I Introduction

Over the last decade or so, there has been a concerted effort by some within the Anglo-American philosophical sphere to consider what is meant by, and what being done under the slogan of “naturalism”. As Mario de Caro and David MacArthur note,

[an] overwhelming majority of contemporary Anglo-American philosophers claim to be “naturalists” or to be offering a “naturalistic” theory of a key philosophical concept … or domain … . Naturalism has become a slogan in the name of which the vast majority of work in analytic philosophy is pursued … [[1]](#footnote-2)

However, there is not much that unifies, or gives clarity to the content of this subscription to the cause of “naturalism”. Indeed there is an incredibly wide variance in the kinds of proposed naturalisms, and, as a result of this variance, very bitter disputes about whether or not certain proposed naturalisms actually qualify as a “naturalism”.

Fortunately, looking over the literature on the question, it is possible to identify two broad opposing camps battling it out over the question of the content, appeal, and nature of naturalism. These are 'Liberal Naturalism' and what David Macarthur refers to as 'Scientific Naturalism'. While many would not object to making this distinction, there is a great irony in doing so.

There are two reasons for this. The first is that both bitterly opposed camps profess to be doing the same thing: rejecting the supernatural. Both Liberal and Scientific Naturalism reject appeals to supernatural entities and methods in accounting for the reality of the world. As such, both reject things such as 'gods, demons, souls, and ghosts'.[[2]](#footnote-3) The second is that neither camp has converged, or appears to be converging on a stable conception of even an outline of their “proposed” naturalism. As mentioned above there exists a great degree of controversy about the validity of many “naturalisms”. Take for instance Liberal Naturalism. Scientific Naturalists, in addition to outright, and in a blanket manner, accusing Liberal Naturalism of amounting to supernaturalism, often correctly point out that some supposed allied Liberal Naturalisms give contradictory accounts of reality. What's more, as is eminently observable in the literature, Liberal Naturalists are known to frequently accuse other Liberal Naturalisms of either being both too similar to Scientific Naturalism, *and* supernaturalism, if not directly or wholly amounting to either.

The purpose of this paper is to provide something of an intervention into this turmoil. The crucial issue around which the distinctions between different versions of Scientific and Liberal naturalistic research programs revolve is the situation of human normativity, or value, in nature. This is the broad question that my thesis concerns: how could it be possible for human value, human normativity, to be natural? In considering this question, I hope to clarify what Liberal Naturalists mean when they talk about their version of naturalism, and defend a particular theory *of* Liberal Naturalism. I also hope to clarify the meaning of the term “naturalism” more generally, and situate it in the context of discussions that have occurred over the last couple of decades on the cutting edge of analytic philosophy.

So what is the problem, and why is it significant? When it comes to being a naturalist, there seems to be a very real problem with, on the one hand, asserting that all that exists is natural, and, on the other, maintaining that normative dimensions to human experience have distinctive and legitimate existence. One way of expressing this dilemma is known as the Placement Problem. Huw Price provides a particularly useful outline of the Problem:

(1) All reality is ultimately natural reality;

(2) whatever one wishes to admit into natural reality must be placed in natural reality;

(3) moral facts, mathematic facts, universals, laws of nature, mental states, and so on do not seem admissible into natural reality;

(4) therefore, if they are to be placed in nature, they must be forced into a category that does not seem appropriate for their specific characters, and if they cannot be placed in nature, then they must be either dismissed as non-genuine phenomena or at best regarded as second-rate phenomena.[[3]](#footnote-4)

The conclusion of the argument of the Placement Problem is one that is reached by Scientific Naturalists on the question of human value. For what David Macarthur terms “Scientific Naturalists”, human value is “non-genuine”. This means that human value does not admit of any kind of justification if it is irreducible or somehow independent of the natural sciences. Mental states, and human social institutions such as morality are not valid in and of themselves. As Macarthur and De Caro explain,

if one follows Scientific Naturalism in supposing that natural science, and only natural science, tells us what there is in the world, then there seems to be no room for the existence of normative facts—or at least this will be so insofar as they cannot be reduced to the kinds of objective, causal facts with which natural science deals.[[4]](#footnote-5)

To illustrate how pressing this challenge is to the Liberal Naturalist cause, a particularly devastating passage from Ram Neta's review of Macarthur and de Caro's *Naturalism in Question* can be summoned:

What if digestion, or respiration, or reasoning are natural kinds, their nature consisting simply in the mechanisms that enable them to occur? Is the liberal naturalist committed to denying this possibility? If so, then I confess I can see no good reason to accept Liberal Naturalism. And if not, then I confess I do not understand just what Liberal Naturalism is.[[5]](#footnote-6)

Neta's observation about human normativity turns entirely on the status of human value with respect to the standards of current mainstream natural science. The substance of Neta's argument is that it seems prima facie, using the standards of natural science that are currently available to us, that human value is either reducible to natural scientific explanations, and therefore not ontologically independent from natural science, or that it is plainly supernatural, and therefore not real. The general response to this charge by many liberal naturalists has been to admit that the present natural sciences do hold pride of place in describing and explaining reality, but that they do not exhaust reality's entire scope. This is the route that Macarthur and de Caro take:

It is not that liberal naturalists have unrevisable a priori reasons to deny that [normative] entities can be scientifically explained or explained away. The liberal naturalist views, however, are characterised by two provisos—one epistemological and one ontological—that complement the constitutive claim of naturalism.[[6]](#footnote-7) Let's suppose that some of the controversial entities were actually reduced or shown to be ontologically dependent on scientific entities; nevertheless, according to the epistemological proviso of Liberal Naturalism, in order to account fully for the features of these entities one might still have to turn to forms of understanding (such as conceptual analysis, imaginative speculation, or introspection) that are neither reducible to scientific understanding nor supernatural. Moreover, according to the ontological proviso of Liberal Naturalism, there may be entities that do not and cannot causally affect the world investigated by the sciences and that are both reducible to and ontologically independent of entities accountable by science but are not supernatural either, since they do not and cannot violate any laws of nature … .[[7]](#footnote-8)

As the reader will see below, this is the route taken by John McDowell. It is probably no coincidence that Macarthur and de Caro take the position they do on the naturalness of human value, Macarthur has written on McDowell's version of Liberal Naturalism, and it clearly very impressed with it.[[8]](#footnote-9)

I consider myself allied to the Liberal Naturalist movement. I think the intention behind the movement's efforts to rescue the distinctiveness and legitimacy of human value is well placed. We absolutely need to be able to have discourse about normative dimensions to human experience with full appreciation that they form a very real part of nature. Despite this, I think the above line of attack that Macarthur and McDowell have been pursuing is a mistake. I think that arguing that science doesn't full explain the world, and that we need to resort to other, non-scientific methods in order to fully cash out our picture of the world paradoxically concedes too much ground to Scientific Naturalism. As will be shown below, in my discussion of John McDowell's concept of “second nature”, taking this line of attack keeps intact the disenchanted view of nature espoused by the natural sciences as they are currently understood. The result of allowing the natural sciences to remain unchallenged on their own ground, and advocating for a kind of “nature-plus” regarding human value, makes Liberal Naturalism look like a purely defensive strategy. More than this, without challenging the disenchanted worldview of the natural sciences, I fail to see how Liberal Naturalism could ever gain the advantage against Scientific Naturalism. On this point, I find myself agreeing with some scholars who are avowed skeptics about the chances of success of Liberal Naturalism.[[9]](#footnote-10)

While Liberal Naturalism certainly came on the scene after Scientific Naturalism had matured, it doesn't have to be purely defensive, and is certainly entitled to challenge Scientific Naturalism on its own ground. That is, we should challenge the predominant view of the natural sciences as a disenchanted activity that discovers a disenchanted world. This is the most general way of expressing the argument of my thesis. In order to rescue the distinctiveness and legitimacy of human value, we need to fully re-enchant our picture of nature. We need a view of the natural sciences that sees not just its methodology, but also its ontology as amenable to normativity and value.

II Philosophical Quietism: Why Should We Question McDowell?

The focus of my thesis will be the particular kind of re-enchantment of nature put forward by John McDowell in *Mind and World,[[10]](#footnote-11)* in his essay *Two Sorts of Naturalism,*[[11]](#footnote-12) and elsewhere. Before engaging in a recitation of McDowell's argument, it is particularly important to address McDowell's philosophical method. This might seem to complicate the issue even further, given that my thesis already deals exclusively with highly abstract metaphilosophy. But it is absolutely crucial that it is understood what McDowell's broad vision of and for philosophy is, and how his advocacy of a re-enchanted nature fits into this picture.

McDowell understands his advocacy of a “partial re-enchantment of nature”[[12]](#footnote-13) to be therapeutic in the Wittgensteinian sense: McDowell aims to show how the anxieties that modern philosophy suffers from when it attempts to construct theories about the relation between mind and world are based on false apprehensions of a state of affairs. By engaging in McDowell's quietist philosophical therapy, McDowell aims to show the reader that there never was such a particular philosophical problem in the first place. This is one of the characteristic features of McDowell's philosophy, and when responding to criticism McDowell is famous for pointing out to their interlocutors that they have missed the point of what they was trying to say. As A. C. Genova writes in a book review of *Reading McDowell: On Mind and World*,*[[13]](#footnote-14)* even the most towering influential philosophers can take on McDowell's work, and still have their interpretation rejected by its author:

Perhaps the most fascinating, if not entirely surprising, feature of *Reading McDowell* is that the papers in this collection are of consistently very high quality, critical of some integral component of McDowell’s thought, and are philosophically persuasive, and yet, McDowell, in his rejoinders, argues that each, in some significant respect, has misread his recent work.[[14]](#footnote-15)

Accordingly, McDowell is likely to charge much of the criticism I recite in this thesis proposal with having fundamentally misunderstood what he was getting at. However, I believe we should take McDowell's philosophy at face value. We should read his therapeutic solution to the problem of the relation between mind and world in the same way that Russell advocates we read an unfamiliar philosopher in his *History of Western Philosophy*: we should approach McDowell favourably, assuming his story makes sense, but then relate ourselves to McDowell's position critically, analysing it carefully and drawing out the conclusions of its reasoning to its logical end.

In this vein, I think many of the problems pointed out by the critics I have selected are particularly salient for the emerging philosophical movement of Liberal or Broad Naturalism. There are three reasons why I think we should turn a critical eye to McDowell's position on re-enchanting nature.

The first is that I feel that merely accepting McDowell's story tout court would commit us to a kind of philosophical conservatism. It seems odd that we would have reached the end of history with McDowell's philosophy, with no further critical tools to tell us where next to proceed in doing philosophy. Perhaps we could accept McDowell's position if McDowell was instead turning us towards a practical orientation to the world, having us instead worry about pressing social and political issues, but McDowell isn't doing this. McDowell is literally shutting up the shop, telling us “nothing to see here”.

The second is that McDowell's position seems incomplete. The story hasn't been completely told yet. McDowell's key concept in effecting their partial re-enchantment of nature, “second nature”, is curiously silent on many issues. One such issue is the way language acquisition is supposed to be related to concept acquisition. How does language work in this regard? On this, McDowell is content to say we don't need to know anymore than “it does”.

The third reason why I think we should re-open the case on McDowell's philosophy is that, crucially, it suffers from internal contradictions. This is what my thesis is about. As will be shown below, I can show that McDowell solves the problem of the relation between mind and world in one discipline of philosophy, namely epistemology, only to push the problem into another, broader domain, namely metaphysics. Instead of concluding, as some scholars do,[[15]](#footnote-16) that McDowell's project was doomed to suffer from problems from the start, I say we seriously and critically accept McDowell's “system” (however horrified they would be of that label), and see if we can perform the final *aufhebung* it needs. Why this particular route seems appealing will only become clear as I move through McDowell's “system”.

III Mind and World: The Epistemological Argument

A *Definition of McDowell's Key Concepts*

*Mind and World* is concerned to diagnose and exorcise a famous and long-lived problem in philosophy, the problem of the relation between the mind and the world. This is a distinctly modern problem. As McDowell is at pains to stress in *Mind and World* and in *Two Sorts of Naturalism*, the fact that the ancients did not place much value on this problem, and that we only seemed to become anxious about it in modern times, is instructive Roughly speaking, the problem raises from a skeptical question: how is it possible for an agent with a mind to have knowledge about the world? This could perhaps be put another way, seeing as the problem has so many variations: given that “we can understand objectivity, in the broadest sense of the term, as epistemic accountability to the real”,[[16]](#footnote-17) or as McDowell puts it, “objectivity [is] access to the real”,[[17]](#footnote-18) how is it possible for an agent to know the objective world from within their particular, subjective perspective?

In order to perform a discussion of McDowell's solution to the problem, it is necessary to outline some key concepts that come attendant with McDowell's argument. The first concept is called the “space of reasons”. The space of reasons is closely related to a concept in Wilfrid Sellars's work called the “manifest image” of human experience of the world. The manifest image of the world equates to the everyday experience of the world that humans have. Populating the manifest image of the world are middle-sized dry goods—in other words, things that can be seen with the human eye—and everyday living beings, such as humans and pets. The manifest image of the world is, crucially, constituted by normative relations. Put another way, the manifest image is entirely situated in a context that is normative. This normative context *is* the space of reasons. Sellars cashes out the substance of the space of reasons as “a framework of conceptual thinking in terms of which [agents] can be criticised, supported, refuted, in short, evaluated”.[[18]](#footnote-19) McDowell can also be summoned to provide some elucidation for what the space of reasons is. It is “a logical space whose structure consists in some of its occupants being, for instance, warranted or correct in the light of others”.[[19]](#footnote-20)

So the space of reasons is a logical space within human experience where agents can make claims about the world which can be judged by other agents as warranted or justified. Key in this logical space is the capacity for evaluation that agents possess. Agents can *evaluate* the truthfulness or falsity of claims about the world. Fundamentally, moves made within the space of reasons are normative. There are rules for how to make claims about the world, and there are standards for assessing the validity of those claims—although we might not yet know what they are, or they could be indeterminate, or could in crisis regarding their legitimacy.

The next concept to outline is the “space of concepts”. For McDowell and Sellars, a concept is a social norm. There is without a doubt a pragmatic dimension here as to what constitutes a concept, and the space of concepts. As Joseph Rouse explains, for McDowell, to come to possess or wield a concept, one has come to understand the proper use of a word: “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”.[[20]](#footnote-21) The space of concepts therefore overlaps, if not situates itself squarely within the space of reasons. A concept for McDowell is not a medium of representational content. It is a social rule with standards of performance:

Normative approaches to conceptual articulation, by contrast, identify the conceptual domain with those performances and capacities that are appropriately assessed according to rational norms. The issue is whether various performances are accountable to reasoned assessment, and can sufficiently stand up to it. Whether something is normatively accountable in this way is then itself a normative issue: the question is whether assessment according to conceptual norms is appropriate, rather than whether it actually occurs. Whether certain kinds of representations or structures are actually contained or causally efficacious in a particular thought or action then does not matter, but only whether that thought or action is sufficiently accessible and potentially responsive to conceptual assessment.[[21]](#footnote-22)

The last two concepts to outline are the phrases McDowell terms the “realm of law” and the “space of nature”. It is important to define these two concepts together because they are normally equated with each other. The realm of law corresponds to what Wilfrid Sellars termed the “scientific image” of the world. Both the realm of law and the scientific image of the world are realms of human experience that are exhausted by the practice and knowledge of natural science. McDowell was at one stage committed to picturing the realm of law as just that—a logical space exhausted by nomological relations, which is a very poor view of the practice and unity of natural science—but he has since improved his view. In his response to Christoph Halbig in *John McDowell: Reason, Norm, and Nature*, McDowell writes:

… 'the realm of law' was a bad attempt to capture the idea of a logical space that contrasts with what Sellars describes as 'the logical space of reasons'. What I wanted to bring into view was the realm of natural-scientific intelligibility, and it was wrong to suggest that all natural-scientific explanation is a matter of subsuming phenomena under law. In particular, that imposes a distorted understanding of biological intelligibility.[[22]](#footnote-23)

According to Sellars, the scientific image of the world arises out of the manifest image of the world, but because of the way it has revolutionised human life, it becomes its own fully-fledged independent perspective on the world. The scientific image becomes antinomial with respect to the manifest image of the world, and the two perspectives of human experience become mutually unintelligible to one-another. Because of this mutually unintelligibility, the two perspectives compete. Crucially for McDowell's position, the scientific image of the world aims to “domesticate” the manifest image of the world, with its conceptual capacities and framework, within the realm of law.[[23]](#footnote-24)

By contrast, the concept of the “space of nature” is seemingly more neutral and easier to define. The space of nature is merely whatever is real. Whatever is natural is to be contrasted with the supernatural, which is not real. Foreshadowing the discussion of McDowell's argument below, many have taken the realm of law to exhaust the space of nature, leaving the space of reasons outside of it, making the space of reasons supposedly supernatural.

B *McDowell's Epistemological Argument*

McDowell's argument about the relation between mind and world is conducted entirely in the context of human empirical perceptual experience. Whether or not McDowell's argument applies to other facets of the relation between mind and world doesn't concern my thesis. I am entirely concerned with McDowell's question of human experience could be answerable to the empirical world.[[24]](#footnote-25)

McDowell divides the relation between mind and world into two sets of relationships. These relationships are explicitly extracted from the post-Kantian tradition of philosophy. The first is receptivity, otherwise known as sensibility, and the second is spontaneity, otherwise known as the “understanding”, or the “faculty of judgement”. Receptivity is the relation between the mind and world where the world “impresses” or “impinges” itself upon the mind, and delivers up to the mind worldly empirical content. The relation or “faculty” of receptivity is passive with respect to the world. The mind merely receives content about the world at this step of the relation between mind and world. Richard Gaskin is right to observe that the phrases McDowell uses to characterise the operation of the faculty of receptivity are causal locutions, “redolent of the British empiricists”.[[25]](#footnote-26)

The second relation between mind and world, spontaneity, takes the empirical content delivered up to the faculty of receptivity and subsumes it under concepts to make judgements about the world. Spontaneity is unquestionably situated within both the space of concepts, and the space of reasons. At the level of receptivity, an agent cannot be blamed for the content about the world their mind receives. But at the level of spontaneity, agents have the freedom to make their minds up about what content counts as part of the world, and what doesn't. The freedom by spontaneity to make judgements with the content received by receptivity entails a form of accountability for the way in which the faculty of judgement is used. There are standards of rationality that have to be met in judgement, in order to make sure what is being revealed about the world is actually true. As McDowell says, in order for the mind to be correct about the world, its understanding of it must be rational:

Active empirical thinking takes place under a standing obligation to reflect about the credentials of the putatively rational linkages that govern it. There must be a standing willingness to refashion concepts and conceptions if that is what reflection demands.[[26]](#footnote-27)

McDowell's epistemological argument in *Mind and World* centres on the way this relationship between receptivity and spontaneity has been characterised. McDowell is keen to diagnose and exorcise an anxiety that has developed as a result of a misunderstanding about what it means for receptivity to be passive with respect to the content of the world. The anxiety is that it is not possible for the mind to be correct about the world, because it is not possible for the content about the world that the mind receives to be rational. Much of this anxiety turns on how expansive the space of concepts is within the space of reasons. An interminable antinomy develops when it is deemed that the worldly content delivered to the mind in receptivity is absolutely non-conceptual.

The Myth of the Given holds that the space of reasons extends more widely that the space of concepts, that the space of reasons is not exhausted by the space of concepts. According to the Myth of the Given, the space of reasons extends down to the level of receptivity, so that the content that the mind receives about the world can serve as justifications for judgements in spontaneity:

The space of reasons, the space of justifications or warrants, extends more widely than the conceptual sphere. The extra extent of the space of reasons is supposed to allow it to incorporate non-conceptual impacts from outside the realm of thought.[[27]](#footnote-28)

Advocates of the Myth of the Given hold that the content of the world received by the mind must be non-conceptual, but within the space of reasons, because they hold that only the faculty of spontaneity can be the relation between mind and world that sits within the space of concepts. If receptivity was also conceptual, that would prevent it from being passive:

What generates the temptation to appeal to the Given is the thought that spontaneity characterises exercises of conceptual understanding in general, so that spontaneity extends all the way out to the conceptual contents that sit closest to the impacts of the world on our sensibility. [Defenders of the Myth argue that we] need to conceive this expansive spontaneity as subject to control from outside our thinking, on pain of representing the operations of spontaneity as a frictionless spinning in a void.[[28]](#footnote-29)

However the Myth of the Given fails as a positive an account of the relation between mind and world because that would mean that receptivity delivers up excuses, exculpations, when delivering content about the world to the mind. Receptivity would be passive, yes, but there would be no warrants, justifications or reasons attendant with the worldly content that receptivity would allow the mind to receive. The content about the world the mind receives would be purely causal. Receptivity could not be used to show *why* the world is the way it is, it would only be able to deliver up *fait accomplis*:

What happens there [at the outer boundary of the space of reasons] is the result of an alien force, the causal impact of the world, operating outside the control of our spontaneity. But it is one thing to be exempt from blame, on the ground that the position we find ourselves in can be traced ultimately to brute force; it is quite another thing to have a justification. In effect, the idea of the Given offers exculpations where we wanted justifications.[[29]](#footnote-30)

The second antinomy, “coherentism”, is the obverse of the Myth of the Given, but is similar because it still holds that the content of the world that the mind receives is still not within the space of concepts. Its innovation, however, is that it identifies the space of concepts with the space of reasons, and excludes the operations of receptivity from both. On this account of the relation between mind and world, only the exercise of spontaneity is within both the identified space of reasons and space of concepts.

However coherentism too fails as an account about how the mind can be correct about the world. Because the space of concepts and the space of reasons are sequestered away from the world's content, nothing constrains the operations of the faculty of judgement. The operations of spontaneity are free to impute any kind of meaning or justification to the purely causal worldly content that the mind receives. McDowell deems this “frictionless spinning in a void”. The world can't constrain judgement, so ultimately the world has no significance for the accountability that an agent has for the judgements it makes about the world.

McDowell's move in all of this is to preserve the best parts of both sides of the antinomy, while transcending the consequences of both. McDowell's position is that we should:

1. Identify the space of reasons with the space of concepts: all moves within the space of reasons (justifications, accountability) are conceptual and bound by rules and standards of rationality.
2. Identify both the mind and the world with the fully conceptual space of reasons. *Both* the space of reasons and the space of concepts extend down to receptivity, which means that the content of the world that the mind receives is normative.

IV McDowell's Metaphysical Argument

I have been persuaded by McDowell's epistemological argument. I think it follows perfectly that in order for the rational agents that we are to be directed towards the world, the content of the world must be conceptual and in some way rational. As McDowell says, “the conceptual is unbounded, there is nothing outside of it”.[[30]](#footnote-31) The consequence of McDowell's position is that we have to consider the space of nature, the space of what really and actually exists, as somehow normative; rational. I think we should accept this.

The next step in McDowell's “system”, however, contains complications. McDowell is not committed to any kind of constructive philosophy. Their aim is to “leave everything at it is”, and merely explain how it is possible after all for the mind to be related towards the world. Because of this, he is committed to recognising the legitimacy of the “realm of law”, the natural sciences, within certain bounds. Not doing so would make their philosophy constructive, it would challenge the status of the natural sciences.

To make discussion brief, McDowell considers the space of nature to house *both* the space of reasons and the realm of law. McDowell considers the space of the meaningful and the realm of the non-meaningful to be just as real as each other. It is also crucial to note that McDowell considers these logical spaces to be mutually exclusive. Christoph Halbig glosses the content of McDowell's position:

Once it is acknowledged that nature must not be identified [solely] with the realm of law (which McDowell in turn identifies with first nature),[[31]](#footnote-32) one gets conceptual room for an understanding of human potentialities as thoroughly natural: An active exercise of conceptual capacities is as much part of the natural development of human beings as the capacity for intentional action. On such a conception of nature the fact that the notion of spontaneity can only be made intelligible within a framework that differs from that appropriate for the realm of law is no longer incompatible with understanding it as part of the natural powers of humans—it is part of their second nature.[[32]](#footnote-33)

McDowell considers human beings to be in the possession of a “first nature” and a “second nature”. As Halbig glosses, a person's first nature is situated in the realm of law, and is explained by the natural sciences. McDowell envisions this part of a person's “nature” to be explained by disciplines such as biology and physics. Contrastingly, a person's “second nature” is situated within the space of reasons. This logical space explains and gives content to a person's cultural, linguistic, and social life.

V Criticisms of McDowell's “System”

Critics have attacked McDowell's metaphysical situation of the relation between mind and world. T. H. Ho provides a summary of two of the most common criticisms of the metaphysical part of McDowell's “system's” argument:[[33]](#footnote-34)

(C1) McDowell's naturalism does not make intelligible how the second nature of human beings is possible in a world of first nature;[[34]](#footnote-35)

(C2) McDowell's naturalism is another dualism between the realm of law and the space of reasons in disguise.[[35]](#footnote-36)

The force of these criticism derive from the fact that McDowell is envisaging (the space of) nature as bifurcated, as at once enchanted and disenchanted. The first criticism asks the question: how does something meaningful and conceptual arise out of something non-meaningful and non-conceptual. The second criticism asks, how could agents thinking in either logical space make their moves within each respective space intelligible to the other?

A *Ho's Suggested Solution to the Antinomy within McDowell*

In considering these criticisms, I have been influenced by two scholars' suggestions about how to overcome the perceived antinomy in the metaphysical argument in McDowell's “system”. The first is T. H. Ho's, and the second is Christoph Halbig's. T. H. Ho suggests that we reverse the priority of the space of nature and the space of concepts.[[36]](#footnote-37) Ho suggests that instead of considering that it is the space of reasons that houses the space of concepts, it should be the other way around.[[37]](#footnote-38) In this way, we can conduct the argument of the Myth of the Given in the epistemological half of *Mind and World* in reverse. Instead of claiming that the space of reasons is more extensive than the space of concepts, and in so doing committing oneself to the meaningfulness of irrational and non-conceptual content in our thought, we should instead claim the reverse. The space of concepts is more extensive than the space of reasons.

Ho claims that we should imagine the space of concepts as extending all the way down to receptivity, but not the space of reasons. In this way the realm of law is conceptual, and therefore in some way rational, but not meaningful and enchanted as critics have charged. Ho's argument looks like this:

1. Our thinking, belonging in the space of reasons, is answerable only to objects that belong in the space of concepts;

2. The space of concepts is unbounded;

3. The realm of law and the space of reasons are distinct from each other;

4. The realm of law and the space of reasons are *both natural*;

5. The realm of law and the space of reasons both belong in the space of concepts.

I believe this suggested solution to the antinomy at the metaphysical level within McDowell's system is a welcome contribution, but it doesn't go far enough. Ho's solution itself succumbs to an antinomy within its proposed conceptually-structured space of nature. There are now two kinds of conceptually articulated thinking within the space of nature. There is now conceptual thinking which is meaningful, and that which is non-meaningful. I think this again raises the mutual unintelligibility problem that occurred in McDowell at the stage of their exposition of first nature and second nature. Ho is aware of this, and offers the concession that at least their solution to the antinomy within McDowell could be seen as an improvement on McDowell's “system”.[[38]](#footnote-39) Ho is after all committed to being faithful to McDowell's philosophical quietism.

B *Halbig's Orthodox Hegelian Solution*

I argue that we should break with McDowell's philosophical quietism, and take cues from the work of Christoph Halbig on the topic of the antinomy between first nature and second nature in McDowell's “system”. Halbig puts forth a solution to the antinomy in McDowell that draws heavily on Hegel, and aims to fully cash out one of the key theses in McDowell that is too inspired by Hegel. Halbig performs a reading of one of the key passages in Hegel's *Encyclopedia*, the passage where Hegel describes and explains how “Nature” (read: first nature) transitions into Spirit (read: second nature).[[39]](#footnote-40) Hegel is able to overcome the dualism in McDowell's thought by considering the dual realms of Nature and Spirit as inhabiting the same conceptual structure: the realisation of the Idea:

Instead of facing the daunting task to make room or a normatively relevant foothold for a second nature within a first nature that is identified with the realm of law, Hegel is able to show why Spirit feel “at home” within nature. On the one hand, Hegel has shown within the teleological structure of his Philosophy of Nature how Nature transcends itself into beings who are aware of themselves and their surroundings and who then go on to transform their natural basis into a “second nature”. On the other hand, even more importantly, they have tried to show that both Nature and Spirit are instantiations of the same conceptual structure which Hegel had analysed in the *Science of Logic* differing only in the specific way they are doing so. This is where the Hegelian theme of the “unboundedness of the conceptual” that McDowell had invoked in support of his common-sense realism comes into its own.[[40]](#footnote-41)

Hegel affirms McDowell's argument that *both* the space of concepts and the space of reasons extends down into receptivity, but Hegel goes further than McDowell, by holding that this means that the realm of law must be meaningful. The space of reasons and the space of concepts are absolutely to be identified, and they both extend down into the realm of law. However this does not amount to “lapsing into pre-scientific superstition” as McDowell claims.[[41]](#footnote-42) For Hegel, Nature is a defective version of the Idea. The purpose or *telos* of Nature is to *become* Spirit. Human normativity is a particular instantiation of the teleological normativity that encompasses the Idea, which encompasses both Nature and Spirit. Not only that, but Nature is a disenchanted and therefore defective *within* an enchanted picture of reality. Reality may exhibit a teleological conceptual structure, but Nature is not able to fulfill this task. On this picture, the space of reasons cannot be fully realised within Nature, because it lacks the capacity for human normativity.

What would satisfy the teleological demands of the Idea then? Hegel has an unequivocal answer. Hegelian self-consciousness is the standard by which the demands of the Idea are assessed. Put very briefly, this standard is the capacity for which a specific organism or species of organism is able to achieve and withstand “absolute negation”. That is, how able an agent can “be at home in the other”. Put another way, self-consciousness is a subject's ability to *recognise* another subject:

Ideally, self-consciousness for Hegel is being conscious about oneself *in an object* of consciousness. This—*consciousness of* oneself in objects, or put in another way *conscious-being with* oneself in otherness—is a particular instantiation of the structure of *being with* oneself in otherness. Hegel calls this often also “knowing” (*Wissen*) or “finding” (*finden*) oneself in what is other to oneself. The structure of being, in the more concrete sense of conscious-being, with oneself in objects is on Hegel's account an immanent ideal or norm both for theoretical and practical object-relations.[[42]](#footnote-43)

On Hegel's account, everything within the space of nature achieves some level of recognition or “absolute negation”. Everything is, in some more or less perfect or defective configuration, a unity of both mind and matter. Everything is assessed with respect to how well it satisfies the demands of the Idea, and it turns out that the configuration within the space of nature that best satisfies the standards of the Idea is human inter-subjective recognition. This is how we should understand McDowell's thesis about the unboundedness of the conceptual:

The conceptual is unbounded because reality as the object of cognition is in itself conceptually structured—Nature is the realm of 'objective thoughts'. … Since the “determinations [sc. of the self-consciousness] are no less objective, or determinations of the very being of things, than they are its own thoughts”[[43]](#footnote-44) an immediate epistemological access to reality is guaranteed (although of course error remains possible): In its acts of cognition the subject is directed not towards “mental intermediaries” (Davidson) but towards reality itself which is constituted by the same determinations which structure the cognising activity.[[44]](#footnote-45)

VI Exploring Halbig's Orthodox Hegelian Solution in Contemporary Research

This particular solution to the antinomy within McDowell takes me as far away from McDowell's therapeutic philosophy as one can get. Hegel's epistemology and metaphysics is in no way akin with McDowell's common sense realism, although it does share with it an affinity for direct realism. In the next two thirds of my thesis, I want to explore the possibility of Halbig's orthodox Hegelian solution by comparing it to the work of two other scholars who have dealt with the issue of naturalism and normativity within a post-Kantian context.

A *Joseph Rouse: Concepts as Biological Niche Construction*

The first scholar is Joseph Rouse. Two significant books for Rouse's particular solution to the nature-reason antinomy are their 2002 *How Scientific Practices Matter: Reclaiming Philosophical Naturalism*,[[45]](#footnote-46) and their very recently published *Articulating the World: Conceptual Understanding and the Scientific Image*.[[46]](#footnote-47) I have only read parts of both, but I am able to perform a discussion of the substance of Rouse's views because Rouse has synthesised the upshot of both pillars of their research in a book chapter that deals with the McDowell-Dreyfus debate on the status of non-conceptual content in human understanding.[[47]](#footnote-48)

Rouse has attempted to dismount McDowell's antinomy between nature and reason by transforming our understanding of the natural sciences. Rouse's research attempts to re-enchant our picture of the natural sciences. He suggests that we should think of the human conceptual capacities that we use in language as a form of biological niche construction. The idea should be familiar. All animals develop different capacities and behaviours through evolution, and by doing so species of animals come to possess niche abilities and roles in the ecosystem. Species are thereby able to be characterised by those abilities and capacities. For humans, one significant biological niche that we have developed with respect to our environment and ecosystem is abstract linguistic conceptual capacities. It has transformed the way we reproduce our way of life as a species.

Rouse argues that we should adopt a “bottom-up” strategy when attempting to discover how the space of reasons could be natural:

We should not start, as Brandom and Davidson do, with a distinguishable structure of conceptually articulated thought, and ask how it is effectively and accountably related to an antecedent, causal, or practical-perceptual engagement with the world. The issue is instead to understand how practical-perceptual engagement itself becomes conceptually articulated and thereby contentful.[[48]](#footnote-49)

Rouse argues that there are three aspects that distinguish their strategy of naturalising the space of reasons non-reductively:

The first is to understand organisms teleologically, as directed toward the goal of maintaining and reproducing their characteristic life-cyclical pattern under changing circumstances. [Footnote: Okrent (*Rational Animals*)[[49]](#footnote-50) provides what I take to be a compelling set of arguments for conceiving of biological teleology in terms of goals (acting for the sake of maintaining a self-constitutive pattern) rather than the more familiar treatment in terms of functions.]

Second, that life-cyclical pattern does not distinguish the organism's form of life from its environmental niche, but is instead a unified phenomenon that one might call (by extension from Heidegger) *in-der-Umwelt-Sein* [being-in-the-environment]. Neither an organism's environment, nor its characteristic ways of “being-in” it, can be adequately characterised independently.

Third, I take from Dreyfus and Todes the recognition that practical-perceptual activity has a reflective rather than determinative teleology: its intentional fulfillment would not be a predetermined goal or condition toward which it aims, but is instead an indefinite exploration toward what Dreyfus sometimes calls an “optimal grip”, translating Merleau-Ponty's “maximum prise”.[[50]](#footnote-51)

Rouse is aware of the problems that attach to this particular way of understanding human normativity. Rouse writes: “the worry is that biological normativity or teleology is incapable of articulating conceptual *content*”.[[51]](#footnote-52) In the same breath he quotes John Haugeland:

there can be no biological basis for understanding a system as functioning properly, but nevertheless misinforming. … There is nothing that [a behavioural] response can 'mean' other than whatever *actually* elicits it in normal [organisms] in normal conditions.[[52]](#footnote-53)

Rouse's response to Haugeland on this point is to agree, and ask the transcendental-sounding question, “how [could] the emergence of *discursive* practice from non-discursive activity … make a difference [to the way of life of a species] ?”[[53]](#footnote-54) Rouse points out that part of the problem is that language and conceptual capacities have been traditionally conceived in ways that are abstract and formal, too suited to the purposes and aims of the academy. The mainstream way of dealing with language and conceptual capacities is to imagine them as formalised and disembodied. We need to “understand discursive practice as not merely interrelated with practical-perceptual coping with the world, but to adapt Haugeland's distinction, “intimately” embedded in it”.[[54]](#footnote-55) Again Rouse couches their position in another quote from Haugeland: “the term 'intimacy' … suggests a kind of *commingling* or *integralness* of mind, body, and world – that is, to undermine their very distinctness”.[[55]](#footnote-56)

Rouse outlines three ways in which we could begin overcome the dualism of nature and reason, how we could imagine a human nature that did not rely on the distinction between first nature and second nature, or, in Haugeland's words, how mind, body, and world could be thought to commingle.

The first aspect is that

discursive practice must involve the acquisition and exercise of subtle and difficult practical-perceptual skills. … Wittgenstein said that if a lion could talk, we couldn't understand him; more importantly, we couldn't even *hear* what he was saying (i.e. recognise the semantically significant sonic patterns), let alone be able to roar back. Acquiring language *is* in significant part acquiring a complex orientation and set of ear, tongue, eyes, and body.[[56]](#footnote-57)

The second aspect is that “language use is also thickly embedded in complex social relations”.[[57]](#footnote-58) Rouse asks the reader to consider how even something as basic as naming an object or an agent is a complex social practice that requires great intricacy and social orientation. By contrast, he observes how the academy has “from early Wittgenstein to Kripke, [considered names] as something like tags conventionally connected to objects”.[[58]](#footnote-59) Rouse argues even the simple process of naming “cannot and does not make sense apart from its embeddedness in … 'name-tracking network[s]' of social practices”.[[59]](#footnote-60)

The third aspect is that

learning a first language *is*  learning to get a distinctive practical-perceptual hold on circumstances. We do not first recognise a certain class of circumstances, and then attach words to them. The ongoing practice of using the world is instead part of the circumstances that we learn to negotiate in picking up on a discursive practice.[[60]](#footnote-61)

B *Alison Stone: Nature as Petrified Intelligence*

Despite the improvements Rouse makes on contemporary philosophical naturalist accounts of human normativity, he doesn't fully enchant nature. Rationality remains the preserve of sentient life, and does not encompass all natural forms. For Rouse, it is the organism that practices rational discursive activities, not the environment. This threatens to have the antinomy between nature and reason return. For Rouse, the question is still the same as McDowell—how is it possible for something conceptual and discursive to emerge out of something non-conceptual and non-discursive?

This is why I turn to Alison Stone. Stone takes Halbig's observation about Hegel's metaphysics seriously. Halbig's solution to the McDowellian antinomy was to follow Hegel closely, and hold that in order for the mind to be related to the world, the all of the objects of the world must be “constituted by the same determinations which structure the cognising activity [of the mind]”.[[61]](#footnote-62) This may strike the reader as confusing, but I think we should deny that this amounts to idealism. There is not enough space to argue the point here, but my position which I hope to at least partially address in my thesis is that what Hegel means by “idealism” is merely the process whereby an object presents itself “as an immaterial centre that manifests itself within its outward qualities”.[[62]](#footnote-63) Idealism is a very weak concept, it merely means Hegel's dialectical process: the process whereby content moves through different conceptual forms.

Some comments from a book review of Stone's *Petrified Intelligence: Nature in Hegel's Philosophy*[[63]](#footnote-64) summarise the substance of Stone's full Hegelian enchantment of nature:

Hegel's conception of nature, which entails that natural forms contain internal contradictions (also knowable as inner loci of rationality) that give rise to self-transformation, can better explain the development and dynamism of nature than can the implicit metaphysical view that underpins empirical science, which conceives of natural entities as “bare things” whose behaviour is intrinsically meaningless. Where empirical science explains change in nature by means of external laws (causes), Hegel will explain it through internal rational necessity. Stone argues that this contrast is a much more fundamental one that the traditional view that casts the contrast between Hegel's view and that of empirical science in the terms of teleology versus mechanism. Hegel used the term “petrified intelligence” to refer to the inherent rationality peculiar to nature, which, as Stone shows against critics of the potential anthropomorphism of this claim, is not a consciously rational way of acting.[[64]](#footnote-65)

Stone's reading of Hegel does not simply assert baldly that nature must be enchanted in this way. Stone is able to show, in *Petrified Intelligence*, how it is indeed the case that the alienation and separation that we experience with respect to the world is in some sense real. Hegel is anxious to show that this dualism that we experience between nature and reason is one particular *stage* of rationality that we must overcome. Further, this antinomy between nature and reason depends on higher levels of rational reality. It must be remembered that Hegel's account of the overcoming of the mind-world dualism is a special kind of teleology—lower stages of the overcoming of the dualism are defective, and therefore in Hegel's language “untrue”. But these lower stages are only “untrue” with respect to reality as a whole, they are perfectly real at their own determinate stage of the realisation of the Idea.

For Hegel, this teleology proceeds in two directions. The Hegelian image of a rational process occurring in a circle is a good one to illustrate the point. Nature proceeds towards thought, and thought proceeds towards nature. The same theme occurs within Marxist thought. Gyorgy Lukacs quotes Marx on this point:

“It is not enough that thought should seek to realise itself; reality must also strive towards thought.” Or, as he expresses it in an earlier work: “It will then be realised that the world has long since possessed something in the form of a dream which it need only take possession of consciously, in order to possess it in reality.”[[65]](#footnote-66)

As Stone writes in an earlier article:

According to Hegel, consciousness suffers from an initial contradiction that impels it to proceed through a variety of forms, each necessarily succeeding its predecessor. Importantly, this initial contradiction within consciousness has the same structure as the initial state of division that Hegel discerns within nature, with the result that the entire development within consciousness closely parallels the development within nature.[[66]](#footnote-67)

Stone draws from Hegel's mature *Encyclopedia* system in cashing out this interpretation. I can only be very brief in outlining Stone's interpretation of Hegel. First is the movement from thought towards nature. Put in very simple language, Stone's reading of Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit* is that thought is seeking to be related to objects in the world that it can fully understand. But thought is alienated from the objects of the world. They appear to resist the concepts of thought and present themselves as mere Givens, and therefore appear irrational. At this stage the mind is still passive with respect to worldly content. Hegel argues that by pushing this contradiction to its limits, we find that the object itself must mirror the structure of the mind. Another quote from Stone's earlier article is useful:

The contradiction can only be resolved, Hegel believes, when the ego becomes ware of itself as the active generator of conceptions of objects. This, in turn, can only happen when the ego adopts a conception of objects as exhibiting the same internal constitution as the ego itself; in thinking of objects of this type, the ego becomes conscious, at least implicitly, of its own conception-generating constitution. Specifically, the object resembles the ego when it is conceptualised as an immaterial centre that manifests itself within its outward qualities ... – which for Hegel, amounts to the object's being defined as an organism. The object … provides an inchoate analogue of the ego as that which is manifest within its conceptions insofar as it generates them. The ego is thereupon positioned to recognise its active role and surmount the basic contradiction of consciousness.[[67]](#footnote-68)

The movement from nature to thought is similar. Very briefly, natural kinds are seeking some way to become what Hegel terms “concretely universal”. This is a key component of Hegel's metaphysics. What concrete universality means for natural kinds is that natural kinds are seeking some way to integrate their constituent parts into an organic and stable whole. This can only be achieved by living organisms which possess sentience, and in turn consciousness. Nature develops these forms so that it can become fully rational:

This comparison between Hegel's accounts of the ego's consciousness of a living object and of the really existing living organism reveals the particularly marked similarities between these two accounts. … The ego has at last constructed the concept of a kind of object that shares its own structure; this enables the ego to acknowledge its own conceptualising activity and bring the progression of stages of consciousness to a close. In the natural case, nature has engendered a kind of entity that resolves the antagonism of concept and matter and replicates the unified structure of the logical Idea, thereby realising the Idea's original aim of creating (itself as) an objective world that resembles and embodies it. The developmental trajectories of both consciousness and nature reach their goals, and cease, with the emergence of the living organism.[[68]](#footnote-69)

VII Conclusion

I began by describing the context into which my thesis fits. A certain strand of contemporary analytic philosophy is reacting to a perceived threat of what McDowell calls “bald naturalism”. A common term—one provided by David Macarthur—for this position is Scientific Naturalism. Put very simply, Scientific Naturalism denies the reality and/or autonomy of human value. Scientific Naturalism also makes doing philosophy heavily dependent on the natural sciences. To the Scientific Naturalist, philosophy is not just continuous with the natural sciences. Philosophy is methodologically inferior to natural science, and natural science has both methodological and ontological priority over philosophy. It is not the focus of my thesis to describe, explain and critique the the different ways Scientific Naturalism strives to cash out this position. Nevertheless it is helpful to mention that the three most popular ways of challenging either the legitimacy or autonomy of normativity are reductionism, eliminativism, and nonfactualism.

The aim of my thesis is to critique the approach that some have made to challenging the Scientific Naturalist program. I am also aiming to provide the rough outline of an alternative approach to combating the advance and status quo of Scientific Naturalism. McDowell, Macarthur, and others have tried to rescue the reality and autonomy of human value in philosophy by arguing that the realm of nature isn't exhausted by the realm of law. The natural sciences do not exhaust all that we could call natural. Human value is natural, but not natural scientific.

I argued in my introduction that I find this approach problematic. It leaves Scientific Naturalism unchallenged on its own ground. Liberal Naturalists of the McDowellian or Macarthurian stripe are committed to the reality of a disenchanted nature within certain bounds. In the case of McDowell, this approach leads to a dualism in his “system”. This is the real focus of my thesis. The first task I set out to do in my thesis is discuss and outline McDowell's “system” about how to positively relate the mind and the world together. This includes both McDowell's epistemological argument, which I find persuasive, and his metaphysical argument, which I argue leads to a dualism of nature and reason. The overall upshot of McDowell's system is that in order for the mind to be truly “open” to the world, the content of the world itself must somehow be normative, and open to reasons and rational reflection. The mind cannot be truly in touch with the world

The second task I aim to achieve in my thesis is to discuss and analyse the criticisms that scholars have made about McDowell's metaphysical argument. In particular I agree with the criticisms leveled by Christoph Halbig against it, and I agree with his suggestion of an orthodox Hegelian alternative to McDowell's “system”. I do so because Halbig's orthodox Hegelian alternative overcomes the antinomy within McDowell. With Hegel, nature and reason become fully coextensive and identical with one another. This allows one to make good on the Liberal Naturalist challenge to Scientific Naturalism. A Hegelian approach to Liberal Naturalism rescues the autonomy and reality of normativity by challenging natural science on its own ground. Natural science is not to be viewed as a disenchanted activity revealing a disenchanted world. It is in fact the opposite. Drawing on Hegel allows one to give teeth to the Liberal Naturalist cause, and not leave it as a merely defensive movement, as Sebastian Gardner has argued it is.

The third task I aim to achieve is a reflection of Halbig's criticism and positive Hegelian program into the work of Joseph Rouse and Alison Stone. I do this in an attempt to explore some of the other engagements with the antinomy of nature and reason in the post-Kantian tradition. Rouse's work offers an exciting and appealing attempt to overcome the nature-reason antinomy. Discussing Rouse's work allows me to draw on the most up-to-date and cutting edge natural scientific and philosophical work, and place my thesis in this context. His very recent book *Articulating the World* presents one of the most up-to-date synoptic views of the current state of Liberal Naturalism. Rouse's past work has drawn heavily on McDowell and his other Pittsburgh colleagues, so he is very well versed in the Sellarsian tradition that McDowell works in. As discussed above, Rouse's positive program is to argue that animal, in particular human, conceptual capacities are a form of biological niche construction. This makes Rouse a provisional ally, because Rouse's strategy in dismounting the nature-reason antinomy in McDowell is to re-enchant the natural sciences. Considering this position will allow me to further identify and develop the key issues that are at stake in challenging Scientific Naturalism on its own ground.

The last third of my thesis turns towards the work of Alison Stone. Rouse is unable to fully dismount the nature-reason antinomy because he doesn't fully enchant nature. For Rouse, conceptual capacities remain the preserve of sentient life, of biological agents, and not also their environment. In my consideration of Alison Stone's work, particularly her book *Petrified Intelligence*, I aim to show that there is a very real possibility that we can make good on Halbig's suggestion that we turn to orthodox Hegelianism in order to positively relate the mind to the world. This alternative to both McDowell and Rouse is able to solve the antinomy of nature and reason where they could not, because they refused to fully enchant nature.

Stone performs a careful reconstruction of Hegel's mature system in his *Encyclopedia*. She deems there to be a dual progression within Hegel's *Encyclopedia* between the *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Philosophy of Spirit*. In this movement, nature develops dialectically and historically towards reason in the *Philosophy of Nature*, and the opposite movement happens in the *Philosophy of Spirit*. Crucially, this metaphysics is able to explain and then transcend the alienation we perceive between the natural sciences and human value in Scientific Naturalism. On this account, the disenchanted nature that we have been uncovering in contemporary natural science is a defective version of the really enchanted nature that nature really is. In reality, nature fits into a teleological normative system that considers fully transparent and reflexive inter-subjective reflection and action as the most developed level of organisation that the universe can reach. This is what Hegel means when he says Spirit (inter-subjective recognition) is the truth of Nature.

I argue that it is through Hegelian metaphysics that we can offer up one way completing McDowell's “system”. Drawing on the Hegelianism of Halbig and Stone presents an exciting and refreshing approach to advancing the Liberal Naturalist cause. Up until now Liberal Naturalism has been mostly defensive. It has also conceded a lot of ground to Scientific Naturalism when it really need not have. Stone's work culminates my thesis because it is a particularly path-breaking way of re-conceiving the natural sciences. Although it represents a very radical break with the status quo of how we currently view nature and the natural sciences, I believe it points in the right direction.

If we are to rescue the reality and autonomy of human value, we must absolutely re-enchant nature.

VIII Timetable

There are three major sections to my research. Each section is comprised of two chapters:

1) Discussion of McDowell's “system” and its problems; 2) Rouse's research and its problems; and 3) Stone's orthodox Hegelian view of Nature and how it resolves the problems of McDowell and Rouse.

My plan is to spend six months on each of those sections, leaving a final period of six months in which I will produce a final edit of my writing, and bring my thesis together into a coherent package. This is my proposed timetable:

* **February 2016 – 30 June 2016**
  + Chapter 1: Discussion of McDowell's “positive system”
  + Chapter 2: Discussion of the criticism of McDowell's “system”, in particular Halbig's criticisms
* **July 2016 – 31 December 2016**
  + Chapter 3: Discussion of Rouse's “system” and its potential to solve the nature-reason antinomy within McDowell
  + Chapter 4: Evaluation and criticism of Rouse
* **January 2017– 30 June 2017**
  + Chapter 5: Discussion of Stone's Hegelian picture of Nature, and how it resolves the antinomy of nature and reason
  + Chapter 6: Evaluation of Stone and response to objections
* **July 2017 – December 2017**
  + Edit
  + Consolidate, make coherent.
  + Submit.

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