

## **Philosophical Exorcisms, Second Nature, and McDowell**

### I. Introduction

In *Mind and World* (MW), John McDowell sets himself the task of ‘exorcizing’ what he takes to be a distinctively modern philosophical anxiety (MW:xx-xxii). The anxiety in question (at least on one way of putting the point) concerns whether—and if so, how—we can make intelligible the very idea that thoughts, utterances, or anything else may be ‘about,’ say, the world, in the sense that is often couched (in philosophical discussions) in terms of meaning, content, directedness, and/or intentionality. Or, to put the same point in terms of a question which reveals (part of) the source of the worry: As a conceptual matter, can we make sense of how something like (empirical) content could even possibly have a place in the natural world?

The crucial step in McDowell’s ‘exorcism’ takes the form of a ‘reminder’ of an ordinary fact about the natural world that he thinks many philosophers have understandably managed to forget in our current intellectual climate, given how profoundly that climate has been shaped by the rise and success of modern science: namely, the fact that ‘nature includes *second nature*’ (MW:xx, italics in original). That is, according to McDowell, one’s philosophical anxiety about the possible place of content in the natural world can (begin to) subside once one recalls that nature includes a species of animal—*viz.*, human beings—whose normal course of coming to maturity—including, essentially, learning a language—transforms them from the ‘mere animals’ they no doubt are as newborns, into animals with a ‘second nature,’ i.e., into ‘rational animals’ who, as such, are capable (*inter alia*) of producing and understanding contentful thoughts and utterances about the world (MW:123).

Perhaps unsurprisingly—even to McDowell—a vigorous critical debate has grown up around his appeal to ‘second nature’ in MW. In perusing the literature on this topic, I was—and I think one ought to be—struck by at least two features of that debate. The first is the frequency with which McDowell’s critics, while recognizing that the crux of his ‘exorcism’ somehow lies in his ‘reminder’ about ‘second nature,’ nevertheless find themselves nonplussed and even bemused by his discussion of it. Crispin Wright (2002a) provides a representative, if particularly strident, example of this reaction:

But if someone is puzzled about how in the natural world, as he or she conceives of it, there can be such things as ‘demands of reason’—how there can be a real subject matter for various forms of normative discourse—some massive unstated assumption would seem to be at work in McDowell’s suggestion that we can teach him or her otherwise simply by a reminder, however eloquently elaborated in terms of the concepts of *Bildung* [i.e., upbringing or socialization] and the acquisition of Second Nature, that our initiation into such discourses is a matter of perfectly ordinary human upbringing which our nature equips us to receive. (Wright 2002a:155, text in brackets added)

That is, to put the point in the terms I have been using: if one is anxious about whether, as a conceptual matter, something like content could even possibly have a place in the natural world, to be ‘reminded’—apparently as a (putative) matter of empirical fact—that ordinary human socialization transforms human beings from ‘mere animals’ into ‘rational animals,’ can seem simply (and rather blithely) to beg the very questions whose possible resolution has one anxious. Indeed, for this reason some critics have even taken McDowell’s ‘reminder’ to evince a certain deliberate and dismissive obtuseness regarding the source of the philosophical anxiety which they think he means thereby ‘quietistically’ (as they understand that term) to ‘exorcize’.

Moreover, according to many of his critics, McDowell’s ‘reminder’ about ‘second nature’ not only begs the very questions that he means thereby to ‘exorcize’, it also ‘dogmatically’ (as

Wright 1998 puts it) begs the question against an entire class of competing philosophical positions, which McDowell collectively refers to as ‘bald naturalism’ (BN) (Wright 1998:399). That is, McDowell is clear that BN represents a ‘competitor’ to his project of ‘exorcizing’ a philosophical anxiety about content; and he is just as clear that he takes his ‘exorcism’ to be (as he puts it) ‘more satisfying’ than the one on offer from BN (*MW:xix,xxiii*). However, his critics maintain, having provided his ‘reminder,’ McDowell does not then engage with any positive arguments in favor of BN’s alternative approach to ‘exorcism,’ nor with any negative arguments BN might offer against his preferred mode of ‘exorcism’; nor—by his own admission—does he provide any argument to the effect that BN’s ‘exorcism’ is in principle unworkable (*MW:xxiii*).

Two further considerations make McDowell’s seeming refusal to engage in argument with BN all the more troubling to his critics, even those who think that BN ought, ultimately, to be rejected. The first is that McDowell’s ‘reminder’ about ‘second nature’ seems to present no difficulty for BN at all. Thus, Robert Pippin (2002) worries that

without something like a *theory* of second nature, something more than a reminder about such acquisitions, it is not hard to imagine all sorts of bald naturalists nodding in agreement, convinced that the ‘training up’ of ‘neural nets’ can handle second nature considerations just fine. (Pippin 2002:65, italics in original)

The second consideration is that, on McDowell’s use of the expression ‘bald naturalism,’ almost all of the historically dominant forms of philosophical ‘naturalism’—e.g., physicalism, behaviorism, functionalism, supervenience theories, etc.—count as varieties of BN. Thus, if McDowell does not engage argumentatively with BN, even his sympathetic critics worry that this amounts to simply dismissing out of hand an entire tradition in philosophy. Referring to the fact that ‘these [‘naturalist’] positions are not so much as mentioned’ in *MW*, Hilary Putnam

(2002) opines that, ‘this seems to me either a serious oversight or, if the omission is intentional, a tactical error’ (Putnam 2002:186, text in brackets added). Indeed, as Putnam then remarks in a footnote, it appears to him from the Introduction to the second edition of MW that the latter, deliberate reading of the relevant omission is, in fact, the right one:

In his introduction to the 1996 edition of *Mind and World* McDowell disclaims the very need to rule out bald naturalism—it is enough, he now says, to show the sort of reduction bald naturalists are seeking is not necessary. In my view this is quite mistaken. (Putnam 2002:190, fn. 36)

Bearing in mind the content and frequency of these criticisms, the second striking feature of the debate around McDowell’s invocation of ‘second nature’ is the commensurate frequency with which McDowell replies to his critics by charging them with misunderstanding what he is doing in appealing to ‘second nature,’ as well as with having failed to appreciate the dialectical structure of MW. Thus, for example, McDowell (2002) replies to Putnam as follows:

The difficulty Putnam finds in my book seems to me to reflect a failure to attend to what I aim to do in it. Putnam wants me to be engaged in a project more like his own in his Dewey Lectures, and he finds my execution of my somewhat different project obscure where it diverges from that expectation. (McDowell 2002:292)

Similarly, McDowell opines that it is only Wright’s refusal to find anything but a certain sort of philosophical project in MW, which leads Wright to require ‘some massive unstated assumption’ if MW’s project is to be viable: ‘Wright is clearly galled by my work, perhaps particularly by my stance of not aiming to compel my readers into theses, and I think this has prevented him from seeing how straightforward my book really is’ (McDowell 2002:291). And to Pippin’s (2002) worry that his ‘reminder’ has no teeth against BN, McDowell responds that,

[b]y the time second nature comes on the scene for me, it is too late for a bald naturalist to feel comfortable ‘nodding in agreement,’ as Pippin engagingly imagines. The point of my appeal to second nature is to make it unthreatening to hold precisely what bald

naturalists deny—that concepts of conceptual phenomena cannot be integrated into the natural as they conceive of it. (McDowell 2002:303, fn. 5)

Now, while I do think that there is real room for improvement in McDowell’s replies to his critics—and this paper is meant as a step in that direction—I nevertheless think he is clearly right that the sort of criticisms of *MW* I have just sketched are misdirected. In particular, I argue, a proper understanding of what a philosophical ‘exorcism’ is—at least of the sort McDowell undertakes in *MW*—makes plain that it is no failing of *MW*, *qua* the ‘exorcism’ it is, that it does not engage with BN in the way that McDowell’s critics would like it to or even think it must. Indeed, I argue, not only does *MW* not beg any relevant questions against BN, but it in fact does provide, *qua* exorcism, just the sort of arguments against BN—and in favor of its own proposal—that its critics allege it does not. Furthermore, in the course of understanding why *MW* does not beg any questions against BN, it likewise becomes clear how McDowell’s ‘reminder’ also does not beg the very questions he means in *MW* to ‘exorcize’.

The argument of this paper proceeds as follows: in Section II, I clarify how *MW* locates the ultimate source of the relevant anxiety about content in the following inconsistent triad of ideas: (1) ‘minimal empiricism’; (2) the ‘dichotomy of logical spaces’; and (3) what I will call (following McDowell) ‘nature conceived as the realm of law’. In Section III, I clarify the structure and dialectical progression of McDowell’s ‘exorcism,’ and I show why McDowell’s reminder about ‘second nature’ does not beg any questions against BN, as well as why it also does not beg the very questions that McDowell means in *MW* to ‘exorcize’. I conclude in Section IV with my diagnosis of why many of McDowell’s critics have nevertheless thought that *MW* does beg these questions.

## II. The Inconsistent Triad, or What McDowell's Critics Get Right about MW

As I noted in my Introduction, McDowell undertakes in *MW* to ‘exorcize’ a distinctively modern philosophical anxiety: namely, whether—and if so, how—we can make intelligible the very idea that thoughts, utterances, or anything else may have (empirical) content to the effect that things in the world stand thus and so. That is, to use an example, the worry is over whether—and if so, how—it is even possible to make sense of, say, my thinking that my son is asleep in his bed, where that thought is (or, at least, purports to be) about my son and his being asleep in his bed. McDowell begins exposing the source of this worry by addressing a commonly felt tension between two independently plausible ideas, which he calls ‘minimal empiricism’ (ME) and ‘the dichotomy of logical spaces’ (DLS) (*MW:xvi,xix*).

The essential point of ME is perhaps most easily put by appealing (as McDowell does) to W.V.O. Quine’s evocative image of the ‘tribunal of experience’ (*MW:xii*). That is, according to ME, as a fact about the human condition, our ‘cognitive predicament is that we confront the world’ in and through experience, where experience is conceived as consisting of the natural world’s (causally) impressing itself upon us as possessors of sensory capacities (*MW:xii,xv*). However, McDowell argues, for it to be so much as intelligible that our thoughts are about the world we encounter in experience, we must at the same time conceive of what we experience as ‘standing in rational relations to what we should think, not just in causal relations to what we do think’ (*MW:68*); in other words, our experience must constitute a ‘tribunal’ (as Quine puts it) to which our thoughts about the world are rationally ‘answerable’.

That is, according to ME, to make sense of one’s thoughts as having (empirical) content to the effect that things in the world stand thus and so, one must think of those thoughts as

'answerable' to the world, in the sense that the thoughts in question are correct (accurate, warranted, justified, reasonable, true, etc.) or not, according to whether things in the world in fact stand thus and so (*MW:xii*). If we do not think of thoughts as answerable to the world in this way—if we were to suppose, for example, that my thought that my son is asleep in his bed could be 'correct' ('accurate,' etc.) regardless of whether he is asleep, or in his bed, or whether I even have a son—then it makes no sense to think of them as, in fact, about the world, i.e., as having (empirical) content. Indeed, McDowell indicates, insofar as we cannot make sense of 'thoughts' as having content, we cannot even make sense of them as thoughts, nor, *a fortiori*, of ourselves as thinking (*MW:4*). And given our 'cognitive predicament,' according to ME, it is our experience of the world which, *qua* tribunal, must 'mediate' (as McDowell puts it) the answerability of our (empirical) thoughts to the world they are about (*MW:xii,xvii*).

McDowell's preferred way of putting this point about something's having (empirical) content is in terms of something's standing within what he calls (following Wilfred Sellars) 'the logical space of reasons' (*MW:xiv*). That is, in McDowell's terms, to think of something as having content in this way is to understand it as (being capable of) standing in the sort of (normative) relations to other things which Sellars evokes with the thought of one thing's being a reason for another. However, as I understand at least McDowell's talk of 'the logical space of reasons,' there is nothing ineliminable about the reference to 'reasons' that occurs in this Sellarsian formulation of the point; and we could just as easily bring out the essential point of such talk by thinking of what is involved in one thing's being warranted (or justified, or correct, or rational, or accurate, etc.) in light of another.

The essential point of such talk, as I understand it, is to remind us of the existence and distinctive character of the ‘logical space’ which the notion of *reasons*, among others, ‘inhabits’. In other words, its point is to put us clearly in mind again of the distinctive sort of intelligibility that something has, the distinctive sort of relations in which it stands to other things, when it is (understood as) (capable of being) a reason for—as well as warranted or justified by, correct in light of, answerable to, etc.—another. It is in this sense that such notions as content, reasons, warrant, justification, correctness, answerability, etc. inhabit a distinctive ‘logical space’.

Of course, this reminder about the distinctive character of the logical space of reasons (LSR) can be made more clearly if we bring out how it differs from another contrasting case. And indeed, McDowell’s larger point in speaking of ‘the logical space of reasons’ is precisely to contrast this way in which things may be (made) intelligible with the different way in which the natural sciences paradigmatically make things intelligible. That is, the natural sciences paradigmatically make things intelligible by showing how particular cases may be subsumed under (shown to be instances of) ‘laws,’ i.e., descriptions of how things generally happen in the world (MW:xv).<sup>1</sup> For example, physics makes intelligible the constant rate of acceleration of bodies free-falling near the Earth by showing it to be an instance of a general law of

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note here that, on McDowell’s use of the term, it is not only the ‘strict’ or exceptionless laws sought by physics which can count as ‘laws’; for his purposes, the various sorts of ‘non-strict’ or *ceteris paribus* laws characteristic of the so-called ‘special sciences,’ e.g., biology, geology, etc., also count as ‘laws’. Thus, from McDowell’s point of view, the special sciences also attempt to render the natural world nomothetically intelligible, in the sense that contrasts with making it intelligible through LSR. Or, as McDowell (1999) puts the point when considering Ruth Millikan’s views in the philosophy of mind:

She argues that ‘the biological sciences, including physiology and psychology, are distinguished from the physical sciences by their interest not in lawful happenings...but in biologically proper happenings’ (‘White Queen Psychology,’ p. 362). But this does not remove the biological, as she conceives of it, from what I introduced as the realm of law: it is just that the relevant laws are underwritten by considerations about proper function, rather than inductively based on what actually happens. We still have the contrast with the space of reasons. (McDowell 1999:294, fn. 28)

gravitational attraction, according to which bodies falling under such conditions accelerate at 32 feet/second/second until they reach terminal velocity. I will follow McDowell in calling this a ‘nomothetic’ or law-establishing way of understanding the world (*MW:xx*).

And here we come to the other idea mentioned above, ‘the dichotomy of logical spaces’ (DLS), which is commonly felt to be in tension with ME, such as to generate a worry about the very intelligibility of (empirical) content. That is, McDowell points out, as a fact about the logical space in which the natural sciences operate, the notions at work in a nomothetic understanding of the world—e.g., law, force, counter-factual statistical correlation, etc.—

are *different in kind* from the normative relations that constitute the logical space of reasons. The relations that constitute the logical space of nature, on the relevant conception, do not include relations such as one thing’s being warranted, or—for the general case—correct, in the light of another. (*MW:xv*, italics in original)

For reasons that become clear below, I will use the expression ‘the logical space of law’ (LSL) to refer to what McDowell here calls ‘the logical space of nature, on the relevant conception’.

Now, for the purposes of DLS, the crucial point about LSR and LSL is this: if it is true that the notions constitutive of LSL are ‘different in kind’ from the normative ones that are proper to LSR, then it follows that LSR is *sui generis* with respect to LSL, and *vice versa*. And this in turn implies, at a minimum, that the phenomena which instantiate LSR-notions (assuming that there are any such phenomena) are simply not amenable to being made intelligible in the distinctive, nomothetic manner of the natural sciences. It is in this sense, then, that LSR and LSL may be understood as representing a ‘dichotomy’ of logical spaces.

And now we can perhaps appreciate why someone could take there to be a tension between ME and DLS, such as to generate an anxiety about the very intelligibility of (empirical)

content. That is, (1) ME (in pertinent part) expresses the idea that thoughts are intelligible as contentful only insofar as they are (rationally) answerable to the ‘tribunal’ of experience, i.e., the natural world impinging upon possessors of sensory capacities. And (2) DLS implies that LSL—i.e., what someone subject to the anxiety conceives as ‘the logical space of nature’—does not include such relations as one thing’s being (rationally) answerable to another. Thus, since the conception of experience at work in (1) is the idea of a ‘natural happening’ (i.e., part of the ‘logical space of nature’), it is hard to see how ME and DLS could both be true without undermining the very intelligibility of content (*MW*:xx). And thus anxiety sets in.

However, McDowell points out, two quite different ideas must be conflated in order to generate this apparent tension between ME and DLS, such as to give rise to an anxiety about content: (2') DLS proper, i.e., the idea that LSR-notions, such as (rational) answerability, have no place in LSL, i.e., the logical space in which the natural sciences characteristically organize their subject matter; and (3) the idea that LSL just is the ‘logical space of nature,’ i.e., the space of notions that are (or may be) instantiated in the natural world; or, equivalently, the idea that nature, as such, consists only of instantiations of LSL-notions. In *MW*, McDowell calls (3) a ‘disenchanted’ picture of ‘nature conceived as the realm of law’ (NRL) (*MW*:70-1;73).

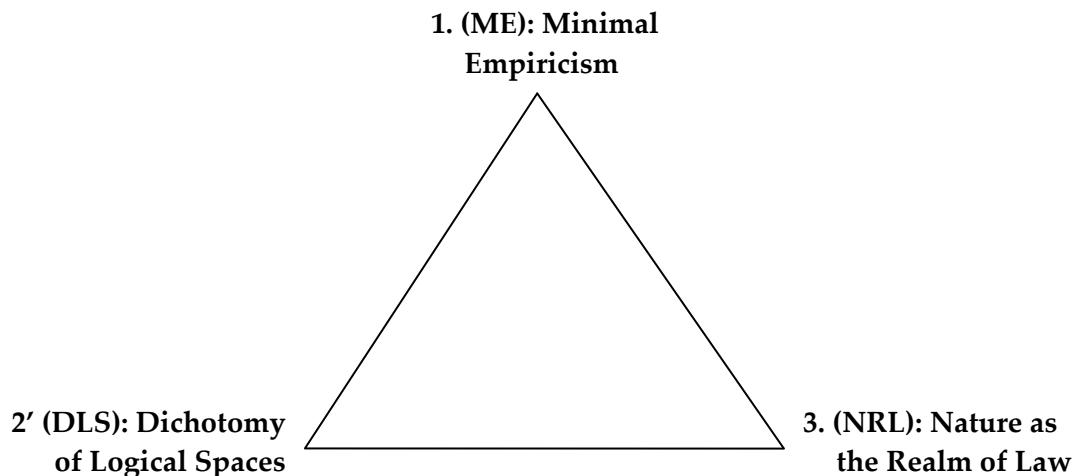
McDowell acknowledges that NRL ‘can seem sheer common sense,’ particularly in light of the rise and success of modern natural science (*MW*:70). Nevertheless, as I discuss in Section III, the whole point of *MW*—and the specific purpose of his ‘reminder’ about ‘second nature’—is to show those who are beset by the anxiety about content that, by their own lights, NRL represents an artificially restricted conception of nature that they can, and should, disavow (*MW*:84-5). However, the present point about NRL is just this: first, that NRL is a distinct idea

not implied by ME and/or DLS, either individually or jointly; and second, that if we abandon NRL for a conception of nature that embraces instantiations of LSR-notions, we can endorse both ME and DLS without thereby threatening the very intelligibility of (empirical) content.

What ME and DLS do together imply is that the idea of (empirical) content is the idea of a natural phenomenon (i.e., a part of nature) which is not amenable to being made intelligible by the (nomothetic) natural sciences. Thus, while it follows from this that the natural sciences cannot bring content as such into view, this fact threatens the intelligibility of the idea of content only if we add the further premise—namely, NRL—that the idea of *nature* (or of a *natural phenomenon*) just is the idea of what the so-called ‘natural sciences’ can bring into view. Indeed, with NRL thus explicitly in place as a premise alongside ME and DLS, it becomes clear why McDowell says that the philosophical question about content, which he aims to ‘exorcize,’ ‘issues from a frame of mind that, when fully explicit, would purport to display an impossibility in what the questions are asked about’ (MW:*xxi*, underline added; cf. also MW:*xxiii*). In other words, on McDowell’s view, what fuels the anxiety he aims to ‘exorcize’ is the inchoate threat that—all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding—(empirical) content is impossible, given what would both have to be true, and could not be true, if it were to exist.

So, to summarize: McDowell shows that the philosophical anxiety about the intelligibility of the idea of (empirical) content, which he undertakes to exorcize in MW, is ultimately rooted not just in the conjunction of ME and DLS, as such, but in the inconsistent triad of ideas that results when those two thoughts are conjoined with NRL. We might graphically represent this inconsistent triad as follows:

**ILLUSTRATION 1**

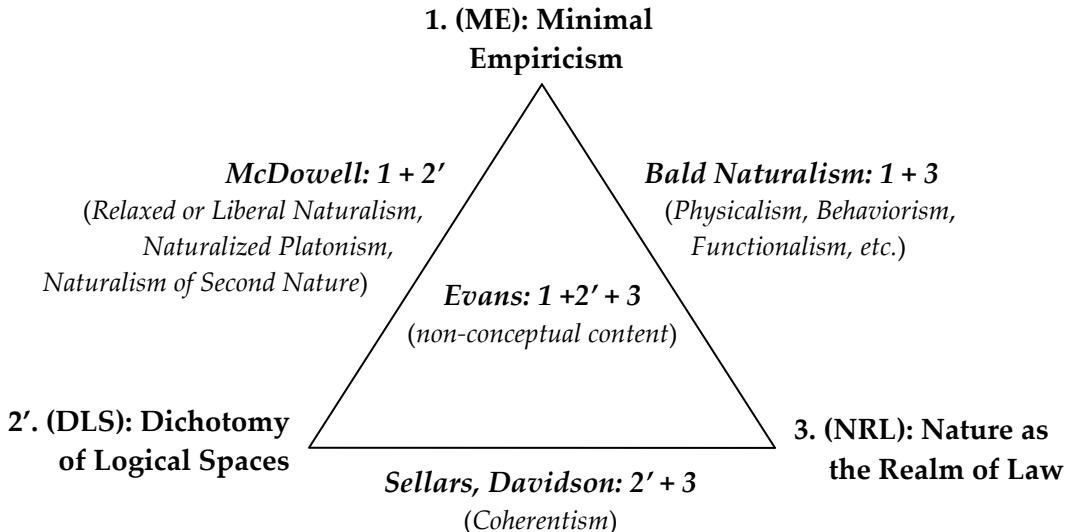


Schematizing the ME-DLS-NRL triad in this way has the further virtue of allowing us to see clearly how the (broadly ‘naturalist’) views McDowell discusses in *MW*—Gareth Evans’ appeal to non-conceptual content; Sellars’ and Donald Davidson’s Coherentism; what McDowell calls ‘Bald Naturalism’; and McDowell’s own view—amount to four possible strategies for dispelling the anxiety about content which is generated by the inconsistency of the triad.

That is, in the face of any (apparently) inconsistent triad of individually attractive views, we can, upon reflection, either deny or accept that the triad is, in fact, inconsistent. If we deny that the triad is inconsistent, then it would seem to be incumbent upon us to show how the triad ought to be understood, so that its actual consistency is clear. If we accept that the triad is inconsistent, then the minimal effective strategy for dealing with that fact is to reject one of its three component-views. Thus, four maximally-conservative strategies for dealing with the (apparently) inconsistent triad are possible: to show that the supposed ‘inconsistency’ is merely apparent; or else to reject either ME, DLS, or NRL. Building on ILLUSTRATION 1, we can thus

map the above (broadly ‘naturalist’) views discussed in MW onto their respective positions in the formal terrain of debate structured by the inconsistent triad:

**ILLUSTRATION 2**



Evans’ appeal to ‘non-conceptual content’—which McDowell takes to amount to Evans’ succumbing to the Myth of the Given<sup>2</sup>—represents, in effect, the first of the four strategies, i.e., to attempt to hold onto all three vertices of the triad by showing their ‘inconsistency’ to be only apparent.<sup>3</sup> That is, Evans argues that there are two sorts of content involved in our thoughts being answerable to the world in the manner required for them to be intelligible as contentful. First, there is ‘non-conceptual content’ had by experience, which nevertheless ‘represents’ how things stand in the world, thus (putatively) enabling experience to serve as a ‘tribunal’ to which

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that, for McDowell, Evans’ extremely sophisticated view is not what the Myth of the Given consists in. Rather it just fails, ultimately, to escape that mythology. I thank Jim Conant for pressing me to make this clarification.

<sup>3</sup> ‘In effect’ is a substantial caveat here. That is, I do not mean to suggest here that Evans (or someone else who likewise appeals to the notion of ‘non-conceptual content’) himself sees his appeal to ‘non-conceptual content’ in this light. That is, I do not mean to suggest that Evans self-consciously takes himself to be attempting to show that the inconsistency of the ME-DLS-NRL triad is merely apparent. My point here is only that Evans’ appeal to ‘non-conceptual content’ instantiates a certain sort of strategy *vis-à-vis* the inconsistent triad of ideas which generates philosophical anxiety about content.

our thoughts may be answerable (MW:53). And second, there is the (constitutively normative) content our thoughts have, which is intelligible as such only insofar as it may be answerable to experience. If this were right (as McDowell argues it can’t be), there would be no inconsistency in cleaving not only to ME and DLS, but also to the idea that experience is ‘natural’ in the sense NRL countenances, because experience would have representational (if ‘non-conceptual’) content, which would be enough for constitutively normative content to be answerable to it.

Sellars and Davidson represent the second strategy. That is, as McDowell understands them, Sellars and Davidson are both properly committed to DLS, and they also recognize (unlike Evans) that ‘if experiences are extra-conceptual, they cannot be what thoughts are rationally based on’ (MW:68). However, McDowell also thinks that Sellars’ and Davidson’s thought reveals the (covert) influence of NRL, which manifests itself in their failing to see that

we need not identify the dichotomy of logical spaces with a dichotomy between the *natural* and the normative. We need not equate the very idea of nature with the idea of instantiations of concepts that belong in the logical space (admittedly separate, on this view, from the logical space of reasons) in which the natural-scientific kind of intelligibility is brought to light [i.e., LSL].

On this view, Sellars is right that the logical space in which natural-scientific investigation achieves its distinctive kind of understanding is alien to the logical space of reasons. The logical space of reasons is the frame within which a fundamentally different kind of intelligibility comes into view. And (the same point in different terms) Davidson is right that ‘the constitutive ideal of rationality’ governs concepts that are for that reason quite special, in comparison with the conceptual apparatus of the nomothetic sciences. But it is one thing to acknowledge this—in Sellarsian terms, to single out a logical space that is to be contrasted with the logical space of reasons. It is another to equate that logical space, as Sellars at least implicitly does, with the logical space of *nature* (MW:xix-xx, italics in original, text in brackets added).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> McDowell’s use of the expression ‘the logical space of *nature*’ is an opportunity for misunderstanding his point that leads me to prefer using the expression ‘the logical space of law’ to refer to the conceptual apparatus, which the so-called ‘natural sciences’ paradigmatically avail themselves of. After all, McDowell means in this passage to distinguish (apparently by mere italicization): (1) what he here calls

Accordingly, McDowell argues, Sellars and Davidson reject ME, which we can now see amounts to the strategic rejection of one vertex of the inconsistent triad (*MW:xviii*,68). In its place, McDowell suggests, they develop their trademark Coherentism in the hopes of thereby salvaging a rational connection between, e.g., thoughts and what they are about, by holistically securing our right to endorse our thoughts as (for the most part) true (*MW:68*). In other words, on McDowell's view, Sellars' and Davidson's Coherentism amounts to a proposed alternative to ME, an alternative that is intended to provide what they think experience—as ME requires—cannot: namely, the rational answerability to the world of, e.g., our thoughts about it.

McDowell attributes (what is, in my terms) a third possible strategy for dealing with the inconsistent triad to what he calls 'Bald Naturalism' (BN). That is, according to McDowell, BN denies DLS, i.e., it denies the *sui generis* status of LSR relative to LSL, and instead insists that the normative relations that constitute the logical space of reasons can be reconstructed out of conceptual materials whose home is the logical space [i.e., LSL] that Sellars, wrongly on this view, contrasts with the logical space of reasons....Bald Naturalism refuses to accept that the relations that constitute the logical space of reasons are anything but natural, in a sense of 'natural' that connects with the logical space [again, LSL] that figures in Sellars (and, with different terminology, in Davidson) on the other side of the contrast with the logical space of reasons (*MW:xviii*, text in brackets added).

In its denial of DLS, BN—or, at least, a ME-endorsing variety of it—thus represents an attempt to preserve both: (1) the (rational) answerability to experience that is essential to ME; and (2) BN's preferred, 'disenchanted' view of nature, i.e., NRL; hoping thereby to salvage the intelligibility of empirical content in the face of the threat posed by the inconsistent triad.

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'the logical space of *nature*'; from (2) his earlier Sellarsian coinage, 'the logical space of nature' (*MW:xiv, xv,xviii*). For McDowell, (1) refers to the (maximally inclusive) logical space of notions and relations whose instantiations may be found in nature, and which includes denizens of both the logical space of reasons, and of the (Sellarsian) 'logical space of nature,' while (2) refers only to the Sellarsian notion. And what he is claiming in the quoted passage is that Sellars 'at least implicitly' conflates (2) with (1).

Finally, McDowell himself opts for what amounts to the fourth maximally-conservative response to the inconsistent triad. That is, he works to dispel the anxiety about content by revealing NRL to be an artificially constrained conception of nature through a ‘reminder’ that

nature includes *second nature*. Human beings acquire a second nature in part by being initiated into conceptual capacities, whose interrelations place them in the logical space of reasons....Once we remember second nature, we see that operations of nature can include circumstances whose descriptions place them in the logical space of reasons, *sui generis* though that logical space is. (MW:xx, italics in original)

In other words, according to McDowell, recalling that ‘nature includes second nature’ allows us to (begin to) see that the NRL-vertex of the ME-DLS-NRL triad can be rejected with a clear ‘naturalist’ conscience, thereby ‘exorcizing’ the anxiety about content that the triad generates.

Now, it obviously remains to be seen what, exactly, the content of the above ‘reminder’ amounts to, as well as how, exactly, it is supposed to accomplish its task, and I address those questions below in Section III. For the moment, however, I want merely to note that, as I read the debate around McDowell’s invocation of ‘second nature’ in MW, his critics have largely understood the facts about MW which I summarized in ILLUSTRATIONS 1 and 2. That is, I take it that McDowell’s critics have largely grasped—even if not, perhaps, in precisely these terms—that MW locates the source of the anxiety about content in the inconsistent triad formed by the conjunction of ME, DLS, and NRL. Moreover, I also think they grasp that BN—like McDowell’s own strategy—represents a possible response to the triad’s inconsistency.

Indeed, as I noted in my Introduction, I think that it is precisely because his critics get these facts right about MW—as well as because of the way those facts can appear to satisfy their expectations regarding what, in general, McDowell is up to in MW—that many critics have taken MW to beg the question against BN. More precisely, I think that the interaction between

their antecedent expectations and the shape of the problematic which MW describes, has prevented many of McDowell's critics from understanding what McDowell's philosophical 'exorcism' is and how it works, and I think that they have thus been led to make the misdirected criticisms of MW that they have. I return to this diagnosis in Section IV, and I begin here by arguing for how I think we ought to understand MW *qua* 'exorcism'.

### III. McDowell's 'Exorcism,' or What His Critics Fail to Appreciate About MW

As a descriptive matter, and without pretending thereby to reveal anything profound about philosophy, we can distinguish two elements in much philosophical writing: (1) the philosophical issue which the author takes up for discussion in a given work, e.g., freedom of the will, how to understand Kant's Transcendental Analytic, etc.; and (2) the audience to whom the discussion of the issue she takes up is addressed. However, this way of characterizing the audience of a work elides a further distinction between two importantly different senses in which a work may have an 'audience' to whom it is 'addressed'.

On the one hand, a work may have what I will call a 'Target Audience,' i.e., those people and/or positions to whom an author (more or less explicitly) addresses her discussion, and to whom she intends it to 'speak'. However, in thus engaging with her Target Audience, an author may nevertheless fail to engage with (the views of) those whom she ought to engage with, insofar as they constitute the rightful or '*de jure*' audience of her work, i.e., the audience whom—as a function of various factors, e.g., the issue the author has taken up for discussion, what she purports to accomplish in that discussion, the philosophical (sub)-culture she participates in, etc.—her work of itself 'addresses,' and who therefore enjoy right of response to

it. In other words, the Target Audience of a work may fail to coincide with what I will call its ‘*De Jure* Audience,’ and a work may, in those cases, be criticized for that failure.

For example, I take it that the charge that *MW* begs the question against BN is a species of just this sort of criticism. That is, the charge is a way of claiming that—given what McDowell has undertaken in *MW*, *viz.*, to exorcize an anxiety about content generated by the inconsistency of the ME-DLS-NRL triad, and what he purports to accomplish in that regard, *viz.*, a ‘more satisfying’ exorcism of that anxiety than the competing one on offer from BN—McDowell’s Target Audience for *MW* fails to include all the members of its *De Jure* Audience: in particular, BN. However, as I argue below, this is simply not so. More precisely, I argue that: (1) in the sense in which it is true that McDowell does not provide an argument for the claim that *MW* offers a ‘more satisfying’ exorcism than BN, BN is not a member of *MW*’s *De Jure* Audience; and (2) in the sense in which BN is a member of *MW*’s *De Jure* Audience, McDowell does offer an argument for that claim. So, *MW* does not in either case beg the question against BN.

### *III.1     The Implications of the Initial Move in McDowell’s Exorcism: MW’s Target Audience*

Perhaps the best way to begin is by reminding ourselves of the starting point for the dialectical progression of McDowell’s exorcism. For it is an important and non-accidental fact that McDowell does not—as he points out in his response (2002) to Putnam—‘raise a question out of the blue about the prospects for contemporary naturalism (“the issue facing naturalism,” as Putnam puts it)’ (McDowell 2002:292). Nor does McDowell begin his exorcism by revealing the place and role of NRL in (what I characterized in Section II as) the ultimately triadic structure of the source of the anxiety about content which he aims to exorcize.

Rather, McDowell's exorcism begins by exposing the apparently indissoluble loggerheads at which two popular camps in contemporary analytic philosophy find themselves, with respect to an anxiety-suffused *desideratum*: an account of how (empirical) content could even possibly have a place in the natural world. One camp comprises those (e.g., Evans) who, in their self-conscious attempt to do justice both to ME and to DLS in supplying the *desideratum*, end up appealing to a notion of experience that McDowell (following Sellars) calls 'the Given,' i.e., experience conceived: (1) as consisting of the world's non-conceptual impacts on us; but simultaneously (2) as something to which our thoughts may still be (rationally) answerable. The other camp comprises those (e.g., Davidson and Sellars) who, in their attempt to make sense of the place of content in the natural world, are no less self-consciously committed to DLS than Evans, but who—for that very reason—reject the idea that thoughts can be (rationally) answerable to experience conceived as 'the Given,' and who, therefore, reject ME.

That is, according to McDowell, Davidson and Sellars agree with Evans that experience, *qua* part of nature, is extra-conceptual. However, they also recognize (as against Evans) that 'if experiences are extra-conceptual, they cannot be what thoughts are rationally based on'; they recognize, in other words, that the idea of 'the Given' is a myth. On the other hand, McDowell argues, Evans is nevertheless also 'right, as against Davidson...[that] if thoughts are not to be empty, that is, if they are to be thoughts at all, they must be rationally responsive [i.e., answerable] to intuitions,' i.e., to the world's impact on us in experience (MW:68, text in brackets added). Otherwise, according to McDowell, our thoughts never become intelligible as contentful in the first place, such that they might then be found to rationally cohere or not with

our other thoughts, à la Coherentism (MW:68).<sup>5</sup> Or, at least, Coherentism does nothing to explain away the appeal of this thought, which is the central intuition behind ME (MW:68).

Thus, according to McDowell, given their picture of experience as extra-conceptual, these two camps ‘are confined to the pair of positions between which they choose. And each has what looks like a completely cogent argument against the other’ (MW:69). And so they stand at an impasse, neither able to supply the requisite *desideratum*, and each for the very reasons which the other camp uses to motivate its own position. This, then, constitutes the first essential move in the dialectical development of McDowell’s exorcism: namely, to show that those who fall prey to the ‘Myth of the Given,’ as well as those who then retreat from ME into Coherentism, inevitably arrive at a philosophical *cul-de-sac*. For my present purposes, the significance of this initial move in the dialectic of McDowell’s exorcism is three-fold.

First, there is the very fact of the move’s essential importance for the exorcism. That is, as will become clearer below, we cannot understand McDowell’s exorcism, nor why his ‘reminder’ about ‘second nature’ does not beg the question against BN, if we do not recognize

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<sup>5</sup> Of course, the emphasized ‘then’ here does not, at least in the first instance, mark a temporal relation, as if McDowell’s point against Coherentism concerns the putative fact that, as a temporal matter, one must first have thoughts in one’s mind, before one can then go about discovering whether they cohere with each other. Rather, McDowell’s point concerns—and the emphasized ‘then’ is intended to mark—a relation of logical or conceptual priority between: (1) its being intelligible that we have to do with contentful things; and (2) it being intelligible that we have to do with rational relations between those things. And his point is that we cannot, without vicious circularity, appeal to the rational coherence between (contentful) thoughts to putatively provide for their intelligibility as contentful in the first place.

At best, and with the intelligibility of our having to do with (contentful) thoughts independently secured, Coherentism can perhaps provide a compelling response to a certain kind of skeptic who would raise the possibility of massive error in our thoughts about the world. And indeed, to provide such a response is precisely what McDowell thinks Davidson intends his Coherentism to do, and all that Davidson thinks motivates ME. According to McDowell, Davidson thus misses the ‘deeper motivation’ for ME: namely, to secure the intelligibility of our thoughts as contentful, such that they might then be intelligible as rationally related to each other (MW:17. cf. also MW:14-16, 68, and Part I of Afterword).

that the subsequent moves in McDowell’s exorcism are all predicated upon this first one, in the sense that they are expressly intended to show the way out of the relevant *cul-de-sac* to someone who finds herself in it (whether through independent reflection or because reading MW reveals that fact to her). Or, more precisely: the subsequent moves in McDowell’s exorcism are directed at exposing, and then dislodging, the deep source of the anxiety about (empirical) content that leads such a person into the relevant philosophical *cul-de-sac* in the first place.

The second way in which the initial move in McDowell’s exorcism is significant, then, is that it makes manifest not only what the relevant anxiety is about, *viz.*, the very intelligibility of (empirical) content, but that it is someone’s anxiety and, indeed, whose anxiety it is. In other words, it reveals the Target Audience to whom McDowell’s exorcism is addressed, and whose anxiety about the intelligibility of content his exorcism is supposed to relieve: namely, the members of the two camps described above, whom I will also refer to as McDowell’s (philosophical) ‘*confrères*,’ in view of the large degree of relevant overlap in their philosophical commitments and views, which I discuss below. Indeed—and this is the third dimension of its significance—the initial move of McDowell’s exorcism reveals four defining characteristics of MW’s Target Audience, i.e., four characteristics of its members, in collective virtue of which they amount to members of it, and which they also largely share with McDowell.

That is, the picture of experience as extra-conceptual—which separates them from McDowell—is not all that unites his *confrères* into the Target Audience of his exorcism. First and foremost, the members of his Target Audience also share with each other—and with McDowell—a commitment to DLS as embodying a genuine philosophical insight. In fact, for some members of McDowell’s Target Audience—as, indeed, for McDowell himself—whether

an account of how to make sense of (empirical) content can accommodate DLS functions as a sort of criterial touchstone for the adequacy of the account.<sup>6</sup> A third characteristic of McDowell’s *confrères*—and not surprisingly, given that they are trying to make sense of content as part of the natural world—is that a super- or extra-natural ‘explanation’ of the possibility of (empirical) content is not a live option for them, just as it is not for McDowell. And finally, McDowell shares with his *confrères* the characteristic of being (at a minimum) ‘alive to the case’ for ME. That is, the members of McDowell’s Target Audience would embrace ME if they could see their way clear to doing so consistent with their philosophical scruples, even if some of them (e.g., Davidson and Sellars) have so far felt compelled to reject it.

Now, if the foregoing is correct about the initial move of McDowell’s exorcism, at least two important points immediately follow. First, adherents of BN are not part of the Target Audience of MW, because an essential condition on membership in that Target Audience is a commitment to DLS, and BN denies DLS. Second, insofar as they are predicated upon the initial move in the exorcism, and so directed at alleviating specifically his Target Audience’s anxiety about content, the subsequent moves in McDowell’s exorcism—and, in particular, his ‘reminder’ about ‘second nature’—are not intended for adherents of BN. Indeed, from McDowell’s point of view, adherents of BN are not even subject to the anxiety about content that he is attempting to ‘exorcize’ in MW (MW:76). So, if McDowell does beg any questions against BN, it seems clear in any case that he does not do so by failing—somewhat inexplicably—to engage with part of his intended Target Audience.

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<sup>6</sup> At least, that is how I read McDowell’s comments in MW that (as he puts it in one of them) ‘neither Evans nor Davidson is tempted by... “bald naturalism”,’ which would deny DLS and attempt to reconstruct LSR-notions in LSL-terms (MW:72; cf. also MW:67).

And I take it that these two points are at least part of the significance of McDowell's remarks in *MW* to the effect that BN figures there 'only as a competitor' to his own exorcism (*MW:xix*, underline added). However, even if one accepts that BN is not part of the Target Audience of *MW*, one might still suppose that BN is surely part of *MW*'s *De Jure* Audience and, what's more, that this is all that is required for the charge that McDowell begs the question against BN to stick. After all, even if, according to McDowell, BN is 'only...a competitor' to his exorcism, it is still, *a fortiori*, a competitor, and, indeed, one which he claims offers a 'less satisfying' exorcism than his own (*MW:xxi*). So, in light of these facts, how can it not be true that McDowell begs the question against BN, if he does not engage argumentatively with it?

### III.2    *Two Questions and Two Construals of MW*

The key here, I think, is to see that the sense in which McDowell takes BN to represent a 'competitor,' and a 'less satisfying' one at that, has everything to do with his attempt in *MW* to exorcize specifically his Target Audience's anxiety about content. That is, there are at least two ways of construing McDowell's project in *MW* and, correspondingly, two ways of construing his claim that *MW* constitutes a 'more satisfying' exorcism than its acknowledged 'competitor,' BN. On the one hand, one might construe McDowell as posing (and undertaking in *MW* to answer) something like the following 'General Question':

**General Question:** How, in general, i.e., for anyone and everyone, ought the inconsistency of the ME-DLS-NRL triad be resolved?

On this reading of McDowell's project in *MW*, McDowell is there attempting to exorcize anyone's and everyone's anxiety about content, insofar as the source of that anxiety lies ultimately in the inconsistency of the ME-DLS-NRL triad. And if this were the right way to

understand *MW*, then for McDowell to declare his own view to be ‘more satisfying’ than BN *qua* response to the triad, but without engaging argumentatively with BN, would clearly beg the question against what remains (for all McDowell says in *MW*) a possible—and popular—alternative answer to the General Question. And, of course, as I discussed in my Introduction, that this is what McDowell does is precisely what many of his critics allege.

However, I take it that this construal of *MW* sits ill with what I have so far been trying to bring out merely through consideration of the initial move in his exorcism, but which I think consideration of the rest of the exorcism’s dialectical development—and, in particular, the crucial ‘reminder’ about ‘second nature’—corroborates: namely, that McDowell’s more or less exclusive concern in *MW* is to exorcize his *confrères*’ anxiety about content. That is, as I read *MW*, McDowell does not attempt there to provide a general-purpose, ‘one-size-fits-all’ exorcism, i.e., one which purports to answer the General Question. Though, of course, as McDowell (2002) concedes to Putnam, ‘no doubt if [he] had, that would have required [him] to consider all the relevant options,’ if he were not to beg the question against BN in declaring it to offer a ‘less satisfying’ exorcism than *MW* (McDowell 2002:292, text in brackets added).

And the point here is this: if construing *MW* as an attempt to answer the General Question represents a misconstrual of its project—as I am in the process of arguing it does—then the fact that McDowell does not provide an argument for the claim that *MW* offers a ‘more satisfying’ answer to the General Question than BN can, does not constitute grounds for charging him with begging the question against BN, in this case, the General Question. For if I am right, McDowell is not even claiming to answer the General Question, and thus BN is not a competitor to *MW* in this respect at all, never mind a ‘less satisfying’ one.

Instead, as I understand his project, McDowell is undertaking in *MW* to answer something much more like the following (Target)-'Audience-Oriented Question':

**Audience-Oriented Question:** How ought McDowell's Target Audience, i.e., his philosophical *confrères*, respond to the inconsistent triad so as to obviate the anxiety about content it generates?

And if this is the correct way to understand McDowell's project in *MW*—as I think it is—then his claim as to the relative 'satisfyingness' of *MW* and BN *qua* exorcisms would be, rather, that, for his *confrères*, *MW* represents a 'more satisfying' exorcism of their anxiety about content than BN does. And no doubt BN also counts here as a member of *MW*'s *De Jure* Audience.

However, unlike in the case of construing *MW* as an answer to the General Question, if *MW* is an answer to the Audience-Oriented Question, then I think McDowell does provide an argument for his claim that *MW* is 'more satisfying' than BN. According to McDowell,

a proposed exorcism is more satisfying to the extent that it enables us to respect, as insights, the driving thoughts of those who take the familiar philosophical anxieties to pose real intellectual obligations (our driving thoughts when we find ourselves beset by the anxieties), even while we unmask the supposed obligations as illusory' (*MW*:xxii)

McDowell's argument for the claim that *MW*'s exorcism of his *confrères'* anxiety about content is 'more satisfying'—in his somewhat technical use of the phrase—than BN's, is thus: on the one hand, in exorcizing his *confrères'* anxiety, (1) *MW* can 'respect, as insights, the[ir] driving thoughts', i.e., DLS (which all of his *confrères* are committed to) and ME (which some of them, while alive to the case for it, have felt compelled to abandon); whereas, on the other hand, (2) embracing BN would require that his *confrères* give up DLS while leaving its intuitive appeal undiminished, just as Coherentism does with regard to ME. Indeed, insofar as it is right to portray Coherentism as a more-or-less forced retreat from a still-appealing ME, McDowell's

exorcism ought to be additionally satisfying to erstwhile Coherentists in that it not only respects their continuing commitment to DLS, but also enables them to re-embrace ME.

Thus, if I am right about how we ought to construe McDowell's project in MW—and on the assumption that MW can successfully exorcize his *confrères'* anxiety about content at all—McDowell's claim that MW does so more satisfactorily than BN could, does not beg the question against BN. Indeed, once we understand McDowell's project as I think we ought to, we see that he is quite right to say, *pace* the passage from Putnam I quoted in my Introduction, that

I need not pretend to have an argument that the bald naturalist programme...*cannot* be executed. The point is just that the availability of my alternative and, I claim, more satisfying exorcism undercuts a philosophical motivation [i.e., his *confrères'* anxiety about content], the only one relevant to my concerns in this book, for supposing the programme *must* be feasible. (MW:xxiii, italics in original, text in brackets added)

However, it still remains to be shown that MW can indeed successfully exorcize the anxiety about content even of McDowell's philosophical *confrères*. And to begin to show that, I want to turn to consideration of McDowell's 'reminder' about 'second nature,' which will also corroborate my reading of MW as essentially (Target)-Audience-Oriented.

### III.3 McDowell's 'Reminder' that 'Nature Includes Second Nature'

McDowell takes himself to have shown his *confrères*, in the initial move of his exorcism, that their positions are hopeless as ways of making content intelligible. And he recognizes that, given the philosophical *cul-de-sac* which he has shown them to occupy, the anxiety which drove his *confrères* to their respective positions can make BN seem ineluctable. In particular, McDowell acknowledges that embracing BN can seem attractive to his *confrères* for two inter-related reasons. First, BN 'conforms to a scientism that shapes much contemporary thinking,' i.e., the idea—which 'can seem sheer common sense'—that (nomothetic) science is the ultimate

arbiter of the truth of the natural world and of what nature comprises (MW:76). Or, to put the same point contrapositively, so as to make plain how this ‘scientism’ is just another name for NRL: from a scientistic point of view, nature includes only (just is the idea of) what can be made intelligible by the (nomothetic) sciences. Second, McDowell suggests, precisely because of the covert—and so unquestioned—influence of NRL on his *confrères*’ thinking, embracing BN ‘can seem [to them] to be the only escape from a philosophical impasse,’ *viz.*, the one McDowell takes himself to have shown that they occupy (MW:76, text in brackets added).

The point of McDowell’s ‘reminder’ about ‘second nature,’ at this point in the dialectic, is thus two-fold. First, it is intended to make explicit the covert influence of NRL on his *confrères*’ thinking, such that it is clear not only that NRL is a necessary part of the source of the anxiety which drives their hopeless philosophical projects in the first place, but also that it is NRL which makes it appear that the success of BN’s reductionist program represents their only remaining hope for making sense of the very idea of content. Second, it is supposed to remind them that, by their own lights, NRL is an artificially constrained and optional conception of nature. This, then, is the truly crucial move in McDowell’s ‘exorcism,’ which is supposed (to begin) to relieve his *confrères*’ anxiety about the intelligibility of the idea of (empirical) content.

But how, exactly, is this ‘reminder’ supposed to provide that relief? And what is a ‘reminder’ of the relevant philosophical sort, anyway? Unfortunately, McDowell does not address this latter question in MW, but in McDowell (1998a) he indicates that

[t]he reminder that the idea of second nature is at our disposal is just that, a reminder—not a piece of news, not a report of a substantial achievement in philosophical theory. What we are reminded of should be something that we knew all along, but were intelligibly induced to forget under the stress of philosophical reflection. What we are reminded of should be in itself—that is, considered in abstraction from the feeling of

being confronted by deep and difficult intellectual problems that it is supposed to liberate us from—thin and obvious. I would be quite happy if someone responded to my diagnosis of some characteristic ailments of modern epistemology by saying: ‘Of course! How can we have been enticed into forgetting how obviously right it is to say that a repertoire of conceptual capacities belongs to the acquired nature of a mature human being?’ (McDowell 1998a:122-3)

That is, I take it, there are something like correctness conditions which, on McDowell’s view, a reminder of the relevant sort must satisfy if it is to be able to play its proper part in an exorcism: it ought not be ‘a piece of news,’ nor ‘a report of a substantial achievement in philosophical theory’; it ‘should be something that we knew all along’; something that is ‘in itself...thin and obvious’ and ‘obviously right’. And I also take it that these conditions are just various expressions of the ‘quietism,’ i.e., the ‘rejection of any constructive or doctrinal ambitions,’ which McDowell finds especially in the later Wittgenstein, and with which he self-consciously aligns his exorcism in *MW* (*MW*:93).

In other words, as I understand McDowell’s ‘quietistic’ view, *MW* would fail, *qua* exorcism of the relevant anxiety about content, if its crucial ‘reminder’ were either itself a piece of ‘philosophical theory,’ or if it were to require its remindees to engage in further philosophical theorizing, i.e., to substitute one bit of philosophical theorizing for another, in order to ‘alleviate’ their anxiety. I mention this only because I take it that these conditions on a proper ‘reminder’ are sufficiently stringent to exclude anything that, *qua* assertion, would require further argumentation to justify.<sup>7</sup> And this fact, in turn, constitutes further evidence that

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<sup>7</sup> Which is not to say, of course, that it may not require further explication and/or ancillary reminders to be effective *qua* reminder. In Section III.5, I take up McDowell’s remarks about science and the scientific revolution, about the place of learning a language in coming to be a mature human being, and about evolutionary speculation on the origins of rational animals; and I argue that they should all be

McDowell is not attempting to provide a general-purpose, ‘one-size-fits-all’ exorcism in *MW*, i.e., one which would (purport to) answer the General Question. For if he were, it is hard to see how there could possibly be something that everyone would find obviously right, and which was still substantial enough to alleviate the anxiety about content.

The key here—as before—is that a given reminder is, as such, directed to a given Target Audience: a reminder cannot be a reminder unless it is something that the remindee can be reminded of, i.e., something the remindee ‘knew all along,’ but has forgotten or come to neglect. And what is important here is that the relativization of a given reminder to a given remindee is precisely what places the task of a reminder—at least in principle—within its reach. That is, a proper philosophical reminder need not be something that anyone and everyone would take to be ‘in itself...thin and obvious’ and ‘obviously right’; it need only be ‘obviously right’ by its Target Audience’s own lights, and this means that it can rely upon its Target Audience’s own view about what is ‘obviously right,’ even if it is not the case that everyone else would agree.<sup>8</sup>

Having thus clarified McDowell’s ‘quietistic’ conception of the sort of reminder which a philosophical exorcism requires, we are now very nearly in a position: (1) to assess whether what his reminder about ‘second nature’ amounts to is, in fact, ‘obviously right’ by his *confrères’* own lights—at least when ‘considered in abstraction from the feeling of being confronted by deep and difficult intellectual problems that it [i.e., the reminder] is supposed to liberate us from’ (i.e., as I understand it, bracketing the influence of NRL on their thinking); and thus (2) to

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understood as attempts to assuage or avert various worries that McDowell anticipates his *confrères* might have about disavowing NRL and joining him in a Liberal Naturalism.

<sup>8</sup> Though he is there writing about how to understand the point of Wittgenstein’s discussion in *Philosophical Investigations* of following a rule, McDowell (1993) confirms my general understanding of what he thinks is involved in a properly ‘quietistic’ philosophical exorcism (cf. especially p. 272).

appreciate how his reminder is supposed to accomplish its task of exorcizing his *confrères'* anxiety about content; as well as (3) whether it is, or can be, successful at that task. Among what remains, however, is to clarify what the slogan ‘nature includes second nature’ actually amounts to, such that it is clear what McDowell takes himself to be reminding his *confrères* of.

So, to begin: What does McDowell mean by ‘second nature’? In MW, he introduces the notion of ‘second nature’ *via* consideration of Aristotle’s account of how individual human beings come to be the ethical beings that they do:

human beings are intelligibly initiated into this stretch of the space of reasons [in context: ‘the rational demands of ethics’] by ethical upbringing, which instills the appropriate shape into their lives. The resulting habits of thought and action are second nature. (MW:84, text in brackets added)

That is, as McDowell reads Aristotle, among the ‘potentialities that belong to a normal human organism’ is the potential for becoming an ethical being of some (better or worse) sort, which is a potential which almost all human beings actualize (MW:84). On this view, what transforms the merely animal, ‘first’ nature we each enjoy as infants, into the more or less determinate (ethical) ‘second nature’ of a mature human being, is the ordinary and all-too-familiar process of ethical upbringing, including, *inter alia*, age- and developmentally-appropriate instruction, correction, task-setting, and modeling of correct performance in a variety of actual situations by our parents, caregivers, relatives, peers, etc., not to mention the efforts of the learner herself.

For McDowell’s purposes in MW, though, the significance of the notion of ‘second nature’ is certainly not limited to Aristotle’s account of how we become ethical beings, nor even to the specifically ethical dimension of human lives. In point of fact, according to McDowell, the process whereby we become ethical beings is just ‘a particular case of a general

phenomenon: initiation into conceptual capacities, which include responsiveness to other rational demands besides those of ethics’ (MW:84). That is, McDowell writes, ‘[i]f we generalize the way Aristotle conceives the molding of ethical character, we arrive at the notion of having one’s eyes opened to reasons at large by acquiring a second nature’; we arrive at the idea that, for human beings, becoming rational involves acquiring a ‘second nature’ through the ordinary process of upbringing or socialization—McDowell’s term is ‘*Bildung*’—more generally (MW:84).

Importantly, however, this does not imply—though McDowell does not emphasize this fact in MW—that only the acquisition of reason by a human being may be correctly described as an animal’s acquiring a ‘second nature’. As McDowell (2004) notes:

The only use to which I put the idea of second nature in *Mind and World* is to affirm that responsiveness to reasons as such is natural too. In this application, the idea of the second-natural coincides with the idea of what can be made intelligible by placement in the space of reasons. But the idea of second nature itself is not exclusively applicable to rational animals. It is no more than the idea of a way of being...that has been acquired by something on the lines of training. It can be second nature to a dog to roll over, say, on the command ‘Roll over’. And the intelligibility of this behavior is not in any interesting sense *sui generis*, by comparison with the intelligibility of, say, pricking up the ears in response to a noise or chasing a squirrel. Apart from how it originates, the second nature of dogs is just like their first nature. (McDowell 2004:98)

In other words, though the only variety of ‘second nature’ relevant to McDowell’s project in MW—and thus the only one he discusses there—is the rational ‘second nature’ of a mature human being, the notion of ‘second nature’ *simpliciter* is much broader—and thinner—than that: ‘[i]t is no more than the idea of a way of being...that has been acquired by something on the lines of training,’ which is something for which a great many animals have the potential, even if they lack the potential to become rational. And this is important to bear in mind, as will become clearer below, lest we take McDowell’s exclusive concern in MW with the rational

(second) nature of a mature human being to imply that the notions of *second nature* and *Bildung/training* (broadly construed) mark a difference between us and all other animals, rather than a widely-shared commonality among human and (many) non-human animals.

This clarification is likewise important because it suggests how to resolve a persistent equivocation in McDowell's use of 'second nature' that appears to figure already in his introduction of that notion, but even more certainly in the passage from 2004 I just quoted. That is, in general, the most familiar use of 'second nature'—indeed, what ““second nature” just means,’ according to Pippin (2002)—and the use which therefore seems best suited to satisfy the quietistic requirement that a reminder be ‘thin and obvious,’ is the one whereby we characterize, e.g., a given form of behavior as '*deeply habitual*,' to use Pippin's words (Pippin 2002:70, italics in original). This is the sense of 'second nature' which McDowell is naturally read as expressing in such sentences as '[t]he resulting habits of thought and action are second nature,' and which is positively required when he writes that '[i]t can be second nature to a dog to roll over, say, on the command “Roll over”.'

On the other hand, McDowell also speaks here and elsewhere in MW of 'acquiring a second nature' and (in the passage from 2004) of 'the second nature of dogs,' uses which lend themselves—particularly in contexts where 'second nature' is juxtaposed to 'first nature'—to being understood in a quite different and much less familiar sense, to denote something like a countable species of a genus, 'nature' (cf. MW:xx,124). But if this is right, as I think it is, it can seem only to compound further the difficulty of understanding McDowell's reminder, insofar as it adds yet another sense of 'nature' *simpliciter* to the sense already at issue between the idea that 'nature includes second nature' and NRL: namely, in the latter two cases, 'nature' in the

sense of *the natural world* or (on certain modern assumptions) just *what there is*. After all, whatever sense we give to ‘nature’ *qua* genus of which second nature is a species, it cannot be ‘nature’ in the sense of *the natural world*, as that latter sense of ‘nature’ does not have species.

So, what is wanted is a notion of ‘second nature’ that can intelligibly connect all these seemingly disparate ‘nature’-notions: (1) the genus sense of ‘nature,’ of which first and second nature are species; (2) the species sense of ‘second nature’ and, for that matter, ‘first nature’; (3) the deeply-habitual sense of ‘second nature’; as well as (4) the natural-world sense of ‘nature’. And all while respecting the further constraint, of course, that the relevant notion of ‘second nature’ allow for these connections to be made intelligible in such a way that it remains ‘thin and obvious’ to McDowell’s *confrères* that whatever instantiates (4) includes whatever instantiates (2)—and no doubt (1) and (3), as well—i.e., that ‘nature includes second nature’. But I take it that understanding second nature as ‘a way of being...that has been acquired by something on the lines of training’ offers just the sort of notion that is required here.

For what it suggests, first of all, is that the genus, of which first and second nature are species, is ‘nature’ in the sense of *a way of being*, as when we say, perhaps, that it is *in a dog’s nature* to chase animals like squirrels. That is, the relevant sense of ‘nature’ picks out an animal’s way of being—namely, living—and not just in the bare sense of its being alive, i.e., its satisfaction of textbook criteria such as growth, reproduction, metabolism, etc. Rather, an animal’s way of being, everything its nature (in the relevant sense) comprises its life in the richer sense of, e.g., what it does and is able to do, the activities it characteristically engage in, etc., in the course of its being alive. These phenomena are what is studied in the disciplines of natural history and ethology, for example, and with which we have perhaps become acquainted

in the pages of *National Geographic* or on the *Nature* channel. And we can (begin to) anticipate McDowell's eventual point about second nature if we immediately note that nature, in the (fourth) sense of *what there is* (exclusive of any putative supernatural 'phenomena'), quite obviously includes the lives of animals in this richer sense. 'Life,' as McDowell notes, 'is a quintessentially natural phenomenon' (MW:103).

Second, if second nature refers to an animal's trained way of being (broadly speaking); and if the relevant training of necessity occurs at some (earlier or later, but certainly post-natal) point in its life; this further suggests how, correspondingly, to understand what McDowell means by 'first nature,' and, in particular, the ordinary (two-fold) sense in which a trained animal's 'first nature' is first. What it suggests is that, in an animal with a second nature, its first nature is its previous, untrained way of being. That is, a trained animal's first nature is first, on the one hand, in the chronological sense of comprising its way of being prior to receiving the training through which it acquired a second nature. And since this will include, *a fortiori*, everything that the animal is (already) able to do as a neonate—for example, move its limbs, make sounds, respond to various biological promptings like the need for food etc.—its first nature will also be its initial or starting way of being, and so 'first' in that sense as well.<sup>9</sup>

Third, if what the relevant training ultimately accomplishes is properly understood as rendering deeply habitual whatever the animal is being trained (to be able) to do, then the

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<sup>9</sup> It is perhaps helpful to note here that the relation between first and second nature, as I understand McDowell's use of the terms, is thus not equivalent to the general relation between: (a) an animal's internal or 'endobiology,' including its neurophysiology; and (b) what it does and is able to do. The general relation between (a) and (b) is that of (occasionally) 'enabling' or subserving, as McDowell calls it in 'The Content of Perceptual Experience' (McDowell 1994:354,356). And insofar as an animal's first nature, i.e., its untrained way of being, itself comprises things an animal does and is capable of doing, too is subserved by the animal's endobiology, just like its second nature (if it acquires one).

connection between McDowell's somewhat idiosyncratic use of 'second nature' to mean *trained way of being*, and the perhaps more familiar use of 'second nature' to mean *deeply habitual*, is also quite plain. That is, the way an animal acquires a second way of being, i.e., a second nature in the former sense, is by being appropriately trained until what the animal is training (to be able) to do is second nature to it, in the latter sense of deeply habitual. In other words, an animal's second nature, in the former sense, comprises what has become second nature to the animal, in the sense of being deeply habitual, through training.

Finally, then—and at least in the case of the non-rational second nature of an animal such as a dog—it does thus indeed seem unobjectionably 'thin and obvious' that nature, in the (fourth) sense of *the natural world*, includes second nature. For, as I noted above, the natural world quite obviously includes the lives of animals in the richer sense of their ways of being alive, and the idea that some animals' lives comprise things they (are able to) do because they have trained until it is deeply habitual for them to do so—that is, the idea of second nature, as explicated here—adds nothing to those lives that would prevent them from continuing to be understood as unproblematic features of the natural world. There is nothing unnatural, in the relevant sense of *supernatural* or *transcending the natural world*, in a dog's rolling over on command, for example, even if one might still consider such behavior 'unnatural' in the (different, though related) sense of somehow violating what has been distinguished here as its first nature, i.e., its untrained way of being, and so what one might take (given certain other assumptions) to be a dog's proper nature (in the genus sense) as such.

Of course, the case that is actually at issue in *MW*, and thus the case in which it must be 'thin and obvious' that nature includes second nature, is not that of the non-rational second

nature of an animal such as a dog, but, rather, the rational second nature of a mature human being. And another way of expressing the anxiety McDowell means his reminder (to begin) to believe is to wonder how it is even intelligible that this could be so. After all, even if his *confrères* agree with McDowell that ‘the idea of the human is the idea of what pertains to a certain species of animal,’ the rational second nature of a mature human being is nevertheless: (1) something that, so far as we know, no non-human animal has the potential to acquire; and, more importantly, (2) something whose correct description, given DLS, requires conceptual resources other than what is sufficient for capturing the lives of non-rational animals (*MW*:77).

But the key here, according to McDowell, and the crucial point of his reminder, is for his *confrères* to recall and dwell upon the following quite uncontroversial facts: ‘Human infants are mere [i.e., non-rational] animals, distinctive only in their potential, and nothing occult happens to a human being in ordinary upbringing’ (*MW*:123, text in brackets added). That is, first of all, a human being does not emerge from the womb a rational animal who is already ‘at home in the space of reasons,’ i.e., who already thinks and acts in terms of what is a reason for what, and who is thus already able to ‘weigh reasons and decide what to do,’ think, and say about the world (*MW*:123;115). Rather, just as in the case of other non-rational animals such as dogs, the life of a human infant is ‘structured exclusively by immediate biological imperatives,’ such as the need for food, the avoidance of pain, etc., and its life is thus ‘shaped by goals whose control of the animal’s behavior at a given moment is an immediate outcome of biological forces’ (*MW*:115). And as such, the life of a human infant can be correctly described using no more than the conceptual resources that are adequate to capturing the lives of non-human animals.

Of course, if the process of gestation and birth have gone in the usual way, a human infant is also born with certain distinctive (though as yet unrealized) potentialities for further development, potentialities which it does not share with other, non-human animals. In particular, normal human infants are potentially able—given the right training, broadly construed—to acquire a rational way of being alive, a rational second nature (MW:125). However, on pain of falling into philosophical anxiety, we cannot allow the mere absence of this potentiality in non-human animals, their lack of susceptibility to the relevant training—nor, for that matter, the ‘difference in kind’ between non-rational and rational ways of being alive, inasmuch as the latter cannot (given DLS) be captured using only conceptual resources that are sufficient for capturing the former—to cause us to forget the ordinary, non-occult character of the upbringing whereby, in point of fact, human beings acquire a rational second nature.

For what this latter fact crucially implies is that—for whatever else might be true—to be ‘transformed into thinkers and intentional agents in the course of coming to maturity’ is ‘essentially within the reach’ (as McDowell puts it) of the ‘mere animals’ which human infants uncontroversially are (MW:125;84). That is, all that is required for (the first nature of) a normal, non-rational, infant human being to be transformed into (the second nature of) an intentional, rationally-minded, mature human subject—a subject who is capable, *inter alia*, of producing and understanding meaningful utterances about the world—is that the infant come to maturity in the usual way, which process integrally involves (as an uncontroversial matter of fact) its being socialized into a human community. And what this socialization consists of—‘if we generalize the way Aristotle conceives the molding of ethical character,’ as McDowell recommends that we do—is nothing more, though nothing less, than the ordinary and all-too-familiar process of

raising a child to maturity, including age- and developmentally-appropriate instruction, correction, task-setting, and modeling of correct performance in a variety of actual situations by our parents, caregivers, relatives, peers, etc., not to mention the efforts of the child herself. In other words, as McDowell also puts the point, '[t]he demands of reason are essentially such that a human upbringing can open a human being's eyes to them' (MW:92, text in brackets added).

In particular, what the normal process of raising a child to maturity accomplishes is a change in the structure or 'shape' (to use McDowell's preferred metaphor in this context) of the child's life. That is, as noted above, the life of a non-rational animal—whether the animal is non-human or (infant) human—is completely determined by immediate biological exigencies, such that its way of being alive consists solely of coping with the 'succession of problems and opportunities' which its environment presents to it, given those exigencies: a scarcity or plenitude of food, the appearance or disappearance of threats, occasions for rest or play, etc. (MW:115). However, an integral part of a child's being raised in the normal way is that she is trained, broadly speaking, to attend and respond to (some conception of) what is a reason for doing/thinking/saying what, until she does so—indeed, until it is second nature, in the sense of *deeply habitual*, for her to do so. In other words, normal human upbringing integrally involves the child's being initiated in this way into the logical space of reasons, 'of justifying and being able to justify what one says,' as Wilfred Sellars puts it (1956/1997:§36).

And as the child's way of being alive comes, through such training, to acquire the shape of (some conception of) the logical space of reasons—as she begins to do, think, and say what she does for reasons—her life thus 'come[s] to embrace not just coping with problems and opportunities, constituted as such by immediate biological imperatives, but exercising

spontaneity, [i.e.,] deciding what to do and think' (MW:115, text in brackets added). In particular, the child becomes able, as McDowell (1996) puts it,

to step back from any motivational impulse [she] finds [her]self subject to, and to question its rational credentials. Thus [being raised to maturity in the normal way] effects a kind of distancing of the agent from the practical tendencies that are part of what we might call his first nature' (McDowell 1996:188, text in brackets added)

In this sense, then, and in this way, normal human infants come to be 'in charge of [their] lives' as they come to maturity in the normal way (MW:115, text in brackets added).

Which not to say, of course, that the mature human being has 'floated free' of her previous life as a non-rational animal. On the contrary, McDowell points out, '...in some respects, the lives of mature human beings simply match the lives of mere animals; it would be absurd to suppose that *Bildung* effects a transfiguration, so to speak, of everything that happens in a human life' (MW:183). Indeed, he points out in a footnote to this passage, 'even those aspects of mature human life that are shaped by *Bildung* show unassimilated residues from their evolution out of mere nature (first nature)' (MW:183,fn. 2). In other words, I take it, a mature human being continues to be subject to the biological exigencies, such as the need for food, etc., which were the sole determinant of her life as an infant, and her life as a mature human being continues to involve her coping with 'a succession of problems and opportunities, constituted as such by biological imperatives' (MW:115). The crucial difference, as was brought out above, is that the rational life of a mature human being is not immediately and solely determined by biological exigencies, nor does it consist of nothing more than the relevant coping. A mature human being can reflect upon any given thing she is inclined to do or think, assess its rational credentials, and decide what to do or think. She can have a reason to do or think what she does.

If this is right, then, in becoming the rational animals that we do, we in no way step outside what is intelligibly part of the life of the sort of animal we are. Quite uncontroversially, we begin as natural creatures who are raised by other natural creatures using natural means, and we remain natural creatures when our socialization is complete, where all these uses of ‘natural’ are cognates of ‘nature’ in the (fourth) sense of *the natural world* (MW:83;115;183). There is no ‘transcendence of biology,’ as McDowell also puts it, involved in human animals coming to be intentional and minded subjects who are capable of producing and understanding utterances about the world, i.e., in our acquiring a rational second nature (MW:115). Rather, as the sort of animals that human beings are, we are normally born with various potentialities for development—including some, perhaps, which no human being has ever actualized—and ‘*Bildung* actualizes some of the potentialities we are born with’ (MW:88). Indeed, McDowell points out, ‘[rational s]econd nature could not float free of the potentialities that belong to a normal human organism,’ since a rational second nature in the end amounts simply to the socialized actualization of various of those potentialities (MW:84, text in brackets added). Accordingly, ‘we do not have to suppose it [i.e., *Bildung*] introduces a non-animal ingredient into our constitution’ (MW:88, text in brackets added). In contemplating human beings *qua* rational, we still properly contemplate them *sub specie animalium*.

Ultimately, then, what McDowell thinks is ‘thin and obvious’ by his *confrères*’ own lights, what he thinks they have forgotten or come to neglect under the influence of today’s scientistic intellectual climate, and what the content of his reminder to his *confrères* that ‘nature includes second nature’ amounts to is that becoming rational (acquiring a rational second nature, becoming a rational animal) is an integral part of the ordinary course of our becoming

the mature animals that we do, and that being rational (having such a rational second nature) is therefore as unproblematically a part of the natural world as anything else that is an integral part of our, or any other animal’s, life. In particular, if the lives of mature human beings, i.e., animals with a rational second nature, involve exercises of reason, e.g., in producing and understanding contentful utterances—which is something that none of these philosophers want to deny, but only to make (naturalistic) sense of—then it follows that, by their own lights, exercises of reason are natural phenomena.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, for McDowell’s Target Audience, exercises of reason are only intelligible in LSR-terms, which, when combined with the reasoning in the previous paragraph, implies that instantiations of LSR-notions are undeniably natural phenomena. And if this is right, then, given their commitment to DLS, the members of McDowell’s Target Audience—ignoring, for the moment, the influence of NRL on their thinking (i.e., ‘considered in abstraction from the feeling of being confronted by deep and difficult intellectual problems that it [i.e., the reminder] is supposed to liberate [them] from’)—already accept that non-nomothetically-intelligible, normative phenomena are part of the natural world. Thus, to the extent that NRL is incompatible with normative phenomena being part of nature, McDowell is in effect reminding his *confrères* that they don’t even really accept NRL anyway. That is, he is reminding them that they don’t really accept that the idea of *nature* (or of a *natural phenomenon*) just is the idea of what nomothetic science can bring into view.

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<sup>10</sup> For what it is worth, this is a conclusion with which a Bald Naturalist will agree. Where the Bald Naturalist will begin to disagree is in the next paragraph, specifically with the idea that exercises of reason are intelligible only in LSR-terms, where this is understood as McDowell’s Target Audience understands it, *viz.*, through the prism of DLS.

Of course, for the purpose of thus summarizing how McDowell’s reminder is supposed to (begin to) exorcize his *confrères’* anxiety about content, I bracketed—and crucially so—the (perhaps heretofore covert) influence of NRL on their thinking. And that assumption will have to be discharged before I can finish showing that MW can in fact exorcize his *confrères’* anxiety about content, and thus that MW does not beg even the Audience-Oriented Question against BN. However, before turning to that discussion below in Section III.5—and as a final propaedeutic to it—I want first to take stock of three important points which the preceding discussion has already established, particularly as those points substantiate the central argument of this paper, *viz.*, that the criticisms of MW, which I rehearsed in my Introduction, are misdirected. I conclude Section III.4 by showing how my (Target)-Audience-Oriented reading of MW enables the argumentative and expository results of my discussion so far to be synthesized into a single coherent and satisfying account of McDowell’s project in MW, which result constitutes further evidence in favor of that reading.

#### *III.4 Recap and Consolidation of Results: Three Points and Their Implications for Criticisms of MW*

I understand the criticisms of McDowell, which I rehearse in my Introduction, to be of two sorts: (1) that MW begs the very questions it purports to ‘exorcize’; and (2) that MW begs the question against BN in declaring itself to be ‘more satisfying’ than BN *qua* exorcism. And in the course of defending MW from these criticisms, I have further distinguished two possible construals of (2): (2a) that MW begs the General Question against BN; and (2b) that MW begs the (Target)-Audience-Oriented Question against BN. Quite naturally, then, my defense of MW from these criticisms has taken on the form of an argument-by-elimination. Furthermore, if the

foregoing is correct, then I have already established that two of these three possible criticisms—namely, criticisms (1) and (2a)—are misdirected at MW.

That is, to take criticism (2a) first, the preceding discussion has provided at least three interrelated pieces of evidence to substantiate the conclusion that McDowell is not attempting in MW to answer the General Question, and that he is rather concerned only to answer the (Target)-Audience-Oriented Question: (1) the nature of the initial move in McDowell’s exorcism, and its role in the subsequent dialectic of MW; (2) what is implied by McDowell’s saying that BN figures in MW ‘only as a competitor’ to his own exorcism, a competitor whose adherents do not suffer from the anxiety about empirical content he is attempting in MW to exorcize; and (3) the constraints imposed by his own correctness conditions on a properly ‘quietistic’ reminder. And if this is right, then I have already shown that McDowell is not vulnerable to the charge that he begs the General Question against BN.

Second, as we just saw in Section III.3, McDowell’s reminder about second nature in fact satisfies the correctness conditions which his quietism imposes on it. That is, at least for McDowell’s *confrères*—and ‘considered in abstraction from the[ir] feeling of being confronted by deep and difficult intellectual problems that [the reminder] is supposed to liberate [them] from’ (i.e., bracketing the influence of NRL on their thinking)—his reminder is indeed neither ‘a piece of news,’ nor ‘a report of a substantial achievement in philosophical theory’. It is ‘something that [his *confrères*] knew all along,’ something that, by their own lights, is ‘in itself...thin and obvious’ and ‘obviously right’; and, as such, it does not require any further argumentation for them to find it justified. Nor does his reminder require that his *confrères* ‘alleviate’ their anxiety

about empirical content by substituting one bit of philosophical theorizing for another, but rather that they henceforth not lose track of what they had forgotten or come to neglect.

That his *confrères* have indeed forgotten or come to neglect what McDowell reminds them of—and thus that ‘nature includes second nature’ also fulfills this further condition on a proper reminder—may be seen in the very fact that, once brought clearly to mind, the content of the reminder is not only obviously right by his *confrères*’ own lights, its effect is to call into question the very reason for being of their philosophical projects. That is, what the reminder reveals to McDowell’s *confrères* is that, to generate their anxiety about content—and thus to motivate their philosophical projects in the first place—NRL is a (perhaps heretofore unacknowledged) *sine qua non*; ME and DLS do not by themselves provide grounds for anxiety about the intelligibility of content, either singly or jointly. And because the reminder is both obviously right to them and incompatible with NRL in its implications, its effect—and intended function, I take it—is thus to bring NRL explicitly into view for his *confrères* as a premise like any other. That is, the reminder renders NRL an explicit premise whose rational credentials may then be challenged, and which—if those credentials are found wanting—may accordingly be abandoned, thereby mooting his *confrères*’ efforts to make sense of (empirical) content.

Thus—and this is the third point I want to take stock of—the foregoing has also put us in a position to appreciate why it is that MW does not beg the very conceptual questions that it undertakes to exorcize, i.e., why criticism (1) is also misdirected at MW. Recall that I quoted Wright (2002a) in my Introduction to give representative voice to the following complaint: there must be (as Wright puts it) ‘some massive unstated assumption’ involved in McDowell’s apparent attempt in MW to answer a conceptual worry—or, as I will call it here, the

'Conceptual Question'—about how content could even possibly have a place in the natural world, with an empirical assertion to the effect that ordinary human upbringing brings it about, e.g., that we are able to produce and understand contentful utterances. For, as a purported answer to the Conceptual Question, such an empirical assertion clearly begs that very question.

Now, no doubt, if someone were, in fact, to do what McDowell is here charged with doing, she would be making a mistake for which she could be criticized. After all—to use McDowell's own analogy—her doing so 'would be like responding to Zeno by walking across a room,' or, more precisely, like purporting to answer Zeno by asserting that we do, after all, walk across rooms (*MW:xxi*). However to charge McDowell with making this sort of mistake in *MW* presupposes—and thus reflects—a misunderstanding of *MW qua* exorcism, a misunderstanding which the foregoing has put us in a position to recognize as such.

What the charge presupposes is this: that McDowell's reminder about second nature—or perhaps *MW* as a whole—purports to, or (by its own lights) is obliged to, answer the Conceptual Question at all, where to 'answer' a question (in the relevant sense) would not be just to provide some response or other to it, which could comprise anything from the most esoteric philosophical gyrations, to simply dismissing the question out of hand. Rather, it would be to provide what I will call a 'straight' answer to a question, i.e., one which accepts the rational credentials of the considerations which give rise to the relevant question, and thus which accepts the question itself as a live one. And, as McDowell is at pains to point out, what gives rise to the Conceptual Question—or, more precisely, what gives rise to the anxiety which the Conceptual Question expresses—is (the conjunction of) ME, DLS, and NRL. Thus, in the terms I am using here, what the above charge against McDowell presupposes is that he either

attempts—or (by his own lights) is obliged to attempt—to provide a straight answer to the Conceptual Question in MW, i.e., one that accepts the rational credentials of all three components of the inconsistent triad, including NRL.

However, we have already seen that the rational credentials of NRL are precisely what McDowell does not accept in MW, at least insofar as those credentials pretend to make embracing NRL mandatory, on pain of one’s otherwise ceasing to be ‘intellectually respectable’ (MW:113). On the contrary, I have argued, the whole objective of MW *qua* exorcism is to bring his *confrères* to see that they, too, can—and should—disavow NRL with a clear ‘naturalist’ conscience, i.e., that it can be—and is—intellectually respectable for them to do so. Which is just to say that MW aims, in effect, to bring his *confrères* to explicitly abandon one of the premises—*viz.*, NRL—that must be in place in their thinking (whether overtly or covertly), if answering the Conceptual Question is to even seem obligatory to them. Or, to put the point in the terms I introduced in the previous paragraph: MW aims to bring it about that the Conceptual Question simply ceases to be a live one for McDowell’s *confrères*, and thus, *a fortiori*, that it ceases even to seem to them to require anything like a (straight) answer.

Of course, I have not yet finished discussing all of what McDowell thinks accomplishing this objective involves, nor have I finished showing that MW can, in fact, accomplish it. But if I am right about how to understand MW’s objective *qua* exorcism, then McDowell is quite clearly not attempting in MW to provide anything like a (straight) answer to the Conceptual Question, whether for his philosophical *confrères* or for anyone else. Nor is this surprising, given that McDowell does not even think there can be (what I am calling) a ‘straight’ answer to the Conceptual Question, and precisely because he recognizes that ME, DLS, and NRL form a truly

inconsistent set. If I am right that he neither attempts—nor is obliged, by his own lights, to attempt—to do so in *MW*, then McDowell is simply not vulnerable to the charge that his crucial reminder about second nature—and therefore his whole exorcism—begs the very (conceptual) questions he undertakes in *MW* to exorcize; Criticism (1)—like criticism (2a)—is misdirected at *MW*, presupposing, as it does, a misunderstanding of *MW* *qua* exorcism.

My argument-by-elimination has also served a crucial expository function: namely, to progressively winnow down the options for what McDowell is trying to do in *MW*, by eliminating what he is not trying to do, thereby bringing his project into clearer focus. In particular, I take it that my arguments against criticisms (1) and (2a) complement each other in the following way: resolving whether McDowell attempts in *MW* to address the General Question or the Audience-Oriented Question—so as to defend *MW* from criticism (2a)—is effectively a matter of properly identifying *MW*'s Target Audience for its discussion of a single issue, namely, how to respond to the Conceptual Question which the ME-DLS-NRL triad generates. However, to have resolved that matter still leaves open whether McDowell's (obligatory) aim in *MW*, with respect to that same issue and Target Audience, is to answer the Conceptual Question, or to exorcize (obviate, moot) it. But if my arguments against criticisms (1) and (2a) are sound, then I have already established not only that its Target Audience comprises McDowell's *confrères*, but also that the argument of *MW* is intended specifically to show his *confrères* that it can be intellectually respectable for them to shrug off the supposed—but in fact illusory—philosophical burden of answering the Conceptual Question, i.e., that *MW* is intended to exorcize their anxiety about the intelligibility of empirical content (*MW:xxii*).

What’s more, the preceding discussion also enables us to now add another, more ‘synthetic’ piece of evidence to further corroborate my reading of *MW qua* exorcism. That is, we are now able to pick up a strand of McDowell’s argument which, despite its importance in the narrative of *MW*, I have so far mentioned only in passing—namely, the strand related to his *confrères’* shared acceptance of the idea that experience is extra-conceptual—and to reveal its proper place in the dialectic of *MW qua* exorcism. Moreover, we are now able to do so in a way that makes satisfying sense of why the initial move of McDowell’s exorcism takes the form that it does, as well as of why the dialectic of the exorcism subsequently unfolds as it does.<sup>11</sup>

That is, recall the ‘important and non-accidental fact’ (as I called it in Section III.1) that McDowell does not begin his exorcism by exposing the place and role of NRL in generating the anxiety about empirical content which he thinks drives his *confrères’* philosophical projects. Rather, he begins by showing that those projects amount to the two poles of an interminable ‘oscillation’ (as he calls it) (*MW*:15). And on the Audience-Oriented reading of *MWI* advance in this paper, that McDowell begins as he does has everything to do with how he understands what may be usefully construed as his *confrères’* pre-exorcism ‘debate’ over how to make sense of empirical content (coupled, no doubt, with the idea that a properly quietistic exorcism should begin from where the members of its Target Audience are ‘at,’ philosophically speaking).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Though he is, of course, not responsible for the way (nor the terms in which) I articulate it here, I am indebted to Prof. Jim Conant for pressing the reading of McDowell’s understanding of his Target Audience’s pre-exorcism thinking, which I attempt to explicate in the following paragraphs. I am consequently also indebted to Prof. Conant for the general perspective on the progressively-unfolding, dialectical structure of *MW qua* exorcism, which informs this entire paper.

<sup>12</sup> It is perhaps worth emphasizing that my characterization of the formal relationship between the respective philosophical positions of McDowell’s *confrères* as a ‘debate’ is only a useful heuristic, since, e.g., Davidson did not actually engage, so far as I know, with Evans’ philosophical position.

In particular, it has everything to do with the following: as McDowell understands his *confrères*’ ‘oscillating’ debate around empirical content, NRL simply does not figure among its overt terms or concerns, even though NRL nevertheless covertly shapes his *confrères*’ pre-exorcism thinking in important and—so far as their prospects for making sense of empirical content are concerned—fatal ways. Specifically, NRL combines with their commitment to DLS to make their (shared) assumption that experience is extra-conceptual appear obvious, and even as a straightforward corollary to DLS. After all, if (1) nature includes only that which is nomothetically intelligible (i.e., NRL); and if (2) experience is, as such, part of the natural world; then it follows that (3) experience is nomothetically intelligible. And if, against this (covert) background, we commit ourselves to the notion that (4) anything with conceptual shape is not nomothetically intelligible (i.e., DLS); then it will appear to follow straight away that (5) experience does not have conceptual shape, i.e., that experience is extra-conceptual (EEC).

In other words, according to McDowell, it is only the additional and covert influence of NRL on his *confrères*’ thinking that makes EEC seem obvious and unimpeachable to them as a picture of experience; by itself, DLS carries no such implication. But it is precisely EEC—which does figure among the explicit terms and concerns of his *confrères*’ pre-exorcism debate—that makes, in its turn, the idea that our thoughts about the world could be rationally answerable to experience seem sufficiently problematic as to require either rejection (in the case of, e.g., Sellars and Davidson), or an appeal to ‘non-conceptual content’ (*à la* Evans). And it is EEC—not NRL—that McDowell refers to as the ‘assumption’ his *confrères* share, when he summarizes the upshot of the pre-reminder phase of his exorcism:

Given an assumption that Davidson and Evans share [*viz.*, EEC], they are confined to the pair of positions between which they choose. And each has what looks like a completely cogent argument against the other (MW:69, text in brackets added).

NRL, for its part, is rather the ‘deep root’ of what McDowell calls the ‘deep-rooted mental block’ which holds his *confrères*’ assumption of EEC in place (MW:69,85; McDowell 1998d:367).

We can gain additional insight into the initial move and subsequent dialectic of McDowell’s exorcism if we recast these same points in different terms: as McDowell sees it, the pre-exorcism perspective on empirical content, which his *confrères* all inhabit, is fundamentally shaped by their shared assumption of EEC. And from within that EEC-shaped perspective, the apparent structure of their pre-exorcism debate, and so the range of options which appear to be open to them in that context, looks very different from the actual structure which McDowell’s exorcism—or, more specifically, his reminder that nature includes second nature—reveals it to have. And one way of putting McDowell’s point about the apparent structure of his *confrères*’ pre-exorcism debate, is to say that it looks different to his *confrères* precisely because it takes in only a portion of the actual structure of their predicament, as determined by the ultimate source of their worries about empirical content, *viz.*, the ME-DLS-NRL triad.

That is, from within the EEC-shaped, pre-exorcism perspective of McDowell’s *confrères* only two of the three constituents of the ME-DLS-NRL triad are explicitly ‘thematized’ or in view: namely, ME and DLS. Thus, from the pre-exorcism perspective of McDowell’s *confrères*, the apparent structure of their debate is much closer to dyadic than triadic. Furthermore, the fact that Davidson and Evans are both committed to DLS as embodying a genuine insight effectively makes it the case that, for their purposes of their pre-exorcism debate, only ME is actually ‘up for grabs,’ with Evans embracing ME, and Davidson/Sellars rejecting it. In other

words, from the pre-exorcism perspective of McDowell's *confrères*, their debate over how to make sense of empirical content has an effectively monadic structure.

Nevertheless, the third constituent of the inconsistent triad—NRL—continues covertly to exert influence on his *confrères'* thought, and precisely so as to perpetuate their distorted and incomplete picture of their own philosophical predicament. In particular, as discussed above, NRL manifests its influence by combining with his *confrères'* commitment to DLS to make their assumption of EEC appear obvious and unimpeachable. Thus, on McDowell's view, there is an important element of what might legitimately be called 'false consciousness' at work in his *confrères'* pre-exorcism debate over how to make sense of empirical content, insofar as they fail to recognize the true source and nature of their philosophical predicament. As McDowell puts the point: 'Evidently it can seem sensible to embark on such a project only if one does not quite understand the predicament that seems to motivate it' (MW:xxiii-xxiv, text in brackets added).

Given this conception of his *confrères'* pre-exorcism predicament, McDowell's Audience-Oriented strategy for exorcizing their anxiety about empirical content is thus this: to begin not by addressing NRL—which has no overt place in his *confrères'* debate—but from the notions which are recognizable and familiar to them in this context: namely, as I've been calling them, ME, DLS, and EEC. McDowell's objective in this first stage of the exorcism is to persuade his *confrères* that, given their shared assumption of EEC, their own philosophical attempts to make sense of empirical content cannot succeed. And I take it that the point of his doing so is to prepare them, psychologically as much as philosophically, for the next, similarly Audience-Oriented stage of his exorcism.

That is, assuming his *confrères* recognize that neither of their respective philosophical projects can fulfill its reason for being, embracing BN will then seem to them to be the only remaining hope for salvaging the intelligibility of empirical content. After all, if (1) ME and DLS are the only constituents of the triad that are actually in view from their pre-reminder perspective; and if (2) their assumption of EEC makes it impossible for them to make sense of empirical content, no matter whether they accept or reject ME; and if (3) the covert influence of NRL on their thinking continues nevertheless to make EEC seem obvious and unimpeachable; then (3) abandoning DLS would thus appear to be—at least from their perspective, covertly shaped by NRL as it is—the only option remaining to them for making sense of empirical content, however deeply unsatisfying that option may be to them.

And I take it that the point of this second stage of McDowell’s exorcism is, like the first, to prepare his *confrères*—again, as much psychologically as philosophically—for yet another stage in the Audience-Oriented dialectic of his exorcism. For it is precisely at this stage of the dialectic that McDowell introduces his crucial reminder about second nature, thereby revealing to his *confrères* that—and how—NRL has always been working in the background of their thought, distorting it so that their assumption of EEC looked obvious and unimpeachable, and thus so that they could not see that embracing both ME and DLS does not, of itself, place any pressure on the intelligibility of empirical content.

Of course, one can—and McDowell does—anticipate that his *confrères’* will have worries about disavowing NRL. And the worries in question will arise despite—and even precisely because of—the promise that disavowing NRL holds for releasing them from what is (at least if McDowell is right) no more than an illusion under which they have labored: the illusion that

intellectual honesty or their commitment to science in any way saddles them with an obligation to attempt to solve various apparently difficult—but, if McDowell is right, in fact insoluble—philosophical conundrums. And thus, it would seem that MW has little prospect for success, *qua* exorcism of his *confrères’* anxiety about empirical content, if it were to end at this third stage.

However, McDowell does not end his exorcism at this third stage, crucial though it is, and I turn next in Section III.5 to his subsequent efforts to assuage and avert various worries which he anticipates his *confrères* may have about disavowing NRL and throwing their hats in with his Liberal Naturalism. The present point is just this: my reading of MW as essentially (Target)-Audience-Oriented enables us to synthesize the various strands and stages of McDowell’s argument into a single coherent narrative, which fact further bolsters this reading of MW. With this in mind, we are now finally ready to reinstate the influence of NRL on McDowell’s *confrères’* thinking, and to see how MW can nevertheless succeed at exorcizing their anxiety about the intelligibility of empirical content, and thus that the third and final criticism—*viz.*, (2b) that McDowell begs the Audience-Oriented Question against BN—is also misdirected.

### III.5 Completing the Exorcism: Science, Language, and Evolution

For the purpose of this section, the clearest and most straightforward way to reinstate the (perhaps heretofore covert) influence of NRL on his *confrères’* thinking is as follows: (1) to imagine them as having all along recognized and acknowledged NRL as a (suppressed) background premise in their projects, even if they did not, for all that, regard NRL as a debatable premise whose good-standing was in any way in question; (2) to imagine them as having been willing, nevertheless, to bracket their acceptance of NRL—as we did here—for the purpose of allowing McDowell to draw a critical (conditional) conclusion, *viz.*, that if they

abandoned NRL, then embracing ME and DLS would not of itself provide grounds for anxiety over the intelligibility of empirical content. And finally, (3) that conclusion having been made plain to them, we can imagine that his *confrères* now reinstate their overt acceptance of NRL.

Besides being clear and straightforward, this way of reinstating the influence of NRL on McDowell’s *confrères*’ thinking has at least two other virtues. First, it allows a possible standing worry about McDowell’s project in MW to lapse. The worry is this: McDowell is simply mistaken, in point of fact, about the role of NRL in, e.g., Evans,’ Sellars,’ and Davidson’s thinking, inasmuch as he takes that role to be covert and unrecognized. On the contrary, one might think, these and other members of McDowell’s Target Audience recognize all too well the place of NRL in their philosophical projects, and it is precisely their recognition of the attractiveness of NRL that gives those projects their urgency.<sup>13</sup> However, the above way of reinstating the influence of NRL makes it possible to show that the success of McDowell’s exorcism does not turn on whether this worry is sound: If McDowell’s exorcism can succeed with *confrères* who, *ex hypothesi*, all along recognized and acknowledged NRL as a premise in their philosophical projects, then it can likewise succeed with *confrères* who only became aware of the (covert) influence of NRL on their thought through McDowell’s reminder about second nature, and so who are, presumably, not so attached to NRL as the former sort of *confrère*.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, reinstating the influence of NRL in this way allows us to keep clearly in view the dialectically cumulative character of McDowell exorcism,

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<sup>13</sup> I take it that, e.g., Pippin (2002) expresses something like this worry in the parenthetical part of the following passage: ‘McDowell is candid at the end of his book in admitting that it is unlikely that the considerations he advances will themselves, alone, free us from the grip of this distorting picture (p. 177—for one thing, it is unlikely in the extreme that the origin of this hold was lack of attention to a neglected alternative’ (2002:60-1).

and thereby to put the point of McDowell’s discussions in Lectures IV through VI of MW in their proper and most perspicuous perspective. In particular, it allows us to see clearly how his remarks about science and the scientific revolution, about the place of learning a language in coming to be a mature human being, and about evolutionary speculation about the origins of rational animals, all constitute attempts on his part to assuage various ‘post-reminder’ worries which he anticipates his *confrères* might have about disavowing NRL and throwing their hats in with his Liberal Naturalism.

For it is not hard to anticipate—and it is the purpose of this section to show that McDowell does anticipate—that, at this post-reminder point in the dialectic of his exorcism, with the (perhaps heretofore covert) influence of NRL on their thinking reinstated, his *confrères* might reasonably respond to him in something like the following fashion:

Suppose it is true that more than one conception of nature is presupposed or implied by various things which we have assumed or which we take to be obvious. In particular, suppose it is true that EEC seems obvious to us only given our (perhaps heretofore tacit) acceptance of NRL;<sup>14</sup> and that another, non-NRL conception of nature is implied, if it is true that nature includes second nature, which latter fact also seems to us obvious. In other words, suppose it is true that MW has revealed to us that certain of our views are in tension with each other, and perhaps even that some of the things we assume and/or find obvious are mutually exclusive, given their implications. Your reminder about second nature may perhaps be credited with revealing that much to us.

However, it does not follow that your reminder has shown us that we (as it was put here on your behalf) “don’t even really accept NRL anyway.” At best, it would seem,

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<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that Evans also provides several independent arguments for EEC, e.g., from the (alleged) fact that we share perceptual experience with non-rational—and so, in the demanding sense relevant to McDowell’s argument, non-conceptual—animals. Indeed, McDowell devotes the whole of Lecture III, and parts of Lectures IV and VI, to consideration and rebuttal of these important arguments. Nevertheless, I am not addressing them here because they are too wide of a detour from the several lines of argument I am already pursuing, and because I think the proper place for their consideration, if anywhere, is in a later portion of this paper: namely, where I consider the implications for the possible success of McDowell’s exorcism—and thus for the possible justice of the criticisms of MW—if we are not fully persuaded by his case that his *confrères*’ own projects stand at an irremediable impasse.

what you have shown is that certain of the things we accept imply NRL, and that certain others imply not-NRL. And however uncomfortable it might be for the subject of such self-revelation, to have such a state of affairs revealed to one is surely not unusual in philosophy, and our present options seem to differ little from those of anyone else who confronts such a dilemma: to accept NRL, based on the cogency of the considerations in favor of it; or to reject it, based on the considerations which imply not-NRL.

Of course, if we concede the upshot of the pre-reminder portion of your argument in MW, *viz.*, that our philosophical attempts to, in effect, combine DLS and NRL are doomed to failure; and if we therefore face a forced choice between your Liberal Naturalism (which disavows NRL) and BN (which disavows DLS), as our only two remaining hopes for alleviating our anxiety about empirical content; then it can seem a foregone conclusion that we ought to, and will, choose the former. After all, we have so far been firmly and explicitly committed to DLS, even to the point, for some of us, of treating it as a touchstone for the adequacy of any account of empirical content. Indeed, this commitment is precisely why we have not—at least to this point—been ‘tempted’ by BN, as you correctly note. Moreover, we are only now questioning our commitment to DLS—if we indeed are—because we are conceding the hopelessness of our own attempts to make sense of a DLS-informed notion of empirical content, and not because DLS now fails on its own terms to seem to us the genuine insight that it once did.

And no doubt, with only the above considerations in view, the need for us to choose between BN/NRL and Liberal Naturalism/DLS will seem like a ‘dilemma’ with only one sharp horn. However, even if we grant that abandoning DLS in favor of BN/NRL will always be for us a choice made, as it were, under duress, it is only the short shrift which you give to considerations in favor of NRL that can make it seem a foregone conclusion that we will not make such a choice. Indeed, one has the impression from MW that it is only NRL’s sheer uninterrogated popularity which speaks in favor of it and, thus, in favor of our choosing now to embrace BN (MW:70,76). But there are in fact many reasons to be attracted to NRL, of which the following considerations are just three.

First, science has been wildly successful in explaining and predicting an enormous variety of natural phenomena. And even if this fact does not, strictly speaking, entail such a conclusion, it does make it seem extremely plausible that what explains the success of science, in its turn, is that the conceptual apparatus of the natural sciences accurately reflects crucial and pervasive features of the natural world. And if it is also true—as you yourself urge—that the conceptual apparatus of science comprises LSL-notions exclusively, then it is not such a big leap to infer that the natural world, as such, comprises nothing but instantiations of LSL-notions. In other words, it is but a short inferential step from the indisputable explanatory success of science to the conclusion that *natural phenomena* just are, as such, those which (can be shown to) instantiate laws; or, equivalently, that *nature* just is, as such, the realm of law.

Second, the sheer temporal, spatial, and scalar extent of the phenomena, which science has been able to render nomothetically intelligible, bolsters the plausibility of NRL even further. That is, the enormous variety of phenomena, which science has been

wildly successful at explaining, not only stretch all the way back to the apparent (temporal) origin of the universe, but all the way out to its furthest (spatial) reaches, and they vary in scale from the sub-atomic to the supra-galactic. And in the face of this apparently limitless explanatory scope, it would seem, again, not such a big leap to infer that the natural world is, was, and always will be nothing other than the realm of law.

Indeed, it would seem, on the contrary, that to reject NRL, so as to make room for some putative features of some human behavior, is to suggest something that surely strains credulity: namely, that while the universe originated in a nomothetically-intelligible event; and though it then proceeded to develop in a nomothetically-intelligible manner for more than fourteen billion years; nevertheless, no more than several million—and perhaps as little as several thousand—years ago, and (at least so far as we know) only among one animal species on one smallish planet in an otherwise thoroughly ordinary galaxy, some non-nomothetically-intelligible phenomena appeared.

Furthermore—and this is the third consideration—even if it now appears that, e.g., reason and meaning constitute counter-examples to NRL, the history of science offers scores of examples of phenomena which initially seemed to pose intractable explanatory problems, and about which it may even have been claimed that science could not explain them. And in case after case, it turned out either that what was thought not to be nomothetically intelligible, in fact was; or that the alleged ‘phenomenon’ in question was, in fact, merely an explanatory placeholder for a genuine phenomenon which, in its turn, was nomothetically intelligible. And surely the accumulated experience of science’s having thus repeatedly overcome what seemed, at the time, like insuperable explanatory obstacles, only lends that much more credence to the idea that everything the natural world comprises is nomothetically intelligible, i.e., to the idea you call ‘NRL’.

In light of even just these three considerations, it is thus not hard to appreciate how NRL has come today to seem so much (as you yourself put it) ‘sheer common sense,’ and thus to appreciate how embracing BN—as against a Liberal Naturalism which rejects NRL—can likewise seem ‘sheer common sense’ to someone who, like us, is forced to choose between them. Moreover, these are just three of the, as it were, ‘positive’ considerations in favor of BN/NRL. There are also other, complementary considerations which reinforce the thrust of the positive ones in favor of BN, but which are ‘negative’ in the sense that they would appear to speak against embracing your Liberal Naturalism.

In general, our worries about what is entailed by disavowing NRL might be summed up as follows: at best, it is to take up a position that, while intellectually possible, is not intellectually respectable, at least in the modern world; and, at worst, it is to be immediately saddled with philosophical conundrums as intractable as the ones which you think you have shown that our own philosophical projects confront.

[...]

### *III.5.a The Respectability Worry: Is McDowell's Liberal Naturalism Anti-Science?*

[...]

*III.5.b The Ontogenetic 'Mystery': Ordinary Human Socialization Brings about a 'Difference in Kind'*

[...]

*III.5.c The Phylogenetic 'Mystery': The Infinite Regress of Rational Animals*

[...]

**IV. Conclusion: Why MW's Critics Make the Misdirected Criticisms That They Do**

[...]

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