.e., meaning, the inferential roles of these concepts. When we pivot from embodied coping into language to make discursive judgments, we use some of the same concepts by deploying the words that designate them. Because some of the

same concepts have a role to play in both our embodied coping and our discursive judgments, there is no break in our awareness in moving between them, even though our focus shifts from the world to the meanings of the concepts that bring the world into view.

4.3 Awareness Monism Is Attractive

Awareness monism fits with our intuitions. Phenomenologically, our awareness is singular and seamless. It seems to us that we have a single form of awareness as we move between our embodied coping in the world and reflectively making discursive judgments about it. Awareness dualism is unattractive because it suggests that, contrary to our intuitions, the kind of awareness we have in our embodied coping is wholly separate from the kind of reflective awareness we have with discursive judgments. Without awareness monism, we cannot appeal to our experience to justify our knowledge claims.

Brandom is not worried about running up against our intuitions. Indeed, he suspects that it is only a vestige of bad Cartesian theory that makes us think we can appeal to our experience to justify perceptual judgments.[44] But as Brandom himself admits, one of the blind spots of his inferential semantics and his theory of perception and cognition generally is that they leave no space for phenomenology.[45] Perhaps it is McDowell's inclination to balance his epistemological commitments with phenomenological ones that pulls him back from Brandom's extremes.

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[44] Brandom, "Non-Inferential Knowledge, Perceptual Experience, and Secondary Qualities: Placing McDowell's Empiricism," 98.

[45] Brandom considers the fact that in his view "nothing at all is made of phenomenology" a considerable flaw (Brandom, "Reply to John McDowell's 'Brandom on Observation': Chicken-Sexers and Ryleans," 322). If Brandom makes commitments in his inferential semantics and epistemology, embraces the upshot of these commitments in philosophy of mind, and more or less ignores the implications for phenomenology, then McDowell, to his credit, appears more interested in balancing commitments in each of these areas.

Ultimately, Brandom's awareness dualism is a strange but viable option if we give up our intuition that we have a seamless form of awareness as we move between experience and judgment. However, at face value, awareness monism is more attractive if it can be made to work without the flaws of McDowell's conceptualism.

5. Concepts, Judgments, and Rational Cognition

So far, I've shown how Brandom and McDowell disagree on how to answer two questions central to their work. The first question (§3) asks whether concepts are exclusively or merely essentially functions of judgment. Brandom argues that concepts are exclusively functions of judgment as part of his commitment to clearly differentiating human rationality. McDowell agrees that concepts are essentially functions of judgment, but allows that they have a role outside judgment, as part of his commitment to retaining a minimal form of empiricism. I argued that minimal empiricism—in some form—seems preferable to Brandom's overwhelming emphasis on demarcation, yet Brandom's position has a significant advantage over McDowell's position, namely, Brandom's great clarity in his definition of what concepts are and what they are for. By comparison, McDowell's account of concepts and the role they play in experience—both his older view from *Mind and World* and his revision of that view—are plagued by ambiguity. If minimal empiricism is to be defended by extending a role for concepts outside judgment, in experience, it will require a definition of concepts that matches Brandom's definition for clarity and precision.

The second question (§4) explores the upshots of Brandom's and McDowell's respective answers to the first question, by asking whether there are one or two forms of human awareness. Brandom's theory of concepts is implicitly committed to two distinct

forms of awareness: an animal form of awareness and the rational awareness involved in discursive understanding, wherein the former can contribute nothing to the latter. McDowell, by contrast, embraces a single form of awareness for humans—rational awareness—wherein the awareness that we have in embodied coping positively contributes to our rational understanding of the world. I argued that Brandom's position, despite its strengths of clarity, seems intuitively false. Even if we find reason to reject McDowell's position, an alternate version of McDowell's awareness monism will be preferable to Brandom's provided it achieves the clarity and consistency that recommends Brandom's view while upholding Brandom's commitment to making human rationality distinct.

Brandom's and McDowell's respective ways of bolstering epistemology in light of the failure of traditional empiricism—with their respective strengths and weaknesses—appear to leave us with a forced choice between the clarity and precision of Brandom's account and the intuitive appeal of McDowell's account. Either way, we are saddled with intellectualism that plagues both their views, namely, the imposition of a gap or break between rational, human cognition and the cognitive abilities of other animals and prelinguistic children. My aim in this dissertation is to answer their epistemological concern without being saddled with their intellectualism, and it is to that end that I propose rejecting their rationalist commitment to making concepts essentially functions of rational, discursive thought.

The alternative, which I begin to unpack in Chapter III, is that concepts (and, more generally, thought) are better understood as essentially features of the cognition of intelligent, problem-solving animals—a category that seems to include corvids,

cetaceans, elephants, and all great apes. Defined broadly as part of a form of cognition we share with other animals, concepts can then be brought into a theory that shows how their normative refinement leads to rational, human understanding. In other words, humans (along with a number of other species) develop concepts and make judgments "naturally" in the sense that their development and use does not depend upon normativity. However, given the right kind of exposure to a coherent set of normative social practices, including perhaps most importantly linguistic practices, the human capacity for concepts is drawn into a rational, discursive form.

However, despite rejecting Brandom and McDowell's shared, rationalist commitment to embrace a broader notion of concepts, I am still aiming to answer the epistemological concern that motivates it. This requires the careful endorsement of some of their other respective commitments. To that end, in what follows, I clarify the criteria for the broad view of concepts to succeed, in light of the commitments I aim to carry forward from Brandom and McDowell.

First of all, this broad theory of concepts should match Brandom's theory in terms of clarity and precision, and avoid the ambiguity about concepts that plagues McDowell's view. To this end, the definition of concepts should make absolutely clear what they are and what they are for, and it should be a well-motivated theory that gives concepts a clear, cognitive function. However, rather than follow Brandom and make concepts exclusive functions of rational, human understanding, they will have a function in the cognition of intelligent animals that makes clear what their purpose is outside of the social norms that fold them into rational human thought.

Second, the broad theory of concepts and judgments must be amenable to upholding Brandom's commitment to making rationality distinct. This is not to say that it will "demarcate" rationality as Brandom does—after all, I am rejecting Brandom's intellectualism. However, the theory must not fall into the trap that Brandom locates in the opposite mistake of uncritically assimilating rational concepts and thoughts with the nonrational cognition of other animals and prelinguistic children. Rather, there must be a way of using conceptual capacities—defined broadly as something we share with other intelligent animals—to help explain exactly what it is that makes human rationality distinct.

Third, the broad theory of concepts must be amenable to upholding McDowell's commitment to giving human experience a rational form, and thereby retaining a minimal form of empiricism. That is, defining concepts broadly as part of the cognition of intelligent, problem-solving animals must help us explain—more clearly than McDowell has so far—exactly how it is that normatively governed concepts play a role in human experience and give it a rational form. Not only should such an account retain what is attractive about McDowell's minimal empiricism without the pitfalls, it should also avoid the awareness dualism that plagues Brandom's account.

6. Conclusion

The aim of my dissertation is to square apparently incompatible, yet eminently attractive, commitments made by Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus. Brandom is committed to defining concept in a way that is useful for making rationality distinct. McDowell is committed to a minimal form of empiricism that casts a role for our conceptual capacities

in experience and action. Dreyfus is committed to giving a step-by-step account of how our rational, conceptual capacities develop out of lesser abilities we share with nonrational animals and prerational human infants. In addition, all three commit to the idea that having language is necessary for having concepts and making judgments (what I call the rationalist commitment). By giving up the shared commitment and developing a more relaxed and inclusive conceptual holism, I aim to square the other three commitments.

The purpose of this chapter has been to show what is at stake for this project in the debate between Brandom and McDowell, and motivate the idea that the apparent stalemate between them can be overcome by abandoning their shared, rationalist commitment to defining concepts as essentially components of rational, discursive judgment. After giving an overview of their debate in §2, I focused on their disagreement over whether or not concepts are exclusively functions of judgment in §3. There I showed that while McDowell's minimal empiricism is more intuitively appealing than Brandom's reliablism, Brandom's position is more compelling because his definition of concepts is clear compared to McDowell's murkier notions of propositional form and conceptual intuition. In §4, I showed how Brandom's restriction of concepts to exclusively functions of judgment results in an unappealing and overlooked awareness dualism: rational animals have two distinct forms of awareness—sentient and sapient—where the former can contribute nothing to the latter. Once again, McDowell's view is more intuitively appealing. Finally, in §5, I raised the option of abandoning Brandom and McDowell's shared rationalist commitment to defining concepts as essentially functions of a normatively governed, rational, discursive understanding of the world. I then clarified the

criteria that such a broad view of concepts would need to satisfy in order to answer the concerns that motivate Brandom and McDowell's rationalist commitment.

CHAPTER II: DREYFUS VERSUS MCDOWELL

1. Phenomenological Intellectualism

Chapter I exploited the debate between McDowell and Brandom to motivate abandoning their shared commitment to making language necessary for having concepts. McDowell embraces a minimal form of empiricism by giving concepts a role in experience—an attractive commitment if it works—but his approach leads him to incoherent ideas about this expanded role for concepts. And Brandom invests in distinguishing our rationality—also an attractive commitment if coherent—but it leads him to the unappealing idea that rational animals have two distinct and utterly separate forms of awareness. I suggested abandoning Brandom and McDowell's shared commitment that language is necessary for having concepts as a way to retain their two respective, attractive commitments. To this end, I proposed investigating a broad notion of concepts that can make sense of the role they play in our embodied coping, while at the same time being useful for explaining what makes human rationality distinct.

In the present chapter, I turn to the debate between McDowell and Hubert Dreyfus over McDowell's conceptualism. Like Brandom, Dreyfus resists McDowell's conceptualism, but for a largely different set of reasons. To Dreyfus, conceptualism makes the mistake of giving rational capacities a role in our embodied coping practices, thereby distorting what embodied coping is. It is a mistake because, in Dreyfus's view, the exclusive function of our rational capacities is to render the world in determinate judgments, whereas in our embodied coping we respond flexibly and fluidly to

indeterminate and ever-changing surroundings. Determinate rational thought and indeterminate embodied coping, Dreyfus thinks, are wholly different. To suggest that determinate concepts play a role in embodied coping is to distort it.[46]

The debate between McDowell and Dreyfus turns essentially on whether or not concepts play a role in embodied coping. McDowell defends his conceptualism as, in fact, non-threatening to the basic shape of Dreyfus's embodied coping and, in turn, McDowell accuses Dreyfus of failing to see how rational and conceptual norms are embodied in our unreflective coping. Throughout their debate, on at least seven occasions, Dreyfus poses a question not just for McDowell but for any philosopher engaged in debates about conceptualism in philosophy of mind. This question, as I indicated at the outset, is the one my dissertation responds to, namely, how does our rational capacity for conceptual understanding develop out of more basic capacities we share with nonrational animals and prelinguistic human infants? McDowell dismisses this question as one we ought not feel compelled to answer. Indeed, as I argue below, his conceptualism is not suited to answer it.

I've already taken on McDowell's commitment to granting a role for our conceptual capacities in our embodied coping—this is one of the three commitments I aim to reconcile. My aim in this chapter, however, is to show how both Dreyfus's and McDowell's respective ideas about concepts make answering Dreyfus's challenge extremely difficult, if not impossible. To this end, the chapter is largely structured around

[46] This seems to suggest that Dreyfus, like Brandom, winds up with rational animals with two distinct and utterly separate forms of awareness. However, as I show in this chapter, Dreyfus rejects Brandom's awareness dualism. He argues that awareness of affordances and conceptual understanding form a whole, as we convert the indeterminate affordances of embodied coping into determinate conceptual content when we think. Dreyfus's model here is Heidegger's distinction between things we encounter as ready-to-hand (*zuhandenheit*) and the shift to grasping things (for Dreyfus, conceptually) as present-at-hand (*vorhandenheit*). Heidegger's point was about different modes of existence things can have. Dreyfus's point is that these are two different, but intimately connected, modes of engaging with things.

two sets of interrogations. In §2, I give a brief overview of the debate between Dreyfus and McDowell (focused on issues relevant for my purposes) and consider some of the responses their debate has provoked. In §3, I interrogate Dreyfus's attempts in his contributions to the debate to show why concepts and rationality can have no place in our embodied coping. This interrogation reveals that it is Dreyfus's commitment to the idea that concepts are bound up with language that blinds him to the possibility of concepts playing a role in our embodied coping. More importantly, I argue that Dreyfus's commitment to the idea that language is necessary for concepts makes it extremely difficult for him to answer the question of how conceptual understanding arises. In §4, I interrogate McDowell's claims about our rational, conceptual orientation to the world in our embodied coping to look for resources in his work for explaining how it is we acquire our capacity for rational, conceptual understanding.[47] This interrogation reveals that, like Dreyfus, McDowell's commitment to the idea that language is necessary for having concepts blinds him to the possibility of explaining how our embodied coping comes to be permeated by our rationality.[48] Thus, I show that both Dreyfus and McDowell are misled in different ways by the same assumption.

2. Overview: The Battle of the Myths

In their debate, McDowell accuses Dreyfus of defending a mythical "disembodied intellect," a notion of conceptual understanding that is not substantially grounded in our

[47] In all fairness, since McDowell denies that he or anyone else is obliged to give such an explanation, one should not expect his work to provide one. Nonetheless, if we want to explain how embodied coping takes the conceptual form his conceptualism describes, then interrogating his work for clues is not inappropriate.
[48] To claim for McDowell, as I do for Dreyfus, that he cannot answer the question of how conceptual understanding arises because he is committed to the idea that language is necessary for concepts would be to miss the point that McDowell specifically rejects any need to answer that question. Indeed, McDowell seems to think that by following our philosophical curiosity into such questions we wind up making the kind of mistakes his quietist brand of philosophy endeavors to correct.

embodied coping. Dreyfus accuses McDowell of defending a mythically pervasive mind, a notion of discursive, determinate thought permeating all human activity that thereby mischaracterizes our embodied coping. I'll quickly sketch the key points of disagreement (for my purposes) before considering some responses to their debate.

2.1 Dreyfus and McDowell's Dispute

Like Brandom, both Dreyfus and McDowell tie concepts closely to rationality and equate having any concepts with having highly developed, linguistic abilities. That is, along with Brandom and McDowell, Dreyfus also subscribes to the idea that having a concept means having the use of a word. Like Brandom, but contra McDowell, Dreyfus thinks concepts are only involved in rational, discursive activity. McDowell agrees that the essential function of concepts is to yield our discursive understanding of the world, but (as I discussed in Chapter I) he adds that concepts acquired through the development of rationality and language can also be involved in our perception and action. In Dreyfus's parlance, McDowell's idea is that concepts are involved in embodied coping. While they agree that concepts are bound up with rationality and language, Dreyfus disputes McDowell's claim that concepts play a role in the embodied coping of rational animals. This objection led to an eight-year debate between them that played out from 2005 to 2013.[49]

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[49] The debate began with Dreyfus's critique of McDowell's *Mind and World* in his Presidential Address to the American Philosophical Association (Dreyfus, "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers Can Profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise"; henceforth OMM followed by page number). As Joseph Schear reports, McDowell responded the following year at an Eastern APA meeting, during a session with Dreyfus and John Haugeland that was "organized to thrash out what is at stake in the debate" (Schear, "Introduction," 1). McDowell's presentation was published in a 2007 issue of *Inquiry*, edited by Wayne Martin, as "What Myth?" (henceforth WM followed by page number). The same issue included Dreyfus's response ("The Return of the Myth of the Mental"; henceforth RMM followed by page number); along with two further replies (McDowell, "Response to Dreyfus"; Dreyfus, "Response to McDowell"). In 2009, James Conant brought McDowell and Dreyfus together again with a number of other philosophers to discuss the relevant issues at a conference in Berlin (Schear, "Introduction," 2). Following

From Dreyfus's perspective, McDowell is ensnared in the "Myth of the Pervasiveness of the Mental," i.e., an attempt to frame perception and action in terms of what they contribute to knowledge that overlooks the indeterminacy of our embodied responsiveness to our surroundings. This myth, in other words, is that mind—and with it our capacity for discursive, determinate thought—is always involved in every aspect of the embodied coping of rational animals. Dreyfus understands the role McDowell assigns to concepts in experience and action to mean that we must have a determinate grasp of objects in our embodied coping, whereas Dreyfus, drawing on phenomenology, wants to show that in embodied coping we encounter things indeterminately, as affordances or as solicitations of affordances.[50]

McDowell, however, does not think that insisting on a role for mind and conceptual capacities in embodied coping saddles him with the idea that, in embodied coping, we grasp objects determinately. What McDowell really wants is to allow our experience in embodied coping to make a positive contribution to explicit acts of judgment wherein we do grasp the world determinately. Part of McDowell's aim in making experience and perception conceptual is to ensure that we can ground our knowledge in experience without the Myth of the Given, i.e., that we can appeal to what appears in our unreflective experience in order to justify our claims to empirical knowledge. From Dreyfus's perspective, to depict embodied coping as conceptual so that it can make a positive contribution to knowledge is to intellectualize embodied coping.

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that conference, their debate culminated in essays in which Dreyfus and McDowell each revised and recapitulated their positions (Dreyfus, "The Myth of the Pervasiveness of the Mental"; McDowell, "The Myth of the Mind as Detached"). These were published in a volume of essays reflecting on the debate, edited by Schear (*Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell–Dreyfus Debate*).

[50] I define Dreyfus's terms, such as "affordances," below.

The mind, as far as Dreyfus understands it, is exclusively concerned with judgments, and extending mind into embodied coping only distorts what embodied coping is.

Dreyfus challenges philosophers to explain how conceptual understanding arises out of more basic capacities. Although he inherits (rather than originates) this old and challenging question, his particular expression of it bears repeating: The challenge is to work up a "step-by-step genesis of the conceptual categories that structure the space of reasons from the perceptual ones that structure the space of motivations. . . . The time is ripe to begin the challenging collaborative task of showing how our conceptual capacities grow out of our nonconceptual ones" (OMM 61). To Dreyfus, the exclusive function of "conceptual capacities" is to make determinate, explicit judgments. In embodied coping, by contrast, we respond unreflectively to indeterminate aspects of what we encounter and, Dreyfus thinks, conceptual capacities can only impede such unreflective coping because to use concepts is to be self-aware in a way that breaks us out of the flow of our unreflective, habitual practices. The task is to work out an emergence thesis for conceptual understanding out of unreflective embodied coping that has no need for determinacy, concepts, or reflective self-awareness whatsoever. Dreyfus does not offer a way of responding to the challenge (indeed, I argue that he cannot, given his other commitments), but his recognition of its importance is part of his inheritance of existential phenomenology: on his reading, both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty recognize the challenge and fail or neglect to answer it (RMM 364).

McDowell does offer a kind of response to Dreyfus's challenge, but (as Dreyfus notes) it is too thin to be satisfactory. He implicitly recognizes the challenge when he argues in *Mind and World* against "bald naturalism" and defends a quasi-Kantian notion

of spontaneity. In McDowell's view, it is part of our nature—on an expansive notion of "nature"—to develop our form of rational, conceptual understanding. Thus, Dreyfus's challenge of explaining the emergence of conceptual understanding from lesser abilities appears in McDowell's work as the need to naturalize spontaneity, that is, the need to explain how spontaneity arises for humans from lesser capacities that are not yet rational. Rationality is natural to rational animals as we actualize our specific animal potential, just as flying is natural to bats as they naturalize their specific animal potential.[51]

To naturalize spontaneity, McDowell turns to Aristotle to set up a simile: acquiring a second nature of rationally understanding a world is *like* acquiring *phronesis*; that is, our rational understanding develops similarly to the way Aristotle describes humans developing practical wisdom (MW 79, 84). He also likens acquiring spontaneity to developing *Bildung*, in the sense of developing one's capacities and acquiring culture (MW 84). I take this to be a step in the right direction for answering Dreyfus's challenge, but it is insufficient.[52] To put the matter bluntly, to have a second nature is to have a bundle of contingent habits, necessary only with respect to a particular form of life. Surely, there is something right about this, as habit has a long history in philosophy as a hinge between freedom and nature. But how are we to understand spontaneity, rational understanding, and objective knowledge as a bundle of habits? Brandom makes it very

[51] McDowell appears to equivocate on the term "natural," given that we are responsible for our rationality in a way that bats are not for flight. However, McDowell arms himself to respond that he is not so much equivocating on the term "natural" as he is expanding the notion of nature to accommodate spontaneity, i.e., partially re-enchanting nature. The problem then becomes that his re-enchantment of nature is too thinly conceived to be satisfying. For a critique of McDowell's tepid endorsement of re-enchanted nature, see Bernstein, "Re-Enchanting Nature."

[52] McDowell doesn't bite on the question Dreyfus raises, despite the fact that he raises it more than once. In the Afterword of *Mind and World*, McDowell insists that his "sketchy and unsystematic" invocation of second nature "should not invite" questions like Dreyfus's. We do not, in his view, need to explain how second nature "constitute[s] the space of reasons" because the motivation for doing is only prompted by the very dualism McDowell is rejecting by claiming that rationality is second nature. Quietism has its merits, but I do not think we should be satisfied with this response, and neither do many of his interlocutors over the past two decades.

clear (as discussed in Chapter I) that if we explain rationality from the bottom up in terms of habits, we lose what is distinctive about rationality.

McDowell disagrees that appealing to habit jeopardizes what is distinctive about rationality, but as I showed in Chapter I, the upshot of his view is that experience and judgment are insufficiently distinct. Moreover, he argues it is a mistake to think we are obliged to even answer the question, because to think we need such an answer is to remain in the grip of alternatives from which he is trying to extricate us. The problem is that McDowell's solution to an epistemological puzzle lands him in a much larger playing field that includes commitments in phenomenology and philosophy of mind. Quietism won't do. From a phenomenological standpoint—and arguably for philosophy of mind, too—we need something more like what Dreyfus called for: a step-by-step genesis of conceptual understanding out of a more basic form of cognition, but one that still manages to make rationality distinct from the abilities that give rise to it.

2.2 Responses to the McDowell-Dreyfus Debate

The debate between McDowell and Dreyfus has sparked many responses, including those in Schear's volume of essays, mentioned above.[53] My response to the debate shares a perspective expressed in some of the essays in this volume that take Dreyfus (and to some extent, McDowell) to task for distorting the views of existential phenomenologists, in particular those Merleau-Ponty expressed in his *Phenomenology of Perception*.[54] The point, in very general terms, is that Merleau-Ponty rejected Dreyfus's idea that the capacity for conceptual understanding is a discrete means to rationally and explicitly grasp a world of objects. Rather, for Merleau-Ponty, the understanding is part of a more

[53] Schear, *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell–Dreyfus Debate*.
[54] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.

general capacity to respond spontaneously to our surroundings, in order to better adapt ourselves to them and adapt them to our needs, to achieve maximal grip on them in order to realize our material ends. A rational, explicit grasp of objects as such is just one of the ways we do this. The rational understanding of a world is distinct, but it is the refinement of a more general ability to navigate an environment.

One respondent who critiques Dreyfus for overlooking important features of Merleau-Ponty's view is Sebastian Gardner. As Gardner puts it, "the line that Dreyfus draws between 'conceptual' and 'nonconceptual' does not align with Merleau-Ponty's central distinction."[55] Gardner's essay, which views the McDowell-Dreyfus debate through the lens of transcendental philosophy as an historical project, is particularly shrewd in criticizing Dreyfus's position. In response to Dreyfus's contention that Merleau-Ponty supports his thesis that embodied coping is non-conceptual, Gardner wonders what notion of the conceptual Dreyfus thinks is in play.[56] Against Dreyfus, Gardner points to Merleau-Ponty's idea that the capacity for rational, conceptual understanding is an aspect of a more general capacity that lends a kind of practical, pre-objective order to our awareness in embodied coping. Quoting the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Gardner insists that "the understanding (*l'entendement*) 'needs to be redefined, since the general connective function ultimately attributed to it by Kantianism is now spread over the whole intentional life and no longer suffices to distinguish it.'"[57] In other words, the gap Dreyfus imposes between conceptual understanding and embodied coping is false on Merleau-Ponty's account. One option for spelling out Merleau-Ponty's account, according to Gardner, aligns well with the notion of concepts I

[55] Gardner, "Transcendental Philosophy and the Given," 131.
[56] Gardner, "Transcendental Philosophy and the Given," 130.
[57] Gardner, "Transcendental Philosophy and the Given," 131.

defend later. If we assume that the understanding involves concepts and extends into pre-objective embodied coping,

> then we must say that on Merleau-Ponty's account conceptuality *is* present in pre-objectivity, and so that it must be uncoupled from objective thought, which should be defined in terms of a specific form of conceptual representation, one generated by analytical reflection."[58]

Distinguishing a general function for concepts from the one they take on in objective thought is precisely the approach I develop in Chapters III-V. Gardner is not, however, endorsing this view in his essay. Rather, he deploys it to critique Dreyfus's misuse and mischaracterization of Merleau-Ponty's thought as rejecting conceptualism.

Alva Noë takes up a position he inherits from Merleau-Ponty in his reading of the debate, while assembling some "remarks towards a general theory of access" to the things we encounter in thought, perception, and action.[59] Like Gardner, Noë draws attention to the idea of the capacity for conceptual understanding as one distributed across a broad range of human activities, but Noë explicitly endorses a Merleau-Pontyian view. As Noë puts it, in a phrase that is critical of both McDowell and Dreyfus, "thought is not prior to experience; experience is a kind of thought."[60] The first part of the claim is, at least implicitly, a rejection of McDowell's and Dreyfus's shared idea that language is necessary for having concepts; the second part rejects Dreyfus's strict partition of embodied coping and conceptual understanding. Noë's leading idea is that we should not "over-intellectualize the intellect," that is, we should avoid the trap of thinking that the primary function of our conceptual capacities is obtaining justified, true beliefs. Rather, the intellect—by way of our conceptual capacities—is deeply involved in our coping

[58] Gardner, "Transcendental Philosophy and the Given," 131.
[59] Noë, "On Overintellectualizing the Intellect," 185.
[60] Noë, "On Overintellectualizing the Intellect," 180.

practices. He writes, "It is to over-intellectualize the workings of the intellect to suppose that every exercise of understanding requires a deliberate act of contemplation of an explicitly formulated rule. Such an over-intellectualized conception of the intellect leaves out the possibility that intellectual skills themselves may admit of expertise and effortless exercise."[61]

By embracing Merleau-Ponty's ideas about the understanding, Noë comes to defend a position quite close to McDowell's, insisting that concepts have a function or use in perception. He writes,

> Concepts and sensorimotor skills get applied in perceptual experience in the distinctively perceptual mode. That is, we don't use conceptual or sensorimotor rules to categorize objects or to represent them in our minds. Conceptual and sensorimotor skills are not means of representation; they are means of achieving access to things.[62]

Noë suggests there are different modes in which our conceptual capacities can be active. A perceptual mode yields perception and a discursive mode yields an explicit form of understanding. Again, Noë takes concepts to be a means of gaining access to things, to allow us to gain a better grip on them to better realize our practical intentions, rather than a mental representation of some feature of the world that could figure in a discursive

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[61] Noë, "On Overintellectualizing the Intellect," 182. For a more thorough investigation of the thought that explicit thought and judgments can be habitually effortless for the same reason as other repetitive and familiar actions, see Braver, "Never Mind: Thinking of Subjectivity in the McDowell–Dreyfus Debate."

[62] Noë, "On Overintellectualizing the Intellect," 186. Rather than take concepts to exclusively represent the world in a way that is amenable for objective knowledge, the idea is that concepts are learned (and therefore revisable) modes of responsiveness to our surroundings. This view, of course, will raise Brandom's hackles (and should raise ours too): by reducing concepts to facilitating abilities we share with other moderately intelligent animals, then how do we distinguish the obviously distinct capacity for conceptual understanding that rational animals have? This hole in the account of concepts that existential phenomenology offers up is part of what Dreyfus alludes to when he declares Merleau-Ponty's attempt to answer the question of the emergence of rational cognition incomplete. Here is a promisory note on the view I develop in Chapter III: rather than restrict concepts-use to an objective grasp of the world (as do Brandom, McDowell, Dreyfus, Haugeland, just to name a few), my attempt to complete Merleau-Ponty's picture will endorse the broad view of concepts that Noë articulates here and then make the normative use of concepts the key condition for having an objective grasp of the world.

judgment—a piece of knowledge—about it. As a mode of access, a concept is more like a window onto some aspect of the world than a mental picture that does or does not correspond to it.

Finally, Joseph Rouse takes up a similar position on the understanding as a capacity distributed through the whole range of human intentional activity.[63] For one thing, he agrees with Noë that our engagement in rational, discursive practices of conceptual understanding is itself a matter of embodied coping. To put the point in Brandom's terms, there is a sense in which language entry moves and language-language moves are always—in some respect—desire-driven, reliable differential responsive dispositions. Drawing on Brandom's favorite example of a parrot reliably making the sound "red" in response to red things, Rouse points out that just as the parrot is using practical, perceptual capacities for this performance, so do we incorporate practical perceptual capacities when we say and also mean that something is red, so much so that we are not necessarily explicitly aware of the meaning of the words we use when we speak. "Rapid, fluent conversation," Rouse claims, "is not explicitly 'mindful' of the concepts it expresses. Speakers can respond fluently and smoothly to the solicitations of the conversational situation, and often discover what they have to say only when they say it."[64] Rouse's larger point is that, contra Dreyfus, not only should we take skilled, absorbed coping practices like speed chess to be examples of the non-discursive, non-

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[63] Rouse, "What Is Conceptually Articulated Understanding?" Rouse builds on this idea in Part 1 of his recent book, Rouse, *Articulating the World: Conceptual Understanding and the Scientific Image*. While Rouse's aims are similar to mine in some respects, he retains a gap between human and nonhuman animal cognition that I hope to close.

[64] Rouse, "What Is Conceptually Articulated Understanding?," 256. There would seem to be many shades of this phenomenon, though Rouse does not discuss them. The easy case would be appropriately issuing a clichéd or stock phrase in response to a familiar situation without thinking the explicit meaning of the words. There may, however, be challenging cases that demand a more detailed account that Rouse offers here.

explicit use of concepts, we should also take paradigmatically conceptual activities like verbal exchanges to be examples of skilled coping practices. Dreyfus preserves "a fundamental difference in kind between conceptually articulated thought and nonconceptual perceptual practice," but the strict distinction between embodied coping and conceptual understanding dissolves under Rouse's approach into a more relaxed distinction between practical-perceptual engagements with our social and physical environs that are filled with the content of conceptual understanding and those that are not.[65] The challenge is to explain how discursive practices emerge and become distinct from non-discursive ones, and thereby transcend mere animal activity without "magically invoking" language to make the distinction.[66] This is Rouse's own articulation of the challenge Dreyfus levels at the philosophical community and it nicely expresses the approach I am pursuing here.

3. Concepts and Embodied Coping

Dreyfus rejects McDowell's conceptualism and hews to a narrow notion of concepts. My aim here is to unpack Dreyfus's narrow notion of concepts and show how it makes answering Dreyfus's own challenge extremely difficult.

Conceptualism is the idea that the embodied coping, experience, perception and action of rational animals involve at least some of the same concepts with which we think. McDowell deploys his conceptualism as a way of inheriting Sellars's attack on the Myth of the Given while at the same time holding onto a minimal form of empiricism.

[65] Rouse, "What Is Conceptually Articulated Understanding?," 258–59.
[66] Rouse, "What Is Conceptually Articulated Understanding?," 260.

Dreyfus begins the debate with two crucial questions that McDowell's conceptualism invites:

> Can we accept McDowell's Sellarsian claim that perception is conceptual "all the way out," thereby denying the more basic perceptual capacities we seem to share with prelinguistic infants and higher animals? More generally, can philosophers successfully describe the conceptual upper floors of the edifice of knowledge while ignoring the embodied coping going on on the ground floor; in effect, declaring that human experience is upper stories all the way down? (OMM 47)

These are rhetorical questions coming from Dreyfus: his answer to both is emphatically negative. Dreyfus approves of McDowell's claim in *Mind and World* that embodied subjects inhabit a world that is present and open to them (OMM 47). His complaint is that McDowell understands this engagement in the world as a "conceptual activity" (OMM 47). Generally, Dreyfus understands concepts, rationality, and mind to be exclusively involved in carving out aspects of what we encounter in embodied coping by making determinate judgments. On his view, the grain of what we encounter in embodied coping is too fine to be captured by concepts; we are alive and responsive to so much more than determinate concepts can ever grasp. Conceptualism constitutes a regrettable flattening of experience into knowledge. There is a whole world of indeterminacy in which we act when we are not thinking, and he wants to stress the fact that, in our unreflective yet skillful embodied coping, we are highly sensitive and responsive to minuscule changes in the environment in ways that far outstrip our ability to determine things in propositional form by explicitly thinking about them. Moreover, Dreyfus believes, the very attempt to

carve up the world determinately, through concepts, actually impedes our performance in skilled coping.[67]

As I argue below, a central problem with Dreyfus's position is that his setup has "over-intellectualized the intellect," to repeat Noë's memorable phrase. Dreyfus notes that determinate judgments are only possible against a background that takes shape through our embodied coping, but fails to note how explicit, linguistic acts like having a conversation are themselves habit-dependent, skilled practices. In the following section (§3.1), I consider the narrow view of concepts that Dreyfus embraces and attributes to McDowell, and spell out reasons Dreyfus gives for why concepts—on his narrow definition—cannot play a role in embodied coping. McDowell's response is to demur that Dreyfus's narrow notion of concepts is not his. I then (§3.2) consider Dreyfus's arguments against two broader notions of the concept, one which plausibly captures McDowell's notion. Here, I show that Dreyfus's own definition of concepts and his rejection of two other ways of understanding concepts are not sufficient to rule out an alternative view that upholds conceptualism without distorting embodied coping. Finally (§3.3), I show how Dreyfus's commitment to the idea that language is necessary for having concepts makes it impossible to answer the challenge he raises, namely, to explain how conceptual understanding arises out of more basic capacities we share with other intelligent animals.

[67] For a clear and compelling argument that Dreyfus's hard distinction between reflective thought and embodied practice and his claim that thought impedes our performance in expert, absorbed coping, see Montero, "A Dancer Reflects." Montero attacks Dreyfus for adhering to the "principle of automaticity," which falsely holds "that expert action is natural and effortless" ("A Dancer Reflects," 304). Moreover, Montero thinks that expert action involves a form of reflective awareness that Dreyfus denies by reducing all reflective awareness to its explicit, discursive form. While I agree with Montero that Dreyfus's notion of the effortlessness of habitual action misses the way in which expert action involves a great deal of effort and a form of self-awareness, I do not deploy her arguments in my critique of Dreyfus here.

3.1 Dreyfus's Narrow Notion of Concepts

Dreyfus spends much of the debate arguing against conceptualism on the basis of a narrow notion of concepts that he both endorses and attributes to McDowell (but that McDowell does not share). The narrow view of concepts he endorses and falsely attributes to McDowell supposes that any and every use of concepts—whether in judgments or in embodied coping—involves an explicit, determinate grasp of the world. Thus, when McDowell suggests that concepts play a role in embodied coping, Dreyfus thinks it must mean that, on McDowell's view, embodied coping involves explicit, determinate understanding. And this is precisely what Dreyfus rejects, on phenomenological grounds. Meanwhile, McDowell insists that his (broader) view of concepts is in principle compatible with a phenomenology of embodied coping. This basic template of their exchange plays itself out a few times, through different issues. Among these issues, following rules, awareness, and being-in-the-world stand out. I'll treat each in turn.

3.1.1. Rule Following

Dreyfus's discussion of rules gives us reasons to reject the idea that embodied coping involves a discursive awareness of rules governing our normative activities on his narrow notion of disembodied concepts. Responding to McDowell's use of Aristotle's *phronesis* to bring the notion of second nature into view, Dreyfus writes, "One can easily accept that in learning to be wise we learn to follow general reasons as guides to acting appropriately. But it does not follow that, once we have gotten past the learning phase, these *reasons* in the form of habits still *influence* our wise actions" (OMM 51). The key phrase here is "reasons in the form of habits." Dreyfus refuses the very idea that reason

can take the form of habits, exclusively relegating reason—as does Brandom—to explicit, linguistic acts. And in excluding rationality from embodied coping, he also bans concepts. The upshot is that if I learn a complex activity by acting according to explicit rules, by consulting the rules regularly in the early stages of the learning process, then when I go on to perform the same activity habitually without consulting the rules or reflecting on specific details of the activity as I did in order to learn the activity, the concepts by which I grasped the rules are no longer involved. Concepts have no place or involvement in the habits to which judgments that involve them give rise.

Dreyfus does not deny outright that rationality influences our embodied coping. For example, the rules of a game (and otherwise explicit instructions that are conceptually articulated expressions of rationality) do shape our behavior once learned. However, Dreyfus denies that the habits acquired that reflect these rules "internalize" conceptually grasped rules, where "internalizing" means that the rules are "stored in the mind" (OMM 53). Rather, he says that we simply experience such rules as limits on our behavior (ibid.). Dreyfus accepts that, in this sense, the rules have become second nature to us, but he denies that this second nature puts our conceptual capacities to work. He writes, "We should bear in mind that, when [rules] function as second nature, they do not function as rules we consciously or unconsciously follow but as a landscape on the basis of which skilled coping and reasoning takes place" (OMM 53). It is odd, considering his position, that Dreyfus admits that rules "function as second nature" at all; perhaps this is just shorthand for the idea that habits can inhabit a shape imparted on them by rule-following or some other notion that keeps the rules themselves out of the body. In any

case, the relevant claim is that the "landscape" constituted by rules functioning as second nature is not itself a manifestation of our conceptual capacities.

Dreyfus discusses games as a way of distinguishing two kinds of rules: (1) the rules of playing the game; and (2) tactical rules for competitive play (OMM 53). With tactical rules, Dreyfus argues, an expert chess player is not capable of describing in sufficient detail the rules governing expert gameplay (OMM 54). If her "retroactive rationalizations" of her expert gameplay really expressed her expertise, Dreyfus contends, then following these rules could turn a mediocre chess player into an expert immediately. The inability to set down the rules of expert play means, according to Dreyfus, that expert players do not play according to rules at all, and he draws the conclusion that therefore conceptual capacities are not involved.

McDowell's basic response to Dreyfus's arguments from rules underscores McDowell's broader idea of our conceptual capacities. McDowell thinks that conceptual capacities can be involved in expert coping without making every aspect of that coping explicit and determinate. Just as implicitly following normative rules can manifest our rationality, so can navigating a territory first grasped conceptually manifest and deploy the same concepts even when the same territory becomes utterly familiar and navigating it becomes second nature.

3.1.2 Awareness

Dreyfus also appeals to the form of awareness we have in skilled coping to rule out conceptualism (again, on his narrow view of concepts). He argues that expert responses to changing conditions operate, at least in part, outside the awareness of the expert, which would mean that, on his view of concepts, concepts cannot be involved (OMM 57-8). In

other words, the expert responds to changing circumstances that never actually break into her explicit and discursive awareness of the situation to which she responds. She is aware of and attending to her situation, but she is not determinately aware of many or even most aspects of the situation that elicit her particular response.

An expert at speed chess, Dreyfus claims, is differentially responsive to "perhaps hundreds of thousands" of different layouts on the board, and he points out that such positions cannot, in principle, be defined and enumerated and thereby grasped explicitly in conceptual terms that determinately identify each position according to a set of properties (OMM 58). Dreyfus uses that fact to re-establish the idea that speed chess experts are not following explicit rules; but the more interesting point that Dreyfus glosses over is that the players are responsive without *being aware* of what they are responding to. It does seem that if one is not aware of what one is responding to, one cannot be responding with conceptual capacities, because conceptual responsiveness is marked by awareness and it is part of the function of conceptual capacities that they yield awareness of what drew them into action—the lack of awareness suggests the absence of these capacities.

McDowell effectively responds to this argument when he answers Dreyfus's point about rules. For McDowell, there is no need to be aware of every aspect of the situation to which one is responding in order to count as responding rationally in one's embodied, skillful activity. It is enough, for example, for the speed chess expert to be aware that she is responding to the situation she encounters on the board, without needing to articulate what the situation on the board is in a way that can distinguish it from one hundred thousand other situations. The point is that, while awareness seems important for

rationality in some sense, rational awareness does not mean exhaustive, discursive awareness. One can claim both that a subject is responsive to features of her surroundings of which she is not aware and that her activity under these conditions manifests her conceptual capacities in action. The thesis that conceptual capacities yield some kind of awareness when they are drawn into play can be true; but they need not bring every aspect of what one responds to into awareness.

3.1.3 Ways of Being-in-the-World

Another way Dreyfus endeavors to keep conceptual capacities, narrowly construed, out of embodied coping is by distinguishing between conceptual and merely intentional content that, he thinks, does belong to embodied coping. The problem is that in tracking Dreyfus's arguments about various kinds of content forward through the debate, he seems to contradict himself. First, there is intentional content, shaped by our habits and practices of engaging with our surroundings. Dreyfus wields the idea of intentional content to disarm what might otherwise seem to be a forced choice between McDowell's conceptual content and a bare or brute given (OMM 58). Later, intentional content gets the added designation of "motor" intentional content, to capture the idea that it is the content of motor intentionality, i.e., the kind of intentionality the body exhibits in activity that does not, in his view, draw our rationality into play (OMM 60). Dreyfus also equates intentional content with "affordances," borrowing the term from Gibson (OMM 56). When McDowell simply appropriates Dreyfus's talk of affordances to show that concepts do play a role in perception, Dreyfus unpacks affordances as solicitations, the idea being that we do not, in embodied coping, respond to affordances as affordances, rather, we respond to them as solicitations (RMM 357). Solicitations, in turn, are not the things we

encounter but the attractions and repulsions that draw our motor intentions into play without engaging our reflective awareness (RMM 357). Finally, Dreyfus claims that there is no content at all in our most absorbed form of coping, which corresponds to the absence of apperception in the form of an "I think" or even "I do" (MPM 28). The claim that there is no content at all is meant as a further clarification of the notions of attraction and repulsion (MPM 28).

It is important to point out, however, that claiming an absence of content is not the same thing, for Dreyfus, as claiming that we are merely responsive to sub-personal environing stimuli that are nothing at all for us or to us. What the lack of content is supposed to reflect, for Dreyfus, is that the subject has no sense of herself as a self in her responsiveness; content requires some kind of awareness of intentions, albeit not necessarily full-blown self-consciousness. This is confusing, if not simply confused: what began as (motor) intentional content was better grasped as affordances, which are, insofar as they are relevant to the argument, solicitations, understood to be attractions and repulsions, which are not content at all. Putting things this way is wholly uncharitable but it illustrates the fact that Dreyfus needs a better tools to clarify what he means by content, or the lack thereof.

One tool Dreyfus reaches for turns out to be Heidegger's discussion of tool-being. How Dreyfus thinks of content reveals itself in the context of different ways of being-in-the-world. Following Heidegger, Dreyfus claims there are three modes of a rational human's being-in-the-world (two of which are forms of embodied coping) (MPM 32). We can be (1) absorbed in the flow of our activities; (2) coping with the unfamiliar; and

(3) engaged in subject-object intentionality (MPM 32). I'll treat each of these modes in turn, from the lowest or most basic up to rational, discursive cognition.

(1) "Absorption in flow" is a form of embodied coping under familiar circumstances that, Dreyfus thinks, involves no content at all, intentional or otherwise. Dreyfus sometimes calls this absorbed coping, referring to our absorption in the flow of our activities. Adopting Heidegger's term, things we encounter in such absorbed coping have the form of being *Zuhandenheit*, which Dreyfus here calls "readiness-to-hand" and, in an earlier work, "availableness."[68] In this form, things are useful for us, but in making use of them there is no subject/object distinction as there is when we are explicitly aware of what we are doing. Things merely ready-to-hand do not appear as objects with properties, and in handling something in this way I am not returned to myself as a self. This is where Dreyfus wants to claim that there is no content involved, where having "content" means that we are attentively aware of or monitoring the thing we are handling. I can open a familiar door and walk through it in one fluid action without ever really attending to the doorknob that I grasped, turned precisely the right amount with the appropriate amount of force, and then released slowly so that it did not produce a loud noise by snapping back to its original position. If you ask me shortly thereafter whether I touched the doorknob when I came through the door, or if, instead, the door was slightly ajar (as it often is) and I opened it simply with my fingertips on the door panel (as I often do), I might not be able to tell you. In this sense, the doorknob that I operated was not, in that instance, the

[68] The earlier work is Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division 1*. For Dreyfus's terminological decision, see p. xi. In her translation of *Sein und Zeit*, Joan Stambaugh renders *Zuhandenheit* as "handiness" (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 64 ff.). All references to Stambaugh's translation give the marginal pagination, which refers to the German edition: Heidegger, *Sein Und Zeit*. For a useful overview of Heidegger's notion of *Zuhandenheit*, see Overgaard, *Husserl and Heidegger on Being in the World*, 117 ff.

content of my awareness in any meaningful sense even though my interaction with it reflected a high degree of specificity and precision. I am an expert at walking through that door.

These distinctions help unpack what Dreyfus is doing with affordances, solicitations, attractions, and repulsions. The important thing about affordances, for Dreyfus, is that they can, when we are wholly absorbed in the unimpeded flow of an activity, "withdraw" like the doorknob did, when we respond to them without necessarily being aware of them *as* affordances at all (OMM 56). When affordances do withdraw, there is just their "solicitation" left. The doorknob solicits my hand when I am absorbed in an activity, without soliciting my attention in any meaningful way, for example, to the properties of the doorknob as such. When we are absorbed in flow, the world is "the totality of interconnected solicitations that attract or repulse us" (RMM 357). Surrounded by familiar things and fully absorbed in a familiar activity, Dreyfus holds that there are only solicitations insofar as they actually attract or repulse familiar bodily movements (RMM 357-8). Reflecting on the nature of solicitations, Dreyfus claims they are orderly and systemic, albeit he does not mean that we encounter them as a system in our embodied coping (RMM 358). To grasp something as a system would surely involve conceptual content. Absorption in flow ends when something breaks into our attention to disrupt the flow of our activities, which leads us into a higher level of awareness that involves content, properly speaking.

(2) "Coping with the unfamiliar" is a form of embodied coping that involves intentional content and, thus, some degree of awareness of one's intentions. But this is not yet a subject-object relation, and engaging with intentional content does not involve

making judgments. What may have functioned as the solicitation of an affordance in our fully absorbed coping now stands out as an affordance for us in our awareness. That is, we are drawn out of absorption in flow and into "prereflective monitoring" of our movements when our absorbed coping is moderately disrupted, thus our actions cannot continue without involving some degree of awareness of our intentions. If I attempt to open the familiar door in a familiar way while absorbed in some larger activity and anticipate no resistance from the door, and then I find the handle to be unexpectedly stuck, requiring more than the usual force (perhaps it takes two hands to crank the handle), then, Dreyfus thinks, I am likely to encounter the affordances as more than just a solicitation, but as affordances as such. An affordance shows up for me, in a manner of speaking, as an un-affording affordance. It thereby becomes intentional content for me, my intention being to open the door, but I am not explicitly thinking and judging. Rather, I am just responding in the still-familiar surroundings with a kind of know-how. Opening the door has slowed me down but has not drawn my full attention. This mode Dreyfus associates with a second Heideggerian term: "*Un-zuhandenheit*" or un-readyness-to-hand."[69] If the disturbance is only marginal, Dreyfus thinks we simply return to absorbed coping without the aid of explicit thought, but if it is great enough, we are drawn out of coping altogether and forced into confronting the world with thought, with subject/object intentionality.

[69] Dreyfus's use of Heidegger's terms in this table (*Zuhandenheit, Unzuhandenheit, and Vorhandenheit*) is not his attempt to represent Heidegger's views so much as simplify the terms for his own use (MPM 32). For example, whereas Dreyfus treats each as distinct modes of entities and equates *Vorhandenheit* with objects grasped *objectively* through discursive, conceptual understanding, in *Being and Time* §15-6 the *Unzuhandenheit* and *Vorhandenheit* are modifications of useful (*Zeug*), *Zuhandene* things in which they do not necessarily lose their quality of being useful to become *merely* or *only* present at hand in an abstract, discursive, conceptual way. In other words, *Vorhandenheit* does not always involve the distinct opposition of a subject and an object (see *Being and Time*, 66–76).

The important thing for Dreyfus is that intentional content yields awareness of a thing and, to some degree, our intentions with respect to the thing, but without drawing us into a subject-object conceptual relation with it. Dreyfus unveils the distinction between intentional and conceptual content by approvingly quoting Brandom's reading of Sellars: "grasping a concept is mastering the use of a word" (OMM 55). From this, he infers that because we do not have words for everything that figures as intentional content for us, concepts are not thereby involved. Note the similarity here to Dreyfus's arguments from rules and from awareness. Intentional content is learned and shaped by experience and opens us onto a meaningful world to which we can respond in myriad ways (OMM 55). This responsiveness in no way requires that we master the use of words for all that figures for us as intentional content. Above all, for Dreyfus, intentional content is meaningful content: it manifests aspects of the world for us with respect to our aims and interests. It allows what we encounter in experience to matter to our lives, to what we are about in a given moment.

In being snapped out of absorbed coping into this prereflective form of coping, what had merely been attracting and repulsing our familiar movements now comes into our intentional focus as affordances. Solicitations become for us the affordances they already were. Now Dreyfus needs to explain how affordances or intentional content becomes conceptual content as we move into subject-object intentionality. Here, Dreyfus suggests that we actively transform affordances or intentional content into conceptual content. Thinking is a kind of force that is separate from embodied coping entirely, and can act on it, stamping its shape onto coping habits to produce conceptually relevant, thinkable content. He writes:

> Analytic attention brings about a radical transformation of the affordances given to absorbed coping. Only then can we have an experience of objects with properties about which we can form beliefs, make judgments, and justify inferences. At the same time, however, this transformation covers up the non-conceptual perception and coping that made our openness to the world possible in the first place. (OMM 61)

Thus, Dreyfus supposes that transformation changes our whole orientation. We move from mere intentional content that motivates us to conceptual content fit for knowledge, from withdrawing affordances to objects with properties. Unfortunately, beyond these sparse comments, Dreyfus leaves the transformation of intentional into conceptual content largely unexplained, giving the impression that the very distinction between them serves more as a way of keeping rational understanding and embodied coping apart rather than explaining how they are related. More charitably, his comments are sparse because he simply doesn't have an answer—the question of how intentional become conceptual content is closely related to the larger one about capacities that Dreyfus calls upon philosophers to answer, namely, to explain how rational, conceptual understanding arises from more basic capacities.

(3) Finally, "Subject-object intentionality" is the reflective, discursive, rational mode of being-in-the-world that involves conceptual content by which we make explicit judgments. In this mode, things formerly encountered merely as solicitations or intentional content now appear as objectively present-at-hand (here Dreyfus adopts Heidegger's term, "*Vorhandenheit*"). In this mode, one is not merely aware of intentions but aware of oneself as having them. And things encountered as affording the opportunity to realize our interests become objects grasped through objective judgments of things bearing properties. Moreover, Dreyfus thinks, here we break into language-use, making

things explicit to ourselves in a determinate form. A distinct subject appears opposite a distinct object and the object takes the form of a substance with knowable properties.

Consider again my familiar door. This time it is not just that the handle is stiff, it won't budge. The door is locked for the first time in recent memory. I have the key in my pocket but it is on a ring with several other keys, only one of which I use regularly. Now I have to inspect the keys and the lock on the handle to figure out which key is the right one. To avoid trying the same key twice, I flip it from one side of the ring to the other, speaking as I do, "not that one, not that one, not that one," until I find the right key. This operation suddenly has my full attention. I am engaged in the activity of opening the door, fully cognizant of the central aspects of my activity: choosing and trying each key, ruling them out methodically one by one. When I succeed, I exclaim, "Yes, this is it!" This is subject-object intentionality.

To Dreyfus, these three modes of being-in-the-world explain how we engage with our surroundings in a way that is supposed to show why conceptual content is only involved in the third and highest stage of subject-object intentionality. The problem is that it is not sufficient to show that concepts are not involved in embodied coping in the manner that McDowell supposes. On McDowell's account, our conceptual capacities can be engaged when we are absorbed in the flow of a familiar activity or engaged in unreflective coping. Indeed, McDowell thinks that the passive engagement of conceptual capacities in our experience and action draws them into play without breaking us out of embodied coping and into subject-object intentionality and our explicit, discursive grasp of the world. What Dreyfus needs in order to repel conceptualism is an argument against endorsing a broader notion of concepts than the narrow one he adheres to.

3.2 Dreyfus Rejects a Broader Notions of Concepts

Dreyfus's argument against a broader notion of concepts only appears in Dreyfus's final contribution to the debate, "Myth of the Pervasiveness of the Mental," where he briefly makes the case for his view of concepts (one at odds with McDowell's and which would exclude concepts from embodied coping) and attacks the competing views. He offers an argument against the pervasiveness of the mental, but it is more precisely an argument against the pervasiveness of conceptual capacities. Dreyfus acknowledges three theories of conceptuality: one is his view and the other two are, to him, variations of the myth of pervasive conceptuality.[70]

Dreyfus's own view I'll call non-pervasive conceptuality (NonPC). NonPC is Dreyfus's way of adhering to the Sellarsian idea that having a concept means mastering the use of a word. NonPC differs from McDowell's view—yet remains remarkably similar to Brandom's—insofar as it allots no role or function for concepts outside discursive judgments, be they inferential or non-inferential judgments. This means, for Dreyfus, that any use of a concept always involves breaking out of embodied coping and into subject-object intentionality whereby the mind takes up a position opposed to a world it grasps in explicit terms. Dreyfus implies that this is a 'strong' concept of conceptuality. It is strong, he seems to mean, in that conceptual capacities are strictly defined for a very specific function and have no other functions. The function of concepts lies in making explicit judgments. Concepts involve mental activity and rationality, breaking out of absorbed coping and taking up a distant relation to what one encounters. Conceptuality is bound up with language everywhere it has a role.

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[70] The names of these views are mine, drawn out of Dreyfus's discussion of pervasive conceptuality in "The Myth of the Pervasiveness of the Mental," 18–19. Henceforth, MPM followed by page number.

Then there are the two views Dreyfus attacks. The first of these I call Limited Pervasive Conceptuality (LPC), a relatively weaker notion of conceptuality (Dreyfus implies) that is the closest of the three to McDowell's position. LPC shares with NonPC the notion that concepts are acquired through language use, i.e., through mastering the use of a word. It differs from NonPC, according to Dreyfus, insofar as it assigns a role to concepts outside explicit, discursive judgments. On this view, concepts come to play a role in perception and action after being printed onto our coping habits by explicit conceptual thought. The result is that we deploy concepts without "thinking" and thereby without breaking out of absorbed coping. Thus, for example, suppose I rely on concepts and explicit thought to familiarize myself with part of a city I've never visited before. Later, when that part of the city becomes familiar and I navigate it without thinking, I am still, nonetheless, incorporating and relying on the same concepts in my embodied coping as I formerly used in explicitly thinking about how to get around.

The third view, and the second that Dreyfus attacks, I'll call unlimited pervasive conceptuality (UPC).[71] For Dreyfus, this is an even weaker notion of conceptuality than the previous one. As with LPC, concepts play a role in absorbed coping without breaking us out of it and into reflective thought. What makes UPC distinct from LPC and Dreyfus's NonPC is that UPC is ambivalent about where concepts come from. UPC agrees with NonPC and LPC that we can acquire concepts through mastering the use of a word, and further agrees with LPC (contra NonPC) that these concepts, once acquired, can wind up playing a role in our embodied coping. But against both LPC and NonPC, UPC maintains that language is not the only means by which concepts can be acquired and put to use in embodied coping. Rather, UPC supposes that concepts result from

[71] This notion is closest to the one I begin developing in Chapter III.

habituation in perception and action without relying on language at all. I next consider Dreyfus's arguments against LPC and UPC.

3.2.1 Limited Pervasive Conceptuality

Before dismissing limited pervasive conceptuality (LPC), Dreyfus briefly considers arguments for it, acknowledging, "we often have to use concepts to find our way about in an unfamiliar situation" (MPM 18). This seems to further imply that because we use concepts to become familiar, we continue to use concepts to engage with the familiar. Once concepts are in play for given situations, they stay in play for those situations, even though getting familiar involves actively thinking our way through the unfamiliar situations with distanced, reflective thought, whereas engaging with the familiar involves circumspection, responding to forces, absorbed coping, and no distance from the world. According to Dreyfus's take on the LPC argument, concepts are pervasive insofar as they remain embedded in the coping habits that develop out of rational, conceptual deliberation.

Dreyfus rejects LPC because it goes against his general idea that rationality is not retained in the habits that it forms:

> [O]ur situation gradually comes to make sense to us in a non-conceptual way as we learn our way around in it. Once our situation becomes familiar, our skilled dispositions respond directly to the solicitations of the relevant affordances. Indeed, once a skill is acquired, concepts used in learning the skill need play no further role. It is not even necessary that to learn a practice one needs to have been aware of the relevant concepts. Our ability to act normally is usually picked up by imitating authorities without concepts playing any conscious role. (MPM 18)

Drawing out the claims of this statement yields two arguments against LPC; I'll treat

each in turn. The first argument sets up the relationships between concepts and habits as being like that between an embosser and a piece of paper: conceptuality is the embosser we use in order to impart the shape of the place onto the paper of our absorbed coping, which grants us certain skilled dispositions. Just as the paper retains the shape of the embosser's plates after the embosser is removed (i.e., the paper does not just revert to being flat), so we tend to retain our new concept-formed habits and disposition without involving the concepts that formed them. In other words, concepts help us form embodied skills and habits that empower us to better respond to our surroundings and organize the relevance of affordances we respond to, but no concepts are necessary once the forming and organizing are done.

This argument against LPC sounds convincing when it claims that taking up a distanced, reflective, and discursive conceptual grasp is necessary for us to effectively navigate unfamiliar surroundings, and later not necessary when the same surroundings become familiar and we navigate them entirely in our absorbed coping. However, the same question arises that has been dogging Dreyfus all along, namely, that it is not clear why concepts must belong only to distanced reflection and not absorbed coping. Dreyfus is still working with the assumption that the only function concepts have involves breaking us out of our absorbed embodied coping. What is the argument against adopting a more expansive notion of concepts that allows them to be involved in embodied coping without disrupting it? An alternative view could claim that—to revise the embosser analogy—the embosser represents not concepts but active thought, and the concept is neither the embosser nor the plates but the shape the plates impart on the paper when the embosser is used. Just as embossing transfers the shape from metal plate to paper, so

thinking transfers the concepts onto our habits, our disposition, our second nature. The question becomes, what is the function of a concept that explains its involvement in embodied coping? Admittedly, that is not an easy question, and it is especially complicated by LPC's commitment to the idea that all concepts are acquired through mastering the use of a word; it is complicated because LPC thereby follows McDowell and Brandom (and Dreyfus) in defining the essential function of concepts in terms of our discursive, linguistic practices. This view thus seems to need to append to concepts a further function that they fulfill in embodied coping that does not involve snapping us back into subject-object intentionality and an explicit, discursive form of awareness. If this question about the function of concepts is what Dreyfus is driving at, then he has a point; I do not think the prospects are good for LPC to append a second function for concepts in embodiment along with the first linguistic one it assigns to them. However, Dreyfus does not carefully consider the possibility of this option; his aim is to rule it out.

Dreyfus's second argument against LPC claims that while concepts may seem to play such a role in the formation of some dispositions and skills, other dispositions and skills clearly require no concepts whatsoever for their formation, because their formation does not require any discursive thought. So if some skills and dispositions work without concepts, why should we suppose other skills and dispositions need or involve concepts? Whatever the function of the concept is supposed to be in the case where it is involved, clearly concepts are not necessary for our skills and dispositions to work. This suggests that absorbed coping has no need of concepts at all. The example Dreyfus and McDowell discuss in their exchange is the practice of standing at an appropriate distance from other people, which (the assumption is) many of us learn by unconscious imitation, i.e., without

every really becoming reflectively aware that we are adjusting the space between the bodies we encounter according to social norms. Thus, if only some dispositions and skills require concepts for their acquisition, we should expect that none does.

This second argument presents the same problem about the function of concepts, but does so more directly and forcefully than does the first argument. How can concepts have a function in embodied coping if embodied coping can happily proceed without concepts? To defend LPC, one could again define a function that concepts have in embodied coping, but one would also need to explain why that function does not need to be fulfilled in instances of embodied coping where no concepts are involved.

One way for LPC to give concepts a secondary function in embodied coping (beyond their essential function in explicit judgments) is to suppose they function as a kind of cognitive tagging system that allows experiences to connect with judgments about them. This way, the function concepts have in embodied coping does not actually pertain to the ability to carry out our interests and activities, but rather, concepts function in embodied coping like intellectual bookmarks, allowing us to bring to mind aspects of our experience we are capable of thinking about. On such an account, LPC could answer Dreyfus in a way that is at least potentially consistent with McDowell's idea that experiences we are equipped to judge have conceptual form. Nonetheless, this defense of LPC raises further questions about what it means for concepts to tag experiences. Dreyfus hasn't wholly dismissed LPC but he has made the challenge to it somewhat clearer.

3.2.2 Unlimited Pervasive Conceptuality

What if concepts do not depend upon language for their acquisition, so that we can have a concept without having mastered the word that designates it? Dreyfus, to his credit,

anticipates this view and his next move addresses the idea that concepts might be involved in dispositions that required no explicit, discursive concepts for their formation. Thus, Dreyfus turns to the idea of unlimited pervasive conceptuality (UPC):

> One could, of course, introduce a still weaker understanding of conceptuality to justify the claim that concepts are pervasive. One could hold that any sort of absorbed coping, no matter how learned, would count as conceptual as long as it had become *second nature*; that is, as long as it was a natural propensity that has been taken over and shaped by a culture. That is, one could call everyday background coping practices conceptual even if no conceptual awareness were involved in acquiring and practicing them. (MPM 19)

On this view, even distance standing—learned and performed without any thought or reflection, or even awareness that one has moved to stand at an appropriate distance—would be a conceptually informed act. This is certainly not McDowell's view, as McDowell relegates distance standing and other gestures we are not aware of performing outside of our agency and rationality and thereby outside the scope of his pervasive conceptuality.[72] Indeed, Dreyfus's argument against UPC actually anticipates reasons McDowell himself might dismiss it. Dreyfus writes, "since such practices normally are unthought, even if we choose to declare our trained normative background practices concepts, they clearly cannot play the role concepts normally play in grounding judgments and beliefs, i.e., in 'adjusting thinking to experience'" (MPM, 19).[73] In other

[72] McDowell, "The Myth of the Mind as Detached," 50–51. I would argue, however, that McDowell should not concede to Dreyfus that distance standing is an example of a nonconceptual gesture. McDowell thinks that it suffices to count as a nonconceptual gesture provided my answer to the question, "why did you move there," is "I didn't know that I did that." But it is impossible to imagine someone capable of that response not also being capable of responding, "I moved here because I didn't want to stand too close to this other person." By McDowell's own arguments, an answer such as this ought to qualify the move as belonging to the agency and rationality of the subject, which requires, in turn, that it involve the subject's conceptual capacities.

[73] Dreyfus is here quoting McDowell (MW 47).

words, if we "weaken" the notion of conceptuality so that it applies broadly to our capacities and practices that make up our second nature, even those that do not require conceptual thought for their formation, then concepts seem to have no function whatsoever. They are not functions of discursive judgments, nor could they even derive their function in embodied coping as a kind of tagging system for judgments. The question arises, what do concepts *do*? What are they *for*?

Earlier, I presented Dreyfus's distinction between intentional content and conceptual content. One way of stating the UPC thesis, and answering the question about the function of concepts, is that it treats everything Dreyfus calls intentional content as conceptual content. That way, one can claim, the function of concepts is to open us to a world of intentions. Some of these concepts will be acquired without language, in responding to the regularities we encounter in our embodied coping. Other concepts might first be acquired through language and only then come to articulate our intentions in embodied coping. Taking UPC in this direction raises further questions. Plenty of animals appear to have intentions, so if we do not want to assign concepts to all animals that appear to have intentions, there needs to be more stringent criteria for distinguishing conceptuality. Moreover, if embodied coping is replete with concepts, then what explains the difference between embodied coping and judging? And if not all intentional content is fit for judgment, yet all intentional content is conceptual content, then there is conceptual content that is not fit for judgment—which is absurd if, as Dreyfus points out, the whole point of conceptual content in embodied coping is to show how we can appeal to experience in justifying explicit, discursive judgments. Finally, UPC raises Dreyfus's question anew: assuming UPC, how do we explain how rational, discursive thought arises

from the more basic give and take of conceptually articulated intentions in embodied coping?

These are all important questions. Dreyfus's argument against UPC, at least implicitly, comes down to (1) the claim that it assigns no coherent function to concepts; and (2) the assumption that UPC has no prospects for answering these questions satisfactorily. He is certainly not alone in thinking (1) and (2)—both McDowell and Brandom would likely agree. Nonetheless, I argue later that a coherent function can be ascribed to concepts in embodied coping that actually helps to dispel (2).

Leaving these issues aside for now, I want to draw attention to what wading through Dreyfus's position has brought to light. Dreyfus's accounts of rules, awareness, and being-in-the-world all yielded the same problem, namely, that while Dreyfus consistently shows why explicit and discursive reflection have no place in embodied coping, he did not (as he seemed to think) show that concepts have no place in embodied coping, because he simply assumed that the involvement of concepts necessarily requires an explicit and discursive form of awareness that breaks us out of embodied coping. In making that assumption, he did not give us an argument as to why we have to take this to be true of concepts. When, in his final contribution to the debate, he stakes a claim for why we ought to take concepts to always involve explicit, discursive awareness, it turns out to depend on negative arguments that consider and then dismiss the alternatives (one very close to McDowell's view, and one I develop later). These negative arguments raise important issues with the alternatives but do not show that, in principle, they cannot work and that the questions he raises cannot be answered. Dreyfus is right to insist, like Brandom, on there being a clearly defined function for concepts, but he seems blind to

the possibility that a UPC-type view of concepts might be able to provide that. Perhaps his blindness to the possibility stems from his adherence, along with both Brandom and McDowell, to the idea that concepts are exclusively acquired through language, i.e., through mastering the use of a word. More importantly, as I explain below, UPC-type views leave open the possibility of answering Dreyfus's challenge, whereas (as I show next) Dreyfus's Non-PC view makes answering his own challenge enormously difficult, if not impossible.

3.3 Why Dreyfus Cannot Answer His Own Challenge

The greatest problem with Dreyfus's view is not that he fails to establish that concepts, understood more broadly than in their role in explicit, discursive judgment, cannot play a role in embodied coping. Rather, it is that his view of concepts as being dependent upon language and exclusively engaged in discursive judgment makes it virtually impossible to answer the challenge he himself raises, namely, the challenge of explaining how conceptual understanding arises out of more basic capacities.

Dreyfus cannot answer the challenge in part because he has (not unlike Brandom) distinguished conceptuality exclusively as the realm of discursive and explicit rational understanding so thoroughly that it no longer bears any resemblance or connection to non-conceptual capacities. This works for Brandom, because Brandom has no pretensions to explain conceptual understanding in terms of the capacities that power our embodied coping, but for Dreyfus the restriction of conceptuality seems disastrous.[74] As Brandom

[74] This is a highly qualified comparison to Brandom. While both treat conceptual understanding as wholly distinct from and uninvolved in experience and action, their respective characterizations of experience and action and their relation to conceptual understanding strongly diverge. To Dreyfus, embodied coping is full of meaning and forms a necessary backdrop to the discursive understanding of the world that comes with language, whereas Brandom denies outright that reliable differential responsive dispositions that make up, on his view, Dreyfus's embodied coping, contribute anything to meaning or knowledge at all.

takes up his position with the explicit intent to make rationality distinct, he rightly acknowledges how this move makes it extremely difficult to see how rational capacities arise out of nonrational ones:

> Theories that assimilate conceptually structured activity to the nonconceptual activity out of which it arises (in evolutionary, historical, and individual-developmental terms) are in danger of failing to make enough of the difference. Theories that adopt the converse strategy, addressing themselves at the outset to what is distinctive of or exceptional about the conceptual, court the danger of not doing justice to generic similarities. The difference in emphasis and order of explanation can express substantive theoretical commitments.[75]

I take Brandom to be absolutely right here, and I take these claims to be uncontroversial. What is odd about Dreyfus's position, in light of Brandom's remarks, then, is that Dreyfus appears to be divided against himself. To answer his challenge, he ought to opt for the former strategy of assimilating to conceptual to the non-conceptual and thereby courting the danger of failing to distinguish rationality. This approach, as critics of Dreyfus discussed above (Noë, Gardner, and Rouse) have pointed out, would be at least consistent with the existential phenomenology Dreyfus channels into his critique of McDowell. And yet, what Dreyfus actually does is the opposite, namely, he focuses on what is distinctive about the conceptual and thereby courts the danger of failing to grasp the similarities and connections between conceptual and non-conceptual capacities. In short, Dreyfus takes a top-down, rationalist approach to defining concepts while advocating a bottom-up explanation for their existence. In Brandom's terms, Dreyfus appears to have made not just methodological but "substantive theoretical commitments"

[75] Brandom, *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism*, 3.

to not answering his own challenge. It should be no surprise then that Dreyfus never offers anything close to a satisfactory way of explaining how rational, conceptual understanding arises.

There is no argument (to my knowledge) that Dreyfus cannot in principle make his apparently conflicting commitments work, but I cannot imagine how Dreyfus can pull it off in practice. Philosophers who make language a necessary condition for having conceptual understanding (such as Sellars, McDowell, and Brandom) tend to arrive at their view having already committed to playing down the challenge Dreyfus raises as less important than the opposite challenge of making rationality distinct. If we make language necessary for concepts and rationality, then answering Dreyfus's challenge means facing the perennial problem of establishing how one of two entirely dissimilar things gives rise to or even relates to the other. In Dreyfus's defense, his account of the intentional content of embodied coping does bring it close to the conceptual content of subject-object intentionality. And Dreyfus does attempt to explain how intentional content transforms into conceptual content. Here, the problem is that he relies on what Rouse calls "magically invoking a '*lingua ex machina*'" to explain the connection and distinction at the same time.[76] Claiming that we turn nonconceptual stuff into conceptual stuff with language is not a sufficient answer to Dreyfus's challenge. To answer it, not only do we need to know how that transformation works, we also need an account of how the capacity for language arises in the first place.

Here is just one way of putting the problem facing Dreyfus. Assume that intentional (but non-conceptual) content develops as part of second nature in intelligent

[76] Rouse, "What Is Conceptually Articulated Understanding?," 260.

animals.[77] It allows them to flexibly respond and adapt to their surroundings under changing conditions. Assume also that Dreyfus is right that having language is necessary for having concepts. Now the question is how exactly does conceptual understanding come on the scene? Because nothing will count as a concept if not expressed through language, language becomes the central means for explaining the appearance of conceptual understanding. Consider, then, a child of eleven months or so who is learning to use words. She makes word sounds correctly correlated to objects (airplane, tomato, dog, etc.), but she does not have conceptual understanding because she is still apt to misuse the words and cannot make the appropriate inferences or commitments regarding her discursive activity. Does this budding use of language constitute a use of concepts or should we explain the behavior of the child in terms of Dreyfus's intentional concepts? If this use of words constitutes a use of concepts, then it becomes difficult to distinguish between a parrot saying "red" and such a small child saying "red." On the other hand, if we deny that the small child's use of words counts as a use of concepts, then we are forced to expand the notion of intentional content to explain word use in this basic sense. This move also comes with a threat to Dreyfus's commitments: once we explain word use in terms of intentional content, it becomes difficult to see why we should not explain all word use (including giving and asking for reasons) in terms of intentional content, at which point intentional content is indistinguishable from conceptual content, ruining Dreyfus's distinction.

[77] This is a contentious claim but a defensible one. Even Brandom acknowledges that intelligent animals have a proto-intentional form of erotic awareness (as discussed in Chapter I), which could itself serve as a starting point for the kind of account Dreyfus wants to give, albeit a 'lower' starting point than intentional content.

This categorial bleed that threatens Dreyfus's account in both directions reinforces the criticism that Noë, Gardner, and Rouse level at him. Rather than attempt (and fail in one of the ways just described) to keep embodied coping and conceptual understanding wholly distinct and unlike one another and face the problem of relating them and explaining how the latter arises out of the former, answering Dreyfus's challenge calls for a different picture altogether. On this different picture—one that draws more closely on the resources of existential phenomenology than does Dreyfus—we should understand embodied coping to go all the way up, animating our discursive, rational, linguistic practices, while at the same time endorsing the idea that concepts go down, if not all the way, then at least far enough to articulate all of the rational activities we perform in our embodied coping.

To return to Brandom's point in the quote above, if we start by assimilating, the challenge is to distinguish, and if we start by distinguishing the challenge is to assimilate. It is better for Dreyfus—at least insofar as he wants to answer the challenge he raises—to embrace the assimilation of conceptual understanding with lesser capacities we engage in our embodied coping. This way, Dreyfus makes the central challenge not explain how they come together but how they are distinct. Gardner, Noë, and Rouse all argue that, if anything, existential phenomenology opts to start with assimilation and face the problem of differentiation. If we assume that, true to his word, Dreyfus thinks the resources for answering his challenge lie in existential phenomenology, then his commitment to starting by differentiating the conceptual and facing the challenge of assimilation has not just blinded him to opportunities for answering the challenge; but rather, Dreyfus is facing the wrong challenge.

In the next section, I turn to McDowell and focus on the difficulty of answering Dreyfus's question about how we develop the capacity for conceptual understanding out of more basic capacities. Just as Dreyfus's difficulties with conceptualism stem from his commitment to the idea that language is necessary for having concepts, I show how McDowell's problem with Dreyfus's question is also tied to the same assumption, namely, the idea that we only acquire concepts by mastering the use of a word.

4. From Embodied Coping to Rationality

McDowell's conceptualism involves a commitment to the idea that our "perceptual experience is permeated by rationality." Concepts and rationality are, on this view, inseparable: one cannot be rational without the normative use of concepts, and one cannot have concepts if one is not a participant in the space of reasons, a rational actor. His move to let concepts and rationality permeate our perception is an attractive way of preserving a minimal form of empiricism while warding off the Myth of the Given, so in agreeing with McDowell on this point I endorse his motivation. I accept conceptualism, in some form, as a way to retain a minimal form of empiricism.

What form that conceptualism needs to take—what theory of concepts we need to square a minimal form of empiricism with other commitments—will be my focus in Chapters III through V. There I reject McDowell's idea that concepts and rationality are inseparable. By opposing the idea that concepts and rationality are inseparable I do not mean to claim that one can be rational without having concepts. I am suggesting that one can have concepts without being rational. In the present section, my aim is merely to test McDowell's conceptualism to see if it offers any resources for explaining how the

capacity for conceptual understanding develops out of more basic capacities involved in our embodied coping. The question is, can McDowell's conceptualism accommodate an answer to Dreyfus's challenge without giving up his thesis that concepts and rationality are inseparable? To this end, I interrogate three aspects of McDowell's view (from *Mind and World* through his debate with Dreyfus) that seem to offer resources for answering Dreyfus's question. In each case I show that McDowell's conceptualism is hobbled by his commitment to making language necessary for having concepts. The first case investigates McDowell's discussion of animal environments for resources for understanding how a mere environment might morph into a world (§4.1); the second case investigates McDowell's discussion of the system of animal affordances for resources as to how it may morph into a system of conceptual understanding (§4.2); and the third case investigates McDowell's discussion of animal affordances generally for resources to explain how an affordance becomes (or comes to be taken as) a concept (§4.3).

To be fair to McDowell, this investigation of his work is not an assessment of a failed attempt to answer Dreyfus's challenge, for McDowell rejects the very idea that the question I am probing his work to answer is one that we are on the hook for answering in the first place. McDowell rejects Dreyfus's challenge altogether. Rather, I am attempting to show, exhaustively, that if one is committed to answering Dreyfus's questions—for reasons McDowell evidently does not recognize—and if one is nonetheless committed to McDowell's idea that concepts play a role in our perceptual experience, then we need a different approach to what concepts are than the one McDowell provides. The point is, to answer Dreyfus's challenge, conceptualism needs to be revised.

4.1 Can an **Umwelt** *Transform into a World?*

McDowell distinguishes the rational form of awareness enjoyed by humans from the nonrational form of awareness of other animals. One way he does this is by appealing to Gadamer's use of the distinction between having a world versus having a mere environment or surrounding world (*Umwelt*). To have a world means engaging with what one encounters as rationally structured and bound up with human meaning and human possibilities. Only with language and rational, conceptual normativity can one encounter a world at all and, on McDowell's view, we encounter such a world not just in explicit, discursive thought but also in our embodied coping. By contrast, on McDowell's Gadamerian view, having a mere environment means encountering aspects of one's surroundings only insofar as they are relevant to the biological necessities of animal survival. Rational humans have a world and no environment, whereas nonrational animals have an environment and no world. The distinction is a means to distinguish rational and nonrational animals.

One can trace discussions of the distinction not just to Gadamer but to others, including Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, and Jakob von Uexküll, who stood out in his opposition to behaviorism for supposing animal lives to be suffused with meaning appropriate to the animal's own form of life.[78] Among these discussions, there is an alternative take on the *Welt*/*Umwelt* distinction that is worth considering, and that hews closer to Dreyfus's outlook (even though Dreyfus barely mentions the distinction in his

[78] See Uexküll, *A Foray Into the Worlds of Animals and Humans, With a Theory of Meaning*. Brett Buchanan writes, "What concerns Uexküll here, as well as elsewhere in his writings, is how we can glimpse natural environments as meaningful to the animals themselves. Rather than conceiving of the world according to the parameters of our own human understanding—which, historically, has been the more prevalent approach—Uexküll asks us to rethink how we view the reality of the world as well as what it means to be an animal" (Buchanan, *Onto-Ethologies: The Animal Environments and Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze*, 2).

debate with McDowell). On this way of making the distinction, rational animals have both a world and an *Umwelt*. For example, Merleau-Ponty views the objective world as a modification of the embodied *milieu* we inhabit (where "*milieu*" is the French translation of "*Umwelt*"). Here the distinction is a means to distinguish modes of being-in-the-world, where rational animals have both an *Umwelt* and a world. The human *Umwelt* is prior in that it establishes the structures out of which the rational world is built. Different forms of life yield different *Umwelten*, which in turn yield different ways of producing a rationally structured world through our linguistic practices. In this section, I trace how McDowell deploys the *Welt*/*Umwelt* distinction as a way of distinguishing rational and nonrational animals, and consider the difficulty it poses for answering Dreyfus's challenge.

McDowell adopts the thesis in *Mind and World* that to have a world, as opposed to a mere environment, is for the world to be objective. Only a self-conscious subject can have an objective world. For McDowell, a self-conscious subject can ascribe experiences to herself, and it is only with this ability "that experiences can constitute awareness of the world" (MW 114). Where there is no self-conscious subject, there can be only an environment. Moreover, for McDowell, it is "the spontaneity of the understanding, the power of conceptual thinking" that brings about the awareness of one's self as a self and awareness of the world as such (MW 114). Lacking the spontaneity of the understanding and the power of conceptual thought, nonrational animals have no access to self-awareness or to an objective world.

By making the contrast between rational and nonrational animals in these stark terms, McDowell invites the criticism that he has saddled himself with the "Cartesian idea that brutes are automata" so that they "are not genuinely sentient" (MW 114-5). On

the Cartesian picture, nonrational animals may be responsive to their surroundings, but their surroundings are nothing *to* them or *for* them. They are, in effect, machines. For animals to be more than machines, they need to be able to distinguish their own bodies from other bodies they encounter, and to be able grasp something as being significant for them, i.e., in the routines they develop to satisfy their biological needs. It is here that McDowell appeals to the *Welt*/*Umwelt* distinction to "acknowledge what is common between human beings and brutes, while preserving the difference that the Kantian thesis forces on us" (MW 115). All animal life is "structured exclusively by immediate biological imperatives," according to McDowell, meaning that it is "shaped by goals whose control of the animal's behaviour at a given moment is an immediate outcome of biological forces" (MW 115). What would it take for there to be any mediation involved, to entertain options irreducible to biological force? McDowell implies for there to be mediation requires that the animal "weigh reasons and decide what to do," which is to say, have the spontaneity of conceptual understanding that yields an objective grasp of the world (MW 115).[79] But an animal lacking a world does not entail that the animal lacks sentient awareness. Rather, following Gadamer, McDowell argues that the sentience of mere "brutes" yields an environment. An environment "can be no more than a succession of problems and opportunities, constituted as such by those biological imperatives" (MW 115).

[79] In effect, McDowell makes practical reasoning basic and subsumes theoretical reasoning under it. This commitment, which one can trace (at least, on certain interpretations) to Aristotle, German idealism, American pragmatism, and existential phenomenology, is also at the core of the view I develop later. However, as I discuss in Chapter III, evidence from contemporary ethology and comparative psychology suggests that some problem-solving animals have a capacity for instrumental reasoning, where this capacity is sufficient for attributing more than mere sentience to animals, yet something less than full, human sapience.

In other words, on McDowell's account, a nonrational animal's sentient awareness of the world is populated by entities and possibilities only insofar as they are shaped by the animal's immediate biological needs, and all of its actions are directed toward satisfying those needs. McDowell's use of the term "immediacy" can seem all too constraining if we take it to mean a lack of flexibility and revisability in the animal's responsiveness to its surroundings. But McDowell's view is not as restrictive as that. In inhabiting their environment, we can understand animals to "take something to be something" in a very basic sense of an affordance (to use Dreyfus's preferred term) or a significance with respect to the animal's erotic desire (to use Brandom's terms). McDowell does not say so, but the form of awareness that animals have could be learned, revisable, and flexibly applied without threatening his thesis that animals are motivated by their biological imperatives. Put another way, animals can have everything short of self-awareness and rational choice or (as McDowell quotes Gadamer) "free, distanced orientation" (MW 117). The environment an animal inhabits impinges upon it, and while the animal can develop habitual capacities to improve its ability to satisfy its biological needs—a degree of second nature—the animal cannot "rise above" the pressure its environment exerts (MW 116).[80] The animal can develop clever responses to these pressures, but it cannot gather enough distance from those pressures to understand them as pressures. It can respond to "problems and opportunities" by treating different aspects of its environment in ways that resolve those problems and exploit those opportunities, but it cannot respond to problems explicitly as problems or opportunities explicitly as opportunities. To do so requires distance, and McDowell thinks that distance requires

[80] See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 441.

self-awareness of a kind that is only available to animals with spontaneous, conceptual understanding of the world.

McDowell returns to the *Welt*/*Umwelt* distinction in his debate with Dreyfus in order to reinforce his thesis that the mind is pervasive in embodied coping. He again quotes Gadamer approvingly, that "man's relation to the world is absolutely and fundamentally verbal in nature" (WM 346)."[81] The point here is that once we acquire language and the rational norms that it enables, our conceptual grasp of the world is drawn into every aspect of our orientation to the world, regardless of whether or not we are explicitly thinking. As McDowell reads Gadamer, language gives us leverage against a mere environment that rational animals inhabit, lending us (to repeat the phrase) a "free, distanced orientation" to a world (WM 346). Again, a rational animal is a subject in the substantial sense of being self-conscious, and self-consciousness transforms the nature and scope of embodied coping even when we are not reflectively thinking about what we are doing.

Part of Dreyfus's complaint against McDowell's conceptualism is that, from Dreyfus's perspective, it seems to require that we have a determinate conceptual grasp of everything that enters our field of awareness in embodied coping. Moves like this are part of Dreyfus's way of rejecting computational theories of mind. But McDowell argues that his pervasiveness thesis makes no such claims. The claim is not that every aspect of our experience is determinately grasped, but rather, it is that pervasive rationality imparts conceptual unity to experience. The point is not that the Kantian I-think actually attends every experience, but rather, that the I-think *could* attend every experience, because every experience is given the conceptual form it needs to make the attendance of the I-think

[81] See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 471.

possible. This unity of experience is a constitutive part of having a world (more than a mere environment), of being a self-conscious animal; it is part of what it is to gain the freedom of some distance from what we encounter. McDowell writes:

> We do not need to have words for all the content that is conceptually available to us … in the distinctive form that belongs with an experience's being such as to disclose the world. The Gadamerian thought is that language enables us to have experience that is categorially unified, apperceptive, and world-disclosing, and hence has content that is conceptual in the sense I have introduced; not, absurdly, that we are ready in advance with words for every aspect of the content of our experience, nor that we could equip ourselves with words for every aspect of the content of our experience. No aspect is unnamable, but that does not require us to pretend to make sense of an ideal position in which we have a name for every aspect, let alone to be in such a position (WM 348).

This is crucial for understanding the sense in which McDowell thinks the world that language affords us manifests itself in our experience. He thinks our conceptual capacities are drawn into play in embodied coping to give unity to the world we encounter, unity that reflects our generally rational orientation to the world. It does not follow, however, that one need the specific concept for every aspect of the world that enters into this awareness. Rather, those aspects fall under the general conceptual unity that shapes our awareness such that, should we wish to make our experience explicit, we could draw on other concepts to form a judgment. This is a form of conceptual unity that is only possible for self-consciousness. Nonrational animals, by contrast, do not have this kind of unity in their embodied coping and, lacking that unity, have no means for relating various aspects of its awareness. An environment may be populated with entities of interest but they are not conceptually related into a unified whole. It is in this sense that

having a mere environment means that the animal's awareness lacks concepts; the content in the animal's awareness must be non-conceptual, whereas, being unified, the content in a rational animal's awareness must be conceptual.

The distinction that McDowell draws here is quite useful for sketching the meaningful differences between a merely animal life and one that is full of human meaning. The problem, however, is that it makes it difficult to grasp how conceptual understanding might arise or, to put it in the terms just discussed, how a human *Welt* might develop out of a mere *Umwelt*. Presumably, all human infants inhabit a mere *Umwelt* on the way to inhabiting a world, so the question is how acquiring a language entails acquiring a world over and above a mere *Umwelt*, or, put another way, how an *Umwelt* becomes a *Welt.* Again, following Gadamer, McDowell claims that language is responsible for apperception, for the conceptual unity we are capable of bringing to all of what we encounter in experience. It is through the overarching conceptual unity that language provides that we bring the mere affordances of animal life into the world order. But this is still to assume the world-ordering capacity, whereas Dreyfus's challenge is for us to explain the very appearance of that capacity in a way that does not appeal to it. McDowell's talk of spontaneity is of no help here either, as it is just another term to account for our rational, conceptual capacities; he claims that we come by our spontaneity naturally, but is not interested in explaining how spontaneity is natural. To say that we gain a world by a process of *Bildung*, by learning language and becoming rational is not an answer to Dreyfus's challenge; it just outlines a version of what Dreyfus challenges us to explain. Moreover, it is not at all clear that this take on the world/*Umwelt* distinction is the right one for answering Dreyfus's challenge. It may well be that the

alternative—where rational animals enjoy both a world when we think and an *Umwelt* in our embodied coping that underpins the rational world offers better resources for answering Dreyfus's challenge. Indeed, it does seem as though Dreyfus, Merleau-Ponty, and perhaps Heidegger would prefer the alternative.

4.2 Does the Discussion of Conceptual Form Explain How It Appears?

Dreyfus's challenge, again, is to explain rational, conceptual understanding from the bottom up. McDowell agrees with Dreyfus that there is a system of affordances to which both rational and nonrational animals respond—McDowell differs by insisting that the affordances of rational animals are conceptual. Perhaps the right approach, then, is to ask how it is that a system of affordances becomes a system of conceptual understanding. This is a second attempt to appeal to the resources of McDowell's perspective as a means to answer Dreyfus's challenge.

One way to think through the question of how affordances become conceptual is through McDowell's idea of "conceptual form," the form under which we relate to affordances as rational animals and which makes everything we encounter at least potentially available for our explicit, conceptual grasp. Dreyfus discusses the affordances that nonrational animals have as forming an interrelated system according to the habits of the animal. The claim is not that the system is a system for the animal, but rather, all that is available to the animal is the succession of affordances. To grasp the system as a system would require conceptual understanding. McDowell nowhere objects to these claims. One of the ways McDowell unpacks the idea that concepts play a role in the perceptual experience of rational animals is by discussing that role in terms of the "conceptual form" by which we grasp the world. What McDowell means by "conceptual

form" is not entirely clear at first glance, and warrants a close reading because it is one of the ways that McDowell explains how aspects of our experience are taken up for discrete, discursive judgment. This discussion also leads into one of the ways McDowell thinks we can acquire new empirical concepts. One might think McDowell's accounts of how aspects of our experience are discursively conceptualized and how we acquire new empirical concepts would offer clues to how the capacity for rational, conceptual understanding itself is acquired. Here I want to show that it does not. Rather, it reveals once again the same problem, namely, that McDowell assumes conceptual capacities in the process of explaining how they function in experience.

In the debate with Dreyfus, McDowell discusses conceptual form to show how experiences can be conceptual without involving discursive, reflective judgments that break us out of embodied coping. To this end, McDowell characterizes all perceptual content as "present in a form in which it is suitable to constitute the content of a conceptual capacity" that brings its content into apperceptive unity (WM 346). What does it mean for all content to be present in a conceptual form? McDowell distinguishes (a) mere conceptual form, the form that all perceptual contents take for a linguistically endowed human with a world; from (b) articulated, conceptual content, carved out of experience and distinctly grasped (WM 347). McDowell's claim is that for (a) to become (b), "All that would be needed for a bit of it to come to constitute the content of a conceptual capacity, if it is not already the content of a conceptual capacity, is for it to be focused on and made to be the meaning of a linguistic expression" (WM 348). The trouble is that it is still not clear what conceptual form actually is. Perhaps what McDowell is alluding to in his discussion of conceptual form is that, as rational animals,

all affordances we encounter are encountered as aspects of the world we gain by virtue of bringing them into a kind of rational unity. “Conceptual form,” then, captures the sense in which affordances no longer just afford a basic animal form of responsiveness we share with animals, they also afford normatively governed moves we can make in the game of giving and asking for reasons. Through rational form, we come to encounter things as bearing the potential for rational discourse, including discursive judgments about what is the case.

Things may appear under conceptual form to rational animals, but, as I’ve already shown, McDowell doesn’t think our experience is entirely conceptualized. How does McDowell explain this partial measure of conceptuality? In his final contribution to the debate, McDowell addresses this issue by making three claims: First, any given experience is resplendent with knowable things, and in experiencing the world we do not actively make discursive judgments about every aspect of the experience; second, moreover, it is quite normal for a subject of experience to be incapable of judging every aspect of that experience; third, the condition for making such judgments is having the “means for making explicit” those implicit aspects of experience (MMD 43).

The point is that even if what we experience is rich beyond our ability to grasp every element in explicit, conceptual terms, it does not follow that our experience is not wholly conceptual. McDowell writes, “experience discloses the way things are, whether or not its subject has the means to make those aspects of its content explicit in judgments or assertions” (MMD 43). That is, we do not experience the world non-conceptually in areas for which we lack the ability to make discursive judgments, and conceptually in areas for which we do not. Moreover, McDowell adds, “Making the content in question

explicit—even if the subject first has to acquire means to do that—does not make the content newly conceptual in any sense that is relevant to my claim, it was conceptual already" (MMD 43). Our rational orientation to the world means that whatever does show up for us in experience shows up through concepts, or as having conceptual form that makes it ripe for discursive judgments.

In what way is our experience conceptual in those cases where we are not equipped with the concepts to make explicit judgments about it? McDowell uses the example of color to show how we move from experience with conceptual form without the ability to make particular aspects of that experience explicit, to the ability to make it explicit. Here the discussion of conceptual form turns into a discussion of demonstrative concepts such as "this" and "that." As McDowell puts it,

> no subject is ready in advance with expressions for all the shades of color she might see. But while one is enjoying a visual experience in which something is presented as having a certain shade of color, determinate to the extent made possible by the acuity of one's power to discriminate colors, one can exploit the visual presence to one of a sample of the shade in order to introduce an expression for the way the thing is presented as being, thus: " … has that shade of color." (MMD 43)

Color is a nice example because, in principle, the entire visual spectrum of colors admits only of degrees. Anyone who has perused and pondered house paint chips can attest to lacking an explicit name for every shade of color. More generally, though, McDowell is saying that in those instances where we lack a complete spectrum of concepts to make the conceptual form of our experience explicit we can nonetheless get sufficiently explicit by recourse to demonstrative language. By saying "this" and "that" we thereby make our experience explicit, if only in the most basic way. The only

stipulation McDowell adds for such a demonstrative index to count as an explicit conceptual grasp is that we can continue to deploy these concepts to refer to the same aspect of our experience in the absence of the example that gave rise to it. The capacity for conceptual explication is thus the capacity to bring to mind or hold in mind something absent.

The color example might seem to create a problem for McDowell. Having characterized the ability to pick out a specific color as a conceptual one, it now sounds as though he is denying other animals an ability that many obviously have. I don't think this is a real problem. Animals might well be reliably, differentially responsive to colors in a variety of ways. For example, a relatively simple animal with a very basic nervous system could be highly adapted to respond reliably and differentially to a very specific range of environing stimuli that include colors. The animal need not have anything like the form of learned awareness of affordances that we seem to share with other intelligent animals, that is. Likewise, we might suppose that an animal with a highly developed brain that features the neural underpinnings of consciousness has the ability to learn to respond to a variety of different colors as aspects of a system of affordances that allow it to satisfy its biological needs. The point that McDowell is making is not that only a rational animal can make fine color discriminations; but rather, it is that in addition to being able to do this at the level of affordances, a rational animal can also make those discriminations explicit and draw them into the ambit of a conceptually unified world simply by referring to them with demonstrative concepts.

Setting these issues aside, however, it is clear that McDowell's discussion of the conceptual form that affordances have for rational animals will not aid in answering

Dreyfus's challenge. McDowell simply assumes the rational capacity whose development Dreyfus challenges us to explain. His means for explaining how we draw new aspects of experience into our conceptual understanding works by appealing to conceptual understanding. This is not, to be clear, a critique of McDowell's claims about conceptual form or demonstratives; to reiterate, McDowell rejects Dreyfus's question. Nonetheless, the prospect of explaining how we acquire conceptual ability seems, if anything, worse. If not conceptual form, perhaps there are resources in how affordances come to be part of our conceptual grasp of the world.

4.3 Can Affordances Transform into Concepts?

In his "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental," Dreyfus argues that McDowell establishes a break between the embodied coping of rational animals and that of nonrational animals by assigning concepts to the former and not to the latter. In its first iteration, Dreyfus's argument is that (as McDowell puts it) "we share basic perceptual capacities and embodied coping skills with other animals"; yet other animals' capacities are not rational; therefore, our capacities cannot be rational either (WM 343). McDowell attacks the first premise, writing, "The claim that the capacities and skills are shared comes to no more than this: there are descriptions of things we can do that apply also to things other animals can do" (WM 343). Animals perceive things and perform learned abilities, and so do we: this is all that the sharing in question amounts to. There is no reason to infer from the shared abilities that the abilities are the same abilities or that the content involved is of the same kind. Or, as McDowell puts it in *Mind and World*, "we can say that we have what mere animals have, perceptual sensitivity to features of our environment, but we have it in a special form" (MW 64). The form that our perceptual

sensitivity takes is conceptual and is due to the development of the spontaneity of conceptual understanding that we do not share with other animals.

McDowell then entertains another claim from Dreyfus that he views as "just a sophisticated version of the quick argument above" (WM 343). He quotes Dreyfus's APA address:

> We directly perceive affordances and respond to them without beliefs and justifications being involved. Moreover, these affordances are interrelated and it is our familiarity with the whole context of affordances that gives us our ability to orient ourselves and find our way about.[82]

Dreyfus's claim here is that we engage in our embodied coping without the involvement of our rational, discursive capacities, aiming to show that there is no function for concepts in our embodied coping. It is not concepts but affordances that play a role here—content that, as discussed above, Dreyfus will later characterize as being intentional without being conceptual. On this view, there is no reason to think we *don't* share this form of perceptual awareness with nonrational animals. So why does McDowell characterize this view as just a sophisticated version of the quick argument? Here he chides Dreyfus for mentioning but then dismissing the distinction between having a world versus having a mere environment.[83] McDowell argues, in effect, that Dreyfus is right to claim that we, like other animals, are perceptually responsive to affordances in our embodied coping. As he puts it, "I do not dispute that perceptual responsiveness to affordances, necessarily bound up with embodied coping skills, is

[82] WM 343. McDowell cites OMM 59.

[83] Dreyfus does not deploy this distinction but he clearly reads it differently from McDowell. Heidegger thinks only rational animals have a world, whereas nonrational animals have a mere environment (*Umwelt*). However, as Dreyfus rightly reads Heidegger, when we are engaged in mere embodied coping, we fall back on having a mere *Umwelt*. In McDowell's favor, the *Umwelt* of a rational animal is enriched with the shape things take on for a world-rich rational animal.

something we share with other animals" (WM 344). Moreover, he is also right that our familiarity with affordances serves as a background for the openness to the world we gain by virtue of our spontaneous capacity for understanding; then he writes, "What perception discloses to human beings is not restricted to affordances" (WM 344). Being open to a world, as opposed to a mere environment, "transforms the character of the disclosing that perception does for us, including the disclosing of affordances that, if we had not achieved openness to the world, would have belonged to a merely animal competence at inhabiting an environment" (WM 344). Once we are rational animals, endowed with the conceptual capacities that learning a language brings, affordances are no longer just affordances, but rather, they are taken up in the ambit of our conceptual capacities. Whereas nonrational animals are responsive to affordances, rational animals respond to conceptual affordances. They are conceptual insofar as we take them to be part of a world to which a rational response is a perpetual option. McDowell continues:

> When familiarity with affordances comes to be a background to what there is, over and above openness to affordances, in being oriented towards the world, which is a distinctively human way of being, a human individual's relation *to affordances* is no longer what it would have been if she had gone on living the life of a non-rational animal. Affordances are no longer merely input to a human animal's natural motivational tendencies; now they are data for her rationality, not only her practical rationality but her theoretical rationality as well. (WM 344)

Putting things this way, McDowell signals the view we saw him defend against Brandom in Chapter I, namely, the view that what we experience we experience as a *reason* for doing, thinking, or judging that something is the case. When our embodied coping skills and the affordances they make available to us become the "background for our openness

to the world," that openness to the world—made possible by our spontaneous, conceptual grasp of what we encounter—establishes a conceptual frame and orientation that encompasses and absorbs everything we encounter, with nothing left outside it (WM 345). It does not follow that everything within that frame is fully conceptualized. But McDowell does claim that there are no aspects of the experience of a rational animal that cannot in principle be conceptualized in one way or another.

One might think that McDowell's response to Dreyfus offers some clues as to how someone adopting McDowell's position might answer Dreyfus's challenge of explaining how conceptual understanding arises from lesser abilities. Upon inspection, however, it reveals only an unsolved puzzle about how it is that affordances become concepts. Ostensibly, McDowell wants to claim perceptual experience is permeated by concepts and rationality. He also needs to ensure that rationality and spontaneity are wholly distinct from mere animal affordances, otherwise the way we respond to our surroundings will not be sufficiently different from the way animals respond to their surroundings. The perennial problem is to explain how we get clear and distinct rational, conceptual understanding if all we start with, as infants, is affordances.

If McDowell agreed with Dreyfus that embodied coping, absent rationality, were informed by affordances that shaped an animal mode of navigating what they encountered in satisfying their needs, and if, prior to becoming rational, human infants also responded to affordances, then presumably McDowell would need to claim that becoming rational definitively transforms affordances into concepts. In the language of his revised view, affordances must become conceptual intuitions. In the quote above, however, McDowell seems to be claiming something different. McDowell recognizes

that rational humans have affordances but claims that, qua rational, we stand in a different relation to them than do nonrational animals. It is not that affordances are transformed into concepts, it is rather that our relation to affordances changes, and by virtue of that change, the affordances count as conceptual. Absent rationality, the relation to affordances concerns merely what they afford in terms of animals realizing their biological needs, but with the presence of rationality, affordances afford much more, i.e., they afford data for empirical judgments according to the norms of one's community.

Does this make sense? The comparison between how nonrational animals relate to affordances (nonconceptually) and how rational humans relate to affordances (conceptually) is suspect. Animals cannot not "relate to affordances" in the same sense that rational humans relate to "affordances." A nonrational animal's "relation to an affordance" is just a relation to a *thing* it takes to afford something. It relates to a thing *as an affordance*, where the affordance constitutes the entirety of the thing. A rational human's relation to an affordance must be a second order relation: a rational animal relates to an affordance "as data for rationality." In other words, the rational animal does not just relate to a thing as an affordance, it also relates to the affordance as a thing, namely a thing that serves as data for rationality. But the whole question is how affordances become conceptual. McDowell's answer that we come to relate to them conceptually does not actually explain anything. Rather, it assumes the thing that needs to be explained, namely, how it is that we come to transcend a mere environment full of affordances to a world where we can grasp an affordance conceptually as affording rational thought.

To be charitable to McDowell, I ought to be clear about how I am exploiting his exchange with Dreyfus. I am exploiting the transcendental shape of McDowell's defense of minimal empiricism. For McDowell is in the epistemological business of explaining the necessary conditions of the possibility of empirical knowledge, and his answer is, in part, that our perceptual experience must be permeated by concepts and rationality. The point is that McDowell's argument is in no way designed to answer the question I am raising. And yet, Dreyfus is right to ask anew the old question of how to explain the development of rational, conceptual understanding out of lesser capacities we share with other animals and children. And it is moreover crucial to any account of how we justify empirical judgments (as Brandom superbly makes clear) that it is able to show what is distinctive about the rational capacity for conceptual understanding. The view that McDowell offers falls apart as soon as we attempt to mobilize it to answer the emergence question. What I am after, again, is a view that makes compatible the disparate commitments to (1) minimal empiricism through some kind of conceptualism and (2) a functional account of concepts that helps us to explain what makes rationality distinct, while answering Dreyfus's challenge.

5. Conclusion

The aim of my dissertation, again, is to answer a longstanding philosophical challenge to explain how our capacity for conceptual understanding arises from more basic capacities we share with other animals. My criteria for answering the challenge is to square three attractive but apparently incompatible commitments: Brandom's rationalist commitment to clearly differentiating rational from nonrational capacities; McDowell's commitment

to a minimal form of empiricism that places concepts in experience; and Dreyfus's phenomenological commitment to explaining our rational capacities in terms of those involved in our embodied coping. To reconcile these commitments in Chapter V, I reject their shared commitment to the idea that having language is necessary for having concepts, and propose instead a relaxed form of conceptual holism.

I began the present chapter by (§2.1) giving an overview of what are, for my purposes, the most important features of the debate between McDowell and Dreyfus, and (§2.2) discussing three critical responses to the debate that help to frame how I later respond to it. Next (§3), I interrogated Dreyfus's rejection of the idea that concepts can play a role in embodied coping, first (§3.1) considering a narrow notion of concepts that McDowell does not share, and then (§3.2) considering two broader notions of concepts, one that is close to McDowell's view and another that comes close to the view I develop later. I showed that Dreyfus's rejection of the idea that concepts play a role in embodied coping is not exhaustive: it is not the case that concepts cannot play a role in embodied coping, but rather, Dreyfus only demands that the function of concepts be clarified if they are to play a role in embodied coping. That is a reasonable objection, and one I intend to meet. I then showed how Dreyfus's own notion of concepts creates difficulties for answering his own challenge of explaining how it is that we acquire the conceptual capacity for rational understanding. I take this difficulty to recommend a different notion of concepts altogether.

I then (§4) turned to McDowell's contribution to the debate and considered what, if any, resources there might be in McDowell's conceptualism for answering Dreyfus's challenge (noting that McDowell himself rejects the idea that we should feel compelled

to answer such a challenge). I focused only on what appeared to be the most promising aspects of his view. After considering (§4.1) McDowell's discussion of the difference between having an environment and having a world, (§4.2) his discussion of conceptual form, and (§4.3) his discussion of affordances, I concluded that McDowell's conceptualism offers little to no help for answering Dreyfus's challenge.

Summing up, here are three key points I have established about how McDowell, Brandom, and Dreyfus all make attractive but apparently incompatible commitments: (1) Brandom rejects McDowell's minimal, empiricist conceptualism and warns against attempting to answer Dreyfus's challenge because doing so would undermine his commitment to making rationality distinct. (2) McDowell rejects Brandom's approach to making rationality distinct because it forces us to give up minimal empiricism, and he thinks we should not even be tempted to answer Dreyfus's challenge. And (3) Dreyfus rejects Brandom's idea that experience contributes nothing to knowledge and rejects McDowell's idea that concepts can play a role in embodied coping.

Looking ahead, I establish that the one commitment all three thinkers share produces the appearance of incompatibility among their respective commitments. The shared commitment, again, is the idea that language is necessary for having concepts, that having a concept means mastering the use of a word. Once we abandon this one commitment, we can begin to see how it is that the other three attractive commitments can be made to cohere with each other. My method for establishing this will be simply to abandon the one, shared commitment. In place of a notion of language-dependent concepts, I consider and endorse a much broader notion of concepts. The notion I have in mind is one developed recently by Elisabeth Camp.

CHAPTER III: CONCEPTS WITHOUT INTELLECTUALISM

1. Beyond Intellectualism

In the previous two chapters, my aim was to challenge the intellectualist idea—held by Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus, among others—that language is necessary for having concepts at all, and to motivate consideration of a broader notion of concepts. The most important criterion for a broader definition of concepts, for my purposes, is that it should help reconcile the respective commitments these three philosophers make. That is, in addition to being compelling in its own right, it ought to (1) help answer Dreyfus's challenge of explaining how rational understanding develops out of cognitive abilities we share with prelinguistic humans and nonhuman animals; (2) clarify how normatively governed concepts play a role in human experience, to retain McDowell's minimal form of empiricism; and (3) be useful for explaining exactly what makes rationality distinct, to uphold Brandom's commitment.

Here, I turn to the work of Elisabeth Camp to present and assess her theory of concepts for my purposes. On Camp's view, as I explain in detail below, concepts are revisable, systematically recombinable representations that can be deployed independently of environing stimuli; so defined, they are the key cognitive capacities of a range of animals capable of intelligent problem solving, likely including elephants, corvids, cetaceans, and all great apes (including humans). One advantage of Camp's definition of concepts is that it builds in a kind of conceptual holism. Unlike the astringent holism of McDowell and Brandom, which makes the inferential role of

concepts in language necessary for having concepts, Camp's relaxed holism merely holds that to have any concepts means to have many concepts, because to have concepts is to be able to spontaneously and systematically recombine them with other concepts.

In Camp's view, Dreyfus, McDowell, and Brandom (along with Sellars, Donald Davidson, John Haugeland, and others) are all beholden to an unwarranted intellectualism about concepts, i.e., the restriction of all concept use to rational understanding, a cognitive capacity exclusive to humans. She is motivated by the idea that human cognition cannot be as different from nonhuman animal cognition as the intellectualists purport it to be.

In searching for a theory of concepts befitting both human and nonhuman animal cognition, she focuses on the function of conceptual thoughts in the lives of animals, emphasizing the advantages of having conceptual thought in the evolution of species that have it. While there are other philosophers who have recently argued on similar grounds that animals have concepts, what makes Camp's theory unique (and uniquely valuable for my purposes) is that hers is an attempt to reconcile theories of animal concepts with intellectualist theories of concepts like those held by Brandom, Dreyfus, and McDowell. She attempts to improve a definition of concepts that attribute them to a wide variety of nonhuman animals (even including invertebrates) by narrowing and tempering it with a compelling insight about concepts she finds in intellectualists from Davidson to McDowell.

My aim here is to explain and evaluate Camp's theory of concepts. What I take from her theory is a way of understanding what rational cognition shares with the cognition of prelinguistic children and nonhuman, problem-solving animals. By

attributing concepts to other intelligent animals, Camp shifts the burden of explaining what makes rationality distinct into other terms: rather than take the intellectualist route and define concepts *in order to* distinguish rational capacities, the idea is to show how (1) all intelligent problem-solving animals share a kind of conceptual grasp of things they encounter, and then (2) explain how that basic, animal, conceptual grasp of things and opportunities is shaped into a rational grasp of the world through socio-linguistic practices. The present Chapter III is devoted to (1). The following Chapter IV integrates Camp's theory of concepts with John Haugeland's theory of objectivity to lay the groundwork to deliver on (2) in Chapter V.

In the present chapter, I first spell out Camp's theory of concepts in detail (§2), then show how Camp's theory of concepts (which I call instrumentalism) functions as an attack on the intellectualism about concepts endorsed by Brandom, McDowell, Dreyfus, and others (§3). Finally (§4), I consider how Camp's instrumentalism falls short by intellectualist lights by failing to offer a sufficient response to the epistemological motivation of intellectualism, and consider how Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus might each respond to Camp's view.

2. Camp's Theory of Concepts

Elisabeth Camp defines concepts as representations that are revisable, systematically recombinable, and stimulus-independent.[84] I sketch the basic shape of Camp's position

[84] Camp, "Putting Thoughts to Work: Concepts, Systematicity, and Stimulus-Independence" henceforth, PTW followed by page number. "Representation" has been a contentious word among philosophers who attack the Myth of the Given—"intellectualists" in Camp's parlance. For example, Rorty attacks "privileged representations," i.e., representations alleged to serve as a foundation for empirical knowledge, as a common enemy of both Sellars and Quine (*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 165–92). This critique of representation does not, however, apply to Camp's theory of concepts because, for Camp, the primary function of representational abilities is not to underwrite rational, objective knowledge but to

briefly here before going into more detail and defining Camp's terms in the following subsections.[85] Concepts are a function of cognition exclusive to animals that can actively recombine their representations, as opposed to being dependent upon environing stimuli to, in effect, dictate what they can represent in any given circumstance. One form of behavior that evinces such conceptual abilities—which I explore in greater detail below—she calls "instrumental reason," i.e., the animal ability to spontaneously bring about specific, subsidiary states of affairs in order to achieve their goals.[86]

Camp presents her view as a middle way between two extremes: minimalism and intellectualism. Minimalism takes a "neo-behaviorist" approach to cognition and attributes concepts to explain the cognitive capacities of a wide range of animals.[87] This is the "scientific tradition" that approaches concepts as thought-enabling mechanisms that facilitate an animal's systematic responsiveness to environmental features. Minimalism

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facilitate an animal's ability to navigate and take advantage of its environment. That is, Camp sets forward "representations" as means to explain the behavior of animals, as part of an ethological discourse that is advancing comparative psychology, and her approach to representations lacks any of the epistemological pretensions that Rorty critiques. Her use of the term "representation" finds a full definition in the work of Josef Perner, whose ideas Camp cites and draws upon. (See Perner, *Understanding the Representational Mind*.) I describe and make use of Perner's theory of representation in Chapter V. The intellectualist challenge to Camp's view is not that she depends upon a bankrupt idea of representation that reinstates the Myth of the Given—she doesn't. Rather, the challenge to Camp's view, as I show at the conclusion of this chapter, is that if nonhuman and human animals alike have concepts, she seems to undermine the means to explain what makes rational, objective knowledge distinct.

[85] I spell out systematic recombinability and stimulus independence below, but let me begin here with "revisable." Revisable representations are not innate but acquired, and can change "in light of experience" (PTW 282). Camp does not elaborate on what it means for a representation to be revisable, but recall Brandom's similar idea in his discussion of "significances." Animals driven by desire take objects to have significance as a means to satisfy that desire. This, on Brandom's view, opens up the possibility of a "distinction between *appearance* and *reality*," when an animal takes something to have the significance of satisfying a desire and it does not satisfy that desire (SDR 134). It will discover that significance it took the thing to have is not the significance it actually has. Any representation (or significance) *R* is revisable in the sense that, if appearance and reality come apart, what counts as *R* can change (SDR 134).

[86] Camp's "instrumental reasoning" is distinct from and should not be confused with other uses of that term or, for example, with the "instrumental rationality" discussed in critical theory. I would not rule out the idea that it is worth exploring a connection between Camp's instrumentalism about concepts and the critique of instrumental rationality, but it is not my aim to do so here.

[87] I borrow the term, "neo-behaviorist," from Haugeland, "The Intentionality All-Stars," 1990. Camp's own view, by Haugeland's standards, is a form of neo-behaviorism. In Chapter IV, I explore the compatibilities and incompatibilities of Camp's and Haugeland's views in detail.

attributes concepts to a wide range of animals, including, for example, dogs and bees. What makes minimalism attractive is that it "puts thoughts to work" (to quote the title of Camp's essay), i.e., it defines concept use in terms of a cognitive ability that affords animals an evolutionary advantage by allowing them, as individuals or in groups, to better exploit their ecological niche. The downside to minimalism, Camp argues, is that it fails to appreciate the importance of an animal's ability to actively recombine representations, independently of environing stimuli. Not only does this failure miss something crucial about thought that intellectualism gets right, it leads minimalism to attribute concepts and thoughts to animals, such as bees, that have highly rigid cognitive abilities compared to animals typically understood to be intelligent, such as corvids, cetaceans, elephants, and primates.

Intellectualism defines concepts exclusively as a function in the cognition of rational, human animals capable of metacognition and grasping cognitive errors. This is the "philosophical tradition" that focuses on what rational thinkers can do with concepts and makes having language necessary for using concepts. Intellectualism only recognizes concept-use in rational animals with a developed capacity for natural language. What makes intellectualism attractive is that it grasps the important insight, mentioned above, that a cognitive ability should only count as thought or concept-use if it can be freely deployed, rather than relying on environing stimuli. The problem with intellectualism, Camp argues, is that it sets the bar too high for concepts and misses the opportunity to link human rationality to the complex forms of cognition that we can observe in our closest primate relatives and other intelligent species.

In the course of her essay, Camp refines the minimalist approach to concepts by accommodating what she takes to be the important insight from the intellectualist approach, namely, that concept-use requires an active ability to recombine representations independently of stimuli. Thus she finds a middle way between the permissive criteria for concept use that minimalism provides and the all too restrictive criteria that intellectualism provides. Her goal is in part to naturalize concepts, or as she puts it, to "understand why and how [conceptual thought] might emerge in nature," and she thinks the key is to consider the practical advantages for an animal that develops conceptual thought (PTW 276).

To spell out Camp's theory of concepts I first present the minimalist approach to concepts whose criteria Camp considers necessary but not sufficient (§2.1); I then explore the additional criteria Camp appends to minimalism to present her instrumentalist approach to concepts (§2.2).

2.1 Minimalism

Minimalism, as Camp understands it, takes concepts to be revisable, systematically recombinable representations that facilitate an animal's ability to adapt to and make use of its surroundings.[88] On a minimalist view of concepts, conceptual cognition is a function of an animal's ability to adapt to its surroundings and adapt its surroundings to its needs. Thus, concepts are "states and abilities [that] have the function of indicating or representing aspects of the world, and are capable of interacting with a range of other such states and abilities to produce action aimed at achieving the creature's goals" (PTW

[88] A good example of a minimalist approach to concepts can be found in Peter Carruthers' work, especially Carruthers, "Invertebrate Concepts Confront the Generality Constraint (and Win)."

279).[89] Concepts are revisable in the sense that they are learned—acquired from and responsive to regular patterns of activity and environing stimuli, enabling the animal to take better advantage of its present circumstances. As Camp puts it, these conceptual abilities are "applicable on the basis of, and revisable as a result of, a range of different experiences" (PTW 279).

What does it mean for concepts to be systematically recombinable? For one thing, it means combinations of a limited set of concepts form distinct conceptual structures that represent different states of affairs, giving the animal a more nuanced grip on its environment and a greater capacity to take advantage of opportunities and avoid threats. Camp writes, "one of the few widely shared intuitions about concepts [is] … that conceptual thought is essentially structured" (PTW 277). On this account, concepts are by definition (1) relational, in that a concept has no function if it is not standing in some relation to another concept; and (2) representational, in that a set of relating concepts has no function if it is not representing a state of affairs.

To further clarify what it is for concepts to be systematically recombinable, Camp draws on the work of Gareth Evans and in particular his notion that generality is the key to conceptuality. Camp is not interested in the distinction between conceptual and nonconceptual content that motivates Evans, and it is not clear that the minimalist's use of Evans' generality constraint accurately reflects Evans' view of it. However, here I only focus on explaining Camp's appropriation of the idea.

On Camp's reading, the main idea of the generality constraint begins with the thought, introduced above, that "conceptual thought is essentially structured" (PTW

[89] What Camp means by "representation" shares some features with what Brandom means by "significance." I discuss Brandom's "significances" in Chapter I, §4.1.1.

277).[90] That is, concepts are representations that can be flexibly recombined with a wide variety of other representations. General recombinability means that different thoughts bear a structural similarity to one another; Camp cites Evans' examples: "John is happy" bears a structural resemblance to both "Harry is happy" and "John is sad" (PTW 277).[91] The similarity between conceptual thoughts "can't just be a descriptive similarity at the level of referential content," because then the similarity would only incidentally belong to the representations (PTW 277). Rather, the similarity belongs to how those representations are essentially structured. The generality constraint is about a similarity of means of representation, not similarity of practical results. As Camp points out, a thinker who can think that both John and Harry are happy can do so because she can represent a variety of things as "being happy," so that every representation of something being happy bears a similar structure; and the reason a thinker who can think that John is happy at one time and sad at another is that she can represent John in a variety of ways (PTW 277-8). This variety is what makes the representational ability "general" in the relevant sense. Camp concludes, "conceptual thoughts are structured, then, at least in the sense that the ability to think them results from the exercise of distinct, systematically interacting representational abilities" (PTW 277-8). In her examples, the ability to represent John, Harry, being sad, and being happy systematically interact. In Evans' formulation of the generality constraint, "If a subject can be credited with the thought that a is F then he must have the conceptual resources for entertaining the thought that a is G, for every

[90] See also Camp, "The Generality Constraint and Categorial Restrictions."
[91] Camp refers to Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, 100. Peter Carruthers arrives at his minimalism through a similarly loose interpretation of Gareth Evans' generality constraint, which he characterizes as follows: "If a creature possesses the concepts F and a (and is capable of thinking Fa), then for some other concepts G and b that the creature could possess, it is metaphysically possible for the creature to think Ga, and in the same sense possible for it to think Fb" (Carruthers, "Invertebrate Concepts Confront the Generality Constraint [and Win]," 97).

property of being G of which he has a conception" (PTW 278).[92] Thus for someone to count as having the ability to think John and Harry are happy, she must in principle be able to think that George is happy too.

An additional criterion of the generality constraint concerns the extent of generalizability: only when the animal is capable of entertaining all possible combinations of its representations can those representations count as concepts. Camp deflates the importance of this criterion by arguing (1) it is not clear that even language affords the ability to entertain all possible combinations of our representations, strictly speaking, and (2) Evans himself takes a relaxed view of this criterion, setting it up as an ideal for conceptual abilities to approach rather than a criterion to be satisfied for an ability to count as conceptual (PTW 305).

Note that minimalism about concepts entails a kind of conceptual holism: to use a concept is to structurally relate a set of concepts. The ability to recombine concepts means having a plurality of concepts that can be recombined. One cannot count as having any concepts if one does not have multiple concepts. To be clear, however, this is not the conceptual holism that interests Brandom in his intellectualist approach to concepts, not least because minimalism about concepts does not require there to be normatively governed inferential relations among concepts. Nonetheless, it is worth flagging that conceptual minimalism involves a kind of holism. Although Camp requires additional criteria beyond minimalism for a cognitive ability to count as conceptual, Camp's own theory of concepts retains this holism built into minimalism.

Camp considers the minimalist criteria for concepts too basic, and incomplete. The problem with minimalism about concepts, Camp argues, is that it attributes thoughts

[92] Camp refers to Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, 104.

to animals that don't seem to have any control over their supposed ability to think (PTW 287ff). Rather, their ability to systematically recombine representations remains entirely dependent upon environing stimuli. Camp argues that, in addition to the minimalist criteria for having concepts, we should add another criterion, namely, stimulus-independence. When an animal can deploy its ability to represent things independently of environing stimuli, it gains a genuine advantage that turns revisable, systematically recombinable representations into instruments for animal problem-solving.

2.2 Instrumentalism

In order to count as conceptual, on Camp's view, it is necessary but not sufficient for representations to be revisable and systematically recombinable. In addition, the animal must be able to actively, systematically recombine its cognitive states as a means to an end. With minimalism, environing stimuli select and cause the systematic recombination of representations in a way that facilitates the animal's goal-directed activity. With instrumentalism, the animal expands its control of its limbs to include its own cognition, and can take over and incorporate the selection and recombination of representations into its goal-directed activity.

2.2.1 Stimulus Independence

Camp's discussion of stimulus independence is part of her search for a "capacity for active, self-generated cognition" (PTW 291). The thinking animal must be capable of actively and spontaneously recombining its representations itself, as part of its goal directed activity, to represent states of affairs that do not presently obtain (PTW 287-8). But what is stimulus independence? Camp distinguishes between two sorts of stimulus-independence that representational abilities can have (PTW 289-90). There is a non-

demanding sense of stimulus-independence that minimalism can already account for and a demanding sense that Camp argues is necessary for representational abilities to count as conceptual.

The non-demanding sense of stimulus-independence captures how animals represent states of affairs that are physically absent, i.e., in the absence of the environing stimuli that initially gave rise to the representation of the state of affairs. As Camp points out, honeybees can represent absent food sources with their waggle dances. Hungry rats that have learned to find food at the end of a maze presumably represent food as being in the maze as they seek it—attributing this representational ability to the rat helps explain the rat's behavior. Animals with revisable, systematically recombinable representations (but lacking concepts, by Camp's lights) can represent absent things in this sense and so, in a limited way, their representational abilities can function independently of environing stimuli.

While Camp recognizes this non-demanding stimulus independence affords the animal certain advantages, it is not sufficient, on Camp's view, to count as conceptual thought. The reason it is not sufficient is that, even though the animal can represent absent states of affairs, it can do so only insofar as environing stimuli prompt it to do so (PTW 291). How and which of its representations are recombined remains causally dependent upon environing stimuli, even though what it represents is not present. Animals with such abilities do have minds, as Camp says, but they are very narrow-minded (PTW 290).

The more demanding, relevant sense of stimulus-independence that Camp does think amounts to concept use involves the ability to (at least occasionally) control how

and which representations are recombined regardless of the environing stimuli (PTW 290). With stimulus independence in the more demanding sense, an animal is capable of representing a state of affairs that does not obtain, *without* relying on environing stimuli to do so. This ability affords the animal genuine advantages, by empowering it with a greater ability to take advantage of its environment.

It is worth dwelling on Camp's use of the notion of "distance" to articulate the importance of stimulus independence in Camp's demanding sense. As she puts it, "many theorists have felt that active, genuinely rational thinking, as opposed to mere passive reaction, requires some sort of 'distance' or 'separation' between the thinker and what it thinks about" (PTW 287).[93] Recall that, in *Mind and World*, McDowell inherits from Gadamer the idea that having "distance" from our environment (*Umwelt*) is an attribute of human rationality that sets us apart from the other animals. As McDowell noted, language helps to establish this distance and it is that distance that makes possible having a world. On McDowell's view, this distance is filled by social and linguistic norms, allowing us to rise above biological pressures to freely, actively, and spontaneously respond to our conditions. By contrast, the distance Camp is talking about does not attribute a world (in Gadamer's sense) to the animals Camp takes to have concepts. Rather, Camp's distance establishes two qualitatively different ways of having an environment: having no distance from one's environment in the sense of being dependent on environing stimuli, and having, over and above this, a modest distance with the ability to actively and spontaneously represent conditions or states of affairs that do not

[93] Among the philosophers she cites as demanding that genuine thought involves distance or separation are Cussins, "Content, Embodiment and Objectivity: The Theory of Cognitive Trails," 659–60; Bermúdez, *Thinking Without Words*, 39; Dummett, *Origins of Analytic Philosophy*, 123; and McDowell, *Mind and World: With a New Introduction*, 57.

presently obtain, and further, an ability to suppose counterfactual states of affairs as a means to realize a goal. This slim distance does not accommodate rational norms but does allow the animal to "think" in Camp's sense of the word. That Camp's theory of concepts can give intelligent animals a degree of distance from their environments is genuinely interesting, because it challenges intellectualism on a basic point: that only humans have any kind of distance from the environment.

2.2.2 Instrumental Reasoning

Instrumental reasoning is the paradigmatic animal ability that Camp takes to exemplify stimulus independence in the demanding sense that she is after (PTW 291-2). To be clear, instrumental reasoning in Camp's sense should not be confused with other senses, or with "instrumental rationality" as discussed, for example, in critical theory. Rather, Camp's instrumental reasoning builds on the notion of "*Einsicht*" (intelligence or insight) developed a century ago by Wolfgang Köhler in *The Mentality of Apes*.[94] There, Köhler characterized "insight" as follows:

> As experience shows, we do not speak of behaviour as being intelligent [*einsichtigem Verhalten*], when human beings or animals attain their objective by a direct unquestionable route which without doubt arises naturally out of their organization. But what seems to us "intelligence" [*Einsicht*] tends to be called into play when circumstances block a course which seems obvious to us, leaving open a roundabout path which the human being or animal takes, so meeting the situation.[95]

[94] See Wolfgang Köhler, *The Mentality of Apes*. In this translation, Köhler's term, "*Einsicht*," and its cognates, are translated variously as "insight" or "intelligence," and their cognates. The discussion of "insight" begins in his introduction and is further refined in his first chapter.
[95] Wolfgang Köhler, *The Mentality of Apes*, 3–4.

Köhler's notion of insight as a form of intelligence shared by both humans and some other species was largely criticized as unscientific and anthropomorphic.[96] A few psychologists picked up the idea but used the notion inconsistently, which led to scrutiny and skepticism even by those who might be inclined to accept the idea, and a particularly damning critique by Jonathan Bennett.[97] However, Camp's revision of "insight" as instrumental rationality goes beyond the views that Bennett criticized by defining it more rigorously and showing how it is useful for explaining distinctive forms of behavior. Her definition is worth quoting at length:

> When a creature reasons instrumentally, it recognizes a way to achieve a goal that it cannot achieve directly, by bringing about a subsidiary state of affairs. In order to do this, it must represent that subsidiary state while realizing both that this state does not actually obtain and that its obtaining would help to achieve the primary goal. To count as a case of genuine reasoning, the creature's recognition of the connection between the two states must be established through spontaneous "insight": that is, it must be neither directly "afforded" by its environment nor established through trial-and-error or operant conditioning. If a creature does meet all of these requirements, then its representation of the intermediate state of affairs is genuinely instrumental. (PTW 292)

The ability to represent a state of affairs that does not presently obtain in its connection with a state of affairs that does presently obtain establishes the independence from environing stimuli that Camp is after. This capacity for instrumental reason, Camp thinks, endows animals with an attitude of "supposing" what it represents, where the supposed

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[96] Waal, *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?*, 66.
[97] See Bennett, *Rationality*, 101–19. The question that animates Bennett is whether "insight" is really different in kind from other forms of animal learning, such as trial and error. Bennett contends that arguments for a difference in kind fail, leaving differences of degree only in the intelligence of nonhuman animals and a difference of kind between human and nonhuman intelligence.

conditions do not obtain (PTW 292).[98] This supposition is a functional part of the animal's ability to solve problems it encounters: it supposes a state of affairs that does not presently obtain, but that the animal could bring about, and if it did bring that state of affairs about, it would then be able to achieve its goal. Köhler's famous examples of this include an ape building a long stick by attaching short sticks together, in order to retrieve food, and apes stacking boxes on top of each other, again in order to reach food suspended out of reach. Thus instrumental reasoning introduces a capacity for means/ends thinking. Whereas animals lacking instrumental reasoning engage in goal-directed activity and can represent their goals as the ends of their activity, animals with instrumental reasoning can also represent situations as means to those ends, and then treat the realization of the means *as* a means to those ends. To put what I take to be the core of Camp's idea in these terms, the genuine advantage afforded by stimulus independence in

[98] Compare Camp's instrumental reason to the notion developed by Okrent in the fifth chapter of his *Rational Animals: The Teleological Roots of Intentionality*, 104–33. As with Camp, Okrent's discussion of "instrumental rationality" should not be confused with the critique of instrumental rationality in critical theory. Although Camp and Okrent proceed differently, their accounts have important details in common. Like Camp, Okrent thinks that to have instrumental reason is (1) to be able to form proximate goals on the way to achieving a main goal; and (2) to model the mental states of others—in Okrent's case a plover models the mental state of a potential predator and uses that model to deceive the predator with its "broken wing display" and lead it away from the plover's nest (*Rational Animals: The Teleological Roots of Intentionality*, 119). (For Okrent's discussion of proximate goals, see ibid. 32-33, 83-84). Ultimately, Okrent writes, "[t]he supreme test of instrumental rationality is the ability to learn to respond effectively to a range of situations by engaging in novel, but goal- and situation-appropriate, activity" (Okrent, *Rational Animals: The Teleological Roots of Intentionality*, 121). In these respects, then, Camp's and Okrent's respective accounts of instrumental reasoning in nonhuman animals appear complementary and mutually reinforcing. However, they are importantly different. For one thing, Okrent's discussion of proximate goals pursued in light of an end goal does not require that pursuing the proximate goal takes the animal temporarily away from its end goal. Nor does it require that the animal must *represent* its proximate goal as a means to the end of achieving its end goal. This is, in part, because Okrent, unlike Camp, makes the intentionality of behavior fundamental and derives the intentionality of representational abilities from behavior (ibid. 26-27). Another crucial point of difference is that Camp singles out instrumental reasoning as a clear indication of conceptual thought, whereas Okrent appeals to it to distinguish a special form of goal-directed activity. If it is fair to claim, as Okrent does, that the plover is "estimating" the predator's "intentional psychological state" (ibid. 119), then his notion of "instrumental rationality" aligns nicely with Josef Perner's notion of secondary representations, i.e., the ability to entertain multiple models, including counterfactual models, of how things are (Perner, *Understanding the Representational Mind*, 7). As I argue in Chapter V, the use of secondary representations underwrites and is necessary for Camp's instrumental reasoning but does not qualify as instrumentally rational by itself for reasons similar to why Okrent's version does not qualify as instrumentally rational on Camp's view (see Chapter V).

the demanding sense is the capacity to represent not just ends but ends that are also means to other ends.

Camp's instrumentalism about concepts benefits—as she recognizes in her paper—from Josef Perner's work on representation in *Understanding the Representational Mind*.[99] I return to Perner's work in detail in Chapter V, but here it is enough to mention his tripartite approach to representation. The most basic ability, primary representation, is revisable, could even be systematically recombinable, and allows animals to refine their behavior based on their success or failure at realizing their goals. But primary representations are only causally elicited by environing stimuli. Secondary representations, which humans acquire around age two, are stimulus-independent and allow children to entertain multiple models of a given state of affairs, engage pretense, and attribute their own mental models to others as a way of anticipating their behavior. Camp's distinction of stimulus independence goes further than Perner's does, however, which suggest's that secondary representational abilities are not, by definition, conceptual on Camp's definition. However, conceptual problem-solving abilities—per Camp's definition—do count as secondary representations by Perner's definition. Although Perner himself does not consider nonhuman animals, the idea that other species have secondary representations (and sufficient stimulus-independence to count as having concepts) is supported by Suddendorf and Whiten, who analyze results in comparative psychology and ethology and argue that Great Apes and other species are best understood as having secondary representational abilities.[100] The third stage in Perner's theory is metacognition—the ability to represent representations as

[99] Perner, *Understanding the Representational Mind*. Henceforth, URM followed by page number.
[100] Suddendorf and Whiten, "Mental Evolution and Development: Evidence for Secondary Representation in Children, Great Apes, and Other Animals."

representations—and the development in human children, around age four, of a representational theory of mind. It is odd that Camp does not take advantage of the resources Perner's metacognition afford for making human rationality distinct, but perhaps this just underscores Camp's lack of interest in this intellectualist question in her essay.

For an example that highlights the advantage of instrumental reason, consider a small dog that habitually and energetically follows a large dog around the neighborhood each day. The two dogs are regular companions, often observed to play with each other. For the past few weeks, during a regular game that involves the small dog chasing the large one, they have been leaping over a fence, but, because it is small, the small dog must first leap on top of a sturdy, overturned cardboard box that has been left next to the fence in order to leap over it. One day, the small dog plays with the box, and, while chewing on its flaps, drags the box several meters away from the fence, making it useless as a launch pad for leaping the fence. At this point, the large dog shows up and one of their regular games of chase erupts, leading them around the neighborhood. When they return to the fence moments later, the large dog bounds the fence as usual and the small dog stops short, erupting in barking and whining; it cannot clear the fence without the box. The small dog's goal is to stay with the large dog, but it lacks the cognitive resources to "suppose" that it could leap the fence if it first dragged the box back to where it has been for weeks—a solution to the small dog's problem that is obvious to an intelligent onlooker. Note that the small dog has already moved the box and is therefore both strong enough to replace it and also has experience moving it. Despite its eagerness to catch up with the large dog, the small dog cannot represent a subsidiary state of affairs,

cannot give itself a subsidiary goal of replacing the box in its previous position, a goal that would require broadening its representation of its *ends* to include also representations of *means* to those ends. In short, the small dog lacks instrumental reason. By treating the box as a tool to achieve its goal of following the big dog, the small dog would, on Camp's account, represent relocating the box as a subsidiary goal on the way to achieving that end. As Camp observes, representing and pursuing a subsidiary goal takes the animal temporarily farther from its main goal (PTW 296); in my example, this would mean backing away from the fence to grab the box, and thereby moving away from the retreating big dog despite being desperate to catch up with it. This small dog lacks instrumental reason.

If we imagine instead that the small dog responds to its situation by moving the box and jumping the fence then, on Camp's account, we would be in a position to attribute instrumental reasoning to the dog: by moving the box, it has supposed a state of affairs that does not presently obtain, which establishes that its grasp of the situation is stimulus independent, and it has represented a subsidiary goal on the way to achieving its main goal. It has thus spontaneously recombined its representations of the box and the fence (and perhaps other surroundings).

It is important to point out that training an animal to perform a subsidiary task to achieve a goal it already has would not amount to giving it instrumental reason. Rather, the training gives the animal a new end goal, and it performs that end goal prior to performing another end goal that it can now achieve for having achieved the first goal. This does not require that the animal represent the first goal as a means to achieve the second. It is not "supposing" anything and still lacks any ability to take something to be a

means to an end. On the other hand, just because an animal fails to grasp an opportunity to solve a problem by representing and achieving a subsidiary goal in a given instance does not mean the animal lacks instrumental reason. Humans fail in exactly this way all the time; it is indeed such a classic human failure that exploiting it is a central motif in physical comedy. In humans, this failure suggests that while we are able in most circumstances we encounter to effectively deploy instrumental reasoning, we can fail to do so. In animals, the failure to achieve an end when the means are available may evince a limitation on the range of objects and situations in which the animals can engage in such behavior, not to mention the relatively narrow set of goals that even intelligent animals (corvids, chimpanzees, etc.) seem to have. What is at stake here is whether an animal can engage in instrumental reasoning under *any* circumstances, not whether or not it always does.

Two kinds of animal behavior that Camp takes to indicate instrumental reasoning are tool use and instrumental social interaction (PTW 293). Essentially, tool use involves using objects as a means to an end, and the social interaction Camp has in mind involves engaging other members of a social group as means to an end.[101] Again, Camp does not think that having a capacity to use instrumental reason is in principle necessary to count as having concepts (PTW 292n12), nor does she claim that only these two kinds of behavior should count as instrumental reason in nonhuman animals. Rather, she is reaching for the clearest demonstrations of instrumental reason in nonhuman animals, and tool use and instrumental social interaction turn out to be the easiest to observe for that purpose.

[101] To discuss members of a community using each other as means to an end has the ring of selfish behavior, but it can be equally altruistic if the instrument-member or community at large benefits from the behavior.

To illustrate an example of tool use, suppose we change my example of the small dog and the cardboard box in the following way: rather than stopping, barking, and whining as the large dog retreats over the fence, the small dog looks for the cardboard box and then moves it back to its former position in order to jump the fence and chase the large dog. Moving the box under these conditions, for this purpose, would count as an example of tool use, which, for Camp, "requires manipulating one object to achieve a goal with respect to some other one" (PTW 293). Here, the small dog's "supposing" could be expressed linguistically as "if the box were under the fence, then the fence could be jumped." In terms of recombining and relating representations, the small dog would have to be able to represent how things are (with the box far from the fence) and how things were and could be (with the box close enough to the fence to enable jumping the fence) and be able to relate those two representations in a way that shows up the box as a means to the end of jumping the fence and catching up with the large dog.

According to Camp, research on tool use in nature (i.e., absent human interference) shows that "a wide variety of species, including primates, elephants, polar bears, sea otters, and corvids (crows and ravens), can do this with at least some objects" (TPW 293). On Camp's account, all such animals will have some capacity for instrumental reasoning and therefore some capacity for conceptual cognition. Examples of animal tool use (both with and without human intervention) that Camp cites include crow communities forming various tools to retrieve food in various circumstances; New Caledonian crows selecting and creating "novel, appropriate tools" (in one case creating a hook with a piece of wire, which was to this crow a novel piece of material with novel properties); chimpanzees using sticks and boxes to obtain bananas and, in the wild,

selecting materials to modify into tools to retrieve food "in situations where the goal is not perceptible" (293-4).[102]

Examples of instrumental social action include "tactical deception," a form of social behavior observed in chimpanzees, corvids, and other species (PTW 294). Another form of instrumental social interaction Camp cites concerns problem-solving behavior in chimpanzees, albeit under human contrived conditions. The human intervention opens the door to skepticism (and I'll turn to Camp's answer to skeptics next), but it is a striking example nonetheless. The example involves one chimpanzee recognizing that coordinating with a member of its group will facilitate achieving a goal. It is again worth quoting Camp at length here:

> Chimpanzees were first introduced to a wooden key which they could use to unlock a sliding door to a room where another chimpanzee was held. Next, they were introduced to a feeding platform, which was located out of direct reach but accessible by means of a rope threaded through two metal loops in the platform. The chimpanzees very quickly discerned (often through observation alone) that pulling one end of the rope unthreaded it, leaving the food inaccessible, while pulling both ends brought the platform within reach. When the platform's loops were positioned close enough together for one chimpanzee to reach both rope ends at once, the subject pulled in the platform by himself. When the loops were too far apart, however, most of the chimpanzees—and a majority on the first trial—unlocked the door and released the other chimpanzee, who then often collaborated to pull in the platform. When, in a second session, the subjects were introduced to two new collaborators, only one of whom was reliably cooperative, they reliably discerned who was cooperative and

[102] This last point about nonperceptible goals answers an objection from Dummett, who denied that chimpanzees used instrumental reason in cases where their goals—the food they wished to obtain—was present. By contrast, chimpanzees preparing tools prior to arriving at the destination of their intended use defeats the objection.

> chose to unlock his door. Thus, most of the chimpanzees quickly figured out when they needed (and could use) help, how to get it, and who could best provide it. (294-5)

This is, if nothing else, an ingenious experiment and one that undeniably shows how intelligent chimpanzees really are, but how to characterize that intelligence is another question. Camp infers from the experiment (reasonably, I think) that the chimpanzee who opts to unlock a door so that another, like-minded chimpanzee can pull the other end of a rope and aid in retrieving food is an example of instrumental reason. It seems fairly clear that the chimpanzee can represent its fellow as a means to the end of retrieving the food, just as it can represent pulling both sides of the rope at the same time as a means to retrieving the food. Camp isolates what she thinks is crucial about the experiment as an example of instrumental social interaction. For Camp, what counts is

> that "chimpanzees can quickly adapt a recently learned skill (removing the key) for a novel purpose (initiating a collaborative activity)," in a situation where the connection between implementing the skill and achieving the goal is indirect and not visually perceptible (Melis et al 2006, 1300). The finding is especially surprising given that chimpanzees generally perform better in competitive than cooperative contexts (e.g. Tomasello et al 2003). (PTW 295)

Part of what is striking here is the degree to which the solution to the problem takes the chimpanzee away from the goal of achieving the food. Unlocking a gate with a wooden key is a whole other activity that itself involves a separate episode of tool use, i.e., representing a wooden object as a means to open an enclosure to release another chimp. This example of instrumental reason is itself enlisted in order to realize a different goal, of retrieving food, instrumentalizing an activity that is already an instance of instrumental reasoning. Whether or not all animals capable of instrumental reason will be capable of

this degree of flexibility or if this identifies two different degrees of instrumental reasoning is an interesting question, one that Camp does not consider.

2.2.3 Differences by Degree

It is part of Camp's view—albeit a part she does not discuss directly—that there are differences of kind and degree in play between different forms of cognition. For example, Camp consistently refers to "degrees" of stimulus independence that cognitive capacities can have, from the nondemanding sense that enables the ability to represent absent states of affairs to the demanding sense required for instrumental reasoning.[103] Presumably, metacognition involves a still greater degree of stimulus independence. Camp also views all conceptual capacities in terms of differences of degree, from the conceptual capacities of intelligent animals capable of instrumental reasoning to those of fully rational humans (PTW 305). However, given Camp's great interest in distinguishing conceptual forms of cognition from nonconceptual forms, it stands to reason that conceptual cognition is different in kind from more basic representational abilities. Thus, one can put Camp's view this way: With respect to stimulus independence, all forms of cognition are different in degree only. With respect to cognition, we can understand there to be two kinds of representational ability: conceptual and nonconceptual. And with respect to conceptual cognition, from chimpanzees up to rational humans, there are only degrees of difference. This, at least, is what we can most straightforwardly infer from what she writes.

On this view, both in terms of stimulus independence and conceptual capacities, human cognition can only be different in degree, not in kind, from the cognition of (for example) chimpanzees. This sets up an interesting contrast with intellectualism that helps to show what is distinctive about Camp's approach to concepts. Camp thinks the

[103] For reference to "degrees" of stimulus independence, see PTW 292, 295, 302.

conceptual, instrumental rationality we find in other intelligent animals is different in kind from more basic forms of animal cognition and yet different only in degree from rational human thought. This is the reverse of intellectualism, which holds there to be a difference in kind between rational human thought and all nonrational animal cognition, and only differences of degree among manifestations of nonrational animal cognition.[104]

Since Camp does not thematize difference of degree vs. difference of kind talk, she never spells out what she takes the distinction to be. Jonathan Bennett offers a useful rule of thumb in cases where it is not clear if there is a difference of kind or degree between two things, in the introduction to his essay, "Rationality."[105] Suppose there is such an ambiguous difference between *x* and *y*. If it is inconceivable for anything that seems to fall between *x* and *y* to be other than an *x* or a *y*, then the difference is a difference in kind. By contrast, if it is conceivable for something falling between them to be neither an *x* nor a *y*, then the difference is a difference in degree.

To show this distinction between intellectualism and Camp's view in concrete detail, consider the opposition between her position and Brandom's position: Camp believes there is (1) a difference in *kind* between two representational abilities that animals may have: (a) recombinable representations whose recombination is wholly dependent upon environing stimuli; and (b) recombinable representations whose recombination is (at least sometimes) under the active control of the animal (as exemplified in sophisticated forms of tool-use). That is, the capacity to think conceptually articulated thoughts is different in kind from lesser forms of animal responsiveness. And

[104] Intellectualists have different stories to tell, however. Brandom and Dreyfus both locate the crucial difference of kind between discursive and nondiscursive practices, and find only differences of degree among nondiscursive practices of humans and nonhumans alike. McDowell, by contrast, locates the crucial difference of degree as between rational humans and nonrational animals.
[105] Bennett, *Rationality*, 4.

Camp believes (2) there is only a difference of *degree* between (b) and (c) the rational, human ability to deploy concepts in language, in giving and asking for reasons.[106] This latter notion may be shocking to intellectualists, but consider that each one of us became rational only slowly, through a process of development or *Bildung* that admits of degrees.[107]

The distinction between differences of degree and of kind is useful here but I do not mean to put it forward as being more than a heuristic. The intellectualist critique of Camp's view, as I discuss in §4 below, is that her means of differentiating rational human capacities from the instrumental reasoning of nonhuman animals is insufficient. In light of that critique, one could argue that there is in fact a difference of kind between full human rationality and nonhuman instrumental rationality, by appealing to species, as McDowell does: only humans have the potential to actualize fully rational capacities, and only for humans is this natural, in a relaxed sense of "nature." Contrast this way of thinking with Camp's species-blind appeal to abilities in her claim that there is only a difference of degree. What this contrast shows is that, at least in this case, the question of whether there is a difference of degree or a difference of kind is decided in advance by the criteria one appeals to in making the claim.

2.2.4 Summing Up Camp's Instrumentalism

Minimalists understand conceptual thought to require revisable, systematically recombinable representations. Camp agrees with minimalists that these are necessary

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[106] As Camp puts it, "we should view conceptuality as a matter of degree" (PTW 305).

[107] Brandom's first response would be to absolutely reject (2). As for (1), Brandom's demarcation of rationality does not necessarily commit him to rejecting it. Endorsing (1) would not cost him anything in principle, though he would have to reject the language Camp uses to characterize (b) as "conceptual" and "instrumentally rational." However, Brandom does seem to also reject (1). He seems to reject (1) because he thinks there's only a difference of degree between iron rusting, parrots saying red, and apes stacking boxes to reach bananas.

conditions for a representational ability to count as conceptual, but not sufficient. Add a robust form of stimulus independence to the minimalist criteria and, together, they constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for a cognitive ability to count as conceptual. Again, many species of animals can represent absent states of affairs, and this is a degree of stimulus independence, but this is not the relevant, demanding sense of stimulus independence because representing absent states of affairs can occur under the control of environing stimuli. Rather, the demanding sense of stimulus independence is that an animal has control over which representations are combined and when they are combined. What this robust stimulus independence amounts to is a capacity for instrumental reasoning, an ability that allows animals to represent not just ends as ends, but also means to ends as means to ends. One can find examples of this capacity for instrumental reasoning in sophisticated forms of animal tool use and instrumental social interaction. This revisable, systematically recombinable, stimulus-independent representational ability that powers instrumental reasoning constitutes conceptual thought. This is a genuinely distinct cognitive ability that empowers animals in possession of it to take advantage of opportunities to which they would not otherwise have access. Finally, while conceptual cognition is a distinct kind of cognition, Camp considers the instrumental rationality of intelligent animals to be different only in degree from the fully rational cognition that humans generally enjoy.

3. Instrumentalism Contra Intellectualism

"Instrumentalism," again, is my term for Camp's theory of concepts, outlined above. In this section, I briefly describe the intellectualist approach to concepts (already familiar

from my discussion of Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus in previous chapters) before spelling out the debate between instrumentalism and intellectualism.

3.1 Defining Intellectualism

Theories that fall under "intellectualism" as Camp defines it are those that treat concepts as essentially or exclusively a function of rational judgment. Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus are intellectualists by this standard, as are Donald Davidson, Wilfred Sellars, and John Haugeland. Camp's critique is that intellectualism demands a superfluous criterion for concept use, above and beyond the criteria required by her own instrumentalism. The superfluous intellectualist criterion for concept use is objectivity: to have concepts, one must have an objective grasp of the world. Objectivity involves metacognition—the ability to think reflectively about thoughts as thought—and the ability to understand that one's beliefs may be true or false.

Camp acknowledges one of the motivating insights of intellectualism, that there is a meaningful difference between the fully rational cognition of humans and the cognition of other animals. She uses cognates of "thought" more liberally than do intellectualists, leading her to put the intellectualist insight this way: "the sort of *thinking* that dogs and rats do is obviously quite different from the sort of *thinking* we do" (PTW 283, emphasis mine). As she points out, even with "extensive training," other intelligent animals seem incapable of the wide variety of counterfactual thoughts that rational humans consider as we freely explore our world (PTW 283). This is Camp's way of agreeing with intellectualists that we need to be able to say something about what makes rational, human cognition different in some way. However, as I show below, her suggestion as to

how to account for that difference is not sufficient to an intellectualist. To be fair to Camp, explaining that difference is not her goal.

To state the intellectualist position in its most basic form, Camp turns to Davidson's version, which has been highly influential.[108] According to Camp, Davidson's intellectualism states that:

> (1) in order to have a belief, one must understand the possibility of being mistaken;
>
> (2) in order to understand the possibility of being mistaken, one must have a concept of belief;
>
> (3) in order to acquire the concept of belief, one must interpret another's linguistic utterances.
>
> Therefore, belief requires language. (PTW 284)

Belief and thought are not synonymous in Davidson, but they go together (to lack either one is to lack both). The upshot of Davidson's argument is that metacognition (reflecting on or thinking about thoughts and beliefs) and error recognition are necessary for having thoughts and beliefs at all, and because concepts are essentially the components of thoughts (as Camp herself agrees, albeit under a different definition), they are also necessary for having beliefs.

Davidson's argument resonates strongly with the Sellarsian line—which Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus all endorse—that having a concept means mastering the use of a word. To master the use of a word is to be capable of deploying it in the game of giving and asking for reasons, and, to do so, one must be capable of recognizing errors

[108] As a mark of Davidson's influence, Brandom conceives the inferential semantics he develops in *Making It Explicit* as, in part, an extended development of Davidson's insight. Davidson is also the chief target of McDowell's revised intellectualism, wherein McDowell (*pace* Davidson) finds an additional role for concepts in experience.

in one's use of the word. It also requires the capacity to grasp concepts as concepts, so as to be reflectively aware of and responsive to the appropriate conditions for using them.

Another the motivation for the intellectualist position is to avoid the Myth of the Given, i.e., the notion that a concept, belief, thought, or mental representation can be both semantically efficacious and yet independent of all other concepts, beliefs, thoughts, or mental representations.[109] In order to avoid the myth, intellectualists typically make language use necessary for concepts, thoughts, and beliefs. Rather than derive the meaning of concepts atomically from their relation to fundamental, mind-independent sensations, intellectualists derive the meaning of concepts holistically from their use in the discursive norms of a community.[110] It follows from this thought that if one does not belong to and participate in a rational, linguistic community, one does not have beliefs, thoughts, or concepts.

Typically, intellectualists think only the rational use of language can make thoughts and beliefs possible. Some intellectualists appeal directly to language-use as definitive of concept-use and even, as Brandom, Dreyfus and Sellars do, restrict all concept-use to language-use.[111] However, other varieties of intellectualism seek other means to account for the ability to have an objective grasp of the world, and de-emphasize the importance of language for capacities like metacognition, error recognition and objectivity. As I showed in Chapter I, McDowell de-emphasizes language to the extent that he thinks concepts give rational form to human experience, such that our conceptual capacities are in use even when we are not making explicit, discursive judgments. This is in contrast to Brandom's and Dreyfus's views, where concepts only

[109] Discussed in detail in Chapter I.
[110] Maher, *The Pittsburg School of Philosophy: Sellars, McDowell, Brandom*, 21ff.
[111] Dreyfus and Sellars also endorse this view.

have a role to play in explicit, discursive judgments; however, McDowell agrees with them insofar as he endorses the Sellarsian idea, mentioned above, that mastering language use is necessary for having concepts. Haugeland's "Truth and Rule-Following" is another example, where language-use may be necessary for having an objective grasp of the world, but it is not the principle means of explaining how that grasp is achieved.[112] A view like Haugeland's is nonetheless subject to Camp's critique, which is not ultimately an attack on making language necessary for having concepts but, more generally, an attack on the idea that having an objective grasp of the world is necessary for having concepts. For Camp, unlike Haugeland or any other intellectualist, the function of concepts lies in facilitating a practically useful, instrumentally rational grip on the world that is, in principle, independent of the normative government of concepts that comes with shared, rational language because it is a capacity shared with nonrational, nonlinguistic animals.

3.2 Critique of the All-or-Nothing View

It is part of the intellectualist view that rational cognition is an all-or-nothing affair. To have concepts is to have thoughts and beliefs, metacognition, error-recognition, objectivity, rationality and a natural language. Falling short on any of these fronts means lacking concepts and thoughts entirely.

Against this all-or-nothing approach, Camp thinks that this difference between human and nonhuman animal abilities can be explained in terms of "a suite of unrelated abilities"—"unrelated" not in the sense that they do not interact but rather that they

[112] Haugeland is unique among the philosophers named above for holding this view. I return to Haugeland later, as his way of thinking about what underwrites objective understanding of the world is extremely effective in showing up what is lacking in Camp's view of concepts. Moreover, I argue, unlike his intellectualist compatriots—Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus—Haugeland's view can accommodate Camp's theory of concepts.

evolve piecemeal as opposed to necessarily coming in an all-or-nothing package. Camp contends that the intellectualist error belies a kind of anthropocentrism about thought. She thinks, "only anthropocentric prejudice leads us to assume that if there were some crucial difference between us and other animals, it would reflect something important about thought itself" (PTW 283). Camp aims to trace out an alternative: conceptual thought is an ability we share with multiple clades of other animals that serve as a genuine evolutionary advantage by enabling a more sophisticated and adaptive—i.e., instrumentally rational—grasp of things we encounter. Language may well serve as the ability that makes up the difference between human and nonhuman animal cognition, but not, she suggests, because it gives us an objective grasp of a world. To Camp, the important human difference—for which language may well be responsible—is rather the massive number and range of concepts we have and our ability to socially co-ordinate our use of them (PTW 286-87). In short, the all-or-nothing view unnecessarily obscures what we share with other animals. Camp's contention is that we can show the difference of human cognition without it. This contention can be true even if it turns out that Camp's own way of explaining the human difference fails to satisfy the intellectualists' concerns. The position I defend below agrees with Camp that the all-or-nothing view is unmotivated but answering intellectualists requires a more robust and detailed account of what makes human rationality distinct.

3.3 Critique of Intellectualism's Basic Argument

Davidson's form of intellectualism, again, has been highly influential. While Camp's critique focuses on the form that Davidson's argument takes, it applies more broadly to the forms of intellectualism on which I am focused: those of Brandom, McDowell, and

Dreyfus. Here again is the basic form of the argument that Camp considers to animate intellectualism:

> (1) in order to have a belief, one must understand the possibility of being mistaken;
>
> (2) in order to understand the possibility of being mistaken, one must have a concept of belief;
>
> (3) in order to acquire the concept of belief, one must interpret another's linguistic utterances.
>
> Therefore, belief requires language. (PTW 284)

Camp accepts (2) but rejects (3) as implausible, in part on empirical grounds that suggest early humans developed a theory of mind (involving, I suppose, belief attribution at least on Camp's broad definition of belief) prior to linguistic communication (PTW 284). Yet because Camp is more concerned with what a belief is than with how the concept of belief can be acquired, she focuses her attention on (1) (PTW 285). There is room for an intellectualist to reply to Camp's quick dismissal of (3) precisely because it seems to require substituting Camp's definition of belief for the intellectualist's definition. However, Camp's dismissal of (3) depends upon her critique of (1), making her attack on (1) the essence of her critique of intellectualism generally.

On Camp's reading, (1) is committed to the following two claims: "first, in order to think conceptual thoughts, one must be able to think higher-order (specifically, modal) thoughts about thoughts and their truth-values; and second, one must realize that beliefs 'aim at' truth (PTW 285). It is by pressing on these claims that Camp derives what she takes to be the important insight of intellectualism: metarepresentational abilities, as higher-order conceptual thoughts (about thoughts), are stimulus-independent. Again, Camp argues that we should take stimulus-independence to be necessary for concept use,

but refuse the idea that metacognition and objectivity are necessary for stimulus-independence.

3.4 The Argument from Children

To show what is wrong with the intellectualist's claim that concept-use is necessarily tied to the abilities to have thoughts about thoughts and to think objectively (i.e., grasp that thoughts aim at the truth), Camp appeals to the cognitive abilities of three-year-olds.[113] Appealing to children is, perhaps, an obvious move for countering an all-or-nothing view because it seems absurd to suppose that children have no thoughts or concepts until suddenly they have a fully rational understanding of the world. According to intellectualism, typical three-year-olds do not have concepts or thoughts because they have not yet developed a capacity for metacognition and objective thought. According to Camp, by contrast, typical three-year-olds evidently do spontaneously recombine their concepts in much the same way fully rational adults do. The argument really turns, therefore, on which approach to concepts and thought is more reasonable. I turn to the "more reasonable" argument in the following section. Here, I spell out how Camp appeals to children and how an intellectualist might respond.

"Intuitively," Camp writes, "three-year-old children appear to possess many concepts, which they apply repeatedly and confidently in various combinations, in order to think and say things about the world. . . . But they have not yet developed an understanding of false belief, let alone an ability to reflect upon the epistemic credentials

[113] Pressing intellectualists to account for the abilities of children is a common move when questioning their notion of a concept. For a critique of McDowell's conceptualism, for example, see Crary, *Inside Ethics: On the Demands of Moral Thought*, 108ff. Dreyfus—who himself counts as an intellectualist by Camp's lights, yet accuses McDowell and others of intellectualism for allegedly reducing perception to an epistemological function—also appeals to "prelinguistic infants" to motivate his challenge to explain the development of upper floors of rational cognition out of the ground floor we share with children and other animals (OMM 47).

of their own beliefs" (PTW 286). That is, young, semi-linguistic children with abilities of typical three-year-olds (i.e., committed yet unreliable speakers and listeners), throughout the early stages of learning a language, really do seem to have concepts when they make correct observation reports of present states of affairs and express desires for absent things. Young, semi-linguistic children manifest this behavior all the time (often relentlessly). It is impossible to conclude that they are not spontaneously recombining their representational capacities in order to represent how things are or how they wish things were. More simply, they really do seem like concept users.

Camp's premises attributing concepts to children in their early stages of language acquisition could be put this way. Picture a three-year-old, H,[114] who is an utterly reliable user of the word "juice" in the following way: every time she sees juice, she makes the sound "juice." So far, she is no different from Brandom's parrot, who says "red" reliably when confronted with red things. But unlike the parrot, H regularly (far too often, really) makes the sound, "juice," in the absence of any juice at all (often, it seems, when it is impossible to obtain juice). Moreover, H repeats the sound, "juice," at ever-greater volume, with increasing intensity and exhibiting the hallmarks of human desperation until juice arrives or some other sufficiently desirable object is introduced. And if juice does arrive, she stops saying "juice" and drinks the juice, exhibiting the hallmarks of human satisfaction. According to Camp's instrumentalism, H's behavior suffices for her to count has having concepts and thoughts.

One key detail suggesting that H has the concept of juice is her clear ability to use the concept in the absence of juice, as a way of expressing her desire for it and a means to

[114] I am elaborating on Camp's example of "Bobby," albeit to the same argumentative effect. See PTW 286.

get it. This suggests the kind of instrumental reasoning that Camp takes to be the hallmark of concept use. Rather than directly raid the fridge, pull the juice container out, spill the juice and lick it up off the floor (as a clever dog might solve the juice problem if, indeed, there are juice-desiring dogs), H engages in activity that instrumentalizes an adult as a means to get the juice, satisfying her juice desires not by pursuing the end directly but through indirect means.

Now, consider how an intellectualist would deny that H meets the appropriate criteria for having concepts and thoughts. We can even allow that H can also use "juice" in basic sentences. Assume H's sentences are not always grammatically correct, for example, "Mommy drinking juice, H wants juice. Mommy give H juice" (PTW 286). Despite this budding linguistic ability, there are many things important to intellectualism that H cannot do. She cannot give and ask for juice-related reasons (or at least, even if she can ask "why" in some sense she cannot accept juice-related reasons, or any reasons for anything that runs against her desires, for that matter). Nor can she reflect on her credentials for saying "juice" in the presence of juice, not least because she lacks most of the words required for articulating the attributes of juice and juice-related practices, and the conditions under which it is appropriate to take something to be juice. Nor can she think about her thoughts about juice (if we are willing to call these thoughts at all). Finally, H is not sufficiently engaged in the criteria for using the word "juice" to judge the use of the word as objectively correct or incorrect. For example, if another child says "juice" in the presence of milk, H doesn't balk at this misuse. All of this is to say, by intellectualist criteria, H cannot count as having the concept "juice," even if, by those criteria, we can say that she is on her way to having the concept. H lacks the concept of

juice essentially because she is not capable of the rational use of the word, "juice," an ability she lacks essentially because she does not yet exhibit rationality at all, by intellectualist credentials.

Hypothetically, an intellectualist could accept Camp's arguments that H has stimulus-independence, instrumental reasoning, and recombines her representations in a general way, and yet still deny that H is using concepts. That is, an intellectualist could argue that because H is not a reliable user of concepts—her propositional claims are not reliably true, often logically unsound, and she is generally unreasonable—she doesn't count as having any concepts. In order to actually confront intellectualism, Camp must make the further claim that her instrumentalism about concepts is more reasonable than intellectualism about concepts.

3.5 The Argument from More Reasonable Premises

Camp's ultimate claim against intellectualists is not that their view is false for empirical reasons or suffers from internal logical inconsistency. Rather, it comes down to the claim that the intellectualist view is *less reasonable* than her instrumentalism about concepts:

> Arguments to the effect that children and early humans are not really deploying concepts to represent the world because they aren't capable of meta-representation will be persuasive only if those arguments rely on premises that are at least as intuitively compelling as the claim that such people are conceptual thinkers. I don't know of any argument that does this. (PTW 286.)

In short, intellectualist premises that deny concepts to semi-linguistic, semi-rational children are less believable than the instrumentalist premises that attribute concepts to them. What makes it more reasonable to suggest that H's abilities are conceptual than that they are not is that (1) what H is doing is easily recognizable as something fully

rational humans do, and (2) what we need is a notion of concepts and thought amenable to explaining human cognition in evolutionary terms. Despite the intellectualist credentials H lacks, it seems much more reasonable to suggest that H uses words to express thoughts and that the components of those thoughts are recombinable concepts, as Camp defines them. Camp's view leaves us to claim that what separates H from full rationality is not an absolute lack of concepts, as the intellectualist would have it, but rather her relatively small repertoire of concepts and her lack of accountability and refinement in her use of them.

If Camp is right that her instrumentalism about concepts is more reasonable than intellectualism, then it is a rejection of the general intellectualist contention that the only or essential function of concepts lies in discursively structuring objective knowledge. To Camp, the function of concepts is to facilitate a cognitive capacity that affords animals that have them the ability to take advantage of opportunities afforded by their environment that would otherwise remain out of reach—from stacking boxes to reach bananas, to spitting water in a tube to bring a floating peanut into reach, to carrying a heavy rock on one's back for a kilometer in order to use it to crack nuts on another, larger flat rock (where suitable rocks cannot be found), to vocalizing recombinable sounds that will prompt a family member to give you juice, to filing a tax return in the hope of receiving the child tax benefit and contributing to a more egalitarian society.

Again, the premise Camp singles out as a driving force behind intellectualism's argument is Davidson's claim that, "in order to have a belief, one must understand the possibility of being mistaken" (PTW 284). As I have shown, Camp rejects this premise as far less intuitively compelling than the claim that beliefs are possible *without*

understanding the possibility of being mistaken, which allows us to recognize what we share cognitively with not-yet-rational children and intelligent nonhuman animals, and defines concepts and thoughts broadly, in a way that shows how they empower animals to take greater advantage of their environing conditions. Camp's thought is that the minimalist's contention that we can identify some nonhuman animals as having specific beliefs on the basis of their behavior is right, provided we also make stimulus-independence and the active recombination of concepts (the important insight buried in intellectualism) necessary for concept-use.

3.6 The Argument from What Explains the Human Difference

Camp's leading, general question is, "What is necessary for distinctively conceptual thought?" (PTW 275; see also PTW 302). To an intellectualist, to ask this question is also to ask what it is that makes rational, human cognition distinct. Camp, by contrast, does not think that what makes conceptual thought distinctive is what makes human thought distinctive (and in Chapter V I show how I agree with her). To explain the human difference, Camp appeals to an "explosive increase in our own cognitive abilities over basic cognition" (PTW 286). She writes,

> The really significant difference between creatures with mere basic cognition and us lies in the exponentially greater range of applications we find for our beliefs, rather than in the carefulness with which we form and revise them or in the mere fact that we exchange them with others. (PTW 287)

The careful formation, revision, and exchange of beliefs refer to metacognitive capacities such as error recognition. Camp's point is that having these metacognitive capacities is much less important, practically speaking, than having a large cache of generally recombinable concepts. The great power of human cognition, in Camp's view, comes

from having many, many concepts, not from the ability to recognize errors in their use. Thus, Camp contends, "a thinker can only apply epistemic reflection to those first-order thoughts that it already thinks" (PTW 287). To illustrate the point, Camp invites us to imagine a thinker with the ability to think second-order thoughts but with only a very narrow repertoire of first-order thoughts about which to think. This would be far less useful and evolutionarily advantageous than having a broad range of generally recombinable first-order concepts and little to no capacity for second-order thoughts, metacognition, error recognition, and the like.

One might object that, in fact, acquiring the vast range and number of concepts we do have depends upon the capacities for metacognition and error recognition. Curiously, despite drawing on Josef Perner's theory of representation, Camp overlooks the fact that, on his view, metarepresentation and the development of a representational theory of mind are necessary for the explosive increase in conceptual abilities that Camp has in mind, but also constitutively include a capacity to reflect on and assess the use of representations.[115] And by embracing this aspect of Perner's theory in Chapter V, my answer to Dreyfus's challenge includes this idea.

3.7 Summing Up the Instrumentalist Critique of Intellectualism

Defining intellectualism as the thought that metacognitive capacities are necessary for conceptual thought, Camp then critiques it on the following grounds: Intellectualism's all-or-nothing grasp of human cognition is anthropocentric and unmotivated, and its basic argument depends upon the tendentious premise that error recognition is necessary for having beliefs, thoughts, and concepts. It is counterintuitive to claim, as intellectualism

[115] See Chapter V, §2.3.1. For Perner's introduction of his notion of metarepresentation, see URM 7; and for his introduction to representational theory of mind, see URM 11.

does, that typical three-year-old, semi-linguistic children lack any conceptual capacities, and far more intuitively appealing to suppose that they have thoughts articulated by concepts. Thus, ultimately, the premises of the instrumentalist argument and definition of concepts are more reasonable and intuitively appealing than those of intellectualism. Finally, if our definition of concepts is to help answer that question of what explains the explosive increase in cognitive abilities that humans have over a more basic form of cognition—and it should help—then the intellectualist definition of concepts is far less useful than Camp's instrumentalist definition.

4. Between Instrumentalism and Intellectualism

Camp's instrumentalism about concepts aims to find a middle ground between minimalism and intellectualism about concepts. However, as I discuss below, I do not think Camp's theory is sufficient for answering the concerns that motivate intellectualists to adopt an all-or-nothing view. My aim for the rest of this dissertation, beginning in Chapter IV, is to split the difference once again, this time to find a middle ground between Camp's instrumentalism and intellectualism. First, I argue that Camp's view won't satisfy intellectualist concerns, and motivate the need to find a middle ground between instrumentalism with intellectualism (4.1). Then I return to the commitments made by Brandom, McDowell and Dreyfus to show how reconciling them and finding a middle ground between instrumentalism and intellectualism about concepts is one and the same task (4.2).

4.1 Motivating a Reconciliation of Instrumentalism and Intellectualism

Camp's instrumentalism about concepts raises a number of questions. For one thing, it is not clear that her (and the minimalist's) appeal to Evans' generality constraint to attribute revisable, systematically recombinable representations to a broad number of species of animals is a convincing use of Evans' ideas. After all, Evans was after a distinction between conceptual and nonconceptual content, not a distinction between basic, animal cognition and mere differential responsiveness. However, Camp's use of the generality constraint does seem like a profitable and useful appropriation, and therefore an admissible part of Camp's own view.

Another worry about Camp's instrumentalism is ambiguity. Her account leaves the reader with many questions. Do animals with instrumental reasoning have nonconceptual representations in addition to conceptual ones? If so, can nonconceptual representations be recombined with concepts? At what point does a nonconceptual representation count as a concept? Or is it better to say that representations only count as concepts when the animal is engaged in actively recombining its representations in the process of instrumental reasoning, and the rest of the time—when the representations are recombined passively, by environing stimuli—they do not count as concepts at all? Later, I endorse specific ways of answering these questions, but here I only raise them to suggest that Camp's instrumentalism so far leaves us wanting. However, that Camp's theory leaves one wanting more detail is not a serious shortcoming. Not only does she provide sufficient detail for the argument of "Putting Thoughts to Work" to be acceptable, it is reasonable to think that the questions I raise can all be satisfactorily answered.

The central issue, for my purposes, is whether Camp is successful in dispatching the intellectualist approach to concepts and thought. And here, I think she misses her mark. Camp's critique of intellectualism falls short because it does not engage with intellectualism's basic, *epistemological* motivation.

To show how Camp's instrumentalism falls short in its critique of intellectualism, let me first articulate the basic point I take her account to get absolutely right:

> (A) If the goal is to give an empirically useful account of concepts that helps to explain the explosion of cognitive capacities as an evolutionary advantage, then instrumentalism about concepts is superior—because more reasonable and intuitively appealing—to intellectualism about concepts.

Setting that aside, consider what motivates the intellectualist. The form of intellectualism that Camp critiques is, in large part, a reaction to the failure of traditional empiricism mired in the Myth of the Given (as I discuss in Chapter I). If traditional empiricism fails because it depends upon an untenable, foundationalist epistemology, then how is objective, empirical knowledge possible? What intellectualism quite rightly demands is an answer to that question, i.e., an account of what constitutes rational thought, of what makes objective knowledge possible. And it is precisely in providing such an answer that anti-foundationalists, from Sellars and Davidson to Brandom and McDowell, take positions on concepts, thoughts, and beliefs that commit them to the intellectualism that Camp critiques. Here, then, is the intellectualist riposte to (A) above that is equally right and compelling:

> (B) If the goal is to give an epistemologically useful account of concepts that helps to explain how rational, objective knowledge is possible at all,

then intellectualism about concepts is superior to instrumentalism about concepts.

Thus, both (A) and (B) approaches to concepts have distinct advantages given their particular sets of concerns. But if both sets of concerns are more or less equally valid—and it strikes me that they are—then they need to be reconciled. What we need is an account of concepts and thought that achieves the goals of both instrumentalism about concepts and intellectualism about concepts.

Among intellectualists, Brandom is the most insistent that such reconciliation is not advisable or even possible. As I showed in Chapter I, Brandom argues that one cannot give an account of this kind—one that plays up the continuity of rational and nonrational forms of cognition—without failing to sufficiently differentiate our rational, discursive abilities. Brandom explicitly opts to differentiate our rational, discursive capacities rather than assimilate them to other abilities, as Camp aims to do.[116] McDowell takes a similar line of thought, imposing a gap between human and nonhuman animal cognition.

By Camp's standards, Dreyfus counts as an intellectualist, because (for example) he endorses the Sellarsian idea that having a concept means mastering the use of a word. However, unlike Brandom and McDowell, Dreyfus is interested in a developmental story about how rational conceptual understanding arises from more basic capacities. Answering the challenge to tell such a story is the motivation of this dissertation, which

[116] See Chapter I, §4.1.2. According to Brandom, "Theories that assimilate conceptually structured activity to the nonconceptual activity out of which it arises (in evolutionary, historical, and individual-developmental terms) are in danger of failing to make enough of the difference" (*Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism*, 3). Moreover, he more recently claims, one cannot do the work of assimilating without failing to "demarcate" rationality (Brandom, *Perspectives on Pragmatism: Classical, Recent, and Contemporary*, 26–29).

led me to Camp's theory of concepts. It is ironic that answering Dreyfus's challenge to explain the appearance of concepts leads me to reject his theory of concepts.

The point to carry forward is that one can endorse Camp's theory of concepts—as I intend to do—and still hold out for an answer to the epistemological concerns that motivate intellectualism. Contra Brandom, I am claiming that both the instrumentalist and intellectualist goals can be satisfied under a single theory of concepts through careful work of reconciliation. The challenge is to show how Camp's theory of concepts can be integrated into an anti-foundationalist theory of knowledge of the kind that motivates the intellectualist view.

4.2 Instrumentalism in Light of the Intellectualists' Commitments

Recall the commitments from Chapters I and II that I aim to reconcile: Brandom's commitment is to explain how the human form of rationality is distinct from whatever it is that nonhuman animals have. McDowell's commitment is to give concepts a role in structuring a rational form of human experience, to retain his minimalist empiricism. And Dreyfus's challenge is to explain how our rational, conceptual understanding develops out of more basic capacities we share with nonhuman animals.

The interest of reconciling these intellectualist commitments led me to reject one commitment all three share, namely, the commitment to making language necessary for having concepts. Camp, as I have shown, gives an empirically useful account of concepts that does not assume language is necessary for concepts, and rather explains concepts and thoughts as offering a distinct evolutionary advantage. How does Camp's instrumentalism look in light of the respective commitments of Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus?

4.2.1 Brandom

Brandom's commitment is to define concepts in a way that helps make rationality distinct. Camp shows little interest in making human rationality wholly distinct from forms of nonhuman animal cognition. According to Camp, the difference between human and nonhuman conceptual cognition comes down to the number of concepts—revisable, systematically recombinable, stimulus-independent representations—one has. In other words, human and nonhuman cognition are not qualitatively different but quantitatively different on Camp's theory of concepts. For one thing, epistemic reflection and other second-order thoughts are only applicable to first-order thoughts we already have (PTW 286-7). The capacity for epistemic reflection does not, itself, do much "to increase the range of such thoughts, or the range of uses to which the thinker can put them" (PTW 287). What marks the difference between human and nonhuman animals, according to Camp, comes down to how broadly our cognitive capacities range over things and situations we encounter. She writes, "The really significant difference between creatures with mere basic cognition and us lies in the exponentially greater range of applications we find for our beliefs, rather than in the carefulness with which we form and revise them or in the mere fact that we exchange them with others" (PTW 287). In other words, in Camp's view, it is the vast number of things we can think and the flexibility with which we can think them that marks our cognition as different and distinct, not the fact that we can critically reflect on and assess the accuracy of our thoughts.

These criteria for distinction fall short for my purposes because they won't serve as a reasonable accommodation of Brandom's commitment to making rationality distinct. What Brandom is after, in making rationality distinct, is an account that explains how it is

that we can have an objective grasp of the world, one for which we can be held accountable. And an important aspect of making rationality distinct involves explaining just how it is that we can justify our claims to objective knowledge. It is true that, from practical point of view, a massive range of widely applicable, flexible representations is enormously useful, but useful for what? Brandom wants to know how it is that we know anything at all. While I have already critiqued Brandom for overemphasizing his epistemological concern, here Camp underestimates its importance. In light of Brandom's commitment, what Camp's view is missing is an account of what it is about human cognitive practices that secures objective knowledge, and how an objective grasp of the world is different from an intelligent animal's conceptual grasp of things it encounters. Put another way, by spelling out what we share cognitively with some intelligent, nonhuman animals, Camp quite strongly assimilates human rationality to animal problem-solving. She thus buys into human/nonhuman animal continuity to the point where she appears to prove Brandom's point: if you reach for assimilation, you rob yourself of the means to make human rationality distinct. To accommodate Brandom's commitment, I need to show how Camp's theory of concepts is amenable to a theory of objectivity that markedly distinguishes our rational, human grasp of the world.

4.2.2 McDowell

McDowell's commitment, again, is to retain a role for concepts in our experience. Specifically, however, this means that the same concepts we think rational thoughts with are involved in experience. Having seen how Camp recognizes the cognition of tool-using, problem-solving animals as conceptual, we might ask if Camp thinks that concepts (in her sense) are involved when animals are not thinking (in her sense). That is, how

should we understand the role of concepts in the lives of problem-solving animals when they specifically are *not* actively solving problems? Are concepts only involved in episodes of active instrumental reasoning, leaving animals reliant on merely nonconceptual representations when they are not instrumentally reasoning? Or, rather, should we take Camp's theory to suggest that once an animal has acquired a stimulus-independent conceptual grasp of *p*, then every representation of a state of affairs that involves *p* is conceptual, in the sense of being part of an animal's ongoing and overarching conceptual grasp of its situation? In other words, what opens up here is a space for the entire Dreyfus/McDowell debate to play out again on Camp's more basic level of conceptually articulated instrumental reasoning and noninstrumentally rational embodied coping. It is conceptualism vs. nonconceptualism all over again, except this time there is no epistemological dimension to the debate because the instrumental reasoning of other animals is not subject to the social norms that underpin objectivity.

Camp's theory, as presented, is entirely neutral on this point, and could be taken either way. Considering, however, that my aim is to accommodate McDowell's commitment to giving a role to concepts in the embodied coping of rational animals, Camp's neutrality presents an opportunity to lay the groundwork for the view I am after. Camp's instrumentalism can help accommodate McDowell's minimal empiricism by explaining the perception and action of rational humans as a matter of recombining concepts (in her sense). However, to satisfy McDowell's concern that experience and action have a rational shape, that, for example, I experience something *as* a justification of an explicit thought, the concepts deployed in experience and action must be normatively governed. Thus, Camp's theory of concepts can be reconciled with

McDowell's commitment to giving a role for normatively governed concepts in experience and action only if one can explain how it is that concepts and thoughts (on Camp's definition) come to be normatively governed and shaped. This is a central task of Chapter IV, where I show how the norms of a linguistic community can come to govern concepts, as Camp defines them.

4.2.3 Dreyfus

The commitment Dreyfus makes is to explain step-by-step the development of rational, conceptual understanding. To this end, Camp's theory promises to be useful, not despite but because it takes a completely different approach to concepts than does Dreyfus. As I argued in Chapter II, Dreyfus's notion of concepts makes it extremely difficult to see how we could explain the development of rational, conceptual understanding.

What makes Camp's theory of concepts useful is that it establishes a ground level for concepts in their most basic form, by defining concepts clearly as a function of a practical grasp of the world that we share with other animals. Camp's definition of concepts can be rolled into and used by a theory that actually explains how rational, conceptual understanding develops. Put another way, Camp's theory of concepts is promising for answering Dreyfus's challenge because it gives us a kind of conceptual "matter" that can then be shown to take on rational "form" through socio-normative and linguistic development. On this account, becoming rational is partially a matter of acquiring the concepts that enable rationality, but also involves developing and shaping the concepts that show up in instrumental reasoning, refining them according to the social and linguistic norms of our communities.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to explain and evaluate Camp's theory of concepts, for my purposes. I've argued that Camp's instrumentalism about concepts offers a way of understanding what rational, human cognition shares with the cognition of prerational humans and nonhuman, problem-solving animals. Unlike intellectualists who define concepts narrowly and thereby exclude nonhuman animals, Camp defines them more broadly—albeit, by giving them a clear function in cognition—and attributes concepts to other intelligent animals. This move shifts the burden of explaining what makes rationality distinct. Rather than define concepts *in order to* distinguish rational capacities, Camp gives concepts a definition that is "empirically useful" for explaining animal problem-solving behavior. Her empirically useful notion of concepts upholds a relaxed form of holism about concepts because to have concepts at all entails an ability to spontaneously recombine them with other concepts. Camp appeals—albeit briefly—to sociolinguistic capacities to explain how conceptual cognition becomes rational, human cognition. This is where Camp's theory falls short by intellectualist standards: she fails to sufficiently explain what makes human rationality distinct.

After spelling out Camp's instrumentalist theory of concepts, I showed how it functions as a critique of the intellectualist approach to concepts embraced by Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus. I then considered how her view nonetheless falls short in light of commitments these intellectualists make (and that I think are worth making). By spelling out just how Camp's instrumentalism about concepts falls short, I laid the groundwork for Chapter IV, where I appeal to the work of John Haugeland to integrate instrumentalism and intellectualism.

Camp's theory of concepts gives me a starting point or, as I put it above, the conceptual material for my account. What my account needs to do is explain just how that material gains its rational form and is thereby drawn into the structure of conceptual understanding that humans have. To give such an explanation is to propose an answer to Dreyfus's challenge. In doing so, I also have to explain how it is that rational, normatively governed concepts with which we think are also drawn into our experience, giving our experience its rational shape, thereby satisfying McDowell's commitment. And finally, I need to explain what makes our rational capacity for conceptual understanding distinct, in order to satisfy Brandom's commitment.

CHAPTER IV: CONFORMISM, NORMATIVITY, AND CONSTITUTION

1. Beyond Instrumentalism

In Chapter III, I introduced Camp's theory of concepts: revisable, stimulus-independent, systematically recombinable representations. The quintessential example of behavior that indicates conceptual cognition, in Camp's sense, is instrumental reasoning: pursuing subsidiary goals that temporarily take the animal away from its motivating goal, which involves the ability to treat things and situations as means to an end. Several animal species show signs of this kind of ability, including corvids and great apes. On Camp's theory, concepts have the same function in human cognition as they do in nonhuman animal cognition. The difference, Camp thinks, is that language allows humans to massively expand the number of concepts we have and coordinate our use of them. Language leads to metacognition, the ability not just to have a thought but to grasp that it can be true or false and to consider how the thought might be justified or not. While I am inclined to agree with the fairly uncontroversial claim that language leads to metacognition, I think Camp's treatment of the difference between the nonhuman animal and human use of concepts is insufficient to account for our objective form of thought, and more generally, for what is distinctive about human understanding.

For my purposes, Camp's theory of concepts offers building blocks for realizing the aim of my dissertation: to propose an answer to Dreyfus's challenge of explaining how a rational, conceptual grasp of the world develops out of lesser abilities that we share with children and nonhuman animals, while reconciling that answer with McDowell's

empiricist commitment to a rational form of experience and Brandom's commitment to making rationality distinct. Camp's theory plausibly establishes a way to understand what human cognition shares with that of other intelligent animals. What remains to be shown—on the way to accommodating Dreyfus, Brandom, and McDowell—is how the animal use of concepts in problem-solving is built into the objective use of concepts in human experience and understanding. Philosophers who argue that there is something distinctive about human rationality typically think that acquiring an objective grasp of the world introduces new elements proper to human cognition or transforms elements of merely animal cognition into the elements proper to human cognition. Thus, there ought to be some story about how the merely animal representations, affordances, or significances are transformed into concepts. As I showed in Chapter II, Dreyfus thinks the transformation happens each time we shift from embodied coping into explicitly thinking, while McDowell thinks this transformation happens as human infants pick up social norms and learn language. Brandom might agree there is some kind of transformation story to be told, but, as I showed in Chapter I, he insists that it is a sub-personal story: whatever is transformed belongs beneath the level of semantic awareness. I agree with these philosophers that there is something distinctive about human rationality; however, I don't think stories about the transformation of the elements of cognition give a suitable answer to Dreyfus's challenge, for reasons I made clear in Chapter II: accounts of this transformation of elements of cognition wind up making the rational, conceptual elements so different from the nonrational elements that they arose from that the transformation is incredible. That is, transformation accounts tend to impose too much distance and difference between the rational and nonrational.[117] The task of

[117] Matthew Boyle also argues for a "transformative framework" for understanding how humans become

answering Dreyfus's challenge, as I take it, is to be able to explain the rational elements *in terms of* the nonrational elements. My way of doing that—which I explain in Chapter V—is by appealing to reflexivity: the "transformation" does not transform the elements of cognition, but rather, it allows us to grasp the elements of cognition as such. To put it back in the terms Camp introduces, rational human cognition consists, in part, in the ability to grasp concepts (as she defines them) in terms of other concepts.

The first step, which I take in the present chapter, is to show how one can profitably integrate Camp's theory of concepts with Haugeland's theory of objectivity. The second step, which I take in Chapter V, is to make use of that integrated view to propose an answer to Dreyfus's challenge while accommodating Brandom's and McDowell's respective commitments.

To integrate Camp's concepts with Haugeland's objectivity, I selectively use ideas that Haugeland developed throughout his career, particularly his ideas about the conformism guiding the behavior of social animals, how conformism makes social norms possible, and how constitution leverages social norms into an objective grasp of the world. My aim is to show how Camp's theory of concepts fits into each of these notions that Haugeland develops to explain objectivity.

Haugeland's and Camp's views are not obviously compatible. From Camp's perspective, Haugeland appears to be another intellectualist, because he thinks of concept use as having an objective grasp of the world. From Haugeland's perspective, Camp's brief suggestions about how the cognition of intelligent animals turns into objective

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rational, and critiques what he calls "additive" approaches to rationality, which add rational human capacities on top of shared animal capacities for perception (Boyle, "Additive Theories of Rationality: A Critique"). The account I develop in Chapter V is not subject to Boyle's critiques of additive theories, but answering Boyle would take me beyond the scope of my dissertation.

understanding are woefully brief and insufficient. However, unlike other intellectualists, such as Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus, Haugeland does not depend upon the definition of concepts to make our rational objective understanding distinct. For this reason, as I show below, Haugeland's view is amenable to a broader definition of concepts, such as Camp's, and yet still able to robustly distinguish our objective understanding of the world from the forms of intelligence possessed by other intelligent, problem-solving animals.

In §2, I put Camp and Haugeland in conversation by considering the implicit critique each has of the other's view. While they have differing concerns, their respective ways of thinking about human and nonhuman animal cognition are complementary, at least when taken as contributions to the kind of view I aim to develop here. Following that, in §3, I turn to Haugeland's notion of conformism to show how it lays a natural ground for socially instituted normativity. I argue that Camp's theory of concepts integrates well with Haugeland's notion of conformism and that, in fact, both Camp's and Haugeland's views are strengthened by accommodating aspects of the other. Next, in §4, I show how, in his early work, Haugeland moves to leverage the normativity that conformism establishes into socially instituted intentionality. Here, the integration of Camp's view with Haugeland's creates a problem for Haugeland by undermining what Haugeland takes to be distinctive about the rational form of intentionality that we enjoy. In §5, I shift focus to the discussion of constitution in Haugeland's late essay, "Truth and Rule-Following," where Haugeland develops his theory of objectivity. In §6, I show how the constitutive structure of objectivity can accommodate Camp's theory of concepts

while nonetheless clearly establishing the difference between socially instituted animal norms and having an objective grasp of the world.

2. Camp and Haugeland in Conversation

Before I integrate their views for my own purposes, I want to acknowledge the distance between their two approaches to concepts by setting out the implicit critique each has for the other's work. In "Intentionality All-Stars," Haugeland distinguishes three main approaches to intentionality, each whimsically assigned a base in a baseball diamond.[118] All three approaches look to explain how intentionality originates in systematic patterns in arrangements of matter, i.e., all three are against the idea that intentionality can be explained in terms of an immaterial substance like a soul.

At first base, there is neo-Cartesianism, a view that is fairly widespread among cognitive scientists and philosophical psychologists (IAS 132-38). On the neo-Cartesian view, artificial intelligence can (at least in principle) be a source of original intentionality. The operative principle for determining whether or not something has intentionality is the principle of interpretation: neo-Cartesians hold that the right criteria for establishing intentionality is that we can *interpret* a system as having internal states that produce semantically meaningful behavior or expressions. Presumably, chess-playing software has intentionality on the neo-Cartesian view. We are justified as interpreting it as intending to win the game of chess. Proponents include Jerry Fodor, Zenon Pylyshyn, Hartry Field, and, Haugeland suggests, perhaps also Ned Block, Rob Cummins, Gilbert

[118] Haugeland, "The Intentionality All-Stars," 1998. I cite the 1998 version IAS followed by page number; the essay was first published as "The Intentionality All-Stars," 1990. By the time the essay was republished in 1998, Haugeland cautiously suggested that his own view no longer fits neatly at the third base of neo-pragmatism, but he does not suggest which position he comes to play nor whether indeed he has left the stadium (see his "Introduction: Toward a New Existentialism," 4).

Harman, and Bill Lycan. Haugeland's point is that neo-Cartesianism is a viable view with advantages and drawbacks, although it is not the view he endorses.

Neo-Cartesians get short shrift in Camp's essay, where she disqualifies the ability of an abacus—and by extension, other machines—to represent a state of affairs because it does not systematically change its own internal states. Camp does not thematize intentionality as such, but if we assume there is widespread agreement that intentionality and representational abilities go hand in hand, by denying machines representations, she also denies that they can have intentionality. This is not a substantial engagement with neo-Cartesianism, not least because neo-Cartesians would agree that an abacus lacks intentionality. Thus, it is not that Camp presents an argument against neo-Cartesianism, but rather, she does not engage with it. That Camp is clearly not a neo-Cartesian, nor a neo-pragmatist helps to illuminate what position she plays on Haugeland's Intentionality All-Star team: as will become clear, Camp plays at the neo-behaviorist second base (perhaps with a slight tendency to inch toward shortstop).

At second base, neo-behaviorism locates intentionality not in the internal states of a system, but rather, in how that system interacts with its environment (IAS 138-47). One can imagine nonanimal forms of intentionality fitting this criteria, but neo-behaviorism motivates (and perhaps is motivated by) a move to ascribe intentionality to nonhuman animals. The operative principle in neo-behaviorism Haugeland calls the Principle of Ascription: we can ascribe intentionality to a system (such as the kind of organic system that an individual animal is) provided that system exhibits sufficient skill in how it adapts and responds to its environment. Proponents include W. V. O. Quine, Daniel Dennett,

Robert Stalnaker and, Haugeland suggests, perhaps also J. L. Austin, Jonathan Bennett, and Paul Grice.

Camp is, crucially, a neo-behaviorist by Haugeland's definition, because, again, she treats intentionality as tightly corresponding to representational capacities while restricting representation to the goal-directed abilities of animals. Camp's minimalism about concepts is neo-behaviorist about intentionality because it locates intentionality prior to or beneath objective, rational capacities. From Camp's perspective, there is no problem with assigning intentionality to animals with only basic cognition (i.e., revisable, systematically recombinable representations that *depend on* environing stimuli for their use), and therefore who lack concepts on her account. Reading Camp in light of Haugeland's categories, it is interesting to see her drive a distinction Haugeland overlooks: the distinction between (1) intentional action facilitated by the systematic recombination of representations that is tightly coupled to and merely triggered by environing stimuli, and (2) intentional action facilitated by the systematic recombination of representations where which representations are recombined is independent of environing stimuli. Unlike (1), (2) enables the kind of problem-solving Camp takes to indicate concept use. With (2), the domain of animal activity has expanded from bodily action; the animal has gained active control of its representational ability, free of environing stimuli. This is what allows animals to represent counterfactual opportunities, drive toward subordinate goals on the way to realizing primary goals, and treat things as means to an end.

Finally, at third base, there is neo-pragmatism (IAS 147-56). Neo-pragmatists locate intentionality in the social norms, language-use, and various practices to which we

conform. By Haugeland's count, proponents include Sellars, and maybe also John Dewey and Michael Dummett.[119] Most importantly for me, this club also includes Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus.[120] From Camp's perspective, neo-pragmatists are all intellectualists because they limit all concept use to rational human capacities. I've shown how this is true of Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus, but it is true of Haugeland too. Haugeland defines concepts as what we have when we have an objective grasp of the world. Camp, as I showed in Chapter III, thinks this delimitation of concept use is not credible because she demands that we define concepts in a way that makes them empirically useful for discriminating an evolutionarily useful cognitive ability (rather than define concepts as essentially bound up with rational understanding, as neo-pragmatists tend to do). Camp's demand leads her to attribute concept use to children who are verbal but do not yet qualify as rational and intelligent, and also to intelligent, problem-solving animals who can clearly cognize not just goals but also distinct tasks as means to an end goal.

How might Haugeland respond to finding himself in the cross-hairs of Camp's critique of intellectualism? The first thing Haugeland can claim is that, unlike Dreyfus, McDowell, and Brandom, he is not hung up on what counts as a concept—this will become clear in the following section. Moreover, Haugeland could say, the task that

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[119] Haugeland also included Heidegger and himself as neo-pragmatists when he wrote the essay in 1988, but by 1998, as I indicated above, his view had changed.

[120] Again, in 1988, at the time he wrote this essay, Haugeland's thought hewed closely to Brandom's. In his late view, Haugeland eschews the label of neo-pragmatism, because he identifies neo-pragmatism with Rorty and Brandom, for whom social institution is sufficient to explain objectivity, whereas Haugeland comes to insist that first-personal experience and existential, constitutive commitments are vital aspects of any coherent account of objectivity. If we can wrest the term "neo-pragmatism" away from Brandom and Rorty, however, and think of it as a productive recuperation of the deep insights of classical pragmatism, it would still usefully capture Haugeland's philosophy. It is also worth noting that his approach to intentionality remains within the ambit of neo-pragmatism he defines in IAS: it is neither neo-behaviorism nor neo-Cartesianism, nor does it warrant a new category or shift Haugeland to the outfield he ridiculed in IAS. I thank Zed Adams for his comments on how Haugeland's view changed.

Camp sees intellectualists engaged in is not (as Camp seems to think) just to give a reasonable definition of what a concept is, but also to explain what exactly our fully rational capacities to grasp the world objectively consist in. It is to that express purpose of making rationality distinct that "intellectualist" neo-pragmatists define concepts. Moreover, defining concepts expressly for the purpose of making rationality distinct is not a particularly surprising move, given the reasonable assumption that concepts are—quite uncontroversially—functions of rational judgment. Haugeland also might add that Camp's definition of concepts threatens to rob the "intellectualist" of the means to explain how rational capacities really are distinct without offering an alternate way to do so, and that is a serious oversight. Most importantly, however, for my purposes, Haugeland could also reply that there is no reason he could not accommodate Camp's definition of concepts into his explanation of fully rational, objective thought.

A final thought from Haugeland bears on Camp's own ideas about how the animal use of concepts becomes the rational use of concepts. As I showed above, Camp thinks epistemological reflection, error recognition, metacognition, objectivity and the like are all much less important than the massive explosion of stimulus-independent representations that comes with human language. That explosion, she thinks, is where the real advantage comes because it massively increases the ways we can take advantage of our environing conditions. Camp plays down metacognition as insignificant compared to the explosion of useful concepts without considering the possibility that metacognition is necessary for that explosion of useful concepts.

It seems to me that this is false. For one thing, if human life and culture were possible without a metacognitive grasp of errors in the face of socially instituted norms,

one would expect to find record of it in our anthropological and historical records. Moreover, it is very difficult to imagine how a human culture could sustain itself without the ability for the group to explicitly articulate deviation from norms. Perhaps what Camp has in mind is something much more basic than anything we would call human culture—an explosion of concepts that gave us massive advantages and set us apart from other animals, yet still without any capacity for metacognition. But Camp accepts the idea that language is necessary for the explosion of concepts, and the idea of having language without culture is a contradiction in terms.

If we accept that metacognition is necessary for the explosion of concepts that Camp thinks makes up the human difference, then we should ask how it is necessary. To that end, let me put things in the following terms: consider that conceptual cognition as instrumental reasoning is "knowing how," and metacognition is "knowing that." A crucial idea absent from Camp's view yet built into Haugeland's view is that "knowing how" and "knowing that" are mutually reinforcing aspects of human cognition, such that "knowing that" is a constitutive part of the expansion of concepts.[121] That is, the idea Camp misses and Haugeland gets is that "knowing how" to do A is necessary for "knowing that" B, which is in turn necessary for "knowing how" to do C, which is necessary for "knowing that" D, and so forth, and this structure of mutual reinforcement between two kinds of knowing is necessary for the expansion of concepts that humans enjoy. In other words, contra Camp, metacognition is necessary for the proliferation of human conceptual know-how and for countless material advantages that give humans clear, empirical, evolutionary advantages.

[121] As Sellars puts it (on the way to making a different point), "knowing how to do something at the level of characteristically human activity presupposes a great deal of knowledge *that*" ("Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," 1–2).

To Haugeland, a human form of life is one that involves a biological propensity for conformism, is socially instituted, and (crucially) is constituted by an individual's constitutive commitment to a shared way of life.[122] To put the point about the importance of metacognition in Haugeland's terms, in this human form of life, how we use our vast array of concepts is governed by social norms (both in terms of knowing how and knowing that). In order for that to happen, in order for social practices to be coordinated in the way that they are, there needs to be some kind of agreement on how to use the concepts and a shared, constitutive commitment to the norms governing our concepts. That constitutive commitment requires, in part, that we reflect on our use of many of these concepts. For Haugeland, metacognition is not just a quasi-superfluous ability idolized by intellectualists, as Camp seems to suggest. Rather, metacognition is a fundamental structure necessary for the coordination of human society because it is a condition for the possibility of socially aligning our constitutive commitments, the basic life skills of navigating the world we inhabit, and cognitive skills of getting things right according to the normative rules to which we commit. The practice of cognitive reflection and capacity for metacognition that Camp plays down are part of a government of concepts without which we could never come together to form the complex societies we have, without which we would have no use for so many of the concepts that proliferate in a human society. To do justice to the centrality of metacognition in Haugeland's work—to unpack it further—would take me away from my aim in this chapter, but as I explore his thought, below, I aim to highlight the crucial importance of metacognition for his late view.

[122] These are all details I unpack below.

In her quick account of the difference of human cognition as the mere proliferation of concepts, Camp more or less waves off Dreyfus's challenge to explain how our fully rational abilities emerge, not to mention Brandom's commitment about what makes them distinct. The advantage of turning to Haugeland is that, unlike Dreyfus, Brandom, or McDowell, Haugeland offers an account of rationality that is useful for proposing an answer to Dreyfus's challenge.

Haugeland's intellectualism is different from the strains I have already discussed in McDowell, Brandom, and Dreyfus. Unlike other intellectualists, Haugeland does not appeal *primarily* to language and concepts in order to distinguish our human, objective grasp of the world. Rather, Haugeland offers what is in my view a more coherent and powerful explanation of objective perception and thought by appealing to skills and to our constitutive commitment to a certain way of life and the norms that give it its distinct shape. Language is, admittedly, a crucial and necessary part of our own particular form of rational understanding, on Haugeland's view, but the point is that directly appealing to language is not the best way to unpack and explain our capacity for objectivity. Haugeland's shift in emphasis opens up the account of intellectual capacities enough to make it amenable to a bottom-up explanation of rational, human cognition that begins with Camp's definition of concepts.

By creating a hybrid of Camp's neo-behaviorism and Haugeland's neo-pragmatism, the view I develop here occupies the position Haugeland identified as shortstop.[123] For Haugeland to accept my proposal, he would have to give up two things.

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[123] In his IAS, Haugeland glibly suggests that Wittgenstein plays shortstop, i.e., a distinct position between neo-behaviorism and neo-pragmatism. Other players who have recently signed onto this position (or at least attempted to combine the best insights of neo-pragmatism and neo-behaviorism) include Sachs, *Intentionality and Myths of the Given: Between Pragmatism and Phenomenology*; Rouse, *Articulating the*

The first is merely terminological: Haugeland would have to give the standard, neo-pragmatist line of thought that equates having a conceptual grasp of the world with having an objective grasp. But this is easy, as Haugeland has no stake in the definition of concepts; reconciling his view with Camp's does not distort anything I take to be essential to Haugeland's understanding of rational objectivity any more than it does Camp's theory of concepts. The second thing Haugeland would have to give up is more substantial: in both his early and late views, Haugeland toes the neo-pragmatist line of thought that drives a gap between humans and other animals and emphasizes the discontinuity between us.

The great advantage of Haugeland's theory of objectivity, for my purposes, is that it lends itself to an explanation of how it is acquired. Brandom rejects the idea that one can assimilate a rational, objective, conceptual grasp of the world to lesser capacities that nonrational animals have. Dreyfus calls for an account of its acquisition but does nothing to provide one. McDowell appeals to concepts like second nature and *Bildung*, but does not develop these ideas. Haugeland, by contrast, more or less traces out a way to explain the acquisition of an objective grasp of the world. He begins with conformism—a biological predisposition of social animals to develop cohesive behavioral dispositions—and shows how this natural ability yields socially instituted norms and is ultimately cultivated into a set of interdependent skills that constitute a socially instituted, objective grasp of the world. In the following sections on conformism, normativity, and constitution, I selectively draw on those aspects of Haugeland's theory of objectivity that are useful for my purposes, to integrate them with Camp's theory of concepts.

World: Conceptual Understanding and the Scientific Image; and Okrent, *Rational Animals: The Teleological Roots of Intentionality*. All three books offer resources for thinking about Dreyfus's challenge, but none takes it on explicitly.

3. Conformism

One of the basic ways I integrate Haugeland's view of objectivity and rationality with Camp's theory of concepts is the conformism that Haugeland attributes to humans and other intelligent, social animals as well. Conformism is an innate or naturally selected proclivity to conform to social, behavioral norms. The result is that individual members of a species will behave according to the norms of the group. Most (if not all) species that count as having instrumental reason, and therefore concepts, on Camp's definition, also exhibit Haugeland's conformism because they are highly social species, such as corvids, great apes, elephants, and cetaceans. All of these species are conformist in Haugeland's sense and also have concepts by Camp's definition. The only animal that may be nonsocial and nonconformist and yet count as having concepts by Camp's definition is the octopus.[124]

3.1 On Conformism

Conformism is one of Haugeland's ways of talking about what, in the history of philosophy, has been discussed in terms of habituation and second nature. It serves, for him, as a basis for grounding norms: Haugeland takes conformism to be a condition for normativity, yet he takes conformism to be a widespread animal capacity and treats normativity as essentially human.

[124] The cleverness of the octopus is legendary. For an interesting investigation into the mind of the octopus, see Godfrey-Smith, *Other Minds: The Octopus, the Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness*. While some species of octopus can famously solve puzzles, like opening a child-proof bottle, it is not clear that they do pass Camp's test for instrumental reasoning, where the animal's behavior must clearly indicate that it pursues subsidiary goals to a main goal in a way that temporarily takes it away from its main goal. If they do pass this test, then they may be a rare example of nonsocial animal with conceptual thought (by Camp's lights).

Animals can form habits through repetition of a wide variety of activities, but conformism specifically concerns habituation of behavior that is reinforced socially. It is useful to keep in mind that conformism is a specific instance of habituation, because it shows how Haugeland's view is part of a tradition of appealing to habit to give rational norms a natural ground, a tradition whose threads appear in German idealism, American pragmatism, and existential phenomenology, and can be traced back (as McDowell hints) to Aristotle's notion of second nature. Habits are crucial for precisely the reason Haugeland points out: they are the hinge between mere biological functioning and social normativity. They ground rational norms in nature in a way that preserves the existence of rational norms. As I discuss below, the social dimension of conformist habituation is crucial for Haugeland's ideas about normativity and objectivity.

In "The Intentionality All-Stars," conformism is an important part of what Haugeland identifies as the neo-pragmatist approach to intentionality. Given that Camp is, by Haugeland's standards, a neo-behaviorist, the view I am developing here is in part an effort to integrate their neo-pragmatism and neo-behaviorism. Haugeland considers the possibility of integrating neo-behaviorist and neo-pragmatist accounts of intentionality, and claims that with regard to the fundamental "pattern upon which original intentionality depends, they are not compatible at all, but mutually exclusive (IAS 160)."[125] He leaves open the option, however, that one could devise an account with two kinds of original intentionality—neo-behaviorist and neo-pragmatist (IAS 161). My aim here is to show that, in some sense, neo-pragmatist intentionality emerges as a distinct pattern from neo-behaviorist intentionality, whereas neo-behaviorist

[125] The fundamental pattern of neo-behaviorist intentionality consists in the perceptions and responsive actions of animals in their respective environments (IAS 138-9). The fundamental pattern of neo-pragmatist intentionality is, by contrast, a culture or a way of life (IAS 147).

intentionality emerges as distinct from a pattern of animal behavioral interactions with its environment. I don't want to claim that rational, discursive intentionality is merely "derivative" of animal intentionality, but I do want to claim that it is a distinct development of animal, behavioral intentionality in something like the following sense: rational intentionality is a human social practice, a longstanding tradition of refining, shaping, and using our animal, behavioral intentionality.[126]

To distinguish neo-pragmatism, Haugeland appeals to conformism to show both how discursive intentionality is ultimately biologically grounded, and to lay the groundwork for its development. What Haugeland aims to show is how conformism leads to the normative, social institutions that yield an objective grasp of the world. To this end, Haugeland defines conformism as a combination of "imitativeness," or the inclination to copy the behavior of other members of a social group, and "censoriousness," or "a positive tendency to see that one's neighbors do likewise, and to suppress variation (IAS 147). Censoriousness thus has both positive and negative expressions (IAS 148). Conformism "presupposes" two abilities that it makes use of: the ability to respond differentially to different stimuli, and the ability "to learn, as in conditioning or habit formation" (IAS 147). He calls the capacity to conform a "complex second-order disposition" because it is a disposition that bears on the formation of other dispositions, yet it is nonetheless natural or "'wired in'" (IAS 147). What conformism leaves open are

[126] In this respect, my dissertation fundamentally differs from Carl Sachs's *Intentionality and Myths of the Given: Between Pragmatism and Phenomenology*. In that book, Sachs takes Haugeland's suggestion of advancing an account that includes both neo-behaviorist and neo-pragmatist forms of intentionality, which he limns as "bifurcated intentionality." He builds his bifurcated approach by combining Merleau-Ponty's bodily intentionality with Brandom's discursive intentionality, making the two distinct and co-original. For a critique of Sachs' approach, see my "Review of Carl B. Sachs, *Intentionality and the Myths of the Given: Between Pragmatism and Phenomenology*." In light of the perspective I develop in this dissertation, Sachs's position endorses the intellectualism I've identified in Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus, and does not (in my view) take seriously enough Dreyfus's challenge.

the actual forms of behavior and dispositions that become reinforced and also the performances that count as reinforcement or rejection of the actions of other members of the social group. Presumably, this is a great advantage for animals that have evolved the capacities for conformism: social habits and dispositions can change to make the most of social and environmental changes.

Haugeland writes, "The net effect of conformism is a systematic peer pressure within the community, which can be conceived as a kind of mutual attraction among the behavioral dispositions of the different community members" (IAS 148). In other words, conformism results in members of a social group forming dispositions to act in similar ways in similar circumstances. Moreover (although Haugeland does not make this explicit), it seems as though the resulting dispositions must be cohesive, at least in the sense that the result is a more or less stable set of behaviors that perpetuate the group as a group, for the simple reason that if they did not, no such social group would last long enough to form dispositions that are alike.

Haugeland takes up conformism again in his late essay, "Truth and Rule-Following," emphasizing that a conformist tendency is both biologically based and also a metadisposition to form and reinforce dispositions according to social pressure (TRF 311). Again, the idea is that we (and many other species) are predisposed to forming dispositions that conform to social norms we encounter, including dispositions to promote and reinforce these norms within our spheres of social influence. To socially conform is to monitor, follow, and uphold rules that govern behavior. Haugeland puts it like this:

> The central idea is that community members effectively promote similarities in how they and their fellows are disposed to behave relative to

> circumstances. This presupposes that they can tell who behaved how in what circumstances, and how that compares with what others would have done; it also presupposes that they can modify their own and each other's dispositions in the direction of conformity. (TRF 311)

Note how complex these capacities are. They require, among other things, the ability to recognize others as institutors of norms, that is, to take others' actions to establish how one ought to act.[127] Haugeland also adds, if these socially instituted norms become coherent, stable, and mutually reinforcing (as opposed to conflicting, mutually destructive, and undermining), they can institute a community "with a common set of social customs and mores." The result is a form of life that will perpetuate itself as long as it is adequately stable and yet also sufficiently responsive to its changing conditions, including those changes caused by the very activities that perpetuate that form of life.

3.2 Integrating Camp's Concepts with Haugeland's Conformism

How does Haugeland's conformism sit with Camp's theory of concepts? Perhaps the best way to think about integrating them is the appeal to the kinds of behaviors that Camp thinks best exemplify the use of concepts: instances of instrumental reasoning like tool use. A group of animals with an ability to treat an object as a tool—a means to an end, for example, of acquiring food—has revisable, systematically recombinable, sense-independent representations of the implements and goals of tool use. Combining conformism with animal tool use is helpful to explain how some groups of animals pass along their tool-using practices to one another, through imitation and censure. A useful example here is the community of tool-using chimpanzees that Camp refers to (PTW

[127] This kind of social recognition forms the basis of the structure of self-consciousness in Brandom's reconstruction of Hegel's theory of recognition (see SDR). Haugeland implicitly recognizes the social institution requires some degree of self-consciousness when he argues that members of a community must recognize each other as agents, that is, as responsible for their own actions (TRF 312).

294). The animals seek out particular kinds of materials in one location, prepare the material into a tool, and then bring it with them to a second location where they are able to use the tool to acquire food. Not only does the community's behavior suggest that individual members have an instrumental—thus conceptual—grasp of the implements and goals of their practice, they also evidently pass this practice along to one another precisely through the kind of conformism that Haugeland discusses.

One point to make here is that it is genuinely useful to combine Haugeland's ideas about conformism with Camp's ideas about instrumental reason to explain some animal practices and behaviors. A more general point, for my purposes, is that conformism and conceptual, instrumental reasoning appear to be independent abilities that can be profitably combined (the animals benefit from combining them). Thus, animals gain an advantage from conformism absent any capacity for instrumental reasoning; likewise, it is conceivable that other animals may be capable of instrumental reasoning yet have little to no conformist tendencies (perhaps they're only minimally social). But when both conformism and instrumental reasoning capacities are present they interact. In particular, conformism helps to establish dispositions to solve certain problems in certain ways, saving instrumentally reasoning animals from having to "reinvent the wheel." Indeed, it is easy to imagine Haugeland taking instrumental reasoning on board for his purposes and Camp taking conformism on board for her own purposes. I don't think Haugeland's theories of normativity and objectivity are flawed because he does not see how instrumental reasoning might play a role in their development—he seems to do fine without it. But I do think instrumental reasoning (and the stimulus-independent, conceptual grasp of things that it comes with) positively augments Haugeland's theory.

The important point is to claim that, in the case of humans, conformism involves shaping dispositions including conceptual, problem-solving dispositions. The idea here is that absent any kind of conformist pressure (if humans could survive without it), humans would develop conceptual, problem-solving practices, but in the presence of conformist pressure, we come to solve problems according to social norms. The next part of Haugeland's argument is to clarify how conformism yields normativity in a really basic sense that is shared by a wide range of animals, and also in a more integral sense wherein normativity deeply penetrates a wide range of social practices and is thereby sufficient to institute what Haugeland calls "a way of life."

4. Normativity

In both "Intentionality All-Stars" and "Truth and Rule-Following," Haugeland's discussion of conformism sets up a discussion of normativity. I focus on the discussion of normativity in "The Intentionality All-stars" in this section, and turn to the later essay to discuss constitution in the following section. I argue that integrating Camp's theory of concepts with Haugeland's earlier view of normativity undermines his old way of distinguishing normativity. In the following section, I show how the discussion of constitution in Haugeland's later view resolves that problem.

4.1 On Normativity

Comparing Brandom and Haugeland on normativity is useful for clarifying Haugeland's notion. To Haugeland, the upshot of animal conformism is norms, not in Brandom's sense of involving rational, discursive understanding, but rather in the sense of a stable set of socially sanctioned dispositions governing the behavior of members of a group

under certain circumstances (IAS 148). Brandom defines normativity narrowly as involving the ability to give and ask for reasons. While he does not make all normativity a matter of explicitly following explicit rules, he does make the capacity to grasp explicit rules in general a condition for normativity in his sense. To Haugeland, by contrast, "norms are a kind of 'emergent' entity, with an identity and life of their own, over and above that of their constituents," that are resilient and passed along from one member to another and from one generation to the next (IAS 149). Against Brandom (and others), Haugeland aims to explain explicit rule-following precisely in terms of norms in his more basic sense (IAS 149-50). To this end, he defines norms as "community-wide classes of similar dispositions that coalesce under the force of conformism" (IAS 149). What qualifies them as norms rather than a mere collection of habits is the fact that "they themselves set the standard for that very censoriousness by which they are generated and maintained" (IAS 149). Whereas habitual behaviors may form and become entrenched or weakened and eliminated without any bearing or influence from a social group, norms have normative force by virtue of the censoriousness that attends to them.

Again, Haugeland argues that the ability to conform to the norms of the group in no way depends upon the ability to follow explicit rules, which would require a rational discursive understanding (IAS 149). All it takes to form the normative dispositions is imitation and reinforcement via the positive and negative censorious reactions of other members of the group. Rather, the point of Haugeland's approach is to explain the capacity for explicit rule-following in terms of the social norms of a group (IAS 150).

Like Brandom, Haugeland distinguishes between normativity and causality, insisting that the former cannot be properly explained in terms of the latter. The

difference here between Brandom and Haugeland is that Haugeland extends a form of normativity to nonrational animals. To explain how the normative behavior of animals is not merely causal (even though there are underlying causal mechanisms at work), Haugeland distinguishes between causal regularity that is merely exhibited and normative regularity that actually governs behavior, such that animals, in practice, hold each other accountable to those norms (IAS 150).[128]

Haugeland firmly distinguishes between conformism and the kind of normativity that rational animals have, while taking conformism to be a condition of all normativity. Thus, it is implicit in Haugeland's theory, I think, that all normativity involves conforming in a general sense (when we take on a social norm, we conform to it), and all conformism yields norms in a general sense, but not all conformism yields normativity in a specific, robust sense of establishing what he calls "*a way of life*" (IAS 151).[129] In other words, a group of social animals can, through conformism, generate a set of norms, but those norms and the imitation and censure that attends their maintenance may not be particularly dominant in the lives of the animals. There may be many circumstances in which there are simply no normatively governed dispositions that the animal can put into play. By contrast, for the norms of the group to constitute a way of life, they should cover a wide—if not the entire—range of behaviors. Haugeland writes, "a way of life is highly integrated and structured, in that the norms which make it up are intricately interdependent" (IAS 151). I take "highly integrated and structured" to mean that normative governed dispositions draw together almost all of the possible activities the animal can find itself in. Haugeland makes this distinction of a normatively governed,

[128] Haugeland does not use the terms "exhibited" and "governing" here, but does so later in "Truth and Rule-Following" (see TRF 305ff).
[129] The italics are Haugeland's.

integrated way of life in order to set up human normativity that governs not just behavioral dispositions but also serves to constitute the things we encounter and use in our practices.

This Haugeland develops into a discussion of tools, which he then uses to distinguish natural language (IAS 152-3). Anticipating arguments he will develop in much greater detail in "Objective Perception" and "Truth and Rule-Following" (and which I consider below), Haugeland explores how social practices institute connections between normative actions and things those actions involve, and thereby practically categorize them (IAS 151). This classification is practical, rather than discursive, in the sense that it does not involve explicitly grasping objects in terms of properties, but rather treating a variety of things as being a certain *kind*, where the kind in question is determined by the role such things play in a socially instituted practice. Anticipating arguments he will develop in "Objective Perception," Haugeland talks about chess pieces in this way: a chess player who learned the game through imitation and censure—rather than an explicit grasp of the rules—would develop the ability to treat a variety of differently shaped things as "rooks" or "pawns" by virtue of the social convention of treating them as such (IAS 151). More generally, the same claim can be made about tools. What constitutes something as a tool of a certain kind are the social practices that institute that thing as such. For any given tool, there are appropriate and inappropriate things to do with it (IAS 152). In short, "tools are defined by their instituted roles" (IAS 152). Typically, such tool use will also involve other kinds of things with which the tools are properly used, according to social norms. Thus, tools are furthermore defined "by their (instituted relations to other role-defined paraphernalia" (IAS 152). The socially

instituted sense that something (a tool) can be "for" something (a use) is, for Haugeland, a crucial distinction, because it sets up a very preliminary sense of objectivity. According to social norms, where proper performance is subject to positive reinforcement and improper performance is subject to censure, a tool can be what it is "objectively" in the sense that it *ought* to be used for some purposes and not for other purposes.[130] And with this preliminary sense of "objectivity" in the use of tools that are cognized "for" a specific purpose as defined by "the instituted relations among public paraphernalia," Haugeland establishes the basis of intentionality for neo-pragmatism (IAS 152-3).

Socially instituted objectivity and full-blooded intentionality come with language, but language is a "(very) special case" of tool use in that language is a "double-use tool" (IAS 153). The "tool" in a linguistic utterance is the sound made, and the two uses of this tool are (1) the uttering of the sound and (2) the response to the utterance (IAS 153). Thus, to utter the word "stop" is to use the word as a tool in the first sense and to respond to the word "stop" by stopping is to use the word in the second sense. Haugeland adds, "the basic *point* of linguistic tools is to *connect* the two uses: utterances are 'meant' to be responded to, and the responses are to them as uttered," and, moreover, both uses are "governed by norms" (IAS 153). The purpose of these linguistic tools—what they are for in the given circumstances—is to realize the normative behavior involved in both uses of the tool. From this point, as Haugeland acknowledges, his discussion of language leads, more or less, into the semantics that Brandom develops in *Making It Explicit*; Haugeland offers a brief discussion of the commitments and entitlements, assertions and beliefs, and the normative statutes of language-users, involved in the double-use of these linguistic

[130] Crucially, although he recognizes that animals seem to use tools, he does not think that animals have any sense that a tool is *for* some purpose. I return to this question below, as I think this is a central and important point of contention between Haugeland and Camp.

tools (IAS 154-6).[131] Original intentionality, he concludes in "The Intentionality All-Stars," is the kind of intentionality that comes with the social institution of the use of language, i.e., a set of public symbols (IAS 156).

4.2 Integrating Camp's Concepts with Haugeland's Normativity

Now the task is to integrate Haugeland's notion of socially instituted normativity with Camp's theory of concepts. Unlike with conformism, where there appeared to be no real conflict between them, Camp would likely find elements of the intellectualism she aims to resist in Haugeland's theory of socially instituted normativity. In pointing them out, I side with Camp. However, importantly, none of the Camp-inspired adjustments I make to Haugeland's account of normativity substantially changes his view of normativity. The central claim of Haugeland's that I do give up is the idea that original intentionality is an essentially linguistic affair.

To begin with, while she does not use the term "intentionality," Camp strongly implies that we should understand original intentionality to begin with what she calls basic cognition, the capacity for revisable, systematically recombinable representations of things or states of affairs an animal encounters. This is not a conceptual ability, on Camp's theory, because it is not necessarily stimulus independent. Nonetheless, Camp takes revisable, recombinable representations of things or states of affairs to count as intentionality because the combinations of representations that arise according to environing stimuli are about or of the animal's environment and are a part of the animal's goal-directed activity of satisfying its basic, biological needs. This commitment to attributing intentionality to animals whose behavior appears to be goal-directed is what

[131] If I give this aspect of Haugeland's early view short shrift here, it is because I am more interested in the account he develops later and that I discuss below, which involves a split with Brandom on what constitutes the objectivity of rational humans.

classifies Camp as a "neo-behaviorist" by Haugeland's lights, in "Intentionality All-Stars."[132] Thus, for Camp and in the view I am urging here, there is a form of original, animal intentionality that is more basic than Camp's criteria for conceptual representations. Rather than make discursive, rational conceptuality original intentionality as Haugeland does, the idea is to stress that human intentionality is a development of animal intentionality.

The second point of contention, which I flagged above, is Haugeland's claim about what distinguishes human tool use from the apparent use of tools in animals, such as chimpanzees. The difference, Haugeland argues, concerns the "propriety" governing uses of tools in human practice that is absent from anything one might call "tool use" among other animals. Propriety is what institutes tools as "for" a specific purpose, which is reinforced by imitation and censure. As Haugeland puts it, propriety "is what separates human use of tools from the uses animals sometimes make of handy objects. A monkey might be both clever and successful at getting some bananas with a stick, but in no sense is that what the stick is properly 'for'; equivalently, a monkey could not abuse a stick, no matter what it did" (IAS 152).[133] This imagined scenario of monkey stick use, I think, underestimates the complexity of, for example, the chimpanzee tool production and use to which Camp refers (see PTW 294).[134] The observation that these chimpanzees not only coordinate the use of two different tools—a stout stick and a brush-like implement—and select specific materials for the brush from a specific location, but also alter that material

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[132] Intentionality is not term that Camp uses, but her discussion of representations does implicitly commit her to a kind of neo-behaviorism about intentionality.
[133] Haugeland is perhaps obliquely referring to Köhler's account of Sultan the chimpanzee's problem-solving abilities in *The Mentality of Apes*.
[134] Camp refers to the astonishing and "culturally" unique problem-solving abilities of one community of chimpanzees discussed in Sanz, Morgan, and Gulick, "New Insights into Chimpanzees, Tools, and Termites from the Congo Basin."

in a particular way to "make" the brush useful for the specific purpose of fishing for termites seems to undermine Haugeland's attempt to distinguish human from nonhuman animal tool use. Against Haugeland's claim, even if we assumed there were no sense in which one chimpanzee in this group would or could take another to be "abusing" one of these tools, it is not at all clear this would mean the tools are not "for" a purpose in the relevant sense; what constitutes the abuse of a tool is a matter of the social practices surrounding tool use, and perhaps the chimpanzees simply don't care about the "abuse" of tools. Indeed, perhaps they have no reason to, if the tools are suitably abundant. The "abuse" criterion that Haugeland introduces is highly questionable. Even without tool "abuse," it is perfectly reasonable that a troup of chimpanzees can select and shape tools that are "for" a very distinct purpose and therefore evince the propriety that Haugeland insists makes human tool use distinct.

Camp's discussion of instrumental reasoning sheds light on this issue of treating a thing as being "for" some purpose according to socially instituted norms. Not all instrumental reasoning and instances of animal tool use should count as socially instituted or involving propriety. An example here is the New Caledonian crow that spontaneously bends a piece of wire to retrieve food.[135] In this example, there is instrumental reasoning and tool use but (it appears) no conformism or social institution. In the case of the termite-fishing chimpanzees, however, it really does appear that conformism and social institution play a role in establishing a resilient disposition to catch termites by acquiring and creating specific tools "for" that purpose. New and young members of this community are drawn into the practice through conformism (imitation and censure) and using their capacity for instrumental reasoning, leading them to acquire materials and

[135] See Weir, Chappell, and Kacelnik, "Shaping of Hooks in New Caledonian Crows."

make tools to fish for termites. As the young chimpanzees watch the older ones engage in this activity, it seems reasonable to assume they recognize what the stout stick and the brush stick are "for," thus they pick up on the social propriety governing the use of these paraphernalia. It may take years of practice before the young manage to catch many termites using this technique, but slow learning does not undermine the point (and the poor return on investment of failed techniques underscores the power of conformist inclinations).

Haugeland's insistence that "the uses animals sometimes make of handy objects" does not qualify as tool use seems to fall apart in the face of empirical accounts of this chimpanzee community's complex termite-catching technique. And because, in Haugeland's early view, social propriety is tied to a preliminary sense of "objectively" grasping things (IAS 152), the empirical evidence seems to require early Haugeland to extend to these chimpanzees an objective (in some sense) grasp of what they are doing. By contrast, in his late view, Haugeland avoids the implication that termite-fishing, tool-using chimpanzees have any kind of objective grasp of what they are doing. As I discuss below, Haugeland's later discussion of conformism introduces new criteria that allow us to distinguish between the highly sophisticated tool use of chimpanzees in the Congo river basin and objectivity.

Reading Haugeland in light of Camp's theory of concepts and instrumental reason, the main point to carry forward regarding the normativity that arises out of conformism and the tool use that goes along with it is that they're both features of the lives of intelligent animals generally, and not of rational, human lives specifically. The list of abilities and proclivities that intellectualists reserve for humans but that, on closer

inspection, belong to a wider variety of intelligent animals has grown: concepts, instrumental reason, normativity, and tool use are all things that seem to be shared and cannot therefore be used to make a rational, objective grasp of the world distinct. The question looms not least because, as I argued in the previous chapter, Camp herself cannot offer a satisfactory answer. In "Intentionality All-Stars," Haugeland appeals to integral socially instituted norms to draw a line, but the real distinction he is after is linguistic. As I mentioned above, Haugeland endorses the idea that primary intentionality resides in normatively governed linguistic practices, or what he calls "the public use of symbols" (IAS 156). Haugeland's later view, however, is more nuanced, critical, and yet somewhat more relaxed about language as he shifts his attention from intentionality to objectivity, especially in "Objective Perception" and "Truth and Rule-Following." Crucially, in his later work Haugeland rejects the idea that propriety is sufficient to account for the kind of objective grasp of the world that rational humans have. I turn to the latter essay next to show how Haugeland downplays language (compared to Brandom and McDowell, at least) to build objectivity out of a theory of skills. For my purposes, this theory of objectivity fills a gap left by Camp's account.

5. Constitution

When Haugeland returns to the question of normativity in "Truth and Rule-Following," he focuses on positing a pragmatist and quasi-existentialist theory of objectivity rather than setting out a neo-pragmatist approach to intentionality. Haugeland's theory of objectivity substantially breaks with Brandom by arguing that Brandom's approach to objectivity is insufficient. On Brandom's view (and on the view Haugeland developed

earlier in "The Intentionality All-Stars") propriety is sufficient to account for an objective grasp of the world. Put simply, provided we are following all of the normative rules (whether implicit or explicit) governing perceptions and judgments about how things are, then we are correct about how things are. There is no possibility of a well-thought wrong thought: following the rules and getting things wrong. Provided we follow all of the established social norms governing objective claims in our given circumstances, we cannot be wrong, because there are no criteria independent of social institutions to speak against them.

In "Truth and Rule-Following," Haugeland argues that to have objectivity in the full sense—a sense that is required for human reason and scientific knowledge—there must be two sources of normative constraint on knowledge: social institution and also objective correctness. Haugeland pitches this idea in historical terms that show up a parallel between Haugeland's response to Brandom's neo-pragmatism and Kant's response to naturalistic psychologism:

> 1. Naturalistic psychologists such as Hume argued that cognition follows rules of natural law.
>
> 2. Anti-psychologists such as Kant "retort" that for rationality to make any sense, "there must be two fundamentally distinct sorts of necessary order: the laws of nature and the laws or norms of reason." (TRF 317)

Kant made this distinction to avoid destroying "the essential character of thought" (TRF 317). However, as many have complained since Kant, transcendental idealism seems to make the norms of reason supernatural, because wholly detached from natural regularity. A "pragmatist" parallel emerges as a way of responding to what is untenable about Kant's position:

> 3. Neo-pragmatists like Brandom "agree [with Kant] that thought is essentially norm-governed, but hold that normativity" should itself be understood as compatible with naturalism. (TRF 317)
>
> 4. Haugeland's "retort" (parallel to Kant's retort) claims that Brandom, despite endorsing normativity as distinct, fails to recover the treasure from the rubble of Kant's dualism: "there must be two fundamentally distinct sorts of normative constraint: social propriety and objective correctness (truth)." (TRF 317)

In other words, Haugeland argues, Brandom is right to embrace Kant's idea that rational normativity is distinct while abandoning Kant's metaphysical dualism. But Brandom is wrong to think in jettisoning metaphysical dualism we must also give up on the idea that there are two distinct kinds of normative constraint on what we think is true of the world. Like McDowell, Haugeland thinks it is not sufficient for noninferential judgments to be reliably keyed to the causal processes of environing stimuli. Rationality, objectivity, and the essential character of thought require that things we encounter in our experience stand up against the norms governing how we judge them. Somehow, if there is to be objectivity, the objects must stand up against the norms governing how we judge them.

Haugeland's ultimate aim in this essay is to make sense of and do justice to our rational, scientific approach to grasping how things are. He hopes thereby to make sense of scientific revolutions, how the social propriety governing our understanding of nature can be challenged by things in the world, by objects we grasp. In this respect, Haugeland aims to vindicate what he takes to be Thomas Kuhn's approach to scientific objectivity. However, "scientific" should also be understood in a very broad sense that includes instances where we risk our commitments, beliefs, or social institutions and test their propriety against how things turn out in the world. A cook who makes hash browns by

several methods to determine the best way to give them the crispness he likes, or a master chess player who tests in tournament play his theory on how best to defeat a certain style of play are both—at least potentially—approaching their practices scientifically in the relevant sense. Both the cook and the chess player are testing and willing to sacrifice their beliefs about how to ply their trades and, crucially, by doing so, both allow the world to speak against the social propriety or received wisdom of how to conduct their practices. Scientific practitioners must be committed first and foremost to coherence and consistency in the corner of the world they are exploring and willing to give up commitments they have to the social propriety, norms and institutions governing their sphere of practice. To be scientific, again, is to be willing to sacrifice social propriety in the interest of forming a coherent and consistent worldview—and knowing when it is appropriate to do so.

In the "scientific" situation described above, what is at stake is the social propriety, the received wisdom generally taken to be true, norms that more or less everyone in the community accepts. Again, Haugeland's interest is in situations where objects stand up against universally accepted norms, and he thereby takes a stand against Brandom. By insisting on there being two forms of normative constraint, he is addressing situations where *everyone* is wrong to ensure it is possible the world can stand up against mistaken yet universal social propriety. And yet, there is another dimension to Haugeland's claim that is important to McDowell's commitment to the idea that experience has a rational form. In defending the idea that there must be two sources for normative constraint on what we believe, he writes, "[T]o collapse correctness into propriety is to obliterate the essential character of thought." Crucially, Haugeland does

not say that the collapse obliterates the essential character of *science*; the collapse is more general: thought itself. In other words, by including two sources of normative constraint on what we think is true of the world, Haugeland makes it possible for objects to stand up not just against universally held norms governing how we take things to be, but takes objects to stand up against our judgments—to provide friction with the world—in instances where we are simply *misapplying* or applying *mistaken* norms governing how to grasp the world. Haugeland's defense of scientific objectivity doesn't just allow objects to speak against universally held but false socially instituted norms; it also allows objects to speak against my failure to follow socially instituted norms. In brief, what Haugeland pulls off by ensuring that the world can stand up against universally held beliefs—something McDowell nowhere considers—is additionally a defense of McDowell's commitment to giving objects the power to stand up against our individually mistaken beliefs (even if our failure is really just a failure to follow universally held rules governing the kinds of judgment we tried to make). In this way, Haugeland's theory will be a crucial part of my accommodation of McDowell's commitment to empiricism below, even though Haugeland himself was not interested in the commitment as McDowell pursues it.

A full explanation and defense of Haugeland's theory of objectivity would go beyond the scope of my dissertation. Throughout the rest of this chapter, I focus on what are, for my purposes, the crucial aspects of Haugeland's late view, namely, his discussion of four kinds of constitutive rule-following. The result is a theory of interdependent skills involved in gaining an objective grasp of the world that, despite their interdependence, are endowed with enough independence to stand up against each other in cases where

they conflict. The brilliance of Haugeland's view is, in part, that it offers a way out of the trap that Dreyfus and McDowell both struggle to escape, namely, the trap of gaining friction with the world by running minds up against bodies. On Haugeland's view, by contrast, minds and bodies are treated as one, and the friction is between distinct skills that all seamlessly involve both minds and bodies as one. To conclude the chapter, I discuss how to integrate Haugeland's explanation of objectivity in terms of constitution with Camp's theory of concepts and instrumental rationality. This sets up the discussion in Chapter V, where I propose an answer Dreyfus's challenge of explaining how rational, conceptual understanding develops out of more basic abilities we share with other animals while reconciling this explanation with McDowell's and Brandom's respective commitments.

5.1 Constitutive Regulations and Standards

Haugeland begins with constitutive regulations and standards. Constitutive regulations are the kinds of governing rules that actually constitute an activity as the kind of activity it is, for example, the rules of a game (TRF 320). The constitutive regulations of a game are those that one must follow and enforce in order to count as playing the game at all. In chess, Haugeland's favorite example, such rules govern how the pieces move and determine the objective of the game, etc.

Constitutive standards relate to but are distinct from constitutive regulations. Constitutive standards, Haugeland writes, "govern all the phenomena that occur within the game, and determine what they are" (TRF 320). Whereas constitutive regulations bear upon what a player can *do* in any given circumstance—by regulating behavior—constitutive standards have, by contrast, an ontological significance by determining the

phenomena of the game as what they *are* in and for the game. So, while there are constitutive regulations governing what a player can do with a rook, there are also, implicitly, constitutive standards determining what a rook is or determining that something one encounters *is* a rook. Haugeland's talk of constitutive standards is his revised way of talking about socially instituted "role-defined paraphernalia" (IAS 152).

As Haugeland points out, it can be hard to see how constitutive standards and regulations are distinct; they seem to be two manifestations of the same rules, yet the distinction becomes clearer when Haugeland points out the many facts we assume when we play a game (TRF 320). To play a game of poker, for an absurd example, the cards cannot turn over by themselves or speak what they are; we could not play poker with such a deck, it would be a different game, if indeed it were still a game at all. Less absurdly, the cards cannot be translucent. Constitutive regulations do not cover such details, because, again, they are concerned with what players can do. Constitutive standards for poker require that cards are inert, silent, and opaque.

5.2 Mundane and Constitutive Skills

Having introduced standards, Haugeland shifts to skills to differentiate the basic "mundane" skills involved in perceiving and acting from the "constitutive" skills involved in upholding constitutive standards. Generally, a skill is "a reliable, resilient ability to abide by a governing rule correctly and reliably" (TRF 322). Mundane skills are those reliable abilities to accomplish basic physical and cognitive tasks according to normative social practices, like recognizing and interacting with things and other community members. The mundane skills required to play a game, Haugeland writes, "are the resilient abilities to recognize, manipulate, and otherwise cope with phenomena

within the game, including other players, as required and permitted by the rules—in effect, the ability to engage in play" (TRF 323). Conformist animals with social norms—such as humans, chimpanzees, crows, elephants, etc.—develop mundane skills in this sense. Such animals imitate and censure one another's mundane skill performances according to their communal norms. Thus, there are socially instituted mundane skills governing behavior, social interaction, and the use of material things, but also socially instituted mundane skills governing the how and when to engage in positive and negative censuring of behavior.

The negative censuring of conformism ensures that social conflict is a part of life for all social animals. There is also the potential for "internal" conflict between two or more mundane skills that an animal has developed. A conflict between socially instituted mundane skills might lead the animal to pause or even be "confused" in some sense. Crucially, however, an animal with only mundane skills (and no constitutive skills) can never encounter that conflict between skills *as a conflict*. The most the animal can do is exercise one or neither of the two conflicting skills. To encounter a conflict between skills as such is to have constitutive skills.

Constitutive skills comprise the ability to tell whether recognizable things reflect and align with constitutive standards that govern them. By introducing constitutive skills as distinct from mundane skills governing how to behave and how to respond to one another's behavior, Haugeland means to introduce something new that we do not share even with the most intelligent, nonhuman animals. "A constitutive skill," he writes, "is a resilient ability to tell whether the phenomena governed by some constitutive standard are, in fact, in accord with that standard" (TRF 323). So, for example, there are many

mundane skills involved in the game of chess that allow us to manipulate and recognize different pieces. These mundane skills conform to the constitutive standards of the game of chess. But in determining, for example, what a rook is in a game of chess, constitutive standards also establish that rooks cannot do certain things and still be rooks (or to still be playing a game of chess); rooks cannot move diagonally. A constitutive skill in chess is the ability to tell when, for example, a rook is moved illegally. This is more than the mundane skill of recognizing a rook, for it involves recognizing something that has moved like a bishop as nonetheless being a rook. Using only mundane skills, one might take the piece to be an oddly shaped bishop or a strangely moving rook, but what one cannot do—and what Haugeland introduces constitutive skills to explain—is to grasp that the rook is indeed a rook, yet it has run afoul of the constitutive standards of chess. Mundane skills only follow rules. Constitutive skills enforce them.[136]

Given that constitutive standards are a kind of governing rule, one might think that to enact a constitutive skill is simply to follow the rules of constitutive standards, but Haugeland is careful to tease these apart: the constitutive standards that determine the phenomena in question are one set of rules, but the rule-following that occurs with constitutive skills are another, distinct set of rules (TRF 323). Rules governing what something is are not the same as the kinds of steps one must follow to correctly determine whether or not a thing reflects the rules that are supposed to govern what it is.

[136] The behavior of intelligent animals that live in hierarchical social groups might seem to pose a problem here in the following way: one might think that when a chimpanzee observes its fellow as breaking with the social norms of the community and moves to negatively censure the behavior, it is exhibiting constitutive skills, because its performance reinforces the standards that constitute the social order. However, nothing like constitutive skills are needed here. The censuring chimpanzee herself can be understood to be performing normatively governed mundane skills for reacting to other chimpanzees breaking with another set of normatively governed mundane skills. The conflict here is between two individual animals, whereas the conflict that constitutive skills are introduced to explain is between the skills themselves.

Another important point is that to have constitutive skills does not require that one have an explicit understanding of constitutive standards. Constitutive skills, Haugeland says, are "know-how." Knowing how to tell when someone makes an illegal move in a game is not the same as knowing the explicit rules of the game, though they are, as Haugeland acknowledges, interdependent. Constitutive skills have, Haugeland argues, a "practical priority" over explicitly knowing the constitutive standards: one can learn the constitutive skills and play a game without explicit knowledge of constitutive standards, but one cannot play a game without the know-how of constitutive skills even if one has explicit knowledge of constitutive standards (TRF 323). Language use among children offers a nice example of this. A typical seven-year-old lacks explicit knowledge of the constitutive standards of correct and coherent speech (involving specific terminology, grammatical rules, etc.), but nonetheless has sufficient constitutive skills to speak both correctly and coherently and also to correct the obvious misuse of words and grammatically incoherent statements typical of younger children. Indeed, in the case of language, it seems necessary to cultivate a high degree of constitutive skills concerning language use prior to gaining an explicit understanding of the constitutive standards of language.

Crucially, constitutive and mundane skills are interdependent. Without mundane skills to recognize what something is, constitutive skills would have nothing to assess according to constitutive standards (TRF 324). Similarly, without constitutive skills for enforcing constitutive standards, mundane skills would not be able to function in their recognitive capacity (TRF 324).[137] Or, to put the same point in Kantian terms:

[137] One might ask, if constitutive and mundane skills are mutually dependent, then how can it be that nonrational animals have mundane skills without having any constitutive skills? The answer, I think, is that

constitutive skills without mundane skills are empty; mundane skills without constitutive skills are blind. The Kantian analogy here should not be taken too far, however. Unlike Kant, Haugeland does not think concepts and intuitions spring from two metaphysically distinct sources like spontaneity and receptivity. For Haugeland, constitutive standards determine what things are and constitutive skills, in practice, carry that determination into making the phenomena what they are, constituting the objects themselves as what they are according to those standards. But in constituting objects, these skills also constitute the mundane skills that allow us to recognize them. As Haugeland says, "We might instead think of mundane skills as 'co-constituted' along with the phenomena that their exercises respond to, manipulate, and cope with" (TRF 324). And yet, despite that co-constitution of objects and the skills involved in recognizing and coping with them according to constitutive skills, the whole point of Haugeland's exercise is to show how mundane skills and constitutive skills come apart, how inconsistency can arise between mundane skills that force their revision, or even the revision of constitutive skills themselves. Ultimately, Haugeland wants to claim that constituted objects can stand up to and push back against the skills involved in coping with them and constituting them. The distinction between interdependent constitutive and mundane skills sets up the notion of object that Haugeland is after. Constituted phenomena

> are "objective phenomena" in the following three-fold sense: (i) mundane skills are responsive to and/or can affect them (they are accessible); (ii) they have normative status as criterial for the correct exercise of objective

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mundane skills cannot function as part of an objective grasp of the world without their interdependence upon constitutive skills. Haugeland did not introduced mundane skills as a way to talk about animal abilities, but rather as a way to explain objectivity. So while I attribute mundane skills yet deny constitutive skills to nonhuman animals, I do not think it undermines Haugeland's point. Haugeland's point about the interdependence of mundane and constitutive skills does not deny nonhuman animals mundane skills but stipulates that the particular mundane skills of animals with an objective grasp of the world *must* be interdependent with its constitutive skills.

> skills (they are authoritative); and (iii) they are independent not only of particular exercises but also of any mere consensus (they are autonomous). The idea then is: constituted phenomena, and only constituted phenomena, can thus stand as accessible independent criteria, hence be objects—and therefore also that this is what we ordinarily and scientifically understand by "object." (TRF 325)

In other words, mundane skills enable us to recognize and cope with phenomena, but the phenomena themselves have normative authority by virtue of being constituted by constitutive skills. So constituted, objects (qua objects) can push back against how we cope with and recognize them if our coping and recognizing runs afoul of what these objects are according to the standards that constitute them. The objects themselves can therefore be or offer criteria for assessing the mundane skills that allow us to cope with them.

5.3 Constitutive Commitment

The fourth of Haugeland's quartet of ways to follow rules that are necessary for objectivity and truth-telling he calls "constitutive commitment" (TRF 340-1). Constitutive commitment is essentially a commitment to upholding constitutive regulations and standards. It is, in this sense, a driving force guiding and upholding the constitutive skills that monitor mundane skills for coherence and consistency among objects of a given domain, whether they are game phenomena or the objects of scientific inquiry. Constitutive commitment is the network of poles structuring the tent of objectivity, without which constitutive and mundane skills would not stand up against one another when discrepancies arise.

In explaining what he means by constitutive commitment, Haugeland teases apart two senses of commitment: deontic and existential commitment. The deontic sense of

commitment concerns taking on socially instituted obligations to do certain things or comport oneself in certain ways (TRF 341). Realizing one's deontic commitments is a matter of living up to the expectations of one's community in any given set of circumstances: knowing how one is expected to act according to the norms of one's community, and acting in accordance with them, regardless of any inclinations to do otherwise.

Existential commitment contrasts with the external authority of deontic commitment; the authority of existential commitment is self-generated, comes from within (TRF 341-2). Rather than being a communal obligation, Haugeland writes, existential commitment is "more like a dedicated or even a devoted way of living: a determination to maintain and carry on. It is not a communal status at all but a resilient and resolute first-personal stance" (TRF 341). It is a commitment to a certain form of life that "is prepared to insist on that which is constitutive of its own possibility, the conditions of its intelligibility" (TRF 341). Moreover, as a self-generated commitment, one can add (beyond what Haugeland explicitly states) that existential commitment means fully embracing what one *is*, being the self one takes oneself to *be*; in other words, it is existential in the sense of being definitive of one's very being; one would not be who or what one is without this existential commitment.

This sense of existential commitment sets up what Haugeland is after, namely, existential *constitutive* commitment. Constitutive commitment, in this existential sense, concerns a commitment to the constitutive standards of a given sphere of human activity. It is not just a commitment to those standards as such, but also to maintaining a coherent and consistent set of constitutive standards, i.e., to ensuring that the sphere of activity is

not incoherent and inconsistent. That is, it is a constitutive commitment to there being a truth or fact of the matter, independent of what one may think, that orders and guides the process of refining, revising or rejecting mundane or constitutive skills in the face of contradictions one may encounter. As Haugeland puts it,

> the content of—the issue for any—existential constitutive commitment is maintenance of the relevant precarious equilibrium. It is this commitment that stands behind the unacceptability of incompatible mundane results, as determined by exercises of constitutive skills. Accordingly, it also stands behind the ability of objects to resist mundane findings, to show them up as incorrect. And therefore, finally, it is the driving force behind all efforts to resolve apparent incompatibilities, whether by exposing them as merely apparent (revising incorrect results), or by repairing the system so as to avoid such results in general (changing the mundane or constitutive skills themselves). (TRF 342)

Ultimately, existential constitutive commitment is what backstops the authority of objects to stand up against mundane and constitutive skills. Haugeland is worth quoting at length as he puts the finishing touches on his account of objectivity:

> The normative authority of objects, by virtue of which they can stand as criteria for the correctness of mundane results—and thus as binding on judgements and assertions—devolves upon them from the commitment to the standards in accord with which they are constituted. Note that this is not to suggest that the authority of objects is somehow "delegated" or "ceded" to them by those committed to the standards. That would be to suppose that the latter already had the relevant authority and could then give it away, neither of which makes clear sense. Rather it is to say that, in committing to a constituted domain, and thereby finding objects, those who are thus committed necessarily also *find* the objects *as authoritative*, and acknowledge them as such. The authority is implicit in the structure of the finding. That normative authority of the discovered objects, derived

> from but not at all the same as the sui generis normative authority of the constitutive commitment, then takes its effect via the responsible responsiveness of the mundane skills. (TRF 343)

One might think constitutive skills should suffice on their own without constitutive commitment to upholding them; after all, constitutive skills are supposed to be resilient in and of themselves. Isn't that resilience enough? Perhaps, in a narrow sense, it is, in the instance of a game where the rules are fixed and the constitutive skills are never challenged. But Haugeland is after the kind of objectivity necessary for a scientific grasp of the world, and in science, it is always possible for constitutive skills themselves to stand in need of revision. The rules themselves must be abandoned and reformed when the objects (and the mundane skills we use to recognize and cope with them) band together and stand up against the constitutive skills and standards and regulations that are supposed to constitute objects in a sphere of inquiry in a coherent and consistent way. In cases such as these, it is the constitutive commitment to upholding *consistency and coherence* in our worldview that allows us to abandon or refine constitutive standards and skills when needed. In other words, in order for our knowledge to adapt and change not just within but also across paradigms, there must be a form of commitment that transcends any given perspective on the world that constitutive skills and standards set up.

6. Integrating Constitution and Concepts

I've spelled out the four kinds of constitutive rule-following that Haugeland puts forward as the structure of our objective understanding of the world. My aim in this chapter is to integrate Camp's theory of concepts with Haugeland's theory of objectivity, as a way of

supplementing what I found lacking in Camp's view in Chapter III. Here, then, is a way to integrate their views that builds on the strengths of each view and helps to set up an answer to Dreyfus's challenge.

6.1 Separating Constitutive Standards and Constitutive Commitments

Haugeland's late view introduces constitutive forms of rule-following as a set devised to explain what goes into an objective grasp of the world. Given Haugeland's aims, it makes no sense to attribute constitutive standards where there are no constitutive commitments. In making use of Haugeland's view to propose an answer to Dreyfus's challenge, however, I suggested above that constitutive standards and constitutive commitments can be carefully separated. To set up how I want to integrate Haugeland's objectivity with Camp's theory of concepts, I need to return to this point.

In §4, I claimed that tool-making and tool-using chimpanzees qualify as having tools in a robust sense, based on the definition of human tool use Haugeland offers in his early view. That created a problem for his early view by robbing it of one of the key ways it distinguishes a human orientation to the world. In Haugeland's later view, his introduction of constitutive standards and constitutive commitments sets up a new way of drawing a bright line between an objective human grasp of the world and the normative social practices of nonhuman animals. As I suggested above, one can attribute tool use, instrumental reasoning, concepts, and even a certain limited form of constitutive standards to termite-fishing chimpanzees, yet deny that these chimpanzees have anything like the existential, constitutive commitment Haugeland deems necessary for objectivity. It is possible for nonhuman animals to have constitutive standards for tools they use in part because Haugeland has not made having an *explicit* grasp of constitutive standards

necessary for them to be operative as governing rules in the lives of animals. And this also allows us to say of human infants that, on the way to acquiring the constitutive commitment necessary for objectivity, we first pick up numerous constitutive standards, which seems both intuitively compelling and empirically true for reasons Camp gives (and which I canvas in Chapter III when discussing the acquisition of concepts in children).

However, to do justice to Haugeland's view, we should differentiate between constitutive standards that are answerable to constitutive commitment for their consistency and coherence, and constitutive standards in the absence of constitutive commitments, whereby there is no overarching enforcement of their internal coherence and consistency. Again, Haugeland's own introduction of constitutive standards is part of a larger picture he is building in which constitutive standards are introduced *for the specific purpose* of explaining what is distinctive about our objective grasp of the world. For Haugeland, to count as having constitutive standards, one must be capable of revising those standards in the interest of maintaining a shared, cohesive and consistent worldview. Some chimpanzee communities do have constitutive standards in the limited sense that involves the social, behavioral re-enforcement of what objects are for, and they do conform and cultivate dispositions to form a socially coherent and consistent way of life insofar as their social practices aim at social cohesion (no matter how inequitable that might be). But what Haugeland is after goes beyond mere social cohesion to include something more, something that is, perhaps for Haugeland, *ontologically* distinct: cognitive cohesion, wherein our conceptual grasp of how things are aims to overcome inconsistencies, instances where one thing purported to be true undermines another thing

purported to be true. This is what I alluded to earlier as a government of (what Camp calls) concepts. It is not just, as with chimpanzee communities, that there is social, behavioral cohesion that bears on and shapes the acquisition and use of concepts that Camp takes them to have; rather, a human, objective grasp of the world draws the concepts themselves explicitly into the social arena as part of our existential commitment to coherence in the very use of concepts themselves.

We can attribute constitutive standards to nonhuman animals like chimpanzees based on empirical observation of their behavior, and at the same time deny them constitutive commitments based on the same observations. Chimpanzees do not demonstrate any ability to encounter a discrepancy between mundane skills on the basis of constitutive skills, nor any inclination to revise their mundane skills in the interest of gaining a rationally coherent grasp of their environment. Just as they lack metarepresentations, so they lack constitutive commitment. This is not, moreover, a coincidence. To recognize via constitutive skills that two mundane skills are conflicting is to engage a metarepresentational grasp of how things *are*, where how things are is itself recognized as being subject to institutional norms. It is not enough to be able, as a chimpanzee is, to follow social norms to represent ways to solve problems because merely following these norms does not surface the norms themselves *as norms*. Rather, to cognize a conflict between mundane skills, one must be able to represent some of one's representations as either true or false *according to* social norms to which one is existentially committed. Constitutive commitment is the introduction of social norms *as social norms*; it is essentially metarepresentational insofar as it requires the ability to represent norms as such.

The point, for my purposes, is that constitutive standards, in the absence of constitutive commitments and objectivity, can help to explain how the social norms of animals with elaborate tool-use practices shape instrumental reasoning, giving them a sense of what a tool is "for." Yet, paired with constitutive commitment, constitutive standards and skills are deployed as part of an objective grasp of the world that uncovers conflicts among mundane skills and give objects the power to stand up against our beliefs.

6.2 Instrumental Reasoning and Concepts Without Constitutive Standards

For Camp, recall, instrumental reasoning and concepts go together. The first thing to point out is that instrumental reasoning is independent of constitutive standard and constitutive skills, because social norms are not necessary for instrumental reasoning. For example, again, a New Caledonian crow that bends a piece of wire (makes a tool) in order to retrieve a piece of food it cannot otherwise reach is an example of instrumental reasoning and tool use, but not necessarily an example of constitutive standards. The reason is that, in the crow's case, there are no social norms lending a shared sense of what the bent wire is "for." Indeed, the same can be true in humans: I can engage in conceptual problem-solving in an entirely novel, unshared way, such that there are no constitutive standards governing my activity. If, on a camping trip, I cut a tree branch and carve a notch into it in order to use it to lift and suspend my food from another branch so that bears cannot get into it while I sleep, I am using instrumental reasoning and making a tool, in one sense. But I am alone and my "tool" does not institute or reflect any constitutive standards governing what my notched stick is "for." The next group of hikers

might arrive on my spot, find other means to safeguard their food from bears, and use my "tool" as fuel in their fire.

The general point is that socially instituted, constitutive standards that make something *for* something are not necessary for instrumental reasoning, but all constitutive standards involve concepts, in Camp's sense, because constituting something as being *for* something—as in sufficiently complex tool use—inevitably involves the capacity for instrumental reasoning. Thus, we can add, a corresponding claim about animals: not all animals with concepts and instrumental reasoning have constitutive standards, but all animals with constitutive standards have concepts and instrumental reasoning.

6.3 Instrumental Reasoning, Concepts, and Constitutive Standards Without Constitutive Commitments

When instrumental reasoning, in the form of tool use, is governed by social norms about what materials to use as tools, where to find them, and how to shape them on the way to actually using them in a specific way, then instrumental reasoning involves constitutive standards. The primary example I used above, again, is the community of termite-fishing chimpanzees.

Appealing to the empirical complexity of tool use in termite-fishing chimpanzees has allowed me to show that, in a limited sense, there are constitutive standards governing their behavior, even if they lack any overarching constitutive commitment that governs their constitutive standards. This complex animal tool use is a perfect example of the instrumental reasoning that counts as conceptual on Camp's definition. In the interest of integrating their respective views, it is reasonable to claim that behavior governed by constitutive standards in complex, tool-using animals involves concepts, as Camp defines

them. Termite-fishing chimpanzees gain the constitutive standards that allow them to grasp a tool as being "for" a certain purpose at the same time as they acquire the concepts involved in termite fishing and the ability to treat objects as a means to an end, wherein subsidiary goals of finding and shaping tool material draw the animal temporarily away from the primary goal of catching termites.

6.4 Constitutive Commitments, Metacognition, and Objectivity

While I side with Camp in attributing concepts, by her definition, to animals with instrumental reasoning, and (contra Haugeland) attributing constitutive standards where social norms govern animal tool use, I nonetheless endorse Haugeland's way of articulating how only human animals have metacognition, along with existential, constitutive commitments, and thereby an objective grasp of the world.

Drawing on Davidson, Camp agrees that objectivity and metacognition go together. She thinks of objectivity in terms of the capacity for metarepresentation, i.e., the capacity to represent our representations and the relations between them. This capacity, along with concepts about truth and falsity that deal with metarepresentations, gives us the kind of objective grasp of the world that we have. Camp further suggests that language is necessary for metarepresentations of this kind. However, recall from Chapter III Camp's idea that the important difference between humans and other animals is the vast expansion of our conceptual repertoire and its social coordination, and her insistence that metacognition and the awareness of error are not the important features of that expansion. Camp does not spell out what she thinks that social coordination entails, but she seems to think something like mere conformism is sufficient to explain the social

coordination of concept use, or at most constitutive standards that normalize what words are for, without a need for metacognition.

It is difficult to imagine a social coordination of concepts—through language—that does not depend upon metacognition. The idea that metacognition is not a crucial aspect of what sets humans apart from other animals is one Haugeland would reject, and here I side with Haugeland. Built into Haugeland's view is the insight that the expansion of human concepts Camp thinks makes the crucial difference in fact depends upon objectivity and metacognition. Only constitutive standards and skills *explicitly* governing our use of concepts according to objective standards—as opposed to governing merely the behavior concepts enable—can make the vast expanse of human concepts useful in the ways that they are. And the overarching existential, constitutive commitment that Haugeland makes crucial to objectivity is precisely the means for the government of concepts that constitutes our objective grasp of the world. It won't do to claim, with Camp, that the expansion of human concepts makes the meaningful human difference because that expansion requires coordination that assumes metacognition, objectivity, and constitutive commitment.

Haugeland's structure of constitution is a means to understand the kind of metarepresentation that Camp, via Davidson, appeals to as the capacity that makes the rational, human grasp of a world possible. All socially instituted mundane skills that bear on problem-solving and involve instrumental reasoning are thoroughly conceptual, in humans and other animals alike. The structure of constitution that makes objectivity possible is a further development and elaboration of these conceptually articulated

mundane skills. The question is how that development happens. This is the new formulation of Dreyfus's challenge to which I turn in Chapter V.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of Chapter IV has been to integrate Camp's instrumentalist theory of concepts with Haugeland's theory of objectivity. The motivation for this integration is that Camp's theory of concepts, by itself, does not answer one of the primary concerns that motivates intellectualists to reject the kind of instrumentalist approach to concepts that Camp offers. Integrating Camp's approach to concepts with Haugeland's account of objectivity allows me to combine what is most useful in each for my purposes, as I propose a way to answer Dreyfus's challenge while reconciling McDowell's and Brandom's respective commitments.

In §2, I considered how Camp and Haugeland might critique each other's view, and highlighted how their respective ways of thinking about human and nonhuman animal cognition are complementary, for my purposes. I then argued in §3 that Camp's theory of concepts integrates well with Haugeland's notion of conformism and that the two views mutually reinforce one another. However, this complementarity proves to have its limits. In §4, I considered how Camp's instrumentalism about concepts undermines Haugeland's early work on normativity and his claims about what makes socially instituted intentionality unique. In §5-§6, I turned to Haugeland's late essay "Truth and Rule-Following" where he develops his mature theory of objectivity, and argue that the constitutive structure of objectivity that Haugeland advances in this essay accommodates Camp's theory of concepts while nonetheless clearly establishing the difference between

socially instituted animal norms and having a rational, human, objective grasp of the world.

All of this is to lay the groundwork for Chapter V, where I offer a way to reconcile Brandom and McDowell's commitments while proposing an answer to Dreyfus's challenge, to explain how rational human understanding develops out of lesser abilities we share with prerational humans and nonrational animals. Having shown that Camp's instrumentalism about concepts is compatible with a promising way of making rational understanding distinct, I've established that it is useful for the kind of answer to Dreyfus's challenge I propose.

CHAPTER V: RELAXED HOLISM

1. Reconciling Commitments

I began with the aim to reconcile three intellectualist commitments:

> Dreyfus's commitment: to explain how rational, conceptual understanding emerges out of lesser abilities we share with human infants and other animals.
>
> McDowell's commitment: to give normatively governed concepts a role in experience and action.
>
> Brandom's commitment: to clearly define the function of concepts in a way that helps make rationality distinct.

Although each of these commitments is attractive, they appear irreconcilable with one another. My contention is that what makes them appear irreconcilable is the one intellectualist commitment all three philosophers share, namely, a commitment to the idea that language is necessary for having concepts, that to have a concept is to have mastered the use of a word. I mean to reject this shared, intellectualist commitment, and with it the astringent form of conceptual holism found in Sellars, Brandom, McDowell, and (perhaps) Dreyfus. I do not intend to defend conceptual atomism in place of holism. Rather, the view I propose below represents a more relaxed form of holism that I take to complement some of the advantages of the Sellarsian view espoused by Brandom, McDowell, and (to some extent) Dreyfus.[138]

[138] As I indicated in the introduction to this dissertation, I am appropriating "atomism" and "holism" in the following way: (1) atomism holds that concepts can have a meaningful use independent of other concepts; (2) holism means concepts only have a meaningful use insofar as they are recombined with other concepts; (3) astringent holism holds that the capacity for explicit, rational discourse is necessary for the meaningful

I spent the first two chapters motivating the rejection of intellectualism by discussing problems that arise when we combine intellectualism about concepts with these commitments. In Chapter III, I turned to Camp's instrumentalism about concepts, an approach that specifically aims to reject intellectualism while retaining a genuinely useful insight in the intellectualist approach to concepts. Camp defines concepts as revisable, recombinable, stimulus-independent representations that function as the elements of instrumental reasoning. The intellectualist insight, again, lies in the robust stimulus independence of cognition: to be able to think means having enough distance from the environment to spontaneously deploy one's cognitive abilities. By Camp's definition, to have concepts is to have a spontaneous cognitive capacity geared toward problem-solving, a capacity that is shared by human children long before they master a natural language, along with a number of other intelligent species including great apes, elephants, and corvids, among others.

The problem with Camp's argument, as I showed, is that it neglects to give a satisfying account of what distinguishes rational, human, conceptual understanding from that of other animals. In response to that neglect, I turned to Haugeland's theory of objectivity, to integrate it with Camp's instrumentalism as a way of establishing what makes properly rational human cognition distinct.

In adopting Camp's theory of concepts, along with Haugeland's theory of objectivity, I have made them central to my attempt to reconcile the commitments of Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus. Here it is worth restating the criteria I take on board

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use of concepts; and (4) relaxed holism holds that the meaningful use of concepts does not require a capacity for explicit, rational discourse. Camp's theory of concepts exemplifies relaxed holism because the animal use of concepts in problem-solving requires that, for representations to count as concepts, they must be spontaneously, systematically recombinable.

for reconciling these three commitments: (1) To satisfy Dreyfus's commitment I need to make plausible the idea that there is a way to answer his challenge that shows how the cognitive abilities we share with prerational children and nonrational animals could be understood to develop into the rational, conceptual understanding we expect to find in mature, rational humans. (2) To satisfy McDowell's commitment, the theory must explain how these normatively governed concepts are also operative in our experience and action, such that as rational animals what we think is true of the world is rationally constrained by experience. And (3) to satisfy Brandom's commitment, the theory must offer a clear definition of concepts that gives them an explicit function in cognition yet also supports an account of what makes human rationality distinct.

My aim in this chapter—and the aim of this dissertation generally—is to reconcile these three commitments. In §2, I propose a way to answer Dreyfus's challenge by exploring three elements of an answer that integrate insights from Camp, Perner, and Haugeland (among others). These three elements—representations, concepts, and metacognition—are intricately linked, and these links constitute a suggestive outline for an answer to Dreyfus's challenge. These three elements lay the groundwork for reconciling McDowell's and Brandom's respective commitments. In §3, I spell out how one can accommodate McDowell's commitment by reiterating Haugeland's way of retaining a minimal form of empiricism and drawing on Camp's instrumentalism to explain how the normative, metacognitive use of concepts in judgment refines and constrains the instrumental role that concepts play in our experience and perception. And in §4, I show how one can accommodate Brandom's commitment by explaining how the

normatively governed use of concepts in rational judgments is different in kind from the merely instrumental use of concepts in experience and action.

The keystone of the chapter is my account of representation, concepts, and metacognition as three elements that are integral to one plausible way to answer Dreyfus's challenge, so let me address at the outset one concern a reader might have about my approach.[139] In the view I am defending, rational, discursive thoughts are composed of concepts, yet concepts also have a function in the cognitive lives of nonrational animals and not-yet rational human children. If concepts are a part of rational thought, why should we think animals that lack rational thought have concepts?

My proposal draws on Josef Perner's theory of representation (which informs Camp's theory, as I mentioned in Chapter III). Perner aims to "investigat[e] how children develop an understanding of the mind as representational," and appeals to empirical evidence to argue for three distinct levels of representational ability (URM 1, 6-7). Primary and secondary representational abilities are empirically useful for explaining the behavior of other animals and prerational human children, whereas the highest *metarepresentational* ability appears only as children begin to meaningfully participate in the life of a rational animal (around age four). Importantly, on Perner's account, the development of these representational abilities is cumulative: secondary representational abilities presume primary ones, and metarepresentational abilities presume secondary ones (URM 7). It is this cumulative effect—which has proven useful for explaining behavior—that recommends attributing the components of rational cognition to nonrational animals. Or better yet: the components of cognition most useful for explaining the complex problem-solving behaviors of highly social animals turn out to be

[139] Many thanks to Zed Adams for pushing me to articulate an answer to this question.

the building blocks that socio-linguistic norms arrange into the structure of rational human understanding.

Given that Perner's theory of representation informs Camp's instrumentalism about concepts, it is not surprising to find a similar cumulative effect in her theory of concepts, such that metaconceptual abilities assume and build upon conceptual ones. The point, again, is that on these accounts, the building blocks of rationality are shared with nonrational animals, whereas the necessary structure of rationality is not, and, ontogenetically, this transition is in large part dependent upon social practices. A human infant deprived of any and all examples of metarepresentational behavior will likely gain secondary representations, but will not develop recognizably metarepresentational abilities. What I offer in the following section is a way to see how social practices, constitutive skills, and commitments turn animal concepts involved in problem-solving and means-ends thinking into a rational understanding of the world.

2. A Proposal for Answering Dreyfus's Challenge

Dreyfus's challenge is a serious one, and historically persistent.[140] It is not my aim to put it to rest; the general challenge has proven independent of the varying terms in which it

[140] It is the historical persistence of the challenge that Brandom seems to bristle against when he elects to methodologically abandon the question, preferring "differentiation" and "discontinuity" of the conceptual over "assimilation" and "continuity" (Brandom, *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism*, 2–3). Later, Brandom identifies assimilationist thinking as the classical American pragmatists applied the lessons of natural selection to understand cognition as a form of adaptation (Brandom, *Perspectives on Pragmatism: Classical, Recent, and Contemporary*, 5). There he writes, "This insight is encapsulated in the concept of habit, and the picture of individual learning as the evolution-by-selection of a population of habits. This master idea made possible the naturalistic construal of a cognitive continuum that runs from the skillful coping of the competent predator, through the practical intelligence of primitive hominids, to the traditional practices and common sense of civilized humans, all the way to the most sophisticated theorizing of contemporary scientists. All are seen as of a piece with, intelligible in the same general terms as, biological evolution" (ibid. 5-6). However, despite recognizing this insight and applauding the pragmatists for their attention to the continuity of rational, human cognition with that of children and other animals, he also criticizes them for failing to sufficiently "demarcate" our rational capacities, i.e., explain

has been raised over centuries. Rather, I want to propose a way to answer the challenge in the specific form it takes among the contemporary intellectualist interlocutors I am responding to here. As I mentioned above, my task is to sketch a plausible way to answer Dreyfus's challenge that can nonetheless be reconciled with, and reconcile, McDowell's and Brandom's respective commitments. At the very least, I need to establish that an answer to Dreyfus's challenge is possible, to counter Brandom's claim that it is not.

To this end, drawing resources from the previous two chapters, what follows is a series of three elements that could be usefully integrated into an answer to Dreyfus's challenge: representation, concepts, and metacognition. Part of what makes them useful is that the elements build upon each other: the instrumental use of concepts builds on and overcomes the limitations of basic representations, and metacognition builds on and overcomes the limitations of the merely instrumental use of concepts.

2.1 Representations

The first element of the developmental story is the capacity for representation. What a mental representation is, and whether machines, organic mechanisms, animals, or only people have and use representations has been intensely debated, much in the same way

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what makes rationality wholly distinct (ibid. 27-28). This failure motivates Brandom's emphasis on our discursive practices. Contra Brandom, I would situate the tendency of the classical pragmatists to place continuity, habit, and adaptation in the center of their views more broadly as an American manifestation of ideas that had already been percolating in Europe as a way of extending Kant's critical philosophy (not to mention critiquing Kant). That is, I find the same tendency to play up habit, adaptation, and continuity especially in Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger; and in Ravaisson, Bergson, and Merleau-Ponty (Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind: Translated from the 1830 Edition, Together with the Zusätze*, 25–215; Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 151–61; Husserl, *Experience and Judgment: Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*; Heidegger, *Being and Time*; Ravaisson, *Of Habit*; Bergson, *Matter and Memory*; Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*). It is worth noting the influence, cited by both Hegel and Ravaisson, of *On the Soul*. In a brilliant and persuasive essay that served as a catalyst for this dissertation, Kolakowski adds Marx's manuscripts of 1844 (Kolakowski, "Karl Marx and the Classical Definition of Truth"; Marx, "Economic Philosophic Manuscripts"). No doubt other philosophers could be added to this list (Condillac, Maine de Biran, Herder, Schelling, and Dilthey all spring to mind).

concepts have been.[141] I am not attempting to settle these debates, but rather helping myself to the notion of representation that best supports my attempt to make plausible a way of answering Dreyfus's challenge.

The notion of representation I adopt here is broad compared to notions that would limit representation to exclusively rational forms of cognition. One worry about definitions of representation that attribute them to a wide range of animals is that they then become indistinguishable from mere operant conditioning, a capacity found in animals, plants, and even microbes.[142] Attributing representations to dogs makes sense because dogs behave as though they represent things in the world around them, but if the criteria that attributes them to dogs also attributes them to single-celled organisms, something seems wrong.

What are the criteria for a broad notion of representation that distinguishes it from operant conditioning? Recall from Chapter III Camp's definition of "basic cognition." She develops it to establish a kind of baseline for what it takes "For a state or disposition to even be a candidate for being conceptual." Her baseline draws, in part, on "teleosemantic" approaches to cognition,[143] and while she ultimately rejects the idea that basic cognition should count as conceptual, it turns out to be useful for showing how representational abilities are distinct from mere operant conditioning. In spelling out basic cognition, Camp "assume[s] that cognitive states and abilities have the function of indicating or representing aspects of the world, and are capable of interacting with a

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[141] For a fascinating introduction to one recent set of debates about mental representation, see Clark et al., *Philosophy of Mental Representation*.
[142] Many thanks to Zed Adams for pushing me on this question.
[143] Camp is primarily thinking of Fred Dretske and Ruth Millikan, referring, for example, to Dretske, "Putting Information to Work"; Millikan, *Language, Thought, and Other Biological Categories* (PTW 279). Camp also points out that, despite his opposition to teleosemantics, Fodor agrees that "beliefs and desires themselves have the function of indicating" (PTW 279n4). See, for example, Fodor, *A Theory of Content and Other Essays*.

range of other such states and abilities to produce action aimed at achieving the creature's goals," and, moreover, that such abilities are "applicable on the basis of, and revisable as a result of, a range of different experiences" (PTW 279). I take this point that representational abilities must be "revisable" to mean that it is part of the function of mental representations to be continually refined, on the basis of experience, to facilitate the animal gaining greater advantage from its environmental and social conditions. And I also assume that effectively representing a dynamic environment requires that mental representations, along with their effective recombination, must be learned.[144] Perhaps most importantly (for distinguishing a representational ability from mere operant conditioning), basic cognition requires satisfying the generality constraint—on the loose interpretation favored by Camp and Carruthers. That is, for an ability to count as representational, it must involve cognitive states that are systematically recombined, giving the animal a more nuanced grip on and greater ability to take advantage of its surroundings. In short, the criteria for what counts as a representational ability for my purposes are the same as the criteria Camp develops for what she calls basic cognition, and these criteria function as a bulwark against worries that the notion of representational ability in play is indistinguishable from operant conditioning.[145]

Another standard for an ability to count as representational is for misrepresentation to be possible.[146] Note that misrepresentation does not include the

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[144] As Camp points out, Dretske also argues that systematically recombinable cognitive states must be learned (PTW 279n4). For Camp, this "learning" requirement is implied in her theory of concepts, but it is not clear from her essay whether she thinks it is also a requirement for representation in general.
[145] Physiologically, my guess is that, in effect, basic cognition makes having a central nervous system a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for an organism to have a representational ability.
[146] Recall that Brandom's notion of sentient awareness also allows for a form of misrepresentation by making possible "a distinction between *appearance* and *reality*" (SDR 134). On Brandom's interpretation of the recognitive structure of self-consciousness, this distinction at the basic level of sentient awareness

necessity of *understanding*, or *representing*, misrepresentation (a point that will become clear below). For my purposes, misrepresentation occurs when what is represented turns out to be incompatible with how it is represented. This is a common theme in the literature on representation. Dretske discusses representation as involving both a reference (what is represented) and a sense (what the referent is represented as being like), where misrepresentation is a mismatch between the reference and sense.[147] Similarly, Cummins discusses representation as involving both a target (what is represented) and content (how it is represented), where misrepresentation is a mismatch between target and content.[148] One "canonical" example that is trotted out by teleosemanticists is a frog that catches flies, but that responds to BB gun shot as if the steel balls were flies.[149] The example suggests that it is part of the frog's cognitive life to represent flies as food and occasionally misrepresent BB shot as food—clearly, ingesting small, steel balls cannot be in the interest of the frog. However, for my purposes and based on the criteria above, unless the frog is capable of refining its behavior on the basis of this misrepresentation and thereby coming to avoid catching BB shot, it cannot count as misrepresenting the shot as food or therefore as representing flies as food. The same is true of another example, where prairie dogs are said to misrepresent kites and predators

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lays the groundwork for what will eventually amount to a distinction between what is true and what is false in rational understanding.

[147] Perner inherits talk of the "sense" and "reference" of a representation from Dretske. To quote Dretske: "There are always two questions that one can ask about representational contents. One can ask, first, about its reference—the object, person, or condition the representation is a representation of. Second, one can ask about the way what is represented is represented. What does the representation say or indicate (or, when failure occurs, what is it supposed to say or indicate) about what it represents? The second question is a question about what I shall call the sense or meaning of the representational content. Every representational content has both a sense and a reference, or, as I shall sometimes put it, a topic and a comment—what it says (the comment) and what it says it about (the topic)" (Dretske, *Explaining Behavior: Reasons in a World of Causes*, 70).

[148] See Cummins, *Representations, Targets, and Attitudes*.

[149] Here I refer to an unpublished paper by Zed Adams and Chauncey Maher, "Frogs, Birds, and Prairie Dogs: Do Biological Functions Suffice for Perceptual Representation?," 1.

by diving underground: if prairie dogs cannot come to refine how they represent kites over time, through repeated exposure to these innocuous objects (assume the kites never forcefully land or present some other danger to prairie dogs), they cannot be said to misrepresent kites as predators.[150]

For a hypothetical example of misrepresentation, imagine a bird species that evolved to eat red, green, and yellow butterflies.[151] One day, a new species of yellow butterfly moves into the bird's feeding area that is identical (for these birds) to existing yellow butterflies but poisonous to the birds—their poison causes the bird to experience severe pain and hallucinations for three to four days, and therefore renders the bird mostly incapable of safe flight and feeding. The ratio of yellow butterflies quickly changes from all safe and no threats to one-third safe and two-thirds threats, and the birds quickly learn that, often enough, eating yellow butterflies is a huge mistake. In general, eating yellow butterflies quickly becomes a risky activity best avoided. The upshot is that the birds mostly cease to eat any yellow butterflies. The point, here, is that the birds initially represent yellow butterflies as a reliable source of food, then the situation changes, and the representation of yellow butterflies as a reliable source of food becomes an instance of misrepresentation because they so often make the birds sick.[152] The birds

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[150] Adams and Maher, "Frogs, Birds, and Prairie Dogs: Do Biological Functions Suffice for Perceptual Representation?," 9. Adams and Maher refer to Cummins, "Haugeland on Representation and Intentionality," 132.

[151] Here I am significantly modifying an example Haugeland deploys against teleosemanticists. (See Haugeland, "Truth and Rule-Following," 309–10.) Because Haugeland thinks normativity is necessary for misrepresentation, he sets the bar high for representation, whereas teleosemanticists such as Cummins think that mere organic mechanisms and organs can count as representing and misrepresenting.

[152] Note that this formulation, "reliable source of food," dodges worries that the birds, in revising how they represent yellow butterflies in general, come to misrepresent the one third of yellow butterflies that are not poisonous. What enables this dodge is that—unlike Haugeland and Cummins in their disagreement over how to understand Haugeland's simpler version of the yellow butterfly example—I am not discussing mere responsive mechanisms built into the bird's anatomy. Rather, I am appealing to the intelligent and sophisticated responsive behavior that many bird species seem to have. It is part of Haugeland's point that mechanical accounts of representation won't work, and on this I agree. Where I disagree with Haugeland is

revise their representational capacities and come to represent yellow butterflies as not a reliable source of food, and avoid them.

Generally speaking, misrepresentation happens when there is a mismatch between the target of the representation and how it is being represented. And the criteria I've offered here for how that happens is that the target and content of a representation come apart when the animal fails to realize its aims because of how it represents something, in such a way that the animal will be disinclined to represent that target in that way in the future. One objection to this approach is that it cannot account for instances where an animal misrepresents something and still successfully realizes its goal, and instances where an animal accurately represents something yet fails to realize its goal.[153] My response to that concern is that it does not undermine the idea that the animal can represent and misrepresent its surroundings on its own terms. The objection imports criteria that are external to the animal's system of representation—namely, our external grasp of an instance of an animal representing or misrepresenting something—that are not relevant to the point. The fact remains that the animal has a representational ability that helps it systematically improve its grip on its ever-changing surroundings by revising how the animal represents things when it fails to realize its goals. In cases of misrepresentation that count, the animal is materially confronted by the upshot of misrepresentations: the really important cases of misrepresentation are those that actually undermine the animal's ability to thrive, such as misrepresenting poisonous prey as reliably good to eat. These cases are important because they highlight the biological advantage of having revisable representational abilities at all. Misrepresenting things can

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that I am arguing that we should understand representation in terms of the criteria assembled above, which limits representation to flexible, revisable, and systematically recombinable cognitive states and abilities.

[153] Many thanks to Zed Adams for bringing this objection to my attention.

be costly, and revising misrepresentations to more accurately represent the animal's environmental and social circumstances can better enable the animal to realize its ends of successful feeding, harm avoidance, procreation, etc.

This notion of a basic, representational ability that coincides with Camp's criteria for basic cognition also coincides (more or less) with Perner's notion of "primary representation" (URM 6-7). To show briefly how they overlap, on Perner's account, human children typically develop their primary representational ability before the age of two. This ability involves the revision and recombination of cognitive states, modeling the child's surroundings in order to better facilitate the child's ability to navigate those surroundings and meet her needs. Primary representations are capable of misrepresentation, are causally keyed to environing stimuli, and causally influence behavior (URM 24). Thus primary representations underwrite a single, updating model of things or situations the child (or animal) encounters (URM 45). Finally, primary representations and single, updating models are not stimulus-independent in the relevant sense (for my purposes). Human infants and other animals with only a single updating model of their surroundings can represent things in the absence of the stimuli that typically give rise to those representations (URM 45-6). However, they are nonetheless dependent upon environing stimuli for entertaining those representations, lacking the ability to spontaneously model counterfactual situations.[154]

Recall the discussion of Haugeland's notion of conformism from Chapter IV. In his early work, Haugeland appeals to a natural, animal proclivity to conform to ground his restrictive view of intentionality (I discuss this in Chapter IV, §3.1). He defines conformism as a combination of "imitativeness," or the inclination to copy the behavior

[154] This is a key point in Camp's definition of concepts, discussed above in Chapter III. See PTW 287-91.

of other members of a social group, and "censorious," or "a positive tendency to see that one's neighbors do likewise, and to suppress variation" (IAS 147). Conformism presupposes two abilities that the capacity for representation also presupposes: the ability to respond differentially to different stimuli, and the ability "to learn, as in conditioning or habit formation" (IAS 147). This makes the capacity to conform a "complex second-order disposition," i.e., a disposition that builds on other dispositions, but is nonetheless natural (IAS 147). The upshot is a "systematic peer pressure within the community" that establishes "a kind of mutual attraction among the behavioral dispositions of the different community members" (IAS 148).

Primate social behavior provides perfect examples of what Haugeland means, but presumably many highly social species of mammals, birds, and other animals exhibit tendencies Haugeland would call conformism. Conformism offers advantages to social animals with basic cognition and primary representations because, for example, by imitating others, animals can discover new advantages in their environment, such as a source of food previously unnoticed. It presumably allows animals to establish stable, shared dispositions to respond to predators in the same way, such that animals that cannot sense a lurking predator can nonetheless respond to the predator responses of other members of the community.

The point here is that, while not all animals with representational abilities are necessarily conformist on Haugeland's account, all conformist animals (presumably) have representations in the sense defined above. Moreover, anticipating the following discussion of secondary representations and concepts, it seems as though all animals with

concepts (by Camp's definition) are also conformists. This makes conformism a significant part of the developmental story whose elements I am assembling here.

While primary representational abilities and conformism confer an array of advantages on the animals and prelinguistic children that have them, they are limited. With only a single, updating model of one's surroundings, one cannot entertain both how things are and how they were, or will be. The representation of how things are simply changes. With only primary representations, children and animals represent what they want but cannot go out of their way to alter their surroundings as a means to get what they want. Put another way, a child or nonhuman animal with only primary representations can flexibly respond to its environment, but has no meaningful distance from its environment.

2.2 Concepts

The second element of the developmental account is conceptual cognition, as Camp defines it, which I take to be bound up with a capacity for Perner's secondary representations. As will become clear below, Perner's definition of secondary representational abilities and Camp's definition of conceptual abilities make them distinct in theory. However, I treat them as a single element in my account here because they appear to come packaged together.[155] I discuss secondary representations first, then

[155] For one thing, all of the animal species exhibiting behavior that seems to warrant the attribution of secondary representational abilities also seem to warrant the attribution of concepts. Suddendorf and Whiten write, "At present we argue that the best (evolutionarily parsimonious) explanation for the ape data is that all great ape species have the fundamental capacity to entertain secondary representations" ("Mental Evolution and Development: Evidence for Secondary Representation in Children, Great Apes, and Other Animals," 644). They also suggest it is likely that a short list of other animals, including crows and dolphins, may well turn out to qualify as having secondary representations ("Mental Evolution and Development: Evidence for Secondary Representation in Children, Great Apes, and Other Animals," 641ff). Great apes, dolphins, and New Caledonian crows all seem to satisfy Camp's criteria for having concepts, insofar as they pursue subsidiary goals that temporarily take them away from a main goal as a means to achieve the main goal. Another point is that the difference between secondary representations and

review Camp's notion of concepts before considering how Haugeland's conformism and normativity fit into the picture.

To have secondary representations is to have, crucially, the ability to entertain multiple models, multiple representations of the same thing. As Perner argues, at around age two, the primary representations of typical human children are augmented by secondary representations. The capacity for secondary representations assumes and builds on the capacity for primary representations in the sense that secondary representations are best understood as primary representations given a secondary function (URM 7). The secondary function is that they can be decoupled from their primary function as causally triggered responses to environing stimuli. Simply put, they can be used to represent states of affairs that do not presently obtain. But if they could not also function as primary representations in other circumstances, they would not have much (if any) use as secondary representations. Thus while I refer to "secondary representations" (following Perner), they are not an entirely different kind of representation with a wholly different function from primary representations, but rather an expanded use of primary representations.

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concepts in theory might only indicate two distinct ways to track a single cognitive ability that manifests itself in multiple ways. As Suddendorf and Whiten argue, there are several criteria to be satisfied for an animal to count as having secondary representations (including passing hidden displacement tests, engaging in pretense, mirror self-recognition, recognizing mental states). For Suddendorf and Whiten's criteria, see "Mental Evolution and Development: Evidence for Secondary Representation in Children, Great Apes, and Other Animals," 641. Note that what Suddendorf and Whiten count as means-ends reasoning, as a feature of secondary representational ability, does not count as instrumental reasoning by Camp's standard because it does not require the degree of stimulus independence that Camp requires (see "Mental Evolution and Development: Evidence for Secondary Representation in Children, Great Apes, and Other Animals," 632). As Camp argues, there is only one criterion for having concepts. Yet, although no single criterion offered by Suddendorf and Whiten counts as having concepts by Camp's standards, it seems unlikely that an animal could satisfy all of the criteria for secondary representations and fail to have concepts. So, while Camp agrees that Perner's secondary representational abilities "underwrite" conceptual cognition (PTW 293), it may be more accurate to claim that they are one and the same. I do not have a large stake in which option is the right one, but for the sake of simplicity, I package secondary representational abilities and conceptual abilities together into a single element here.

Secondary representational capacities underwrite a variety of behaviors common to children ages two to four, some of which are also found in other great apes and other species, including passing hidden displacement tests; engaging in pretense; means-ends reasoning; mirror self-recognition; reading the emotions and recognizing the mental states of other members of a social group.[156] These abilities are a powerful and profitable advance on merely primary representations because they give their possessor a much greater ability to take advantage of their physical and social environments. It is reasonable to assume that the secondary representations of human children are shaped by their exposure to social norms, but that does not mean that only humans have secondary representations; there is increasing evidence that other great apes, for example, should be understood to have secondary representations.[157]

Whereas primary representations afford a single, updating model for what an animal encounters, secondary representations afford multiple complex models. Multiple models make instrumental reasoning possible, because they allow an animal to both represent how things are and also counterfactual states of affairs—specifically, how they could be made different. This gives the animal an advantage, for example, by enabling a chimpanzee to stack and climb wooden crates as a means to reach bananas suspended

[156] Thomas Suddendorf and Andrew Whiten, who are interested in the secondary representational abilities of nonhuman animals, follow Perner in counting these behavioral abilities (among others) as evidence of secondary representations (see "Mental Evolution and Development: Evidence for Secondary Representation in Children, Great Apes, and Other Animals," 641).

[157] Thomas Suddendorf and Andrew Whiten argue, "for most instantiations of secondary representational skill in toddlers there is now evidence from great apes," and, moreover, given the available evidence, "the best (evolutionarily parsimonious) explanation for the ape data is that all great ape species have the fundamental capacity to entertain secondary representations" ("Mental Evolution and Development: Evidence for Secondary Representation in Children, Great Apes, and Other Animals," 644). It follows that, to the extent that other species appear to exhibit secondary representational skills, it is well worth entertaining the hypothesis that they do, and investigating further.

overhead.[158] Secondary representations also offer significant advantages in the social arena, by allowing human children from around age two (and likely great apes and some other social animals) to attribute to others mental models and feelings they themselves have. The advantage is being able to understand social behavior, to anticipate what another member of a social group is likely to do, and where a given social situation is likely to lead. The idea is that secondary representational abilities and multiple models underwrite "some notion of the mental as familiar from inner experience, which they can use as a theoretical construct in explaining and understanding other people's experiences, thus in turn explaining their actions" (URM 10-11). Children (and some other animals) demonstrably anticipate the feelings and models of others.

To be clear, on Perner's analysis, this secondary representational ability does not amount to having a theory of mind, but merely a theory of behavior.[159] That is, it is not a grasp *of* other minds or inner life as such, or of the representational abilities of other animals per se. Rather, it is a grasp of the *behavior* of others, one that is afforded by a practical ability to project elements of one's own inner life and representational abilities onto others. It is not what is projected that is understood or grasped, but rather, what is projected is a means to understand what others are doing or are inclined to do.

Camp considers Perner's secondary representations to "underwrite" what she defines as a conceptual ability (PTW 293), yet (as I explained above) I treat conceptual cognition and secondary representations as aspects of a single ability here. Here, I review Camp's criteria for a representational ability to count as conceptual.

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[158] I refer here to Wolfgang Köhler, *The Mentality of Apes*, 139–78.

[159] Perner distinguishes between having a mentalistic theory of behavior and a representational theory of mind (URM 11). The former is an ability to represent behavior and behavioral intentions. The latter is an ability to represent representations and representational intentions, and only comes with what Perner calls metarepresentation.

Recall from Chapter III that Camp considers instrumental reasoning as clear evidence that an animal has concepts because it establishes that the animal has active and spontaneous control over how, when, and which representations it recombines. She defines instrumental reasoning as an ability to pursue subsidiary goals as a means to realize an end goal even when the subsidiary goal takes an animal temporarily away from its main goal. Making tools is a perfect example of instrumental reasoning. Instrumental reasoning requires a high degree of stimulus independence in that it involves actively recombining representations to model a counterfactual state of affairs as a means to solving a complex problem. By contrast, while animals with merely basic cognition (i.e., representation but lacking secondary representation) can represent distal states of affairs, what they represent and when remains under the control of environing stimuli.

Perner's criteria for secondary representation and Camp's criteria for concepts both demonstrate clear advantages over primary representations. Perner's notion of secondary representations shows a clear link with primary representations: in effect, secondary representational abilities are a secondary, stimulus-independent use of primary representations. This establishes clearly that the second element in my account builds on the first element. Furthermore, animals and human children that satisfy Perner's criteria for secondary representations also satisfy Camp's criteria for having concepts. Camp's theory of concepts highlights a substantial form of stimulus independence, one that allows animals to actively take spontaneous control over their representational abilities, turning them into a system for solving problems. If a representational ability satisfies the criteria for secondary representations and the criteria for conceptual cognition, then it counts as a form of conceptual cognition overall. That is, an animal or human child can

be said to have conceptual cognition in general, even when it is not actively engaged in behaviors considered here to indicate secondary representations or concepts. And, moreover, to have concepts constitutes an enormous advantage over having mere representations because this active use of cognitive capacities allows animals (and children) to solve problems and generally take greater advantage of their surroundings.

In the previous section, I discussed how representation and conformism work together to confer advantages beyond what representation provides by itself. Similarly, combining conceptual cognition with conformism also extends the advantages of having concepts. For example, tool-using chimpanzees conform to the instrumental problem-solving behaviors of others in their social group by using the same types of materials in the same ways to catch termites. The combination of instrumental rationality with the inclination to conform allows effective skills to be shaped and transmitted across generations, conferring significant advantages on animals that have these abilities.

On Haugeland's view, conformism is a natural underpinning for normativity. As I discussed in Chapter IV, §4.2, Haugeland's early criteria for distinguishing an objective form of normativity appealed social propriety that governs things like tool use: implicit rules that institute the use and misuse of objects for specific purposes. Moreover, this robust normativity involved a "highly integrated and structured" form of life insofar as "the norms which make it up are intricately interdependent" (IAS 151). This "highly integrated and structured" way of life should be understood to mean that normatively governed dispositions draw together almost all of the possible activities the animal can find itself engaged in. As I argued earlier, this criteria is not sufficient for distinguishing

the rational, objective form of normativity humans have.[160] It could well turn out that, for example, chimpanzee communities with complex tool-making and tool-using practices really do have social institutions—by Haugeland's standards—that establish a sense of the proper use of these tools.

The point here is that the combination of conceptual cognition with conformism and normativity allows animals to treat other members of the community as means toward ends, such as preferable treatment in the social hierarchy, and also treat materials they encounter as means to ends, such as gaining food. Among the advantages animals gain by combining conceptual cognition with conformism is to share techniques for problem-solving that develop out of their capacity for instrumental rationality. Presumably, in cases where multiple different materials are sourced and made into tools that are then used systematically to catch food like termites, the complexity of the practice has developed over time as different techniques are systematically combined with each other.

Prerational human children also combine their capacity for conceptual cognition with conformity and normativity in powerful ways. Anyone who knows or has known children aged two to four—possessed of concepts but incapable of rational reflection—knows how willful they are. The have the power to use their concepts to model and anticipate the behavior of others, and solve problems by representing counterfactual states of affairs and treating things and situations as means to their ends. At the same time, they are under enormous pressure from authorities (mostly caregivers) to conform to social norms governing their behavior, restricting what objects they use and how, and

[160] As I discussed in Chapter IV, Haugeland's later work on constitution, by contrast, does establish a meaningful difference between the normativity of highly intelligent, concept-wielding animals and rational, objective normativity.

what activities are appropriate for different situations. The idea here is that, under these conditions, they gain a concept of what it is to have and wield authority. Their natural drive toward conformity does not merely result in reflecting the social norms to which they are forced to conform; they also seek to conform to the models of authoritative behavior they witness in the authorities in their lives. That is, they seek to model the authoritative behavior itself and gain the social advantages that come with that behavior, which, in practice, is the same as seeking to be an authority. In effect, children desire to be right, and recognized as right, about how things are and how things ought to be, and to be treated as other authorities are treated—all before they have a clear sense of the distinction between right and wrong, true and false.

Concepts, combined with social instituted norms, offer powerful advantages over primary representations and basic forms of conformity. Crucially, unlike mere representations, concepts open up a distance from the environment, allowing the animal to twist its representational capacity free from environing stimuli and make active use of it. Gaining this distance from the environment affords the animal distinct advantages not available without concepts.

However, conceptual cognition, as such, is limited. Social conformity and normativity of the kind described above directly affects behavior and only thereby *indirectly* affects how animals use their capacity for conceptual cognition. A far greater power to enforce social norms—and thereby gain the advantages of highly complex forms of cooperative action—could be had if there were a means to *directly* govern the use of concepts. In other words, the social power to govern the behavior of problem-solving animals with conceptual cognition is significant, but it pales in comparison to the

social power that stems from governing conceptual cognition itself. This possibility only arises with the transition to the third element of this developmental account, which opens up the possibility for objectivity.

2.3 Metacognition

The third element of the developmental account is metacognition, i.e., metaconceptual understanding. The transition from concepts to metacognition corresponds to a transition from secondary representations to metarepresentation, from a mentalistic theory of behavior to a representational theory of mind, and from cognition of surroundings and opportunities to cognition that is about cognition. It is, essentially, a conceptual capacity to reflect on our use of concepts. And when combined with an overarching, constitutive commitment to doing things a certain way, to a specific set of practices or form of life, it makes objective understanding possible.

To set up this overview of metacognition, recall the distance metaphor that comes up in McDowell's debate with Dreyfus in Chapter II. The idea, which McDowell gleans from Gadamer, is that animals attend only to their immediate biological imperatives and have no distance from their environment, whereas humans have language and thereby gain not just a distance from our environment but also a world. I think the distance metaphor is useful, but McDowell's use of it is too simple. Following Camp (in §2.1 above), I characterized mere representations as having no distance from an environment, whereas (in §2.2) I characterized concepts (in Camp's sense) as establishing a distance from one's environment. This distance reflects the ability to spontaneously deploy cognitive abilities independently of environing stimuli. Metacognition constitutes *a second distance*, this time from the concepts that structure an animal's instrumental

engagement with its surroundings. So whereas concepts allow for a first distance from the environment, metacognition allows for a second distance from concepts, and it is this second distance, combined with the first, which opens up space for a world. This second distance opens up space to reflect on how we use concepts, to think about how and what we perceive and think.

I lead with my elaboration of this distance metaphor because it nicely frames the following, detailed account of metacognition and the space to reflect on our concepts as concepts. Here I consider Perner's notion of metarepresentation and retrace Haugeland's notion of constitution to present the most important features of this proposed transition into a rational, objective grasp of a world.

Metarepresentation is the capacity to represent other beings as representing something and to understand misrepresentation (URM 7, 35). Since representations and representational abilities are now in view—no longer just a means of representation but part of what is represented—a shorthand definition of metarepresentation is the capacity to represent a representation *as a representation*. To have a capacity for metarepresentation is to understand the distinction "between *what* is represented (referent) and *as what* it is represented (sense)" (URM 7).[161]

To clarify what metarepresentation is, then, it is useful to work through how the distinction between sense and referent (or, to use Cummins' preferred terms, content and target) functions at each level. Recall that the distinction between sense and referent was useful to clarify what it is to have primary representations, because to have primary

[161] Perner is thinking of Frege's distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*; however, as he notes, he is more specifically following Dretske to "use the word 'referent' when I want to say *what* a representation represents and the word 'sense' when talking about things being represented *as being a certain way*" (URM 20). Perner refers to Dretske, *Explaining Behavior: Reasons in a World of Causes*, 70.

representations is to be capable of revising representations as a result of being foiled by instances of misrepresentation. This is a fact about what it is to have primary representations even though the one representing (an animal or an infant) cannot cognize this sense/referent distinction itself. Also recall that with secondary representations it is possible to represent counterfactual states of affairs, entertain multiple models of the same situation, and represent the behavioral intentions of others by treating others as though they have certain mental states or representations that one has oneself. But crucially, representing the behavioral intentions of others falls short of representing others *as having representations* because the former does not involve representing representations as representations. Finally, representing a representation as a representation, again, requires actually cognizing the distinction between sense and referent, i.e., metarepresentation.[162] In sum, to have primary representations is to be able to differentially *respond* to sense and referent being incompatible; to have secondary representations is to able to *exploit* the incompatibility of sense and referent (e.g., entertaining multiple models, representing counterfactual situations, tactical deception); and to have metarepresentation is to be able to *understand* the distinction between sense and referent.

The distinction between having secondary representations and metarepresentation underwrites (or at least corresponds to) the distinction between having a mentalistic theory of behavior versus a representational theory of mind. With merely secondary representations, human children can form a mentalistic theory of behavior, but with

[162] While there is already a distinction between sense and referent operative in primary representation, the capacity for primary representation affords no awareness of that distinction. Likewise, while a capacity for secondary representation makes it possible to entertain more than one sense of the same referent, it falls short of representing *the relation* between senses and the referent. What distinguishes metarepresentation is actually representing and understanding that a sense represents a referent.

metarepresentation they can form a representational theory of mind (URM 11).[163] Human children with secondary representational abilities can begin to develop a "mentalistic theory of behavior" insofar as they can use their own mental states, arising from their own experiences, to model the intentions of others and anticipate their behaviors (URM 10-11). Children under the age of four "start to use mental terminology to make sense of people's behavior, (URM 242). But, having only a mentalistic theory of behavior (i.e., lacking a representational theory of mind), a child cannot understand how mental states can misrepresent (URM 11), because she cannot represent representations as representations. Once the child starts to develop a capacity for metarepresentation, there is an opportunity to develop a representational theory of mind, "in which mental states are understood as serving a representational function" (URM 11). At this stage, the child comes to understand representation in terms of the distinction between sense and referent, which plays "a catalytic role in children's reconceptualization of what the mind is" (URM 11).

With the transition from primary to secondary representations, recall that Perner argued primary are necessary for secondary representations because what makes secondary representations useful is the fact that they are, in effect, primary representations that gain a secondary function insofar as they come to be deployed independently of environing stimuli. In the transition from secondary representations to metarepresentations there is a corresponding dependence of the latter on the former. Perner writes that the ability to cognize the distinction between sense and referent that

[163] Perner is critical of broad claims that attribute a theory of mind to other species (see URM 240; Perner refers to Premack and Woodruff, "Does the Chimpanzee Have a Theory of Mind?"). According to Perner, it is not "mind" that toddlers (or other animals) "theorize" about, but behavior, deploying their mental models as a means to anticipate and make sense of the behaviors of others. For Perner, to have a theory of mind is to have a theory of the mental (and material) use of representations.

defines metarepresentation "can only be understood with secondary representations. Hence, secondary representations are a prerequisite for metarepresentation" (URM 11). This is a cumulative effect, where each stage or level depends upon development of the prior stage.

Finally, the capacity for metacognition is, by definition (i.e., Camp's definition), conceptual, for it involves a capacity for stimulus-independent representations: one cannot represent a representation—that is, represent the relation between sense and reference—if one's representational ability remains entirely under the control of environing stimuli, because there are no stimuli for *the relation* between the sense and reference of a representation. The relation of sense and reference, content and target, is constituted by a cognitive act. Whereas with practical instrumental reasoning—e.g., manipulating objects to attain food—concepts were deployed as a means to take better advantage of one's physical circumstances, with metacognition, concepts are deployed to understand the deployment of concepts.

How does normativity fit into this picture? Absent metacognition, only behavior was subject to normative constraint and approval. With metacognition, our conceptual capacity itself becomes folded into the growing field of normative constraint. The government of behavior—which arises with conformism, norms, and social practices surrounding conceptually-structured instrumental reasoning—broadens to become a government of conceptual thought, just as conceptual thought, largely through language, becomes a form of behavior. How does this come about?

Recall the example in the previous section of the child (with concepts and instrumental reasoning, but no metacognition) who does not merely conform to authority

by doing what is expected, but also conforms to authoritative behavior by behaving authoritatively. There I suggested that children desire to be recognized as normative authorities—as right about stuff—before being capable of understanding what it means to be an authority, or even differentiate right from wrong, true from false. What must the child do to satisfy her desire to be an authority?

For one thing, to be an authority about how to do something—say, clap a simple rhythm—a child must more or less conform to social norms regarding how to do it, thereby actually treating the authority as an authority. She cannot become an authority by merely imitating the authoritative behavior of showing how others should clap the rhythm if she cannot actually clap the rhythm. Indeed, if she is in the midst of a lesson on how to clap the rhythm she will be censored for acting like an authority. This is what is so odd about authority: whereas other behaviors you can get right by imitating them, you will be censored if you imitate the authoritative behavior of showing someone what the norm is rather than just learning to follow the norm.

For another thing, the child must learn to differentiate between an attempt to follow a particular norm and a successful following of the particular norm. To do so, she must, once again, treat the authority as an authority—this time as an authority on who does and who does not follow the norm properly. By following the authority, she gains the ability to recognize an attempt at playing the rhythm that does not count as an instance of playing the rhythm.

Once she gains the ability to reliably play the rhythm, and recognize attempts to play the rhythm, and to assess whether or not those attempts are successful, according to norms, she will get what she wants: she will be treated as an authority with respect to

playing the rhythm and gain a concept of herself as an authority. Moreover, beyond merely representing a target (the rhythm properly played) by means of some content (an attempt to play the rhythm), she will understand the normatively governed relation between them, and more generally that there are norms governing how we represent things. She will have a concept for the rhythm that allows her to recognize instances of the rhythm being played and a metaconceptual grasp of that concept that allows her to differentiate failed from successful instances of someone playing the rhythm. She will have a socially instituted, objective grasp of this rhythm.

What is the nature of the commitment that allows her to conform her way into authority? And how is it possible to use concepts to assess the use of concepts?

Haugeland's late theory of objectivity, discussed in Chapter IV, helps to answer these questions. The crucial, overarching, and abiding commitment must be constitutive of who a person is. It cannot be merely a commitment to being an authority, which led the girl in the example to imitate authority rather than the norms the authoritative person was trying to teach. Rather, it must be a commitment to actually getting things right as a way of life, and to weeding out inconsistency and incoherence in our views as they arise.[164]

Constitutive commitment is an overarching disposition that orients our mundane and constitutive skills. Recall that mundane skills are basic rule-following abilities to perform actions and recognize familiar things, for example, the ability to play a rhythm and to recognize the rhythm. A constitutive skill is the ability to detect whether or not

[164] Crucially, for Haugeland this opens up the possibility of getting things right in a way that runs afoul of social norms, where one can follow all of the rules and the object can stand up against them, forcing us to refine our mundane and constitutive skills and standards. Haugeland deems this possibility to be necessary for the kind of objectivity science requires.

rule-governed things, like the performance of a given rhythm, do in fact accord with the applicable normative standards. Concepts, as Camp defines them, can be usefully understood in relation to both mundane and constitutive skills. Mundane skills deploy concepts when we recognize things or carry out familiar activities. Similarly, constitutive skills deploy concepts by which we grasp whether or not something conforms to rules and norms. Concepts—such as the concept of the rhythm in the example above—would be deployed by both mundane and constitutive skills sets.

To Haugeland, as I discussed in Chapter IV, the minimal, socially instituted sense of objectivity involves a commitment to getting things right according to social norms. The skills involved can be understood to deploy concepts. In its robust sense, objectivity is a commitment to revising mundane skills and even, if necessary, giving up constitutive standards in the face of contradictions and incoherence among or between mundane and constitutive skills. This also means assessing and revising the concepts mundane and constitutive skills deploy. To monitor mundane skills with constitutive skills is, by its nature, metaconceptual and metacognitive, because it brings conceptual abilities to bear on assessing the accuracy and intelligibility of our conceptual grasp of our activities and surroundings. By expanding the governance of behavior to include our conceptual grasp of our surroundings, objectivity achieves the governance of our use of concepts.

2.4 Summary

My aim here has been to propose a way to answer Dreyfus's challenge by appealing to three distinct but related elements of cognition that can serve as the "steps" in a "step-by-step" explanation of how rational understanding develops out of more basic capacities we share with children and other animals. The three elements—representation, concepts, and

metacognition—are related insofar as the second builds on the first and the third builds on the second. Representation is a natural and widespread ability to systematically recombine cognitive states and revise them, and how they are combined, based on whether they help bring about the animal's goals. Concepts and secondary representations open up a distance between an animal and its environment, as they twist free of environing stimuli and become useful for representing counterfactual states of affairs, especially in instrumental reasoning. And metacognition takes instrumental reasoning and folds it back on itself, opening up a second distance that allows us to reflect on, assess, and refine our use of concepts according to social norms, but also in light of an overarching commitment to ensuring our use of concepts is coherent and consistent. Thus I am satisfying Dreyfus's commitment by showing how the "higher" capacities of rational understanding can be understood to develop out of "lower," shared capacities: concepts are representations that come to be used independently of environing stimuli for the purpose of getting a better grip on our surroundings; and rational, conceptual understanding is the reflective act of folding our conceptual grasp of things back on concepts themselves for the purpose of sharing and coordinating, assessing and revising how we use them under an overarching, existential commitment to a coherent and consistent worldview.

3. Integrating McDowell's Commitment

Recall that McDowell is committed to a minimal form of empiricism that gives normatively governed concepts a role in experience and action. The same concepts we would use to make a rational, determinate judgment about a state of affairs structure our

experience of that state of affairs such that, when we appeal to experience to justify an empirical claim, the judgment we make deploys some of the same concepts that structure the experience. The upshot is that experience, because structured by normatively governed concepts, falls within the space of reasons.

McDowell's view stands up against Brandom's "pinched" view of human rationality (to use Haugeland's term) as narrowly confined to linguistic activity.[165] Most importantly for McDowell, if we can see how our experience is structured by normatively governed concepts, then we can make sense of the idea that, for the most part, when we perceive, we perceive things as potential reasons for thinking things are the way we perceive them to be.

To put things this way is to adopt McDowell's own way of putting things. Critics have demanded (I think fairly) that McDowell unpack these ideas in considerably more detail. In reconciling McDowell's commitment with my answer to Dreyfus's challenge and my way of accommodating Brandom's commitment (to be spelled out in the following section) I must depart from McDowell's view in significant ways, not least because I aim to avoid the criticism I leveled at McDowell's early and late positions in Chapter I.[166] My main criticism there is that, under scrutiny, McDowell fails to sufficiently distinguish between experience and judgment. McDowell's underdeveloped notion of how concepts are involved in experience makes perception indistinct from judgments, i.e., judgment in all but name.

My aim here is to accommodate McDowell's commitment to minimal empiricism without inheriting problems created by McDowell's way of making that commitment. As

[165] Haugeland's actual line accuses Brandom of a "pinched and shallow conception of human life and personhood" (Haugeland, "Two Dogmas of Rationalism," 302).
[166] See Chapter I, §3.1.

I mentioned above, I take as my criterion for satisfying McDowell's commitment that I must explain how the normatively governed use of concepts can operate in our experience and action, such that as rational animals we can perceive what we perceive as rationally constraining what we think is true of the world. To this end, I draw on the insights of Camp's instrumentalism about concepts, Perner's claims about how we gain a representational theory of mind, and Haugeland's theory of objectivity to explain how it is that normatively governed concepts that we use in a judgment about *p* are involved in an experience of *p*.

3.1 Instrumentalist Insights

Recall Perner's account of the transition from a mentalistic theory of behavior to a representational theory of mind. The former, underwritten by secondary representational abilities, is a capacity wielded by two- to four-year-old children, other great apes, and likely other species as well. The latter seems exclusive to humans and comes only with an onslaught of metarepresentation around age four in humans. We can only represent representations as representations, and represent others as representing things, insofar as we can understand the distinction between sense and referent, which is to say, grasp that representations can be right or wrong according to social norms.

Having secondary representations and concepts already establishes some distance from one's environment because such representations can be spontaneously deployed independently of environing stimuli to represent counterfactual states of affairs. As I claimed above, in acquiring a representational theory of mind, I gain a second distance, this time a distance from my own concepts. In other words, I gain the power to reflect on how I conceptualize the world. But that is not to say that I am always in the mode of

reflecting on my concepts, and assessing the validity of my use of them according to social norms; it only means that I am capable of such reflection. (This is, more or less, to echo Kant's point that the *I think* must be capable of accompanying all of my representations.)

McDowell's commitment to giving concepts a role in embodied coping is a commitment to there being an unreflective role for normatively governed concepts. It seems to me reasonable to agree with Dreyfus and McDowell that much of human activity is not reflective at all, and that correspondingly we are not engaged in metacognition or metarepresentation for much of the time. The default cognitive capacity that presents itself, it seems to me, is that when we are not reflecting or thinking in explicit, discursive terms, we proceed with secondary representations and concepts (as Camp defines them), or perhaps even primary representations that remain beyond our capacity to spontaneously recombine. What is crucially important here, however, is that, to accommodate McDowell's commitment, there must be a role for normatively governed concepts in our embodied coping—the nonmetaconceptual use of concepts upon which we can discursively reflect.

To use Dreyfus's terms (i.e., his interpretation of Heidegger's distinctions between *Zuhandenheit, Unzuhandenheit,* and *Vorhandenheit*), it seems as though when things are ready-to-hand, we can carry out familiar, even skilled activities, such as hammering a nail, largely by responding to environing stimuli. In one sense, this makes the activity similar to the behavior of an animal with only basic cognition and primary representations, because it can proceed without independence from stimuli. In another sense, however, many human activities are skilled in the sense that they could only have

been learned and become habitual through higher-order conceptual and metaconceptual abilities. That means even if we are engaged in an activity in such a way that we are entirely guided by environing stimuli and not actively recombining our conceptual capacities and establishing a distance from our environment, the representations involved are conceptual in the sense that we *can* spontaneously recombine them in cases where we encounter trouble that causes our activity to halt. Moreover, insofar as reflective, metaconceptual cognition was involved in learning the skill (for example, we learned the skill in part by following linguistic instructions), the concepts involved in the activity will be normatively governed.

Now, suppose we do encounter trouble that causes our activity to halt—i.e., we find that things are unready-to-hand. This forces us into the spontaneous, stimulus-independent, conceptual grasp of our situation wherein we actively deploy our capacity for instrumental reasoning. We represent counterfactual states of affairs, and subsidiary goals to a main goal. If the nail is bent and won't go into the board, we pull it out and hammer it straight first, and then bang it into the board. By engaging our conceptual abilities in problem solving, we take a step back from our environment. We are capable of raising the concepts involved in the problem-solving activity into explicit, reflective thought and we understand the normative constraints on the use and misuse of those concepts in discourse, and in our practical activity.[167]

[167] It is worth pointing out here that this way of understanding embodied coping allows me to accommodate an important criticism of Dreyfus's view by Barbara Montero. Montero rejects what she calls Dreyfus's "principle of automaticity," the idea that "when all is going well, expert performance significantly involves neither self-reflective thinking, nor planning, nor predicting, nor deliberation, nor mental effort" (Montero, "A Dancer Reflects," 304). Taking on board Camp's notion of concepts and conceptual thought allows me to agree that such activities involve mental effort that includes the active, spontaneous recombination of our conceptual capacities—albeit, not necessarily metaconceptual thought. Contra Dreyfus, thought—on this broader picture that is not exclusively metacognitive—may be constitutive rather than inhibitive of highly skilled embodied activities in which we are pushing the very limits of what we can physically achieve.

If we are still stymied by our situation and cannot solve it through the instrumental deployment of our concepts, we can take a further step back to reflect on our conceptual representation of our situation. That is, we can think about it in explicit, reflective terms. In doing so, we make things present-at-hand. And it is at this level that we engage in rational discourse with each other, that we give and ask for reasons and assess our use of our concepts.

Here it pays to reiterate the linked, cumulative nature of these abilities. The higher achievements reshape the lower ones that served as the stepping stones. This is obvious insofar as secondary representations are primary representations that have come to be deployable independently from environing stimuli. Insofar as metacognition and social norms shape our behavior and practices, they revise our concepts and how we systematically recombine them in perception and action.

For example, suppose as a one-year-old I become obsessed with pressing elevator buttons. They light up! Grownups do it! I have a primary representation for elevator buttons that is mostly reliable. I don't really grasp what they are for, but I do like to press them. Later, as a two-year-old, I come to understand that pressing elevator buttons is a means to an end, the way to get the elevator to go to the place we are going. I am indiscriminate about which button, but I do understand that pressing an elevator button is a subsidiary goal on the way to the main goal of getting to a certain floor, i.e., using elevator buttons is part of my capacity for instrumental reasoning. If the elevator is not moving, I will be inclined to press a button to make it move. While I still very much like to press elevator buttons, I am not yet capable of assessing instances of correct or incorrect uses of elevator buttons (which makes me a nightmare to share an elevator

with). Later, between four and five years old, I take an interest in the numbers and letters on the elevator buttons, as I come to realize they mean something. As I grow into a representational theory of mind, I come to understand that specific numbers and letters mean things to other people, and so they come to mean something to me. Now, when someone says, "Ninth floor, please," I can recognize what they want, find the "9" button, and press it for them. Or if my younger sibling heeds the request for the ninth floor by pressing the "7" button, I can assess that as the wrong response to the request. In other words, I am capable of reflecting on what people mean, and judging correct and incorrect claims and behaviors according to social norms.

The point of this elevator button example is to show how my ability to recognize something (in this case, elevator buttons) has been with me since I was capable of nothing more than primary representations, yet with each successive advance I made—first to secondary representations and then to metarepresentation—my attitude toward and inclinations to use the buttons changed. Pressing elevator buttons went from something fun to do, to a means to an end, to an act whose rightness or wrongness is assessable according to social norms. According to Camp, I already had a concept (in her sense) of elevator buttons at age two, when they became a means to an end. But—and here is the crux of the matter—once I gained metarepresentation and a representational theory of mind, my concept of elevator buttons, specifically, how and when exactly to use them, *changed*. Once I gain a representational theory of mind and take my first steps into the space of reasons, I begin to revise the concepts that have animated my surroundings to date. And as that process takes off, even when I am not reflecting on my or anyone else's claims or actions, when I am merely engaged in embodied coping, the

concepts that structure my engagement with the world are largely the ones that have been revised according to social norms.

So to refer back to my earlier point about ready-ness-to-hand and present-at-hand, pressing the familiar button on the elevator as part of my routine involves no thought or reflection or even problem-solving. My responsiveness is not so different from having merely a primary representation. The difference is that (1) if there is a problem, I can deploy my concepts for elevator buttons to solve my problem and (2) if there are claims or acts involving elevator buttons I am prepared to assess whether they are correct or incorrect according to social norms. What this account shows is that the same concepts by which we judge or reflectively think about a situation are involved in our embodied coping.

3.2 Haugeland's Objective Perception

McDowell—or at least a nonquietist avatar of McDowell—could respond that appealing to Perner and Camp is all well and good, but on their view it is not sufficiently clear what makes rational capacities rational, and objective thought objective. Recall that this is the problem I identified with Camp's instrumentalist view of concepts at the end of Chapter III and addressed in Chapter IV by integrating it with Haugeland's theory of objectivity. Here, I recapitulate what is crucial about Haugeland's view for my way of accommodating McDowell's commitment.

Recall that Haugeland does not make concepts a thematic centerpiece of his theory of objectivity, but rather treats concepts as what we have when we have developed an objective grasp of the world. To encounter an object is to deploy mundane skills by which we recognize or make use of it, where those skills are governed by constitutive

skills, according to a set of constitutive standards that belong to an overarching existential commitment to a way of life that constitutes not just what we do and how, but also who we are. This package of constitutive skills and commitments forms a self-correcting enterprise that makes it possible for us to have objective perception of what we encounter and objective knowledge of the world. Thus not only does Haugeland endorse (in his own distinct way) the idea—central to *Mind and World*—that concepts and rational comportment to a world pervade our experience, he goes beyond McDowell by explaining how this is possible, by building a theory of objectivity out of a structure of interdependent skills.

Haugeland argues that human experience has a rational form in "Objective Perception" and "Truth and Rule-Following."[168] In these essays, he explores how following social norms in our interaction with objects constitutes them as the objects they are. His favored example is chess: by following the rules of chess play, we treat things we encounter as the paraphernalia of chess. In following these rules, we come to have an objective grasp of the world in our perception and action. Moreover, to have such an objective grasp of things is tantamount to having a conceptual grasp; again, objectivity and conceptuality are co-extensive for Haugeland. Haugeland puts the empiricist insight that McDowell aims to defend like this: "there must be two fundamentally distinct sorts of normative constraint: social propriety and objective correctness (truth)" (TRF 317). In other words, there must be, on one hand, the kind of normative constraint that determines what judgments we are entitled to make about things we encounter; in this case the direction of force runs from norms to the world by imposing rules on how one ought to

[168] Haugeland, "Objective Perception"; Haugeland, "Truth and Rule-Following."

judge.[169] On the other hand, there must also be a distinct kind of normative constraint that concerns actually getting things right about the world; in this case the direction of force runs from the world to our norms by forcing a re-evaluation of the validity of the norms themselves. The latter form of normative constraint requires experience to have a rational form. Haugeland is here arguing against views like Brandom's, which only allow for one form of normative constraint, namely, social propriety. As Haugeland puts it, "To collapse correctness [the former] into propriety [the latter] is to obliterate the essential character of thought" (TRF 317). It is by incorporating this aspect of Haugeland's view that I retain McDowell's commitment to empiricism and the rational form of experience. Experience is rational because objects can stand up against our beliefs about them.

Here is what I take to be a crucial difference (for my purposes) between McDowell's view and Haugeland's view: whereas McDowell locates the friction between mind and world between the passive use of concepts in experience and the active use of concepts in judgment, Haugeland locates the friction between mind and world between constitutive and mundane skills. The contradictions between mundane skills show up in light of the overarching constitutive skills that govern them—though more rarely a block of mundane skills can stand up against and force a refinement of the constitutive skills themselves. By setting things up this way, Haugeland allows that an object can stand up and speak back against what we take it to be. What we encounter in the world when an object stands up against the mundane and/or constitutive skills that enable us to grasp it objectively is a kind of rupture of the rational coherence to which we are existentially committed. The friction between a mind and a world is constituted within the structure of

[169] Haugeland picks up the "direction of fit" language from Searle (Haugeland, "Truth and Rule-Following," 305–6; there, Haugeland refers to Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 1–29). I prefer, however, direction of "force" because it resolves the ambiguity of what is fit to what.

skills that give us access to the world in the first place, the very conditions of having a world at all. To worry that this is not sufficient friction with the world is just to fail to grasp the transcendental conditions of having a world. It is enough for Haugeland to give an account of the structure of objectivity that enables things we encounter in the world to stand up against our beliefs. This is all that transcendental friction needs to be on his picture and it is this picture that I endorse here in my way of accommodating McDowell's commitment to minimal empiricism.

3.3 Summary

To sum up my accommodation of McDowell's commitment, then, my claim is that our nascent conceptual grasp of our surroundings as toddlers begins as we gain stimulus-independence for our representations and begin to deploy them in instrumental reasoning, treating things as means to our ends and representing counterfactual states of affairs. As we gain self-consciousness and develop a representational theory of mind through social and linguistic practices, we gain the ability to represent our representations as representations, and grasp our concepts by means of other concepts. With these abilities, we become aware of our use and misuse of our concepts, and revise our use of them according to social norms. These normatively governed concepts are not just means for explicit judgment but are practical, insofar as they continue to structure our embodied coping and facilitate our nonverbal grasp of our surroundings, thereby giving our perception, experience, and action a rational form. And what makes these concepts objective and rational is that the various mundane skills that deploy them are kept in check by constitutive skills geared toward enforcing constitutive standards and an overarching constitutive commitment to a rational way of life. Thus I am satisfying

McDowell's commitment by showing how the rational government of concepts that comes with our metacognitive, metaconceptual grasp of their use shapes the role they play in our embodied coping, giving rational form to our experience and securing a minimal form of empiricism.

4. Integrating Brandom's Commitment

Brandom is committed to clearly defining the function of concepts in a way that helps make rationality distinct. The criterion I established to determine what would count as a reasonable accommodation of this commitment is to explain how the development of rational capacities out of lesser capacities amounts to not merely a difference in degree but a difference in kind.

4.1 What Makes Rational Metacognition Distinct

The key here lies in focusing, once again, on the distinction between concepts in their instrumental use and in their metacognitive use. Concepts are used instrumentally insofar as they are deployed as part of a capacity for instrumental reasoning, to represent counterfactual situations, subsidiary goals on the way to achieving a main goal. Concepts are used metacognitively insofar as they are deployed to reflect on or cognize representations as representations, and to grasp concept and thoughts as such. Appealing again to the metaphor of distance, one can make the distinction between instrumental and metacognitive use of concepts like this: the instrumental use of concepts allows us to step back from our *surroundings* to take advantage of opportunities that would not otherwise appear to us; by contrast, the metacognitive use of concepts allows us to take another step back, this time from our *representations, concepts, and thoughts*, to assess their merit

according to socially instituted standards of correctness. Because metacognition is developed, shaped, and governed by rational norms, to engage in the metacognitive use of concepts is to participate in the space of reasons. What makes rationality distinct is precisely this capacity to reflect on the use of concepts and thoughts as concepts and thoughts, and to assess our thoughts and those of others according to rational norms.

I'm claiming that I've defined concepts in a way that is useful for explaining what makes rationality *different in kind* from the "lesser" abilities we share with prerational humans and nonrational animals. They are different in kind because there is no room for a third possibility between the merely instrumental use of concepts in problem-solving and the metacognitive use of concepts that brings the use of concepts to light and makes it assessable as right or wrong, according to normative standards. Conceptual acts are either metaconceptual or instrumental. There are likely degrees of the ability to engage in metacognition, and I take it that childhood—from age four through to rational maturity (though some never get that far)—is typically defined by steadily increasing the degree of one's ability to effectively engage in normatively governed metacognition. Yet, again, metacognition itself is distinctive and different in kind from instrumental concept use. To be rational in the sense that interests Brandom entails mastering the metacognitive use of concepts.

This approach to distinguishing rationality bears some similarities to Brandom's approach but also relies on a key difference. On the view I am defending here, contra Brandom, it is not the *definition* of concepts that makes rationality distinct. Recall that Brandom defines concepts narrowly for the explicit purpose of making rationality distinct, so that we only use concepts when and insofar as we make explicit judgments.

By contrast, here (following Camp) I have defined concepts as the systematically recombinable cognitive components of instrumental reasoning—a capacity we share with nonrational animals. What makes rationality distinct is not the use of concepts per se, but the metacognitive capacity for thinking with normatively governed concepts. This broad, instrumental definition of concepts *is useful* for my way of making rationality distinct, because it makes them an essential component of normatively governed metacognition that does make rationality distinct. The idea is that, as we transition from a mentalistic theory of behavior and a merely instrumental use of concepts into a representational theory of mind and a normatively governed, metacognitive understanding of concept-use, we are drawn into the space of reasons. Concepts, as I define them, are an essential part of this picture, a hinge between "natural" problem-solving and its "cultural," metaconceptual refinement. This is a definition of concepts that plays a positive role in an account of what makes rationality distinct, but one that is quite different from Brandom's account.

4.2 Language and Constitution

Brandom makes language central to his definition of concepts—again, for him as for Sellars, McDowell, and Dreyfus, having a concept means mastering the use of a word. If language is not central to the definition of concepts, then I owe an account of the role of language in what makes rationality distinct on the view I offer here. To answer this question, I draw on both Haugeland and Perner. Haugeland does not appeal explicitly to language when he offers an account of objectivity (which I count as his way of distinguishing rationality). One could—in principle—gain objective perception provided one developed the appropriate skills, namely, mundane skills for engaging in a well-

defined social practice, constitutive skills for assessing these mundane skills for accuracy and propriety (in ourselves and others) as we engage in this social practice, and an overarching constitutive, existential commitment to getting things right, even to the point of standing up against incoherent social norms. Language is not, in principle, necessary for developing these skills. Yet, I take Haugeland to also imply that, for us humans, language is always, in practice, involved in developing these skills.

Perner's theory of representation confirms the importance of language, by giving it a crucial role in the transition from a mentalistic theory of behavior to a representational theory of mind. A variety of nonlinguistic species seem to have more or less limited use of secondary representations and a mentalistic theory of behavior, but human children begin to acquire language at this stage. That is, the first use of words and phrases children use and respond to come before metacognition and a representational theory of mind. Moreover, on Perner's account, the transition into a representational theory of mind coincides with the explosive growth and sophistication of language use that comes around the age of four (URM 9).

Taking Haugeland and Perner together, then, the minimal claim is that developing a natural language is deeply bound up with the development of our metacognitive, rational capacities. A stronger claim that is also consistent with the view I am proposing is that language is necessary for the development of human rational abilities. Where I differ from Brandom is that, along with rejecting the idea that language is necessary for having concepts, I am also rejecting the idea that language-use is definitive of human rationality. This, again, is Haugeland's subtle point: it is not that language is definitive of rationality—rationality is defined as an always-improving structure of interdependent

skills. Rather, language happens to be the way humans break into the structure of rationality. Language is the human means to bring reflective, shared, rational order, and structure to our use of concepts.[170]

Another way to articulate what makes rationality distinct comes from Haugeland. In order to count as rational, one must be capable of objective perception and objective thought. This requires an existential, constitutive commitment to making thoughts, perceptions, and beliefs cohere with one another, such that they form a mutually reinforcing whole, absent detectable contradictions among them. It is a commitment to the idea that our beliefs are answerable to how things are, that we must sacrifice our beliefs in the face of evidence to the contrary. Crucially it is a commitment that allows objects to stand up against the skills by means of which we grasp them, by showing up inconsistencies among those skills. And it is a commitment to recognizing and resolving incompatibilities among our concepts and revising how we use them both in our explicit, metacognitive understanding of the world and in our instrumental conceptual engagement with our surroundings in our embodied coping. What makes rationality distinct, ultimately, is this overarching, existential commitment to getting things right, to giving a damn about the truth.

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[170] I've arrived at this conclusion without investigating whether or not the view I am presenting recommends a particular definition of language. This is a huge topic that is beyond the scope of my dissertation. However, to sketch a line of inquiry worth considering, it seems to me there could be a definition of language in the offing that makes language necessary for metacognition, and therefore rationality. There are many domains of human activity that involve rule-bound, symbolic activity. Tagging someone in the game of tag *means* something according to the rules of tag. Drawing an "x" in a game of tic-tac-toe *means* something according to the rules of tic-tac-toe. However, the symbolic resources of tag are not useful for representing the state of affairs in a game of tic-tac-toe, nor vice-versa, and nor are either sets of symbolic resources particularly useful for representing sets of affairs in other human activities (except, perhaps, in the artistic appropriation of these symbolic resources, but this is another complicated question). The point is that what seems to distinguish language from other rule-bound systems of symbolic activity is that it is geared toward representing other systems of symbolic activity. In other words, language is anything that makes norm-governed metacognition possible. If this is what defines language, then language is indeed necessary for rationality, not just the incidental the human means of breaking into the space of reasons.

4.3 The Recognitive Structure of Self-Consciousness

By reconciling Brandom's commitment to defining concepts in a way that helps make rationality distinct with a proposed answer to Dreyfus's challenge, I'm doing something Brandom rejected as impossible. Distinguishing between the instrumental and metacognitive uses of concepts allows me to assimilate human cognition with that of other animals while still differentiating human understanding and rationality. Ironically, as I show briefly below, the three distinct abilities (representation, concepts, and metacognition) that I appeal to in order to reconcile Brandom's and Dreyfus's commitments closely correspond to the three distinct abilities in Brandom's reconstruction of Hegel's recognitive theory of self-consciousness.

The form that Brandom's reconstruction of Hegel takes is a historical narrative that brings us face-to-face with the kinds of development that have been necessary for us to stand where we are, as normatively governed subjects that encounter normatively governed objects. As Brandom writes, the point of this abstract, historical narrative is to "[understand] oneself as an essentially historical, because essentially self-conscious, sort of being. To be for oneself a historical being is to constitute oneself as in oneself a special kind of being: a self-consciously historical being" (SDR 128). The three developmental stages that lead from desire to self-consciousness in Brandom's account mirror—with sometimes astonishing precision—the three stages of Perner's developmental account of human representational abilities. That is, there is a close correspondence between (1) Brandom's sentient awareness and what I discussed above as representation, especially insofar as both are revisable abilities to "take something to be something" in a way that can fail because it results in (what I call) misrepresentation, as the failure to satisfy a

desire (as Brandom puts it); (2) between Brandom's simple recognition and what I discussed above as concepts, especially insofar as simple recognition enables one to recognize another as a being motivated by desire (as Brandom puts it) or to represent the behavioral intentions of another animal (as I put it above); and (3) between Brandom's robust recognition and what I discussed above as metacognition, especially insofar as recognizing another as a normative authority on who is an authority on how things are (as Brandom puts it) corresponds to an ability to step back from and reflect on our use of concepts and understand the norms governing how we conceptualize things.

Developing an account that substantially integrates Brandom's insights into the recognitive structure of self-consciousness with an attempt to answer Dreyfus's challenge is beyond what I can accomplish here.[171] The point of bringing it up is to underscore another way to differentiate our rational, conceptual grasp of a world. Rational cognition is different in kind because it involves the achievement of both subjectivity and objectivity, where to recognize an object as an object, with skills and concepts refined according to socially instituted norms, is also to recognize oneself as a subject who is answerable to the norms of one's community. As subjects, we are answerable to the normative demand that we revise and repair our conceptual grasp of the world in the face of contradictions, whether those contradictions show up in the norms governing our

[171] To fully integrate Brandom's account of the development of self-consciousness out of desire and the development of metacognition out of representation would involve—as I see it—an argument that, structurally, they are the same achievement. This is closely related to the view, endorsed by Brandom, Haugeland, and others, that subjectivity and objectivity are two sides of the same achievement. The idea is that the shift from concepts and a "mentalistic theory of behavior" to a metaconceptual understanding and a "representational theory of mind" necessarily involves gaining the ability to represent oneself and others as representing how things are. In a slogan: the ability to represent representations as representations entails the ability to represent representers as representing because they are structurally the same ability. Giving a fleshed out argument for this idea would take me beyond my focus here.

understanding of nature, defining the world of cultural artifacts, or characterizing how a person should be.

4.4 Summary

To sum up my accommodation of Brandom's commitment, my claim is that adopting Camp's broad, instrumentalist definition of concepts allows me to show how rationality is distinct. What makes rationality distinct is the normatively governed, metacognitive, metaconceptual use of concepts. This is an ability not merely to use concepts for problem-solving, getting a better grip on our surroundings, and navigating the social structure of our communities, but also to use concepts to understand these conceptual structures themselves. Rationality, as a distinctive capacity, involves acquiring language and massively expanding, coordinating, refining, and assessing our use of concepts; but it is also an existential commitment to coherence and consistency in our use of them, a willingness to revise conceptual structures even when we've come to rely on them. Rationality is also distinctive, following Brandom, insofar as it involves the recognitive development of self-consciousness. Thus, I am satisfying Brandom's commitment not by making concepts exclusive to rational understanding (as Brandom himself does) but by giving concepts a function in the cognitive lives of problem-solving animals, and making rationality distinct as a normatively governed problem-solving ability folded back on and applied to itself, yielding an explosive and powerful difference of kind.

5. Conclusion

My aim has been to reconcile the respective commitments of Dreyfus, McDowell and Brandom. Drawing on Perner, Camp and Haugeland, I proposed what I take to be three

crucial elements of an answer to Dreyfus's challenge that can be reconciled with McDowell's and Brandom's respective commitments. Representations give rise to concepts as they become deployable independently of environing stimuli, and concepts give rise to metacognition as we learn to fold our conceptual capacity back on itself, to reflect on our thoughts. The first transition opens up a distance between the animal and its environment, whereas the second transition establishes a second distance between the animal and its own conceptual abilities.

Although I reject the Sellarsian idea that having language is necessary for having concepts, I do not thereby abandon holism about concepts altogether. Rather, I reject only the astringent form of holism embraced by Brandom and McDowell (and seemingly Dreyfus). The resulting view is a relaxed form of holism. Because having concepts entails an ability to spontaneously, systematically recombine them, having one concept implies having many concepts.

These three elements gave me resources to discuss how normatively governed concepts are involved in our embodied coping. When we enter the space of reasons, we come armed with countless concepts already, stimulus-independent representations that have formed as part of our instrumental reasoning as we navigate and take advantage of our surroundings. On this account, McDowell's appeal to *Bildung* can be explained as a long and sometimes painful process of coming face to face with all of the conceptual baggage we arrived with when we broke into metacognition. Our newfound metacognitive ability allows us to revise our concepts, to refine them (or not) according to social norms. How we represent and conceptualize the world comes to reflect and be answerable to the norms of our communities. Revising our concepts at the explicit,

metacognitive level means that they likewise alter how we represent the world in our embodied coping, when we are not engaged in representing representations as representations, but merely navigating our familiar surroundings. My induction into the government of concepts ensures that these concepts are available to my metacognitive reflection and assessment, that all of my representations can, in principle, be accompanied by an *I think*. This metaconceptual accounting and refinement of our concepts secures McDowell's goal of a minimal form of empiricism, such that our experience and perception take on a rational form.

Finally, these three elements of a potential answer to Dreyfus's challenge also allowed me to reconcile Brandom's commitment to defining concepts in a way that enables us to make rationality distinct. Concepts are defined, again, as systematically recombinable, stimulus-independent representations that are useful for instrumental reasoning and problem-solving. This definition of concepts is useful for making rationality distinct because rationality, on this account, is constituted by an ability to fold conceptual cognition and instrumental reasoning back on itself, to conceptualize conceptual understanding as such. To use Perner's language, the metacognition of our rational understanding is different in kind from secondary and primary representations by virtue of what it represents: the lower abilities are restricted to representing actual or potential states of affairs, whereas metarepresentation takes a step back into the sphere of normativity to represent representations as representations. Drawing on Haugeland, what makes rationality distinct is the objectivity that we achieve by virtue of the constitutive skills and commitment we make to getting our conceptual capacities right and refining them when they are wrong. And drawing on Brandom himself, I showed how

metacognition, objectivity, and rationality coincide with the recognitive achievement of self-consciousness, which, once achieved, distinguishes rational from nonrational animals because it becomes essentially definitive of who and what we are.

CONCLUSION

It comes to this: if we wish to answer Dreyfus's challenge while reconciling that answer with the commitments made, respectively, by Brandom and McDowell, then the proposal for the relaxed conceptual holism outlined in Chapter V makes it possible. It seems intuitively compelling to think that we should (1) explain our capacity for rational understanding from the bottom up (as opposed to taking a top-down approach); (2) make sense of the idea that our experience, perception, and action are a part of our rational comportment to the world by recognizing the role concepts play in them, and thereby retaining a minimal form of empiricism; and (3) be able to explain just what it is that makes rationality distinct and that a clear definition of concepts should be a useful part of that explanation.

I have not ruled out that there might be other ways of answering Dreyfus's challenge that can be reconciled with Brandom's and McDowell's commitments; I just cannot imagine another way. First and foremost, it seems necessary to give up on the Sellarsian idea that language is necessary for having concepts, that one only has a concept insofar as one has mastered the use of a word. That strongly suggests a broader notion of concepts than the ones Brandom, McDowell, and Dreyfus entertain. If concepts do not have their primary function in making discursive judgments, then what is their primary function? The answer I opt for here is one that helps me answer Dreyfus's challenge: it gives concepts a clear function in the cognitive lives of an array of highly social and astonishingly intelligent problem-solving animals, including children who do

not yet count as having *mastered* the use of any words in the relevant sense of understanding the commitments one makes by using those words.

The question becomes, then, how does this widely shared capacity for conceptual cognition develop into the rational understanding that adult humans typically enjoy? My proposal in Chapter V outlines an ontogenetic (as opposed to phylogenetic) answer to Dreyfus's challenge. By drawing on Perner, Camp, and Haugeland to present three crucial elements of an answer—representation, concepts, and metacognition—I show how the conceptual abilities of prerational children can be leveraged into the rational, objective grasp of a world proper to human subjects. The answer includes a vital role of our social norms and practices and an existential, constitutive commitment to a coherent understanding of self and world. Language is, no doubt, an integral part of this process, and I acknowledge that the theory I offer here calls for further reflection on this question of language.

McDowell's, Brandom's, and Haugeland's arguments about objectivity and knowledge are all transcendental arguments, in a broad sense. They assume it is possible for us to justify our claims to objective knowledge and unpack the necessary conditions for this possibility. I consider the relaxed holism I propose here to also traffic in transcendental arguments in this sense. However, my proposal avoids the disadvantage of intellectualism that marks McDowell's, Brandom's, and Haugeland's views, namely, the questionable gap they open up between rational humans, on the one hand, and prerational children and nonrational animals on the other hand. Rather than impose a gap, relaxed holism highlights what we share with our non- and prerational fellows, while retaining a way to explain what makes rational human understanding distinct. I've traded the

metaphor of a "gap" for a "fold." The human animal is an animal folded back on itself and made aware of and answerable to how and what it thinks; its conceptual understanding is likewise folded back on and applied to itself to assess the use, misuse, and abuse of concepts, according to social norms.

This returns me to the brief discussion of Sellars's manifest image that I began with in the introduction. There, I framed what I am doing as an attempt to overcome Sellars's idea that the manifest image is beset with an "irreducible discontinuity" in the world that results from a "radical difference in level between man and his precursors."[172] This discontinuity and radical difference is Sellars's language for the gap that Brandom and McDowell perpetuate in their work. If my proposal of a relaxed conceptual holism can be fleshed out in greater detail, it ought to undermine the idea that there is an irreducible discontinuity in the manifest image (and with it, perhaps, the distinction between the manifest and scientific image). It would do so, in part, by attending to and accounting for the marvelous cognitive abilities of other animals that are so often overlooked in the intellectualist circles of philosophy of mind. A fully developed, relaxed conceptual holism would contribute a new way to solve the problem Sellars sets out to address in "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," by reconciling our capacity for objective thought with our animality and illuminating our continuity with other animals.

[172] Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," 6.

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