

Italo Testa

Criticism from within Nature:

The Dialectic between First and Second Nature from McDowell to Adorno¹

(Draft: published in "Philosophy and Social Criticism", 33 (4): 473-497)

1. Naturalism and the philosophy of nature.

In the first part of this paper my intent is to characterize McDowell's position as a naturalism *with nature*, i.e., as a conception of naturalism that implies the thematization of the notion of nature in a broad and polysemous sense and, correlatively, the rehabilitation of the conciliatory function of that form of philosophic thought, the philosophy of nature, to which the present discussion is dedicated. This 'with nature' is nothing to be taken for granted, if we consider not only the disrepute into which the philosophy of nature seems to have fallen today, but also the fact that we are now witnessing a proposition of forms of naturalism that fundamentally either accept a conception of nature already given beforehand, such as the one proper to natural science, or, even when they seek to give shape to a 'weak naturalism' --- as Habermas has recently done --- do so without a full and proper analysis of the very notion of nature --- and thus present themselves as forms of naturalism *without nature*. After this preliminary operation I tackle the definition of the relation between first and second nature --- the crux of my argument --- while examining some problems with McDowell's conception; I then attempt to show the dialectical character of that relation. This, in the first place, will bring out the need to extend the notion of second nature to the social dimension, understanding it not just as 'inner' second nature --- individual mind --- but also as 'outer' second nature --- objective spirit. In the second place the dialectical connection between these two notions of second nature will point the way to a critical use of the concept itself, which will link up with a theory of reification. Furthermore, I shall

endeavor to fit my reflection into the problematic constellation of *critical theory*: my analysis in fact rests on the question whether, within a critical theory, the philosophy of nature can be recaptured today, in such a way as to give meaning to the very notion of socio--philosophical criticism of reality. I shall attempt to obtain this result by showing, on the one hand, that the theoretical project of *Mind and World* does meet some of the requirements proper to first--generation critical theory, while utilizing, on the other hand, Adorno's theory of second nature as a critical antidote to McDowell's quietism. My aim, then, is to produce an immanent criticism of McDowell's project which --- through immersion in contemporary thought --- is capable of rehabilitating certain aspects of Adorno's paradigm that have fallen by the wayside in Habermasian theory.

1.1. Habermas and weak naturalism without nature. In *Wahrheit und Rechtfertigung*, and more recently on the occasion of the *Adorno--Konferenz* in Frankfurt,² Habermas has developed the concept of a 'weak naturalism' [*Schwacher Naturalismus*], intended as an alternative to the aggression carried out by reductionist naturalism against the normative self--understanding of human beings. Despite its claim --- nominally far stronger than McDowell's --- to reconcile Kant and Darwin, Habermas' weak naturalism is not developed on the basis of a philosophical rethinking of the notion of nature, but rather through a (nearly transcendental) pragmatic reflection on the co--originality and irreducible complementarity of the first--person perspective of the performative stance of the participant in an interaction and the third--person perspective of the observer. This, for Habermas, corresponds to the dualism between the logical space of the rationally arguing interpreter's normative understanding and the logical space of the objectifying description that understands nature as a causally closed realm: a bifurcation that coincides with the dualism --- criticized by McDowell, as we shall see --- between logical space of reason and logical space of nature understood as causal realm of law.³ In this way the concept of nature is assumed as already given and simply made to apply to the logical space of objectifying description, and is understood as the domain of legal causality.

1.2. *The postmetaphysical test.* Habermas' reluctance to consider the hypothesis of a redefinition of our understanding of nature --- except in the sense of a transcendental reflection on our linguistic nature --- can be connected with the taboos that the postmetaphysical interpretation of philosophy imposes upon thought. It is perhaps not fortuitous that Habermas, rereading the young Adorno's essay *Die Idee der Naturgeschichte*, maintains that his teacher --- in the attempt to relativize the scientific conception of nature as a realm of mute and meaningless objectified processes, while at the same time attempting to give meaning to a philosophical notion of natural history --- ended up by calling on a metaphysical conception of nature (Schelling's *natura naturans*), interpolated with a philosophy of history (the history of nature as an odyssey of spirit). The broadening of the concept of nature beyond the limits defined by modern science and by the linguistic turn cannot --- for Habermas --- pass the test of postmetaphysical thought.⁴ And on this point it would not be difficult to show that if Adorno is guilty of metaphysics then McDowell is no less so, given his explicit commitment to extending the concept of nature, connected with an epochal diagnosis of modernity. But perhaps the question is different from the way Habermas puts it, and the postmetaphysical test does not regard metaphysics *tout court*, but bad, foundationalist metaphysics alone. Rather than branding any attempt to relaunch the philosophy of nature as metaphysical, it may rather be a question of asking --- in the cases at hand --- whether Adorno's and McDowell's extended conceptions of nature are capable of eluding the arrogance of imperialist, foundationalist metaphysics⁵.

2. *John McDowell: naturalism with nature.*

In *Mind and World* it is clear from the very beginning that reductionist bald naturalism can only be confronted on the basis of the thematization of the very notion of nature, where what is at stake is nothing less than the overcoming of that ontological dualism of reason and nature which gives rise to modern epistemological anxiety.⁶ Such an operation will then be understood --- as *Two Sorts of Naturalism* explicitly asserts --- as a question of the philosophy of nature.⁷

2.1. *Nonfoundationalist philosophy of nature.* Like his ethics, McDowell's philosophy of nature adamantly pursues a nonfoundationalist approach. For McDowell an ontological foundationalist approach would be one that, accepting the basic dualism in the understanding of the two terms, then attempts to identify them, reducing the one to the other, and in that sense founding reason upon nature and nature upon reason.⁸ The nonfoundationalist stance in the philosophy of nature is a first aspect shared by McDowell and Adorno. The latter, in the essay of his youth *Die Idee der Naturgeschichte*⁹ --- we later find some of the same ideas in the *Excursus* on 'Naturgeschichte und Weltgeist' of the *Negative Dialektik*¹⁰ --- had the precise aim of going beyond the ontological dualistic conception of nature and history, nature and reason, to work out a notion of natural history or of dialectical nature as a concrete unity of the *relata*: not, that is, as an abstract, foundationalist identity, which founds the terms --- understood in isolation --- on one another, but rather as a concrete unity of terms among which an inner relation subsists, and which are therefore identical and nonidentical.

2.2. *Diagnostic spirit.* McDowell's revision of the concept of nature is designed to diagnose the cause of that --- typically modern --- mental block which generates the philosophical concern and anxiety to solve the problem of the possibility of the relation between mind and world. This anxiety gives rise to an oscillatory pathology, since --- in the attempt to answer the question --- thought is captured in an inexorable pendular movement between the extremes of a coherentism that is unanswerable to experience and a foundationalism that utilizes the myth of the given as an external constraint on thought but, at the same time, as an exculpation from all rational answerability.

McDowell's diagnosis identifies the cause of the pathology in the dualism between reason and nature, and thus reconstructs that dualism as produced by the advent of the modern scientific conception of nature. The broadening of the notion of nature is, in that sense, the cure that is to remove the cause that produces the mental block and thus gives rise to anxiety. The 'diagnostic spirit' of McDowell's philosophical enterprise, already announced in the introduction to *Mind and World*,¹¹ is thus not simply a metaphor but has to be taken seriously as, at once, a Hellenistic, Hegelian and Wittgensteinian legacy that McDowell intends to assume. His philosophical enterprise therefore has a

therapeutic purpose, akin to the *pharmakon* of ancient *skepsis*, designed to dissolve unease by removing the philosophical theory that is causing the problem. Albeit without quietistic accents, in Adorno's enterprise too we find, from the very beginning, a diagnostic spirit and a therapeutic purpose. Thus in his 1931 conference *Die Aktualität der Philosophie*, Adorno maintains that philosophy has to approach the questions of traditional metaphysics not seeking new answers but rather showing the mere appearance of the question, and thus therapeutically dissolving the problem.¹² Indeed, his mature conception of a negative dialectic takes up the moment of ancient skepticism in the Hegelian dialectic and therapeutically turns it against the very positivity of the speculative, which is accused of being a new kind of identifying thought [*das identifizierende Denken*]¹³.

2.3. Critical spirit. The diagnostic stance also imbues McDowell with a philosophy endowed with critical spirit. The diagnosis is not limited to the mere description of a phenomenon but is, at the same time, critical of the appearance connected with it: it shows that the sensation of feeling obliged to face the problem of the possibility of the relation between mind and world is illusory.

2.4. Epochal diagnosis. The critical diagnosis proposed by McDowell is, moreover, an epochal diagnosis, in a sense close to the one utilized by Axel Honneth (*Zeitdiagnose*) in the field of social philosophy --- and Honneth, as is clear in *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit*, forges the notion with an eye to both Hegel and Wittgenstein.¹⁴ McDowell, in fact, sets out from the idea that there is a notion of nature broader than nature understood as realm of law, disenchanted dominion of objects with no normative relations between them. Denying science exclusive rights to the concept of nature, McDowell has to undertake a genealogical reconstruction to show how the conception of the logical space of nature as a realm of law is not in itself innate in our mind but, rather, is the effect produced by the modern scientific revolution on the philosophical understanding of nature.¹⁵ His historico--genealogical reconstruction is thus related to the criticism of the absolutization of the objectified notion of nature and fits into a broader criticism of modernity. McDowell's epochal diagnosis is in fact designed to deabsolutize the modern conception of nature: not to liquidate it but to show and to

legitimate the limits of its validity, while at the same time exhibiting the theoretical pathologies connected with its absolutization. This epochal diagnosis is, moreover, to be understood as the exercise of that standing obligation to reflect critically on and review the standards to which, in McDowell's view, reason, as second nature, is internally subject, and which can be exercised only as self-criticism from within, as reflectiveness¹⁶ --- that is, as the exercise of an immanent self-reflection and self-scrutiny. If reason, as second nature, is intrinsically historical, both in its matter and in its form, as McDowell believes, then the very diagnostic reconstruction undertaken in *Mind and World* has to be understood as the performance of that task of bringing modern reason to reflect on itself already individuated by Horkheimer and Adorno as proper to philosophy.

2.5. *Intersection with the philosophy of history.* The philosophy of nature, proceeding through a diagnostic criticism of modernity, not only makes available a broad notion of nature itself, but inevitably ends up by intersecting in a number of ways with the philosophy of history. *In primis* the criticism of modernity, as self-criticism of reason, would appear to demand at least a minimal framework of philosophy of history --- which in the case of Adorno and Horkheimer was considerably more than minimal. In the second place the dualism between reason and nature --- since reason, also as second nature, is historical --- gains precision and breadth in a dualism of history and nature. Thus the task of a --- nonfoundational --- philosophy that seeks to thematize and rethink the very concept of nature must be that of rethinking the concept of history as well, as Adorno saw far more clearly than McDowell,¹⁷ who has neglected this second horn of the dilemma, uncritically trusting in the notion of history expressed by the Gadamerian tradition¹⁸ --- and thus of thinking the dialectical unity of the terms without yielding to the abstract identification of the one with the other.

2.6. *Habermas' criticism of Adorno.* We note, in the margin, that this connection between philosophy of nature, philosophy of history and epochal diagnosis of modernity that we find in McDowell is precisely the object of Habermas' criticism of the first-generation Frankfurt School, and in particular of Adorno's concept of natural history.¹⁹ For Habermas, Adorno's --- and, in the last analysis, also McDowell's --- metaphysical move consists in the presupposition of a concept of

nature broader than that of modern science. Habermas takes this to be a mythico--archaic notion of undivided and nonobjectified nature, supposedly followed --- with nature's derailment --- by the rift between man and nature, by which a human being becomes, unwittingly, a detached fragment. But reason, thus constituted in its dualistic opposition to nature, is itself nature forgetful of itself.²⁰

2.7. *Anamnesis of nature and the risk of remythologization.* Diagnosis of the causes of the pathology of modernity is made possible by an anamnesis that, for diagnostic purposes, reconstructs the patient's complete physiological and pathological, personal and hereditary history. Bringing back to light an Aristotelian notion of nature as the living being of the animal, and at the same time reminding the rational subject of the naturalness of reason itself, McDowell presents us with a partially secularized version of that which in Adorno was technically defined as 'anamnesis of nature' [*Eingedenken des Naturs*]²¹: the task, which the self--reflection of reason cannot shirk, of remembering its own naturalness. Thus for McDowell the fact that 'we tend to be forgetful of the very idea of second nature'²² must be combated through the remembrance of that idea. 'Modern naturalism,' in its turn a moment of the historical self--understanding of reason that cannot be eliminated, 'is forgetful of second nature.'²³ Adorno, too, combats the historicist tendency to forget that reason is --- according to an expression we also find in McDowell --- a 'bit of mere nature,'²⁴ incorporated in it. By the same token, Adorno combats the tendency of blind materialism and naturalism to forget that nature is more than mere mute and blind mechanism; indeed, as organic endowment, it is the support of history and has a longing for it --- and here Adorno's anamnesis expresses a theologico--redemptive demand that is overdetermined compared to McDowell's more sober remembrance. The anamnesis of nature, while reopening the doors of meaning and of normativity to nature, must nevertheless flee --- as McDowell often tells us --- the temptation to reenchant the world, regressing to an enchanted and magical conception²⁵ --- a demand openly expressed by Adorno himself, when he tells us that the anamnesis of nature must resolutely keep its distance from the risk of a remythologization or of a return to the origin²⁶.

2.8. *Deflated conciliation.* The task of the philosophy that proceeds in anamnesis and in diagnosis is for McDowell nothing less than ‘reconciliation.’²⁷ The therapeutic function of philosophy, understood as a Hellenistic--Wittgensteinian quietant, thus shoulders the Idealist legacy of a conciliation that had already presented itself as the *telos* of the epochal diagnosis of the suffering of modernity in Hegel's *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*. The reconciliation makes its appearance here in the classical sense of the *Versöhnung* between reason and nature, and in the quietant that liberates us from modern philosophical anxieties. This, in any event, is a deflated version of conciliation, which drops the theological surplus that the notion still held in Adorno, linking up with the impossible possibility of human redemption and, through Lukács and Benjamin, of the resurrection of nature²⁸.

3. *Polysemy of nature.*

Remembrance of nature, and of the philosophy of nature itself, leads McDowell to work out a notion of naturalism of second nature that is alternative to naturalism of first nature. To understand in what these two forms of naturalism consist, we first need to define more precisely the very notions of first and second nature.

3.1. *First nature.* The notion of first nature employed by McDowell, as we have seen, is historically linked to the affirmation and to the history of the effects of the modern scientific revolution. First nature is understood as the objectified domain of processes that have to be made intelligible insofar as they are subject to mere legality, and that are thus considered --- at least in methodological abstraction --- as in themselves empty of meaning and of normative conceptual connections.²⁹ This, in fact, is a strictly Galilean conception, and it is in this light that we have to read McDowell's opposition to the identification of the logical space of natural science with the logical space of causality --- an identification that Habermas does himself make. In *Wahrheit und Rechtfertigung* and in his recent book *Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion*, Habermas maintains that reductionistic naturalism seeks to reduce the performative stance of the speaker to an objectifying causal description, thus presenting a new version of the Kantian antinomy between the determinism of causal

closure and the freedom of an agent who interprets herself or himself in the first person.³⁰ But for McDowell such an identification of the realm of law with causality runs the risk of proposing an obsolete view of science --- obsolete not only with respect to Heisenberg, but with respect to Galileo himself. This identification, moreover, conceals the fact that description itself is not extraneous to the space of reasons and that the act of instituting causal relations can be understood as a rational operation through which justificatory relations are established (so that reasons can be causes). The Galilean image of science is, in conclusion, interpolated by McDowell with the Weberian idea of disenchantment, in a manner not unlike that of *Dialektik der Aufklärung*.³¹

3.2. *Second nature*. The result of the criticism of the modern conception of nature is not for McDowell the abolition of the legitimacy of scientific understanding --- that is not in question --- but rather the possibility of not identifying nature with the realm of law. The *desideratum* is a concept of nature that incorporates reason without dropping the *sui generis* character and autonomy of rationality in its own sphere, allowing us to reunderstand conceptual powers as something natural, but in a broader sense of naturalness. (Similarly, Adorno writes in his *Aesthetic Theory* that second nature – referred here to logicity – is a kind of ‘being sui generis’ [*Sein sui generis*], thus anticipating McDowell’s understanding of spontaneity and the space of reason as ‘sui generis.’)³² It is the problem of the thinkability of a normative nature or, in another respect, of the immanentization -- naturalization or detranscendentalization would be other terms to express something analogous --- of norms. For McDowell, we can conceive of nature as something not extraneous to normativity to the extent that normativity --- understood here solely as conceptual normativity and thus as an expression of human *logos* --- is not in its turn an occult supernatural power, but rather something that is part of our way of living, an expression of our natural being as (rational) animals.³³ This means that conceptual powers are something that in our form of animal life we are individually inclined to bring to maturity through the support of the intersubjective and socio--historical process of education. In this sense for McDowell second nature is first of all reason, understood as the inner nature of individuals. Second nature can in fact be understood as a certain sort of responsiveness to the

environment --- and, properly speaking, to that human environment which is the world --- that is part of our way of being natural and that consists specifically in a responsiveness to reasons.³⁴ We are thus rational animals: animal individuals whose being natural is permeated with rationality.

3.3. *A short history of second nature.* Before analyzing this characterization of second nature in more detail, let us make a historical *excursus* on the concept in question. In Hegel, first of all, the ‘ethical life’ [*Sittlichkeit*] of the *Grundlinien* presents itself as a second nature with respect to the first naturalness of Greek ethical life, and not with respect to the first naturalness of the object of modern science. In Lukács, by contrast, we can find that transformation of the concept of second nature, mediated by Marx, that comes down to McDowell. In his *Theorie des Romans* Lukács in fact sees the ideal of human community of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* as the expression of a humanized and nonalienated second nature, understood as a recognitive community that is substantiated by its social structures, in which it can express the freedom of its action.³⁵ This humanized second nature is thus distinct from the alienated second nature of modernity --- the reified social world whose social structures present themselves to humankind as something extraneous, a mute world of things made of frozen spirit, which has the same mutism and manifests itself as a necessity that illusively reproduces the necessity of the objectified natural world. Second nature in this sense is second with respect to first nature --- understood as the objectified domain of mute things perceptible to the senses --- and not with respect to Greek first nature, as in Hegel's case.

3.4. *Inner nature.* McDowell's second nature is thus not identical to the concept of Greek nature, neither is it identical to the concept of humanized second nature we find in Marx and Lukács: if this were McDowell's intent, he could easily be accused of championing a false conciliation. McDowell explicitly utilizes the notion of second nature for the most part to indicate the ‘inner nature’ of the individual, the form that the natural character of a human being acquires through the mediation of *Bildung*. Here what I wish above all to emphasize is that the naturalness of the animal living being, understood as the individual's inner nature --- a notion that recurs in *Two Sorts of Naturalism* --- is as such opposed to the outer nature of the environment and of the body itself understood as an object

in the realm of law. In this sense second nature, distinct from the first, effectively seems to recall the first--person phenomenological experience of the living being; that is, of perceiving oneself, in Plessner's terms, in the first place as *Leib* (a body that is my body), and only in the second place as *Körper* (the body as an organic substrate that is objectifiable within a third--person description).³⁶ But here we are up against the same problem as before: defining second nature solely as inner nature is a reductive operation that does not take the very sense of second nature into account. What in fact seems to be needed is a complementary notion of nature as social and human--historical environment/world. Responsiveness to reasons, if it is not solely responsiveness to reasons that are found in the head but that are already part of the deliverances of experience, and that are to be understood in a realistic sense --- they are already there, as ethical reasons, before we become sensitive to them --- has to be understood as responsiveness to reasons directly experienced in the normative structure of social interactions and institutions. Moreover, the only way in which such responsiveness to an environment permeated with reasons can take shape is through the mediation of the educational process carried by language, in which the historically elaborated conceptual heritage is deposited as tradition. Therefore the individual's inner second nature has as its social condition not only the endowments of first nature but also social second nature. Thus we have to distinguish between at least two --- integrated --- senses of second nature in McDowell's discourse: and this should also impact on the very notions of rationality and mind, which at this point are to be thought of as objective rationality and as common, collective mind. The fact that McDowell neither really distinguishes nor connects these two senses of second nature is the hidden reason why -- I would suspect -- he does not understand the process of *Bildung* and of moral life intersubjectively³⁷. Of course McDowell wants reason and spontaneity to be within reality, i.e., real features of our world as we experience it; but, in the final analysis, he maintains that only individual reason can be real.

4. *Two sorts of naturalism.*

Once we have drawn these threads out from the notion of second nature we find ourselves with more elements in our effort to understand the meaning of the naturalism of second nature and of its sustainability. And in this sense we can also better grasp that which differentiates the two sorts of naturalism.

4.1. Naturalism of first nature. Bald naturalism is a quietistic strategy that, like McDowell's broad, 'liberal naturalism'³⁸, acts on the causes that produce modern anxiety:³⁹ hence it does not consist in an answer to the questions of modern epistemology but rather aims at dissolving the apparent necessity of answering the question, showing that the natural first world is already in order just as it is. This naturalism does not coincide with eliminativism, since it does not intend to eliminate the deliverances of conceptual spontaneity from the furnishings of the world, but rather makes use of a reductionistic tactic: it aims to reconstruct conceptual normativity on the basis of conceptual materials drawn from nature understood as realm of law. Thus bald naturalism does not silence modern anxieties through an extension of the notion of nature --- since it does not touch the objectified modern notion in the least --- but rather by denying the *sui generis* status of conceptual spontaneity. Bald naturalism --- a version of Quine's naturalized epistemology --- resolves the opposition between reason and nature abstractly: namely, by leaving the impoverished modern understanding of the two terms intact, and then going on to found reason on first nature.

4.2. Mitigated or anamnestic naturalism. Also McDowell's liberal, broad, mitigated naturalism carries out a reconstruction --- it would be better to say 'reunderstanding,' in light of his avowed anticonstructivism --- of human conceptual powers. Nevertheless, this reunderstanding --- unlike bald naturalism --- is not carried out on the basis of materials of first nature. Thus *logos*, human second nature, has to be reunderstood on the basis of materials of second nature itself: on the basis of itself. We note, first of all, the effect of circularity, which perhaps would not trouble McDowell all that much. A part of the conceptual materials he uses goes back to finds of the historical tradition, deposited for example, but not solely, in the Aristotelian understanding of living being. But the problem that McDowell ought to thematize better is the very status of this operation. Is it a matter of

hermeneutic self--understanding, as the repeated references to Gadamer lead us to believe? In some respects the most sensible idea would be that of methodologically connecting the operation with what McDowell says about the structure of practical rationality and, more generally, of human self--reflective rationality.⁴⁰ Anamnesis of second nature would then be an exercise of reflection internal to the viewpoint of the rational animal, whose self--interpretation would thus be legitimated on the basis of itself, expressing the sense of its own rationality. Such self--reflection also has a historical character, since it brings back to light elements of the self--understanding of the rational animal's inner experience: elements that are deposited in the historical tradition and that have been obfuscated by the absolutization of objectifying understanding.

4.3. Relation between first and second nature. In appearance the two sorts of naturalism are profoundly different, even though their objective is the same, and even though both produce a partially enchanted image of nature. However, it is important to bring into sharper focus the question regarding the relation between first nature and second nature within mitigated naturalism: in fact the very possibility of giving meaning to the distinction between mitigated and bald naturalism depends on the intelligibility of that relation. It is in fact not sufficient to generically assert that 'our nature is largely second nature':⁴¹ particularly problematic here is, precisely, what McDowell means by 'largely.'

4.3.1. Human potentials. Second nature depends not only on the historical factor of *Bildung* but also on the natural component of organic potentials. We can develop a second nature because we have a certain natural endowment, i.e., specific potentials that, if adequately developed, permit us to acquire second--nature dispositions. But in what sense are such potentials natural? From the Aristotelian standpoint it is clear that it is not necessary to conceive the naturalness of such potentials in terms of first nature, since first nature is a subsequent notion. McDowell, however, aims neither at a reenchantment of the world nor at the delegitimization of the scientific view of the world, which continues to be binding for us. Hence it is necessary for us to view these potentials also as first--nature potentials, proper to our *Körper*.⁴²

4.3.2. *Constraints and limitations of first nature.* McDowell maintains, in *Two Sorts of Naturalism*, that second nature is such because it permits us to distance ourselves from first nature.⁴³ First nature is thus seen as mere necessity --- constraint --- as in Adorno's image (brute nature as mere self--preservation, from which reason detaches itself in a tremendous self--preserving effort, asserting its freedom in the face of natural necessity)⁴⁴ and second nature as that which ought to free us from natural pressure. Thus nature ceases to have unquestionable authority over us, and we are now subject only to the authority of reason (and of experience as its component).⁴⁵ But this capacity for distancing -- Plessner's eccentricity [*Exzentrizität*]⁴⁶ -- is nonetheless a component of first nature, even though it must be activated and substantiated through education.

Second nature has an emancipating function with respect to first nature, which nonetheless imposes limits on it. In the first place the sort of second nature we can acquire depends on the sort of first nature that is proper to our form of life.⁴⁷ What is more, first nature imposes limits on the exercise of rational reflection: in fact, as Wittgenstein shows in *Über Gewißheit*,⁴⁸ the sort of self--reflection that we can exercise --- and the sensibleness of its critical scrutiny --- depends on how the world is made; furthermore, as his arguments on private language show, reflection cannot have a merely private character, since the intersubjective community is itself a fact of first nature.⁴⁹

5. *The dialectic between first and second nature.*

Has the transition from first to second nature truly been completed? There is a further perspective under which the relation between first and second nature proves to be problematic. Examining it will also be the occasion for a critical examination --- that I can only briefly sketch here --- of Adorno's theory of second nature. Let us consider the fable of the rational wolves, a thought experiment that McDowell recounts in *Two Sorts of Naturalism*.⁵⁰ Let us say that a number of wolves --- not just one, otherwise we would immediately fall into a number of Wittgensteinian difficulties --- manage to acquire *logos*, as the power to speak and give expression to conceptual capacities. The acquisition of *logos*, in McDowell's hypothesis, would make available to the wolves not only a further cognitive

capacity, but also a possibility of behavior not entertained by merely natural wolves. Such wolves would have the possibility of considering alternative possibilities of behavior, different from those of other wolves: even if this does not mean they would not continue to have a first nature, which, for example, makes them hunt in packs. They could, however, take a step back with respect to their first nature. The story of these 'deliberative wolves' is thus an expedient to bring to light the inner connection between reason, freedom and critical stance. If, however, we consider the fable rather more disenchantedly, we can come up with a less optimistic ending than the one privileged by McDowell. It is possible to doubt that the transition from first to second nature has ever taken place or that it has ever been fully completed: either in the sense that second nature is a mere illusion, or in the sense that the transition is always in progress. This is perhaps one of the meanings of Adorno's bitter and paradoxical statement that 'in truth second nature is first.'⁵¹ Who is to say that our 'deliberative wolves' are not deceiving themselves when they think they can consider various alternatives? And what guarantee have we that the acquisition of this capacity, if actual, is also stable? At this point, however, it is no longer the wolves of the fable that are in question, but rather those 'deliberative wolves' that philosophic tradition, from the Sophists to Hobbes and to Nietzsche, has considered to be the basis of human society. This doubt could be raised also by a suspicion of foundationalism in reverse: admitting that the transition has already definitively taken place, and that our nature is largely second nature --- may such an admission not turn out to be an attempt to found first nature on second nature? May it not do the dialectic of nature and history wrong, entirely resolving human nature in historical reason?

5.1. Metaphysical and historical version of the dilemma. Excluding an interpretation of the dilemma in a merely eliminativist sense, it would be possible to see the question as a version of metaphysical doubt. But even partial doubt, relative to particular eventualities of deception, is no less damaging. For McDowell's image of rationality we in fact possess no external criterion that permits us to judge whether in a specific case reason fails to transcend first nature, ending up by submitting to its authority rather than to the authority of arguments. This is more precisely the sense of Adorno's doubt

that second nature may often, all too often, end up by being first. Second nature, in fact, is not given to us in itself, but always as appearance endowed with sense, phenomenally, i.e., within a process of self-interpretation in which we possess no final evidence but always fallible elements. We cannot appear to ourselves other than as animals that can act freely, yet this experience of the conditions of sense of an action in the first person is, in any event, an appearance of freedom that can retrospectively prove to be illusory. The only sensible possibility we have is to submit such experience to inner self-reflection: this takes the form of a critique of appearance⁵² that makes us aware of the fragility of our experience of rational freedom. The fragility, fragmentariness and plurality of our second nature – we live in different traditions whose grounds are increasingly perceived as unsure, disputable and subject to reflective scrutiny – may be seen as signs of the fact that second nature is still an unstable appearance. That is why Adorno's reading of natural history cannot be qualified – unlike Habermas' and McDowell's – as a 'hermeneutic of natural history,' which reconstructs from our human standpoint the development of nature as a process whose subsequent levels culminate in our life form (our second nature). In contrast to this hermeneutical view, Adorno's understanding of natural history has to be understood from the very beginning as a kind of materialistic '*Deutung*'⁵³. According to this model we can neither endorse the hermeneutical assumption of givenness and continuity of meaning nor retrospectively reconstruct natural history teleologically --- on the contrary, (first and second) nature, like history itself, is always given to us as a fragment whose meaning is broken. That is why the conflictive movement from the certainties of our shared form of life to their reflective scrutiny should be understood in terms of an unstable movement from first to second nature and back again, rather than in terms of a movement from an already given, unreflective second nature to a reflective one. A model that could be useful to understand the anthropological process of the struggle for recognition too.

5.2. *Social second nature and 'smoke screen'*. We can tackle the problem from a standpoint internal to McDowell's work if we begin, once again, to work out the concept of second nature in a truly consequent manner. Reason, as second nature, is always formed for McDowell in a particular,

historically determined situation, of which both its form and its material contents are substantiated. This means that for McDowell there are neither supra--historical and universal formal criteria of practical reason --- which rules out Apel's transcendentalist perspectives and the criteria of formal pragmatics of Habermas himself --- nor natural facts ascertainable within the logical space of law that can authoritatively command it.⁵⁴ The particular historical situation, in which an individual's rational second nature is formed, can nonetheless always prove to be a smoke screen, which gravely obstructs the exercise of reflective freedom. For McDowell, who once again is not far from that concept of 'critical self--reflection' [*kritische Selbstreflexion*] which is the basis of *Dialektik der Aufklärung* and of *Negative Dialektik*,⁵⁵ there is no other solution for this problem apart from radicalizing the subject's self--reflection as much as possible.

This smoke screen, as we well know, and as it would be useful for McDowell to recall, can be read in at least two ways: a) *as individual smoke screen*, in the case in which our responsiveness to reasons is disturbed by some internal cause and is dominated by our susceptibility to nonrational elements, or dominated by the mere responsiveness to first nature; b) *as social smoke screen*. The smoke screen that manifests itself in the individual may derive not only from individual factors, but from the social structure and the historical tradition in which the individual is situated: the 'social smoke screen' [*gesellschaftlicher Verblendungszusammenhang*] discussed in *Dialektik der Aufklärung*.⁵⁶ McDowell, also as a reader of Marx's early writings, should know this well: all the more since, given his historical conception of the substance of individual reason, he must perforce admit that power relations can intervene in the socialization of an individual, broaching systematic distortions in his capacity to react to reasons and to distinguish them from mere force. Power relations, precisely because reason is a second nature, can contribute to shaping it.

This shapability of the domain of reason is, finally, due to the fact that inner second nature is complementary to the outer second nature of shared ethical life. The social environment, as deliverance of the world of which we have experience, must be understood in its turn as second nature. Clearly, however, also in this case social second nature can be both an expression of freedom

and a smoke screen, which is to say mere appearance of freedom that carries compulsion. This reflection takes us back to the critical use of the concept of second nature and to the distinction, already made by Lukács, between stiffened second nature (the reified social world) and second nature expressing freedom (the ideal of *Wilhelm Meister*, which as such has only been realized in fragments while remaining the utopian *telos* to which human reality tends, as to that in which it would be reconciled).⁵⁷

5.3. *Critical use of the notion of second nature.* The problem of the relation between first and second nature and, then, of the extension of the sense of second nature has led us to the question --- which is central for an immanent criticism of McDowell --- of the critical use of second nature. The consequent development of the concepts employed in *Mind and World* ought to lead us here: yet McDowell ends up by putting forth a merely descriptive theory of the normative second nature of human beings. Yet the spirit of epochal diagnosis could have been applied to second nature itself, both inner and outer, individual and social. In fact McDowell's diagnostics already functions in part as a theory of epistemological reification: what is the concept of first nature that falls within the realm of law if not the result of an alienation and objectification of experience? Would it not thus be possible to develop a notion of second nature in connection with a theory of social reification? Adorno's theory of social reification was based precisely on this connection with the notion of first and second nature: as, in fact, in *Dialektik der Aufklärung* --- for example in the fragment on 'Man and Animal' --- spirit was understood as alienated nature that separates from itself and that opposes nature reduced to an extraneous dead thing, to which it ends up by assimilating its own inner and social second nature.⁵⁸

6. Adorno's Metacritique.

In conclusion I wish to remark, briefly, on how Adorno's *Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* is the text in which we can find the example of a theory of second nature and of reifying alienation connected not only with the philosophy of history, but which is solidly installed in an epistemological

system of prime value.⁵⁹ In this text of 1956 we can find a critique of the myth of the given, together with a critique of the dualism between schema and content, that goes in the same direction as the coeval critique by Sellars (and by McDowell itself): here, however, critique of the given is explicitly accompanied by an epistemological use of the theory of reification, since the absolutized empirical given is understood as a result of the reification that the subject performs on itself --- connected with a social reification --- and that is reflected epistemologically also in the very image of the substantial Cartesian *cogito*.⁶⁰

In the sphere of this treatment Adorno has occasion to utilize the notion of second nature in a logico--epistemological sense, to indicate synthetic activity --- thus conceptual spontaneity --- and the very system of concepts: in virtue of the logical notion of mediated immediacy, in fact, Adorno can understand conceptual mediation as the very nature of rationality.⁶¹ Thus second nature is a concept that Adorno utilizes, as McDowell does, to indicate inner nature also in the sense of spontaneity. Cognitive inner nature itself can self--reify, as occurs in the empiristic and rationalistic understanding of the subject and of the given; this is also the reflection of a society that is increasingly freighted with the repression of inner nature.

In Adorno's treatment the concept of second nature must, however, be utilized not only to understand individual conceptual powers, but also to penetrate the structure of social reality. Social second nature is the necessary support of inner second nature: but the reconstituted immediacy constantly runs the risk, on both sides, of remythologization: thus it can occur that second nature is actually first, that its appearance of freedom is merely appearance and thus masks a form of compulsion that repeats natural necessity. This means that not only first nature, and the absolutized concept of first nature on which naturalism is based, has to be criticized, but that also the notion of second nature must in its turn be submitted to rational control.

The critical use of the notion of second nature is already implied by the fact that Adorno calls second nature the network of concepts, which as such surpasses the individual in its unboundedness. The demand for a critical use of the concept of second nature emerges, then, from Adorno's very

criticism of the positivization of the thesis of the unboundedness of concepts. For Adorno conceptual mediation must not cancel out the necessity of holding fast the meaning of the immediacy of experience for thought: the idealist thesis of the infinity of the concept --- today embraced *tout court* by Brandom --- for Adorno is to be corrected with the materialist thesis of the primacy of the object. The risk that McDowell's thesis of the conceptual unbounded on the outside may run is the one Adorno indicates when he says that one must not substitute 'the network of concepts for the dialectic of concept and thing.'⁶² The Hegelian thesis of the unboundedness of the conceptual must not, in its turn, be reified for Adorno: a risk to which McDowell --- even as he upholds the need to think experience as a rational bond --- is, in our opinion, constantly exposed, at least to the extent that his philosophical quietism borders on the critique of knowledge. A truly radicalized empiricism ought, in our opinion, to uphold the historical constitution of the rationality of experience, and thus ought to develop the critique of knowledge into a criticism of reality, and the epochal diagnosis of mind into a epochal diagnosis of society. This criticism is of first as of second nature, both inner and outer: criticism of that tradition which in McDowell appears only in its positive role as a neutral vehicle of *Bildung*.

7. Self--criticism.

The last step in our investigation of McDowell leads us to come directly to grips with the concept of critical stance and critical standpoint expressed in *Mind and World* and to relate it directly to the conception proper to Adorno's critical theory. McDowell's concept is, in the first place, a *rational criticism without ultimate foundation*, as in Adorno, since the possibility of appealing to claimed unquestionable foundations is ruled out.⁶³ McDowell's, moreover, is a notion of *criticism without aprioristic formal criteria*, since the form of rationality is not available independently of its historical content. It is, moreover, a model of *internal criticism*, which always sets out from a particular context and which cannot raise itself --- like the famous baron --- out of that context. It is subject to the rational obligation of self--revision, which it can deal with only through reflection on

itself.⁶⁴ Rational criticism is, then, *criticism in re*, responsible before the bar of empirical experience and is thus subject to the control of reality: the dialectic of concept and thing is made necessary by the fact that our way of making contact with the world is through the senses, which accounts for the primacy of the empirical object with respect to our experience. Criticism, precisely because it can proceed only internally, through self--reflection, which is at the same time exposition of the empirical object, *is justified only in its execution*: only retrospectively, then, can it justify itself, as Adorno maintains regarding negative dialectic, in the process of its execution – of its performance – showing *in re* its capacity of rational penetration of experience.⁶⁵ And this process is, at the same time, an individual and common journey of self--transcendence from within, which is to say of self--emancipation and affirmation of freedom. Self--critical reason is, then, intrinsically, *substantially historical*.⁶⁶ Thus individual human reason, reflecting on its historicity, ought to expand its self--criticism in a criticism of the second nature of the social world, or of history as second nature. On the other hand, even though the material subject of such self--reflection are individuals, it is also true that the self--reflection concerns the human collective mind itself, and socially and historically objectified common rationality. In sum, the notion of criticism as self--justifying, internal, self--reflective rational criticism, *is connected with a faceted notion of nature* (first and second, inner and outer, individual and social).⁶⁷ This is due to the fact that criticism is part of our nature, and a theory of human nature must be one that describes also the fact that we possess critical powers. What is more, criticism, as historical and social criticism, can conceive of history in an antifoundationalist sense only by keeping it in dialectical tension with a notion of nature. In conclusion, rational criticism ought to be *dialectical criticism*. This is the aspect of criticism that is underdetermined in McDowell. And this is not only because he does not explicitly develop a notion of dialectic, even as he makes use of intrinsically dialectical analysis. The main reason is that his appropriation of dialectical motifs drops their element of negativity. The unboundedness of the concept, if sundered from the negativity of thought, risks being resolved in the pacifying version of a renunciatory quietism, satisfied with its internal reconciliation. But a road to reopen the course of dialectical negativity

within the project of *Mind and World* is nevertheless open, if one engages in an immanent criticism that exits it.

¹ Previous drafts and parts of this paper were presented at the Colloquium on “Social Philosophy”, Frankfurt University, 28 January 2006, at the Seminar on “Critical Theory”, Urbino University, 26 June, 2005, at the Workshop “Mind and Nature”, Trento, ISTC, 5 December, 2005 and at the Seminar on “Philosophy and Social Sciences”, Milano-Bicocca University, 8 March, 2005. I would like to thank all the participants for their helpful comments and in particular Matteo Bianchin, Paolo Costa, Axel Honneth and Heikki Ikaheimo. Trans. by Giacomo Donis.

²See Habermas, 1999, pp. 7--64, 271--318; Habermas, 2003, pp. 13--40; Habermas, 2005, pp. 187--215.

³See McDowell, 1994, p. XVIII. For the already vast critical bibliography on McDowell, see at least: Di Francesco, 1996; McDowell, 1998; Honneth, 2000; Smith, 2002.

⁴See Habermas, 1988, pp. 35--60 (English trans. pp. 28--53).

⁵ For a distinction between ‘metaphysical theory’, ‘systematic metaphysics’ and a pejorative concept of ‘imperial, systematic metaphysics’, see Testa, 2003, pp. 559--561.

⁶McDowell, 1994, p. 77.

⁷McDowell, 1995, p. 182 ff.

⁸McDowell, 1995, pp. 173--174.

⁹Adorno, 1932, pp. 344--345: ‘Ich verrate aber nicht zuviel, wenn ich sage, daß die eigentliche Absicht dessen, was ich sagen will, dahin geht, die übliche Antithese von Natur und Geschichte aufzuheben; daß also überall da, wo ich mit den Begriffen Natur und Geschichte operiere, nun nicht letztgültige Wesensbestimmungen gemeint sind, sondern daß ich die Intention verfolge, diese beiden Begriffe zu einem Punkt zu treiben, an dem sie in ihrem puren Auseinanderfallen aufgehoben sind’. On this reading, see also Testa, 2005.

¹⁰Adorno, 1966, pp. 295--353 (English trans. pp. 300--350).

¹¹McDowell, 1994, p. XI.

¹²Adorno, 1931, pp. 333--336.

¹³ Adorno, 1966, p. 150 (English trans. p. 148).

¹⁴Honneth, 2001, pp. 71--72.

¹⁵McDowell, 1994, pp. 70--71.

¹⁶See McDowell, 1994, p. 81.

¹⁷See Adorno, 1932, p. 354: ‘Aber weit mehr ist zu postulieren. Wenn die Frage nach dem Verhältnis von Natur und Geschichte ernsthaft gestellt werden soll, bietet sie nur dann Aussicht auf Beantwortung, wenn es gelingt, das geschichtliche Sein in seiner

äußersten geschichtlichen Bestimmtheit, da, wo es am geschichtlichsten ist, selber als ein naturhaftes Sein zu begreifen, oder wenn es gelänge, die Natur da, wo sie als Natur scheinbar am tiefsten in sich verharrt, zu begreifen als ein geschichtliches Sein’.

¹⁸McDowell, 1994, pp. 126 n., 185--187.

¹⁹See Habermas, 2003, pp. 13--40.

²⁰See Horkheimer and Adorno, 1947, pp. 56--57 (English trans. p. 39).

²¹Horkheimer and Adorno, 1947, p. 58 (English trans. p. 40).

²²McDowell, 1994, p. 86.

²³McDowell, 1994, p. 85.

²⁴McDowell, 1994, p. 70. See Adorno, 1966, pp. 285--286 (English trans. p. 289): ‚Daß Vernunft ein anderes als Natur und doch ein Moment von dieser sei, ist ihre zu ihrer immanenten Bestimmung gewordene Vorgeschichte. Naturhaft ist sie als die zu Zwecken der Selbsterhaltung abgezweigte psychische Kraft; einmal aber abgespalten und der Natur kontrastiert, wird sie auch zu deren Andere m. Dieser ephemere tragend, ist Vernunft mit Natur identisch und nichtidentisch, dialektisch ihrem eigenen Begriff nach. Je hemmungsloser jedoch die Vernunft in jener Dialektik sich zum absoluten Gegensatz der Natur macht und an diese in sich selbst vergißt, desto mehr regrediert sie, verwilderte Selbsterhaltung, auf Natur; einzig als deren Reflexion wäre Vernunft Übernatur’ (‚The prehistory of reason, that is a moment of nature and yet something else, has become the immanent definition of reason. It is natural as the psychological force split off for purposes of self--preservation; once split off and contrasted with nature, it also becomes nature’s otherness. But if that dialectics irrepressibly turns reason into the absolute antithesis of nature, if the nature in reason itself is forgotten, reason will be self--preservation running wild and will regress to nature. It is only as reflection upon that self--preservation that reason would be above nature’).

²⁵McDowell, 1994, pp. 71--72.

²⁶ See Adorno, 1966, p. 69 ff. (English trans. p. 61 ff.).

²⁷See McDowell, 1994, pp. 85--86.

²⁸ See Benjamin, 1928 and Lukács, 1920, p. 54 (English trans. p. 64).

²⁹See McDowell, 1994, pp. 70--73.

³⁰See Habermas, 1999, p. 32 ff.; 2003, pp. 13--40; 2005, p. 155 ff. See also Habermas, 2001.

³¹See McDowell, 1994, p. 70. See Horkheimer and Adorno, 1947, pp. 56--57 (English trans. p. 39): ‚Denken, in dessen Zwangsmechanismus Natur sich reflektiert und fortsetzt, reflektiert eben vermöge seiner unaufhaltsamen Konsequenz auch sich selber als ihrer selbst vergessene Natur, als Zwangsmechanismus [...] In der Selbsterkenntnis des Geistes als mit sich entzweiter Natur ruft wie in der Vorzeit Natur sich selber an, aber nicht mehr unmittelbar mit ihrem vermeintlichen Namen, der die Allmacht bedeutet, als Mana, sondern als Blindes, Verstümmeltes’ (‚Thinking, in whose mechanism of compulsion nature is reflected and persists, inescapably reflects its very own self and its own forgotten nature – as a mechanism of compulsion ... In the self--cognition of the spirit as nature in disunion with itself, as in prehistory, nature calls itself to account; no longer directly, as *mana* – that is, with the alias that signifies omnipotence – but as a blind and lame’).

-
- ³² See Adorno, 1970, p. 205 (English trans. p. 198): ‚Gleichwohl ist die Logizität der Kunst die unter ihren Kräften, welche sie am nachdrücklichsten als ein Sein *sui generis*, als zweite Natur konstituiert‘ (,positively speaking, logicity ist the one factor in art that accounts for art’s having a being *sui generis*, or a second nature’). See McDowell, 1994, pp. 76 and 78.
- ³³ McDowell, 1994, pp. 108--110.
- ³⁴ McDowell, 1994, p. 84.
- ³⁵ Lukács, 1920, pp. 140--156 (English trans. pp. 132--143).
- ³⁶ See Plessner, 1928, pp. 296 ff, 303 ff and 367 ff. For a comparison of Adorno and Plessner, see Habermas, 2003; for a comparison of McDowell and Plessner, see Krüger, 1998.
- ³⁷ On this remark see Honneth, 2003, pp. 108--109 and 128--137.
- ³⁸ See McDowell, 2004.
- ³⁹ See McDowell, 1994, pp. 87--88, 108--109.
- ⁴⁰ See McDowell, 1995, pp. 184--185; 1994, pp. 78--86.
- ⁴¹ McDowell, 1994, p. 91.
- ⁴² McDowell, 1994, p. 84.
- ⁴³ McDowell, 1995, pp. 172--173 and p. 188.
- ⁴⁴ See Adorno, 1933, pp. 138--140 (English trans. pp. 52--53); Adorno, 1966, pp. 285--286 (English trans. p. 289 ff.)
- ⁴⁵ McDowell, 1995, p. 172.
- ⁴⁶ See Plessner, 1928, p. 360 ff.
- ⁴⁷ McDowell, 1995, p. 190.
- ⁴⁸ See Wittgenstein, 1969.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ McDowell, 1995, pp. 169--173.
- ⁵¹ Adorno, 1932, p. 365: ‚Es ist in Wahrheit die zweite Natur die erste. Die geschichtliche Dialektik ist nicht bloß Wiederaufnahme umgedeuteter urgeschichtlicher Stoffe, sondern die geschichtlichen Stoffe selber verwandeln sich in Mythisches und Naturgeschichtliches’.
- ⁵² See Adorno, 1966, p. 168 ff.
- ⁵³ See Adorno, 1933.
- ⁵⁴ McDowell, 1995, pp. 194--195.
- ⁵⁵ See Adorno, 1966, p. 16 (English trans. p. 4).
- ⁵⁶ See Horkheimer and Adorno, 1947, p. 59 (English trans. p. 41): ‚Schuld ist ein gesellschaftlicher Verbeldungszusammenhang‘ (, Guilt is a context of social delusion’).
- ⁵⁷ See Lukács, 1920, pp. 140--156 and 52--53 (English trans. pp. 132--143 and 62--64).

⁵⁸See Horkheimer and Adorno, 1947, pp. 283--292 (English trans. pp. 245--255). See also Derrida, 2002.

⁵⁹See Adorno, 1956. For this interpretation, see also Testa, 2006.

⁶⁰See Adorno, 1956, p. 110: ‚Das Urmodell der Verdinglichung liegt bei Husserl gar nicht erst in der Ausweitung des Begriffs der Gegenständlichkeit auf Phänomenales, sondern schon in der dogmatischen Position dessen, was scheinbar aller Verdinglichung vorausgeht, des unmittelbaren Datums‘.

⁶¹See Adorno, 1956, pp. 115--116: ‚Was an Erkenntnis in jener zweiten Natur sich abspielt, gewinnt den Schein des Unmittelbaren, Anschaulichen‘.

⁶²Adorno, 1956, p. 115: ‚Der Primat der Logik über die Erkenntnistheorie, der bei ihm der Denkstruktur nach auch noch herrscht, wenn er ihn inhaltlich widerruft, drückt die Substitution des Begriffsnetzes für die Dialektik von Begriff und Sache aus‘ [...] ‚Mag immer es unmöglich sein, das begriffliche Netz zu zerreißen, so ist es doch die ganze Differenz, ob man seiner als eines solchen gewahr wird, es kritisch reflektiert, oder ob man es um seiner Dichte willen für das „Phänomen“ hält‘.

⁶³See Adorno, 1966, p. 9 (English trans. p. xix): ‚Was, nach der herrschenden Vorstellung von Philosophie, Grundlage wäre, entwickelt der Autor erst, nachdem er längst vieles ausgeführt hat, wovon jene Vorstellung annimmt, es erhebe sich auf einer Grundlage. Das impliziert ebenso Kritik am Grundlagenbegriff, wie den Primat inhaltlichen Denkens‘ (‘What would be the foundation, according to the dominant view of philosophy, will here be developed long after the author has discussed things of which that view assumes that they grow out of a foundation. This implies a critique of the foundation concept as well as the primacy of substantive thought’); see McDowell, 1995, pp. 173--174.

⁶⁴See Adorno, 1966, p.16 (English trans. p. xx); McDowell, 1995, p. 194.

⁶⁵See Adorno, 1966, p. 9 (English trans. p. xix): ‚Seine Bewegung gewinnt einzig im Vollzug ihr Selbstbewusstsein‘ (‘a thought of whose moment the thinker becomes aware only as he performs it’).

⁶⁶See Adorno, 1966, p. 16 (English trans. p. xx); McDowell, 1994, pp. 81--83.

⁶⁷See Adorno, 1966, p. 285--286 (English trans.p. 289 ff.); McDowell, 1994, pp. 109--111.

Bibliography

Adorno, Th.W. (1931) "Die Aktualität der Philosophie," in *Gesammelte Schriften* (GS), ed. by R. Tiedemann, Vol. 1, *Philosophische Frühschriften*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp (Suhrkamp TaschenBuch Wissenschaft), 1997, pp. 325--344; trans. "The Actuality of Philosophy," *Telos* 31 (Spring 1977) 120--133.

Adorno, Th.W. (1932) "Die Idee der Naturgeschichte," in GS 1, pp. 345--365.

Adorno, Th.W. (1933) *Kierkegaard. Konstruktion des Ästhetischen*, Tübingen: Mohr--Siebeck, in GS 2, pp. 1--213; trans. R. Hullot-Kentor, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Adorno, Th.W. (1956) *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, in GS 5, pp. 7--245; trans. W. Domingo, *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique --- Studies in Husserl and the Phenomenological Antinomies*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 1983.

Adorno, Th.W. (1966) *Negative Dialektik*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, in GS 6, pp. 7--412; trans. E.B. Ashton, *Negative Dialectics*, New York: Continuum, 1990.

Adorno, Th.W. (1970) *Ästhetische Theorie*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, in GS 7; trans. C. Lenhardt, *Aesthetic Theory*, London, Boston Melbourne and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984

Benjamin, Walter (1928) *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, Berlin: Rowohlt (ed. R. Tiedemann, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp Verlag, 1955, 1974); trans. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, London: Verso, 1998.

Derrida, Jacques (2002) *Fichus*, Paris: Galilée.

Di Francesco, M., Donatelli P. and McCulloch, G. (1996) "Discussion on *Mind and World*," *Iride*, No. 19, settembre--dicembre 1996, pp. 783--801.

Habermas, Jürgen (1988) *Nachmetaphysisches Denken. Philosophische Aufsätze*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp; trans. W.B. Hohengarten, *Postmetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Essays*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 1992.

Habermas, Jürgen (1999) *Wahrheit und Rechtfertigung. Philosophische Aufsätze*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp; trans. *Truth and Justification*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 2003.

Habermas, Jürgen (2001) *Die Zukunft der menschlichen Natur. Auf dem Weg zu einer liberalen Eugenik?*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001; trans. *The Future of Human Nature*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002.

Habermas, Jürgen (2003) "'Ich selber bin ein Stück Natur' --- Adorno über die Naturverflochtenheit der Vernunft. Überlegungen zum Verhältniss von Freiheit und Unverfügbarkeit," in *Dialektik der Freiheit. Frankfurter Adorno--Konferenz 2003*, ed by A. Honneth, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2005, pp. 13--40.

Habermas, Jürgen (2005) *Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion. Philosophische Aufsätze*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, Th.W. (1947) *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, Amsterdam: Querido, in GS 3; trans. J. Cumming, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London: Verso, 1998.

Honneth, Axel, ed. (2000) "Schwerpunkt: die Rationalität der zweiten Natur. John McDowell's *Geist und Welt* in der Diskussion" (with essays by C.B. Christensen, A. Kern, A. Denejkin, M. Quante), *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 48, 6, pp. 889--965.

Honneth, Axel (2001) *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit*, Stuttgart: Reclam; trans. *Suffering from Indeterminacy. An Attempt at a Reactualization of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 2000.

Honneth, Axel (2003) "Zwischen Hermeneutik und Hegelianismus. John McDowell und die Herausforderung des moralischen Realismus", in *Unsichtbarkeit. Stationen einer Theorie der Intersubjektivität*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, pp. 106—137.

Krüger, H.--P. (1998) "The Second Nature of Human Beings: an Invitation for John McDowell to discuss Helmuth Plessner's *Philosophical Anthropology*," *Philosophical Explorations*, No. 2, May 1998, pp. 107—119.

Lukács, György (1920) *Die Theorie des Romans: ein geschichtsphilosophischer Versuch über die Formen der grossen Epik*, Berlin: Paul Cassirer (reprinted: Frankfurt: Luchterhand, 1989); trans. A. Bostock, *The Theory of the Novel*, London: Merlin, 1971.

McDowell, John (1994) *Mind and World*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, (2nd ed. 1996).

McDowell, John (1995) "Two Sorts of Naturalism," in *Mind, Value and Reality*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1998, pp. 167—197.

McDowell, John (1998) *Precis of Mind and World*, and responses from critics, in *Symposium on Mind and World, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (with essays by J. McDowell, R. Brandom, A.W. Collins, C. Peacocke, R. Rorty, C. Wright, and a reply by J. McDowell), Vol. LVIII, No. 2, June 1998, pp. 365—431.

McDowell, John (2004) "Naturalism in the philosophy of mind", in *Naturalism in Question*, ed. by M. De Caro and D. MacArthur, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, pp. 91—105.

Plessner, Helmuth (1928) *Die Stufen des Organischen. Einleitung in die philosophische Anthropologie*, Berlin: De Gruyter
(reprinted: *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 4, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981)

Smith, N.S., ed. (2002) *Reading McDowell on Mind and World* (with essays by R. Bernstein, M. Friedman, R. Pippin, B. Stroud, R. Brandom, Ch. Taylor, G. McCulloch, C. Wright, H. Putnam, Ch. Larmore, R. Bubner, J. M. Bernstein, A. Honneth, and with a reply by J. McDowell), London: Routledge.

Testa, Italo (2003) "Hegelian Pragmatism and Emancipation. An Interview with Robert Brandom," *Constellations*, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 553--570.

Testa, Italo (2005) "Doppia svolta. L'ontologia allegorica del primo Adorno e l'ombra di Heidegger", in *Adorno e Heidegger. Soggettività, arte, esistenza*, ed. by L. Cortella, M. Ruggenini and A. Bellan, Roma: Donzelli, , pp. 159--179

Testa, Italo (2006) "La Metacritica di Adorno nella costellazione contemporanea. Epistemologia dialettica e post--empirismo", in *T.W. Adorno*, ed. by A. Borsari, (forthcoming)

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1969) *On Certainty*, G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (eds.), Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969.