An Idealist Critique of Naturalism

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Abstract

According to many naturalists, our ordinary conception of the world is in tension with the scientific image: the conception of the world provided by the natural sciences. But in this paper, I present a critique of naturalism with precedents in the post-Kantian idealist tradition. I argue that, when we consider our actual linguistic behavior, there is no evidence that the truth of our ordinary judgments hinges on what the scientific image turns out to be like. I then argue that the best explanation of this result is that the norms and presuppositions operating in ordinary discourse are different from the norms and presuppositions operating in scientific discourse. So naturalistic attempts to undermine the manifest image are illegitimate attempts to critique a practice "from the outside."

1   Introduction

According to many naturalists, our ordinary conception of the world is in tension with the scientific image: the conception of the world provided by the natural sciences. For example, it has been argued that the natural sciences undermine our ordinary views of space, of causation, of macroscopic objects, and of human action.

But in this paper, I present a critique of naturalism with precedents in the Kantian and post-Kantian idealist tradition. I argue that, when we consider the actual use of our language, there is no evidence that the truth of our ordinary judgments hinges on what the scientific image turns out to be like (see section 3). I then argue that the best explanation of this result is that

the norms and presuppositions operating in ordinary discourse are different from the norms and presuppositions operating in scientific discourse (see sections 4-5). So naturalistic attempts to undermine the manifest image are illegitimate attempts to critique a practice "from the outside."

I conclude my argument with a discussion of the role of philosophy in reconciling the manifest and scientific images. I argue that, rather than viewing philosophy as continuous with the natural sciences (as many naturalists suppose), we should instead view philosophy as a form of "second-order" enquiry whose task is to identify the different types of norms operating in different areas of our discourse (see 5.1).[1] This discussion will help clarify how the idealist's position differs even from more "liberal" versions of naturalism (see 5.2).[2]

I will begin in section 2 by characterizing the thesis of naturalism more precisely.

2 Preliminaries

In everyday life, we work under a certain conception of the world and our place in it. For example, we ordinarily think of ourselves as inhabiting a world of macroscopic objects. We ordinarily think of ourselves as moving around a vast three-dimensional spatial arena. We ordinarily think of ourselves as causally interacting in certain ways with other persons and objects. I will call this general conception of the world conferred on us by everyday experience the *manifest image*. By contrast, I will call the (allegedly) competing conception of the world provided by the natural sciences the *scientific image*.[3]

Even those of us who are very familiar with the scientific image continue to work under the manifest image in the typical contexts of everyday life—when waiting for the bus, when cooking dinner, when competing at sports, when watching the sun rise, and so on. I will refer to contexts where we work under the manifest image as *manifest contexts*. Aside from contexts where we are reflecting on the scientific image or doing philosophy, almost any context in everyday life qualifies as manifest in this sense.

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[1] See D'Oro, Giladi, & Papazoglou (2016) for discussion.
[2] See, e.g., Macarthur & De Caro (2004) and McDowell (2004).
[3] The terms "manifest image" and "scientific image" are from Sellars (1963), although I use these expressions in a somewhat different way.

I will refer to the judgments we make in such contexts as *manifest judgments*. Examples include: 'There is a cup on the table', 'Suzie tossed the stone and caused the window to shatter', 'The car is ten meters to the right of the tree', etc. In contrast, this category excludes *theoretical judgments* such as 'The table is composed of electrons' and 'The book inhabits a Riemannian spacetime', since these judgments are made in contexts where we are reflecting on the scientific image.

2.1 Naturalism

With the above terminology in place, I will characterize naturalism as follows:

> **Naturalism**: if a manifest judgment J is incompatible with the scientific image, then J is false (at least when J is interpreted in its intuitive sense).[4]

I have included the parenthetical qualification because, instead of simply concluding that manifest judgments are false, some naturalists have responded to conflicts between the manifest and scientific images by offering revisionary accounts of the correctness of our ordinary speech. I will set this complication aside until section 4.

The above thesis is a (tacit) premise in a common form of argument for revisionary metaphysical conclusions:

> **Premise 1**: Manifest judgment J is incompatible with the scientific image.

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[4] This thesis aligns closely with Putnam's (2004, 61) characterization: "what is common to most versions of naturalism is that those conceptual resources and conceptual activities that do not fit into the narrowly scientific first-grade system are regarded as something less than *bona fide* rational discourse."
Because the term "naturalism" has many different senses in the literature, not all philosophers who call themselves "naturalists" will count as such on the usage of this paper. The term "naturalism" is also sometimes used to express a view about philosophical methodology (see, e.g., Macarthur and DeCaro (2004, 3)); I will discuss methodological naturalism in 5.1.

Premise 2: If a manifest judgment *J* is incompatible with the scientific image, then *J* is false.

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Therefore: Manifest judgment *J* is false.

I will call arguments of this form *naturalistic arguments*.

2.2 Examples

For concreteness, it will be useful to consider some specific examples of naturalistic arguments. Because this paper focuses on methodology, it will not be necessary to present these arguments in fine-grained detail. The important point is that, in each case, philosophers appeal to results from the natural sciences to undermine the manifest image.

Example 1: space. Ney (2012) argues that the three-dimensional space presented to us in experience does not exist.[5] Ney's argument assumes *wave function realism*: the view that the wave function is a concretely existing entity living in a concrete infinite-dimensional configuration space. Ney begins by noting that our ordinary spatial dimensions cannot be identified with any of the dimensions of this configuration space (538-540). She then argues, contra Albert & Loewer (1996), that three-dimensional space is not functionally enacted through the behavior of the wave function in configuration space (545-549). So according to Ney, there is no way to functionally identify the three-dimensional space presented in experience with anything in the quantum mechanical world. Because of this failure, she concludes that ordinary three-dimensional space does not exist.

Example 2: causation. Many philosophers have offered naturalistic theories of causation that diverge from our intuitive judgments about when causation occurs. For example, on Aronson's (1971) theory, causation involves the transference of a physical quantity (e.g., momentum, kinetic energy, etc.) from one object to another. On this account, it is false to say that the ice's melting caused the water to cool because energy is actually transferred from the water to the ice.[6] Similarly, on Dowe's (2000) theory,

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[5] Says Ney (2012, 553)"we cannot find our ordinary three dimensions in the world of quantum mechanics." Instead, manifest three-dimensional space is "nothing more than a simulation" and is merely "a mirage" (552).

[6] Says Aronson (1982, 424-425): "Commonsensically, one might wish to say that the ice cubes caused the water to cool. ... [But] the correct description of this case is that in the process of causing the ice to melt, the water gave up some of its heat, i.e., became cooler."

a causal interaction requires an intersection of world lines that involves an exchange of a conserved physical quantity. On this account, it turns out that causation by omission (e.g., 'John's failure to take the medicine caused his illness') is not genuine causation at all (124ff).

Example 3: objects. According to *eliminativist ontic structural realism*, physical objects should be eliminated in favor of an ontology of structures.[7]-Eliminativist ontic structural realism is often motivated as a response to problems relating to the identity and individuality of quantum particles.[8] The nonexistence of microphysical particles is not itself a threat to the manifest image, since microphysical particles are not part of the manifest image. But it is standardly assumed that macroscopic objects (supposing they exist) are composed of microphysical particles. So in this indirect sense, eliminativist ontic structural realism threatens our ordinary belief in a world of macroscopic objects.

Other examples: When specific examples are called for, I will often return to the three examples just described. But philosophers have offered naturalistic arguments in other domains as well, such as secondary quality judgments ('Grass is green')[9], intentional judgments ('John believes that the movie is over', 'John knows that the movie is over')[10], and judgments about human actions ('Evelyn stopped her bike because she believed that the brakes were rubbing').[11]

I note that the thesis of naturalism is indexed to a specific manifest judgment *J*. This opens up conceptual space to endorse naturalism for some manifest judgments but not others. I think the pressures against naturalism apply uniformly across most areas of manifest discourse. But I will not try to establish any such general claim. Instead, one should think

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[7] This version of structural realism is often associated with Ladyman (1998) and French (1999). For example, Ladyman (1998, 420) claims that the predictive success of our theories does not "supervene on the successful reference of theoretical terms to individual entities, or the truth of sentences involving them.'' (See also French (1999, 203). For critical discussion of eliminativist ontic structural realism, see, e.g., Psillos (2001, S22-S23) and Lyre (2004).
I note that not every version of ontic structural realism denies the existence of objects (see Ladyman (2014, section 4) for a useful taxonomy). Indeed, it is possible to interpret French and Ladyman as functionally identifying physical objects with certain types of structures, rather than eliminating them entirely (see French & Ladyman (2003, 37f) for relevant discussion). I consider this type of functionalist proposal in 4.2.

[8] For discussion, see French (1989), Ladyman (1998), French & Ladyman (2003), and French (2010).

[9] See, e.g., Maund (2011).

[10] See, e.g., Churchland (1981), Kornblith (2002).

[11] In particular, many philosophers have argued that explanations of human actions that appeal to reasons are in tension with the types of causal explanations provided by the natural sciences. For discussion, see Hornsby (2001), McDowell (2004), and D'Oro (2012).

of the discussion below as developing a certain *style* of argument that can be used to critique naturalism in any given particular domain.[12]

3   A challenge

In each of the cases in 2.2, the naturalist assumes that the manifest image is "hostage to fortune" in the following sense: if a certain aspect of the manifest image X cannot be fit into the scientific image, then X must be rejected as an illusion or a fiction. But there is a challenge for naturalism: when we consider the actual use of our language, it does not seem that manifest judgments are threatened by the types of evidence that we would expect them to be threatened by if naturalism were true. This can be seen with some examples.

Suppose we become completely persuaded by Ney's arguments that there is no three-dimensional space in the quantum mechanical world. How would this affect our disposition to assert $J_1 \equiv$ 'The book is rectangular' *in manifest contexts*?[13] I submit that, even if we found Ney's arguments completely convincing, we would continue (in manifest contexts—say, when moving furniture) to assert J_1 just as we always had. The same goes for any of our other manifest spatial judgments.

Similarly, suppose we become convinced that the analysis of causation that best aligns with our fundamental physical theories is Aronson's transference account. How would this affect our disposition to assert $J_2 \equiv$ 'The melting ice caused the water to cool' *in manifest contexts*?[14] Just as before, we would continue (in manifest contexts—say, when swimming in a cold lake) to assert J_2 just as we always had. The same goes for any other robust causal judgment we make in manifest contexts.

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[12] I think the critique is plausible for all of the domains mentioned above. In contrast "theoretical judgments" ('The electron's wave function collapsed 10 seconds ago'), judgments about laws of nature, and "derivatively theoretical judgments" ('Schmidt is tall', where 'Schmidt' refers to the discoverer of the muon) fall outside the scope of the thesis of naturalism, since none of these judgments plausibly count as manifest. For simplicity, I will ignore judgments involving indexicals, demonstratives, and deferential terms (e.g., a term 'Neptune*' stipulated to refer to whatever astronomers refer to when they use the term 'Neptune') in the discussion ahead.

[13] According to Ney (2012), judgments like J_1 are false (at least when speaking strictly). Says Ney: "I am not arguing that on a straightforward, ontological reading of realist versions of quantum mechanics that there are not rocks. … However, I claim that this does not imply that there is anything that is genuinely rock-shaped" (550).

[14] Recall that J_2 is false (at least when speaking strictly) on Aronson's account—see 2.2.

Similarly, suppose we are completely persuaded by the eliminativist ontic structural realist's arguments against the existence of physical objects. How would this affect our disposition to assert $J_3 \equiv$ 'The bus will arrive soon' in manifest contexts? Just as before, I submit that it would make no difference. We would continue to make judgments about ordinary objects even after accepting eliminativist ontic structural realism.

The above examples raise a challenge for the naturalist. Ordinarily, when we receive evidence E that contravenes our judgment that P, we abandon our judgment that P . But even if we were completely convinced by the naturalist's arguments, we would continue making manifest judgments just as we did before (at least when in manifest contexts). (To be sure, we revise our manifest judgments in response to receiving more *ordinary* evidence all the time; for example, we would abandon our judgment J_3 upon learning that, in fact, the bus had just run out of fuel. The challenge for naturalism arises from the fact that we would continue making manifest judgments even after accepting the contravening *naturalistic arguments*.)

I will consider some responses to the challenge that are consistent with naturalism in section 4. But before presenting these responses, I will first address a possible *dissolution* of the challenge.

3.1   Different ontological levels?

The challenge assumes that there are cases where the scientific and manifest images conflict. But some philosophers reject this assumption. For example, some philosophers claim that, while the natural sciences describe reality at a (comparatively) fundamental level, our manifest judgments describe reality at a less fundamental level. So the two do not really conflict:

> "...many philosophers now would acknowledge that the world may be described at many 'different levels.' This opens the possibility that characterizing the qualitative world we encounter in experience, the colours and shapes, the beach ball on the sand, and so on, is simply a matter of saying how things are 'at a different level' than the level of description used by the physicist." (Campbell & Cassam (2014, 3))

While this "layered reality view" may be plausible in certain cases, I do not think it is successful as a general strategy for reconciling the scientific and manifest images. This is because, at least in certain cases, results from the natural sciences seem to conflict with the manifest image even at non-fundamental levels of reality.

For example: on our manifest conception, space and time are objectively independent dimensions of reality, each with its own qualitative nature. But from special relativity, we know that the division of spacetime into spatial and temporal dimensions is relative to an observer's state of motion. This result seems to undermine our manifest conception of space at *any* level of reality.[15]

Rather than assess the layered-reality approach on a case-by-case basis, I will restrict attention to examples where the scientific and manifest images genuinely conflict—*whatever these cases turn out to be*. It is these cases that generate the challenge of section 3. My assumption that there *are* cases where the images genuinely conflict is entirely appropriate since it is an assumption that proponents of naturalistic arguments all accept. Indeed, with this assumption, I am conceding the first premise of a naturalistic argument (see 2.1). But I will argue that the naturalist is mistaken in thinking that the proper response to such conflict is to reject the manifest image as an illusion or a fiction.

4   Naturalist proposals

Naturalists claim that the scientific image undermines certain aspects of the manifest image. But not every naturalist believes that the proper response to these results is to abandon our ordinary patterns of speech. Recognizing the practical utility of our manifest discourse, some naturalists have offered revisionary accounts of the correctness of our manifest judgments. By "revisionary," I mean that these accounts do not interpret our manifest judgments in their most intuitive sense.[16]

If such accounts are available, then the cases of section 3 may not seem so troubling. But in this section, I will argue that these accounts do not provide a satisfactory response to the challenge to naturalism.[17]

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[15] See Thompson (2013, 170) for discussion.

[16] The availability of these accounts explains the need for the parenthetical qualification in the thesis of naturalism (see 2.1).

[17] There are two ways to interpret the proposals in this section. On a *hermeneutic* interpretation, the proposals describe our manifest discourse even prior to subjects accepting a given naturalistic argument. On a revolutionary interpretation, subjects would decide to adopt the proposal in question *after* accepting the naturalistic argument.

A problem with the revolutionary interpretation is that, while we can certainly imagine subjects deciding to adopt a revisionary semantic account, we can also imagine subjects who would simply revert to their manifest discourse without making any such decision. So the revolutionary interpretation does not seem to provide a general response to the challenge. For this reason, I focus on the hermeneutic interpretation in the discussion below. (I raise an additional problem with the revolutionary interpretation in fn. 28.)

4.1 Paraphrases

Many naturalists have argued that manifest judgments are correctly assertible because they *paraphrase* naturalistically-acceptable sentences. According to this approach, the surface structure of manifest discourse does not correspond to its true logical form. As an example of this approach, Dowe (2000, ch. 7) paraphrases sentences apparently describing causation by omission. In this example, Dowe uses the predicate 'cause*' to distinguish causation-by-omission from *real* (i.e., scientifically-respectable) causation:

(I) 'Not-*A* caused* *B*' is true if

    (O1) *B* occurred and *A* did not, and there occurred an x such that

    (O2) *x* caused *B*, and

    (O3) if *A* had occurred then *B* would not have occurred, and there would have been a causal relation between *A* and the process due to *x*, such that either

        (i) A is a causal interaction involving the causal process *x*, or

        (ii) A causes *y*, a causal interaction involving the causal process *x*

As a second example of how this approach might work, van Inwagen (1990, ch. 10) paraphrases sentences apparently mentioning ordinary objects in terms of sentences describing fundamental particles:

(II) 'There is a chair' is true iff there are particles arranged chair-wise.

One worry for the above proposals is that systematic paraphrases of ordinary forms of discourse have proven very difficult to come by. For example, to criticize (II), Uzquiano (2004) observes that there are object judgments that *themselves* involve plural quantification (e.g., 'There are some chairs in the kitchen'). But according to Uzquiano, there is no way to systematically paraphrase such sentences using the device of plural

quantification. Similarly, Jago & Barker (2012, 128) argue that Dowe's paraphrase in (I) is unable to account for cases of negative causation involving preemption.

But even if we set these technical issues aside, there are two more basic worries. First: paraphrase accounts seriously undermine our semantic self-understanding of our manifest discourse.[18] For example, according to (II), the expression 'the chair' does not have a referential semantic role. But we ordinarily consider 'the chair' to be a paradigmatic example of a referring expression.

Second: paraphrases seem *irrelevant* to explaining the correctness of our manifest discourse. As I mentioned, it is controversial whether there are naturalistically-acceptable paraphrases of our manifest discourse. But does it really matter how this controversy is settled? No: we would continue engaging in manifest discourse even if no paraphrase was forthcoming. This shows that the correctness of our manifest discourse does not depend on paraphrases, and therefore that paraphrases do not really explain the correctness of manifest discourse

Berkeley (1948, 231) said: "What a jest is it for a philosopher to question the existence of sensible things, till he hath it proved to him from the veracity of God; or to pretend our knowledge in this point falls short of intuition or demonstration!" A similar point applies in the current context. We do not need to wait for some naturalistically-acceptable paraphrase in order to engage in manifest discourse. Nor need we even *expect* that some naturalistically-acceptable paraphrase is forthcoming. Our manifest discourse seems fine enough either way.

4.2   Functional identification

According to proponents of functional identification, the proper response to the scientific image is not to claim that the objects and properties of the manifest image do not exist; instead, it is to claim that these items have a different nature than we originally thought. In particular, manifest objects and properties should be identified with whatever items fill the corresponding functional roles in the scientific image. (Compare: it is commonly thought that water is identical to whatever chemical turns out to fill the water-role in our actual environment, which, as it happens, turns out to be H_2O.)

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[18] Of course, it is possible for our semantic self-understanding to be wrong. But so long as linguistic evidence does not conflict with it, it is desirable to respect our semantic self-understanding.

I will illustrate this proposal with the case of macroscopic objects. Wilson (2011, 373-374) claims that the quantum measurement problem undermines our ordinary conception of objects. But instead of denying that objects exist, Wilson identifies a given object with a fusion of ordered pairs <b,a>, where b is a branch of the Everettian multiverse and a is a pointlike part of that branch. Similarly, Wallace (2003) believes that quantum mechanics undermines the basic idea that there are self-subsisting, space-filling entities like those presented in experience. But instead of denying that objects exist, Wallace identifies objects with patterns in the properties of the quantum state (99). Similar proposals have been offered for other aspects of the manifest image.[19]

Unlike paraphrases, functional identification preserves the apparent logical form of our manifest judgments. But the approach faces two shortcomings. First: at least in certain cases, functional identification conflicts with our semantic self-understanding. For example, when we use the expression 'the chair', we clearly do not intend to refer to a complex set-theoretic item or a pattern of relations. We mean to refer to items that are concrete, that are located in space and time, that have certain vivid color properties, and so on. But sets and patterns meet few, if any, of these conditions. Indeed, sets and patterns are not even of the right ontological category. So, at least in the case of macroscopic objects, functional identification does not seem like a plausible response.[20]

Second: functional identification seems irrelevant to explaining the correctness of our manifest discourse. There is no guarantee that the natural sciences will yield suitable items to functionally identify with the objects and properties of the manifest image.[21] But either way, it makes no difference. Suppose it turns out that no functional identification is available. No matter—we would continue to engage in manifest discourse all the same. This shows that the correctness of manifest discourse does not depend on functional identifications. So the current proposal does not provide the real explanation of why we would continue to make manifest judgments.

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[19] For example, Chalmers (2012, 7.5) identifies spatial properties with whatever properties normally cause our spatial experiences. Similarly, Arpaly & Schroeder (2014, ch. 6) identify the desire that *P* with whatever state causes the motivational, emotional, and cognitive effects associated with intrinsically desiring that *P*; they claim that this state turns out to be a state of the brain's reward system. At least in certain cases, it is not clear that functional identification is available. For example, Ney (2012) disputes the claim that functional identification is available for spatial properties (see 2.2).

[20] This criticism may not apply to all cases of functional identification; for example, it is not as clear that a functionalist account of desire (*cf.* Arpaly & Schroeder (2014) conflicts with our semantic self-understanding. See D'Oro (2012, 217) for related discussion.

[21] See Ladyman & Ross (2007, 254): "We take it to be an empirical question for any particular common-sense object whether it [can be fit into the quantum world], and so eliminativism … cannot be ruled out *a priori*."

4.3 Fictionalism[22]

As I will use the term, fictionalism encompasses views on which the claims made within manifest discourse do not aim at the literal truth but instead involve fiction, pretense, or non-literal speech. Fictionalism provides explanation of the phenomenon discussed in section 3: while our manifest judgments are literally false, we continue making such judgments because we are merely pretending or speaking non-literally. Still, there are two independent problems for fictionalism.

One worry is that the standard types of evidence that indicate fictional or non-literal speech are absent in typical manifest discourse. For example, if a speaker says "I have butterflies in my stomach," and a child asks "How do you know that they aren't moths?", the original speaker will retract her original assertion and will explain that she was not speaking literally.[23] The same goes for all other clear cases of non-literal or fictional discourse. But in typical manifest contexts, speakers have no inclination to retract their manifest judgments in response to questions like "Is there *really* a chair?" or "Did the ice *really* cause the water to cool down?"

In addition, fictionalism seriously conflicts with self-understanding of the distinction between fictional and non-fictional discourse. As the terms 'fictional' and 'non-fictional' are actually used, they mark a clear distinction between judgments like 'Romeo loved Juliet' and judgments like 'There is a bicycle' (when, e.g., one is pointing to a bicycle). So any theory on which *all* of our manifest discourse counts as fictional is simply failing to use the terms 'fictional' and 'non-fictional' with their ordinary meanings.[24]

4.4 Summary

In this section, I considered three ways the naturalist might respond to the challenge of section 3. I think that each of these responses deserves fuller discussion. Nonetheless, I hope to have provided some reasons why these proposals are less than fully satisfying. In some cases, the proposals seem *irrelevant* to explaining the correctness of our manifest discourse in the examples of section 3. And in some cases, the proposals seriously conflict with our semantic self-understanding of our manifest discourse.

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[22] This section parallels Smithson (manuscript a, 4.3).
[23] See Burgess & Rosen (2002, 532-534) for discussion.
[24] Similar remarks apply to views on which manifest judgments involve pretense or non-literal speech.

The naturalist might reply that, even if the above accounts have shortcomings, we have no choice but to accept one of them because revisionary semantic accounts are our only options. But in the next section, I will present an attractive alternative.

5   A critique of naturalism

I think that what the section 3 examples really show is that the naturalist is simply mistaken in supposing that the truth of our manifest judgments hinges on what the scientific image turns out to be like. The real explanation of these examples is that, in any manifest context, we do not care about the scientific image. Indeed, we ordinarily go on in complete *indifference* to the scientific image. But if this is correct, why would we ever think that our manifest judgments are threatened by results about the scientific image in the way that naturalists suppose?

In trying to fit our manifest judgments into the scientific image, naturalists suppose that our manifest judgments are something like primitive scientific hypotheses, subject to the canons of scientific rationality. But manifest judgments could only be subject to the norms of scientific inquiry if we cared about those norms in manifest contexts. But we don't: our aims and interests in everyday life are different than our aims and interest when doing science. And this can be seen from the fact that we are not responsive to the same types of evidence in manifest contexts that we are responsive to in scientific contexts.

The naturalist assumes that all areas of our language must be governed by one set of norms: the norms that govern natural scientific discourse. But the section 3 examples show that, in fact, our language can operate under different norms in different contexts. So to use Carnapian language, the naturalist makes the mistake of trying to critique a linguistic practice "from the outside." Or to use Kantian language, the naturalist makes the mistake of applying the norms and presuppositions guiding one area of inquiry to some other area outside their proper sphere.[25]

A question remains: if manifest discourse and scientific discourse are governed by different sets of norms, why does it intuitively *seem*—at least to many of us—that the scientific image threatens our manifest judgments? I think this reaction is explained by the fact that we—or those

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[25] What exactly *are* the norms governing manifest discourse and how are they different from the norms governing natural scientific discourse? It is outside the scope of this paper to address this question, but I offer proposals for how we ought to understand manifest discourse about ordinary objects and causation in Smithson (manuscripts a, b).

of us initially sympathetic to naturalism—have false theoretical beliefs about the semantic role of our manifest judgments.[26] We may initially retract these judgments in response to naturalistic arguments because we assume that manifest judgments must fit into the scientific image of the world. But the fact that we return to our manifest discourse shows that this naturalistic assumption is mistaken. When doing philosophy, we often treat our manifest discourse as if it were some kind of primitive scientific theory. So, when our manifest discourse fails to respect the canons of scientific rationality, we are tempted to conclude that it is defective. But in manifest contexts, we are not acting as scientists; we act with a very different set of interests and concerns.[27]

(Of course, we can imagine communities where subjects *do* care about the scientific image when making manifest judgments. For example, we can imagine a community where subjects permanently abandon talk of ordinary objects after learning about quantum mechanics. But this community is very different from our own community.)[28]

5.1 An idealist critique

In addition to endorsing the metaphysical thesis in 2.1, naturalists typically endorse the following methodological view on the relation between philosophy and the natural sciences:

Methodological Naturalism: Philosophy ought to be methodologically continuous with the natural sciences.[29]

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[26] *Cf.* Macarthur & De Caro (2004, 29) on "our tendencies to reflectively distort our lives in thought."

[27] *Cf.* Macarthur & De Caro (2004, 16): "all attempts to reduce, eliminate or re-conceive [manifest] concepts in terms of some supposedly more scientifically legitimate notions do not just fail—they entirely miss the kind of importance these notions have in our lives and experiences."

[28] I have argued in this section that, in manifest contexts, subjects go on in complete indifference to the scientific image. For this reason, I think that all linguistic dispositions that actually matter to the everyday use of our manifest judgments remain the same even after accepting evidence that—according to the naturalist—threatens the manifest image. This is a second reason why I do not think revolutionary versions of naturalist proposals (see fn. 16) are convincing responses to the challenge.

[29] See Papineau (2015, 2.1): "philosophy and science are engaged in essentially the same enterprise, pursuing similar ends and using similar methods''.

This methodological assumption shapes the naturalist's philosophical response to discrepancies between the manifest and scientific images. In viewing philosophy as methodologically continuous with the natural sciences, the naturalist views the philosophical task presented by these discrepancies as one of investigating whether the manifest image can be accommodated *within* the scientific image.

But in this paper, I have worked under a different conception of the relation between philosophy and the natural sciences. I have not tried to argue that the manifest image can somehow be fit within the world described by the natural sciences. Instead, my philosophical project has been to examine the norms and presuppositions operating in different areas of our discourse in order to show that the scientific image cannot undermine our manifest judgments.

I call the critique of naturalism developed in this paper "idealist" because of its metaphilosophical precedents in the Kantian and post-Kantian idealist tradition. According to this tradition, the task of philosophy is "to make explicit the heuristic principles at work in different forms of enquiry" (D'Oro, Giladi, & Papazoglou (2016)). By contrasting the types of evidence that subjects are responsive to when engaging in different forms of discourse, my critique identifies a specific method for determining when two areas of discourse operate under competing norms.

5.2 The idealist critique vs. liberal naturalism

In recent years, certain "liberal naturalists" have argued that the manifest and scientific images do not conflict in the way that naturalistic arguments suppose. Liberal naturalists adopt a more expansive view of the scientific image that subsumes certain aspects the manifest image.[30] In this section, I will contrast the idealist's critique of naturalistic arguments with the liberal naturalist's critique. Recall from 2.1 that naturalistic arguments have the following form:

> **Premise 1**: Manifest judgment J is incompatible with the scientific image.
> **Premise 2**: If a manifest judgment J is incompatible with the scientific image, then J is false.
> —
> **Therefore**: Manifest judgment J is false.

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[30] For discussion, see Hornsby (2001), Macarthur & De Caro (2004), De Caro & Voltolini (2010), Papazoglou (2012), and Giladi (2014).

I think that liberal naturalists are best interpreted as accepting premise 2 while denying premise 1. In accepting premise 2, liberal naturalists accept the metaphilosophical presuppositions of naturalism: that the task for philosophy is to investigate how the manifest image fits into the world described by the natural sciences. But in rejecting premise 1, the liberal naturalist disagrees with the proponent of naturalistic arguments over whether the manifest and scientific image are in competition. According to liberal naturalists, naturalistic arguments fail to appreciate the ways in which the concepts of manifest discourse are indispensable to the practice of science.[31] So liberal naturalists claim that using results from the natural sciences to subvert the manifest image is self-undermining. Instead, the scientific image should be regarded as subsuming (certain aspects of) the manifest image.

By contrast, the idealist accepts premise 1 but denies premise 2. In accepting premise 1, the idealist concedes that (in at least certain cases) the manifest and scientific images genuinely conflict. But by rejecting premise 2, the idealist denies that the proper response to this conflict is to view manifest discourse as defective. This is because the idealist rejects the naturalist's metaphilosophical assumption that the task for philosophy is to show how and whether the manifest image can be fit into the scientific image.

While I think that the liberal naturalist's critique is interesting and important, I think that the idealist's critique has a distinctive advantage: it is able to account for why naturalistic arguments can often seem genuinely persuasive. I think that there are certain cases where it really *does* seem to us that the manifest and scientific images conflict. For example, when we reflect on the conception of space provided by special relativity, we—or many of us—have the intuitive reaction that external space is very different from how it manifestly seems to us (see 3.1 for discussion).

I think this type of case reveals that there is at least a sense in which the scientific and manifest images really can conflict. We might capture this sense as follows: it is impossible (or at least very difficult) for a subject to work under the scientific and manifest images at the same time. In particular: in contexts where we are working under the scientific image, the manifest image strikes us as a false (or at least an unnatural) way of describing the world. If this were not the case, naturalistic arguments such as those in 2.2 would never have had any persuasive force to begin with. The distinctive advantage of idealism is that it can acknowledge this sense in which the scientific and manifest images genuinely seem to conflict.

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[31] See Macarthur (manuscript) for discussion.

Indeed, such conflict is not at all surprising to the idealist, who claims that different norms are operative in manifest and scientific contexts.[32]

We have an antinomy. On the one hand, there seem to be cases where the scientific and manifest images are incompatible. On the other hand, there does not seem to be anything defective about our manifest discourse. The idealist respects both aspects of this antinomy by distinguishing the norms operative in manifest and scientific discourse. Like the liberal naturalist, the idealist recognizes that our ordinary patterns of speech are perfectly fine as they are. But like the proponent of naturalistic arguments, the idealist acknowledges that our everyday conception of the world is incompatible (in the sense described above) with the conception of the world provided by the natural sciences.

I will conclude this section by considering some objections.

5.3   Objection 1: an illegitimate focus on language

In this paper, I have appealed to results about the contrasting norms governing manifest and scientific discourse in order to critique the thesis of naturalism. But some philosophers may object to drawing conclusions about the legitimacy of the manifest image from results about language.

For example, it is sometimes emphasized that metaphysical theories are not about the use of our linguistic expressions; instead, they are about what is *out in the world*. But if this claim is taken to imply that we can simply ignore how our manifest discourse is used, it is too simplistic. This is because the use of our manifest discourse acts as a *constraint* on metaphysical theorizing. If a theory T is incompatible with the use of an expression like 'table', T is simply failing to talk about *tables* (the things we care about in everyday life). And any philosopher defending T would simply be changing the subject.[33]

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[32] For related discussion, see D'Oro's (2017) discussion of Collingwood's idealist metaontology. According to D'Oro, one major advantage of idealism is its ability to explain why, even if there is no competition between the scientific and manifest images, there can still be conflict between them (in the sense that both images cannot be endorsed at the same time).

[33] Compare to Schaffer's (2004) analogous response to philosophers who would disregard the use of the term 'cause'. Schaffer imagines a philosopher who claims: "The nature of causation is being over a mile apart, and no mere human ... concepts can affect this" (207). It is clear that, whatever else we might say about it, this theory does not deserve to be called a theory of causation. This is because the theory has nothing to do with how the term 'cause' is actually used.

Alternatively, one might claim that our metaphysical theories need not consider the *actual* use of manifest judgments; instead, they need to consider how subjects *should* use these judgments. For example, one might argue that failing to modify one's manifest discourse in response to naturalistic arguments merely betrays a failure of imagination or a failure of nerve.

While this objection is interesting, I doubt that there is any viable way to understand the normative force of the 'should' in this objection. I have argued that, in manifest contexts, we do not *care* about the scientific image of the world. But then, given these interests and concerns, it is difficult to see why we should use manifest discourse differently than we actually do.

5.4 Objection 2: theoretical judgments

The idealist claims that, because of a difference in the norms governing manifest and scientific discourse, the scientific image cannot undermine our manifest conceptual scheme. For this reason, one might worry that the idealist privileges the epistemic credentials of manifest judgments over science.

This worry is misguided for two reasons. First: it is a mistake to view the manifest image as a "pre-scientific" image of the world. As Sellars (1963, section 2) discusses, there are many ways in which scientific results increase our understanding of the world *within* the manifest image (as opposed to undermining the manifest image itself).[34]

Second: the idealist need not (and should not) deny any of the deliverances of the natural sciences.[35] Her only disagreement with the naturalist is over the claim that the scientific image can undermine our manifest conceptual scheme.

Nonetheless, one might worry that the denial of this claim is *itself* in conflict with scientific practice. For example, scientists *themselves* sometimes make pronouncements that are directly in tension with the

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[34] For a simple example, consider the radial-velocity method for detecting distant planets. On this method, scientists use spectrometers to measure the light frequencies emitted by a distant star. If there are periodic shifts in these frequencies, this indicates that there is an orbiting planet gravitationally influencing the star. This kind of result does not undermine the manifest image; it simply increases our knowledge of the manifest world.

[35] Relatedly, the idealist can and should *accept* that the natural sciences provide causal explanations of manifest phenomena.

manifest image (e.g., $T_1 \equiv$ 'Objects are not really colored').[36] This example seems to show that fundamental physics *can* undermine the manifest image. And if the idealist denies these "theoretical judgments," how can she claim that her position respects the scientific image?

Response: In some cases, a theoretical judgment T_i may have no real role within actual scientific practice.[37] In such cases, the idealist should indeed reject T_i, while also giving an explanation of why T_i may have *seemed* correct. The idealist will claim that this mistake is the natural result of confusion about the semantic role of manifest discourse. For example: if we (tacitly) assume naturalism, and physics does not discover any properties that are like manifest colors, then it is natural to conclude that $T_1 \equiv$ 'Objects are not really colored'. But once we reject naturalism, we realize that it is a mistake to try to fit manifest colors into the scientific image in the first place.

In other cases, T_i may actually be an established part of scientific discourse. In such cases, the above response faces a difficulty. Suppose we grant that different norms and presuppositions operate in scientific and manifest discourse. Even so, it is not obvious that there is any reason for scientists to abandon the judgment T_i while in scientific contexts. On the present assumption, T_i is an established part of the linguistic framework of scientific inquiry, a framework that does not seem to have held back scientific inquiry in any way. So why change? Unless there is some reason *internal to science* for abandoning this way of speaking, I doubt that there is any *philosophical* reason for scientists to alter their discourse.[38]

If this is correct, then instead of denying T_i, the idealist should instead adopt a semantic account on which this judgment is true in scientific contexts. But in accepting the truth of judgments like T_i in *scientific*

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[36] For example, the cognitive scientist S. K. Palmer (1999, 99) writes: "People universally believe that objects look colored because they are colored, just as we experience them. The sky looks blue because it is blue, grass looks green because it is green, and blood looks red because it is red. As surprising as it may seem, these beliefs are fundamentally mistaken. Neither objects nor lights are actually 'colored' in anything like the way we experience them. Rather, color is a psychological property of our visual experiences when we look at objects and lights, not a physical property of those objects or lights."

[37] For example, Thomasson (2001, 141-142) denies that judgments about ordinary objects are actually a part of scientific discourse. This view is shared by Stebbing (1958, 58), who says: "I venture to suggest that it is as absurd to say that there is a scientific table as to say that there is a familiar electron or a familiar quantum."

[38] According to Carnap (1950, sections 2-3), we cannot show that the judgments within a certain practice are false from a standpoint external to the practice. At most, we can argue that our interests would be better served by adopting some other practice. In the current case, I am suggesting that there may be no reasons why science would be better served by refraining from theoretical judgments like T_1.

contexts, we need not also accept that the truth of judgments made in *manifest* contexts hinges on what the scientific image turns out to be like.

6 Further methodological lessons

I will conclude this paper by discussing some methodological implications of the above discussion.

6.1 Naturalism and common sense

Some philosophers think that common sense should have no role in philosophical theory choice. Says Sider (2013, 10):

> "…there is no independent reason to think that common sense is reliable about whether there exist tables and chairs as opposed to there merely existing suitably arranged particles. Our forebears presumably did not even consider the latter possibility. … The Mooreanism I oppose says that we should trust common sense even in the absence of independent reason to think that it is reliable. And that seems no better than the absurd: 'believe the masses...'"

Other philosophers are inclined to afford common sense at least some measure of respect. But even among this group, it is often thought that common sense can be abandoned if the theoretical utility is great enough.[39]

One reason this view may seem plausible is that, in many cases, common sense *has* been mistaken. For example, at least at some point, common sense held that the earth was flat. So, it might be argued, we should not automatically rule out a naturalistic theory T simply because it conflicts with common sense.

While it is true that we can receive evidence that undermines our common sense judgments, the above argument fails to recognize that this evidence must be of a *certain type*. Suppose, for example, that a subject *S* asserts

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[39] For endorsement of this stance, see, e.g., Merricks (2001, 24), Paul & Hall (2013, 40-41), and Rinard (2013, 40-41).

'That table is brown'. There are various types of evidence that would cause S to revise this judgment. For example, she might realize that the table only looked brown because of a trick of the light. Or she might remember that she took hallucinogenic drugs that affect her color vision. But there are other kinds of evidence that would *not* cause S to revise her judgment. For example, I claimed in section 3 that S would not (permanently) revise her judgment in response to arguments for eliminativist ontic structural realism.

I have argued that the explanation of this behavior is that our interests and concerns in everyday life are different from our interests and concerns when engaged in natural scientific inquiry (see section 5). So while it is true that our manifest judgments—even common sense ones—can be mistaken, it does not follow that these judgments can be undermined in the specific ways that naturalists suppose. Looking to fundamental physics to determine whether tables exist is just as misguided as looking to fundamental physics to determine whether unmarried males are bachelors or whether 2+2=4.

6.2   "Vindicating" the manifest image

Throughout this paper, I have considered examples where naturalists have appealed to the scientific image to undermine our manifest judgments. But there are also cases where theorists have appealed to the scientific image to *vindicate* our manifest judgments. As an example, Sider (2013, section 11) considers (although does not endorse) an argument that appeals to results from general relativity to support the conclusion that composite entities (such as regions of space) exist.[40]

While this argument does not attempt to undermine our manifest judgments, it still assumes that the truth of our manifest judgments hinges on facts about what the scientific image turns out to be like.[41]

But according to the idealist, naturalistic attempts to vindicate the manifest image are just as misguided as attempts to undermine it. When we

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[40] Specifically, the argument is that, because our best physical theories quantify over certain composite entities (such as paths and regions), we ought to include such items in our ontology.

[41] One complicating factor is that Sider is investigating the question of whether composite entities exist *fundamentally*, and Sider is agnostic about whether ordinary existence equates with fundamental existence (see Sider (2013, section 3) for discussion). I think the idealist critique of naturalism can be extended to critique naturalistic arguments for and against the *fundamental* existence of items from manifest ontology. But in the present context, I will set fundamental existence aside and will suppose that the argument considered by Sider is an argument for the ordinary existence of composite entities.

consider the actual use of our language, there is no evidence that our manifest judgments are threatened in the way that Sider's argument supposes. These judgments would be true even if they turned out to be *incompatible* with the scientific image. Naturalistic attempts to vindicate the manifest image are tilting at windmills: they defend manifest judgments from possibilities that were never a threat to begin with.

7   Conclusion

I have argued that our manifest discourse cannot be undermined by the scientific image in the way that naturalists suppose. The scientific image could have authority over our manifest discourse only if we cared about the canons of scientific rationality in manifest contexts. But we don't: in everyday life, we have a very different set of interests and concerns. So I have argued that manifest discourse operates under different norms and presuppositions than scientific discourse.

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