

Robert BRANDOM,

Professor, University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5478-8567>

HOW TO SYNTHESIZE THE TRADITIONS OF PRAGMATISM AND ANALYTICAL PHILOSOPHY?

Hello everybody. It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to address the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. And it's a particular pleasure to be able to talk about a topic that is near and dear to my heart, the relation between pragmatism and analytic philosophy. In many ways, this has been the topic I've devoted my entire academic career to. It's at the center of my philosophical interests. One measure of that is my doctor fathers at Princeton were Richard Rorty and David Lewis, avatars on the one hand of pragmatism after the linguistic turn and the heights to which analytic philosophy had reached.

I'd like to tell a story of what I see as cumulative progress over the last 300 years. The story would begin with Kant, with what I've called his normative turn. This is the insight that Kant had into the normative character of intentionality or discursiveness. His view of concepts as rules for doing something, namely judging. In particular, Kant had the idea that what distinguishes us as rational beings from everything else is not the presence of some kind of special mind stuff in us. It's not a matter of substance at all. It's a matter of function. Judgments and actions are things that we're in a distinctive sense responsible for. They're exercises of our authority, investing our authority in a thought or in an intention, in a doing. They're commitments of ours. Responsibility, authority, commitment, these are all normative notions. And Kant's idea was that it was

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this deontic or deontological difference between us and it that distinguished minds from matter, not any ontological or substantive distinction.

Many of Kant's most remarkable and characteristic theses are downstream from this normative insight. For instance, where the tradition had started with concepts built up to judgments and then up to inferences or syllogisms, Kant insists that judgment is the minimal unit of discursiveness. And that's because judgments are the minimal unit that we can take responsibility for.

Kant transmuted our thought about ourselves into a normative key. This was his great insight. Concepts, then, are understood as rules, rules for judging, rules that determine what we have made ourselves responsible to and responsible for in judging that things are thus and so.

As I see it, pragmatism is downstream from this normative insight of Kant's. It's something that, it's an insight that has penetrated analytic philosophy only at the edges and largely under the influence of pragmatists. By and large, analytic philosophy never made Kant's normative turn.

When my particular hero and former colleague Wilfred Sellars was asked what he hoped the effect of his work would be, he said he hoped it would move analytic philosophy from its Humean phase to its Kantian phase. And by that he meant, in no small part, to move analytic philosophy into a post-Kantian normative phase. When Rorty was talking about my work, he generously said that my aim was to move analytic philosophy from its Kantian to its eventual Hegelian phase.

And I think of Hegel as having made the second big move in the progressive tradition that I'm rationally, retrospectively reconstructing, sketching here for you. And that move was a social turn and a historical turn. It was the recognition that norms are instituted by social practices and that those practices have a distinctive history.

So Hegel transmuted Kant's normative melody into a social and historical mode. Hegel was, in this regard, the progenitor of American pragmatism. Peirce, above all, was a reader of Kant and of Hegel and took from him this normative lesson, but gave it a particular pragmatic twist or turn.

He said where Kant had thought with the entire tradition since Plato of norms as something that's explicit in the form of principles or rules, something sayable. The pragmatist insight was rather that norms implicit in practices, implicit in what we do, are more conceptually fundamental than the norms that are made explicit in principles or rules.

Dewey, above all, was the one who took this distinction between the implicit and the explicit, between what's to be found in the know-how characteristic of skillful doings as part of the essential background against which alone it's possible to understand the explicit form of norms as rules or principles.

He saw pragmatism as putting these implicit norms, giving them pride of place, giving them explanatory priority over what's explicit. So knowing how over knowing that in Ryle's terms.

I don't think, however, that the classical American pragmatists made what Rorty called the linguistic turn. Language was very important to them. It was one of the pillars of Peirce's work and Dewey has a good deal to say about it. He appreciates language as at the center of culture, the cultivation, the *bildung* that we acquire by coming into language, by having the social practices take the form of discursive social practices. But he did not identify the discursive with the specifically linguistic. The linguistic turn really was characteristic of analytic philosophy, which gave it a particular logistical spin. It's true, but by and large the linguistic turn was a post-pragmatist phenomenon in anglophone philosophy.

I see Rorty and Sellars as principal developers and enthusiasts for pragmatism after the linguistic turn. Pragmatism that would take on board the detailed lessons about the nature of language and logic that analytic philosophy had developed and bring them into a broadly pragmatist way of understanding us as creatures whose natural history revolves around linguistic practices. This was what Rorty aimed to do and it's what, beginning already in my Princeton dissertation in 1976, I set out to think about.

When I did, it seemed to me that Sellars had given us a piece of the puzzle that Rorty never fully appreciated, at least to the extent that I would like to push the point. And that is Sellars suggested that we think about language principally in terms of inference. Think of language as a *practice of giving and asking for reasons*.

Thinking of us as creatures who not only lived and moved and have our being in a normative space of commitments, responsibilities, and so on, but also who live and move and have our being in a space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what we say and do. This inferentialist turn says that what distinguishes specifically linguistic practice is the reason relations of implication and incompatibility that articulate the conceptual contents of our claimables. Understanding the downtown of discursive practice as practices of giving and asking for reasons is a kind of rationalism that is anathema to the later Wittgenstein, for instance, who otherwise made the normative turn, made the social turn, thought of discourse as a matter of normative practice, thought of norms as implicit in social specifically discursive practices.

So Wittgenstein is certainly on the contemporary side of the linguistic turn, but he did not make, as Rorty did not, this inferentialist turn to connect discursive practice to practices of giving and asking for reasons. He famously said that language has no downtown. It's a motley of different practices.

What I'm thinking of as the inferentialist turn that Sellars gave to pragmatism after the linguistic turn is the commitment that, the view that, language does have a downtown and it's the practices of giving and asking for reasons that accepting or rejecting claims in the way that is made explicit in assertions and denials that have propositional content, asserting that things are thus and so or denying that things are thus and so. Those pragmatic significances of speech acts are inseparable from the involvement of those speech acts in chal-

lenging each other's claims by giving reasons against them and justifying or defending those claims by giving reasons for them. Asserting and denying and giving reasons for and against, these are all part of one set of practices.

What I take it we need to synthesize the traditions of pragmatism and analytic philosophy is to appreciate this progression from the Kant's normative turn through Hegel's socializing of that, Hegel's appreciation that normative statuses are social statuses. They're a matter of the role that performances and performers play in the practices of ultimately giving and asking for reasons. That we understand that what distinguishes us from the beasts of the field is our linguistic capacity to entitle ourselves to our commitments, both doxastic and practical, our capacity to entitle ourselves to those commitments by giving reasons for them and to critically assess the goodness of those reasons.

So my picture is that an inferentialist philosophy of language is the natural endpoint of the evolution starting with Kant's insight and modulating that insight in the light of the linguistic turn. My own inclination and philosophical character is towards synthesis. Synthesis of traditions.

We've been talking a little about the synthesis of analytic philosophy with pragmatism. That's the task that my work, making it explicit, aimed to make a contribution to. Synthesizing the analytic tradition with its very sophisticated account of language and linguistic content on the one hand with pragmatism on the other hand.

The particular form that took is offering a normative pragmatic metavocabulary for talking about what we're doing when we say things on the one hand and an inferentialist semantic metavocabulary for talking about what we've said, the contents of our utterances on the other. And in making it explicit I tried to bring these together. That's a way of synthesizing the tradition of analytic philosophy with that of pragmatism.

I've already indicated that I see pragmatism as in effect a form of neo-Kantianism downstream from the German idealists appreciation of the normative character of intentionality or discursiveness and specifically downstream from Hegel's bringing the norms down from the Kantian transcendental heaven of noumenal activity where conceptual norms are instituted for Kant, bringing that down to earth to the earth of actual social practices of human beings. So I see pragmatism and German idealism as tied together in a single tradition. I have an essay called *From German Idealism to American Pragmatism and Back* in which I discuss this.

The end back is because the German idealists did care about giving and asking for reasons specifically for Kant. What we become responsible for in making a claim or performing an action is principally having reasons for it, being able to entitle ourselves to the commitments that we're undertaking in judging or acting intentionally. So there's a space in the German idealist understanding of discursive normativity for the specifically linguistic version of giving and asking for reasons to be filled in.

And again, that's something I'm eager to do. It's important that we do that. But also, I'm concerned to synthesize analytic philosophy with German idealism.

Yes, German idealism given the sort of proto-pragmatic inflection of it that I see Hegel as having given. And that's what I do in my recent big work, *A Spirit of Trust*, that is a reading of Hegel through the lens of pragmatism after the linguistic turn and the advances in the philosophy of language and logic that are the glory of analytic philosophy. The slogan of the neo-Kantians was Kuno Fischer's *Zuruch nach Kant*.

And I think the ultimate reconciliation of contemporary and recent continental philosophy with analytic philosophy, postmodern literary theory with a capital T on the one hand, with the best of contemporary analytic philosophy, I think that reconciliation, that synthesis is going to be achieved by going back to the source, to the fork in the road where the traditions diverged. And that's basically with Hegel, who has been tremendously important in the continental tradition, deservedly so in my opinion, and has been essentially absent from the analytic tradition. The fighting faith of analytic philosophy that Bertrand Russell and G.E. Moore articulated in the early years of the 20th century understands analytic philosophy is essentially a recoil from the version of Hegelianism as British idealism that they were both trained in.

And so analytic philosophy is essentially rejecting Hegel. And I think that's just wrong. Hegel has fascinating and valuable things to say about how we manage to confer determinate content on concepts by using them.

I see Hegel, for instance, as offering a responsive answer to Kripkenstein's concern about how any sequence of actual doings could institute a norm that's binding on cases that have not come up in the actual use of the language so far. Hegel's account of the way in which determinate conceptual contents are shaped by reciprocal recognition in the form of rational recollection, that is the way in which the social and historical dimensions of the articulation of conceptual content combine. This is a responsive answer to an issue of considerable contemporary interest. So I think that to bring continental philosophy and analytic philosophy together, we have to go back and try and understand Hegel. And that's what I do in *A Spirit of Trust*, in German, in *Geistes des Vertrauens*. Zorka has it out.

That's my attempt to point to how this reconciliation can be brought about. Well, that's a very brief, and I'm afraid, breathless summary of how I see these issues. It's been a pleasure to speak to this audience.

In this day of capricious, irrational, and even predatory governments, including mine, let me express a sentiment that I know I share with most of my American fellow citizens. Slava Ukraini!

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