

The World from Within
Driving Stakes through the
Heart of Non-Normative Naturalism

Part I — Introduction

I • Introduction

A. Preparation

- I. For 3 reasons, it is a n honour to have this opportunity to disagree with Joe Rouse

B. Reasons

- I. First, it's an honour because *How Scientific Practice Matters* gives such sustained, detailed philosophical voice to a critically important perspective—stance, orientation, commitment—on science, and to the world more generally, that is emerging at the boundaries of philosophy and feminist science studies.
 - a. I don't believe this stance is simply one more incremental position—or “series of moves”—within a reasonably dense landscape of philosophical possibilities
 - b. Rather, it seems to me quite singular: a stance towards which some feminists, scientists, and philosophers have been struggling, for 30 or 40 years, since the progressive politics of the 60s and the rise of feminism—that
 - i. Does justice to the undeniable achievements of science
 - ii. Defends politically committed, intellectually uncompromising engagement with the world, and
 - iii. Overcomes the enduring limitations of the “mechanical philosophy”
 - c. I.e.
 - i. A gritty, politically progressive, unsentimental project of *re-enchanting nature from within*.
 - ii. ... Of clearing the woods, tilling the ground, and hewing an accountable place to live.
2. The second reason it is an honour to disagree with Joe is because he has done such an admirable job of *showing a path to this place*—from received philosophical views and the philosophical heartland.
 - a. The analysis of Carnap and Husserl—of Neurath and Heidegger—of Quine, Davison and McDowell—of Brandom and Haugeland

- i. Not only helps to locate this new place
- ii. But makes a path to accessible to people who work or dwell elsewhere.
- b. In a way, Joe's achievement in establishing a path to the place is
 - i. Both
 - α The book's greatest strength
 - β Also its greatest limitation
 - ii. One can—I did—long for a simpler, more straightforward picture of the place (or of Joe's view of the place) articulated *for people who already live there*.
 - iii. That is
 - α An account of *what it is like to be there*
 - β Not an account of *how to get there*☒
- c. Of course, given that, as Joe says, science and philosophy are practices of discursive engagement, there is no such thing as a description of this (or any other) place or position de novo, as it were—or from outside.
- d. Still, I am going to suggest that the book's being framed
 - i. As a defense or articulation of this place, from a historical vantage point
 - ii. I.e., from a perspective so routed in how it can be seen as emerging from, or at least as accessible to, philosophical tradition
 - iii. ... Is (to mix metaphors) rather a two-edged sword.
- e. This is something we are going to have to wrestle with.
- 3. Third
 - a. Still, wrestling is an honour.
 - b. Which leads me to the third reason it is a delight to disagree with Joe
 - c. Because my *disagreement* is based on top of so much *agreement*.
 - i. In particular, I, too, want to forge a place—a way—to live in this new place, to give it philosophical voice, to “accord it its intellectual due”.
 - d. In particular, I agree with at least the following
 - i. That we need—urgently—a normative understanding of nature
 - ii. **“To speak is to help configure the world as a field of discursive practice.”** [260]
 - iii. That **“subjects and bodies are emergent from the intra-active configuration of the meaningful world.”** [260]
 - iv. That we must not only be committed *to* the world; we must be committed *by* the world. [257]
 - v. That we have to resist tendencies to defer wholesale to local histories of sciences, and abandon generalization.
 - vi. That we need **“a constructive articulation of how scientific practices are normatively accountable in ways that have binding authority over what people say and do.”** [311/top]
 - vii. ... and so on

viii. [289] • Point of agreement
 ix. [308/0/end] • Point of agreement
 x. 263
 xi. 260 (× 2)
 xii. 236
 xiii. 144
 xiv. 76
 xv. 5
 xvi. 309

- C. From within
1. My challenges therefore, are offered in the spirit of “friendly amendments”
 2. So that is what I want to do, in my remaining time
 - a. To raise a set of challenges *from within*
 - b. I am not, by and large, going to question or challenges the route by which Rouse gets to this territory.
 3. Therefore I won’t, by and large, question roughly the first 2/3 of the book
 4. One could, of course do that:
 - a. Question whether Brandom has achieved his project, in chapter 8 of *Making It Explicit*, of attaching inferential semantics to objects via perception and action
 - b. Challenge whether [247/1] Kierkegaard is right (or, for that matter, said) that one cannot voluntarily make an irrevocable commitment
 - i. I believe one can (cf. marriage)
 - ii. And therefore, whether the critique of H and B as being *voluntarist* is legitimate
 - iii. I suspect not.
 - iv. I suspect Haugeland, for example, would call it an act of authentic freedom to do exactly that—even if doing so is normatively mandated by the world.
 - c. And so on ...
 5. Overall, though, I think challenging the *road* would distract from—rather than illuminate—the book’s greatest contribution.
 6. So I will leave that part to other critics, more competent than I
- D. One additional preparatory remark
1. According to Hoyle, I
 - a. Read Joe’s book long ago
 - b. Prepared my comments over months of detached reflection
 - c. Sent them to Joe two weeks ago, so that he could prepare his response.
 2. Incessant decanal duties, however, intervened.
 3. Let me just say
 - a. I extricated myself from Toronto on Sunday—with a freshly minted, *unopened* copy of Joe’s book.
 - b. So Joe will have had exactly the same amount of time to consider my remarks as

- you will have—once I've made them.
- c. For that reason, I am going to restrict myself to comments so manifestly self-evident and compelling that Joe will happily be able to discharge his part of the bargain simply by saying “of course!”
 - d. To do anything else would be unfair.

Part II — Voice

II • Introduction

- A. What I want to do first, then, is talk about **voice**
 1. Voice is particularly important when one believes—as Joe and I both do—that science and philosophy are both located, discursive practices of normative engagement
 2. In particular, when one attempts—as Joe has—to explicate a route from a received or generally intelligible tradition to a new place, the question arises of **how to talk**.
 - a. Does one speak in the language of the place *from which one comes*?
 - b. Or does one speak the language of the place *to which one is going*?
 - c. Or—thirdly, and interestingly—does one speak in a language *special to the trip*?
 3. Vocabulary
 - a. For discussion, I will introduce three terms
 - b. I will call the language of the place from which one starts **traditional**, or **conservative**
 - c. It is highly likely that that traditional vocabulary will do, alone, do the job
 - i. Especially when—as is the case here—the new ground to be tilled is not just an example of my least favourite type of philosophy, in which one “makes moves” within a presumptively unproblematic conceptual frame taken over intact from the literature.
 - d. A typical—and perhaps even necessary, but ultimately unsatisfying—strategy, in my experience, is to define oneself in opposition to that traditional vocabulary or conceptual framing.
 - i. (As a Canadian, I know a lot about defining yourself in terms of something else which you claim you are not.)
 - ii. The problem is that that way of speaking, strictly speaking, is **reactionary**
 - α In the literal sense that it is *defined as a reaction against that from which it hopes to free itself*.
 - e. The **radical** thing to do, however—or anyway so I believe—is to speak, or at least get to the point where one can speak—in the language of the place to which one is moving.
- B. Reflexive integrity
 1. These issues of voice are especially problematic in cases of **reflexive change**—

when the shift one is making—as is the case here—involves a change in our understanding of language and understanding themselves.

2. In my own work, I call this a criterion of **reflexive integrity**:
 - a. That in all appropriate respects, the account one gives...
 - i. ... Of language and understanding and science and evidence and people and objects and politics and the world (and other things like that)
 - ii. ... must be *accountable* to the picture or understanding of language and understanding that the account thereby conveys
 - b. A kind of immanent version of a transcendental requirement.
 3. Two quick examples
 - a. People who not only study constructive mathematics, but who believe that it is the only consistent and coherent way for mathematics to be done, shouldn't be proving the consistency of constructive mathematics in classical mathematics
 - i. — Or if they do, they shouldn't sleep well, at night.
 - b. Similarly, if you fundamentally don't believe that cross-cultural understanding can be conveyed in language, but can only be shared a form of legitimate peripheral participation, then you shouldn't be writing papers—you should be inviting people over for a drink.
 4. In places, R recognizes—even if he doesn't name—this criterion
 - a. As he notes [293]—with disapproval—many naturalisation projects
 - i. **“help themselves to concepts of ... objects, causes, or laws in ways that cannot be reconciled with their own commitments to naturalism”**
 - b. But the real recognition of the importance of the criterion emerges only in the last 3 pages of the book.
 - i. **“Descriptions of issues or stakes, or of the causally intra-active circumstances to which they belong, are themselves accountable possibilities (ways of configuring one's situation from within), rather than exhaustive or definitive representations of them”**
 - c. Similarly, the very last paragraph, on p. 360, in a way, is a paean to the issue's possibility—and importance.
- C. Gauntlet
1. One might say that, if the purpose of the book is to defend a path to this territory, then it is appropriate to speak in a reflexively integral voice only once one gets there.
 2. Alas, I don't think that the issue is so simple.
 3. In particular, the brunt of my critique will be that the way that Joe characterises the territory to which he is leading us
 - a. ... Positively, the aspects he endorses, the stances he recommends, the commitments he encourages us to make
 - b. ... And negatively: the traditional approaches he disparages

4. ... Are still too inflected—and *thereby infected*—by framing them in a voice that is still too caught up in the very intellectual territory from which he recommends we exit
- D. That is: I am going to accuse Rouse of being *reactionary*.

III • Six Examples

- A. Four examples, quickly—to show what I mean.
- B. [1] • Properties
 1. Two quotes
 - a. [222n] “**Power is not a property or capacity possessed or exercised by agents, but a feature of the dynamics of the situations in which those agents act.**”
 - b. [269/2/7:9] “**Content is not a property of particular performances ... but instead accrues throughout discursive practice as a whole.**”
 2. These illustrate, I would claim, a *reactionary voice*
 3. Now “property,” of course, means “that which is *proper* to something”—as opposed to that which is contingent, accidental, or immaterial to the thing’s being what it is.
 4. **According to tradition**, properties are taken to be intrinsic, presumably local, and relational properties to be “extrinsic” or contingent—i.e., as *not necessary*
 - a. But that whole conception of intrinsic and necessary property derives from exactly the kind of alethic presupposition that Rouse is so concerned to dispel.
 - b. I.e., it seems to me that the statement that these things “aren’t properties” involves a commitment to a conception of properties that Rouse must not want to embrace?
 5. In particular
 - a. What if what it was, for a normatively-engaged agent, to exemplify a (linguistic or discursive) property, were to be sited in such a way as to shoulder responsibility for features of the dynamics of the situations in which one acts”?
 - b. What if the property of having content were to be such as to play a focal point for consequences that accrue throughout discursive practice as a whole?
 6. Then power and content *would be properties, after all*
 - a. Just properties, not in the traditional sense, but in the sense of property that arises from the advocated normatively-engaged perspective on naturalism?
 7. You get the point.
- C. [2] • Language
 1. Similarly, consider Rouse’s use of the term ‘language’
 2. At one point [269] he says “**even if theories are not themselves linguistic entities**” but instead patterns of discursive performance ...
 - a. This is a theme throughout his book
 3. It should be clear: what he is saying is that theories are not *languages as we have traditionally understood language or linguistic entities*.

4. But Rouse wouldn't want—I should think—or anyway shouldn't want—to give up the word 'language' to that mistaken, “unnatural” (because non-normative) historically formalistic tradition.
5. Discussion
 - a. It is not, after all, as if he thinks that language *has, for many years, been as the prior tradition thought it was*
 - i. ... and that only if one agrees with his summoning us to a new place, that language (in this wonderful new place) will *become* an engaged, normative, discursive practice
 - b. Rather, what he must think is that this—i.e., being an engaged, normative, discursive practice—is how languages have *always already* worked.
 - c. Joe is a gracious man, after all—with more than enough grace to accord history its own authenticity
6. So to say that theories are language seems like—or anyway verges on—a reactionary statement
 - a. After all, he does think of them as discursive practices—and surely one would not be too far off to think that “discourse” and “language” might have something to do with each other”
7. So should he simply say that theories *are* linguistic?
 - a. No.
 - b. That—to continue the political metaphor, and add a fourth category of voice:
 - i. Would not (thank heavens!) be *traditional* or *conservative*
 - ii. And it would escape being *reactionary*
 - iii. But only to devolve into a form of vapid *liberalism*
8. Rather, what we want—what Rouse should want, I believe—is to realize that, even if human language, in history, was authentic, and therefore always has been an engaged, normative, discursive practice, that thinking of it on a formalist, alethic model of naturalistically disconnected syntax still affects how we speak, what we do—i.e., it affects our discursive engagements
 - a. This, I take it, is Charles Taylor's point, among others; that we, and our projects, are in part constituted by our own understandings of them.
9. So what he should say, I should have thought, is that theories are (or anyway to a large part are) linguistic, but that *language is not a matter of syntax or formal models, but* an engaged, normative, discursive practice—and that recognizing that fact has profound material consequences.
 - a. E.g., Cartwright's entreaty about women dying of breast cancer.
- D. Two other “simple” examples—very quickly, because we have little time
 - I. 3 • Regularities
 - a. One has to do with
 - i. Regularities
 - ii. Regulism and regularism
 - iii. Commonality

- iv. etc.
- b. Rouse is against regularities, but then—in his positive picture, talks about the constitutive commonality necessary for scientific intelligibility.
- c. E.g., [299] **“Through the discussion, I have emphasized the constitutive repeatability of causally intra-active phenomena.”**
- d. Options
 - i. One possibility is that, sure enough, constitutive repeatability does not exemplify a regularity.
 - ii. Another, though—is that regularities *aren’t what tradition has assumed*—and that the form of constitutive repeatability that he emphasizes is what we should understand exemplifying a regularity to be.
- e. Again, after all, we don’t want to relinquish authority over the word ‘regularity’ to a tradition we are freeing ourselves from
 - i. (Quite a nice word, actually—‘regularity’)
- f. Same issue comes up when he argues that different instances of a type aren’t the *same*, but answer to (shared? related? identical?) normative demands?
 - i. Maybe that means they *are* the same—in an important way?
- 2. [4] • Distinctions
 - a. Similarly, I was worried—from page 8 on through the whole book—that Rouse buys into a conservative conception of distinction—which he himself must surely, explicitly, deny.
 - b. In particular, there are numerous places where he seems to accept the inference
 - i. From : “drawing a line” (between two concepts, or phenomena) being impossible
 - ii. To: no distinction to be made
 - c. E.g.,
 - i. [91] Between the human and natural sciences
 - ii. [170] Between *normative* and *regularity*-based conceptions of practice
 - d. I.e., a surely glib endorsement of the meta-argument that
 - i. If there isn’t an in-principle, even (God forbid!) *necessary* way of distinguishing two kinds of thing, then
 - ii. It follows that the Δ itself is ungrounded.
 - e. This looks to be an (unwitting? required? unfortunate?) acceptance of what Haugeland calls “higher-order discreteness”—something I believe to be one of the worst residues of excessive formalism.
 - f. Obviously doesn’t believe it.
 - i. Cf. relation between science and philosophy
 - α Does it follow that we should abandon the notion of philosophy?
 - β Retract his tenure?
 - χ Obviously not

- g. I talk to students about *food, gardens, relationships, place*—things that precede our formalist, academic idea that that concepts, *in order to penetrate or register the world*, must be uniform, derive their sense of boundary from their edges, etc.
- 3. NB
 - a. Note that this is not to say that R can't argue that it is not a good distinction
 - b. It may not be
 - c. Problem is: I am not disposed to believe an argument that it is not a good distinction, if the concept of distinction employed in that argument is a concept of distinction that itself is untenable.
 - d. To make the case—that it should not be employed as a distinction in the new place—we need an argument framed in terms of how distinctions are going to be understood in that new place.

IV • Summary

- A. So this will be the thrust of my specific critiques
 - 1. Let me put it in the philosophically-neglected second-person, of which I am fond, in both singular and plural versions
 - 2. Joe ... I want to see you, and raise you one
 - a. Specifically, I don't think you are being *nearly radical enough*
 - i. Not just for my taste—but for your own
 - b. I don't think you are yet fluent in the language of the place you want to move us to
 - c. That is: I don't believe that the argument in the book satisfies the criterion of reflexive integrity.
- B. Now I should repeat
 - 1. I don't consider this simply an issue of flawed pedagogy or rhetoric.
 - 2. Rather: the failure, I believe, infects the argument itself, making it less than it could be.
- C. Plan
 - 1. So I want to move on from the illustrative examples we have talked of so far
 - 2. Turn to seven small issues that I believe need (as I say) *friendly emendation*
 - a. Objects
 - b. Semantics
 - c. Causality
 - d. Mind
 - e. Science
 - f. Objectivity
 - g. World

Part III — Challenges

I • 1 Objects

- A. Reactionary
1. Throughout the book, there is a tendency to reject appeals to “objects” as the ground of normative grip or beholdenness.
 2. [302] • **“For purposes of naturalistic explanation, the natural world has been presumed to consist variously of material objects, natural kinds, causal powers, natural laws, or accessible possible worlds”**—going on to say that, for his purposes, these assumptions are all equally problematic in their common assumptions.
 3. More specifically, he criticizes Haugeland’s “Truth and Rule Following” paper for its uncritical, he feels, acceptance of “material objects” as causal but *non-normative* furniture of the world.
- B. Now objects are something I have thought about a lot.
1. Moreover—remember—I agree with him about all kinds of things
 2. I agree with him [313] that **“The root error underlying the familiar difficulties plaguing the Humean tradition is the presumption that the world somehow already comes naturally composed of discrete objects.”**
 3. I also agree that “more is at stake” in our scientific and philosophical projects than deference to “causally efficacious but normatively inert objects”
- C. I just want to say two things
1. First, I don’t believe that objects are causally efficacious but normatively inert.
 2. Second: I don’t believe there are *any objects in science*
 - a. That is: science contains no ontological commitment to the existence of objects
 - b. Sure enough, we use objects in our epistemic practices (to make a Δ that Rouse—and I—think is ultimately untenable)
 - c. I would go to court to defend this claim—non-standard as it may be.
 - d. That is, no objects in the sense in which we care about objects
 - i. No fact of the matter—no concern about the matter—of whether, if a cell divides, which, if either, is the same one as before
 - ii. No fact of the matter—no concern about the matter—of whether a sprig or frond of a redwood tree is the same redwood tree, or a different one.
 - e. In particular, no concern with *individuation* and *identity*—at all!
- D. Rather, what I think is that objects are “chunks or patches of the world that *matter*”
1. ... Talk about: heal the gap between *matter* and *matteing*
 2. ... Matteing is an issue about which R cares enormously
 3. But he still seems at least partially in the grip of the predecessor science or predecessor era, which divorces material objects from the matteing (normative) side of the equation.
- E. Now this claim that there are “no objects in science” is tricky:
1. *If* one were to think that the subject matter (“object matter”) of science were a

- non-normative field, then it might be true—or helpful—in aid of my claim that material objects are “chunks of reality that matter”.
2. However, if—as R and I both agree—the subject matter of science is in fact normatively implicated already, then the “need”, as it were, for there to be no objects in science is lessened. However I think that their absence is still interesting.
- F. The main point, however, is that objects are normative things.
1. Moreover, I think that Haugeland thinks so too. [Ask him!]
 2. So his criticism of Haugeland’s reliance on objects is weakened.
- G. Worse; we are left not knowing how objects (which we certainly should not give away) will figure, in the new place.

II • 2 Semantics

- A. Intro
1. Second issue: *semantics*
 2. Say: worked in the two sciences in which semantics is a scientifically investigated phenomenon
 - a. Cognitive Science
 - b. Computer Science
 3. Not an accident: that is *why* I have wasted my life in them.
- B. Again, want to say just one thing:
1. Semantic relations (paradigmatically: reference) are not causal (except holistically).
 2. Cf. remote (disconnection)
 3. Semantics is *only useful* because it gives us (intentional) access to that with which we are *not* causally intra-active.
 4. Discussion
 - a. You might say: not *at that moment*
 - b. But that won’t work
 - i. First, won’t work because it is no concept of object-hood, nor is it a robust object, if one must causally-intra-act with all of it (which would anyway be impossible)
 - α For example: it would prohibit futural thoughts
 - ii. Second, we don’t *have* the concept of object to extend to other places in space-time
 - c. Also: cf the light-cone.
- C. Semantics
1. The fundamental challenge of explaining semantics, in fact, that I take up with students, is not to explain how it is, or arises out of, causal intra-action.
 2. Rather, it is to explain how it is not a form of causal intra-action.
- D. Three consequences
1. Material objects: not causal (and maybe not even: causally-intra-active) phenomena!
 - a. Pace Brandom: one might say—or at least consider saying—that an object is

“that which is indicated by a successful use of a singular term.”

- b. Certainly this much: objects face the tribunal of experience as a web
- 2. No one has ever causally (but non-normatively intra-acted with an object)
 - a. Except, of course, to the extent that intra-action is normative, as well as causal
 - b. Something to which R alludes—but does not explain.
- 3. “Objects cannot be given a causal—even, I am going to argue, a causally intra-active normatively discursive—explanation!”

III • ③ Causality

A. Intro

- 1. This brings me to my third major concern
- 2. **“I hope to understand how causal interaction with our surroundings is authoritative over what people say and do.”** [234]
- 3. That, in experimental settings, **“intentional interpretation can be understood as measurement intra-action”** [286]
- 4. **“My commitment to the primacy of causal intra-action”** [312]
- 5. ... etc.

B. Here’s my worry

- 1. I worry that, in reaction to the inexplicable semanticism (some would say “semantic realism”—but that is a reactionary phrasing) of model theory, formalism, etc., that R is (unwittingly?) endorsing the opposite fundamentalism, and thereby ideologically embracing exactly what he does not want to: i.e., what the non-normative tradition took as naturalistically primary: a world of physical causes.
- 2. Admittedly, he wants a notion of *normative* cause.
- 3. Fair enough.
- 4. But I still think this is cause too much.
- 5. In particular, I think it runs counter to my sense of what is required in order to *grasp the world*. (about which more in a moment).

C. Grounds of the worry

- 1. I worry that R’s endorsement of a Brandom-esque inferentialist conception of semantics may allow him to slide towards a causal fundamentalism
 - a. (Not *reductionism*; fundamentalism and reductionism are well distinguished).
 - b. Huge trend in cog sci, AI, computing, etc.:
 - i. To reconceptualise logic in purely inferential terms,
 - ii. Then: to construe inference syntactically (a Δ move, of course),
 - iii. ... all in aid of a lurking physicalism.
 - c. So we have to be on guard!

D. Success

- 1. To me—given what I said about semantics—success counts as embracing the world as a whole.
 - a. Without giving causal talk distinctive priority.

- b. Stronger, in fact, I would suggest (though this can never be more than a surmise) that a *tacit recognition of the ultimate inadequacy of causality to explain the world* may surreptitiously have propped up allegiance to the normative/nature dualism.
 - c. It is not enough, I would say, to implicate normativity in causal talk; one has to recognize the limits of causality (or rather: the *locality* of causality, as opposed, perhaps, to the *integrity* or *wholeness* of the world—tai).
- E. Suggestion
- 1. Replace “**intra-action**” with “**engagement**”
 - a. Just as R suggests replacing Haugeland’s “objects” with “stakes”
 - 2. Discussion
 - a. [288] • Engagement with the world—not something rocks can do.
 - b. Requires a world.
 - c. The focal consequences of the locality of causality aren’t being given anything like enough due, here (as well as the deixis—yet another aspect of “actually doing the metaphysics?”).

IV • 4 Mind

- A. Mind—abstraction. No time...
 - 1. I claim: it is essential to *doing* science
 - 2. But it is hard to know what a scientific treatment of it is going to look like
- B. [11] • Setting aside of naturalistic attempts to use the structure of cognition to ground the epistemic structure of necessity. This might be a wedge where I could enter.
- C.

V • 5 Science

- A. Say: his description of science is too *general*
 - 1. Patterns of normatively-accountable causal intra-action, emergent from practices ...
 - 2. Nothing *distinctive* about science.
- B. Discussion
 - 1. [300/0/-7:-4] • “**Scientific practices are not just directed towards, or accountable to, the phenomena that they currently work to stabilize and articulate. Scientific research is always directed at something beyond itself, toward something that is not yet adequately realized or understood.**”
 - 2. Amazing.
 - 3. “Not yet realized”—diabolically ambiguous
 - 4. This is the first glimmering of science’s directedness—what science is directed towards *in general* (in newspeak).
 - a. Mostly, Rouse exploits the *futural* directedness of science to this “looking beyond” aspect.

- b. But I don't believe it is just the *future*—it is the “beyond,” the *world*.
- c. In fact I (myself) want to claim that it is the world, simpliciter, out of which causal and normative emerge as (partial, contested) distinctions.
- C. This is where I think R underestimates H's understanding of objects—and the real power of the excluded zone, etc.
- D. _____ JUMP _____
- E. [309/-1/-4:-3] • “intentionality does not have to be naturalized, because intentional interpretation is itself a natural phenomenon.” Well, in one sense that is right; but its truth can blind one to something that *does* need to be done: which is to *explain interpretation*.

In particular, the claim of supervenience of the physical world remains compelling. To come up with a ϕ of science which doesn't recognise its power misses the point. My claim is that nothing in (what is right about!) R's account is actually inimical to such a project. In fact that *is* my project, more or less. This point ties into the “doing metaphysics” which I think he is suffering for the lack of.

It is absolutely critical that, if—when—I say this, that I make it clear that this is not “metaphysics” as metaphysics has been understood. This is why the question of “voice” is so powerful. Speaking *in an successor voice*, we need metaphysics in order to explain the power of the physical supervenience thesis.

Also make clear: cog sci, AI, etc., as *sciences of discursive agents*. This is—or anyway ought to be—of considerable interest to R.

- F. [310/1/7:10] • “The ways in which scientific understanding outruns mere description of actual events to explicate what is possible and impossible are sufficiently robust that any adequate account of science must account for them.” So too, I claim, *the ways in scientific understanding generates a sense that the world, at a fundamental level, is exhaustively constituted by physical phenomena is sufficiently robust that any adequate account of science must account for it*.

This is something that R doesn't do (tied into his failure to distinguish science from any other normative practice). But I believe it can be done (or anyway that is gauntlet I want to throw down).

Note: this, too, in spite of Cartwright, and Hacking, and Barad, and ...

VI • 6 Objectivity

- A. Intro
 - 1. In particular, this takes us to the sixth concern: objectivity
 - 2. R underestimates H's conception because he assumes that H speaks in a more traditional or conservative voice than I believe he does (or anyway should!)
 - 3. If one
 - a. Recognizes what a “new” notion of object could be; and
 - b. Recognizes what Rouse credits Barad, Haraway, others in feminist science studies with doing—namely, forging or articulating a revised and revamped notion of objectivity,

4. Then a more specific account of what science *in general*
- B. Discussion
1. What is “at stake,” in the other kinds of performance and practice that R brings forward, are in fact “at stake in the world,” and therefore, in a way, in the spirit of Haugeland’s characterisation. I.e., it is things *at stake in the world*. So in a way R is agreeing with H in spirit (though, to be fair, H doesn’t put it this way; and I want to reconceive of the whole thing as “in the world,” rather than as “objective,” probably—and certainly not as *object*).
 2. Really what I think is going on:
 - a. What matters is that both H and R fail, in this regard.
 - b. H gives too much priority to the “independence” and non-normativity of objects—and loses the normative engagement, the political colour, and the normative materiality of objects
 - c. But R gives too much precedence to the normative practices and engagements, and loses what H does give credit to: an awesome deference to the world.
 - d. R doesn’t have an account of “**finding out what the world is like.**”
[261/2
 - e. His account is too non-specific; it could be a description of looking for a lover, or history, or planning an expedition.

VII • 1 Metaphysics

- A. Extremely briefly: the seventh and final issue, of metaphysics
1. A question arises of doing metaphysics, and of giving intellectual robust and satisfying accounts of our normativity—including of the grounds of our normativity, and how it is that the we are bound by them.
- B. Rouse
1. Rouse is pretty pessimistic, if not dismissive, of such a project
 2. One final quote: [292[
 - a. **“Understanding discursive practices as causally intra-active in this way does not provide an alternative metaphysics of nature, one that would substitute a metaphysics of phenomena for a more familiar naturalist metaphysics of nature as composed of material objects or events, or as determined by laws”**
 - i. — can see all the reactionary language in this
 - b. **“Such an alternative metaphysics would treat phenomena as simply a more complex kind of object, and claim that the world (nature) as a whole is composed of them rather than of some other kind of object or process.**
 - c. **“As in other supposedly naturalistic metaphysics (such as physicalism), that claim would still tacitly depend upon the possibility of representing the world in a language that is not itself constitutive part of the world represented.”**

- C. As I hope is obvious, by now, I see no reason whatsoever to suppose that this is true.
- D. Discussion
 - 1. Sure enough, R properly eschews the conservative or traditional project of aiming for an account that “**transitions from a supposed absence of normative binding to its presence**”! [353/2/middle]
 - 2. Yet to think that that is the only possible *explanation* of such ground is only something a conservative would think.
 - 3. Indeed, his not outright, but still overall seeming dismissal of such a possibility seems yet one final substantive claim trapped in reactionary language.
- E. There is a huge issue lurking here [301]
 - 1. It seems to me that R should—or rather, that we should, that it is normatively incumbent on us, as inhabits of the newly cleared space—
 - a. Not only to require that the phenomena, practices, etc., of science be recognized as inveterately and ineliminably normative
 - b. But also to require that science “disclose their normativity.”

VIII • Conclusion

- A. So it goes
 - 1. I could even add an eighth category: of the world
 - a. Re the world: obviously, there is a world, in a sense, for anything—since all things are of the world. The point is that it is an achievement for their to be a world *for* a system. That, I take it, is the achievement of objectivity.
 - 2. Even: think that the incomprehensibility of any sense of their being a way of “grounding” normativity in the world, beyond language
 - a. ... pace Kant and Sellars and just about all of my friends
 - b. ... is itself a reactionary conclusion
 - c. ... that stems from a conception of language that we need no longer (and should no longer) hold.
 - 3. But if I went there, you would think—even though you would be wrong—that I had really taken leave of my senses.
- B. So I will leave it with this recommendation to Joe:
 - 1. Declare victory!
 - 2. Take the task of clearing the road from the history and heartland of philosophy to this new territory to be admirably accomplished, in your book
 - 3. Take tonight off! It is a stellar achievement.
 - 4. And then come join us in the new territory, and help us **reëncant the world from within.**



Notes & Fragments — Not Read

IX • Objectivity

- A. 354
- B. 342 (R)
- C. [263/1/-4:-3] — In fact that suggests a way that R can appreciate H: to talk the “objectivity” in H’s discourse in the way in which he admits that feminism is reconceptualizing objectivity. (◆).
- D. [246] R fails to recognize that H’s conception of object is simply “what is objective,” and therefore not directly vulnerable to the critique of objects (e.g., as opposed to phenomena) that R lays out in Chapter 6;
 - I. R’s characterisation of H’s construal of objectivity, and his own complexification of it [246/1], fails to address what H, at least, does attempt to address, which is what the *normative aim* of science is. It is all very well to point out that the norms guiding science, and objectivity in particular, are complex and contested; but R’s characterisation of objectivity could be taken as the characterisation of almost any norm. What is *distinctive* about science is lost. Not that it is an essential property; not that what has constituted science, over the past 300 years, is a “regularity” in the sense in which R decries regularities; but one can say something (partial and perspectival) about what the norms of science are, at least roughly. Only by doing justice to what science is can one legitimately complexify it. (◆).
- E. [255:262] — summary of H: scientism of objectivity
- F. [257/1] • Why *isn’t* objectivity normative? Cf. my claim that R is losing what is distinctive about science.
- G. [261] • Haugeland’s entire account was dedicated to showing how the independent, modally robust natures or causal powers of objects could normatively binding upon scientific practices.” I am not sure this is right. Cf. Haugeland’s Objective perception. But no matter, in a way. The point is that objects are material—chunks of the world that *matter*, that (as R says) “emergent from the intra-active configuration of a meaningful world.” (◆)
- H. [273] • Haugeland quote: material for showing that his sense of “object” is not trivial. The *achievement of* (even a reconfigured notion of) *objectivity* is not something R has (yet?) even addressed.
 - I. [336/3:1-4] • Beginning of a recognition on R’s part that truth and objectivity might be more substantial (i) than they have traditionally been taken to be, and (ii) than Haugeland takes them. My beef is that I am not sure that H takes them to be as traditional as R makes out.
 - I. [339/2] • I agree with R’s objection to H’s definiteness about the Δ between incor-

rect performances and incorrect determinations by correct performance.

J. [354] (Note that it is in his own voice)

X • Metaphysics and the World

A. 247

B. 235

C. 292

D. 291 (explicitness)

E. 355

F. 351 (R)

G. 309

I. [309/-1/-4:-3] • “intentionality does not have to be naturalized, because intentional interpretation is itself a natural phenomenon.” Well, in one sense that is right; but its truth can blind one to something that *does* need to be done: which is to *explain interpretation*.

In particular, the claim of supervenience of the physical world remains compelling. To come up with a ϕ of science which doesn't recognise its power misses the point. My claim is that nothing in (what is right about!) R's account is actually inimical to such a project. In fact that *is* my project, more or less. This point ties into the “doing metaphysics” which I think he is suffering for the lack of.

It is absolutely critical that, if—when—I say this, that I make it clear that this is not “metaphysics” as metaphysics has been understood. This is why the question of “voice” is so powerful. Speaking *in an successor voice*, we need metaphysics in order to explain the power of the physical supervenience thesis.

Also make clear: cog sci, AI, etc., as *sciences of discursive agents*. This is—or anyway ought to be—of considerable interest to R.

H.

I. If we and our normative commitments part company—we lose. We die; the commitment remains!

1. I.e., this is “voluntarism” only in the sense that suicide is an open possibility.

2. We are committed by being *in* and *of* the world. In a way, the world is committed to us, in virtue of hosting, containing, comprising us.

J. There is merit to deflationary accounts, in that they duck the problems that (all?) non-deflationary accounts, to date, have had. But per se they don't necessarily either (i) satisfy, or (ii) result from any manifest claim that deflationary approaches are *mandated*. It seems to me that one of the fundamental merits of feminist ϕ of science is that it doesn't, per se, deflate (exculpate?) objectivity. This is part of my sense that feminism is to be valued for reconfiguring objectivity. So I remain committed to the idea that we need to reconfigure knowledge, or at least knowing.

Also, this leaves open what I think should be made room for: reconfiguring the *world*.

K. [353/2/middle] • Yikes! An explanation of the ground of normativity authority and of

- the claim of normative force needn't be an account that "transitions from a supposed absence of normative binding to its presence"! To think that that is the only possible *explanation* of such ground is remarkably unimaginative.
- L. [301] • There is a huge issue lurking here: it seems to me that R's program requires not only that the phenomena, practices, etc., of science are inveterately normative, but also that science "disclose their normativity." This is where my sense of "naturalising abstraction," etc., comes forward. By no problematising the content of science, as well as our meta-scientific or ϕ cal account of science, the job is still not done. (◆) Later: see chapter 9, where he seems to be dismissive of this. But his dismissal is a substantive claim trapped in reactionary language.
- M. [~208] • Worry that there is a naïve assumption that causal links outstrip understanding—without recognizing that "that which" we take to be causal is a way of aggregating (and hence rendering intelligible) the way the world is—a way that may outstrip our understanding.
- N. [235 and earlier] • This stuff of Brandom's taking different bodies and desires as engendering different "goods," but discursive practices as engendering a single Truth, is really, amazingly bad.
- I have a strong sense, throughout the book, of its being defeated by not actually *doing* any metaphysics. It seems to fall into what in O3 I called "meta-metaphysics." Is this fair?
- O. It seems that R's project is ultimately undermined, to an extent, by his not actually *doing* any metaphysics—e.g., explaining what the relation is between a concept and its instances, what an object is, what is meant by "vagueness" and "indeterminacy." These issues come up: e.g., when he talks about norms in place of regularities, and in failing to give him straightforward vocabulary in terms of which to defend a way to talk, over history (and scientific variety) of some of the complex patterns of intra-action between and among theory, experimentation, equipment, embedded social normative practices, etc.
- P. Re the world: obviously, there is a world, in a sense, for anything—since all things are of the world. The point is that it is an achievement for their to be a world *for* a system. That, I take it, is the achievement of objectivity.
- Q. Even: think that the incomprehensibility of any sense of their being a way of "grounding" normativity beyond language (pace Kant and Sellars) is a reactionary conclusion, that stems from a conception of language that we need no longer (and should no longer) hold. But if I went there, you would think—even though you would be wrong—that I had really taken leave of my senses. So I will leave it at that.

XI • Conclusion

- A. Bottom line for
1. Declare victory!
 2. Take the task of clearing the road from the history and heartland of philosophy to this new territory to be admirably accomplished, in this book

3. Come and join us in the new territory, and help us reëncant the world from within.

Fragments

XII • Regularity

1. 299
2. [210/2/quote] • ‘Commonality’ is a big issue—not clear how it fares, through R’s re-constructions. ...
3. [280:81] • This discussion of the relation between regularities, normatively governed practices, and the question of whether a solitary instance “exemplifies” a regularity is worrying—and also reflects the reliance on an out-of-date metaphysics.
Cf. also Chapter 8’s talk of “constitutive repeatability” (e.g., [299/-1/4]).
How does *this* differ?

XIII • Distinctions—can’t draw a line

- A. But: who said that “drawing a line” is necessary to the worth—power, insight, trenchancy, usefulness, political efficacy, etc.—of a notion?
- B. That is a traditional—formalist—conceit!
- C. Cf. philosophy: Joe would agree, as fast as I, that no sharp *line* between philosophy and science can be drawn.
- D. Does it follow that we should abandon the notion of philosophy? Retract his tenure?
- E. Talk to students about *food, gardens, relationships, place*—things that precede our formalist, academic idea (“higher-order digital,” in Haugeland’s phrase) idea that that concepts, in order to penetrate or register the world, must be uniform, derive their sense of boundary from their edges, etc.
- F. [8] • Possibly glib (seeming) agreement with a meta-argument that (i) if there isn’t an in-principle way of distinguishing two kinds of thing (necessary and contingent, for example), then (ii) it follows that the Δ itself is ungrounded. This looks to be an (unwitting? required? unfortunate?) acceptance of higher-order discreteness.
- G. [91] • “Drawing a line” being impossible \Rightarrow no distinction. Still endorsing a digital / formalist sense of what it is to be a distinction. This, I think, is where he is not yet to the point of satisfying the criterion of reflexive integrity. Question is whether his major point requires *no* difference between ordinary activity and science, or only that there isn’t a sharp “principled” distinction. (Though that conception of “principled” is probably itself in need of reconfiguration.)
- H. [~170] • I am concerned about the Δ between *normative* and *regularity* conceptions of practice—only because I am not sure what sense of regularity he is assuming. It looks as if there is an assumption of what I would call a digital type: one in which all instances are indistinguishable, according to a metric which specifies the complete contribution of

the instance to the importance of the instance in some larger pattern or performance.

This relates to his failure to take abstraction seriously—and generalization.

There are places (get quotes) where he admits that feminists—and he—are interested in generalization; but he doesn't do any work (at least so far) in explicating what such patterns of generalization might come to.

The point is that notions of generality, abstraction, representation, etc., should be “reclaimed” or reconfigured in the way in which feminist ϕ science reconfigures notions of objectivity and (yes?) truth.

- I. [~172:3] • I don't know what sense of the “same” norm R is relying on, in trying to move the conception of practice away from regularity and towards normative. Rather, it would surely be better to say that the regularity is a *normative* regularity? Locating in terms of the norm under which it is what it is doesn't actually deal with the general-specific or type-instance issue; it only identifies what is at stake in its *being* “the same”, “intelligible,” “coherent,” etc. [Worth saying]
- J. He himself: says that science and every day (mundane) practice are “intratwined”; but wouldn't, I believe, argue that we drop the word ‘science’

XIV • Vagueness

- A. 54
- B. [338] • The conception of *vagueness* that almost everyone seems to buy into is a reactionary notion; it is only “non-precise” because of buying the untenable conception of precision in the prior mould. In reality, what is from their point of view called vague, is actually much *more* precise, much *more* detailed, than anything that could be “precisely specified” in the old language-as-understood. Similarly, one doesn't need non-determinateness (vagueness) to allow for futural plasticity unless one buys into the false preconception that present definiteness dictates future outcome. A willow wand is utterly definite, but delightfully bendable.

Could be used in Part II (■)

