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Willem A. deVries

University of New Hampshire, willem.devries@unh.edu

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deVries, Willem A., "Hegel's Revival in Analytic Philosophy" (2017). *The Oxford Handbook of Hegel*. 1221. https://scholars.unh.edu/faculty_pubs/1221

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Hegel's Revival in Analytic Philosophy

Willem A. deVries

University of New Hampshire

Abstract

Analytic philosophy is rediscovering Hegel. This essay examines a particularly strong thread of new analytic Hegelianism, sometimes called ‘Pittsburgh Hegelianism’, which began with the work of Wilfrid Sellars. In trying to bring Anglo-American philosophy from its empiricist phase into a more sophisticated, corrected Kantianism, Sellars moved in substantially Hegelian directions. Sellars’ work has been extended, and revised by his Pittsburgh colleagues John McDowell and Robert B. Brandom. The sociality and historicity of reason, the proper treatment of space and time, conceptual holism, inferentialism, the reality of conceptual structure, the structure of experience, and the nature of normativity are the central concerns of Pittsburgh Hegelianism.

Keywords

G. W. F. Hegel, Wilfrid Sellars, John McDowell, Robert Brandom, Pittsburgh Hegelianism, analytic philosophy, sociality and historicity of reason, conceptual holism, inferentialism, conceptual realism, structure of experience, normativity

I. Introduction: Analytic Philosophy contra Hegel

The analytic tradition dominant in Anglo-American philosophy was born in part in a revolt

against the neo-Hegelianism that was fairly dominant in English-speaking lands at the end of the 19th century. Throughout much of the 20th century, Hegel was not merely shunned but also scorned and derided as the exemplar of all that analytic philosophy abjured. However, a significant revival of interest in Hegel's philosophy among analytically oriented philosophers has recently emerged and continues to grow.

Opposition to 19th century the (neo-)Hegelian idealism took several forms. One was a revival of realism. 'Realism', however, is a protean word; in this case the focus is on the contrast to idealism. Realists hold that there is at least some non-mentalistic component in the vocabulary that most fundamentally describes the world; mentalistic vocabulary applies only to a limited set of entities and not to the world-whole. A second form of opposition to Hegelianism was the reassertion of atomism, not only in nature, but also in semantics and the analysis of the mental. Atomism, in turn, tends to associate with foundationalist, hierarchical structures; once the fundamental elements are decided upon, everything else must be composed of them.

The tremendous growth in the sciences during the 19th century surely contributed to the rise of realism and atomism. By the turn of the century, the idea that the fundamental nature of the world is to be explicated in terms of a universal self-consciousness or spirit seemed less and less compelling. With analytic methodologies proving increasingly fruitful time and again in both science and philosophy, their influence made itself felt in the development of modern logic in the work of Frege, Peano, and Russell and Whitehead; in the popularity of positivism (the doctrines of Comte and then Mach, not yet those of the Vienna Circle); in the revival of the British Empiricist tradition (J.S. Mill was Russell's godfather); in the careful attention to scientific methodology paid by C. S. Peirce; and in the rise of the philosophy of science as a significant sub-discipline. In Germany, Hermann von Helmholtz and the neo-Kantians paid much greater

attention to the empirical sciences, substituting philosophy of science for Hegelian philosophy of nature.¹

The general secularization of Western society, and especially the universities, also seemed incompatible with Hegel, who (rightly or wrongly) was widely associated with a heavily theological and metaphysical philosophy. Similarly, the Hegelianism of the schools (as opposed to left-wing or Marxist Hegelianism) was associated with political conservatism.

This catalog is far from complete, and these forces did not always push in the same direction. The empiricism of the early 20th century, for instance, was often phenomenalistic, not realistic. Philosophy of science, especially in the first few decades following the tremendous blossoming of physics early in the century, seemed to take theoretical physics, with its increasing panoply of unobservable entities, as the exemplar of everything scientific, and this put pressure on the shape any realism could take. The interpretation Russell gave the new symbolic logic was highly atomistic, foundationalistic, individualistic, and phenomenalistic, which, again, was in tension with the urge to realism and, at least arguably, the actual procedures of the empirical sciences.

This brief overview helps explain why Hegel was anathema to the analysts: He stood in direct opposition to the atomism, foundationalism, individualism, reductionism, and materialist realism that operated in the new-found analytic tradition as regulative ideals. Each of these ‘ideals’ has since come under attack, not just from outside the analytic tradition, but by the development of arguments within the tradition (in good Hegelian dialectical fashion). The rest of this article will follow perhaps the most significant rapprochement with Hegelian philosophy attempted from within the analytic tradition: the efforts of the so-called ‘Pittsburgh School’.

The Pittsburgh school originated in the work of Wilfrid S. Sellars (1912-1989). Sellars' training in philosophy was cosmopolitan, with schooling in both America and England. In particular, he had strong ties to the realist traditions in both American and British thought through his father, Roy Wood Sellars—himself a significant American philosopher, a founder of Critical Realism and Professor at the University of Michigan for the first half of the 20th century—and his teachers at Oxford, H. A. Prichard and H. H. Price.

Sellars wrote in the analytic tradition; arguably, he became one of its pillars. *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* (1949), edited with Herbert Feigl, became the industry standard reader for a generation of analysts, and *Philosophical Studies*, the journal Sellars and Feigl founded in 1950, was the first journal solely devoted to 'philosophy in the analytic tradition'. Still, Sellars distinguished himself from most analysts by his broad knowledge and sensitive interpretations of the history of philosophy, particularly Aristotle and early modern philosophy through Kant. He was an empirically-minded philosopher who was nonetheless fascinated by rationalist philosophy. His hope was to move analytic philosophy from its empiricist beginnings into a more adequate and sophisticated Kantian phase. Arguably, though, Sellars' own awareness of the shortcomings of Kant prompted him to develop a far more Hegelian philosophy than would have been politic at the time to admit. His younger colleagues at Pittsburgh, John McDowell (1942-) and Robert B. Brandom (1950-), further developed some of Sellars' insights in their own work, while also departing from Sellars in various ways.

II. Sociality and Historicity

Some of Sellars's references to Hegel are either indirect or subtly critical when read closely, but some declare his clear allegiance to a Hegelian position. The clearest of these is in 'Philosophy

and the Scientific Image of Man' when Sellars rejects the 'Robinson Crusoe conception of the world as generating conceptual thinking directly in the individual'.²

It was not until the time of Hegel that the essential role of the group as a mediating factor in this causation [of the presence in the individual of the framework of conceptual thinking] was recognized, and while it is easy for us to see that the immanence and transcendence of conceptual frameworks with respect to the individual thinker is a social phenomenon, and to find a recognition of this fact implicit in the very form of our image of man in the world, it was not until the nineteenth century that this feature of the manifest image was, however inadequately, taken into account.³

The social nature of thought and conceptuality remains an invariant commitment of the Pittsburgh school, reinforced by the influence of Wittgenstein's later works.

Sellars quickly hedges his endorsement of this Hegelian insight with criticism:

The manifest image must, therefore, be construed as containing a conception of itself as a group phenomenon, the group mediating between the individual and the intelligible order. But any attempt to explain this mediation within the framework of the manifest image was bound to fail, for the manifest image contains the resources for such an attempt only in the sense that it provides the foundation on which scientific theory can build an explanatory framework; and while conceptual structures of this framework are built on the manifest image, they are not definable within it. Thus, the Hegelian, like the Platonist of whom he is the heir, was limited to the attempt to understand the relation between intelligible order and individual minds in analogical terms.⁴

There are several different issues at play here, and we need to keep them separate. One issue concerns the general status of the conceptual or intelligible order, while another concerns the

particular status of our currently dominant conceptual framework and its major features. The relations between these two are complex for both Hegel and Sellars. Both philosophers are, in one sense of the term, epistemic realists about the conceptual order. That is, they both think that (descriptive) concepts aim at delimiting the very nature of things; they see no sense in the Kantian notion of a thing-in-itself that is in principle beyond the reach of the conceptual or the knowable. But at the same time, they are hardly naïve realists: though concepts *aim* at delimiting the nature of things, they also tend to fall short of their target. Indeed, both of them acknowledge that it takes significant effort to develop successively better and better concepts. For both Hegel and Sellars, the *sociality* of thought entails also its *historicity*. We always operate with a less than ultimately satisfactory conceptual framework that is fated to be replaced by something more satisfactory, whether on the basis of conceptual or empirical considerations.

Hegel sketches a complex sequence of ever more sophisticated conceptual schemes in the *Phenomenology*. Sellars boils this down to a clash between what he calls the ‘manifest image’ [MI]—the rich commonsense scheme in terms of which we ordinarily make sense of the world—and the ‘scientific image’ [SI]—the incipient and (potentially) radically different scheme that is starting to be constructed by the empirical sciences.⁵ For both Hegel and Sellars, grasp of the Truth lies at the end of a long process.

Although Hegel and Sellars think along related lines with regard to the status of conceptual frameworks vis-a-vis reality, they differ significantly concerning the content of the ultimate framework. For any complex conceptual framework, there will be some architecture of explanatory priorities that makes some concepts more fundamental than others that are to be explained in terms of more basic concepts. For Hegel, the most general and explanatorily most basic concepts are those of spirit: reason, concept, subjectivity and objectivity, etc. Ultimately,

we understand nature in terms of its relation to spirit, and the process by which we come to be able to grasp the truth is a process by which spirit comes to know itself. Things are quite otherwise with Sellars, who thinks the explanatorily prior concepts in the scientific image will be the concepts of materiality.

78. The concepts of ideal matter-of-factual truth and of what there really is are as fraught with subjunctives pertaining to conceptualization as the idealists have ever claimed. But *no picture*⁶ of the world contains *as such* mentalistic expressions functioning *as such*.

The indispensibility and logical irreducibility of mentalistic discourse is compatible with the idea that in *this sense there are no mental acts*. Though full of important insights, Idealism is, therefore, radically false.⁷

This is a complex claim, but it comes down to the idea that even though mentalistic (or spiritual) discourse is both indispensable for creatures like us and irreducible to material-object discourse, in the scientific image the mental will be seen to depend on the material ontologically.⁸ One's ontology is determined by the explanatorily most basic kinds recognized in one's conceptual framework. Hegel is undoubtedly an idealist; we can let others worry about how weighty a *metaphysical* idealism it is. Sellars is a decided materialist: 'the solution of the puzzle lay in correctly locating the conceptual order in the causal order and correctly interpreting the causality involved'.⁹

According to Sellars, the manifest image generates questions it cannot answer on its own. Even augmented with the Hegelian insight that the community is an essential intermediary between the individual and the intelligible order, Sellars claims that the manifest framework is not in a position to explain *how* the community serves this role. This is a complex thought. First, what Sellars calls the 'intelligible order' is the network of rational connections among the concepts of a conceptual framework.¹⁰ For example, our confidence that brothers are male siblings and that

water turns to ice when cooled sufficiently are both expressions of connections that have come to be built in to the intelligible order made available to us by our conceptual framework/language.

As noted above, until the 19th century, philosophers believed that these rational connections are learned by means of some action of the world (broadly construed) upon our individual minds. Furthermore, according to Sellars, '[i]n the Platonic tradition this mode of causation is attributed to a being which is analogous, to a greater or lesser degree, to a person'.¹¹ In Sellars' view, Hegel, as a member in good standing of the Platonic tradition, also sought to understand the relation between intelligible order and individual mind in terms of something person-like that accounts for how individuals come to possess a (normatively constituted) conceptual framework in terms of which the world in which they live can be understood. This is spirit informing the activity and pervading the being of the human individual. Spirit is not like an individual person, localized in space and time, nor is it outside of space and time, but its fundamental structure is still that of a *synthetic, rational unity*, a mind. It makes sense to attribute 'cunning' to spirit, for instance.

Sellars's view is that the manifest image *cannot* explain how it is that the community (or spirit) mediates the individual's acquisition of a conceptual framework. Sellars gives us no argument in PSIM for this negative claim. He needs a positive argument to establish that the manifest image cannot develop such an explanation and that we must turn to a radically novel scientific framework to do so. The manifest image has shown itself in the past to be a flexible tool for coping with reality, capable of growth and development in order to accommodate an ever richer understanding of the structure of reality and our relation to it.

Sellars does say that with the resources of the MI, we could generate an understanding of the

relation between the individual and the intelligible order ‘in analogical terms’. That is, their relationship is understood by construing it as analogous to something else understood fairly well independently, such as a form of *perception*, which we have some grasp of, aimed at a special object, e.g., Platonic forms. Calling it an analogical understanding sounds fairly dismissive, as if such an understanding is something to be transcended. In a sense, that’s what Sellars thinks, but even if we manage to *transcend* this analogy-based understanding, it does not follow that it should or even can be *discarded*. According to Sellars, conceptions of psychological states are developed in analogical terms, and even though Sellars believes that, in the final wash, there are no mental acts, he never intimates that we can or should abandon the language of psychology (although some of Sellars’s students have drawn that conclusion). Sellars insists that the language of ‘individual and community intentions’—the very heart of the manifest image—must be joined to, or better, preserved within the future scientific image.¹² Refining the language of intentions—the language of sociology, social psychology, family life, and politics—has been on the agenda since the time of Hegel, but Sellars thinks there is a limit to the progress that can be made in these directions with armchair methodologies.

A split has developed among the followers of Sellars, often described (with obvious reference to the history of Hegel reception) as a split between ‘right-wing’ and ‘left-wing’ Sellarsians. Not everyone agrees on just what the divide is, but it seems to center on the weight one gives the natural sciences in ontology. Right-wing Sellarsians retain Sellars’ declared scientific realism: the empirical ontology of the world is strictly a matter for science to settle, and that ‘means displacing the everyday ontology of commonsense. Left-wing Sellarsians endorse Sellars’ rejection of the given and his analysis of the intentional (by and large), but reject the strident scientific realism that declares that ‘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’.¹³

(Interestingly, it is the right-wing Sellarsians who are more radical and the left more conservative.) Brandom and McDowell are left-wing Sellarsians; both reject the notion that science will cast significant light on the norm-constituted concepts that articulate human intentionality.

Sellars himself was a right-wing Sellarsian, and he thinks we are now able ‘to see this [problem of the acquisition of a conceptual scheme] as a matter of evolutionary development as a group phenomenon’.¹⁴ The point is that evolution can generate categorially new objects, even something like a conceptual scheme.¹⁵ Ruth Millikan, for instance, has shown how such processes can be accommodated within a generally Sellarsian view.¹⁶ Yet one of the great lacks in Sellars’s philosophy is a treatment of the biological and social sciences. This is not sheer accident, for accommodating teleologically constituted biological or normatively constituted social phenomena within the causal structures central to science’s concerns is a daunting challenge.

How are we to construe the relations among irreducibly distinct groups of concepts, all of which seem to be necessary for a full comprehension of our multifarious world? Arguably, both Sellars and Hegel believe that there is some privileged set of concepts, some privileged layer of discourse, that provides the most universal and encompassing viewpoint on the world, its history, and our place in it. This then determines our ultimate ontology: materialistic for Sellars, idealistic for Hegel. Neither seems to take seriously that the irreducibility of these different sets of concepts is itself indicative of the ultimate furniture of the world.

III. The Myth of the Atomic

Sellars is most commonly identified with the critique of the *myth of the given* first articulated in his classic essay “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind”. This critique can be construed along fairly narrow epistemological lines, but it really reaches across the full range of the cognitive as a critique of any atomistic, foundationalistic construal of the structure of meaningful human activity, both theoretical and practical. That is, Sellars denies that the epistemic, semantic, or intentional properties of any episodes or states accrue to them either in *isolation* or as simply *descriptive* properties.

The essential point is that 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.¹⁷

‘Empirical’ is used here as G. E. Moore used ‘natural’, to stand for the purely matter-of-factual in contrast to anything normative or evaluative. The ‘logical space of reasons’ is, first, an abstract *space*, that is, an array of potential positions, the identity of which is determined (holistically) by their relations to the other potential positions, and, second, an essentially *normative* realm, structured by the oughts and ought-nots of good inference (both formal and material).¹⁸ Epistemic givens would be states that possess their epistemic status independently of their (epistemic) relations to any other states, e.g., a self-justifying belief or a belief that is warranted simply because it is caused in a certain way. Semantic givens would be states that possess a certain meaning independently of their (semantic) relations to any other states, e.g., because they are intrinsically intelligible or derive meaning from some (non-normative) ‘ostensive tie’ to some object.

Thus, Sellars denies both that there are ‘atoms’ of knowledge or meaning independent of their relation to other ‘pieces’ of knowledge or meaning, and that they are structured in a neat hierarchy rather than an interlocking (social) network. The determinate content of a thought or

utterance is fixed by its position in the space of implications and employments available to the community in its language or conceptual framework. This kind of holism is congenial to Hegelian modes of thinking. It is important to see, however, that Sellars also rejects standard forms of coherentism.

Above all, the [standard] picture is misleading because of its static character. One seems forced to choose between the picture of an elephant which rests on a tortoise (What supports the tortoise?) and the picture of a great Hegelian serpent of knowledge with its tail in its mouth (Where does it begin?). Neither will do. For empirical knowledge, like its sophisticated extension, science, is rational, not because it has a foundation but because it is a self-correcting enterprise which can put any claim in jeopardy, though not all at once.¹⁹

This seems like a rejection of Hegel, but it is, of course, a rejection of the cartoon version of Hegel that was all too dominant in Anglo-American philosophy. Recognition of the dynamics, of the dialectics of thought is precisely what is needed to fix the imagery.

IV. The Return to Experience

Sellars' attempt to escape the apparently forced choice between foundationalism and coherentism was picked up to great notice in John McDowell's 1994 book *Mind and World*, wherein he wants to help us escape the 'intolerable oscillation' that has characterized modern philosophy between coherentism, a theory that gives us only a 'frictionless spinning in the void' which 'cannot make sense of the bearing of thought on objective reality,' and foundationalism, 'an appeal to the given, which turns out to be useless'.²⁰ For both Sellars and McDowell, resolving this tension means developing a more adequate conception of experience itself, one that embodies the Kantian insight that experience is both sensory and conceptual, aetiologically non-inferential yet justificationaly embedded in an inferentially structured matrix.

But Sellars and McDowell do not agree on the proper conception of experience. Sellars retains a significant, though non-epistemic role for the sensory, non-conceptual content of experience.

[B]y denying that sense impressions, however indispensable to cognition, were themselves cognitive, Kant made a radical break with all his predecessors, empiricists and rationalists alike. The ‘of-ness’ of sensation simply isn’t the ‘of-ness’ of even the most rudimentary thought. . . . But his own question haunted me. How is it possible that knowledge has this structure? . . . It wasn’t until much later that I came to see that the solution of the puzzle lay in correctly locating the conceptual order in the causal order and correctly interpreting the causality involved.²¹

For Sellars, then, experience is a double-sided coin. The sensory aspect of experience is part of the causal story of the impact of the world upon us, but its conceptual aspect locates it within the logical space of reasons, the space of reasons for belief and for action.²² Early on, McDowell rejected the idea that ‘receptivity makes an even notionally separable contribution to its cooperation with spontaneity’,²³ though in later works he backs away from this fairly extreme position.

IVA. Realism, the Phenomenal, and Transcendental Idealism

The differences between Sellars and McDowell are significant, and we can see them as differing responses to Kant’s transcendental idealism, which neither Sellars nor McDowell finds attractive. Both Sellars and McDowell want to be realists, not merely *empirical* realists à la Kant, but realists for whom the distinction between things as we know them and things as they are evaporates. But they take very different routes to this desired goal. McDowell proclaims that

In a particular experience in which one is not misled, what one takes in is that things are

thus and so. That things are thus and so is the content of the experience, and it can also be the content of a judgement: it becomes the content of a judgement if the subject decides to take the experience at face value. So it is conceptual content. But that things are thus and so is also, if one is not misled, an aspect of the layout of the world: it is how things are. Thus the idea of conceptually structured operations of receptivity puts us in a position to speak of experience as openness to the layout of reality.²⁴

Sellars' and McDowell's different responses to Kantian transcendental idealism reveal their relations to Hegel. Like Sellars and McDowell, Hegel is an epistemological realist: he rejects the idea that we do not (or are not even able to) know things as they are in themselves. Yet neither Hegel nor Sellars wants to reject altogether the distinction between phenomenal reality and things as they are in themselves. Sellars calls the distinction between the phenomenal and the real the distinction between the manifest and the scientific images of man in the world. Hegel provides for numerous phenomenal realities related in ways that require a phenomenology to understand. It is not the distinction between phenomenon and reality itself that Hegel and Sellars attack, but the notion that it is *absolute*, establishing an unbridgeable divide.²⁵ McDowell, however, is concerned to defend our 'openness to the layout of reality' and seems not to take seriously the idea that we might have systematically false beliefs about the nature of things.²⁶ On this score, Sellars is more Hegelian than McDowell.

IVB. Space, Time, and a Full-Fledged Epistemological Realism

Kant's arguments for transcendental idealism turn crucially on the status of space and time. Hegel, Sellars, and McDowell, however, all reject Kant's notion that space and time can be only subjective conditions of human receptivity.

Despite the many differences between Hegel and Sellars in their development of a full-fledged epistemological realism, there is a fundamental similarity in their strategy.²⁷ The strategy, boiled down, is this: Kant's critical philosophy is formulated in terms of basic dualisms, *apriori/aposteriori*, analytic/synthetic, receptivity/spontaneity, even empirical science/philosophy. Hegel insists that trapped in these dualisms Kant cannot satisfactorily explain human cognition or action. The gaps imposed by the assumed dualisms never get properly bridged. Hegel therefore reconceives the critical project. Hegel abandons rigid dualisms and recognizes that human life is a dynamic, fallible enterprise that begins from relative ignorance (even of ourselves), is fraught with contradictions to be overcome, and works itself slowly via constant revision towards an ever more adequate grasp of and fittedness to the reality *within* which (as opposed to *over against* which) we live. Any distinctions that arise must be explained, not assumed, including categorial distinctions. If we do not begin with starkly dualistic assumptions, the reasonableness of a belief in unknowable things in themselves never forces itself upon us.

Sellars' response to Kant is strikingly similar, for Sellars also recognizes that there is no Archimedean point outside of common reality from which the critic can operate. He also rejects absolute, hard and fast dualisms in favor of limited and pragmatically justified distinctions. As Paul Redding argues, Hegel and Sellars reject both an exogenous and an endogenous given.²⁸ That is, neither empirical content nor conceptual scheme are given to us independently of the other. But if conceptual form is not given independently of the real world, there is little reason to think that it is related only contingently to that world and affords us a mode of access to it unrelated to what that world is in itself. In Sellars' view, as well as Hegel's, human life is a dynamic, fallible enterprise that begins from relative ignorance (even of ourselves), is fraught with contradictions to be overcome, and works itself slowly via constant revision towards an

ever more adequate grasp of and fittedness to the reality *within* which (as opposed to *over against* which) we live.

McDowell expresses his concern with Kant's transcendental idealism as a worry that it reduces experience and knowledge to 'facts about us'. He agrees that neither empirical content nor conceptual scheme are given to us independently of the other. But rather than trying to accord sensation as something non-conceptual a distinguishable place in experience, like Sellars and Hegel, McDowell denies that there is *anything* non-conceptual in experience. Space and time should not be seen as forms of a distinct, non-conceptual element in experience, but, as McDowell claims Hegel also thought, as further categorial forms of the conceptual content in experience. The sensory is, thus, not an intermediary between understanding and the world, but a way in which we are open to the world, a shaping of our consciousness of the world.

When Kant makes it look as if the forms of our sensibility are brute-fact features of our subjectivity, it becomes difficult to see how they could also be forms of the manifestness to us of what is genuinely objective. But when, in the move Hegel applauds, Kant puts the forms of our sensibility on a level with the categories, he takes a step towards making it possible to see the forms of our sensibility, no less than the categories, as genuinely forms of cognition -- at once forms of subjective activity and forms of genuine objectivity with which that activity engages.²⁹

Assimilating space and time to the other categories of conceptuality and essentially ignoring them as forms intrinsic to the self-external is not at all clearly Hegelian.³⁰ Furthermore, McDowell's deconstruction of the intuition/concept distinction undercuts the Kantianism that he claims to be defending. What, after all, is left once Kant's his claim that there are two independent sources of knowledge that combine in experience is rejected?³¹ In this light,

McDowell's move seems less a radicalization of Kant than a retreat to Leibniz.

IVC. A Form of Idealism

Still, there is a clear sense in which McDowell espouses idealism. For McDowell endorses Wittgenstein's dictum that 'The world is everything that is the case'.³²

And if we do say that and mean it, we conceive the world, not ... as a totality of the describable things -- zebras and so forth -- that there are (as we say) in it, but as precisely, everything that can be truly thought or said: not everything we would think about if we thought truly, but everything we would think.³³

McDowell goes on to say, 'This is an idealism in an obvious sense. On this conception, the world itself is indeed structured by the form of judgment'.³⁴

These claims reveal McDowell's idealism as a form of logical realism. The fundamental structure of McDowell's world is logical or conceptual structure, and the primary force of that claim is that it (1) denies that either spatio-temporal or causal structure is fundamental except insofar as space, time, and causation are themselves logical categories and (2) explains the sense in which we are 'open to the world'. Said differently, for McDowell, the logical space of reasons includes the entirety of the world and subsumes the nominally distinct space of objects, causes, or laws. McDowell's normative realism, the doctrine that normative demands and prohibitions are not just believed-in, but actually out there in the world for us to respond to, is essential to his view here. It is a Hegelian position to see a deep identity between the fundamental structures of world and the fundamental structure of good thought. Here McDowell is clearly more Hegelian than Sellars.

Sellars rejects the idea that the world is the totality of facts, for, according to Sellars, fact-talk is

material-mode truth-talk. That is why facts have logical structure. Sellars thinks the world itself is a totality of *objects*, and objects do not have logical structure. Empirical objects have causal and spatio-temporal structure; logical analysis and empirical science are different enterprises, however much cross-fertilization is desirable. Whereas McDowell (and Hegel) unifies the causal and the conceptual realms by subsuming the causal under the conceptual, Sellars unifies them, as we saw above (Cf. *Autobiographical Reflections*: 285), by incorporating the conceptual within the causal order. This does not mean *reducing* the conceptual to the causal, but only, as he says, ‘locating the conceptual order in the causal order’.

McDowell’s quietism departs from Hegel, however. McDowell abjures grand philosophical or metaphysical constructions and insists that the point of good philosophy is to make it possible to stop doing philosophy, to remove any spur or urge to engage in such abstruse speculations. Also missing from McDowell’s position is a Hegelian sense of philosophical development or growth. Since McDowell holds (like Wittgenstein) that in ordinary language and common sense everything is in order, there is and could be no grand narrative of the development of philosophy, only a contingent series of corrections when thinking goes awry. Deep metaphysical modesty combined with a static conception of the philosophical realm seems, however, unHegelian. Hegel argues for the *need* for philosophy, and he does not intend that his efforts will leave everything in place. And who has a deeper commitment to the dynamism of philosophical theory than Hegel? Whether metaphysical or not, Hegel is a philosophical theoretician on a grand scale, and Sellars, with his metaphysical courage and dynamic understanding of the development of human understanding, is closer to Hegel’s spirit in this regard, however much his philosophical materialism opposes Hegel’s absolute idealism.

V. Semantic Dynamism

VA. Sellars, Functional Classification, and Inferentialism

In different ways Sellars and McDowell resemble Hegel in their attempts to avoid Kant's transcendental idealism while still maintaining an anti-foundationalist epistemological realism. This concerns relatively large-scale structural features of the mind's relation to the world. If that were the only way in which the Pittsburgh school 'revived' Hegel, it would be pretty thin beer. But the school also has a lot to say about the nature of conceptuality itself, and what it says resonates with Hegelian overtones. It is here that Brandom's work comes to the fore, elaborating a base established by Sellars.

Coherence can be invoked in a theory of truth, a theory of meaning (or of concepts), and a theory of justification or knowledge.³⁵ Sellars exploits all three forms. As mentioned, epistemologically there are no stand-alone justifiers for Sellars, and semantically, meaning and intentionality concern the functional role of symbolic states in complex systems of behavioral modulation.

According to Sellars, semantics is a matter of *functional classification*. To say what an utterance or a thought means is to say what role it plays in the linguistic/conceptual economy of the community. We do not usually do this by giving a detailed and complex description of that role, but by giving an equivalent phrase, hopefully intelligible to one's interlocutor, that plays a similar role. So, when we say things like

'Brother' means *male sibling*

'*Geschwindigkeitsbegrenzung*' in German means *speed limit*

we use the phrase to the right of 'means' to delimit the role of the phrase on the left hand side by providing a phrase in our background language with a relevantly similar role. Sellars points to three dimensions of the functional role of an expression: its role in (1) language-entry

transitions; (2) language-exit transitions; and (3) intralinguistic transitions. Thus, this is a *use* theory of semantics. Language-entry transitions include observation statements, in which interaction with one's environment evokes a linguistic response; language-exit transitions include statements of intention that evolve into actions. Most interesting for our purposes are the intralinguistic transitions, in which one moves from one utterance or thought to another. When purporting to adhere to conceptual proprieties, such transitions are known as inferences. In "Inference and Meaning" Sellars argues that the meaning of an expression is crucially determined by its contribution to good inferences, both formal and material.³⁶ Formally good inferences, e.g., *modus ponens*, are good in virtue of their syntactic form. Materially good inferences do not rely on syntax. The inferences

The cube is red	It is raining
So, the cube is colored	So, it will be wet outside

are not *formally* valid, but they are good material inferences. Sellars denies that we ought to think of them as essentially enthymematic: not all inference licenses can be made into explicit premises.³⁷ For Sellars, such facts about inferential proprieties determine both the *form* and the *content* of our judgments and the concepts used in them.

23. To say of a judging that it has a certain logical form is to classify it and its constituents with respect to their epistemic powers.

24. If judgments qua conceptual acts have "form," they also have "content." The temptation is to think of the "content" of an act as an entity that is "contained" by it. But if the "form" of a judging is the structure by virtue of which it is possessed of certain generic logical or epistemic powers, surely the content must be the character by virtue of which the act has specific modes of these generic logical or epistemic powers.³⁸

One consequence of this view is that linguistic/semantic form and content are not radically different. If, e.g., physical object judgments have their own 'form' (perhaps, e.g., suppressible

default inferences concerning spatio-temporal location, causal connectivity, or appropriate forms of evidence), then judgments about rocks fill in or specify this form in determinate ways.

In Sellars' view *all* semantic predicates are ultimately metalinguistic functional classifiers. It is not just *meaning statements* that classify expressions functionally; so do *reference statements* and even *truth attributions*. Sellars thus denies that *meaning*, *reference*, or *truth* denote relations between words or thoughts and objects in the world.³⁹ This is sometimes described as a rejection of representationalism, though Sellars talks regularly about representations, both linguistic and mental. He certainly rejects the idea that there is some set of specific, fundamental semantic 'relations' between language or concept and the world (say, the meaning, reference, or satisfaction relations) that determines our ontology.

Sellars' doctrine relates fairly clearly to Hegel. One of Kant's revisions to the 'new way of ideas' that dominated the thought of his predecessors was his insistence on the priority of *judgment over concepts*; a concept, for Kant, is basically a predicate of a possible judgment (A69/B94). Hegel takes this move one step further: judgments are elements of possible inferences. Hegel's Concept self-elaborates into a syllogism, showing itself as a synthesizer or unifier of other concepts. The Hegelian view that concepts are determined by their place in an inferentially articulated system is highly compatible with Sellars' overall view of semantics and intentionality.

VB. Brandom's Hegelianism: Intentionality, Normativity, and the Structure of Authority

Brandom spells out more fully how this is supposed to work, taking up the inferentialist

conception of semantics that Sellars really only sketched in outline and elaborating it significantly. In this regard Brandom is the most explicitly Hegelian of the Pittsburgh school. He has also written more on Hegel than his colleagues, and has been working for years on a commentary on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, successive drafts of which are available on his website. Here I draw mainly on his Woodbridge Lectures, a broad overview of his interpretation of German idealism and Hegel's particular position in that movement.⁴⁰ These lectures are more relevant to our purposes here than the details of the *Phenomenology*.

Brandom sees Hegel as modifying several central themes in Kant's transcendental idealism. The first of these Kantian themes is the realization that intentionality, the fundamental defining trait of the mental, is, at root, a normative affair.

What distinguishes judging and intentional doing from the activities of non-sapient creatures is not that they involve some special sort of mental processes, but that they are things knowers and agents are in a distinctive way responsible for. Judging and acting involve commitments. They are endorsements, exercises of authority.⁴¹

This is Sellars' idea that intentional state attributions locate the subject in 'the logical space of reasons'. Sapience (conceptual thought) involves *responsibility*, and the fundamental responsibility, according to Brandom, is to integrate one's intentional states (both one's past states and one's growing accumulation of new intentional states) into a total *unity of apperception*. This involves elaborating and adopting the material and formal consequences of one's intentional states and eliminating conflicts that may arise among them. One is, thus, responsible *for* one's thoughts and actions, the contents of which are determined by their relations (again, both formal and material) to other intentional states (echoing Sellars' coherence theory of meaning and intentionality); and one is responsible *to* the objects of one's judgments insofar as they (the objects) set the standard of correctness for the commitments one undertakes

in judging. It is the synthetic activity of “integrating judgments with one another, by critical exclusion and ampliative inclusion or extension [that] makes the concepts both of subject and of object intelligible”.⁴²

The second Kantian theme in Hegel concerns the nature of normativity itself. Kant’s Enlightenment twist is the attitude-dependence of norms, which come to exist only when humans start taking and treating each other *as* authoritative, responsible, committed, etc. Kant’s understanding of the attitude-dependence of normativity puts the notion of *autonomy*, self-governance, center stage: ‘we, as subjects, are genuinely *normatively* constrained only by rules we constrain *ourselves* by, those that we adopt and acknowledge *as* binding on us’.⁴³ If normativity is grounded in the autonomy of individuals, however, there is a potential problem. If it were up to us both *whether* we are bound by or responsible to a particular conceptual norm, which is a matter of the normative *force* of our judgmental act, and *what it is* we are bound to, the *content* of the judgmental act, then whatever *seems* right to one would *be* right. In that case, normativity collapses, because there is no sense to getting things right or wrong. The norms of force and content must be relatively independent of each other.

Hegel’s principal innovation is his idea that in order to follow through on Kant’s fundamental insight into the essentially *normative* character of mind, meaning, and rationality, we need to recognize that normative statuses such as authority and responsibility are at base *social* statuses.⁴⁴

It is not just *within* an individual that the synthetic activity of rational integration occurs. Such activity is meaningful only when individuals rationally integrate themselves into a *community*. We could put it this way: The older obedience model of authority takes the status of the commander to be the relevant independent variable in the normative; Kant’s autonomy model takes the status of commandee to be the relevant independent variable; Hegel insists that both are

relevant and importantly but not absolutely independent.

What institutes normative statuses is *reciprocal* recognition. Someone becomes responsible only when others *hold* him responsible, and exercises authority only when others *acknowledge* that authority. One has the authority to *petition* others for recognition, in an attempt to become responsible or authoritative. To do that, one must recognize others as able to *hold* one responsible or *acknowledge* one's authority. This is according those others a certain kind of authority. To achieve such statuses, one must be recognized by them in turn. That is to make oneself in a certain sense responsible to them. But they have that authority only insofar as one grants it to them by recognizing them as authoritative.⁴⁵

It is up to me whether I assert, doubt, imagine, etc. that the wire in my hand is copper; it is not up to me what the formal and material consequences connected with that particular content are. By subjecting myself to the constraints of linguistic rules that are not 'up to me' (a surrender of a certain negative freedom), I in fact gain access to the expressive power of a natural language and the radical semantic novelty it makes available. This enables a massive expansion of my positive expressive freedom. Language is not the only social practice in which reciprocally cognitive structures yield huge gains in positive freedom.

How do these two stories, the synthesis of the self and the social model of normativity, fit together into an overall Hegelian view? According to Brandom, they must both be placed in a larger *historical* developmental structure. Brandom employs the common law tradition of jurisprudence as a partial model of the kind of historical developmental structure he has in mind here. In common law, judges have a fair amount of discretion in deciding whether and how a law applies to a given situation, but they are under an obligation to say how their application of the law is consistent with, extends, or even corrects the precedents in hand. And no one decision

settles such matters; each is a petition to future judges to see their cases in the same light. Ongoing social practices of integrating old and new commitments *institute* the normative statuses of authority and responsibility. That is, they are *sufficient* to create and sustain the normative statuses that constitute the logical space of reasons.

It is this historical process that determines (by progressive refinement) the contents of our concepts. In order to understand how that could be, however, Brandom argues that we need a different notion of determinateness from the one generally assumed by mainstream analytic philosophy. Brandom describes what he calls ‘Fregean determinateness’ as involving ‘sharp, complete boundaries’.⁴⁶ For each such concept, it is a settled matter, semantically speaking, whether it applies to any object, definitively and in advance of any actual application. Hegel disparages such a vision of the conceptual realm as the attitude of ‘*Verstand*’, understanding. In its place Hegel proposes a vision of the conceptual realm he calls ‘*Vernunft*’, reason. The rational knower realizes that her concepts (her commitments and entitlements) are rarely finally fixed, they are almost always open-ended, susceptible to refinement, correction, even relocation in the overall scheme, and these adjustments are moments in an on-going story of the justification and integration of our commitments. (Recall here the de-absolutization of the *apriori/aposteriori* distinction mentioned earlier.) The rational unity we strive for among our representations is not a merely synchronic unity, but also a diachronic narrative of growth and elaboration. This view of conceptual determinateness is temporally perspectival: concepts exist in time with both forward- and backward-looking components.⁴⁷

Such a sequence reconstructs the history of one’s current view as gradually making explicit what was previously only implicit; it reveals one’s present view as the result of progress in the epistemic and/or practical realms from an earlier, less refined position.

In taking one's current commitments as the standard to judge what counts as expressive progress, one *is* taking them as the *reality* of which previous constellations of endorsements were ever more complete and accurate *appearances*.⁴⁸

Hegel is working out the idea that conceptual content is

articulated by non-monotonic, seriously multipremise material inferential and incompatibility relations, in the context of the realization (which we latecomers to the point associate with Quine, and he associated with Duhem) that those relations depend on the whole context of collateral discursive commitments.⁴⁹

The conceptual contents of thoughts are articulated by the material consequential and incompatibility relations that hold among them. Brandom then makes his own move towards a conceptual realism,

The principled parallel between the *deontic* modal relations of inclusion and exclusion that articulate our thought on the subjective side, and the *alethic* modal relations of inclusion and exclusion that articulate the world on the objective side . . . define a structural conception of the conceptual according to which thought and the world thought about can both be seen to be *conceptually* structured. This *conceptual realism* about objective reality is, in the context of the other metatheoretic commitments we have been considering, just a consequence of *modal realism*: taking it that objective states of affairs really do necessitate and rule out one another.⁵⁰

Thus, while Sellars would shudder at the thought that the (quasi-)logical relations that connect the contents of our thoughts are 'of the *same* generic kind' as the causal and compositional relations among the objects, events, and facts of nature, Brandom makes common cause with McDowell's logico-conceptual realism. This is the truth in Hegel's absolute idealism. As Brandom argues, the claim is not that natural objects are mind-dependent, particularly not on the

peculiarities of human subjectivity nor in any causal sense of ‘dependent’. Rather, the activities pragmatically constitutive of the objectivity of thinking about a modally structured world are connected intrinsically with the activities pragmatically constitutive of normatively well-structured thought. Being an object and being a fact are themselves also normative statuses.

Brandom’s Hegel ends up, then, preparing the way for Brandom himself. While Brandom shows us a way to read Hegel that puts logic and semantics properly at the heart of his concerns and ties those to modern approaches to such issues, it is far from clear how smoothly Brandom’s view map onto Hegel’s. Brandom’s own cavalier attitude towards the notion of ‘experience’ seems quite foreign to Hegel. Brandom has not delved far into social or political philosophy, though its foundations play a large role in his philosophy. He has mostly borrowed his social/political philosophy eclectically from the German idealists. He faces, at bottom, the task of reconciling 3 doctrines:

1. Concepts are constituted by norms.
2. Norms are attitude-dependent.
3. Conceptual realism: the world (and not just our thinking about it) is conceptually structured.

Brandom’s non-metaphysical reading of Hegel convinces him he can claim to be Hegelian without incurring the metaphysical commitments traditionally attributed to Hegel. Thus, Brandom’s reconstruction of the Hegelian system does not seem to constitute an ontological proof of God’s existence, but we can pose the question to Brandom: does his conceptual realism ultimately commit him as well to the Idea?

VI. Conclusion: Reality and Concept in Dynamic Interaction

Their conceptual realism is the most significant tie to Hegelian doctrine shared by McDowell

and Brandom. But there are distinctions to be drawn between them, despite this common element. McDowell rejects the Sellarsian functionalistic analysis of meaning (and reference) in favor of a Davidsonian view that, he thinks, still entitles him to think of intentionality as a relation.⁵¹ However, this generates some tension with McDowell's Sellarsian commitments. The notion that intentionality is a mind-world relation runs into difficulties in either a Sellarsian or Hegelian context. First, it makes it difficult to make sense out of conceptual change: if our concept of, say, water changes, wouldn't it either have to relate to a different object or relate in a different way to the same object? It thus is not clear how a concept can be the *same* concept through conceptual change. Second, if intentionality is a matter of normative status—one of the founding insights of the Pittsburgh school—then the relation between word (or mind) and world is, well, what? A normative relation? But what is that? A relation that *ought to be* or *is supposed to be* is not therefore a relation that *is*.

In contrast to McDowell, Brandom retains and elaborates Sellars' functionalist semantics, fitting much more smoothly with both the phenomena of conceptual change and the commitment to the normativity of intentionality. Sellars attempts to fit the structural insights of German idealism into a naturalistic framework that assigns to natural science authority over the ontology of the empirical world. This, however, in Sellars' view, requires denying that *normative* features of the world are part of its *empirical* furniture; they are solely features of our social relationships and practices. Both McDowell and Brandom seek to give the normative realm a deeper tie to empirical reality, either by virtue of a relation that unites the intentional and the material realms or a structural parallelism that plays that role.

This review has skimmed a number of surfaces; it has not plumbed the depths or the details of these sophisticated thinkers to any great degree. Yet the Pittsburgh school acknowledges and

accommodates significant Hegelian insights. Foremost among these are Hegel's recognition of the dynamic, inferential, social, and historical realization of rational and normative structures in human thought. The ontology of the normative remains in dispute, but there is every reason for analytic philosophers to recognize Hegel as one of the most significant and profound contributors to the canon of Western philosophy, someone whom we can with profit study and learn from.⁵²

1. A caveat: Hegel himself was very interested and well-informed about the sciences of his day. His followers, particularly those ensconced in academia, not so much.
2. Wilfrid Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man" [PSIM] ¶44, in *Science, Perception and Reality* [SPR] (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963): 16; in *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, eds. Kevin Scharp and Robert B. Brandom [ISR](Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007): 384. Available online at <http://www.ditext.com/sellars/psim.html>
3. Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man" ¶44.
4. Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man" ¶48, in SPR: 17; in ISR: 385).
5. The 'manifest image' is the more-or-less refined 'common sense' conceptual framework in terms of which humans have come to understand and cope with themselves in their world. It is a Strawsonian/Aristotelian framework in which persons and things are the basic objects. In Sellars' view, it is currently being challenged by the growth of a new and categorially distinct framework that is being developed by the empirical sciences, the 'scientific image of humanity in the world'.
6. Sellars uses 'picture' here in a technical sense that is *not* equivalent to *proposition* or *statement*. Mentalistic expressions, Sellars is telling us, do not participate in the basic, naturalistically unproblematic, pre-semantic picturing relations that hold between objects in the world and the occurrence of particular sign-design types. Mentalistic expressions relate to real-world objects and events in much more complex ways.
7. Wilfrid Sellars, *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967; reprinted Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing, 2002), chap. 5, ¶78: 142-143.
8. A full interpretation of this passage would require an explication of Sellars' obscure notion of *picturing*, which he thinks is a key to realism. But that goes beyond the scope of this essay. See W. A. deVries "Getting Beyond Idealisms", in *Empiricism, Perceptual Knowledge, Normativity and Realism: Essays on the Anniversary of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,"* W. A. deVries, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
9. Wilfrid Sellars, "Autobiographical Reflections: (February, 1973)". In *Action, Knowledge and Reality: Studies in Honor of Wilfrid Sellars*, ed. H.-N. Castañeda, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975): 285. Available online at <http://www.ditext.com/sellars/ar.html>
10. It is also worth noting that Sellars would not think that rational connections among concepts are always *analytic* or *a priori*. Sellars makes room for *material* connections that are nonetheless rational. In general, Sellars thinks of rational connections, not on the containment model that Kant employed, but as inference tickets, and then recognizes both formally and materially valid inferences.

It is also worth remarking here that Sellars's phrase 'the intelligible order' implies a

unique referent. But if the intelligible order is the set of rational connections among concepts, then there will be, of course, many possible intelligible orders, since there are multiple possible conceptual frameworks. Sellars does seem to assume that we can sensibly posit a Peircean ideal framework that, given world enough and time, we would be fated to accept.

11. Sellars, “Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man” ¶44, in SPR: 16; in ISR: 384.
12. I have argued that *preservation* of the ‘language of individual and community intentions’ in the scientific image (as opposed to mere ‘joining’) is the proper conception in several places. W. A. deVries, “Ontology and the Completeness of Sellars's Two Images,” *Humana.Mente - Journal of Philosophical Studies* 21 (2012):1-18, [http://www.humanamente.eu/PDF/Issue_21_Paper_deVries.pdf], and “Images, Descriptions, and Pictures: Personhood and the Clash,” forthcoming.
13. Wilfrid Sellars, “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind”, in *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, vol. I, eds. H. Feigl & M. Scriven (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1956): 253-329. [Originally presented at the University of London Special Lectures in Philosophy for 1956 as “The Myth of the Given: Three Lectures on Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind”). Reprinted in SPR with additional footnotes. Published separately as *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind: with an Introduction by Richard Rorty and a Study Guide by Robert Brandom*, ed. R. Brandom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997). Also reprinted in W. deVries & T. Triplett, *Knowledge, Mind, and the Given: A Reading of Sellars’ “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind”* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2000).] This passage, often called the ‘*scientia mensura*’, occurs in §41; in SPR: 173; in KMG: 253. Also available online at <http://www.ditext.com/sellars/epm.html>
14. Sellars, “Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man” ¶49; in SPR: 17; in ISR: 385.
15. I take it, e.g., that plants are categorially different from animals in the manifest image.
16. Ruth Millikan, *Language, Thought, and Other Biological Categories: New Foundations for Realism*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984). Millikan is a right-wing Sellarsian who would agree with Sellars that we need to turn to natural science for the *ultimate* story about language, thought and other biological categories. For an interesting review of her differences with the left-wing Brandom, see Ruth Millikan, “The father, the son, and the daughter: Sellars, Brandom, and Millikan”, *Pragmatics & Cognition* 13:1 (2005): 59–71. For further discussion of their differences, see Willem A. deVries, “All in the Family,” *Millikan and Her Critics*, Edited by Dan Ryder, Justine Kingsbury, and Kenneth Williford. (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2013): 259-75.
17. Sellars, “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind” §36, in SPR: 169; in KMG: 248.
18. *Formally* valid inferences are so in virtue of the syntactic structures of the sentences involved, without regard to their content. *Modus ponens* or a valid syllogism are classic examples. *Materially* good inferences are not formally valid, but are such that it is part of the

language that the truth of the premise(s) entails the truth of the conclusion. For example, “A is red” materially implies “A is colored”. Sellars thinks of scientific laws as proposed and corroborated material inference tickets.

19. Sellars, “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind” §38: in SPR: 170; in KMG: 250.
20. John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994): 23.
21. Sellars, “Autobiographical Reflections”, 285.
22. For an intelligible, thorough examination of Sellars’ two-component analysis of perceptual experience, see Paul Coates, *The Metaphysics of Perception: Wilfrid Sellars, Perceptual Consciousness and Critical Realism*, (London: Routledge, 2007).
23. John McDowell, *Mind and World*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994): 51.
24. McDowell, *Mind and World*, 26.
25. It is notable that attacking the absoluteness of familiar philosophical distinctions is a standard move for pragmatists. This connection to pragmatism is particularly important for Brandom.
26. This is probably the influence of Donald Davidson on McDowell.
27. Sally Sedgwick’s analysis in *Hegel’s Critique of Kant: From Dichotomy to Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) is very helpful.
28. See Paul Redding, *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
29. John McDowell, “Having the World in View: Sellars, Kant, and Intentionality”, in *Having the World in View: Essays on Kant, Hegel, and Sellars* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009): 102-03.
30. The problematic explananda here are the facts that (1) space and time receive dialectical treatment in Hegel’s system at two very different locations: once early on in the *Philosophy of Nature* and once in the last third of the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*; and (2) animals, who operate at the level of sensation and not thought, must nonetheless be able to track and in some sense represent space and time. The obvious answer seems to be that, as Hegel himself says, space and time are forms embodied in different substrata, one of which is non-conceptual.
31. This point is elaborated and defended more fully in Paul Redding “McDowell’s Radicalization of Kant’s Account of Concepts and Intuitions: A Sellarsian Critique”, *Verifiche: Rivista di scienze umane*, 41:1–3 (2012), 9–37; a pre-print is also available on Redding’s website.

32. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. David Pears and Brian McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), Proposition 1.
33. McDowell, "Having the World in View", 143.
34. McDowell, "Having the World in View", 143.
35. This is a point made also by Roderick Firth in an article Sellars referred to often: Roderick Firth, "Coherence, Certainty, and Epistemic Priority", *The Journal of Philosophy* 66 (October 1964): 545–57.
36. Wilfrid Sellars, "Inference and Meaning," *Mind* 62 (1953): 313-38. Reprinted in PPPW and in ISR. Note the order of explication here: meaning is determined by inferential proprieties, not the other way around.
37. Lewis Carroll, "What the Tortoise said to Achilles", *Mind*, New Series, 4, 14. (Apr., 1895): 278-280.
38. Wilfrid Sellars, "Some Remarks on Kant's Theory of Experience", in *Kant's Transcendental Metaphysics Sellars' Cassirer Lectures Notes and Other Essays*, ed. Jeffrey F. Sicha (Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing Company, 2002): 295-296.
39. There is a trivial sense of 'relation' in which any statement the surface grammar of which contains a relational (that is, n-place for $n > 1$) predicate describes a relation. But surface grammar is not decisive here. After all, sentences of the form "X is related to Y" are not all true for every substituend X and Y.
40. Robert B. Brandom, "Animating Ideas of Idealism: A Semantic Sonata in Kant and Hegel" in *Reason in Philosophy: Animating Ideas*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009): 27-110.
41. Robert B. Brandom, "Animating Ideas of Idealism: A Semantic Sonata in Kant and Hegel", in *Reason in Philosophy: Animating Ideas*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009): 32.
42. Brandom, "Animating Ideas", 49.
43. Brandom, "Animating Ideas", 62.
44. Brandom, "Animating Ideas", 66.
45. Brandom, "Animating Ideas", 70.
46. Brandom, "Animating Ideas", 88.

47. Cf. Sellars' remark, '[S]cientific terms have, as part of their logic a "line of retreat" as well as a "plan of advance"', "Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities," in *Minnesota Studies in The Philosophy of Science*, Vol. II, eds. Herbert Feigl, Michael Scriven, and Grover Maxwell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957): 288. This is a point that, given Sellars' treatment of meanings, applies to *all* terms, not just scientific terms.

48. Brandom, "Animating Ideas", 100.

49. Brandom, "Animating Ideas", 102.

50. Brandom, "Animating Ideas", 97-8.

51. See the last of McDowell's Woodbridge Lectures, "Intentionality as a Relation", *Journal of Philosophy* 95 (1998): 471-491; reprinted in McDowell, *Having the World in View: Essays on Kant, Hegel, and Sellars*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009: 44-65.

52. I would like to thank Paul Redding, Carl Sachs, and Dean Moyar for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this essay. Parts of this essay have also been the target of feedback from audiences at Kent State University and the University of Sheffield. Thanks to them as well.