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Mind, Body, and World: Todes and McDowell on Bodies and Language¹

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ABSTRACT *Dreyfus presents Todes's (2001) republished *Body and World* as an anticipatory response to McDowell (1994) which shows how preconceptual perception can ground conceptual thought. I argue that Dreyfus is mistaken on this point: Todes's claim that perceptual experience is preconceptual presupposes an untenable account of conceptual thought. I then show that Todes nevertheless makes two important contributions to McDowell's project. First, he develops an account of perception as bodily second nature, and as a practical-perceptual openness to the world, which constructively develops McDowell's view. Second, and more important, this account highlights the practical and perceptual dimension of linguistic competence. The result is that perception is conceptual "all the way down" only because discursive conceptualization is perceptual and practical "all the way up". This conjunction of McDowell and Todes on the bodily dimensions of discursive practice also vindicates Davidson's and Brandom's criticisms of McDowell's version of empiricism.*

The recent republication of Samuel Todes's 1963 PhD dissertation under the new title *Body and World* (2001) is provocative. The title suggests that Todes's dissertation should be understood as a response to John McDowell's *Mind and World* thirty-one years before its publication. In introducing the new edition, Hubert Dreyfus offers this summary of Todes's implicit response to McDowell:

By calling attention to the structure of nonconceptual, practical perception and showing how its judgments can be transformed into the judgments of detached thought, Todes is able to provide a framework in which to explain how the content of perception, while

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not itself conceptual, can provide the basis for conception. (Todes, 2001, p. xvi)

On Dreyfus's reading, Todes provides reasons to reject McDowell's claim that perceptual experience is already conceptually articulated, and that it must be conceptual to play its indispensable role in constraining the spontaneity of reason so as to produce empirical knowledge. I argue that Dreyfus is mistaken in his assessment of how Todes's account of perception and human embodiment affects McDowell's position: Todes does not succeed in resurrecting a role for "preconceptual experience". I nevertheless show that Todes's book can advance McDowell's concerns in two significant ways. First, Todes's account of embodied perceptual practice advances McDowell's account of empirical knowledge even in the latter's own terms. Second, once this account has been freed from attachment to Todes's own treatment of conceptual thought, it suggests a novel way to fulfill McDowell's desideratum of reconnecting perceptual openness to the world to conceptual spontaneity, by assimilating the conceptual domain within perceptual practice rather than incorporating perceptual receptivity within an unbounded conceptual domain.

My discussion has four parts. First I briefly recapitulate McDowell's widely discussed criticism of neo-pragmatist accounts of empirical knowledge. I then introduce Todes's account of embodied perceptual practice and show how it constructively contributes to McDowell's project. Todes articulates the conception of bodily second nature and practical-perceptual openness to the world that McDowell calls for. My third section takes up the differences between Todes and McDowell that prompted Dreyfus to juxtapose the two accounts. Todes developed his account of perceptual praxis as part of an explicitly dualistic theory contrasting preconceptual perception with the conceptual domain of imagination and thought. His position might thus seem directly opposed to McDowell's claim that "experiences themselves are already equipped with conceptual content" (McDowell, 1994, p. 25). We cannot simply take this direct opposition at face value, however, because Todes and McDowell work with fundamentally different accounts of conceptual understanding. Moreover, I will show that we have compelling reasons to prefer McDowell's version of the conceptual domain: Todes's accounts of language and theoretical imagination cannot capture the open-ended character of thought and language (expressed by its compositionality and inferential articulation), and they explicate listeners' linguistic competence at the expense of failing to understand what speakers can do. The result is that McDowell can accept the core of Todes's account of perceptual practice while denying Todes's claim that perception is preconceptual. In the final section of the paper, I show how conjoining Todes's account of perceptual practice with McDowell's understanding of the conceptual domain suggests a novel

understanding of how thought bears on perceptual interaction with the world. McDowell had originally proposed expanding the conceptual space of reasons “downward” to incorporate perceptual receptivity and practical spontaneity. If we think about McDowell’s conception in light of Todes, we might proceed in the opposite direction by taking more seriously the worldly and bodily character of language, and the linguistic character of thought. The point of such an alternative reading of Todes’s challenge to McDowell would not be, as Dreyfus had hoped, to place limits upon the conceptual domain, but to recognize it as a finite, embodied, worldly capacity all the way up.

I.

In *Mind and World*, McDowell challenged central assumptions about the relation between conceptual spontaneity and perceptual receptivity within the neo-pragmatist tradition of Quine, Sellars, Davidson and Rorty. He endorsed Rorty’s and Davidson’s attitude toward skepticism about the connection between thought and the world: their common aim is not to answer the skeptic, but to tell him to get lost. From McDowell’s perspective, however, the most salient skeptical issue concerns not empirical knowledge, but the empirical content of thought and language. McDowell’s worry is that his fellow neo-pragmatists interpret the relation between conceptualization and experience in a way that “does not ensure, as [they] want to, that the [skeptical] question lacks urgency” (McDowell, 1994, p. 147).

McDowell’s worry emerges especially clearly in response to Quine. Quine allows considerable play for conceptual spontaneity through the inter-animation of sentences. He famously insists that sentences “face the tribunal of experience not individually but as a corporate body” such that “the unit of empirical significance is the whole of science” (Quine, 1953, pp. 41, 42). McDowell’s worry is that Quine thereby systematically equivocates on the notion of empirical significance. For Quine, empirical significance is determined by physical events (surface irritations) that can be understood scientifically. As merely causal impacts, however, they can have no rational bearing upon what we (should) say. McDowell’s conclusion is that:

Quine ... impossibly tries to have it both ways – to exploit the idea of experience as a tribunal that stands in judgment over beliefs, while conceiving experience so that it has to stand outside the order of justification. (McDowell, 1994, p. 137)

The result is to undermine the very idea that our vocalizations or inscriptions are *about* the empirical world at all; without normative (rational) constraint by our encounters with surrounding circumstances, our utterances would be events in the world, but would say nothing about the world.

Davidson also recognized this difficulty in Quine. His rejection of the third dogma of empiricism denied that we could make sense of holding linguistic expressions accountable to something extra-linguistic. He therefore sought to bring empirical constraint within the order of justification, construed in terms of the truth of sentences. Davidson insisted that “nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief,” and indeed, he “rejects as unintelligible the request for a ground or source of justification of another ilk” (Davidson, 1986a, p. 310). There is a causal relationship between beliefs and sensations, but causal relations as such play no role in justification.

McDowell’s objection to Davidson was that, by relegating sensation or “receptivity” to the brutally causal, non-justificatory realm, Davidson has resuscitated (despite himself) the skeptical question of how beliefs or sentences could ever be about the world at all. As merely systematic interconnections among linguistic expressions, Davidsonian truth theories display no accountability to the world, and hence no genuine content. Davidson could respond to McDowell that such accountability is already built into a speaker/interpreter’s practical command of a background language. Davidson did not intend to offer an independent account of what makes a language genuinely a language, but rather to make his account parasitic upon prior linguistic competence. McDowell endorsed that response in principle, for he too wants to dismiss, rather than answer, the skeptic about meaning. He nevertheless claimed that Davidson is not entitled to that response, and thus cannot “help himself to the notion of a belief”, because the latter’s official doctrine renders perceptual receptivity impervious to rational norms. The result, he claimed, is that Davidson succumbs to a “dualism of nature and reason”.

McDowell responded to this alleged dualism with an appeal to “second nature”. Nature as the realm of causal law is impervious to reason, but acculturated second nature is not. Second nature is exemplified in ethical upbringing, in the acquisition of tradition (including language as the indispensable mediation of thought), and even in developing bodily capacities for movement. Moreover, he proposed that a naturalism of second nature is the only naturalism we should want or need. Second nature “could not float free of potentialities that belong to a natural human organism” (McDowell, 1994, p. 84), yet the actualization of these potentialities is *sui generis* and inexplicable by natural law. In second nature, we are to find a sensuous receptivity whose passivity and openness to determination by the world leaves it outside the realm of freedom and conceptual spontaneity. Yet such perceptual receptivity would still be fully conceptual, such that it “includes a capacity to resonate to the structure of the space of reasons” (McDowell, 1994, p. 109).

I argue elsewhere² that McDowell’s appeal to second nature also remains unacceptably dualistic. He merely shifts the locus of the resulting

unintelligibility of relations between nature and rational norms, rather than overcoming the dualism to which he rightly objects. What names the inexplicable for McDowell is not the Davidsonian token identity of mental and physical events, nor the pineal gland, but the body as belonging both to the arational realm of natural law and to the acculturated world of second nature. That failure and its remedy are not my concern here, however.

A different feature of McDowell's constructive account is relevant to the challenge Dreyfus attributed to Todes. McDowell's constructive response to Davidson extends Davidson's response to Quine. Quine claimed that conceptual spontaneity is only constrained by non-conceptual experience at the boundaries of a conceptual scheme. Davidson instead denied any constraint by experience outside of thought; thought is unbounded. Our thoughts are identical with token events in the causal order, but the conceptual intelligibility of the causal and the rational orders each allow no place for its counterpart. McDowell would extend the sovereignty of thought and conceptual normativity even further than Davidson, so as to encompass perceptual receptivity and the practical spontaneity of action. Natural life (but not natural law) is permeated by reason and conceptual understanding on McDowell's account.

II.

What McDowell distinctively called for (in contrast to Davidson, Rorty, or Brandom) is to include perception (as receptivity) within the conceptual domain, and to do so without resorting to the Myth of the Given. For all concerned, any epistemic authority for perception cannot simply be a matter of *having* the right kind of causal or experiential relation to something external. It must instead involve something we *do*, rightly or wrongly. McDowell's fellow neo-pragmatists therefore draw a sharp line between the judgments actively formed in response to perception and the merely causal processes that prompt such judgments without determining them. McDowell claimed that such a sharp separation of conceptual spontaneity from perceptual responsiveness leaves judgments bereft of any accountability to the world, to what is independent of our free, spontaneous productivity. But without such accountability, spontaneous productivity is empty; nothing distinguishes one spontaneous production semantically from another. McDowell's own response was that the conceptual domain extends beyond the realm of spontaneous judgment. Perception itself is passive, and hence not open to our spontaneous determination, and yet its deliverances are directly engaged with our capacities for conceptual spontaneity. What is received experientially through being "acted on by independent reality" has "conceptual capacities [already] operative in them" such that "they can be exploited in active and potentially self-critical thinking" (McDowell, 1994, pp. 66, 67). The concern driving this response is to show how perceptual

experience can be externally determined, and yet also already normative, such that it bears directly upon the correctness or appropriateness of judgment and action.

Todes's account of perceptual activity offers an instructive response to McDowell's concern. Todes shares McDowell's commitment to understanding perception as a responsive accommodation to circumstances beyond our control. Yet he insisted that such responsive accommodation can be achieved precisely because perception itself is *active*.³ We are able to perceive a determinate object in a definite way only through balanced, poised, skillful exploration. A practical command of bodily activity is required to accommodate ourselves to what an object affords us. But the bodily command that enables perceptual responsiveness is itself not autonomously spontaneous. Todes claimed that in order to explore and discover features of our surrounding circumstances, we have to be balanced within a vertical field that we do not produce, effectively directed within a circumstantial field (toward one aspect of that field rather than another), and appropriately set to respond to whatever we might encounter within that field. Perceptual receptivity is thus a skilled accomplishment. McDowell (1994, 10n) acknowledges this point in passing, while insisting upon limits to spontaneous control over what we perceive. What Todes showed, however, is that perceptual activity is not a spontaneity that is merely externally constrained by the world. Active control of our bodily activity both enables and is enabled by responsive accommodation to circumstances ("receptivity"). This entanglement of perceptual activity and receptivity is highlighted by its possible failure. Todes highlighted three dimensions to the normativity of perceptual spontaneity/receptivity (located in the perceiver's balance, orientation, and "set"), and displayed exemplary failures in each respect. In losing balance, we lose the foothold within the world needed before we can effectively orient perceptual responsiveness in any direction at all (in this respect, there is no effective bodily spontaneity at all except through responsive accommodation to circumstances). Having achieved and maintained balance, we can also experience a failure of orientation. Whether we are misdirected, or we move or turn too quickly through the appropriate orientation, we then fail to register a determinate character to what seems to "pass us by". Most commonly, however, perceptual failure involves setting ourselves to respond in ways that are inappropriate to what one's surroundings afford. We fail to see available features of the world because seeing them would require us to focus or scan differently. We fail to discern textures that could be discriminated by the movement of a hand across its surface in a different direction or with different pressure. We do not hear what was said because we do not actively discriminate its phonemic articulation. Successful perceptual receptivity thus depends upon appropriate practical-perceptual activity, very success of which nevertheless depends in turn upon ongoing accommodation to circumstances.⁴

In movements responsive to what its surroundings afford, the body of an active perceiver differs significantly from an object merely causally affected by other objects. Todes insisted that an active body is not merely an interconnected set of parts, but an integrated capacity to coordinate its movement as a whole. In bodily action “all our members appear concentrated, ... ‘there’ in active support of our instrumental members with which we are carrying out our action” (Todes, 2001, p. 108). The skillful bodily command exercised in perception and action is not a self-contained, already determinate capacity for spontaneous movement, however. On Todes’s account, we do not first gain practical coordination of bodily movement, and then use that ability to explore the world. The bodily capacity to move is only acquired through its exercise within and upon the world. I am not already “given” to myself as an active bodily perceiver and agent; I instead repeatedly “find” myself in the course of finding out about my surroundings. In losing my balance, for example, I do not just momentarily lose effective contact with my surroundings, but also lose effective control of my bodily activity. I then must simultaneously and mutually regain both a footing in the world and a hold on my body. In this and many other ways, bodily activity and perceptual receptivity are two aspects of the same phenomenon. Moreover, this phenomenon of active bodily accommodation to its surroundings shows more clearly how to understand McDowell’s claim that experience involves an openness to the world that is neither Given nor purely spontaneous.

Todes characterized the normativity of this bodily directedness toward its surroundings as a matter of need rather than desire. This feature of his treatment is especially interesting. Elsewhere (Rouse, 2002), I argue that neo-pragmatists such as Brandom and Rorty cannot adequately account for the normative force of the space of reasons. They cannot do so, because the concept of desire provides their only resource for expressing how our discursive commitments are binding upon us. They then oscillate between understanding desires as Given (akin to Davidsonian “pro-attitudes”), or as spontaneous, voluntary takings. If Given, they can have no authority; if voluntary and revokable, their putative authority has no normative force. Todes circumvents this difficulty with his claim that to be bodily agents at all we need to adapt to circumstances. We are both vulnerable to and dependent upon our surroundings. Only by orienting ourselves toward and within the world can we find ourselves and stave off (for the moment) our vulnerability to circumstance. The perceptual and practical satisfaction of needs is thus neither a matter of inner, private feeling, nor simply the fulfillment of objectively specifiable conditions, but the ongoing, usually partial, achievement of a bodily equilibrium with and in the world. Such equilibrium is in turn always preparatory, both for the renewal of neediness, and as ground and orientation for further exploration.

Todes usefully noted along these lines that bodies are not simply objects that undergo change, but gain their identity *by* the way they change. A body is not just what it actually does, but what it can do, “the bare unity of [its] free activity”. This point importantly sustains McDowell’s emphasis upon “second nature”. The capacities that are the “nature” of a body continually shift through the development or erosion of skill. The boundaries at which the body opens onto circumstances also shift. Disease, injury, or pain effect a partial withdrawal of bodily competence. Perhaps more important, we regularly bring aspects of the world around us within the schema of bodily capacity. In the skillful use of equipment, tools typically become part of our integrated capacities for movement. While tools can usually be discarded in a way that bodily members cannot, the bodily skills acquired in using them become a more permanent part of a bodily and personal repertoire. I set my bicycle aside when I arrive at a destination, but I do not set aside my ability to ride or the expanded mobility that it provides.

Before turning to the apparent differences between Todes’s and McDowell’s treatments of conceptual understanding, I note that some small but significant emendations to Todes’s phenomenological account of bodily intimacy with the world are necessary to translate Todes’s claims into a form that bears more clearly upon McDowell’s arguments. Todes wrote from a resolutely phenomenological stance, but McDowell’s concern for how experience bears upon reality repudiates the constraints of phenomenology.⁵ What Todes described phenomenologically as the vertical world-field is a gravitational field, whose characteristic resistance and accommodation structures our bodily capacities. Todes also described bodies as self-moved movers, but that is not strictly true, for effective movement requires appropriate resistance and accommodation from one’s physical surroundings. Bodies thus move only as situated within and responsive to an environment (think of how human capacities to move and respond would be affected if they developed under circumstances that disconnect the body from its surroundings, such as weightlessness, frictionless surfaces, darkness, or soundproofing). Human embodiment only develops through gravitational and frictional interaction with the earth, but also through the vital interchange of oxygen, water, food, light, sound, heat, and waste, not to mention social interactions with other humans and companion species. The neediness that for Todes sustains the normativity of perceptual activity is thus, *contra* Todes, a thoroughly natural/cultural neediness, which McDowell characterized under the inclusive heading of “second nature”.

III.

For all the affinity between Todes’s views on the body and McDowell’s on second nature, they crucially part ways at McDowell’s insistence that

perceptual receptivity must “resonate to the structure of the space of reasons” such that the deliverances of sense experience are themselves conceptually articulated. Todes insists that bodily perceptual/practical engagement with one’s surroundings is preconceptual.

To assess this claim, however, we need to consider the account of conceptual understanding to which Todes contrasts perception, along with his treatment of how perceptual/practical interaction with the world could have a bearing upon this supposedly distinct and autonomous domain of conceptual imagination. Todes offered his own formulation of McDowell’s concern for how spontaneity and receptivity can be combined, as the “paradox of theoretical interpretation”, which is “somehow responsible both *to* and *for* the facts to which it refers” (Todes, 2001, p. 269). Unless Todes can resolve this supposed paradox, Dreyfus’s understanding of the Todes/McDowell relation would be reversed: McDowell’s objection to Davidsonian dualism would also offer an anticipatory response to *Body and World*, namely that Todes renders theoretical and other conceptual constructions into empty products of spontaneity, a free play of the imagination that is bereft of any conceptual content because it could have no responsibility to, and hence no bearing upon, the experience of objects.

A crucial difficulty in comparing Todes with McDowell, however, is that they appeal to quite different accounts of conceptual understanding. For Todes, thought is imagination, the full intuitive presence of a representation. Conceptual imagination presumably differs from other species of imagination by having before the mind a concept rather than an image. Both supposedly differ from perceptual presentation by representing (completely) a possibility, rather than presenting incompletely an actuality. For McDowell, by contrast, what characterizes the spontaneity of thought is not representation but normativity. To belong under a concept is to be within the Sellarsian space of reasons, a matter of public practice rather than private intuition. To have a concept is to have mastered the use of a word. We will not resolve here the divide between representationalist and discursive accounts of intentionality (although I am firmly committed to a discursive conception for reasons developed elsewhere (Rouse, 2002)), but we can at least locate Todes’s discussion within this contested field.

Todes characterized imagination as a distinct field of intuitive presentation, which occurs in perceptual time but not perceptual space (like Kant, Todes assigned a temporal form to the connection between concepts and percepts). In the representational space of the imagination, we are inactive spectators rather than active participants (imagination is supposedly a species of the “spectatorial attitude” within whose genus he included disinterested observation, as we shall see). Yet we produce and direct everything that appears before us in this space: “The field of our imaginative productivity is united by nothing more than our reversible capacity to produce in it, and extinguish from it, any specifiable image ... [and] what we

imagine is merely what we represent it to be, entirely a creature of our own making ... [such that] our word or thought is law, legislating the content of our imagination” (Todes, 2001, pp. 139, 146, 147). An imaginative content may not be fully explicit, but what is implicit within it is fully determinate. We grasp an “imaginative idea” through an “imagistically representative way of imagining an inexhaustible idea ... at once as entire, and as further imaginable with endless variety in the same entirety” (Todes, 2001, p. 151).

How does this space of determinately imagined possibilities ever connect to the perceptual spatiality of the world, except through the free capacity to alternate from one realm to the other within the unifying framework of perceptual time? For Todes, perceptual presentations are *perceptually* schematized into material suitable for thought through what he calls sensuous abstraction. Sensuous abstraction is deliberately inhibited perception. Like the sensualist or the aesthete, the disciplined observer “holds back the course of perception so as to prevent its natural completion”, maintaining toward a perceivable object “the attitude of attentiveness that is normally reserved for looking-for and listening-for things not yet seen or heard” (Todes, 2001, pp. 273, 274). In doing so, we supposedly perceive not the thing, but sensuous qualities abstracted from it and shorn of the incomplete manifestation that “essentially and distinctively [characterizes] our knowledge of the existence of existing things” (Todes, 2001, p. 275). Such inhibition can be undertaken purely aesthetically, but it can also furnish the “data [that] comprise the only scientific evidence of matters of fact” (Todes, 2001, p. 275). In short, sensuous abstraction supposedly mediates between perceptual engagement with actual circumstances and the imaginative explication of possibilities, which for Todes incorporates the entire conceptual domain. But such abstraction from perceptual context to permit conceptual-theoretical recontextualization supposedly sacrifices the natural facticity of this world in which we find ourselves perceptually. In its place we get the merely brute facticity that accompanies theoretical lucidity into this world as “one sort of world among many other equally possible worlds” (Todes, 2001, p. 276).

Although Todes understood imaginative presence as prior to its discursive articulation, language nevertheless did show up centrally within his overall view. Indeed, language supposedly involves two distinct “levels” of meaning, which roughly correspond to Grice’s (1989) distinction between utterer’s meaning and sentence meaning. The use of words in ordinary language can express a “personal meaning [that] is first made determinate in the course and particular context of our actually giving expression to it” (Todes, 2001, p. 148). Underlying such personal meaning (and “filled out” by it), is what he called the “technical content” of language. Todes characterized technically contentful words⁶ as the artificial, publicly perceivable “shadow” of imaginative thought. Like natural shadows, written words are “pure face” (two-dimensional visible abstractions that

have no back side and are not present in other sensory modalities) and essentially representational (a token sensuous character “e” is merely a visible manifestation of the invisible type of the fifth letter of the English alphabet). Unlike natural shadows, these artificial shadows supposedly represent fully rather than partially, and acontextually (highlighted by their typical appearance against the uniformly blank background of the printed page). Indeed, the blankness of the page is the visible representation of the purely spontaneous productivity of the imagination: it “represents a sort of uniform Newtonian Absolute Space of the mind’s eye” (Todes, 1975, p. 112). Todes took the linguistic shadowing of thought (such that “the casting of artificial shadows *is* the cast of mind”, Todes, 1975, p. 113) to reveal thought’s essential abstraction, its unworldliness:

The mental world – insofar as it consists of ideas as meanings of words which are in turn groups of families of sensuous characters – is thus basically *completely representative*: its basic entities are completely representative shadows whose completeness of representation is bought at the price of their being nothing but representations. The mind’s eye thus basically grasps not things but only the universal outlines of things, ... pure figure, with everything represented and nothing presented. (Todes, 1975, pp. 112–13)

In ironic commentary on Plato, Todes identified semantically contentful words rather than artworks as shadows of shadows of (perceptible) reality, at two removes from what alone could give them sense.

Note well, however, that Todes’s insistence that perceptual understanding is preconceptual depends upon something like this account of the conceptual domain. The form taken by his dualism of perception and imagination is especially problematic in juxtaposition to McDowell. Todes’s account of conceptual space is not so far from the outcome McDowell attributed to Davidson as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the latter’s exclusion of perceptual receptivity from discursive normativity. McDowell objected that on a Davidsonian conception, language and thought are empty. The unboundedness of the space of reasons is bought at the price of containing nothing but (systematically interrelated) representations; but when there are only representations and no presentations, he thinks, there could not even be contentful representations.

There are a number of important respects in which Todes’s account of thought and language is seriously inadequate. These failings render his view incapable of fulfilling the role Dreyfus proposed for it, as a challenge to McDowell’s expansion of the conceptual space of reasons to incorporate perceptual receptivity. I shall indicate where I see fundamental problems, although they are sufficiently extensive and far-reaching that working them out fully is beyond the scope of this paper. First, the closest analogue to

Todes's account of imaginative representation seems to be some version of a two-dimensional possible worlds semantics: he treated imaginative thought as a pure representation of possibility, such that "the real world is conceived as one sort of world among many other equally possible worlds" (Todes, 2001, p. 276). But even possible worlds semantics requires some way of specifying the representation relation that identifies the actual world as one represented within this abstract possibility space. Perhaps the most common way to understand the representation relation is by causal determination, but that option is not open from Todes's resolutely phenomenological stance. It also conflicts with his account of the unconstrained spontaneity of imaginative production.

Looked at from another direction, we see that Todes cannot adequately account for the normativity of conceptual understanding. His account of imaginative ideas commits him to an untenable regulism: an idea before the imagination is a rule that implicitly contains all of its possible applications as fully determinate in advance. Wittgenstein and Kripkenstein (Kripke, 1982) have shown why this cannot be so. As a corollary, Todes has no obvious way to understand the inferential and compositional character of language and thought. Every idea of the imagination is self-contained for Todes (any further elaboration or interpretation of a conceptual content must be an addition to it rather than an expression of it). If an idea stands in inferential relations to other ideas, that presumably must be expressed in another idea that takes the form of an inference rule. Lewis Carroll's (1895) paradox of "What the Tortoise said to Achilles" makes vivid the regress invoked here. Such a conception also denies any inferentially based semantic holism, and the interdependence of theoretical concepts: the sense of an imaginative idea must be graspable without reference to its inferential relations to other ideas. Todes has thus given an account of imaginative productivity that undermines the systematic theoretical lucidity that he admiringly described as its characteristic product (Todes, 2001, Appendix II). Indeed, on his account, it is even unclear on what grounds one could identify a self-standing idea with any of the embedded components of a more complex idea. Without such identifications, however, one could not legitimately make detachment inferences.

How Todes would have treated the compositionality of sentences is less clear. Nevertheless, his assimilation of conceptual and iconic imagination makes it difficult to see *how* the compositional character of articulated thought would be involved in determining its content. He certainly could not avail himself of any account of compositionality that assimilates it to inferential articulation, for reasons already mentioned.

Indeed, Brandom's inferentialist approach to semantic content (or its analogue implicit within the internal recursive structure of Davidsonian truth-theoretic interpretation) nicely highlights the contrast with Todes's account of conceptual imagination. For Todes, the mark of conceptual

thought was the mind's *autonomy* over its own imaginative production. For Brandom, McDowell, and others influenced by Sellars, by contrast, inferentially articulated conceptual understanding extends beyond anything present to the mind, and does so precisely by *submission* to a rational authority that extends beyond our present comprehension. Todes's portrayal of conceptual thought on the model of a spectator (as well as producer) of the theater of the mind exemplified the contrast case to Brandom's suggestion that:

Conceptual contents ... are best thought of on a *tactile* rather than a *visual* model. ... Frege's own favorite metaphor for our cognitive relation to senses is that of *grasping* rather than *seeing*. One can grasp an anaphoric chain as one grasps a stick; direct contact is achieved only with one end of it ... but [that] gives genuine if indirect contact with ... the other end. ... The Cartesian model of conceptual contents restricts them to the part of the stick touching one's hand, at the cost of mystery about how our cognitive reach can exceed that immediate grasp. (Brandom, 1994, p. 583)

Of course, the other aspect of this metaphor is its shift from a spectatorial to a pragmatic conception of thought. Part of what it is to grasp a concept is to be able to do something with it, to use it in various contexts. That throws a different light upon Todes's account of sensuous and imaginative abstraction. For Todes, qualitative awareness was a matter of losing the concrete presence of the object, so as to gain the abstract presence of a qualitative datum or a visual or conceptual image. For post-Sellarsian neo-pragmatists, by contrast, observational understanding is instead a kind of know-how, for example the ability to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate substitutions or inferences. In mastering the application of a qualitative concept like "green", I do not lose contact with concrete things that are green, but only do something different in response to them.

This point highlights the phenomenological and conceptual inadequacies of Todes's account of sensuous abstraction as the mediator between perception and thought. He said that "one becomes aware of qualities *rather* than things; we ordinarily taste the food, but the gourmet savors the flavor" (Todes, 2001, p. 274; emphasis changed). But the gourmet does not thereby lose the world; she savors the flavor *of the food*, attending to *the food* differently, rather than attending only to a location in an abstracted space of qualities. Even Todes recognized a limited sense in which we do not lose the world altogether in sensuous abstraction, however. We retain the bodily capacity to track sensuous abstraction as the inhibition of full perceptual consummation, and we thereby sustain a connection between the abstract datum and the perceivable thing in our bodily orientation toward the world.

The residual continuity Todes recognized between sensuous qualities and full-blown perception contrasts with the unresolved discontinuity in his account between concepts and sensuously abstract qualities. Indeed, Todes's account of sensuous abstraction threatens to reintroduce the Myth of the Given. It is altogether unclear how the brute facticity of abstracted qualities or data is connected to the spontaneous production of an imaginative idea. Todes asked us simply to accept that the loss of the object in sensuous abstraction brings the abstracted datum within the domain of conceptual understanding. But how does this particular sensory presence fall under the concept "green" rather than some other imaginative idea? How is an idea before the imagination correctly or incorrectly identified with the sensuous presence of a brute, qualitative datum? I can see no basis for misidentification on Todes's account, and consequently no genuine identification either. The problem arises even in Todes's own terms, in which the mind is the capacity to alternate freely between two radically different forms of presentation. The inhibited *sensuous* presentation of a datum does not abolish its sensuous presence (or the ability to reconnect to the object perceptually). Todes offered no account of how this qualitative presence survives the transition from an attenuated presence within actual experience to a purely represented possibility in an autonomously produced imaginative space of ideas.

There was a parallel gap in Todes's discussion of language. Todes distinguished two levels of linguistic meaning (word-meaning and speaker's meaning) in a way that makes it hard to see how they function together. On the one hand, we have the shadowy abstraction of words, as a mere "technical content" identifiable acontextually. On the other hand, we have the expressive bodily presence of a speaker, through which "the literal meaning of the words we use is noticeably augmented with the way we use these words, and with the practical context of our using them" (Todes, 2001, p. 148). Todes gave an account of how we perceive (written) words as sensuous abstractions, and identify them with an imaginative idea (as its artificial shadow). He offered no parallel account of how we could use such words communicatively and expressively (or hear them as an aspect of speaker's meaning). How do the shadowy abstractions of words as technically contentful get taken up in expressive speech to say something more or different in context? Or from the other side, how is the expressive articulation of speech accountable to (and thus dependent upon) its "technical content"? In characterizing written language as the perceivable manifestation of thought (its artificial shadow), and in distinguishing listening to a speaker from listening to the content of what is said, Todes unwittingly threatened to divorce the standpoint of readers and listeners from that of writers and speakers. But that is always the danger of any philosophical dualism; once imagination and perception, or content and

expression, have been so sharply separated, it becomes hard to understand their characteristic interrelations.

IV.

Recognizing the fundamental difficulties confronting Todes's account of conceptual imagination and its shadowy articulation in language suggests an obvious strategy for how to reconcile Todes on perception and the body with McDowell's overall view. Todes's insistence that perception is preconceptual seems fundamentally at odds with McDowell's claim that conceptual understanding (but not conceptual spontaneity) is unbounded. This apparent conflict, however, depends upon accepting Todes's account of what it is to apply a concept with "technical content". If we give up that account, and identify conceptual understanding with mastery of a publicly corrigible discursive practice rather than with the imaginative representation of an idea, the problem may seem to dissolve.

That is indeed the strategy I endorse, but it need not rule out further reformulation of McDowell's project in light of Todes's treatment of perceptual practice. In this final section, I shall propose an alternative way to think about the significance of Todes's book as a response to McDowell. The motivation for this suggestion is that there remains something unsatisfying about McDowell's own proposed solution (perhaps better described as a dissolution) of the problem of how perceptual receptivity brings conceptual spontaneity into normative accountability to the world. It may seem as if McDowell has heightened our awareness of the difficulty of understanding how perceptual experience itself can be both receptive and conceptually articulated, without resolving how this is actually possible.

Conjoining Todes on perceptual activity with McDowell on conceptual spontaneity suggests another way to think about how to avoid an untenable dualism between nature and normativity, or receptivity and spontaneity. McDowell's strategy was to assimilate perceptual receptivity within the conceptual domain. The alternative I am suggesting would be to assimilate conceptual spontaneity within perceptual practice by taking seriously the practical and perceptual dimension of language use. For McDowell and other Sellarsians, grasp of a concept involves mastery of a word in a publicly corrigible discursive practice. The normativity that marks genuine concept-use arises from public corrigibility in what Sellars dubbed the "game of giving and asking for reasons". This insistence upon public corrigibility brings the practical/perceptual aspects of language into the forefront. There cannot be a publicly corrigible practice unless it involves publicly accessible tokens. The reciprocal abilities of language users to produce and consume audible, visible, or tactile signs are constitutive of the possibility of language and thought. The strategy I am proposing draws upon McDowell's commitment to the role of language and tradition in conceptual spontaneity,

while treating the assimilation and mastery of a language through Todes's account of perceptual practice. In this way, Todes's account of perception as bodily praxis would become integral, rather than merely complementary, to McDowell's account of conceptual spontaneity. I cannot adequately defend such a far-reaching view here. My more modest aim is to introduce it as an option to consider seriously in response to McDowell's work.

For Todes, "perception is essentially characterized as the culmination of the percipient's *search* to find himself in the world in which he originally (without an object) senses himself to be lost, but in which he can find himself in the midst of his circumstances in respect to some object he finds there with him" (Todes, 2001, pp. 104–5). We gain practical mastery over our bodies by learning to direct them toward, and responsively conform to, objects around us. A salient feature of the human world in which we find ourselves, however, is its wordiness. A child is surrounded from its earliest moments not merely by people and things, but by verbal expression.⁷ One gradually finds oneself as a bodily agent not merely by one's ability to coordinate hand and eye to grasp the object one sees, but also by coordinating ear and voice to (re)produce the sounds one hears. Human bodies are verbally articulate.⁸

Just as with the perception of objects, the hearing or reading of words requires an appropriate body set, and the ability to "conform" (responsively rather than merely passively) to what one encounters. Think of learning to discriminate spoken words in a new language (or a familiar language heavily accented or dialectally inflected). Before one can begin to understand what is being said, one must learn to respond to the characteristic rhythms and phonemic articulations of its discursive flow.⁹ The bodily skills involved in fluently speaking a language, producing appropriate expressions in real time, likewise share many of the characteristic features of Todes's account of skillful perceptual/praxis.

Learning to speak and think in a language has some philosophically distinctive features, however. It is not an autonomously expressive bodily skill (such as a novel form of dance), but instead involves conformity to an extant, partially determinate practice (since one's capacity to learn any human language will not develop spontaneously in the absence of exposure to an actual language). Nor is language merely a narrowly bounded practical domain, like chess, within which one can acquire and assimilate perceptual/practical *gestalten* (although one certainly does acquire such significant practical schemata), because its acquisition permeates everything one says and does. In many respects, the acquisition of an extant language is akin to other available equipment that we learn to incorporate within our capacities for skillful activity. Yet a language is also not simply a tool, an *object* that can be prosthetically assimilated within one's practical body schema, both because of its unbounded character, and the extraordinary expressive flexibility its mastery affords.

Recognizing the perceptual and practical dimensions of learning to understand and speak a language makes an important connection to McDowell's insistence upon the importance of language and tradition in bringing us into the space of reasons. Consider these concluding remarks from *Mind and World*:

Human beings are not [born at home in the space of reasons]: they are born mere animals, and they are transformed into thinkers and intentional agents in the course of coming to maturity. This transformation risks looking mysterious. But we can take it in our stride if ... we give pride of place to the learning of language. In being initiated into a language, a human being is introduced into something that already embodies putatively rational linkages between concepts, putatively constitutive of the layout of the space of reasons, before she comes on the scene. (McDowell, 1994, p. 125)

What we acquire in learning a language is both a concrete bodily repertoire and a kind of virtual embodiment, with which one "moves" through one's verbally articulated circumstances. The "language" one acquires is thus not a determinate formal structure of the sort that Davidson (1986b) rightly objects to, but practical mastery of discursive practices situated in their publicly accessible surroundings. It matters both that we inhabit a wordy world, and live a verbally expressive life. On the one hand, the talk that goes on around us is an integral part of the world we inhabit. Recall Wittgenstein's example of "expecting" someone:

What's it like for him to come? – The door opens, someone walks in, and so on. – What's it like for me to expect him to come? – I walk up and down the room, look at the clock now and then, and so on. – But the one set of events has not the smallest similarity to the other! So how can one use the same words in describing them? It is in language that an expectation and its fulfillment make contact. (Wittgenstein, 1953, I, pp. 444–5)¹⁰

On the other hand, the ways we pick up on the discursive practices we inhabit and make them our own is an integral part of our bodily interaction with our circumstances.

Spoken and written language can thus be seen as the paradigm case of John Haugeland's conclusion that "intelligence abides in the meaningful *world*: not just books and records, but roads and plows, offices, laboratories and communities" (Haugeland, 1998, p. 236). One might object that Haugeland sharply distinguished the broader sense in which roads or laboratories are significant ("important to us and interdependent with other things in their proper use") from "meaning in the sense of bearing content

or having a semantics” (Haugeland, 1998, p. 233). Part of Haugeland’s worry is that emphasizing the externality of language makes it too easy to assimilate his point about the externality of human intelligence within more traditional conceptions of mind; it is indeed harder to treat roads and laboratories as mental phenomena. My argument goes in the other direction, however: the moral I draw from the encounter between Todes and McDowell is to “externalize” mind altogether as skillful bodily interaction with a significantly configured world, in which discursive practices are integral to the world itself. A necessary component of such assimilation, of course, would be to account for semantics pragmatically; Brandom’s (1994) pragmatic-inferentialist semantics thus does crucial work for my proposal. His insistence upon the primacy of material over formal inference, and his expressivist account of logic (as an additional expressive ability to *say* what one already knows how to *do*, which can in turn be explicated in normative terms as a knowing-how) can be adapted to incorporate the full anaphoric, inferential, compositional, and reflexive dimensions of discursive practice as expressive bodily capacities.¹¹

Todes undoubtedly would have objected to this assimilation of discursive practice to bodily expression on the grounds that perception involves the achievement of balance, poise, and satisfaction in actual circumstances, whereas discursive competence (he would have spoken instead of conceptual imagination) introduces an intentional directedness toward what is merely possible. It is this representational capacity that supposedly distinguishes imagination from perception. But what we should have learned from Quine and Davidson, and learned from Brandom to express in pragmatic-inferential terms, is how this capacity to talk about what is absent or non-existent depends upon a mostly successful discursive hold upon one’s actual surroundings (whose success can be articulated via interpretation in an actual, ongoing discursive practice).¹² Discursive competence could not confer intentional directedness toward possibilities apart from a practical, bodily grasp upon actual circumstances (including an actual discursive practice in those circumstances).

An account that successfully assimilated Todes and McDowell in this way would go further than even McDowell foresaw in overcoming dualistic conceptions of spontaneity and receptivity in human understanding. Todes’s account of perceptual praxis provides no experiential intermediary between a perceiving mind and a causally efficacious object. Coordinated bodily action is responsive to the thing itself, in its bodily accommodation to what the object affords us, rather than to a perceptual presentation of the object. Moreover, recall from my discussion in section II above that such responsiveness to surroundings is not a purely spontaneous bodily capacity, for we only acquire and exercise such capacities in dependent engagement with our surroundings (we find ourselves as active bodies only through such responsive accommodation to circumstances). Todes did not deny that there

is inner “experience” or consciousness, however, nor did he treat it as epiphenomenal. The role he allotted inner experience is neither “given” content nor conceptually articulated intermediary, but the momentary satisfaction of an unresolved tension or pain that manifests a bodily composure or discomposure in and with its surroundings (Todes, 2001, pp. 58–60, 81–82, and especially 117–128). Perceptual experience has a “sense”, not as “meaning-content”, but as “direction”, an indefinitely open solicitation to further active exploration (either to resolve the tension exhibited by a failure to orient oneself successfully, or to sustain one’s composure in further activity amid changing circumstances).¹³

From the perspective of this approach to understanding the practical/perceptual acquisition of discursive competence, Todes’s challenge to McDowell’s attempt to retain a place for conceptually articulated perceptual receptivity comes from the opposite direction than that suggested by Dreyfus. The point of the challenge would not be to re-introduce limits to the domain of conceptual understanding, but to replace the notion of “receptivity” with that of responsive bodily interaction with the (verbally articulated) world. The meaningful accord of bodily intentionality and worldly significance would then not be “already there” in the natures of objects or the commitments of subjects, but would only arise and be sustained through ongoing interaction within a conceptually articulated tradition. Such a conjunction of Todes and McDowell would also challenge a residual empiricism in each of their views (in the sense of “empiricism” that attributes epistemic, semantic, or psychological significance to mental or bodily states intermediary between discursively articulated understanding and material reality).¹⁴ It may seem a strange position I am attributing to Todes: he was an empiricist about conceptual thought, but not about perception. In the sense of “empiricism” at issue between Davidson and McDowell, however, that was indeed Todes’s view. He described perception as an unmediated bodily responsiveness to objects themselves, which involved no intermediary sensations or appearances, yet he did introduce “sensuous abstractions” as abstractly contentful intermediaries between thought and fully consummated perceptual practice. This latter point is the part of his view that I rejected in section III above. If McDowell, in turn, was right to object that Davidson, Rorty, and Brandom failed to show adequately how conceptual spontaneity is accountable to the material world, then Todes would show us (in light of McDowell’s objections) how to fulfill their commitment to understand intentionality without experiential intermediaries.

As I noted in section II above, the final point that Todes contributes to McDowell concerns the normative force of conceptual understanding. Let us first distinguish two dimensions of normativity, authority (a difference between what is correct and incorrect, appropriate or inappropriate, true or false, etc.) and force (how that difference is binding upon a situated agent).¹⁵

Although McDowell does not make this distinction, it figures significantly in his objections to Davidson and Brandom. The problem that worries him is not just the resuscitation of skepticism about normative authority (the worry that the products of conceptual spontaneity are empty). That problem only arises through Davidson's and Brandom's purported inability to account for the world's normative force, that is, for how some of these conceptual productions are "*wrung* from the perceiver by the object perceived" (Sellars, 1997, p. 40; my emphasis). Unfortunately, while I think McDowell's worry is well-founded, i.e. that his neo-pragmatist confreres cannot adequately account for how the world has normative as well as causal force, it is not clear that McDowell himself does better. That its normative force arises through our bodily (second) nature arguably names the problem rather than solves it.

Todes accounted for the normative force of perceptual exploration and its satisfaction in terms of our neediness as bodily agents who are both active in, and vulnerable to, our circumstances. Embodied human agents are neither complete nor self-contained; we are dependent upon the resistance and accommodation of our surroundings to develop our capacities and possibilities as agents (even to move as "self-moved movers", but also to develop particular skills, and involvement in the practices for which those skills could matter). Perceptual/practical orientation within, and understanding of, our circumstances are also responses to our bodily and personal vulnerability. We only sustain ourselves as agents through mostly successful perceptual/practical interaction. We are thus bound to the perceptual/practical disclosure of our surroundings (it is "*wrung* from us" in Sellars's terms) in order to be(come) the agents we are. Human needs and neediness are not simply given, however. Even in the case of the most basic perceptual/practical ways of finding ourselves in the world by responsive interaction with our surroundings, *what* we need only becomes determinate in the course of our situated activity. What and how we are needy depends upon what transpires around us, and upon the repertoire of possibilities we have already taken up.

Although this point is not developed in *Body and World*, I think that Todes's conception of human neediness and dependence upon circumstances can thus be extended to understand the normativity of language and thought.¹⁶ There are two principal barriers to assimilating language and thought to bodily activity: the mistaken preconception of perception and bodily activity as brute causal processes, and the parallel mistake that language and thought must be purely spontaneously expressive. This second mistake is often motivated by the need to account for a genuinely crucial aspect of discursive practice:

Learning [a] language is not just learning to use a set of stock sentences which everybody else uses too. One has not learned the language, has

not acquired the capacity to engage in the social practices which are the use of the language, until one can produce *novel* sentences which the community will deem appropriate, and understand the appropriate novel utterances of other members of the community. ... This emergent expressive capacity is the essence of natural languages. (Brandom, 1979, p. 193)

But Todes pointed out that bodily responsiveness to surroundings is also not just a matter of acquiring a stock repertoire of movements that are brutally-causally deflected by what we encounter, but is instead acquiring a flexible and open-ended capacity for novel responsiveness to changing surroundings. Where McDowell proposed that perceptual receptivity imposes a limit to conceptual spontaneity, Todes responds that perception can only be receptive through its own activity in accommodating to surroundings. In assimilating discursive expression to Todes's account of perceptual activity, both barriers to understanding language as a bodily activity could be overcome at once. The key intermediate step would be to understand discursive expression in a language as part of our bodily capacities for responsive, expressive interaction with an already verbally articulated world. What Todes did to make that possible is to help us recognize perceptual activity as neither purely spontaneous, nor passively receptive, nor an "interrelation" between conceptual spontaneity and perceptual receptivity, but as intra-active.¹⁷ Our surroundings become meaningfully configured as a situation, through the activities by which we find ourselves, in response to the practical and expressive possibilities that these circumstances afford to the bodily repertoire we have already acquired through a discursive tradition.

By understanding both perceptual activity and discursive expression as responsive to a verbally articulated world through active, normatively accountable skills, this assimilation of Todes on perception and McDowell on second nature promises a more thorough integration of rational spontaneity with normative accountability to the world. Such a position could thus help overcome the dualisms of causality and normativity and of receptivity and spontaneity, not merely by extending conceptual understanding all the way down as McDowell proposed, but by recognizing how discursive expression extends practical/perceptual intra-action with the world all the way up.

Notes

1. I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Samuel Todes; this paper would not have been possible without our extensive conversations about his work. A preliminary version was presented to the International Association for Phenomenological Studies. Thanks also to Steven Horst and Eric Schliesser for very helpful comments on earlier versions.

2. Rouse 2002, especially chapters 2 and 6.
3. Although I cannot argue the point here (I develop a parallel argument extensively in Rouse 2002, ch. 6), Todes's account demolishes any philosophically significant distinction between perception and action. All perceiving involves practical activity, and all bodily activity is perceptually responsive to its surroundings. There are not distinct perceptual and practical components to our ongoing responsive bodily engagement with our circumstances.
4. I hold in abeyance throughout this section the question of whether and how the normativity of perceptual practice exemplified by such failures is commensurate with the semantic or epistemic normativity that ultimately concerns McDowell. This question first of all presupposes an answer to McDowell's question about the relation between perceptual practice and conceptual normativity, which I take up in later sections. Even then, however, this question goes beyond the considerations that can be developed in this paper. Those inclined toward some form of naturalistic reductionism in the philosophy of mind and language might aspire to explicate semantic and epistemic normativity starting from a bodily orientation toward achieving a homeostatic equilibrium with one's surroundings. Todes, by contrast, interpreted the normativity of perceptual practice strictly phenomenologically, in terms of feelings of neediness and their temporary satisfaction. My own approach is to regard the relation as expressive: the implicit normativity of perceptual praxis is only vindicated by its articulated conceptual expression, even though, I suggest below, we ought to regard such expressive capacities as themselves basically practical/perceptual. Okrent (forthcoming) provides a more extensive and largely compatible discussion of the relation between the teleological directedness of bodily agency that we share with nonhuman animals, and instrumental and expressive rationality. Thanks to Steven Horst for pointing out the need to address this point.
5. I would myself endorse these accommodations of Todes to McDowell, although arguing for the philosophical merits of the latter's non-reductive naturalism relative to Todes's existential phenomenology goes well beyond the scope of this paper. For some discussion of the underlying issues, see Rouse 2002, especially chapter 1.
6. Todes (1975) confines his discussion to written inscriptions, but he elsewhere (2001, pp. 147–48) characterizes “technical speech” in ways that suggest that phonemically articulated speech should be treated analogously to the extent that one is listening to “what is being said” (Grice's sentence meaning) rather than listening to what the speaker is trying to say (Grice's utterer's meaning). Written texts do not present quite the same ambiguity perceptually because there is no writer present, although it is possible to read a text as the spoken expression of a speaker, which Todes would presumably treat as a fusion of perception and imagination in which one imaginatively attributes an expressive voice to the words read.
7. The developmental difficulties encountered by children whose early environment is discursively impoverished are now well-known; one does not fully develop as a human being (even at the bodily level, in neural organization, and in the capacities of ear and tongue) except in a wordy world.
8. More philosophical attention should be paid to the perceptual and cognitive development of deaf children, especially those whose early life involves extensive interaction with sign language.
9. This point, combined with the Davidsonian insight that we have no criterion for discursive normativity apart from interpretability into a language we know, might well dim the prospects for understanding a language of dolphins or extraterrestrials. The difficulty would not be semantic incommensurability as it is usually construed, but perceptual “incommensurability”, an inability to recognize and respond to salient differences and articulations. Human embodiment may be practically indispensable to human language.
10. If you are inclined to believe that this constitutive role for discursive practice can be confined to an inferentially insulated “social reality”, consider the parallel between

- predicting the existence of a new particle and fulfilling that prediction. Peter Galison's (1987, 1997) historical studies of experimentation and the pidgins and creoles that facilitate the "trading zone" between experimentation and theory in 20th Century physics should help put that worn conceit to rest.
11. The argument for this assimilation is in chapters 6–7 of *How Scientific Practices Matter* (Rouse, 2002). Brandom himself does not make the move I am proposing, for although he recognizes the worldly "thickness" or "corporeality" of discursive practices (1994, p. 332), he still gives conceptual priority to a rationalist conception of intralinguistic practice. I begin the argument in 2002, chapter 6, by showing why Brandom's residual rationalism is untenable, such that practical/perceptual interaction with our surroundings must take expressive priority over intralinguistic practice, comparable to the priority for perceptual praxis that I am claiming here. Neither line of argument, however, retains a place for an autonomously pre-discursive stratum to human intentionality once discursive practices have permeated the world we live in.
 12. This is also a point that could be learned from Heidegger 1963. A central theme in section 44 of *Sein und Zeit* is not to think of the intentional directedness of assertions in terms of semantic intermediaries ("Das Aussagen ist ein Sein zum seienden Ding selbst", 1963, p. 218). Instead of following Husserl or Frege in giving priority to understanding the sense of empty intentions (thoughts) before asking how such intentions could be fulfilled or not, Heidegger started with the understanding of being (in Husserl's terms, "being" is the noematic sense of the categorial intuition of fulfillment), and on that basis sought to account for how we can understand entities as what they are not. We can grasp meanings only because we already understand their fulfillment by entities.
 13. Todes was deeply influenced by Merleau-Ponty (1945), whose criticism of Husserl's account of the sense or meaning of perceived objects exploited the fact that *sens*, the obvious French translation of Husserl's (and Frege's) *Sinn*, can be used to indicate a direction or orientation as well as an articulated meaning.
 14. It is in this sense of empiricism, as positing a non-conceptual content intermediary between conceptual thought and the world, that Davidson claimed that "if we give up [the third dogma of empiricism, the scheme/content distinction], it is not clear there is anything distinctive left to call empiricism" (1984, p. 189).
 15. Among the parallel accounts of the normative force of semantic norms in the recent literature are Brandom (1994) appealing to deontic commitments and entitlements, Haugeland (1998) to existential commitments, and Davidson (1980) to desires as "pro-attitudes".
 16. Lance (2000) is a parallel attempt to sketch such an assimilation, drawing upon Sellars/Brandom and Heidegger/Dreyfus rather than McDowell and Todes.
 17. Karen Barad (1996) introduced this term to avoid the connotation of "interaction" that the interacting objects have determinate boundaries and identities apart from their pattern of interaction. Haugeland's (1998, ch. 9) insistence upon the "intimacy" of embodied mind and meaningful world as an alternative to "interrelationist" accounts of mind and world parallels the point I am attributing to Todes on perception, but he does not consider the perceptual/practical character of human language as an intimate engagement of body, mind and world, as I am proposing.

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