Sellars and McDowell on Objectivity

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Abstract

On the surface, one of the main differences between John McDowell and Wilfrid Sellars when it comes to their conceptions of intentionality has to do with their respective accounts of meaning. McDowell advocates a relational account of meaning, whereas Sellars holds, on the contrary, that a correct view of intentionality is only possible through a non-relational account of meaning. According to McDowell, Sellars does not consider the possibility of his own relational view because he suffers from a 'blind spot'. It is implied that if Sellars saw this possibility, he would see the light and embrace something like McDowell's own account. I would like to argue in this paper that the whole issue goes much deeper than that. Sellars does not suffer from a 'blind spot' and showing why this is the case should give us an idea of how far apart these two thinkers really are, appearances notwithstanding. It will also reveal that the heart of their disagreement does not consist in a dispute over whether the correct shape of an account of meaning should be relational or not. Sellars's and McDowell's respective outlooks on intentionality differ fundamentally with regards to the concept of objectivity.

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On the surface, one of the main differences between John McDowell and Wilfrid Sellars when it comes to their conceptions of intentionality has to do with their respective accounts of meaning. McDowell advocates a *relational* account of meaning, whereas Sellars holds, on the contrary, that a correct view of intentionality is only possible through a *non-relational* account of meaning. Contrary to McDowell, he holds that an account of meaning—since it has to be non-relational—is not sufficient to elucidate the nature of intentionality (of 'aboutness', or 'objective purport'): a full explanation of intentionality needs to be supplemented by his own

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picture theory in order to give the full story. McDowell, on the other hand, does not need anything beyond his account of meaning to explain intentionality. He thinks that Sellars errs in his account of meaning and that consequently, the picture theory is superfluous. According to McDowell, Sellars does not consider the possibility of his own relational view because he suffers from a 'blind spot'. It is implied that if Sellars saw this possibility, he would see the light and embrace something like McDowell's own account. I would like to argue in this paper that the whole issue goes much deeper than that. Sellars does not suffer from a 'blind spot' and showing why this is the case should give us an idea of how far apart these two thinkers really are, appearances notwithstanding. It will also reveal that the heart of their disagreement does not consist in a dispute over whether the correct shape of an account of meaning should be relational or not. Sellars's and McDowell's respective outlooks on intentionality differ fundamentally with regards to the concept of objectivity.[1]

I will proceed in the following manner. Firstly, Sellars's critique of relational accounts of meaning and his own brand of non-relational account will be exposed in some detail. This stage-setting is necessary in order to introduce some key concepts and ideas and to provide the background of the picture theory. In the second section, the main elements of the picture theory will be described. McDowell's criticism of Sellars is then discussed in relation to the picture theory and in relation to the correct shape of a theory of meaning. It is here that mention is made of Sellars's purported 'blind spot'. I will argue that McDowell's criticism fails to hit the mark. I agree with McDowell that there is something unsatisfying with Sellars's account of intentionality—however, I situate the main problem in his picture theory rather than in a blind spot. In section four, I try to substantiate that claim by laying down a three-pronged critical analysis of the picture theory. We will see here that the fundamental problem consists in a vacillating concept of the 'real order'. In section 5, I attempt to give an idea of the shape that a Sellarsian account of intentionality would take if the foregoing critical account is on the right lines. Section 6 concludes by identifying and underlining the deep disagreement between McDowell and Sellars.

1 Criticism of relational accounts of meaning

Roughly speaking, a relational account of meaning is one which takes expressions of the form "α means a"[2] at face value in the case of 'ba-

sic' expressions—that is, as *relating* an expression to an extra linguistic item, *i.e.*, an item in the 'real order'. For instance, let's take "'Socrates' means Socrates". What is meant here, at first blush, is that a certain word ("Socrates") is used to refer to something 'out there', in the world—the object *Socrates*. It is thus implied that with such statements of meaning we are *transcending*, so to speak, the realm of language and literally reaching 'out'. Sellars ([12, p. 164]) calls this conception of meaning the "Fido"–Fido conception.[3] Examples of such relational accounts of meaning are those constructed along Tarskian semantics[4] and McDowell's own account of meaning (see in particular his [5]).

According to Sellars, as is well-known, this is an illusion. Statements of meaning—as well as those involving the concepts of aboutness, denotation, reference, and truth—do not get us outside the conceptual realm (understood here as the realm of language), contrary to what surface grammar seems to tell us about these statements. Indeed, for Sellars, it would be a mistake to take such statements at face value. Their proper analysis, on his view, shows that they do not reach beyond the conceptual realm—language—to 'hook onto' or 'catch' the objects that they are purportedly about. Sellars criticised the relational account repeatedly over the entire course of his prolific academic career.[5] In what follows, I will quickly expose the main points of his criticism as he put it in his texts, and then I will offer what I take to be the 'spirit' of this criticism. Sellars criticises the relational account in many guises, not only as it concerns the concept of meaning, but also kindred ones such as denotation and satisfaction. I will cover them in turn.

Let's start with the concept of meaning. For Sellars, it is a mistake to think that statements of the form:

α means a

state a relation between a linguistic item and a non-linguistic item. Consider, he asks us, the following instance of the preceding schema:

'Rot' means *red*

Sellars suggests[6] unpacking this sentence in the following manner:

'Rot' in German plays the role of 'red' in English

In this case, all that is asserted is that a certain word in a language is used in the same way as a word in another language. Hence, we stay in the conceptual realm—nothing is said of what happens in the 'real order' in relation to 'rot' or 'red': only that these strings of letters have the same use in their respective langage. The relation here is between two linguistic items.

Someone could well agree with Sellars's analysis of the concept of meaning but maintain that in the case of canonical statements of *denotation* and closely related concepts—reference, designation, and 'standing for' come to mind—there clearly *is* a relation being asserted between a linguistic item and a non-linguistic one. Here the basic schema would be:

α denotes a

where, as in the previous schema concerning meaning, "α" stands for the name of a referring expression and "a", presumably, for the actual object or property denoted by the referring expression. However, [16, V, §§58–68] warns us against a relational understanding of instances of this schema. He asks us to consider instances such as:

'Plato' denotes the teacher of Aristotle.

Just like he did for statements of meaning, Sellars proceeds to offer a non-relational analysis of this instance of the schema. This time, the sentence is unpacked in the following way:

For some S, 'Plato' stands for S, and S is materially equivalent to ·the teacher of Aristotle·

This existential generalisation is true because 'Plato' stands for ·Plato·, and ·Plato· is materially equivalent to ·the teacher of Aristotle·. The second conjunct ("S is materially equivalent to ·the teacher of Aristotle·"), Sellars explains, is true just in case this statement is true:

$\forall x$ (x is Plato $\equiv$ x is the teacher of Aristotle)

If this is a proper and sound analysis of the concept of denotation, it has to be admitted that there is no 'stepping out' of the conceptual realm here. What the analysis tells us is that one word used to talk about something has the same sense as another one which is

also used to talk about that same thing—whatever is true of something when we use one expression will also be true when we use the other expression. It is important to note that the 'something' here is not specified.

Again, someone could sympathize with Sellars's analysis up to this point while remarking that the truth of "$\forall x$ (x is Plato $\equiv$ x is the teacher of Aristotle)" *does* entail a 'word-world' relation through the notion of *satisfaction*. On a Tarskian-style analysis, the truth-conditions of this sentence will involve the notion of satisfaction:

"$\forall x$ (x is Plato $\equiv$ (x is the teacher of Aristotle))" is true $\equiv$ ($\forall x$ (x satisfies "x is Plato") $\equiv$ x satisfies "x is the teacher of Aristotle")

The notion of satisfaction, the objection goes, certainly involves a relation involving an extra-linguistic item. Sellars discusses the issue in Chapter 3 of *Science & Metaphysics*. There, he reinteprets statements involving satisfaction in a way that keeps such statements within the 'conceptual realm'. Let's start, as usual, with the following satisfaction schema:

O satisfies 'x is F'

where 'O' refers to an object in the domain and 'F' is any predicate. An instantiation of this schema would be:

Socrates satisfies 'x is wise'

Here we seem, superficially at least, to have stated a 'connection' between language and the world—certainly the occurrence of 'Socrates' above points to the actual Socrates. Not so fast, says Sellars. He suggests ([16, p. 103]) that we reinterpret such statements involving satisfaction in the following way:

The result of replacing the ·x· in an ·x is wise· by a ·Socrates· is true, i.e., S-assertible

Once we reflect that Sellars analyses s-assertibility in a way that does not contain essentially a relation between language and world [16, IV, §§24–34], we see that in the end, for Sellars, the notions of meaning, denotation, truth, reference, and satisfaction all form an interconnected

network of concepts that are to be analysed in such a way that the application of these notions never reach beyond the conceptual.

This discussion of satisfaction by Sellars has prompted Gilbert Harman's following reaction ([4, p. 414]):

> Sellars claims (in effect) that the relation of satisfaction, which plays an essential role in Tarski's account of truth for quantified sentences, is not really a semantic relation at all. That is, he denies that satisfaction is a relation between language and the world. Now it seems to me that Sellars must be mistaken here, possibly because he has not fully appreciated Tarski's theory.

Sellars replies to Harman in a correspondence [21], and the heart of his reply, as I understand it, is that Tarskian semantics *does* use a concept of reference that appeals to 'word-world' relations, but it doesn't *explain* that relation—that is the problem. It tells us nothing about the *nature* of reference, or so Sellars argues in his letter: "...is this language-world relationship captured by the intension of either 'true' or 'true of' or 'satisfies'? My answer is *no*. The answer of those who hold the standard interpretation of the Carnap-Tarski account—most recently Donald Davidson—is *yes*." It has to be admitted that Tarski's notion of satisfaction, as it is used in his classic paper [23], does not amount to a philosophical explanation of the nature of reference, nor is it intended to fulfil that role. It takes the relation between language and the world for granted. Indeed, the specification of the truth-conditions amounts to saying that the sentence will be true provided that an object satisfies the open sentence—nothing is said about *how* such a relation of satisfaction obtains.

What this analysis of semantical notions showed is that for Sellars, the relation between the conceptual realm and the non conceptual—the relation between, in essence, mind and world—is not to be cashed out, ultimately, in terms of these semantical notions. They appear to have a relational form, to be of the form 'aRb', but for Sellars the surface syntax should not mislead us—the logical form of these fundamental semantical notions is not relational. This leads me to endorse the thesis according to which Sellars *intends*[7] his semantics to be non relational and as such it does not lead to a full account of the intentionality of statements such as 'this cube is red'.[8] With such a statement, we do not get out of language and into the world—Sellars associates here the conceptual with language.[9] Now, how does this intentional relation between language and

world obtain? Sellars does not deny that there is such a relation.[10] The answer lies in his picture theory.

2 The picture theory

The importance of Sellars's picture theory in his 'system' should not be understated. It is not a mere optional element that can be discarded while keeping the rest of his views more or less intact. It goes hand-in-hand with his non-relational account of meaning, aboutness, and intentionality: without the picture theory, there would be no account, in Sellars's system, of how language and thought relate to the 'real order'. Indeed, Sellars is not an idealist—he needs to give an explanation of the link between mind and (mind-independent) world, so to speak. Unfortunately, as we will see in section 4, this theory perhaps raises more questions than it purports to answer. First of all, though, we need to have a look at it.

Remember that with Sellars's non-relational account of meaning, we do not 'reach' what he calls the 'real order'—so far, we have remained in the 'conceptual order'. We get to the real order, according to Sellars, with the relation of picturing. The basic idea—taken from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*[11] —is to consider a word such as 'cube' as a *natural-linguistic object*, that is, as marks on paper or sound waves or pixels on a computer screen, independently of what the word 'means'. Such natural objects—presumably part of the real order—are correlated with other items in the real order, that is, actual cubes.[12] These natural-linguistic objects are correlated through uniformities of performance: typically, basic singular statements containing the natural-linguistic object 'cube' in one of its guises will be uttered or written in the presence of an actual cube in the real order. Hence, we see that for Sellars, the picturing relation is a real order - real order relation.[13] It is important to note that this relation holds between words figuring in basic singular statements such as 'cube' in 'this cube is red'[14] —this will be crucial for section 4. Another element to keep in mind is that on this account, cubes and other ordinary objects such as tables and chairs are part of the real order.

Now how does this relate to the conceptual order? Let's remember that for Sellars ([20, pp. 211–212])—as McDowell [5, p. 52] also clearly sees—there is no relation of picturing as such between the orders. The only 'relation' is one of presupposition [11, p. 57] or, as McDowell sees it (rightly, in my view), it is a *transcendental* relation: "For Sellars, our entitlement to see elements in the conceptual order as intentionally

directed towards elements in the real order has to be transcendentally secured from outside the semantical, from outside the conceptual order" [5, pp. 61-62].[15] This transcendental job is performed by the picture theory: it ensures, ultimately, that our discourse has objective purport by 'grounding' it, so to speak, via uniformities of performance that relate linguistic-natural objects to other natural objects.

Granted, the foregoing is a mere sketch of the picture theory. But independently of the issue concerning the details of Sellars's account, the following elements are beyond doubt and form its core:

1. There are no relations between the conceptual and the natural order.

2. The picturing relations that obtain between natural-linguistic objects and natural objects *make possible* the intentionality of what happens in the conceptual order—that is, they ensure that our discourse has 'aboutness'.

3. The natural-linguistic objects forming one item of the relation are basic empirical ones such as 'this cube is red'—what Sellars calls 'basic singular statements' or 'atomic statements'.

4. Ordinary common-sense objects such as cubes, chairs, plants are part of the natural order.

5. This picturing relation amongst elements of the natural order obtains through *uniformities of performance*—words such as 'cube' picture cubes by virtue of the uniformities of performance towards basic singular statements in which the word 'cube' occurs (such as 'this cube is red').

Now that we have this sketch of Sellars's picture theory and that we have, in the previous section, explained his non-relational account of meaning, we are ready to have a look at McDowell's criticism of Sellars's overall account of intentionality.

3 McDowell's criticism of Sellars

In his *Woodbridge Lectures* published in 1997, McDowell develops his views on meaning, intentionality, and objectivity by confronting them with Sellars's, especially as the latter are put forward in his *Science & Metaphysics*. The heart of the matter, as McDowell sees it, lies in the

issue of whether we should adopt a relational or a non-relational account of meaning. Sellars embraces the second type of account, but McDowell resists it and suggests that a correct account should be a relational one.

For McDowell, Sellars's account of intentionality, resulting from a combination of his non-relationalism about meaning and his picture theory, is unacceptable. He points out that Sellars's transcendental view requires a 'sideways-on' perspective,[16] something that McDowell is strongly opposed to. Sellars's view also seems symptomatic of his alleged scientism (according to which the objects of the manifest image do not 'really exist'—more on this in the next section), another aspect of his account that definitely goes against any sort of view that McDowell could accept.[17] In a nutshell, despite McDowell's strong affinities with Sellars on many aspects, the combination formed by his non relational account of meaning, picture theory, and scientism is where reconciliation is impossible.

According to McDowell, Sellars is led to these inadmissible views because he suffers from a 'blind spot': he is blind to a possibility, a possibility exploited by McDowell in his own 'account'[18] of intentionality. On McDowell's diagnosis, Sellars is correct to reject relational accounts of meaning that relate conceptual episodes to a domain of Cartesian 'contents'. On this view, the thought of a golden mountain is such by virtue of being related extrinsically to the content *golden mountain*. Hence, our access to the world is mediated by this domain of contents. Sellars (see his [11]) rightly, according to McDowell, rejects that view. Furthermore, Sellars is correct (also in 'Being & Being Known') to reject another relational account, the one embraced by so-called 'extreme realists' according to which the conceptual episode is related to an item in the real order, namely, *that* which the conceptual episode is about. On this extreme realist view, a conceptual episode about a golden mountain is what it is in virtue of its being in relation to a golden mountain—a 'subsistent', non-existing object in this case, and an existing object in the case of a conceptual episode containing a reference to something that exists. These conceptions are not satisfying for Sellars, neither are they (at least as they stand) for McDowell. One of the problems with these relational accounts is that conceptual episodes (thoughts), *qua* conceptual episodes, end up being all alike: they differ only in having different relata, they are different *extrinsically*, but *intrinsically* they're all the same. This strikes Sellars as 'odd' [11, p. 42] and McDowell [5, p. 54] concurs.

On Sellars's view, these are the two possible shapes that a relational

account can take. They're not satisfying, hence, he concludes, we need a *non relational* account of meaning (or content), one that Sellars advocates along the lines of the first section of this paper. As we have seen, such a non-relational account is bound to take the shape of a theory according to which statements of meaning relate two items that are in the conceptual order—we do not get out of language, as it were, and we can't (except transcendentally). According to McDowell, Sellars is led to this non relational construal of meaning because he is unable to see another possibility for a relational account, one that does not suffer from the problems associated with the Cartesian and the extreme realist approaches. The missing possibility is that "conceptual episodes might differ intrinsically, not in a way that *systematically corresponds* to what they are about, but *in* being about whatever they are about" [5, pp. 54-55]. McDowell also formulates the blind spot thus: "[Sellars] simply does not consider that someone might want to say a difference in what [conceptual episodes] are directed towards can itself be an intrinsic difference in [conceptual episodes]" [5, p. 55]. On this view—unconsidered by Sellars—a conceptual episode is what it is in virtue of its intrinsic content, and that content *is* what the conceptual episode is about: it is to be *identified* with it in a strong sense.[19]

What we have here, in effect, is McDowell's own view on content, according to which conceptual episodes "contain" claims unmediated by anything. With experience, we are 'open to the world', as it were, and take it in as it is. The content of the conceptual episode 'this cube is red' is the very fact *itself* that the cube is red (hence the cube will itself be part of the conceptual episode). It is a relational account of content (of meaning) in that conceptual episodes are related to something else, to something external, something 'outside' language—in our example, the actual fact that the cube is red. We have the episode on the one side, and the content on the other, so to speak. But once the episode 'takes in' the content, it is identified with it—the content is what the episode is about, not a Cartesian realm of contents mediating between thoughts and the world. We thus see that McDowell's view shares similarities with the extreme realist account. One of the differences between the two is in the way McDowell explains thoughts that do not reflect reality, such as conceptual episodes concerning golden mountains or impossibilities.[20] What is interesting—as we will see in sections 5 and 6—is that McDowell formulates his account as being relational since it relates conceptual episodes to 'extra-conceptual items' [5, p. 55]. It's interesting because it reveals an important point of difference between McDowell and Sellars

concerning the very nature of objectivity.

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The way that McDowell sees it, then, Sellars suffers from a blind spot—he has not considered a possibility such that had he been alive to it, he probably would have embraced it and his account of intentionality would have taken a similar shape to that of McDowell's. However, I must admit that I am sceptical of this. I don't think that Sellars suffers from a blind spot and I am doubtful that he would have been open to the sort of view on content and intentionality that McDowell is advocating. McDowell's view contains many aspects which would make a considerable number of Sellars's key theses false:

- McDowell's view, as we have just noted, involves the idea that the world (his own 'real order') is conceptual. It is a determining aspect of Sellars's views that he sees the real order as non conceptual.

- A theory of aboutness and intentionality constructed along McDowellian lines would obliterate the need for Sellars's picture theory. However, the picture theory is so central to the way that Sellars conceives of intentionality, content, meaning, and aboutness that it is hard to imagine a properly Sellarsian account without it.

- McDowell's view nullifies Sellars's life project of uniting the scientific image with the manifest image: indeed, the real order on McDowell's view is the manifest image (or at least it is an 'authentic' part of the real order) and for him there is certainly no 'problem' of according two images. Again, it is difficult to imagine how a Sellarsian philosophy could survive without that unifying commitment.[21]

Hence, one wonders what would be left of Sellars's philosophy as we know it. This makes me think that the reason Sellars is 'blind' to that possibility is that it's simply not an option for him, given his deep philosophical commitments. We must not forget that Sellars's main philosophical project is to bring into stereoscopic vision the manifest image and the scientific image. He has a deep philosophical commitment to the manifest image being thoroughly different from the scientific image. One thing is certain, for Sellars the realm described by the scientific image is not conceptual, it resides outside the conceptual sphere, outside of the space of reasons. This apparent dualism between the two images shaped his philosophical life. It strikes me as very unlikely that Sellars would

consider and adopt a philosophical position that would undermine his life's work. Sellars has no 'blind spot'.

4 Critical examination of Sellars's account of intentionality

I agree with McDowell that there is something deeply unsatisfying with Sellars's account of intentionality when it comes to 'basic' conceptual episodes such as 'this cube is red'. But I don't situate the problem in the non-relational aspect of the theory, contrary to McDowell—I rather think that Sellars has some major problems when we consider the picture theory underlying his non-relational account. I will consider these problems in turn in what follows, and then I will attempt to locate a common source to these worries.

4.1 Basic singular statements and the real order

The main question I would like to investigate concerns the nature of the real order for Sellars. This question is key for everything, since the picture theory relates *only* items of the real order—it does not involve anything belonging to the normative realm (the conceptual order). The real order certainly comprises the items described by the scientific image. McDowell's reading coheres with this, especially when he reacts negatively against Sellars's 'scientism' [5, pp. 62–63]. In fact, there is a strong temptation to *identify* the real order with the items described by the scientific image, in view of his stance that the items of the common sense framework (belonging to the manifest image) do not really exist.[22] In other words, it is almost unavoidable to see Sellars as a Kantian whose main difference with Kant is to replace the latter's unknowable *noumena* with the knowable (in principle) items described by the scientific image. Given Sellars's self-admitted strong *penchant* for Kant, this reading sounds very plausible.

But if that is the case, what should we make of the picture theory with regards to basic singular statements pertaining to the common sense world of physical objects, such as 'this cube is red'? Sellars tells us that the objective purport of that statement should be understood through his picture theory, where 'this cube is red' is to be taken as an item in the real order (a natural-linguistic object). This natural object entertains a picturing relation with items of the real order—here, red cubes. Hence, the red cubes are in the real order. But this is problematic if we remember the view I have attributed to Sellars, namely that common

sense objects do not really exist and are not part of the real order. The nature of the real order is unclear in Sellars's writings. Does it, or does it not, contain common sense objects—*i.e.* the ordinary empirical items of the manifest image? I don't think it does, for two reasons:

1. Sellars seems committed, as pointed out earlier, to identify the real order with the scientific image. If that's the case, then, given that cubes, etc, are not part of the scientific image, these common sense objects cannot be part of the real order. Or at least that's what Sellars seems to think himself—in addition to the famous passage in 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind' already quoted, see also his [18, §52] and his [16, V, especially §79].

2. Sellars's life project consists of 'bringing into a stereoscopic view' the manifest image and the scientific image [15, pp. 4–5]. This implies that there is a tension between the two images. They suggest different accounts of 'what there is'. Presumably, the tension is between the common sense objects of the manifest image (such as red cubes) and the 'objects' or whatever is taken to be the ultimate component of the universe according to the scientific image. Hence, if the common sense objects were part of the real order, there would be no problem to reconciliating them with whatever the scientific image tells us about the nature of reality—but there *is* such a problem, according to Sellars. So it seems that for him, the real order does not 'contain' (in a sense to be made more precise—that's the problem, in fact) the ordinary items of the manifest image.

To recapitulate: in the picture theory, two elements of the real order are said to be into a picturing relation (through uniformities of performance, of which more below). It is central to Sellars's picture theory that these elements both belong to the *real* order. But Sellars keeps using examples involving common sense objects as if these objects were part of the real order. This is problematic since he seems committed to the idea that such objects are not part of the real order. If this is the case, then the account as he explains it is of no help towards an understanding of the objective purport of statements such as 'this cube is red' since no mention would be made of the real order as such, which it is the business of the scientific image to elucidate.

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It could be argued, against the criticism that I have just raised of Sellars's account of the picture theory, that I have failed to understand his view of the nature of basic singular statements. My criticism, it could be held, would hit the mark if for Sellars, basic singular statements necessarily had to concern the real order, the order described by the scientific image. However, Sellars mentions [16, V, §§88-91] that there *are* basic singular statements pertaining to the common sense objects. Such statements would be those of the kind 'this cube is red'. In the context of an ideal scientific theory ('Peircean'), these regular empirical statements would be *equivalent* to complicated basic singular statements in the framework of 'micro-physics' (*ibid.*, §88), that is, to statements of the scientific image. Hence, it could be said, Sellars adresses the problem of the status of ordinary common sense statements such as 'this cube is red' and provides us with a solution: they pertain to the same 'order' as the statements of micro-physics, the real order described by the scientifc image. It's just that the description at the level of the scientific image is more precise, it's a more adequate picture of the real order.

However, this reply fails to address two important issues. First of all, the foregoing scenario would work only within the context of an ideal scientific theory—we're not there yet, and we have no idea how basic singular statements pertaining to the common sense world of objects would correlate with them. It might turn out, for all we know, that on such an ideal scientific theory, it is impossible to correlate statements of both levels in a satisfactory manner. It might turn out that the correlation is only partial—perhaps we won't be able to account for colours in the ideal model, but able to account for lions. We basically have no clue what the ideal theory will be, if it ever (even) exists! So it is not responsible to draw conclusions from this putative 'Peircean' standpoint.

Secondly, the very notion of being 'more adequate' is problematic. What does it mean exactly? In which sense is the description of the table in the terms of scientific theory *more adequate* than the everyday table? The very notion of adequacy here needs to be explained in more detail in order to provide the foundation for the idea that ordinary perceptual statements are about the same 'real order' as those of the scientific image. Moreover, if the answer to the relation between the scientific image and the manifest image turned out to be so simple—a mere question of better adequacy—then it is hard to understand why Sellars would devote his life's writings to this question. It seems to me that the whole issue is to be considered by looking at Sellars's philosophy as a whole. It is in fact

the very idea of 'better adequacy' that is in need of explaining, and we could reformulate the question thus: "in which sense can we say—if we can say it—that the scientific image is more adequate than the manifest image?". Formulated thus, we see that the notion of adequacy only leads us so far and that it points, in fact, to the heart of the problem. Hence, it cannot be used to support the idea that basic singular statements pertaining to the world of common sense objects are in fact 'about' the real order.

4.2 The nature of basic singular statements

Sellars tells us, as we have just discussed, that his picturing relation holds for basic singular statements.[23] But what are basic singular statements? How can we distinguish them from molecular statements?[24] For the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, 'this cube is red' is *not* a basic singular statement—it has to be analyzed down to its atomic parts, where the resulting basic singular statements picture configurations of atoms ('atomic facts' according to the Ogden translation of *Sachverhalt*). The problem is that Sellars's commitment to the primacy of the scientific image points in a similar direction, namely, that 'this cube is red' is not, and *cannot* be, a basic singular statement. This is hard to reconcile with the fact that Sellars, more often than not, uses examples such as 'this cube is red' to explain the picturing relation. One way to defend Sellars on this point is to claim that for him, "the observation-theory distinction is fundamentally a methodological distinction with no direct ontological import" [3, p. 155]. I agree with deVries here that Sellars is not, after all, a traditional foundationalist, nor does he want to be one. Sellars does hold, in his philosophy of science, that it is unavoidable that theory is bound to play a part in observation. However, even if this is true and that there is some 'theory' in basic singular statements, the latter are still supposed to picture. And if they picture, then it is hard deny that there is some ontological import involved here: after all, picturing is a relation that holds between linguistic items (considered as natural-linguistic objects) and other natural objects. The point of the relation, and the point of insisting on *basic* singular statements, is to ensure that the relation in question happens in the world, so to speak. There is nothing 'methodological' about the picture theory—as I see it, it's ontological all the way, and it is designed to be like that. In other words, I don't see how the claim that the observation-theory distinction has no ontological import could answer the worry I just raised.

In sum, there would be no reason to appeal to the (synonymous, in Sellars's terminology) notions of 'basic singular statements' and 'atomic statements' in the context of the picture theory unless these words carried some sort of ontological import. This is because the picture theory exists to explain the relation between language and the world. If the distinction between 'basic' and 'not basic' or that between 'atomic' and 'molecular' has no ontological import, it is hard to see how basic singular statements can be said to have the important role that Sellars ascribes to them. If this is the case, we're back to the same problem: seen in that light, 'this cube is red' and the like are simply *not* basic singular statements in the sense required by the picture theory.

4.3 Uniformities of performance

One last worry about the general shape of the picture theory concerns the nature of the relation between the items in the real order. Sellars tells us[25] that the relation is constituted by 'uniformities of performance'—that is, it is the fact that basic singular statements containing the word 'cube' are (typically) used in the presence (in the real order) of cubes that makes it the case that the sign 'cube' pictures cubes.

Let us set aside, for the moment, the two worries above (concerning the appropriateness of taking common sense objects to be in the real order and concerning the availability of a suitable notion of basic singular statements). What I would like to point out is the following problem: we obviously have access to the common sense objects of the manifest image, such as cubes, tables, chairs, persons. That is, these manifest image objects exist outside of me, and I can *see* them. It is certainly not part of Sellars's philosophy to adopt a stance according to which these objects are not accessible to us and that we can't *know* basic empirical facts about these objects, such as the fact that a certain cube is red. Now let us remember that what guarantees the objective purport of our empirical discourse is the fact that such picturing relations obtain. But Sellars tells us—as we have seen in section 2—that this guarantee is transcendental. This transcendental aspect of Sellars's philosophy has to be understood in a Kantian sense: these picturing relations are a condition of possibility for objective purport in a sense which parallels Kant's idea that the noumena are a condition of possibility for objective purport as well.

Now all of this would make perfectly good sense in the context of a picturing relation involving elements of the real order understood in

terms of an ideal scientific theory. But in the present context, in which we talk about red cubes, this transcendental talk seems superfluous. Saying that we have to make a 'leap' and 'presuppose' that there is a relation of uniformities of performance between utterances of basic singular statements containing the word 'cube' and the presence of cubes in order to ensure the objective purport of statements such as 'this cube is red' goes against common sense. It's almost a truism that basic singular statements involving the word 'cube' are related to ('picture') cubes in virtue of 'uniformities of performance'. One very tempting way to understand these uniformities of performance is to conceive of them as a way to express Wittgenstein's idea that the meaning of a word consists in how it is used: correct utterances of empirical sentences containing the word 'cube' are used in the presence of cubes in a uniform manner, and that's what accounts for the meaning of 'cube'. There is nothing mysterious there, nothing 'transcendental', nothing that, to borrow McDowell's formulation used earlier, has "to be transcendentally secured from outside the semantical". Something *does* have to be secured from outside the semantical, but why 'transcendentally'? This adds an unecessary complication if it is insisted that words referring to common sense objects perform a picturing function.

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The three criticisms just raised against the picture theory involve a certain level of uneasiness with the idea that objects belonging to the common sense framework are part of the real order. In the first criticism, this idea is addressed head-on: on the one hand, in his philosophy science, Sellars claims that common sense objects do not *really* exist, and on the other hand, in his picture theory, such objects are considered part and parcel of the real order. The resulting tension formed the basis of that first criticism. In the second point that was raised, the key question was the status of empirical expressions involving common sense objects. Sellars is committed to the claim, via his picture theory, that such expressions are 'basic' or 'atomic'. But another tension appeared, this time between this commitment and another important commitment undertaken by Sellars, namely his claim of the primacy of the scientific image. These two tensions, of course, are related. Finally, in the last criticism, the supposedly 'transcendental' aspect was found to be puzzling since there seems to be nothing transcendental about common sense objects eliciting uniformities of linguistic performance amongst language-users. This tension, of course, also involves in a critical manner Sellars's

contention that common sense objects are part of the real order. This, then, is perhaps the overall diagnosis of this study of the picture theory: the inclusion, in the real order, of common sense objects such as tables and cubes. To put it differently, the problem is that the picture theory in Sellars's account is built around the idea that there are relations of picturing between expressions (considered as natural-linguistic objects) that are about items belonging to the realm of the *manifest* image and 'objects' belonging to the realm of the *scientific* image.[26]

5 Sellars's account of intentionality reinterpreted

What I propose to do, in what follows, is to give an idea of the shape that a Sellarsian account of intentionality would take if we strip it of the idea that common sense objects—manifest image objects, so to speak—are part of the real order and thus participate in the picturing relation. This, as we will see, amounts to drawing a strong correlation between Sellars's manifest image and Kant's realm of phenomena. Phenomena, for Kant, as is well-known, are not to be identified with the *noumena*. Phenomena are conceptual, whereas things-in-themselves are not. The latter somehow underlie the phenomena (how exactly this is done is a matter of controversy amongst Kant scholars). On this reinterpretation of Sellars's views, Kant's things-in-themselves become the realm described by the scientific image. Unlike in Kant, this realm is not unknowable for Sellars. But the overall shape is the same: on the one side, we have a non-conceptual realm which is somehow partially 'responsible' for the constitution of the other—conceptual—realm. This conceptual realm is the one we have access to through our senses. It is the ordinary world of common sense objects, part of what Sellars calls 'the manifest image'. Hence, if we attribute to Sellars a view possessing this overall shape, the cubes and other ordinary objects cannot be said to be part of the 'real order'—this label is more suited to the items described by the scientific image. On this interpretation, then, objects belonging to the manifest image cannot be said to enter into the picturing relation, since the picture theory is designed—for good reason, namely to account for objective purport—to put in relation two objects belonging to the real order.

This interpretation of Sellars's view is very hard to resist since it is suggested by Sellars himself in two passages worth quoting:

> The thesis I wish to defend, but not ascribe to Kant, though it is very much a 'phenomenalism' in the Kantian (rather

> than Berkeleyian) sense, is that although the world we conceptually represent in experience exists only in actual and obtainable representings of it, we can say, from a transcendental point of view, not only that existence-in-itself accounts for this obtainability by virtue of having a certain analogy with the world we represent but also that in principle *we*, rather than God alone, can provide the cash. [16, II, §49].

And:

> To what extent does the positive account I have been giving amount to a Kantian-type phenomenalism? Should I say that the *esse* of the common sense world is *concipi*? It is not too misleading to do so provided that this is taken to be a vigorous way of stressing the radical differences in conceptual structure between the framework of common sense and the developing framework of theoretical science. [16, V, §102].

These passages strongly buttress the interpretation according to which cubes and the like belong to the 'conceptual' realm of the manifest image. It also supports the attribution to Sellars of the view that it is the realm described by the scientific image that is responsible for the realm of phenomena—another way of characterizing Sellars's belief in the primacy of the scientific image.[27] It is also clear that there is a sense in which Sellars would assent to the idea that the world of the manifest image is conceptual (its *esse* is somehow *concipi*).

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What would become of the picture theory under such an interpretation? Here, the picture theory will have to be seriously modified, while trying to retain its objective of ensuring the objective purport of expressions such as 'this cube is red'. This 'new' picture theory does not involve statements pertaining to the realm of the manifest image. The relation in question would be between the Sellarsian real order (that is, the world described by the scientific image) and Sellarsian *impressions*, which are theoretical entities in his sense of the word. So it would not be between natural-linguistic objects and the items referred to by these linguistic objects. On this interpretation, what guarantess—transcendentally—that our conceptual episodes have objective purport is still the relation that they entertain with the elements of the 'real order' that they are about, but this time the relation obtains in virtue of the impressions

that somehow caused (in a sense to be made more clear, of course) the conceptual episode. These impressions, for Sellars, are non-conceptual and are the basis of the conceptual episodes that are formed with the process of synthesis along with the productive imagination. The impressions that 'cause' the conceptual episodes are *analogous* to the items that caused them—what corresponds to the impressions in the real order is analogous to ('pictures') the real order stuff at the micro-level, that is, whatever corresponds to the red cube at the level of the scientific image. It would be in this sense that the phenomenal world is ultimately determined by Sellars's real order. The fact that impressions *picture* the real order is what guarantees that our conceptual episodes are about the real order, that is, is what guarantees their *objectivity*.

This reinterpretation of Sellars's picture theory requires also that we modify somewhat the role of the concept of an impression as it is put forward in 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind'. For one thing, Sellars never discusses impressions in the context of the picture theory, as far as I know. As pointed out above, the picture theory as understood by Sellars involves items of the real order and natural-linguistic objects, also part of the real order. On the interpretation of the picture theory that I am suggesting—an attempt to save the spirit of the theory—we need to change the items of the picturing relation. As we just saw, it would be between impressions and the real order stuff at the micro-level. But on Sellars's conception of impressions, the latter are said to be *analogical* with common sense objects such as cubes and chairs. This passage makes it clear:

> What can be said is that the impression of a red triangle is *analogous*, to an extent which is by no means neatly and tidily specified, to a red and triangular wafer. The essential feature of the analogy is that visual impressions stand to one another in a system of ways of resembling and differing which is structurally similar to the ways in which the colours and shapes of visible objects resemble and differ. [12, p. 193]

However, on the conception suggested here, the impressions are said to be analogical to the micro-level stuff that would correspond, on a Peircean science, to the cubes and chairs of the phenomenal world—hence not analogous to the cubes and chairs *per se*. Two things to be noticed here. Firstly, I am attributing to Sellars's concept of analogy the role of *picturing*. Given the way that I interpret his notion of the real order, this seems to be a warranted move. The concept of analogy as used by Sellars in the passage of 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind' just

quoted is strikingly close to the concept of picturing. Secondly, this way of conceiving of the analogy involved in impressions solves a problem raised by McDowell when he discusses Sellarsian impressions. Indeed, McDowell expresses puzzlement at Sellars's contention that impressions are not conceptual. This puzzlement is easy to share when we reflect that Sellars wants impressions (not conceptual) to be analogous to common sense objects (conceptual). But if we change the role of impressions so that they are to be analogous to the real order stuff at the micro-level (the scientific image) *and* that this relation of analogy is to be assimilated to the picture relation, then the non-conceptuality of impressions is no longer puzzling.[28]

6 Two conceptions of objectivity

To recapitulate, I have suggested in the last section that we should reinterpret Sellars's system in a Kantian manner. This means two things. Firstly, it involves taking seriously the idea that common sense objects such as cubes belong to the phenomenal world, that is, to the conceptual realm. In other words, I am here associating the phenomenal with the conceptual on behalf of Sellars—but this move is hard to resist in view of the passages quoted in the preceding section from *Science & Metaphysics*. Secondly, it also means taking the description provided by the scientific image as grounding the *objectivity* of what happens at the phenomenal level. The realm described by the scientific image is not conceptual, and it is entirely in this realm that the (reconstructed) relation of picturing between impressions and objects belonging to the scientific image occurs. This reconstruction has been necessary in view of the instability, detailed in section 4, of the picture theory defended by Sellars. In sum, if one is to take on board Sellars's Kantian leanings, one has to modify the picture theory because in this Kantian reading of Sellars, cubes and the like do not belong to the real order, whereas in his writings Sellars suggests otherwise.[29] One is led to the view that Sellars did not manage to come to a fully consistent account of the real order—but his strong Kantian sympathies suggest a way to integrate the main ingredients of his account of intentionality while allowing him to endorse fully and completely the view that common sense objects are part of the conceptual realm.

If this Kantian reading of Sellars is at all plausible, then we can interpret Sellars as holding that conceptual episodes such as 'this cube is red' are 'related' to the phenomenal realm, to the world of the manifest image.

However, this will have repercussions on Sellars's criticism of relational accounts of meaning and his own advocacy of a non-relational account. Since the realm of common sense objects is conceptual, episodes such as 'this cube is red' could be characterised as being, in a sense, non-relational: they do not reach 'outside' the conceptual order, since the phenomenal world, in a Kantian-inspired account, is conceptual. This interpretation accords with the meaning of 'relational' implicit in Sellars: for him, a proper relational account would have to be one that relates something conceptual to something *non* conceptual. Since, on the Kantian-inspired account that I am attributing to Sellars, we remain in the realm of the conceptual when it comes to assessing the link between 'this cube is red' and the red cube, the 'relation' between them remains inside the conceptual realm—and that's why we could say that on this intepretation of Sellars's view, he holds a non-relational account of intentionality.

Admittedly, this is a different view of the non-relationality of meaning from the one put forward by Sellars in his writings and that I exposed in section 1 of this paper. The way Sellars sees it, it appears that we cannot say that " 'cube' means cube " is true in virtue of a relation between a word and an item in the 'real order'.[30] This is what shocks McDowell—and it is hard to disagree with him on this. However, if we attribue to Sellars the view that the real order is non conceptual and does *not* include cubes and the like, then there is no problem, independently of what he says about the non-relationality of semantical notions, in acknowledging that the word 'cube' refers to cubes. Once we get clear on the nature of the real order, there is no need for Sellars to defend the view that we never 'get out of language' with semantical notions. What we never get out of is not language, but rather the conceptual. It is because we don't get out of the conceptual with statements of meaning that Sellars's account can be said to be non relational. It is not exactly what he understands by 'non relational' in his writings, but it is the closest we can get to a working notion of it if we want to take seriously both the Kantian aspect of his system and the spirit, if not the letter, behind the picture theory.

In addition, this interpretation allows us to grant, on Sellars's behalf, that there *is*, in a sense, obviously a relation between something (a conceptual episode) and something else (a fact) in the case of a truthful conceptual episode about the ordinary world of common sense objects. That's what McDowell insists on: obviously, when I say that 'cube' means cube, I am pointing to a relation between a word and a certain

kind of object. For McDowell, the realm of the phenomenal, the realm of the manifest image, is part and parcel of the real order: hence, he does not hesitate to call 'relational' his account of meaning. For McDowell, 'relational' means: a relation between something conceptual and something belonging to the real order (conceptual or not).

Viewed in this light, McDowell's and Sellars's accounts of meaning and intentionality are, up to a point, the same: they agree that there is on one side a conceptual episode, and on the other side the realm of facts and objects that conceptual episodes are *about*. Sellars would call the modified account 'non-relational' because both items are conceptual, and for him a relational account needs to be between something conceptual and something non-conceptual—the key notion is conceptuality for Sellars. McDowell calls what basically amounts to the same account (in this respect) 'relational' because one item belongs to what we can call 'the space of reasons' and the other items belongs to his own understanding of the real order (the latter being conceptual all the way through). For McDowell, the key notion is the real order. On this reading, both agree on what to include in the realm of the conceptual, but they disagree on the nature of the real order.

This disagreement about what to include in the real order is the genuine point of tension between Sellars and McDowell. If both embrace, in the end, a similar account of the intentional purport of semantical notions, they nevertheless disagree on whether this is the end of the matter or not. For McDowell, statements of meaning allow us to get outside language and into the conceptual realm of ordinary empirical objects, and that's the end of the story. For Sellars, the story continues with his picture theory, the latter grounded on the items of the scientific image—that's what guarantees objectivity for him, whereas for McDowell the conceptual realm provides all the objectivity we need. Sellars takes seriously the Kantian thesis according to which something outside of the conceptual grounds our ordinary empirical judgments. For him, that something is the realm described by the scientific image—not Kant's *noumena*. For McDowell, we would do better to either give a different interpretation of Kant's noumena or work our way to a Kantian account stripped of the need to ground objectivity on something 'beyond' the conceptual—on McDowell's view of the matter, the conceptual is *unbounded* [6, Lecture II]. In that sense, we can say that McDowell's and Sellars's accounts of intentionality differ fundamentally with respect to their different conceptions of *objectivity*. The impression that their disagreement is based on the putative relationality or

non relationality of semantical notions is encouraged by Sellars's vacillating concept of 'real order'. Attempting to stabilise this notion in Sellars's system and putting the newly reconstructed concept of 'real order' to work in a comparison with McDowell's views showed how deep the disagreement between them is: it amounts to no less than diverging views on one of the most elusive, yet decisive, aspect of one's stance on intentionality—namely, objectivity.

Notes

1 In this paper, I approach the issue of objectivity in Sellars and McDowell from an examination of Sellars's picture theory. For a different approach, see [1]. In that latter paper, the issue of objectivity is discussed in the context of the Myth of the Given in its categorial form.

2 Where "α" stands for the name of an expression.

3 He also refers to it as the 'bow and arrow' conception and the 'matrimonial' conception [17, p. 350].

4 For instance, [24, p. 345] (also cited by [2, p. 66]) where he states:

> *Semantics* is a discipline which, speaking loosely, *deals with certain relations between expressions of a language and the objects* (or "states of affairs") *"referred to" by those expressions.* As typical examples of semantic concepts we may mention the concepts of *designation, satisfaction, and definition* [. . .]

Note that Tarski himself does not have a *theory* of meaning—however, it is possible, à la Davidson for instance, to construe a theory of meaning on the basis of Tarskian semantics.

5 As early as in his [13, pp. 311–316] (1953) and as late as 1979 in his *Naturalism & Ontology* ([14, pp. 97–105].

6 See [11, p. 55], [20, pp. 203–204], [19, pp. 244–245]. See also [9, pp. 59–60] and [3, p. 29]

7 What I mean here is that Sellars clearly puts forward a non-relational account of meaning and intentionality. The textual evidence in many of his classic writings all point to this. However, as we will see later in the paper, I think that Sellars would be agreeable to an account of meaning similar to that of McDowell's once some confusions about the 'real order' are dispelled. But Sellars might still, I think, call *his* account non-relational, even under the interpretation I will be suggesting. In this sense, the labels would remain the same, but Sellars's account of meaning would be—I will claim—more plausible. As it stands, it is 'unstable'—it leans too much on a strong understanding of what it means to be conceptual.

8 It is also possible to interpret Sellars's semantics as providing the basis for the intentional purport of such statements while acknowledging the gist of his criticism of the relationality of the key semantical notions. Shapiro does so ([22]). While it is true that the correctness of Shapiro's alternative analysis would possibly undermine the main claim of the present paper, it would require another paper to discuss that issue satisfyingly. What I can say now is that it seems to me

that this alternative interpretation comes with the cost of obliterating the need of the picture theory in Sellars's system. It is tempting—almost irresistible—to view the picture theory as providing exactly what, on my reading, the semantical notions cannot do for Sellars. If we grant that we should construe Sellars's semantics in the way suggested by Shapiro, it becomes difficult to acknowledge the relevance of the picture theory. My own view, as will become clear later, is that we may interpret Sellars as holding a view close to that of McDowell's with respect to semantical notions, but that this is not the end of the story for Sellars, whereas for McDowell it is. More on this in section 6.

9 This is will be crucial in later sections. I will argue that Sellars's view on this matter, in order to be stable, needs to be amended in an important manner.

10 He writes in his correspondence with Harman [21]: "I certainly do not deny that when we get to the level of basic sentences our account of truth conditions must include a relation between language and world. What I deny is that satisfaction, *as characterized in Tarski-Carnap semantics*, is that relation."

11 See especially propositions 2.1 – 3.263 of the *Tractatus* [26]. Sellars explicitly borrows the idea from Wittgenstein [20, pp. 207–208].

12 For the main lines of the picture theory see especially [11, pp. 50–59] and his [20, pp. 207–224]. As deVries ([3, pp. 50–56]) says, the picture theory has been somewhat neglected in the literature, perhaps because it has often been considered as the weak link in his system. But if I am right, it forms a fundamental core of his account of intentionality and cannot be dismissed while keeping the rest of his system intact.

13 It is important to point out that I am here laying down the picture theory as I take Sellars to have understood it. As we will see in section 4, I think there are important problems with this theory as spelled out here. In section 5, I suggest another understanding of the picture theory, one that I regard as reflecting more accurately Sellars's overall views on intentionality.

14 Sellars is explicit about this in *Science & Metaphysics*, V, §26: "The fundamental job of singular first-level matter-of-factual statements is to picture, and hence the fundamental job of referring expressions is to be correlated *as simple objects* by matter-of-factual relations with single non-linguistic objects".

15 See also [9, p. 150], where he writes, in the context of discussing the nature of the picture theory: "Sellars' corrected Kantian empiricism—his 'naturalism with a normative turn', as I have been characterizing it—is at its heart the attempt to articulate the subtle *transcendental* or presuppositional relationships that obtain between the normative, conceptual dimensions and the non-normative, naturalistic dimensions of human experience" (emphasis mine).

16 For instance: "There is a temptation to suppose transcendental philosophy would have to be done at a standpoint external to that of the conceptual goings-on whose objective purport is to be vindicated—a standpoint at which one could contemplate the relation between those conceptual goings-on and their subject-matter from sideways on. Sellars's move fits this conception: he undertakes to vindicate the objective purport of conceptual occurences from outside the conceptual order" [7, p. 17]. For a general criticism of the sideways on perspective, see his [6], II, § 5 and V, § 3.

17 See for instance his [8, pp. 41–43] and his [5, pp. 62–63].

18 I use quotes since McDowell takes himself to be a quietist and hence as not putting forward any theory or hypothesis about the nature of the mind and intentionality.

Whether he really succeeds in being a quietist is a different issue, a fascinating one that I cannot go into here.

19 For a different interpretation of the blind spot and a good discussion of it, see [22].

20 I cannot possibly go into the subject of how McDowell deals with the issue of false thoughts (a fascinating issue, for sure), but suffice it to say that he does not suggest that we should postulate subsistent objects, and that's where basically his account differs from the extreme realists'.

21 See Williams [25] for a discussion of McDowell and Sellars on the relationship between the manifest and the scientific images along similar lines.

22 It is indeed almost impossible to ascribe to Sellars another standpoint on the status of the objects of the common sense framework when he writes, in the oft-quoted passage: "*speaking as a philosopher*, I am quite prepared to say that the common sense world of physical objects in Space and Time is unreal—that is, that there are no such things. Or, to put it less paradoxically, 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" [12, p. 173]. Admittedly, the matter is much more complicated than that. In Chapter 5 of *Science & Metaphysics*, Sellars discusses the common sense framework and its relation with an ideal ('Peircean') scientific framework. Many common sense objects will probably prove to have what Sellars calls 'counterparts' in the Peircean framework. This may seem to lessen the strength of his scientism, but I don't think it does—no matter what 'exists' in the common sense framework, the Peircean framework always has priority, and the counterparts (when they exist) are bound to be wildly different from the original common sense framework. This is even more the case if we buy into Sellars's 'process ontology'.

23 He also calls them 'atomic statements' [16, V, §10].

24 For an illuminating discussion of basic singular statements, see Rosenberg's 'Sellarsian Picuring' [10]. Rosenberg agrees that this is a problem for Sellars [10, p. 106]. He then offers his own account of basic singular statements and how they can be interpreted in such a way as to rescue Sellars's picture theory. His sophisticated interpretation of Sellars on picturing and basic singular statements cannot be tackled here—it would require another paper.

25 See for instance [20, p. 212] and [16, V, §§30–31]. I follow McDowell's interpretation of Sellars on this point [5, pp. 51–52].

26 Rosenberg's interpretation of Sellars's picture theory, through his account of basic singular statements, does not face this problem (see his aforementioned [10]). Rosenberg attempts to provide a viable characterisation of basic singular statements by examining, among other things, animal representation systems. Coming from a different direction, I will attempt my own rescue of Sellars's picture theory in section 5.

27 For the primacy of the scientific image, see [15, p. VI].

28 What remains puzzling is how these impressions are 'transformed' into conceptual representations of cubes and chairs—but this is puzzling in the old account too. In fact, once impressions are introduced, their relation with either the real order or the representations that they cause is puzzling, period.

29 As we have seen when studying his criticism of relational accounts of meaning and his elaboration of the picture theory.

30 The crux is that Sellars is wavering in his conception of the real order—it includes common sense items as well as the items described by our best science.

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