12 Categories and Noumena

Two Kantian Axes of Sellars' Thought

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PART I: ON THE WAY TO A PRAGMATIST THEORY OF THE CATEGORIES

1. Introduction

Several decades ago, Richard Rorty suggested that philosophical admirers of Wilfrid Sellars could be divided into two schools, defined by which of two famous passages from his masterwork *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* are taken to express his most important insight:

> In the dimension of describing and explaining the world, science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not.
>
> (§41)

or

> [In] characterizing an episode or a state as that of *knowing,* we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says.
>
> (§36)[1]

The first passage, often called the "*scientia mensura,*" expresses a kind of scientific naturalism. Its opening qualification is important: there are other discursive and cognitive activities besides describing and explaining. The second passage says that characterizing something as a knowing is one of them. And indeed, Sellars means that in characterizing something even as a believing or a believable, as conceptually contentful at all, one is doing something other than describing it. One is placing the item in a normative space articulated by relations of what is a reason for what. Meaning, for him, is a normative phenomenon that does not fall within the descriptive realm over which natural science is authoritative.

Rorty called those impressed by the scientific naturalism epitomized in the *scientia mensura* "right-wing Sellarsians" and those impressed by the normative nonnaturalism about semantics expressed in the other passage "left-wing Sellarsians." Acknowledging the antecedents of this usage, he used to express the hope that right-wing and left-wing Sellarsians would be able to discuss their disagreements more amicably and irenically than did the right-wing and left-wing Hegelians, who, as he put it, "eventually sorted out their differences at a six-month-long seminar called 'the Battle of Stalingrad.'" According to this botanization, I am, like my teacher Rorty and my colleague John McDowell, a left-wing Sellarsian, by contrast to such eminent and admirable right-wing Sellarsians as Ruth Millikan, Jay Rosenberg, and Paul Churchland.

While I think Rorty's way of dividing things up is helpful, I want here to explore a different perspective on some of the same issues. I, too, will focus on two big ideas that orient Sellars' thought. I also want to say that one of them is a good idea, and the other one on the whole is a bad idea—a structure that is in common between those who would self-identify as either right- or left-wing Sellarsians. And the one I want to reject is near and dear to the heart of the right-wing. But I want, first, to situate the ideas I'll consider in the context of Sellars' neo-Kantianism: they are his ways of working out central ideas of Kant's. Specifically, they are what Sellars makes of two fundamental ideas that are at the center of Kant's transcendental idealism: the metaconcept of *categories,* or *pure concepts of the understanding,* and the distinction between *phenomena* and *noumena.* The latter is a version of the distinction between appearance and reality, not in a light epistemological sense, but in the ontologically weighty sense that is given voice by the *scientia mensura.* I cannot say that these fall under the headings, respectively, of What Is Living and What Is Dead in Sellars' thought, since the sort of scientific naturalism he uses to interpret Kant's phenomena/noumena distinction is undoubtedly very widespread and influential in contemporary Anglophone philosophy. My aim here is threefold: to explain what I take it Sellars makes of these Kantian ideas, why I think the first line of thought is more promising than the second, and the way forward from each that seems to me most worth developing.

When asked what he hoped the effect of his work might be, Sellars said he would be happy if it helped usher analytic philosophy from its Humean into its Kantian phase. (*A propos* of this remark, Rorty also said, not without justice, that in these terms my own work could be seen as an effort to help clear the way from analytic philosophy's incipient Kantian phase to an eventual Hegelian one.)[2] Sellars tells us that his reading of Kant lies at the center of his work. He used that theme to structure his John Locke lectures, to the point of devoting the first lecture to presenting a version of the Transcendental Aesthetic with which Kant opens the *Critique of Pure Reason.* Those lectures, published as *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes,* are Sellars' only book-length, systematic exposition

of his views during his crucial middle period. The development of Kantian themes is not only self-consciously used to give that book its distinctive shape but also implicitly determines the contours of Sellars' work as a whole. I think the best way to think about Sellars' work is as a continuation of the neo-Kantian tradition. In particular, I think he is the figure we should look to today in seeking an appropriation of Kant's theoretical philosophy that might be as fruitful as the appropriation of Kant's practical philosophy that Rawls initiated. On the theoretical side, Sellars was the greatest neo-Kantian philosopher of his generation.[3]

In fact, the most prominent neo-Kantians of the previous generation, C. I. Lewis and Rudolf Carnap, were among the most immediate influences on Sellars' thought. Kant was the door through which Lewis found philosophy and later, the common root to which he reverted in his attempt to reconcile what seemed right to him about the apparently antithetical views of his teachers, William James and Josiah Royce. (Had he instead been trying to synthesize Royce with Dewey, instead of James, he would have fetched up at Hegel.) In his 1929 *Mind and the World Order,* Lewis introduced as a central technical conception the notion of the sensory "Given," which Sellars would famously use (characteristically, without mentioning Lewis by name) as the paradigm of what he in *EPM* called the "Myth of the Given." (Indeed, shortly after his 1946 *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation,* which Sellars also clearly has in mind in *EPM,* Lewis wrote a piece addressing the question "Is the Givenness of the Given Given?" His answer was No: It is a necessary postulate of high philosophical theory, which dictates that without a sensory Given, empirical knowledge would be impossible.)

Sellars modeled his own Kantian "metalinguistic" treatments of modality and the ontological status of universals explicitly on ideas of Carnap. Although, like Lewis, Carnap is not explicitly mentioned in *EPM,* his presence is registered for the philosophical cognoscenti Sellars took himself to be addressing there by the use of the Carnapian term "protocol sentence" (as well as Schlick's "Konstatierung") for noninferential observations. Unlike Lewis, Carnap actually stood in the line of inheritance of classical 19th-century German neo-Kantianism. His teacher, Bruno Bauch, was (like Heidegger) a student of Heinrich Rickert in Freiburg—who, with the older Wilhelm Windelband, led the Southwest or Baden neo-Kantian school. In spite of these antecedents, Bauch was in many ways closer to the Marburg neo-Kantians, Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp, in reading Kant as first and foremost a philosopher of the natural sciences, mathematics, and logic. I suppose that if one had asked Carnap in what way his own work could be seen as a continuation of the neo-Kantian tradition of his teacher, he would first have identified with this Marburg neo-Kantian understanding of Kant, and then pointed to the *logical* element of his logical empiricism—itself a development of the path-breaking work of Frege, Bauch's friend and colleague at Jena when Carnap studied with both there—as giving a precise and modern form to the conceptual element in empirical knowledge, which

deserved to be seen as a worthy successor to Kant's own version of the conceptual.

If Lewis and Carnap do not immediately spring to mind as neo-Kantians, that is because each of them gave Kant an empiricist twist, which Sellars was concerned to undo. If you thought that Kant thought the classical empiricists' Cartesian understanding of the sensory contribution to knowledge was pretty much all right, and just needed to be supplemented by an account of the independent contribution made by a conceptual element, you might well respond to the development of the new 20th-century logic with a version of Kant that looks like Lewis's *Mind and the World Order* and *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation,* and Carnap's *Aufbau* (and for that matter, Nelson Goodman's *Structure of Appearance*). That assumption about Kant's understanding of the role played by sense experience in empirical knowledge is exactly what Sellars challenges in *EPM*.

One of the consequences of his doing that is to make visible the neo-Kantian strand in analytic philosophy that Lewis and Carnap each, in his own way, represented—and which Sellars and in our own time, John McDowell, further developed. Quine was a student of both Lewis and Carnap, and the Kantian element of the common empiricism he found congenial in their thought for him drops out entirely—even though the logic remains. His Lewis and his Carnap are much more congenial to a narrative of the history of analytic philosophy initiated by Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore, according to which the movement is given its characteristic defining shape as a recoil from Hegel (seen through the lenses of the British Idealism of the waning years of the 19th century). They understood enough about the Kantian basis of Hegel's thought to know that a *holus bolus* rejection of Hegel required a diagnosis of the idealist rot as having set in already with Kant. This narrative does pick out one current in the analytic river—indeed, the one that makes necessary the reappropriation of the metaconceptual resources of Kant's theoretical philosophy in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. But it was never the whole story.[4] The neo-Kantian tradition comprising Lewis, Carnap, and Sellars can be thought of as an undercurrent, somewhat occluded from view by the empiricist surface.

2. Categories in Kant

Many Kantian themes run through Sellars' philosophy. I am going to focus on two master-ideas, each of which orients and ties together a number of otherwise apparently disparate aspects of his work. The first is the idea that besides concepts whose characteristic expressive job it is to describe and explain empirical goings-on, there are concepts whose characteristic expressive job it is to make explicit necessary structural features of the discursive framework within which alone description and explanation are possible. Failing to acknowledge and appreciate this crucial difference between the expressive roles different bits of vocabulary play is a perennial source of

distinctively philosophical misunderstanding. In particular, Sellars thinks, attempting to understand concepts doing the second, framework-explicating sort of work on the model of those whose proper use is in empirical description and explanation is a fount of metaphysical and semantic confusion.[5] Among the vocabularies that play the second sort of role, Sellars includes *modal* vocabulary (not only the alethic, but also the deontic species), *semantic* vocabulary, *intentional* vocabulary, and *ontological-categorial* vocabulary (such as 'proposition', 'property' or 'universal', and 'object' or 'particular'). It is a mistake, he thinks, to understand the use of any of these sorts of vocabulary as fact-stating in the narrow sense that assimilates it to *describing* how the world is. It is a corresponding mistake to recoil from the metaphysical peculiarity and extravagance of the kinds of facts one must postulate in order to understand statements couched in these vocabularies as fact-stating in the narrow sense (e.g., normative facts, semantic facts, conditional facts, facts about abstract universals) by denying that such statements are legitimate, or even that they can be true. (Though to say that they are true is not, for Sellars, to describe them.) Both mistakes (the dogmatic metaphysical and the skeptical), though opposed to one another, stem from the common root of the *descriptivist fallacy.* That is the failure to see that some perfectly legitimate concepts do not play a narrowly descriptive role, but rather a different, explicative one with respect to the practices of description and explanation. Following Carnap, Sellars instead analyzes the use of all these kinds of vocabulary as, each in its own distinctive way, "covertly metalinguistic."

In opposing a Procrustean descriptivism about the expressive roles locutions can play, Sellars makes common cause with the later Wittgenstein. For Wittgenstein, too, devotes a good deal of effort and attention to warning us of the dangers of being in thrall to ("bewitched by") a descriptivist picture. We must not simply assume that the job of all declarative sentences is to state facts ("I am in pain," "It is a fact that . . ."), that the job of all singular terms is to pick out objects ("*I* think . . ."), and so on. In addition to tools for attaching, detaching, and in general reshaping material objects (hammer and nails, saws, draw-knives, . . .), the carpenter's tools also include plans, a foot-rule, level, pencil, and tool belt. So, too, with discursive expressive ˢtoolsˢ. Wittgenstein's expressive pluralism (language as a motley) certainly involves endorsement of the anti-descriptivism Sellars epitomizes by saying

> [O]nce the tautology 'The world is described by descriptive concepts' is freed from the idea that the business of all non-logical concepts is to describe, the way is clear to an *ungrudging* recognition that many expressions which empiricists have relegated to second-class citizenship in discourse are not *inferior,* just *different*.[6]

But Sellars differs from Wittgenstein in characterizing at least a broad class of nondescriptive vocabularies as playing generically the *same* expressive

role. They are broadly metalinguistic locutions expressing necessary features of the framework of discursive practices that make description (and—so—explanation) possible. Of this broad binary distinction of expressive roles, with ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary on one side and a whole range of apparently disparate vocabularies going into another class as "metalinguistic," there is, I think, no trace in Wittgenstein.[7]

The division of expressive roles I am claiming for Sellars binds together modal, semantic, intentional, and ontological-categorial vocabulary in opposition to empirical descriptive vocabularies and traces back to Kant's idea of "pure concepts of the understanding," or categories, which play quite a different expressive role from that of ordinary empirical descriptive concepts. The expressive role of pure concepts is, roughly, to make explicit what is implicit in the use of ground-level concepts: the conditions under which alone it is possible to apply them, which is to say, use them to make judgments. Though very differently conceived, Kant's distinction is in turn rooted in the epistemological difference Hume notices and elaborates between ordinary empirical descriptive concepts and concepts expressing lawful causal-explanatory connections between them. Hume, of course, drew skeptical conclusions from the observation that claims formulated in terms of the latter sort of concept could not be justified by the same sort of means used to justify claims formulated in terms of empirical descriptive concepts.

Kant, however, looks at Newton's formulation of the best empirical knowledge of his day and sees that the newly introduced concepts of *force* and *mass* are not intelligible apart from the laws that relate them. If we give up the claim that F equals m*a then we do not mean *force* and *mass,* but are using some at least slightly different concepts. (Galileo's geometrical version of the—late medieval—observable concept of *acceleration is* antecedently intelligible.) This leads Kant to two of his deepest and most characteristic metaconceptual innovations: thinking of statements of laws formulated using alethic modal concepts as making explicit rules for reasoning with ordinary empirical descriptive concepts, and understanding the contents of such concepts as articulated by those rules of reasoning with them.

This line of thought starts by revealing the semantic presuppositions of Hume's epistemological arguments. For Hume assumes that the contents of ordinary empirical descriptive concepts are intelligible antecedently to and independently of taking them to stand to one another in rule-governed inferential relations of the sort made explicit by modal concepts. Rejecting that semantic atomism then emerges as a way of denying the intelligibility of the predicament Hume professes to find himself in: understanding ordinary empirical descriptive concepts perfectly well, but getting no grip thereby on the laws expressed by subjunctively robust rules relating them. Even though Kant took it that Hume's skeptical epistemological argument rested on a semantic mistake, from his point of view Hume's investigation had uncovered a crucial *semantic* difference between the expressive roles of

different kinds of concepts. Once his attention had been directed to them, he set himself the task of explaining what was special about these *non*descriptive concepts.

Two features of Kant's account of the expressive role distinctive of the special class of concepts to which Hume had directed his attention are of particular importance for the story I am telling here. They are *categorial* concepts, and they are *pure* concepts. To say that they are 'categorial' in this context means that they make explicit aspects of the *form* of the conceptual as such. For Kant concepts are functions of judgment—that is, they are to be understood in terms of their role in judging. Categorial concepts express structural features of empirical descriptive judgments. What they make explicit is implicit in the capacity to make any judgments at all. This is what I meant when I said above that rather than describing how the world is, the expressive job of these concepts is to make explicit necessary features of the framework of discursive practices within which it is possible to describe how the world is. The paradigm here is the alethic modal concepts that articulate the subjunctively robust consequential relations among descriptive concepts.[8] It is those relations that make possible *explanations* of why one description applies because another does. That force *necessarily* equals the product of mass and acceleration means that one can explain the specific acceleration of a given mass by describing the force that was applied to it. (Of course, Kant also thinks that in articulating the structure of the judgeable as such, these concepts *thereby* articulate the structure of what is empirically *real:* the structure of *nature*, of the *objective world*. But this core thesis of his understanding of empirical realism within transcendental idealism is an optional additional claim, not entailed by the identification of a distinctive class of concepts as categories of the understanding.)

To say that these concepts are 'pure' is to say that they are available to concept-users (judgers = those who can understand, since for Kant the understanding is the faculty of judgment) *a priori*.[9] Since what they express is implicit in any and every use of concepts to make empirical judgments, there is no *particular* such concept one must have or judgment one must make in order to be able to deploy the pure concepts of the understanding. To say that judgers can grasp these pure concepts *a priori* is *not* to say that they are *immediate* in the Cartesian sense of nonrepresentational. Precisely not. The sort of self-consciousness (awareness of structural features of the discursive as such) they make possible is mediated by those pure concepts. What was right about the Cartesian idea of the immediacy of self-consciousness is rather that these mediating concepts are available to every thinker *a priori*. Their grasp does not require grasp or deployment of any *particular* ground-level empirical concepts but is *implicit* in the grasp or deployment of *any* such concepts. The way I will eventually recommend we think about this distinctive *a prioricity* is that in being able to deploy ordinary empirical descriptive concepts one already knows how to do everything one needs to know how to do in order to be able to deploy the concepts that play the

expressive role characteristic of concepts Kant picks out as "categorial" (as well as some that he does not).

3. Categories in Sellars

Sellars' development of Kant's idea of pure concepts of the understanding is articulated by two master-ideas. First, his successor metaconception comprises concepts that are in some broad sense *metalinguistic*.[10] In pursuing this line he follows Carnap, who, besides ground-level empirical descriptive vocabulary, allowed metalinguistic vocabulary as also legitimate in formal languages regimented to be perspicuous. Such metalinguistic vocabulary allows the formulation of explicit rules governing the use of descriptive locutions. Ontologically classifying terms such as 'object', 'property', and 'proposition' are "quasi-syntactical" metavocabulary corresponding to overtly syntactical expressions in a proper metalanguage such as 'singular term', 'predicate', and 'declarative sentence'. They are used to formulate "L-rules," which specify the structure of the language in which empirical descriptions are to be expressed.[11] Alethic modal vocabulary is used to formulate "P-rules," which specify rules for reasoning with particular empirically contentful descriptive vocabulary. Carnap's neo-Kantianism does not extend to embracing the metaconcept of *categories,* which he identifies with the excesses of transcendental idealism. But in the expressions Carnap classifies as overtly or covertly metalinguistic, Sellars sees the raw materials for a more thoroughly Kantian successor conception to the idea of pure categories of the understanding.

The second strand guiding Sellars' reconceptualization of Kantian categories is his *semantic inferentialist* approach to understanding the contents of descriptive concepts. Sellars picks up on Kant's rejection of the semantic atomism characteristic of both the British empiricism of Locke and Hume that Kant was reacting to and of the logical empiricism of Carnap that Sellars was reacting to.[12] The way he works out the anti-atomist lesson he learns from Kant is in terms of the essential contribution made to the contents of ordinary empirical descriptive concepts by the inferential connections among them appealed to in *explanations* of why some descriptions apply to something in terms of other descriptions that apply to it.

> Although describing and explaining (predicting, retrodicting, understanding) are *distinguishable,* they are also, in an important sense, *inseparable*. It is only because the expressions in terms of which we describe objects, even such basic expressions as words for perceptible characteristics of molar objects, locate these objects in a space of implications, that they describe at all, rather than merely label. The descriptive and explanatory resources of language advance hand in hand.[13]

This is a rich and suggestive passage. It is worth unpacking the claims it contains. It is framed by a distinction between a weaker notion, *labeling,* and a stronger one, *describing*. By 'labeling' Sellars means discriminating, in the sense of responding differentially. A linguistic expression is used as a label if its *whole* use is specified by the *circumstances* under which it is applied—the *antecedents* of its application. We might distinguish between three kinds of labels, depending on how we think of these circumstances or antecedents. First, one could look at what stimuli as a matter of fact elicit or in fact have elicited the response that is being understood as the application of a label. Second, one could look *dispositionally* at what stimuli *would* elicit the application of the label. Third, one could look at the circumstances in which the label is *appropriately* applied. What the three senses have in common is that they look only *up*stream, to the situations that have, would, or should prompt the use of the label. The first provides no constraint on future applications of the label—*que sera sera*—as familiar gerrymandering arguments about "going on in the same way" remind us. The second doesn't fund a notion of mistaken application. However one is disposed to apply the label is proper, as arguments summarized under the heading of "disjunctivitis" make clear. Only the third, normatively richer sense in which the semantics of a label consists in its circumstances of *appropriate* application (however the proprieties involved are understood) makes intelligible a notion of *mislabeling*.

Sellars wants to distinguish labeling in *all* of these senses from *describing*. The idea is that since labeling of any of these sorts looks only to the *circumstances* in which the label is, would be, or should be applied, expressions used with the semantics characteristic of labels address at most one of the two fundamental aspects of the use characteristic of descriptions. The rules for the use of labels tell us something about what is (or would be or should be) in effect so described, but say nothing at all about what it is described *as*. That, Sellars thinks, depends on the *consequences* of applying one description rather than another. The semantics of genuine descriptions must look downstream, as well as upstream. It is this additional feature of their use that distinguishes descriptions from labels. Here one might quibble verbally with Sellars' using 'label' and 'description' to describe expressions whose semantics depend on only one or on both of these dimensions of use. But it seems clear that a real semantic distinction is being marked.

Making a further move, Sellars understands those consequences of application of descriptions as essentially involving *inferential* connections to other descriptive concepts. This is what he means by saying that what distinguishes descriptions from labels is their situation in a "space of implications." We can think of these implications as specifying what other descriptions do, would, or should *follow from* the application of the initial, perhaps responsively elicited, description. As he is thinking of things, a description (correctly) applies to a range of things (for descriptive concepts used observationally, including those that are appropriately

noninferentially differentially responded to by applying the concept), which are described *by* it. And it describes them *as* something from which a further set of descriptions (correctly) follows. Crucially, these further descriptions can themselves involve applications of descriptive concepts that also have *non*inferential (observational) circumstances of application. Descriptive concepts that have *only* inferential circumstances of application he calls 'theoretical' concepts.

In the opening sentence of the passage, Sellars includes *understanding* as one of the phenomena he takes to be intricated with description in the way explaining is. Understanding a descriptive concept requires being able to place it in the "space of implications," partly in virtue of which it has the content that it does. This is in general a kind of knowing *how* rather than a kind of knowing *that:* being able to distinguish in practice the circumstances and consequences of application of the concept, when it is appropriately applied and what follows from so applying it. Grasping a concept in this sense is not an all-or-none thing. The ornithologist knows her way around inferentially in the vicinity of terms such as 'icterid' and 'passerine' much better than I do. A consequence of this way of understanding understanding is that one cannot grasp one concept without grasping many. This is Sellars' way of developing Kant's anti-atomist semantic insight.

Taking a further step (undertaking a commitment not yet obviously entailed by the ones attributed so far), Sellars also thinks that the inferences articulating the consequences of concepts used descriptively must always include *subjunctively robust* inferences. That is, the inferences making up the "space of implications" in virtue of which descriptive concepts have not only potentially atomistic circumstances of application but also nonatomistic relational consequences of application must extend to what other descriptions *would be* applicable if a given set of descriptions *were* applicable. For what Sellars means by 'explanation' is understanding the applicability of some descriptions as *explained by* the applicability of others according to just this kind of inference. This is, of course, just the sort of inferential connection that Hume's empiricist atomistic semantics for descriptive concepts, construing them as labels, could not underwrite. Sellars' conception of *descriptions,* as distinguished from labels, is his way of following out what he sees as Kant's anti-atomist semantic insight. *Modal* concepts make explicit these *necessary* inferential-consequential connections between descriptive concepts. They thereby perform the expressive role characteristic of Kantian categories: expressing essential features of the framework within which alone genuine description is possible.

All of this is meant to explicate what Sellars means by saying that "the descriptive and explanatory resources of language advance hand in hand." In addition to Kant's idea, Sellars here takes over Carnap's idea of understanding concepts whose paradigm is modal concepts as (in some sense) *metalinguistic*. The principal class of genuinely intelligible, nondefective, nondescriptive vocabulary Carnap allows in *The Logical Syntax of*

Language is syntactic metavocabulary and what he there calls "quasi-syntactical" vocabulary, which is covertly metalinguistic.[14] For Sellars, the *rules* modal vocabulary expresses are rules for deploying linguistic locutions. Their "rulishness" is their subjunctive robustness. Following out this line of thought, Sellars takes it that "grasp of a concept is mastery of the use of a word." He then understands the metalinguistic features in question in terms of rules of *inference,* whose paradigms are Carnap's L-rules and P-rules. His generic term for the inferences that articulate the contents of ordinary empirical descriptive concepts is "material inferences." The term is chosen to contrast with inferences that are 'formal' in the sense of depending on *logical* form. In another early essay he lays out the options he considers like this:

> . . . we have been led to distinguish the following six conceptions of the status of material rules of inference:
>
> (1) Material rules are as essential to meaning (and hence to language and thought) as formal rules, contributing to the architectural detail of its structure within the flying buttresses of logical form.
> (2) While not essential to meaning, material rules of inference have an original authority not derived from formal rules, and play an indispensable role in our thinking on matters of fact.
> (3) Same as (2) save that the acknowledgment of material rules of inference is held to be a dispensable feature of thought, at best a matter of convenience.
> (4) Material rules of inference have a purely derivative authority, though they are genuinely rules of inference.
> (5) The sentences which raise these puzzles about material rules of inference are merely abridged formulations of logically valid inferences. (Clearly the distinction between an inference and the formulation of an inference would have to be explored).
> (6) Trains of thought which are said to be governed by "material rules of inference" are actually not inferences at all, but rather activated associations which mimic inference, concealing their intellectual nudity with stolen "therefores."[15]

His own position is that an expression has conceptual content conferred on it by being caught up in, playing a certain role in, material inferences:

> . . . it is the first (or "rationalistic") alternative to which we are committed. According to it, material transformation rules determine the descriptive meaning of the expressions of a language within the framework provided by its logical transformation rules. . . . In traditional language, the "content" of concepts as well as their logical "form" is determined by the rules of the Understanding.[16]

By "traditional language" here, he means Kantian language. The talk of "transformation rules" is, of course, Carnapian. In fact in this essay Sellars identifies his "material rules of inference" with Carnap's "P-rules." 'Determine' is crucially ambiguous between 'constrain' and 'settle'—the difference corresponding to that between what I have elsewhere called 'weak' and 'strong' semantic inferentialism.

As already indicated, the material inferential rules that in one or another of these senses "determine the descriptive meaning of expressions" are for Sellars just the subjunctively robust, hence explanation-supporting ones. As he puts the point in the title of a long essay, he construes "Concepts as Involving Laws, and Inconceivable without Them." This is his response to Quine's implicit challenge in "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" to say what feature of their use distinguishes inferences determining conceptual contents from those that simply register matters of fact. Since empirical inquiry is generally required to determine what laws govern concepts such as *copper, temperature,* and *mass,* Sellars accepts the consequence that it plays the role not only of determining facts but also of improving our conceptions—of teaching us more about the concepts that articulate those facts by teaching us more about what really follows from what.

On this way of understanding conceptual content, the modal concepts that express the lawfulness of connections among concepts and so underwrite subjunctively robust implications—concepts such as *law, necessity,* and what is expressed by the use of the subjunctive mood—have a different status from those of ordinary empirical descriptive concepts. Rather than in the first instance describing how the world is, they make explicit features of the framework that makes such description possible. Because they play this distinctive framework-explicating role, what they express must be implicitly understood by anyone who can deploy *any* ground-level descriptive concepts. As I would like to put the point, in knowing how to (being able to) use any ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary, each interlocutor already knows how to do everything she needs to know how to do in order to be able to deploy the modal locutions that register the subjunctive robustness of the inferences that determine the content of the descriptive concepts that vocabulary expresses. This is what Kant's idea that the pure concepts of the understanding are knowable *a priori* becomes when transposed into Sellars' framework.

The two lines of thought that orient Sellars' treatment of alethic modality, semantic inferentialism and a metalinguistic understanding of the expressive role characteristic of modal locutions, are epitomized in an early formulation:

> I shall be interpreting our judgments to the effect that A causally necessitates B as the expression of a rule governing our use of the terms 'A' and 'B',[17]

where the rule in question is understood as a rule licensing subjunctively robust inferences. I have been filling in the claim that this overall approach to modality deserves to count as a development of Kant's notion of categories, pure concepts of the understanding, as concepts that make explicit features of the discursive framework that makes empirical description possible. Sellars himself, however, does not discuss this aspect of his work under that heading. When he talks about categories he turns instead to his nominalism about abstract entities. The central text here is "Toward a Theory of the Categories" of 1970.[18] The story he tells there begins with Aristotle's notion of categories (though he waves his hands wistfully at a discussion of its origins in Plato's *Sophist* that he feels he cannot shoehorn into the paper) as ontological *summa genera*. There he opposes an unobjectionable hierarchy:

> Fido is a dachshund.
> Fido is a dog.
> Fido is a brute.
> Fido is an animal.
> Fido is a corporeal substance.
> Fido is a substance.

to a potentially problematic one:

> X is a red.
> X is a color.
> X is a perceptual quality.
> X is a quality.[19]

The next decisive move in understanding the latter hierarchy he attributes to Ockham, whom he reads as transposing the discussion into a metalinguistic key. Ockham's strategy, he tells us, is to understand

(A) Man is a species.

as

(B) ~~Man~~ is a sortal mental term.[20]

while construing mental items as "analogous to linguistic expressions in overt speech."

This sketch sets up the transition to what Sellars makes of Kant's understanding of categories:

> What all this amounts to is that to apply Ockham's strategy to the theory of categories is to construe categories as classifications of conceptual

> items. This becomes, in Kant's hands, the idea that categories are the most generic functional classifications of the elements of judgments.[21]

At the end of this development from Aristotle through Ockham to Kant, he concludes:

> [I]nstead of being *summa genera* of entities which are objects 'in the world,' . . . categories are *summa genera* of conceptual items.[22]

The account he goes on to expound in this essay, as well as in his other expositions of his nominalism about terms for qualities or properties, construes such terms metalinguistically, as referring to the inferential roles of the base-level concepts as used in empirical descriptions. I explain how I understand the view and the arguments on this topic in "Sellars's Metalinguistic Expressivist Nominalism." Without going into that intricate view further here, the point I want to make is that although Sellars does not say so, the metaconceptual role he here explicitly puts forward as a successor-concept to Kant's notion of *category* is generically the same as that I have argued he takes alethic modal locutions to play. It is this capacious conception I want to build upon and develop further.

4. Categories Today

The general conception of pure categorial concepts that I have been attributing to Sellars, based on the commonalities visible in his treatment of alethic modal vocabulary and of abstract ontological vocabulary, develops Kant's idea by treating some vocabularies (and the concepts they express) as "covertly metalinguistic." This Sellarsian conception represents his development of Carnap's classification of some expressions as "quasi-syntactic." The underlying insight is that some important kinds of vocabularies that are not strictly or evidently metalinguistic are used not (only) to describe things, but in ways that (also) depend on the use of *other* vocabularies—paradigmatically, empirical descriptive ones.

The lessons I draw from the strengths and weaknesses of Sellars' successor-conception of the "pure concepts of the Understanding" are fourfold. That is, I think he is pointing toward an expressive role characteristic of some concepts and the vocabularies expressing them that has four distinctive features. First, these concepts express what I will call "pragmatically mediated semantic relations" between vocabularies. Second, these concepts play the expressive role of making explicit essential features of the use of some other vocabulary. Third, the proper use of these concepts can be systematically elaborated from the use of that other vocabulary. Fourth, the features of vocabulary (concept)-use they explicate are universal: they are features of any and every autonomous discursive practice. I think there are concepts that play this distinctive fourfold expressive role,

and that a good thing to mean today by the term "category" is metaconcepts that do so.

Carnap and Tarski introduced the expression "metalanguage" for languages that let one talk about languages, with the examples of syntactic and semantic metalanguages. In his earliest writings, Sellars also talks about "pragmatic metalanguages," meaning languages for talking about the *use* of languages—rather than the syntactic or semantic properties of expressions.

These were to be the languages in which we conduct what he called "pure pragmatics." During and after Sellars' most important work in the *anni mirabiles* of 1954–63, however (possibly influenced by Carnap), he shifts to using the expression "semantics" to cover essentially the same ground. I think that this was a step backward, and that it is one of the obstacles that prevented him from getting clear about the sense in which he wanted to claim that such locutions as alethic modal vocabulary and singular terms purporting to refer to universals ("circularity") and their kinds ("property") are "covertly metalinguistic." One vocabulary serving as a pragmatic metavocabulary for another is the most basic kind of pragmatically mediated semantic relation between vocabularies. It deserves to be called such because the *semantics* of the pragmatic metavocabulary depends on the *use* of the vocabulary for which it is a pragmatic metavocabulary. The relation itself is aptly called a "semantic" relation in the special case where one vocabulary is sufficient to specify practices or abilities whose exercise is sufficient to confer on another vocabulary the meanings that it expresses. We could represent such a semantic relation, mediated by the practices of using the second vocabulary that the first vocabulary specifies, as in Figure 12.1.[23]

The pragmatically mediated semantic relation between vocabularies V′ and V, indicated by the dashed arrow, obtains when vocabulary V′ is expressively sufficient to *specify* practices-or-abilities P (that semantic fact about V′ with respect to P is here called "VP-sufficiency") that are sufficient to

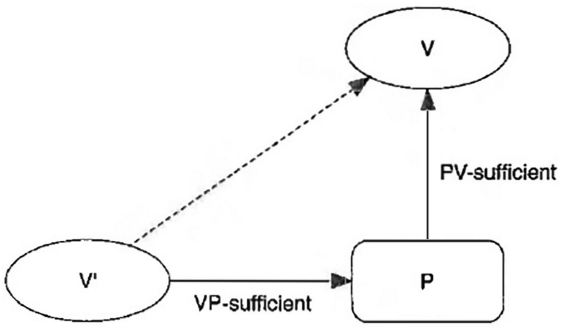

Figure 12.1 Meaning-use diagram representing the pragmatically mediated semantic relation of a pragmatic metavocabulary, V′, to another vocabulary, V. P are the practices-or-abilities to deploy the vocabulary V.

deploy the vocabulary V with the meanings that it expresses when so used. In asserting that this relation between vocabularies obtains, one is claiming that if all the sentences in V′ used to specify the practices-or-abilities P are true of P, then anyone engaging in those practices or exercising those abilities as specified in V′ is using the expressions of V with their proper meanings. This semantic relation between what is expressible in the two vocabularies is mediated by the practices P that the first specifies and that are the use of the second. This particular pragmatically mediated semantic relation holds when the vocabulary V′ allows one to *say* what one must *do* in order to *say* what can be said in the vocabulary V. In that sense V′ makes *explicit* (sayable, claimable) the practices-or-abilities *implicit* in using V. This is the explicative relation I mention as the second component of the complex expressive role that I am offering as a candidate for a contemporary successor-(meta)concept to Kant's (meta)concept of *category*. There are other pragmatically mediated semantic relations besides being a pragmatic metavocabulary in this sense, and others are involved in the categorial expressive role. The result will still fall under the general rubric that is the first condition: being a pragmatically mediated semantic relation.

One such further pragmatically mediated semantic relation between vocabularies holds when the practices PV-sufficient for deploying one vocabulary, though not themselves PV-sufficient for deploying a second one, can be systematically elaborated into such practices. That is, in being able to deploy the first vocabulary, one already knows how to do everything one needs to know how to do, in principle, to deploy the second. But those abilities must be suitably recruited and recombined. The paradigm here is *algorithmic* elaboration of one set of abilities into another. Thus, in the sense I am after, the capacities to do multiplication and subtraction are algorithmically elaborable into the capacity to do long division. *All* you need to learn how to do is to put together what you already know how to do in the right way—a way that can be specified by an algorithm. The diagram for this sort of pragmatically mediated semantic relation between vocabularies is shown in Figure 12.2.

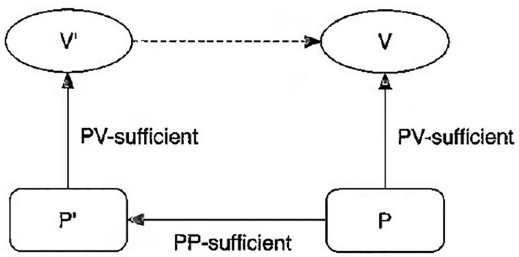

Figure 12.2 Meaning-use diagram representing the relation between two vocabularies, V′ and V, that holds if the practices-or-abilities sufficient to deploy vocabulary V can be elaborated into practices sufficient to deploy vocabulary V′.

The dotted arrow indicates the semantic relation between vocabularies V′ and V. It is the relation that holds when all the relations indicated by solid arrows hold—that is, when the practices-or-abilities sufficient to deploy vocabulary V can be elaborated into practices sufficient to deploy vocabulary V′. In this case, the semantic relation in question is mediated by two sets of practices-or-abilities: those sufficient to deploy the two vocabularies.

A concrete example of vocabularies standing in this pragmatically mediated semantic relation, I claim, is that of *conditionals* in relation to ordinary empirical descriptive (OED) vocabulary. For using such OED vocabulary, I claim (following Sellars following Kant), requires distinguishing in practice between materially good inferences involving descriptive predicates and ones that are not materially good. One need not be either infallible or omniscient in this regard, but unless one makes *some* such distinction, one cannot count as deploying the OED vocabulary in question. But in being able practically to distinguish (however fallibly and incompletely) between materially good and materially bad inferences, one knows how to do everything one needs to know how to do, in principle, to deploy conditionals. For conditionals can be introduced by recruiting those abilities in connection with the use of sentences formed from the old vocabulary by using the new vocabulary. On the side of circumstances of application (assertibility conditions), one must acknowledge commitment to the conditional p→q just in case one takes the inference from p to q to be a materially good one. And on the side of consequences of application, if one acknowledges commitment to the conditional p→q, then one must take the inference from p to q to be a materially good one. These rules constitute an algorithm for elaborating the ability to distinguish materially good from materially bad inferences using OED vocabulary (or any other vocabulary, for that matter) into the ability appropriately to use conditionals formed from that vocabulary: to distinguish when such conditionals are assertible, and what the consequences of their assertibility is.

My idea for a successor-concept to what Sellars (with hints from Carnap) made of Kant's metaconception of pure concepts of the Understanding is that they must play *both* of these expressive roles, stand in *both* sorts of pragmatically mediated semantic relations to another vocabulary. It must be possible to *elaborate* their use from the use of the index vocabulary, and they must *explicate* the use of that index vocabulary. Speaking more loosely, we can say that such concepts are both *elaborated from* and *explicative of* the use of other concepts—in short that they are el-ex, or just LX with respect to the index vocabulary.

The fourth condition I imposed above is that the concepts in question must be *universally* LX, by which I mean that they must be LX for every autonomous discursive practice (ADP)—every language game one could play though one played no other. That is, the practices from which their use can be elaborated and of which their use is explicative must be essential

to talking or thinking at all. This universality would distinguish categorial concepts, in the sense being specified, from metaconcepts that were elaborated from and explicative of only some parasitic fragment of discourse—culinary, nautical, or theological vocabulary, for instance. I take it that any autonomous discursive practice must include the use of ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary. If so, being LX for OED vocabulary would suffice for being *universally* LX, LX for every ADP.

Putting all these conditions together yields the diagram (shown in Figure 12.3) of the pragmatically mediated semantic relation between vocabularies that obtains when vocabulary V′ plays the expressive role of being universally LX by being elaboratable from and explicative of practices necessary for the deployment of ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary.

The fact that the rounded rectangle labeled P″, representing the practices from which vocabulary V′ is elaborated and of which it is explicative, appears inside the rounded rectangle representing practices sufficient to deploy ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary indicates that the practices P″ are a necessary part of the practices sufficient to deploy OED vocabulary, but need not comprise all such practices. Thus, distinguishing materially good from materially bad inferences involving them is necessary for deploying ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary (rather than mere labels), but there is a lot more involved in doing so—using such vocabulary observationally, for instance. Different categorial metaconcepts can be LX for different essential features of the use of empirical descriptive vocabulary. Thus alethic modal vocabulary explicates the subjunctive robustness of the inferences explicated by conditionals. "Quasi-syntactic" abstract ontological vocabulary such as 'property' and 'proposition' explicates structural features of descriptive sentences.

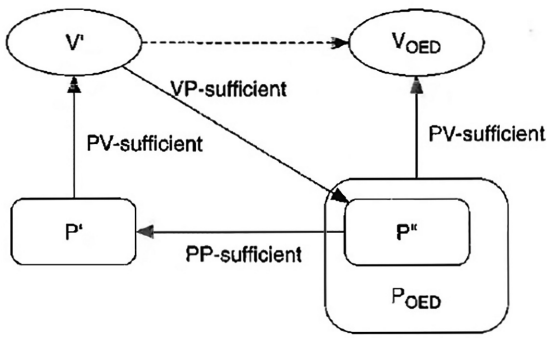

Figure 12.3 Meaning-use diagram representing the pragmatically mediated semantic relation between vocabularies that obtains when vocabulary V′ plays the expressive role of being universally LX.

Diagramming the expressive role of being LX for practices necessary to deploy OED vocabulary provides an analysis that breaks down the claim that some vocabulary plays a categorial role into its component sub-claims. To show that alethic modal vocabulary, for instance, stands in this pragmatically mediated semantic relation to ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary one must show that there are some practices-or-abilities (in this case, to reason subjunctively or counterfactually) that are 1) a necessary component of practices-or-abilities that are 2) PV-sufficient to deploy OED vocabulary, 3) from which one can elaborate practices-or-abilities that are 4) PV-sufficient to deploy vocabulary (alethic modal vocabulary) 5) that is VP-sufficient to explicate or specify the original practices-or-abilities. Although there is by design considerable elasticity in the concepts *vocabulary, practices-or-abilities,* and the various sufficiency and necessity relations between them, the fine structure of the distinctive expressive role in question is clearly specified.

What credentials does that expressive role have to pick out a worthy successor metaconcept to what Sellars made of Kant's *categories* or *pure concepts of the Understanding?* At the beginning of my story, I introduced the idea behind the Kantian categories as the idea that besides the concepts whose principal use is in giving empirical descriptions and explanations, there are concepts whose principal use is in making explicit features of the framework that makes empirical description and explanation possible. The expressive task characteristic of concepts of this latter class is to articulate what Kant called the "transcendental conditions of experience." The concepts expressed by vocabularies that are LX for empirical descriptive vocabulary perform this defining task of concepts that are categories. As explicative of practices necessary for deploying vocabularies performing the complex expressive task of description and explanation (distinguishable only in the context of their complementary relations within a pragmatic and semantic context that necessarily involves both), this kind of vocabulary makes it possible to *say* what practitioners must be able to *do* in order to describe and explain how things empirically are. They do this by providing a pragmatic metavocabulary for describing and explaining. This is a central feature (the 'X' in 'LX') of the complex pragmatically mediated semantic relation between categorial metaconcepts and ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary.

One feature of the concepts performing this explicative function that Kant emphasizes is that they are "*pure* concepts of the Understanding." (I take it that the "of" should be understood as expressing both the subjective and objective genitives—as in "Critique of Pure Reason." These concepts both belong to the Understanding and address it, being both discursive and metaconceptual.) To say that they are pure concepts is to say that they are graspable *a priori*.[24] The feature of the LX model that corresponds to the *a prioricity* of Kant's categories is that the use of LX metaconcepts can be elaborated from that of the empirical descriptive vocabularies for which

they are LX. As I have put the point, in knowing how to deploy OED vocabulary, one already knows how to do everything one needs to know how to do to deploy vocabulary that is LX for it—such as alethic modal vocabulary, conditionals, and ontological classificatory vocabulary. If we take it, as per Sellars, that grasp of a concept is mastery of the use of a word, then one need not *actually* grasp concepts that are LX for descriptive vocabulary in order to deploy descriptive vocabulary. But in effect, *all* one is missing are the words for them. The circumstances and consequences of application of LX concepts can be formulated by rules that appeal only to abilities one already has in virtue of being able to use OED vocabulary. (Think of the sample rules for conditionals sketched above.) In that sense, the LX concepts are *implicit in* the descriptive concepts. It is not that one must or could grasp these concepts *before* deploying descriptive concepts. It is rather that nothing more is required to grasp them than is required to deploy descriptive concepts, and there are no particular descriptive concepts one must be able to deploy, nor any particular descriptive claims that one must endorse, in order to possess abilities sufficient to deploy the universally LX metaconcepts.

The class of concepts that are arguably universally LX (LX for every autonomous discursive practice because LX for OED vocabulary) overlaps Kant's categories in important ways—most notably in the alethic modal concepts that make explicit subjunctively robust consequential relations among descriptive concepts. But the two do not simply coincide. Besides modal vocabulary, as I argue in *Between Saying and Doing*, logical vocabulary, indexical and demonstrative vocabulary, normative vocabulary, and semantic and intentional vocabulary all should be thought of as LX for OED vocabulary. In spite of this extensional divergence, the fact that vocabulary that is LX for descriptive vocabulary in general principle shares with Kant's categories the two crucial features of being explicative of such vocabulary and being graspable *a priori* makes the idea of universally LX metaconcepts a worthy successor to Kant's breakthrough idea. The fact that Sellars' own development of this idea of Kant's takes such important steps in this direction convinces me that his version of the categories was a progressive step, and a Good Idea.

Notes

1 In Herbert Feigl and Michael Scriven (eds.), *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science,* vol. I (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956); reprinted in Sellars's *Science, Perception, and Reality* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956; reissued Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview, 1991); reprinted as a monograph, with an Introduction by Richard Rorty and a Study Guide by Robert Brandom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997). Hereafter *EPM*.

2 In his introduction to my Harvard University Press edition of *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*.

3 His only rival for this accolade, I think, would be Peter Strawson, who certainly did a lot to make us realize that a reappropriation of some of Kant's theoretical philosophy might be a viable contemporary project. But I do not think of Peter Strawson's work as *systematically* neo-Kantian in the way I want to argue that Sellars' is.

4 Paul Redding begins the process of recovering the necessary counter-narrative in the Introduction to his *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

5 Distinguishing two broadly different kinds of *use* bits of vocabulary can play does not entail that there are two corresponding kinds of *concepts*—even in the presence of the auxiliary Sellarsian hypothesis that grasp of a concept is mastery of the use of a word. Though I suppress the distinction between these two moves in these introductory formulations, it will become important later in the story.

6 "Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities," in H. Feigl, M. Scriven, and G. Maxwell (eds.), *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, vol. II (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), §79. Hereafter CDCM.

7 The best candidate might be the discussion of "hinge propositions" in *On Certainty*. But the point there is, I think, different. In any case, Wittgenstein does not *generalize* the particular expressive role he is considering to anything like the extent I am claiming Sellars does.

8 Note that these concepts are *not* those Kant discusses under the heading of "Modality" but rather concern the hypothetical form of judgment.

9 I take it that Kant always uses "*a priori*" and "*a posteriori*" as adverbs, modifying some verb of cognition, paradigmatically "know."

10 In Chapter 3 of *From Empiricism to Expressivism: Brandom Reads Sellars*, I discuss the sense in which "metalinguistic" should be understood in such formulations. See R. B. Brandom, *From Empiricism to Expressivism: Brandom Reads Sellars* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

11 Chapter 7 of Brandom's *From Empiricism to Expressivism* discusses Sellars' view about this kind of locution.

12 "Another feature of the empiricist tradition is its 'logical atomism,' according to which every basic piece of empirical knowledge is logically independent of every other. Notice that this independence concerns not only *what* is known, but the *knowing* of it. The second dimension of this 'atomism' is of particular importance for understanding Kant's rejection of empiricism. . . ." Sellars, "Toward a Theory of the Categories," in *Essays in Philosophy and Its History* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974), §16.

13 CDCM §108.

14 R. Carnap, *The Logical Syntax of Language* (London: Kegan Paul, 1937), §§63–70.

15 Wilfrid Sellars, "Inference and Meaning," in J. Sicha (ed.), *Pure Pragmatics and Possible Worlds: The Early Essays of Wilfrid Sellars* (Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview, 1980), Reprinted in Kevin Scharp and Robert Brandom (eds.), *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 317. Hereafter *PPPW*.

16 Sellars, "Inference and Meaning," *PPPW*, p. 336.

17 Sellars, "Language, Rules, and Behavior," *PPPW*, footnote 2 to p. 296.

18 In L. Foster and J. W. Swanson (eds.), *Experience and Theory* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), pp. 55–78; reprinted in *Essays in Philosophy and Its History*. Hereafter TTC.

19 TTC §10–11.

20 TTC §16.

21 TTC §22.
22 TTC §23.
23 I introduce, develop, and apply these "meaning-use diagrams" in *Between Saying and Doing: Towards an Analytic Pragmatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
24 Kant does admit also impure *a priori* principles.

Part IV

Author Meets Critics

AuQ3

Robert B. Brandom, Willem A. deVries, and James O'Shea

The following are the initial remarks, responses, and subsequent dialogue among Robert B. Brandom, Willem A. deVries, James O'Shea, and other participants on Robert B. Brandom's *From Empiricism to Expressivism: Brandom Reads Sellars* from their May 2, 2015, presentation at the Sellars in a New Generation conference at Kent State University.

BRANDOM: I want to say something in general about why I wrote this book. I talked about two neo-Kantian ideas—the White Hat and the Black Hat—already (in chapter 12 of this volume). I've been worrying about Sellars my entire career, and there is stuff I had given up on understanding. I think I'm together on the early Sellars, the middle Sellars of this fabulous nine years starting in 1956, of the late Sellars when he was my colleague, and the meshugganah Sellars of pure processes as well. But absolutely at the core of his system, I came to think, was his nominalism about abstract entities, and I could *never* understand why he thought this was so important. Modality: I could see why that was really important—both in the sociology of philosophy, but downstream from Kant, you have to get straight on modality. But all we have on modality [in Sellars] are some scattered references, mostly in the early work, and then "Counterfactuals, Dispositions and the Causal Modalities," which is a mess. I don't know why the first half of that essay exists, and the second half breaks off without him having resolved the problems he is settling. He never returns to it; I think he didn't know what to say about modality. By contrast, we have the three big essays on nominalism. One of them, "Grammar and Existence," is basically two long essays, so there are really the four of them. In a three-year period he basically wrote a book on this topic. He really did nail down what he needed to say, and his later references to this work indicate he was completely happy with the view. This stands in contrast to his treatment of modality. I couldn't see why he cared about it, why he thought this was so central outside of the epistemological and semantic moves in EPM, which he continued to refer to; nominalism, Sellars clearly thought, was at the center of what he was doing.

It was only when I was able to see this as a principled application of this metalinguistic expressive strategy for dealing with philosophically puzzling concepts that I said, "All right—this one he really worked out!" Sellars showed how this metalinguistic strategy could work: Thinking about these statements as *what you're doing when you say something is a quality or property* is classifying the expression that is being nominalized as a predicate, not as a singular term. So I wanted to focus the book on this metalinguistic expressive strategy.

I think that Sellars was entirely successful in this nominalism. He sets out criteria of adequacy, and he satisfies them. But there is a dark side to this, too. Namely, he thought that when you give an expressivist account of something that means that it doesn't play any descriptive or representational role. So, if as he thought—and as I think—he gave us a correct expressivist account of concepts like *particular*, *object*, *property,* and so on, but in particular of *concepts that name properties* (like 'circularity', and so on), then his conclusion was that those things are not real in the narrow sense. They don't exist in the world, in the narrow sense. There is a broader sense in which they do, but that is the broader sense in which norms exist in the world. But they're not describable, representable—they are not in the world *in the narrow sense*. This bleeds into Sellars' discussion of scientific naturalism, because that world in the narrow sense—what's real, what exists in the narrow sense—that is what the language of natural science is supposed to be authoritative about. But it is not a world of facts; it is a world of things. It is just the particulars. There are no properties in it, there are no facts in it. It is just the things. Wittgenstein said that there is an opposition in thinking of the world as a world of things, and a world of facts, and comes down on the facts side. This view is completely explicit in "Abstract Entities," the last of his [Sellars'] nominalism essays. It is actually reflected in the *scientia mensura*. Now this has come up many times; I'll bet you're sick of hearing about it! I'd like to ask a question that I'll bet you've never asked yourself before: Why isn't the *scientia mensura* the following: "In the dimension of describing and explaining, science is the measure of all things, of what is, and what it is, and of what is not, ~~that~~ it is not"? All he says is "of what is" and "~~what~~ it is not." Now, right off the bat, there are two readings of that. One is to say that it is just stylistic, he's doing a pastiche of Protagoras, who spoke of what is and what is not, and Sellars, for stylistic reasons, didn't want to break that. In which case, the missing piece of the *scientia mensura* is of no significance at all. But it actually expresses this nominalistic view that the world, in the narrow sense—what's real, what exists in the narrow sense—consists exclusively of particulars. Late in life, he comes to think that those particulars are pure processes, but he doesn't give up the nominalism; we still don't have properties of them in the world, we still don't have facts, we just have things. I doubt that this conception of the world as just a

collection of things is intelligible, but I am confident that the implicit argument that got him there is a bad argument. The argument is that he notices—and this is a wonderful thing to notice—that these expressions, these ontological categorizing expressions—like 'circularity', like 'property'—play this distinctive expressive role that is not played by ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary. There is a distinction in their expressive role. He concludes that they do not play a descriptive role, not even in a broader sense of descriptive. They do not represent how things are. Now that made sense if you thought that the sense in which they were metalinguistic was a semantic metalanguage that they were expressed in. But that didn't quite work for him. That's why he had to say that you're not *saying* that the inference is good, or that this expression is a predicate. You're *conveying* that information. I've suggested that his better wisdom—what he is reaching for there—is what he has a fabulous account of: In a pragmatic metalanguage, rather than a semantic one, he describes what you're *doing* in saying what something means. You're functionally classifying it, or in saying what ontological category it is, you're functionally classifying it in a quasi-syntactic way. The inference from what you're doing when you say *this* is something you don't do when you use ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary. So you can't be saying anything of the kind that ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary does. You can't be representing the way the world is. That's just a bad inference. It doesn't follow from *saying what you're doing* when you say "something is this"—nothing actually follows about *what you're saying* when you say that. And yet that's the inference: He says what you're not doing is saying anything about what's real, you're not representing the way the world really is.

It is clear that this nominalism that is at the center of Sellars' thought is, in some sense, the best worked out philosophy that he did. But it led him to this conclusion that what exists in the narrow sense, that what is real, is just a collection of particulars. This is a very popular view. My other "Doktorvater," David Lewis, says what's real is whatever the ultimate particles are, and all the mereological sums of them. That's thinking of the world as just a collection of particulars. The push-back you get to that view in contemporary metaphysics is, "Oh, no, it is world just of things but it's gunk, there aren't ultimate particles," *not* [the view] that the only conception of a world that makes sense is a world of facts, of propertied particulars. I myself doubt that this reistic conception—often associated with Kotarbiński, whom Sellars sometimes talks about—I doubt that this [view] is intelligible. But I am much more confident that his inference from his expressivist analysis that I understand as a matter of *what you're doing* when you say something—that the inference from that to "so you're not doing anything that's descriptive" (even in the broader sense than the narrow sense that applies to ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary)—I'm confident that is not a good inference.

When we think about his scientific naturalism, the *first step he makes* is thinking of the world as the world of particulars first, and then that's what science is authoritative about. I think the second move is tainted by the first move. At any rate, if we're going to get on to figuring out what's living and what's dead in Sellars, that's something we have to worry about: In what sense is the world a world of facts, and in what sense is it a world of particulars?

Now Bill and Jim are going to talk about the scientific naturalism, not this particular aspect of it, but I didn't want to let us not have that on the table.

DEVRIES: Both Jim and I both thought we had to say *something* in favor of the Black Hat, because in the long run it may be the White Hat that wins and survives, but the Black Hat should at least go down fighting, right?

The last half of the (long) first chapter of Brandom's *From Empiricism to Expressivism* constitutes an extended argument against one half of Wilfrid Sellars' version of scientific realism. I say 'half' of Sellarsian scientific realism because Brandom agrees with Sellars' anti-instrumentalism. The half Brandom takes issue with is Sellars' claim that the "scientific image" [SI]—an idealized, complete scientific framework for the description and explanation of all natural events and objects—possesses such ontological priority over the "manifest image" [MI]—itself an idealization of the 'commonsense' framework of persons and things in terms of which we currently experience ourselves and the world—that it will come to replace the MI in all matters of description and explanation.

Brandom's argument against this Sellarsian idea is rather roundabout. First, he traces Sellars' distinction between the MI and the SI back to the Kantian distinction between phenomena and noumena. Then he argues against several attempts to understand identity claims across disparate frameworks. Neither, claims Brandom, will permit us to identify objects across the MI/SI divide. But if we cannot identify the objects of concern across the frameworks, well then a shift from the MI to the SI is not a form of *replacement* of one framework by a better, but simply a change of subject, and that poses no threat to the MI at all. And thus Brandom strikes a blow for left-wing Sellarsianism.

Now I'm not going to argue that Brandom is wrong to thus defend left-wing Sellarsianism. Nor am I going to argue that Brandom is wrong to see Sellars' MI/SI distinction as a latter-day version of Kant's phenomena/noumena distinction. I too am bothered by Sellars' belief that the scientific image will be able to replace the manifest image in some wholesale fashion (some of the difficulties of this view is the subject of my paper in this volume). But I do think that Brandom has *not yet* sealed the deal. There is another construal of Sellars' distinction that I think could survive Brandom's arguments, and it is not a construal that

is obvious on the face of it; nor, for that matter, can I really claim that it is the "real Sellarsian construal"—the one that he had in mind. But I do think it is a construal of Sellars' doctrine that is intrinsically interesting, and it is a construal that, given Brandom's endorsement of Sellars on categories, and given, further, Brandom's own distinctively Hegelian leanings, Brandom needs to face.

(I wrote this when I first got the book, so I have to skip all the pages where I pat Brandom on the back for doing all the stuff about the categorial Sellars that he likes—'cause I like that too—but this is a *critics* session, right?)

Sellars introduces the manifest image in existential terms, as "the framework in terms of which man came to be aware of himself as man-in-the-world" (PSIM ¶14; SPR: 6; in ISR: 374). Though he contrasts it with the scientific image, the manifest image is neither uncritical nor naïve and unscientific. It has been refined over the millennia both categorially and empirically. In thinking about the nature of a conceptual framework, Sellars thinks one of the fundamental questions to ask is "'of what sort are the basic objects of the framework?'" (PSIM ¶26; in SPR: 9; in ISR: 377). For the manifest image, the answer is persons and things. It's a Strawsonian, or Aristotelean-Strawsonian, framework. There is a fairly complex (and not altogether plausible) backstory attached to this claim, wherein we began with an 'original image' (and I've never quite got how that could be the original one) in which everything is accounted a way of being a person. The notion of a thing develops as we come to realize that not everything exhibits the full range of capacities that characterize persons.

Thus, the manifest image includes what Sellars calls the "descriptive ontology of everyday life" (EPM §41). "Perennial philosophy," he tells us, "which is the 'ideal type' around which philosophies in what might be called, in a suitably broad sense, the Platonic tradition cluster, is simply the manifest image endorsed as real, and its outline taken to be the large-scale map of reality to which science brings a needle-point of detail and an elaborate technique of map-reading" (PSIM ¶21: in SPR: 8; in ISR: 376). That's how he takes perennial philosophy to see things. The differences between the SI and the MI are generated from a single, methodological difference: The scientific image begins to form when we begin to postulate imperceptible entities to explain the behavior of perceptible things. This entails, of course, that the scientific image presupposes the prior availability of the manifest image in terms of which we perceive things in the first place, but it is crucial to Sellars' view that the methodological priority of the manifest image does not imply its substantive or ontological priority: what is first in the order of knowing need not be first in the order of being.

The overall story Sellars tells is then fairly clear: in the process of postulating imperceptible entities to explain the observable behavior of

things, we do not simply add more of the same kinds of things already believed in to our world-view; we add *new* kinds of things and sometimes, correlatively, new kinds of concepts. Science revises the categorial structure of our world-view. Sellars sees this, ultimately, as a challenge to the manifest image. We cannot simply add new categories to our framework; we must also prune the old. Sellars is radical here; he does not think we can prune and replace in a piecemeal fashion: "[T]he most fruitful way of approaching the problem of integrating theoretical science with the framework of sophisticated common sense into one comprehensive synoptic vision is to view it not as a piecemeal task—e.g. first a fitting together of the common sense conception of physical objects with that of theoretical physics, and then, as a separate venture, a fitting together of the common sense conception of man with that of theoretical psychology—but rather as a matter of articulating two whole ways of seeing the sum of things, two images of man-in-the-world and attempting to bring them together in a 'stereoscopic' view" (PSIM, ¶52; in SPR: 19; in ISR: 387).

Notice that the assumed unity of science plays a significant role here. Sellars is not totally naïve on that score; he's not totally naïve about much. He certainly recognizes the methodological pluralism of the sciences; he sees that "as sciences they have different procedures and connect their theoretical entities via different instruments to intersubjectively accessible features of the manifest world" (PSIM ¶58; in SPR: 21; in ISR: 389). "But" Sellars argues, "diversity of this kind is compatible with intrinsic 'identity' of the theoretical entities themselves, that is, with saying that biochemical compounds are 'identical' with patterns of subatomic particles. For to make this 'identification'—and 'identification' is in quotes there, for some reason—is simply to say that the two theoretical structures, each with its own connection to the perceptible world, could be replaced by one theoretical framework connected at two levels of complexity via different instruments and procedures to the world as perceived" (PSIM ¶58; in SPR: 21; in ISR: 389). Identity claims will play, obviously, a significant role in the arguments to come.

Sellars spells out more thoroughly what this means, in his view, in *Science and Metaphysics*: "A consistent scientific realist must hold that the world of everyday experience is a phenomenal world in the Kantian sense, existing only as the contents of actual and obtainable conceptual representings, the obtainability of which is explained not, as for Kant, by things in themselves known only to God, but by scientific objects about which, barring catastrophe, we shall know more and more as the years go by" (SM VI ¶61: 173). Insofar as Sellarsian scientific realism goes beyond a rejection of scientific instrumentalism (which of course Brandom also rejects), Brandom takes Sellars' position to be, in the end, a reductive scientific naturalism, because science retains an absolute priority in ontology.

So Brandom's criticism of Sellars' scientific realism is intended to be a rejection of reductive scientific naturalism, and I have no interest in defending such a reductionism. It isn't clear to me, however, that Sellars ever espoused that position, and some of Brandom's characterizations of the scientific image that support such an interpretation seem clearly off the mark. So let me pause to correct some mistaken assertions Brandom makes in his characterization of the scientific image.

My primary complaint is that according to Brandom, the scientific image "consists exclusively of descriptions and explanations" (Brandom 57), and "[n]ormative vocabulary accordingly is not drawn upon in articulating the scientific image of things. It belongs exclusively to the manifest image" (Brandom 58). I admit that Sellars heavily emphasizes the descriptive and explanatory dimension of science, and that it is no accident that the *scientia mensura* begins with the condition "In the dimension of describing and explaining the world. . . ." But if the SI consists of *nothing* but descriptive/explanatory discourse, I'm not sure why Sellars would need the introductory condition in the *scientia mensura* in the first place, since Sellars claims that the scientific image purports to be a complete image of man-in-the-world. In Brandom's view, however, the scientific image is not only purely descriptive but also shorn of all prescriptive discourse. It would be deeply incoherent for Sellars, who is so very sensitive to the rich multidimensionality of language and the conceptual frameworks that define the structures of thought, to think that there could be a "complete" image of the world that contains and employs only descriptive vocabulary. Sellars hints at this when he points out that "the conception of the scientific or postulational image is an idealization in the sense that it is a conception of an integration of a manifold of images, each of which is the application to man of a framework of concepts which have a certain autonomy. For each scientific theory is, from the standpoint of methodology, a structure which is built at a different 'place' and by different procedures within the intersubjectively accessible world of perceptible things" (PSIM ¶55; in SPR: 20; in ISR: 388). So, science(s) clearly, in his characterization, has (have) methodologies and procedures, and those are essentially normative: they tell us what we ought and ought not to do.

I have argued elsewhere that the kind of view of the scientific image that Brandom is trying to sell us, however much it seems supported by Sellars' own words, cannot be right. Sellars talks of the need to "join" the language of individual and community intentions, which provides, in his view, the basis for normative discourse, to the scientific image. Talk of 'joining' implies that the things joined have existence independently of each other, but in my view such talk is really misleading. A scientific image of man-in-the-world—I'm sorry, humanity-in-the-world (sometimes one falls into bad old traditions)—can neither develop nor sustain itself independently of normative language and categories. So I

have to reject Brandom's crass distinction between the two images, and especially his assertion that normative vocabulary "belongs exclusively to the manifest image." Sellars tells us it's got to be added to the SI, and will thereby become part of the scientific image.

There is, however, plenty of reductionist rhetoric in Sellars, and Brandom's attack on this thread in Sellars' thought is welcome as a counterbalance to that rhetoric. The larger question we need to face is whether that rhetoric expresses something deeply woven into the texture of Sellars' thought or is, instead, a more superficial aspect of Sellars' response to the philosophical problems he faced. According to Brandom, Sellars drew inspiration for his MI/SI distinction from Kant's distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal realms. "The question Sellars' neo-Kantian reappropriation of the phenomena/noumena distinction addresses is how to understand the relations between the descriptive vocabulary native to the manifest image and the descriptive vocabulary native to the scientific image" (Brandom 62). Brandom takes the *scientia mensura* to mean "that descriptive terms from the manifest image refer to things specifiable in descriptive terms from the scientific image, if they refer at all" (Brandom 62). This reading leads to the first construal of Sellars' distinction, which Brandom calls the "sense-reference scientific naturalist rendering of the phenomena/noumena distinction."

Given popular extensionalist assumptions, co-reference of terms is identity of objects, and we've already seen that Sellars is concerned about the identifiability of objects across scientific theories. If we so construe the MI/SI distinction that the relevant descriptive vocabularies constitute two different realms of senses picking out (if anything) a common set of referents, then scientific realism is the view that it is the vocabulary of science that 'really carries all the weight.' It's the only reliable vocabulary we really have. The MI vocabulary successfully refers and the relevant objects exist if and only if the referent is also the referent of (true) scientific assertions. This construal is very congenial to a lot of contemporary scientific naturalists.

Let me try to summarize Brandom's argument very briefly; it is not my purpose here to subject it, as an argument, to close scrutiny. In the standard or received view, identities can be cashed out via Leibniz's law, but with a significant codicil: only extensional predicates count. Extensional predicates are such that what they are true of in a given possible world depends only on what is true in that world. But Brandom argues, "all descriptive properties are modally involved (so that we cannot require that identicals be indiscernible only with respect to modally insulated properties)" (Brandom 76). Furthermore, Brandom claims, "differences in criteria of identity and individuation entail differences in modal profile—that is, differences in the possession of properties whose applicability or possession entails nonmonotonic subjunctive conditionals"

(Brandom 77). This is all stuff you've been hearing—it should be old hat by now. From these premises Brandom concludes "that no identity claims involving terms that fall under descriptive sortals exhibiting different criteria of identity and individuation (that is, no strongly cross-sortal identity claims) are true" (Brandom 76). Brandom recognizes that this is not a knockout argument, because he has not excluded the possibility of constructing some partition of modally involved predicates on which the predicates in one class are referentially transparent and thus some strongly cross-sortal identities come out true. He does think he has made the likelihood of such cases extremely low.

If Brandom's argument is correct, then "the identity version of the sense/reference construal of the scientific naturalist rendering of the phenomena/noumena distinction is untenable, and should be recognized to be so by Sellars' own lights" (Brandom 80). Is there a weaker position then on the distinction between the images that we might attribute to Sellars? Yes, Brandom thinks one in particular stands out: Take functional realization as the basic model of relations between MI and SI. One way to do this is to construe the MI as a theory, Ramsify it (by replacing each bit of descriptive vocabulary in it by a variable bound by a quantifier ranging over predicates or sortals), and then look for the best replacements (realizers) as described in scientific language. Given Sellars' functionalist treatment of the intentional as well as his recognition of the extent to which Aristotle and his hylomorphic metaphysics is a powerful interpretation of the underlying logic of the manifest image, this kind of view slides like a fairly well-fitted glove onto much of what Sellars says. Notice that it also gives us what many have thought to be a reasonable story to tell about the cross-theoretical identities that we saw Sellars worrying about. The identification of genes with DNA sequences, for instance, is ubiquitous, and seems to make sense on that model. But Brandom does not think that this interpretation of the MI/SI relation is available to Sellars, because it conflicts with another compelling Sellarsian argument, namely Sellars' argument against phenomenalism in the essay of that title. Again, I want to be brief in my treatment of Brandom's argument here, because its validity and soundness are not my primary concern. But Brandom tells us, "Both the phenomenalist reductive project and this functionalist rendering of scientific naturalism seek to explain the use of some target vocabulary (object-directed, ordinary empirical description) in terms of the use of a privileged base vocabulary (phenomenal experience talk, scientific description). The phenomenalist looks directly to underwrite subjunctive conditionals whose consequents are expressed in the privileged vocabulary, while the functionalist naturalist looks to reproduce as far as possible the subjunctive conditionals that articulate the criteria of identity and individuation of sortals in the target vocabulary by means of conditionals couched in the privileged vocabulary" (Brandom 83). So Brandom,

following Sellars, poses a dilemma: either all of the target vocabulary is eliminated, or it is not. Suppose we try to Ramsify the manifest image; if we cannot ultimately get rid of it all, the supposed priority of the scientific vocabulary cannot stand. Once one has Ramsified some theory, the general problem, of course, is that there are too many potential realizers or models (e.g., mathematical models). This problem, according to Brandom, is commonly dealt with by requiring that the *causal* relations in the target vocabulary not be Ramsified, which is a reasonable constraint. But then we're pushed onto the other horn of the dilemma: The subjunctive conditionals that the functionalist naturalist seeks to reproduce inevitably include manifest-image sortal vocabulary in their antecedents. Brandom concludes that the functional-realization of the MI/SI relation also fails to hold up. "The result is that the functionalist way of reading Sellars' scientific naturalist rendering of Kant's phenomena/noumena distinction fares no better than the sense/reference identity way of reading it. It just is not the case that everything we talk about in the manifest image that exists at all . . . is something specifiable in the language of an eventual natural science. The manifest image is not best thought of as an appearance of which the world, as described by science, is the reality" (Brandom 87). Brandom's general diagnosis is that Sellars was operating in an atmosphere in which two common assumptions still ruled: (1) a general belief in the unity of science, where that unity is interpreted as grounded in a reductive explanatory hierarchy organizing all the sciences; (2) a further belief that the manifest image or common sense framework somehow belongs in that hierarchy. Neither of these assumptions is common coin any longer, and we do not need to adopt them ourselves. I have strong doubts that Sellars falls into the second error (in fact I don't think he thought that the manifest image was a "theory" in any interesting sense)—but he was well aware that the manifest image is not just another scientific theory. The rest of Brandom's chapter is an argument for his expressive pragmatic naturalism as the right development of Sellars' worthier thoughts. That may, in fact, be the case; it is not something I am going to dispute here.

But I now want to offer a different perspective on Sellars' story concerning the two images that I think puts it in a better light, and one that has some claim on Brandom's own credence. I happily agree with Brandom that Kant's distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal was a model for Sellars, who pretty much says this explicitly. But I don't think it is the only relevant model, for two reasons. First, Kant's phenomena/noumena distinction is absolute, never to be overcome, even in principle; so things as they are in themselves remain forever and in principle beyond our ken, and of course Sellars explicitly rejects that view. Second, the relation between the manifest and scientific images is essentially historical and developmental. The scientific image is supposed to grow out of the manifest image; it has the manifest image as its

necessary condition, not just logically or epistemologically, but historically and methodologically, and develops certain aspects of the manifest image in ways that ultimately turn around to challenge that image. And looked at in this light, *don't we have to say that in Sellars' view the scientific image is the Aufhebung of the manifest image?*

So I propose to take seriously some Hegelian aspects of the MI/SI relation. Both Hegel and Sellars reject the absoluteness of Kant's distinction; both think that knowledge of things as they are in themselves is not in principle beyond our reach. Both think that the reason they can reject the idea of the *Ding an sich* is that we need not start from dualistic assumptions, but from the belief that minds and their objects are parts or aspects of a single reality. And both understand the history of humanity as a development toward an ever-more-adequate set of categories in terms of which we can get at the very being of things. Notice that the interpretations of the MI/SI relation that Brandom examines are themselves static. It is consistent with those interpretations that the two realms of senses or the discovery of the underlying realizers of functionally characterized items are historically and developmentally linked, but it is not *essential* to understanding either the sense/reference or the function/realizer view. Any historical or developmental relation between the MI and the SI seems merely contingent.

Furthermore, the relationships that Brandom has in view take seriously the idea that "everything we talk about in the manifest image that exists at all" needs to be specifiable in the language of ideal science. To someone in the MI, who assumes therefore that there is reason to preserve many of the objects and concepts of that framework, the MI has to appear as a "large-scale map of reality to which science brings a needle-point of detail and an elaborate technique of map-reading" (PSIM ¶21; in SPR: 8; in ISR: 376)—remember that was one of Sellars' characterizations of perennial philosophy—a view Sellars explicitly rejects. Sellars' rejection of such a construal of the MI/SI relation might seem to support Brandom's criticism, because reductionism cannot construe the MI/SI as a filling-in of detail. But we need not interpret Sellars as holding that either we can give a determinate reconstruction in the language of ideal science of manifest objects or those objects do not exist at all or are somehow illusory. Science, in Sellars' view, will not be simply a filling-in of the details concerning the world we live in, nor will it be a simple redefinition of manifest objects in language of ideal science. It will challenge and almost certainly revise some of the fundamental architecture of the conceptual framework we use to cope with the world. Sellars gives us a glimpse of this when he suggests that the basic entities of future science will not be particulars, or at least not objects as we now think of them, but such things as absolute processes. (Are those things particulars? I guess so. And by the way, I want to confess: Sellars has two articles devoted to particulars, and the logic

of particulars, and I don't understand either of them! So if someone can tell me what the hell is really going on there—please, be my guest. They're beyond me. . . .). The differences between the framework of ideal science and our MI will not be minor. We have, perhaps, only a taste of how different they may be in such manifestly odd conceptions as the wave/particle duality or a superposition of states.

Brandom's arguments turn on the difficulty of finding some relation between sortal concepts of the MI and sortal concepts of the SI that preserves the modally rich structure of manifest image concepts. The difficulty of doing so disrupts claims to a simple identity between the objects of the MI and the SI. Despite his talk of such identities in PSIM (and he *does* use that verbiage systematically there), it is surely Sellars' considered view that science will be developing successor concepts to those of the MI. The kind of developmental change Sellars has in mind cannot be a set of minor adjustments in a theory, leaving everything else, including the fundamental conception of the theory's objects, untouched. So just as consciousness and self-consciousness in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* discover new forms of objects as their experience unfolds—the experience changes, the object changes—there is every reason to believe that the conception of an object changes as science develops. In fact, if science proceeds as Sellars thinks it will, moving toward a pure process view of the world, the notion of at least the basic objects of our framework will change very significantly, for absolute processes apparently don't, for instance, belong to kinds. As I mention in my previous paper (in this volume), he wants us to get beyond kind talk somehow, get beyond causation. I doubt I understand how radically different the world looks from such a perspective.

The development of an adequately articulated SI will be a long and arduous process, spanning numerous scientific revolutions, revolts, paradigm shifts or intermediate frameworks. Sufficient structure from the old conceptual framework will have to be preserved at each juncture so that the new concept or concepts are reasonably seen as successors to some of the old concepts, but the successor relation here requires only relevant similarity, not identity. Over generations of conceptual change, therefore, it is thoroughly possible that the concepts to be found in a distant future science will as little resemble our current armory of sortal concepts as we resemble trilobites.

The argument Brandom models on Sellars' anti-phenomenalist argument clearly does point up the difficulty of so thoroughly replacing uses of MI concepts in the subjunctive conditionals that articulate the significant sortals we use in coping with the world that we no longer rely on the descriptive resources of the MI at all. And that surely cannot happen all at once, nor could it proceed by a series of clear identifications of the objects across the developmentally related frameworks. At least, I see no reason to think it should or could so proceed. So I tend

to think that Brandom does put his finger on an important point when he remarks that Sellars assumed a pretty strong unity of science thesis. But if we extract that commitment from the picture, I do not think that we thereby render the MI unassailable. If anything, it becomes easier to envision how a variety of sciences, each tuned to particular issues, might replace various aspects of the MI piecemeal, rather than necessarily waiting until there is grand unified science replacing it wholesale. Rather than a grand reduction of the objects of the MI to a new set of basic objects, we get localized and opportunistic explanations that we hope will be mutually consistent, but might not have any deeper unity. Over generations of scientific development, is it unreasonable to think that the concepts in the clauses of the relevant subjunctive conditionals that articulate the sortal concepts we use will themselves also be replaced with scientifically honed and reconstructed concepts?

I am aware, however, that in suggesting that science may end up more of a patchwork of locally profitable schemes than Sellars would ever have countenanced, I am also betraying my original Hegelian inspiration. For Hegel was a grand unifier if ever there was one. (I mean, that I take to be obvious.) Sorry, I can only say: so much the worse, then, for both Sellars and Hegel. Color me some shade of post-modern, I guess. I think I've given up on grand unities.

There is, however, another reason I claim Hegelian inspiration here. In my view, the Hegelian dialectic moves from the abstract toward ever-increasing concreteness, which I take here to be an ever-increasing comprehension of the context or whole within which the original abstraction is intelligible. It is no historical accident that the earliest developed sciences are highly abstract, and that progress in the sciences has often been achieved by beginning from a relatively simple abstract idealization and developing a theory of a larger context—a higher unity, one might say—within which the simpler abstraction becomes intelligible. It is in this context that I would see, for example, Newton's unification of Galileo's laws of terrestrial motion with Kepler's laws of celestial motion. Darwin provides a context within which a wide range of previously understood but "smaller-scale" phenomena—from breeding patterns in plants and animals to the newly won understanding of geological time scales to the organized diversity of species—fit together into a systematic view of biological phenomena. So it is just as much a Hegelian point that once the theory (or concept) of the larger context or higher unity is developed, the previous, partial, and abstract theories or concepts are not left as they were. Newton did not leave Kepler and Galileo untouched; Einstein did not leave Newton and Maxwell untouched; and Darwin left everyone in his field scrambling to rethink the phenomena they studied.

The objects cannot reveal themselves entirely in tightly constrained contexts in which they are abstracted from their normal situation. As

we broaden the context against which we see them, new and often hitherto unidentified aspects, properties, or relations come to light. Our very concept of objecthood changes. Did Sellars think that the progress of the sciences toward some Peircean ideal promised us a sequence of ever-more-adequate conceptualizations of objecthood itself, eventually swamping the hoary old manifest image concept of an object and the relevant categorized sortals?

The stumbling block I see to the thoroughgoing supersession of MI concepts by SI concepts is, as I have argued elsewhere, the fact that any conceptual scheme we could use must be *one that we can use*. We are finite beings with limited intelligence and built-in computational power, restricted to certain modes of sensory access to the world, however much we supplement them with instrumentation. We are necessarily located in space and time, we have certain natural needs and desires, and we are always operating within a cultural context that determines both our further interests and our further cognitive powers. Perhaps most basic is the fact that we must always be able to engage the world from the perspective of the singular human individual subject, who is also a singular human agent. In this sense, there is a privileged context, and it is not the "view from nowhere" context that, arguably, science strives for. There is no easy accommodation of this perspective in the sciences. And this is why Sellars thought the language of individual and community intentions must be joined to (or I would prefer, rather, never abandoned by) the vocabulary of science. Thus, I am inclined to think that something like the subject naturalism that Brandom, following Price, endorses at the *end* of his chapter is closer to the truth than object naturalism, but as I have tried to argue here, Brandom needs more argument really to get us there.

O'SHEA: I am in agreement with most of what is contained in this powerful book. In particular, I find Brandom's extended defense of his "Kant-Sellars thesis about modality," which is elaborated throughout the central chapters 3 to 6, the constructive heart of the book, to be both innovative and yet interpretively compelling with respect to the real semantic heart of Sellars' philosophy. I myself agree that one of the deepest of insights elaborated in different ways by Kant, C. I. Lewis, Sellars, and now Brandom is that the objective purport of any empirical concept presupposes the prescription of lawful modal constraints governing the objects themselves, as systematically reflected in our inferential practices. This is Kant's idea of the categories as concepts that prescribe laws to appearances, and Sellars' idea of concepts as involving laws, and C.I. Lewis defends this, too—and now I think that Bob has really developed that in a nice way. And I also agree that these sort of normative presuppositional relationships, in general, constitute a key strand running throughout Sellars' philosophy: Sellars' idea, for example, that the normative espousal of principles is reflected in uniformities of practice

and in certain natural regularities. (I tried to make that the center of my book on Sellars as well, in not nearly as sophisticated a way, however.) This highlights the pervasive Janus-faced interplay between what is explicitly asserted on the one hand, and the various normative practices and natural regularities that are thereby, Sellars will say, presupposed or conveyed or prescribed on the other.

Brandom's book, however, theoretically analyzes and probes these matters more deeply than any other work on Sellars, providing a fully worked out theory of how the normative, the modal, the semantic/intentional, and the categorial-ontological domains of discourse stand in various complex relations rendered systematic by Brandom's conception of pragmatically explicitating meta-vocabularies. So it follows on from *Between Saying and Doing* in a very ambitious and interesting way. And he shows how all of this was anticipated with much (if partial) success in Sellars' own views, not to mention in certain ways, those coming out of Kant.

Furthermore (and I didn't do this in my book on Sellars, because I was mostly clarifying what Sellars thought), I also agree with Brandom's central critical recommendation that we should reject Sellars' only quasi-Kantian contention that the object-ontology of the manifest image is strictly speaking false. In particular, I am inclined to think (more along the lines of a Paul Coates or a David Rosenthal, or other theories of perception) that a Sellarsian critical realist theory of perception can embrace a richly explanatory theoretical posit of nonconceptual sensory representations while rejecting Sellars' implausible homogeneity argument and his disputable qualia intuitions (in the end he wouldn't call them 'qualia intuitions' in that way), thus rejecting Sellars' bravely held Feyerabendian idea that our manifest perceptual ontology rests not on various misconceptions but rather on one big, global locational mistake.

So overall, then, I agree with Brandom's general attitude toward each of the two Big Ideas from Kant around which he structures Sellars' philosophy: namely, the Good Idea of pragmatically elaborating Kant's pure categories as functional and explicitating meta-concepts; and the Bad Idea of warping—Sellars *knows* he's warping, he says this—Kant's phenomena/noumena distinction in the attempt to map it onto Sellars' own global distinction between the manifest and scientific images, and in particular to fit the 'global mistake' picture of Prichard: Perception rests on a mistake. So I agree that we should reject what I will call Sellars' *noumenal scientific naturalism*, as putatively entailing the strict falsity of the object-ontology of the manifest image. But now this provides a good transition to some divergences, at least in emphasis, in our readings. For I think we should reject Sellars' noumenal scientific naturalism but defend what I will call Sellars' *integrated* scientific naturalism, where the latter involves far more than just the sensible rejection

of instrumentalism about theoretical entities, and more importantly, results in a different portrait of the enduring significance of Sellars' philosophy. While I embrace quite a bit of what Bob also says is of enduring significance.

The following points have also been discussed very nicely by Dionysis (in this volume), and Bill (in this volume). Consider, first, Brandom's rejection in chapters 1 and 6 of what he calls "strongly cross-sortal identity claims," as "requiring that when manifest-image expressions refer at all, they must refer to items referred to by expressions belonging to the scientific image" (Brandom, 27). Without getting into the details of his very sophisticated argument, I can say that since I agree with Brandom's modal Kant-Sellars thesis, I am also inclined to agree with the specific anti-reductionist points he makes here. However, I don't think Sellars' scientific realism was intended to require strongly cross-sortal identities in that way. To bring this out I'll note that Bill deVries had raised an interestingly related objection in his Sellars book when he argued that Sellars cannot intelligibly hold both that manifest objects are *appearances* of scientific realities and that they are nonetheless also *identical to* those realities. For the appearance relation is asymmetrical while identity is not.

But I replied (in my book, 2007: 159–60, 222*n*22) that Sellars' general account of conceptual change and theory succession eludes Bill's objection, and I think it eludes Bob's objection, for similar reasons. Consider Sellars' views on the counterpart concepts of Newtonian and Einsteinian *mass*, just to illustrate the relevant account of conceptual change, and of co-reference (co-reference can be complicated, and I'll say something about that in a moment), and of approximate truth with strict falsity. So what are those concepts all about? Sellars is going to distinguish $concept_1$ from successor $concept_2$, for example Newton's *mass* from Einstein's, but he's also going to distinguish $refers_1$ from $refers_2$, and $sense_1$ from $sense_2$; he's not going to have the same notion of co-reference as the standard sense-reference account has it. It's going to be dot-quoted names, embedded within dot-quoted sentences (senses), and it is all going to concern functional similarity. The straightforward identification of Newtonian mass with Einsteinian mass, given their modally diverging lawful entailments, will rightly be ruled out by Brandom's Kant-Sellars thesis—the straightforward identity of the two. But Sellars doesn't straightforwardly identify them in that way, and nor does he do the classic Putnam-Kripke preservation of reference, either. Rather, he argues, first, that there is sufficient comparative, intra-theoretical functional role similarity between the two concepts to regard them both generically as *mass concepts* that are involved in relevantly similar explanatory tasks. (Jay Rosenberg was good on some of this.) The Einsteinian theory then provides a model, using its own Einsteinian conceptual recourses, of the Newtonian concept of mass, thereby demonstrating, internally to Einstein's theory, the strict

falsity of the relevant modeled Newtonian laws, while also exhibiting their approximate truth (that's why it works within limits). The strictly speaking falsity and reference failure provide the aspect of non-identity (that is, there is a sense in which there *is no* such thing as Newtonian mass, strictly speaking; it has been replaced); whereas the generic functional similarity, along with the Einsteinian reconception of mass and the counterpart modeling within the later theory, warrant the claim that relativity theory has thereby identified what mass really is and always was. This is Sellars' account of theoretical identification by counterpart reconceptualization, and that's what he's essentially saying we do, and it is supposed to apply as well to those aspects of the manifest ontology that fit this model of explanation. (David picked out some passages from *Science and Metaphysics*—it's very complicated—what do you do with all aspects of the manifest image, do you identify them in that way? And Sellars tries to say some things about this, but it's very complicated. Sometimes you just want to say there aren't those things, but sometimes you want to say they are identifiable with the later things.) This account of theoretical identification by counterpart reconceptualization is supposed to apply as well to those aspects of the manifest ontology that fit that model. Our belief that the banana is yellow, on Sellars' view, which is perfectly true and reveals reality if that worked, but it contingently turns out to be the case that there is a better theory that is re-conceptualized in such a way [that] it turns out it rests on a mistake, although it needn't have, and is strictly speaking false (which is the part I don't go along with). But Sellars' thought was that an analogous counterpart concept of the banana-shaped expanse of yellow will be part of a sophisticated neurophysiological-cum-environmental successor theory that will explain the approximate truth and hence the 'appearances' of the manifest ontology.

This is my shot at it: Both the reductive identity and the appearance claims, I take it, are supposed to be accounted for in that sort of way; and as far as I can see this account would then just sidestep Bob's and Bill's objections, because you can account for the appearance along with the aspect of identity, and you don't make direct cross-sortal identifications. So this would be one respect in which I reject Sellars' *noumenal* scientific naturalism, the *global* Feyerabendian ambition, without rejecting a central methodological and ontological component of Sellars' strong scientific naturalism. That said, I hold, as do Brandom and deVries, that many objects of the manifest image and of the 'special sciences' (I'm interested in the case of biology) are simply not plausibly subsumable under that particular *replacement* model of explanation—although, who knows?—the future might hold in store some surprising reductions of this kind in some higher-level domains. Darwin gave us a different model for domesticating biology. Roy Wood Sellars was very good on the biological outlook and the layered aspects of things, and I'm attracted to that in these domains. And having also rejected

the color argument for scientific noumenalism, I am now left with no motivation, or no strength, for the heroic Feyerabendian attempt to envision a global idealization of the replacement model of theoretical identification.

However, although I shy off that super-task, I also see no obstacle to *integrating* any such cases of theoretical replacement identification—no logical objections to that story—*within* a scientific naturalism that, in other respects, is multilayered and non-reductive. I also see no reason not to seek to expand such theoretical identifications as a kind of empirically open-ended regulative ideal in Kant's sense, though again my own view is that such an ideal is probably not best thought of as achievable globally, for the reasons cited. But there are also no *a priori* philosophical grounds to *resist* such enthusiastic expansions, I think, in the object-domain either, wherever they might turn out to be plausible. I think, in a sense, the single most important and successful aim of Sellars' whole philosophy was to show how even the ideal Feyerabendian achievement of such an aim, if it really were coherently envisionable, would not threaten our autonomy as knowers and as rational agents. That was his biggest thing. That was his heart of hearts. He had two hearts of hearts, actually. The other one was the expanse of yellow. So doing those two things took some work.

Here is a further point: There are many other significant ways in which a slightly different overall picture of Sellars emerges once one disentangles noumenal scientific naturalism from various more plausible but nonetheless still strongly naturalistic and ambitious aspects of Sellars' views—views that can, however, I think be fully integrated without replacing the manifest ontology. So consider Brandom's remarks in his introduction on his discussions with Sellars (fascinating biographical discussions, very revealing philosophically):

> how . . . matter-of-factual picturing relations [are] to be related to the normatively characterizable discursive practices that (he and I agreed) alone deserved to be thought of in genuinely *semantic* terms. [. . .] [O'Shea aside: How we going to characterize the matter-of-factual picturing relations, how are they to be related to the normatively characterizable discursive practices that] he and I agreed, alone deserve to be thought of in genuinely sematic terms. We both saw that it is in a story about how sign-designs can lead a double life, on the one hand as items caught up in a web of causal relations supporting subjunctively robust conditionals, and on the other as normatively characterizable as having proper and improper uses ("according to rules" . . .) that [Sellars'] response must be found. . . . (Brandom, 13)

(Brandom on his discussions with Sellars.) But Brandom reports having been "quite critical of [Sellars'] characterization of this

amphibiousness [O'Shea aside: this double life] without having positive suggestions as to how one might better conceive it" (13). He says, however, that "the issue has come to assume an importance for me of the same magnitude as it did for Sellars," and he refers in this context to his key conceptions of "the normative and the modal Kant-Sellars theses," and thus to "deontic normative vocabulary and alethic modal vocabulary as articulating two aspects of the phenomenon of intentionality" (13). So we've got Sellars bangin' on about picturing in his office, and they're both agreeing "How are we going to relate this causal dimension to the normatively characterizable semantic dimension?" And then Bob later develops what I think is great stuff in the Kant-Sellars thesis about modality, and about normativity, and these show how causal modality is layered with normative vocabulary and with intentionality as well.

But I think it's clear that there are crucial differences between those two envisioned ways—Brandom's and Sellars' in these conversations—in which simultaneously normative and causal 'double lives' can be led by various kinds of tokenings, as they had put it: *both* sorts of 'double life' are in Sellars—both Brandom's and the other one—but only one of them is in Bob's work. Brandom's double life is a sophisticated pragmatic metalinguistic development of Sellars' conception of how "the language of modality is . . . a 'transposed' language of norms" (Sellars IM V, §39), which for Brandom is the semantic resultant of two pragmatically mediated metavocabularies. And that's good stuff! But in their unhappy discussions specifically about 'picturing', what Sellars was after—and I think Brandom knows this—was a different sort of Janus-faced relation between the normative and the causal, one that has nothing *essentially* to do with *noumenal* scientific realism at all, but has everything to do with the possibility of an *integrated* and *non*-reductive scientific naturalism. What Sellars had in mind is that for any physical tokening (whether it be a non-language using animal brain state, or a conceptual-linguistic tokening proper) for any such thing to have any object-representational cognitive content or purport in relation to its environment at all, such a tokening must be embedded within some wider normative system of proper functioning—whether it be a social-linguistic space or a naturally selected space of proper biological functioning. You're only going to represent something if you're embedded in one of these kinds of wider, normative proper functioning systems. The result being that it now intelligibly *ought to be* the case that representing-events—little tokenings of these kinds—having certain properties and relations are tokened *ceteris paribus* when and only when they stand in appropriate causal-historical-sociological relations to what are thereby *represented* environmental events that are supposed to have certain corresponding properties and relations (cf. O'Shea 2007: 147–158). This is essentially [Huw Price's notion of]

e-representation embedded within i-representation; Sellars is looking for something like that.

Roughly put, Sellars' thought was that there must be a way of embedding an underlying and norm-parasitic naturalistic theory of object-representational mapping and tracking *within*, and resulting from, in part, the familiar non-reductive, rule-governed norms pertaining to 'meaning as use' that both generate and depend upon those complex causal-historical relationships. It's an interdependence. There are familiar objections to such subsequently highly influential naturalistic strategies of accounting for representational purport in certain matter-of-factual domains—but usually precisely because they fail properly to appreciate what was Sellars' main lesson: the normatively Janus-faced character of the relevant naturalistic relations. You're not going to have purely naturalistic theories of representation except as embedded in one of those two kinds of wider normative spaces: proper biological functioning, or the space of reasons. Sellars' characteristic philosophical genius, for his part, was to contend only for the *intelligible logical space* for such substantive and integrated naturalistic hypotheses, as representing no threat to (and in fact requiring, in our case) the sorts of normative-inferential conceptual relations in terms of which our intentionality and our rational agency are constituted—and that latter stuff includes, of course, the sorts of meta-level pragmatic 'double lives' that Brandom is doing so much to clarify and expand. Sellars wanted that kind of transpositional meta-vocabulary 'double life', and also this other 'double life' where we're tracking the world as a result, but in a way that is parasitic on those normative activities and doesn't swing free in a sort of Kripke-Putnam referential way.

Again this sort of integrated scientific naturalism has nothing to do *specifically* with Sellars' overreaching noumenal scientific naturalism or with the conjectured wholesale theoretical replacement of the manifest image object-ontology with that of Peircean science. For Sellars' view—and this is a deep and important thing, that I think is definitely right—is that these Janus-faced norm/nature double lives pertain to *any* matter-of-factual discourse, including that of the manifest image. But unfortunately this groundbreaking and intelligible dimension of a normatively integrated scientific naturalism, which appears throughout Sellars' philosophy, seems unnecessarily—at least gives the appearance—of unnecessarily going out with the noumenal bathwater in Brandom's book on Sellars. The result is that Brandom's Sellarsian pragmatism gives at least the appearance of being more hostile to scientific naturalism than it needs to be, in my view, and thereby misses out on the chance to recover, in a non-reductive but enthusiastic way, one of the most dominant themes in the history of American pragmatism.

In this final section I do want to say little bit about nominalism, but not much. Finally, then, a few words about Brandom's carefully constructed

critique of Sellars' nominalism in the final chapter 7, entitled 'Sellars' Metalinguistic Expressivist Nominalism'. Brandom argues plausibly—I think plausibly—that Sellars ultimately confused what should properly be distinguished as *pragmatic* and *semantic* metalanguages, as he was just explaining that to us helpfully in his opening remarks above (and Chapter 12 of this volume), and which were already distinguished to some extent in Sellars' own conception of a 'pure pragmatics'. The result of not distinguishing these pragmatic and semantic metalanguages carefully, Brandom argues, was that "Sellars himself draws invidious nominalistic ontological conclusions" (28) according to which only *nameables* (ultimately, 'pure processes') exist "in the world", as Sellars puts it (cf. 269). This view also brought in its train Sellars' lingering non-realist, empiricist attitude toward the alethic modalities, which is a nice connection he makes, and which is true in Sellars—I'm going to concentrate on that case. Brandom's recommended emphasis on Sellars' *pragmatic expressivist* metalinguistic account of the function of categorial vocabulary—'property', 'fact', and so on—pragmatic expressivist, not semantic metalinguistic, seeks to preserve key aspects of Sellars' Carnapian metalinguistic account of universals, properties, and kinds, but in a way that entails no revisionary ontological nominalism and no resulting hostility to modal realism understood in Brandom's sense.

I think this is a very powerful argument. This chapter insightfully diagnoses what is indeed, it seems to me, a genuinely deep and difficult choice-point in both the pragmatist tradition and in the Sellarsian legacy. First, I agree that Kant himself was a 'modal realist'—I quite like Kant, I work on Kant—in *something* very much like Brandom's sense: for on Kant's view the upshot is that we necessarily represent that necessary causal connections obtain in nature itself, objectively. (Nature itself—this has nothing to do with Kant's noumena; it's *nature*.) But Sellars' view was subtly different, and also compelling, and I think he held the following views with respect to *all* matter-of-factual domains (we don't need to bring in the noumenal anything!), including the manifest image, since he held that picturing-representations are generated in any empirical, matter-of-factual domain. So again: leave aside the noumenalism. Rather, it's the Janus-faced picture again: in this case (i.e., of nominalism with respect to necessary connections—the modal realism issue), Sellars' view has to do with our espousal of the normative Kantian inferences that thereby conceptually represent objectively necessary connections (the Kantian view is that to experience any event you have to judge that something preceded that event and necessitated it). And what's really nice about Bob's Kant-Sellars thesis about modality—and I think it is also in Kant and Lewis, and in Sellars—is that to cognize any particular event or object, you're already conceptually embedding within those objectively real causal connections. If it's not causal, it's modal in some other way.)

The key further point is that our espousal of the normative Kantian inferences that thereby represent objectively necessary connections, is reflected for Sellars in underlying naturalistic patterns of representing-events that track and map those Humean successions of events that *are all that is really taking place, ontologically, in the natural world*. That is, we're inference-ticketing ourselves and others, we're saying "if you assert this, then [you have permission to] assert that," and what we're doing is getting our inferences to go in certain patterns, according to normative rules that we espouse, we are representing that there are necessary connections (as it were), we are saying 'A necessitates B', but what those inferential practices are doing is mapping—in Price's e-representation way—the Humean successions that are *really* all that's out there, for Sellars. So we're getting ourselves, like Sellars' robot in "Being and Being Known" to say, to represent "lightning now; thunder soon", and we're doing that with fancy inferential norms, and with ascriptions of causal connection, but what we're doing is tracking nature. Sellars wants to say *in nature*, there is a sense in which Hume was right. There aren't As followed by Bs, and necessitations getting them to represent them in a way that tracks them. And *that's* an interesting idea. This is why I find it an interesting and difficult choice-point that Bob is really picking up on.

So Sellars' doctrine of 'pure processes' and fancy later stuff are just more adequate replacement versions of this basic story, which he already tells in "Truth and Correspondence" *about the manifest world*. He says there is an underlying Humean truth, which our normative Kantian practices, as it were, are getting us to track. That's the story, and it's a lot like some things Huw Price was saying (in this volume). So Sellars' constitutive Kantianism, in other words, is supposed to be consistent with this underlying Humean or Russellian view about what's *really* contained in nature, which doesn't include 'necessitations' in the same way that it includes objects—I mean, Bob Brandom can say it's not the same way, too, and can make distinctions here, but for Sellars in a stronger sense, they're not in the world in the way that objects, events, or 'pure processes' are. So the good thing about this Peircean science, we're doing all this normative inferring, and then we're reacting to apparent disconfirmations, we're changing our inference-tickets, the sorts of laws we espouse in response to those things, and all of this explanatory or explanationist project is getting us to make causal inferences, reflected in inference-ticket licenses, and they are getting us to better track the world. That's what science is doing—it's changing our inferential norms to ultimately be better tracking what's really out there, which is one damn thing after another. And then one damn thing after another can be conceived in more fancy and more fancy science. So that's Sellars' picture. And *that's* an interesting picture.

So I'll end with this: do we go with the modal realism of Kant and Hegel and Brandom on *this* question, about necessary connections, or do we go with the underlying naturalistic nominalism of Sellars' corrected Kantian empiricism? One thing I know is that Sellars' *noumenal* scientific naturalism, which is the focus of Bob's criticism, is irrelevant to that debate, although it is maybe connected in the diagnostic way that Brandom just talked about in his opening remarks. I suspect that an integrated scientific naturalism can, perhaps, contrary to Brandom, retain the merits of Kant's objectivist view, that we represent that there are objectively necessary connections, while also preserving Sellars' view that, considered from a certain ontological view, universals, real connections, and other abstract entities don't exist in nature, *per se*, at the end of the day. For now what I can say is that I think Brandom's critique of Sellars' nominalism, whether successful or not, has succeeding in highlighting the importance of this particular fork in the road, very nicely.[1]

I probably have another minute, do I?

MICHAEL HICKS: One more minute!

JIM O'SHEA: One more minute! Perfect! When you say there are no properties in the world it can sound very implausible, but one of the things Sellars does in those particular articles is say that what's really out there are *qualified particulars*. There are, as it were, propertied objects, a kind of trope theory is what's Sellars' ultimate ontology is. When you are using the word 'red' as a dispensable auxiliary predicate, and you're saying "X is red", the way we use that does then succeed in getting you to track red objects and not green objects. In a sense what Sellars thought Plato's abstract entities were doing in carving things at the joints, they were really carving our representational activities at the joints by showing what kind of predicate practices we have that enable us to track objects in this way. Sellars' theory was that we could do it without predicates, and we can also explain the upshot of it just in terms of, as it were, trope-like objects—qualified objects without any further universals, and so on. So he's got some interesting things to say that don't make it sound so bare. And his later "Towards a Theory of Predication" offers a possible account of what that might look like. I'll end there. Thanks.

BOB BRANDOM: Thank you both for that. I really don't disagree with what you've said. Jim is characteristically judicious. I think we all agree in rejecting what Jim is calling now the *noumenal scientific naturalism,* and I think we all agree that that this really is a strand that is in Sellars that is mixed up with these strands that he didn't fully see how to disentangle, and we're now in a position to do that. I didn't take my argument to do more than—I don't know—drive a stake through the heart of *that* aspect of his rhetoric. That clears the ground for us to

think about what is recoverable in that way. Some revisionary things are going to need to be done with what's left.

Bill, you started off giving us this quote about Sellars' seeing at the heart of his suggestion about the manifest image and the scientific image that the unification of them couldn't happen piecemeal—it had to happen sort of "all at once." And that's something that your attractive Hegelian picture says, "Well, that can't be right. It is going to have to be spread out, and piecemeal, and so on," and that's a very sensible way of going. At this point we have to decide which pieces we can use to make something sensible out of. And Jim, I think your account had the same general shape. You talked about this methodological fork in the road. I'm not myself tempted by the naturalist/empiricist strand that I agree is in American Pragmatism—but one might be—and seeing that it's going to be real hard to have both of these, we need to think about what considerations speak for the one and for the other, and which other desirable things do they integrate with? I think that shows us in a good place in trying to think critically about Wilfrid's work. And I hope it's obvious to everybody not only how sophisticated and intricate Sellars' view is, but just how rich the questions that remain are after we've engaged critically with some parts of it. It really seems for me a good way to end in our thinking about Sellars in a new generation.

BILL DEVRIES: I agree very much with Bob that one of the nice things about people who are interested in Sellars is that, unlike devotees of *some* philosophers, they don't think that philosophy *ended* with him. If anything, they think, "Oh, it's just getting going!", and I like that. Sellars is an invitation to do more, not to stop where you are and spend your life explicating something that's already finished. I'm with Bob 100 percent on that.

MICHAEL HICKS: We can open it to the floor now, if anybody else has questions.

KEVIN FINK: Thanks. This question is primarily for Jim. I like the very nicely nuanced discussion and defense of Sellars' scientific naturalism. My question is this: It seems like one of the main reasons to want to defend a Humean ontology, of the sort you were seeming to associate, would be that you bought into the Humean epistemology.

JIM O'SHEA: No, that's not true at all.

KEVIN FINK: Right! And this is sort of an oversimplification of a lesson that, at least I read out, from Professor Brandom's book, that once I *reject* that Humean epistemology, once I cease affording this privileged status to empirical descriptive vocabulary, when I realize that in order to have any of that in any meaningful way I must already possess these other (at least) abilities, if not concepts. It seems like you were conceding, on the epistemological end.

JIM O'SHEA: No that was the great thing [about Sellars] is to make none of those epistemological assumptions—that's my view, anyway.

KEVIN FINK: You were conceding the Kant-Sellars thesis, it seemed.

JIM O'SHEA: Oh, I concede that.

KEVIN FINK: Yes, okay. You agreed that in order to have this empirical descriptive vocabulary we needed to have these other abilities, involving modality, etc.

JIM O'SHEA: Yes.

KEVIN FINK: So I guess the question is, given *that*, given that the empirical descriptive vocabulary is not privileged in that sense, why privilege it in the ontological sense? Why think the ontological picture is just about the things that we're supposedly describing, and not about the modal facts, etc.?

JIM O'SHEA: Well, I guess I wouldn't privilege it . . . It's in a different line of work. But it is unique; think of how bold Sellars' attempt is to combine the later Wittgenstein with the early Wittgenstein. The way he's doing it, he's reading the early Wittgenstein purely as a theory of mapping, picturing, and then saying we can have *both*. Does he then *privilege* the later Tractarian account over what was absolutely central to him to the end—the whole later Wittgensteinian picture? I don't want to put it *that* way. With regard to certain tasks it does a different thing. In the way that Huw talks about these—it's in a different line of work. We can explicate that line of work, but it is still embedded—it doesn't have to be *privileged* in the way of being world-revealing, because moral claims can be true and false, too. And—what's the quote that keeps coming up?—an "ungrudging recognition" of all the other ways in which we say true things about the world doesn't necessarily have to be made second-class, if it turns out that there is a useful distinction of this kind. Maybe Sellars fell into making that [distinction] too strongly when he's a logical atomist at heart—when he says "I'm a Russellian"—all those things that you'd never believe that he'd say if you'd read his epistemology.

BILL DEVRIES: I still think that *he* thought—I don't know rightly or wrongly—that the move to picturing did give some kind of privilege to those entities. Because, in his view, if there were no picturing, nothing else would work, because nothing else would get hooked up properly to the world in which we live. It's the picturing that ties us to the world in which we live, so that gets priority because it is the *sine qua non* for everything else making sense. So all the rest of the stuff is not *second class*, and we can ungrudgingly recognize that it's *different*, but I think that he does think that there's some privilege to the vocabulary in which one pictures. But he doesn't think it evident what that vocabulary is. He thinks that every language has to have picturing, and pictures don't make themselves self-evident to us *as* pictures. That's a scientific project: to figure out what it is, and how it is, that our language, either here-now or in some future scientific millennium, pictures, and what it is about that language that pictures.

CARL SACHS: I just want to raise the following consideration to see what the feeling in the room is about this. One of the problems you're going to have with Sellars is his commitment to the Humeanism. I think that is actually going to be a very serious problem, in a lot of ways, and the person you need to make the Sellarsian project work is not Hume, but Dewey, because it's in the organism-environment transactions where the rubber of discursive practices really hits the road. I'd like to invite some comment on that, or maybe make some push-back: What's wrong with using Dewey to do this? Thank you.

BILL DEVRIES: Let me ask for further clarification. What's wrong with Hume? It's the minimal, right? The world is just one damn thing after another. That's the minimal, I assume. I cannot think of anything more minimal than that. So why do we have to think there's more?

CARL SACHS: That's funny!

BILL DEVRIES: *That's* pushback!

CARL SACHS: That's fine—I asked for it! So the question is: Why more than just what Hume gives us? Well for one thing, we might want a picture that is post-Darwinian, informed by better biology, more consistent with what we do know in 2015 about how brains work, and how ecosystems work, and things like that, so that's one point in favor of it. Another is that because it is more richly structured, because there is a lot more going on, it gives us more information about *how* the higher-order discursive practices get constrained. We don't have the problem of our concepts just being projected onto the world—a cookie-cutter picture of how concepts cut into the world—which might be a worry with a Humean background.

BILL DEVRIES: (pointing across the room) Huw!

MICHAEL HICKS: Huw, do you want to answer that?

HUW PRICE: Well, it's sort of related to this discussion. As I've been listening to this I've been asking myself why is it that in some respects I'm a Humean or a Russellian about causation. Causation is a topic on which, in one sense, I have developed views that are in some sense independent of these broader issues that we're talking about. I think [this] is a case in which a good case can be made that we can understand our ways of causal thinking by combining a Russellian or Humean ontological picture with the fact that we're *agents*. By putting the two together you get the bit that seems to be missing from the Russellian picture—the bit that Nancy Cartwright rightly pointed out needed to be there in order to account for the distinction between effective and ineffective strategies, but I think wrongly thought had to be there in the metaphysics. She didn't see the possibility that you could understand it in terms of the distinctive standpoint of an agent. But then that thought led me to two thoughts. One is: To what extent whether what you need to put into the explanatory base can be used more widely to gain traction on the sort of more general issues we've been considering here. But then also to a

suggestion about how we can modify what Bob has given us here, with these diagrams, to make those questions explicit. And that's by modifying them, to put in the P-boxes, to make explicit what you're assuming about the world in which those practices are taking place. In a sense, I suppose, it must be implicit, anyway, but it would be nice to make it explicit. Then, for example, in the causal case, you could have in the P-box a sort of Humean or Russellian world of one thing after another, just regularities and associations, and then you put in an agent—that's the sort of P-bit. My claim would then be that at that point you have what I'll call POV—practice and ontology—sufficient for the causal vocabulary. So this is really not a question; it's a suggestion as to how we could use this material that Bob has already given us, and the very nice graphical representations, and add to it this ontological element. The question is, *what's assumed on the world side* in these explanations and vocabularies? That might make some of these questions we're looking at a little bit more tractable.

BOB BRANDOM: Well I'm down with that. One way of thinking about the advantage of thinking about the relations of discursive practices to things in the world is that you're not tempted to think, "Here's the word, just sort of sitting still, and here's the ~~thing~~. Now how are we going to get these together?" If your paradigm of a practice is attaching two things by driving nails with a hammer through them, the hammer and the nails are *part of the practice*. They aren't sitting over here while the practice, or just the movements of your arm, without the things in them. The way it is supposed to work with those diagrams is that what's in the practice is always a matter of the vocabulary you're using to specify the practice. Of course to specify hammering, or discursive practice, one is going to be characterizing the objects that are involved in the practice. So I would say we're just going to get one more box—that's the vocabulary we use to specify it—but yes, there is a big difference between using a richer vocabulary that's describing the abilities, the roles the objects are playing, and so on. And I think it would be an interesting task to translate your account of causation into such a specification of the practices.

BILL DEVRIES: I want to go back to Carl, because I don't want him to think we just ignored him.

HUW PRICE: Oh, I'm sorry, I had meant to say how I thought it connected to Carl's question. Apologies, Carl!

BILL DEVRIES: Sellars never really defends this [Humean picture]. He just assumes that when it comes right down to it the world is just one damn thing after another. There's no defense of it. If I were to construct one in his name—which is always a dangerous thing to do—I guess it would be something like this. He does recognize, of course, that our conceptual frameworks are multidimensional, highly complex, there is a lot of richness with modalities, and normativity, and all those other things, but as

Stephanie [Dach] pointed out, I don't believe there is an inference from "Our conceptual framework has this rich structure" so "the world must have this rich structure," because conceptual frameworks are changeable, discardable things. So there's no straightforward inference. The thing that I think he holds on to as sort of the last ditch is just the picturing. That's the ultimate standard. And when we finally get a conceptual framework that allows us to picture arbitrarily well—arbitrarily designated segments of the world history (or whatever)—at *that* point we have some right perhaps to assume that the structures of our conceptual frameworks adequately, in some way, represent the structure of the world. But actually, I'm not convinced. At that point, the picturing is what we've got. I'm going to make *minimal* assumptions about what the hell's out there, except insofar as we can build a framework that enables us, in the long run, to construct these pictures that really do work. Everything else is on *our* side.

BOB BRANDOM: You're bringing me back to those discussions with Sellars. All we need to make this work is an Archimedean point outside all conceptualization, a point of view from which the goodness of all of the different conceptualizations can be compared, so we can be confident that we can really be in touch with the world.

BILL DEVRIES: The trouble is, there's no such point of view!

BOB BRANDOM: Exactly! Right! The way I think about picturing is, it's an inferential matter. To say that the one thing pictures another like a map is to say that inferences from a range of map-facts to a range of terrain-facts are good. So any assessment of a picturing relation is done from within a language in which you can specify the pictured facts and the picturing facts so that you know, well, from this design on a map—that's a map-fact—and you can make an inference to this one to another one—no, that's a coffee stain, there is no good inference from that to the way things are. *That* I can understand. Those relations are important. But they're precisely *not* that Archimedean point, that language that Sellars uses. . . . I don't see that that's intelligible.

BILL DEVRIES: But at least you said I sounded like him. I was just trying to sound like him!

JIM O'SHEA: If Sellars sounds like that in some context, he wants neither an Archimedean point that's outside of all frameworks, or to have using maps be using them in that agential way. What he thinks is that through the use of discursive practices and everything governed by norms, in the normal way that would be accessible to us, let's say that we're telling each other to infer Q, after asserting P. Let's take the robot where it's two dots when it's lightning, and it's '//' when it's thunder; we engineer this into the system, and it's our engineering knowledge that is the normative practice that sets up the [picturing relations]. . .—just like record companies engineer all the intelligible inferences that you can make. But we can also see there is an extensional relationship, is his idea, between

these dots, and they occur in a causal historical relationships, (but) of course we engineered that. Now, our discursive practices are the only things we have access to, and falsification—we change our theory—all of it has got be internal to a framework for Sellars—he believes that—but I think he thinks our actual tokenings as a result of those (and this is the part, I don't know if there is a good theory for this) are unwittingly, as it were, setting themselves up in various temporal and spatial structures that are mapping things. So I don't think he has the "user-map" view of pictures, he's got the underlying—

BILL DEVRIES: They are like animal representations.

BOB BRANDOM: That's absolutely fine. What I'm asking is, what are you *saying* when you say there is this extensional relationship between the things? It's that *there's a good inference* from inscription facts to meteorological facts.

JIM O'SHEA: He says it is the sort of thing that can be articulated by a mathematical theory of second-order isomorphisms—a similarity between the relationships among the dots on the record and there's a second-order isomorphism where they can be shown to track mathematically the . . . But it all results not from magic, but from the rule-governed practices.

BOB BRANDOM: I wasn't addressing sort of how it's established—just what you're saying when you're saying there's this picturing.

PRESTON STOVALL: That's what you're *doing* when you're saying there's picturing—you're saying here's an inference ticket schema from this set things [of] in the nervous system to this set of things in the world. But what you're *saying* is that there's a subjunctive correlation between this nervous system and this set of events that this kind of creature has the capacity to be on to. So what you're *doing* is you're underwriting inferences. But what you're *saying* is that there is a correlation between two structures in the world that's isomorphic in virtue of a subjunctive correlation between them.

Sorry, I had a question, anyway. I wanted to say something in defense of Carl, and precisely along this point. [There are] two ways in which Dewey might be useful here, both of them connected to Sellars. These are things that I think Sellars picks up from Dewey. One is emphasis on evolved habituation. So it's in Peirce too, and obviously in James as well. But particularly Dewey's focus on reflex actions, and states of the central nervous system as conditions on the possibility for doing the kind of things that we do. You might think that, insofar as this story that you suggested Bob, on how the social and the natural might be united—getting the son and the daughter together again—I think Dewey is someone, because he thought seriously about the kind of things Sellars was thinking about, might be useful in trying to give that reconciliation. The second thing is just a passage that's thick in the middle of *Experience and Nature*, and it reads like an abstract of "Empiricism

and Philosophy of Mind" because it asserts both a rejection of mythical givenness, and circumscription to language. So he's got psychological nominalism here, in virtue of the phrase "apart from discourse." I'll just read—this is Dewey: "The notion that sensory affections discriminate themselves, apart from discourse, as being colors and sounds, etc., and thus constitute certain elementary modes of knowledge, even though it be only knowledge and their own existence, is inherently so absurd that it would never have occurred to anyone to entertain it, were it not for certain preconceptions about mind and knowledge."[2] So he's rejecting the thought that apart from discourse there could be these momentary sensory episodes that could constitute baseline units for knowledge. So again, I think there might be reasons to think, insofar as we're interested in Sellars in a new generation, we take seriously the roots in classical pragmatism and Dewey.

BOB BRANDOM: Sellars himself never called himself a pragmatist, but was very apologetic about that. There is this poignant passage where he says, "My father didn't really like the pragmatists"—they had displaced his generation of philosophers institutionally. Roy Wood Sellars is one of this generation of philosophers who used three names—Ralph Barton Perry, William Pepperell Montague, Edwin Bissell Holt—that had the critical realism, direct realism, representational realism debates in perception, all of which, when we look back at them now, we say "This is some of the same sort of stuff we're really worried about—this was a sophisticated discussion. Where did this all go?" It was swept away by enthusiasm for Dewey. So his father was actually quite resentful about pragmatism. Sellars said, sort of apologetically, "I can't really take them seriously in print, because of the way I was raised." [Laughter from the audience.] This is just a historical footnote. Yes, we can say we can see all these things, and there is a sense in which he suspected that was true, or knew that that was true, but just for contingent reasons, couldn't pursue that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I thought it was the other way around. I though he was distancing himself from pragmatism because it had been eclipsed by another philosophy. So thank you very much for that.

JIM O'SHEA: Just another Carl thing . . . If that sort of enactivist Deweyian thing were true, it might fit better with Bob's outlook of vehicle-less thought and not positing inner tracking items—it's much more a view of our environmental nature not requiring a special mode—it might fit well with some of Bob's project. And I'm happy if that turns out to be true.

MARK LEBAR: Yes, my question concerns the categories. I don't have a problem with the description you give of the purpose of it, and the role and the function of it, but I'm putting a different twist on the question, given the year we're in today. What role do the categories play? Do the

categories need to be revised in some way, as far as Kant goes? Could you address how that could affect the formula you give for how these functional roles are going to perform?

BOB BRANDOM: The list of concepts that have this status, although Sellars didn't call it categorial, playing this covertly metalinguistic expressive role that *I'm* saying was his notion of the categories was somewhat different from Kant's already, and *my* list would be different yet. So, for instance, Sellars was downstream from Wittgenstein's schooling Russell on the nonrepresentational character of logical vocabulary, where Russell really worried about negative facts, and conditional facts, and so on. Wittgenstein had taught everybody the lesson you don't have think about logical vocabularies playing *that* role. Sellars did not put logical vocabulary in a box with modal vocabulary, with ontological categorial vocabulary; he had a special box for that, and actually we hear very little about how he thought they worked. They're just special cases. But I think they belong in that box. Sellars, I think correctly, treats normative vocabulary as going in that box. Kant doesn't. As much as I think the First Critique is organized around that insight into the normative character of discursivity, that's not one of the categories. Now does it end up having that status by the end of the Second, and especially the Third Critique? Maybe. But for Sellars that's absolutely front-and-center, and I think seeing the intimate relation between the normative and the modal—the alethic and the deontic—that goes deep for him. Once you start thinking about these successor specifications of expressive roles that I'm saying are categorial, yeah, that's going to have an effect on the extension of what you say should be treated like this.

MICHAEL HICKS: Thank you very much. Should we give to the panel our applause?

(audience applause)

Notes

1 [Just for 'philosophical sport', as Quine says: an 'Afterword' from Peirce (not that it helps):

> "Kant was a nominalist; although his philosophy would have been rendered compacter, more consistent, and stronger if its author had taken up realism, as he certainly would have done if he had read Scotus. Hegel was a nominalist of realistic yearnings. I might continue the list much further. Thus, in one word, all modern philosophy of every sect has been nominalistic."
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> (Peirce CP 1.19, from the "Lowell Lectures of 1903," Lecture IIIa)]

2 Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (LaSalle: Open Court Press, 1929), p. 212.