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SELLARS THE POST-KANTIAN?

ABSTRACT. In Kant's "fact of reason," there is an apparent paradox of our being subject to laws of which we must regard ourselves as the author, while at the same time being normatively bound by the same laws that we cannot see ourselves as authoring. Working out the implications of this apparent paradox generated much of the response to Kant in post-Kantian idealism. Wilfrid Sellars notes the same paradox when he speaks of the "paradox of man's encounter with himself" in "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man." Like some of the idealists, Sellars thus opted for "two track" system of philosophy that combines the two tracks in a metaphor of "stereoscopic vision." This paper argues that understanding Sellars's own thought in terms of the issues that formed the dynamic of post-Kantian philosophy in Germany puts us in a better position to understand why Sellars's own conception of experience and of the unreality of the manifest image is not completely consistent with the argumentative direction of his thought. Understanding Sellars in this way helps us understand the limits of post-Kantian idealism just as understanding the dynamic of post-Kantian idealism gives us a more nuanced version of Sellars's conception of experience.

> A rule is an embodied generalization which to speak loosely but suggestively, tends to make itself true.
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> (Sellars 1953, p. 299).

> Mindedness (*Geist*) existing in and for itself is not the mere result of nature but instead is in truth its own result; it produces itself out of the presuppositions that it makes for itself, from out of the logical idea and external nature, and is the truth of the former as much as of the latter.
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> (Hegel 2004, §381)

Wilfrid Sellars gave the subtitle, "Variations on Kantian Themes," to his one full-length book treatment of his ideas (*Science and Metaphysics*, an expanded version of his Locke lectures of 1966), and he notoriously, although a bit tongue in cheek, characterized his other major statement of his views, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," as a series of *Meditations Hegeliennes*. But if anything, the "Kantian" and "Hegelian" elements might seem to be only very general: The "Kantian" element is quite general, in that

Sellars holds that there is some version of the "synthetic a priori" and some sense in which we can be said to bring certain conceptual elements to experience rather than deriving them from experience; and the Hegelian element might be perceived to be even more superficial, consisting only a very general kind of "holism" that both he and Hegel share.

Indeed, Sellars's work is characterized by the kind of concerns that animated the early analytic and, more specifically, positivist reactions to the revolutionary developments in late nineteenth and early twentieth century movements in science and philosophy. What has been called the "second scientific revolution" in physics (and likewise in chemistry and biology) seemed to call for a more serious approach to science than anything that the older versions of the idealist *Naturphilosophie* had to offer; the corresponding revolutionary developments in mathematics since Hegel's day also led many to believe that the so-called "dialectical logic" of the Hegelians was, most politely put, "outmoded"; and, finally, the revolutionary development in the approach to philosophical problems concerning the relation between thought and reality that focused on the representational character of language (particularly on issues of reference and meaning) gave philosophers a better and more concrete grasp on the issues than the all too general notion of "thought's relation to being," and the rigor of Frege's and Russell's mathematical logic offered a far better apparatus for understanding these issues than did anything like "dialectical logic."

Sellars's invocation of Kant was, of course, part of a long-building movement in contemporary philosophy. Many recognized that issues brought to the fore by the new science, the new mathematics, the new logic, and the new analytical approach called for a similarly new philosophical approach, not just for the rejection of Hegelian idealism, and those same concerns, as Michael Friedman has shown, led to a revival of Kantianism on the continental side of the philosophical divide, where Kantianism came to be seen as a kind of approach to those issues that did not take the "analytical" turn towards issues of meaning and reference to be the preferred method for tackling the new problems that arose in the second scientific revolution. (See Friedman 2000). German Neo-Kantianism, of course, was not so much philosophically defeated as it was simply cut short by the poison of the Nazi regime in Germany and the war that followed. In the Anglo-American world, the Kant revival had to wait until the 1960's, when in 1959, P.F. Strawson's book, *Individuals*, appeared with the provocative subtitle, "An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics." (One nowadays has to remind oneself just how shocking it was in 1959 to see the word "metaphysics" in the subtitle of a book by a prominent British analytical philosopher.) Sellars's own Locke lectures in 1966, along with Strawson's 1966 book on Kant (*The Bounds of Sense*, published at the

same time as Jonathan Bennett's, *Kant's Analytic*) helped to stoke the interest in Kant's theoretical philosophy, which was followed by a tsunami of interest in Kant's ethics fueled by John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* in 1971 put Kant firmly back on the map in Anglo-American philosophy. Hegel, however, remained an outsider, since he seemed that he had little to offer the dominating interests in philosophy of language, Fregean logic, or philosophy of science.

The other object of attack from the new analytical movement was American pragmatism, with Dewey's "logic" suffering the same kind of withering dismissal from Russell that Hegel's "logic" had earlier received. What divided, in particular, Dewey from the older, Hegelian tradition – it is worth being reminded that Dewey began his philosophical career as a kind of Hegelian – was Dewey's belief that Darwinian evolutionary biology had changed the entire playing field for philosophy and that the challenge to modern thought came from that direction, not from the new emphasis on Fregean logic and the representational structure of language.[1]

Sellars mixed some of these streams together, not only being an analytical philosopher (even with "Kantian variations" as his theme), but also a pragmatist of a sort.[2] What I want to suggest here is that Sellars own systematic views, seen most generally as a mixture of pragmatism and analytical philosophy, can be put into an even broader context of what is nowadays called "post-Kantian" philosophy (with the term referring to that broad movement in Germany in the late eighteenth up to the mid-nineteenth century that took Kant as its starting point and then tried to use Kant to get out of Kant).[3] The term, "post-Kantian" has been used to characterize the movement, since the older term, "German Idealism," neither characterized all the participants in the movement, nor did adequately capture the differences even among the various so-called "idealists" that it supposedly described. Indeed, it was a set of very similar issues that motivated some pragmatists (most especially, Dewey) and the issues that spurred both the development of analytical philosophy and the Neo-Kantian movement in Germany which

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[1] See Burke (1994) for a reconstruction and defense of Dewey in terms of the renewed interest in evolutionary approaches to epistemology.

[2] Robert Brandom in his "Study Guide" published as an appendix to the reprint of Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind notes that "Sellars's pragmatism dictates that issues of conceptual priority be translated into questions of the relative autonomy of different strata of language – that is, into questions concerning what language games can be played independently of and antecedently to which others" (Sellars 1997, p. 170).

[3] This characterization of "using Kant to get out of Kant" was the point stressed by Rolf-Peter Horstmann in his classic, "Die Grenzen der Vernunft," (1991) a study of the themes and issues motivating the "post-Kantian" philosophers.

provided the impetus for much of the much earlier post-Kantian development. To make this point requires the telling of a rather generalized narrative about that period of philosophy – or, to paraphrase Sellars, of how the impulses of that movement, in the broadest senses of the terms, hung together in the broadest sense of the term. My concern here, however, is not just to place Sellars a different context from where he is usually found; I hope that doing so will also offer us a different way of understanding his thought.

1. Some Post-Kantian Issues: Reinhold, Fichte, and Schelling

The story of the move from Kant to his immediate successors is complex and multifaceted, and I have tried to tell that story in more detail elsewhere (see Pinkard 2002). To get a handle on it, though, it is best to begin with a well-known Sellarsian theme: The Myth of the Given. The problem seemed particularly acute for the post-Kantians, starting with Karl Leonhard Reinhold, who recognized that the Kantian system, spread across three *Critiques* and a variety of other works, needed some kind of interpretive reordering. In particular, there was the usual concern about Kant's notion of unknowable things in themselves and a view that by the time of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant had effectively shown that the more dualistic understanding that the first *Critique* seemed to present (with its sharp division among the faculties of understanding and sensibility) was not to be maintained and that both faculties were somehow to be united. Very striking for the post-Kantians emerging in the last decade of the eighteenth century was the third *Critique's* assertion that in aesthetic judgment we have a normative, universally communicable judgment (although not, strictly speaking, a *conceptual* judgment because we cannot state a rule for it), and that in making this kind of judgment we orient ourselves by the "indeterminate concept (namely, of the supersensible substrate of appearances)" (1987, §57) which is "neither nature nor freedom and yet is linked with the basis of freedom, the supersensible" (1987, §59).

One line of post-Kantian thought took that an invitation to unite Spinoza's monistic conception of substance with the Kantian metaphysics of freedom; but another line of post-Kantian thought (which put great stress on Kant's own emphasis on what we would call the "intersubjectivity" of judgments) took that instead as Kant's own admission that the strict separation of concepts and

intuitions was untenable.[4] In particular, in light of Kant's later texts, passages from the first *Critique* stood out, such as: "The same function which gives unity to the various representations *in a judgment* also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations *in an intuition*; and this unity, in its most general expression, we entitle the pure concept of the understanding."[5] This seemed to indicate, most forcefully, that *even for Kant himself* intuition could *not* be conceived as a separate and independent "faculty" that provided some kind of foundation for knowledge that could be apprehended without the exercise of any conceptual faculties being needed or brought into play.

To Reinhold, this suggested that the key concept was instead that of representation in general, since both intuitions and concepts were species of representation, and if we could understand the representative function of "mindedness" itself, we could put the Kantian system into proper order. For Reinhold, a sensation, for example, was merely a subjective mental occurrence open to empirical (although only introspective) investigation. It is another thing altogether, Reinhold argued, to *take* that sensation *as* a representation of something different from the sensation, and its taking on that representative function is a result of our bestowing what Reinhold called "representational form" on the sensation, that is, giving what we could anachronistically call "semantic content" to the sensation. This was all based on what Reinhold called the "fact of consciousness," an awareness that we were conscious of objects in the world and of ourselves as the subject to which those conscious states were ascribed; this "fact" was supposed to serve as the foundation for all other claims about representations.

Reinhold's own version of this kind of reworking of Kant ran into some severe difficulties, which we need not go into here.[6] Fichte in particular picked

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[4] The relevant text in the *Critique of Judgment* was the following: "Instead, we must [here] take sensus communis to mean the idea of a sense shared [by all of us], i.e., a power to judge that in reflecting takes account (a priori), in our thought, of everyone else's way of representing, in order as it were to compare our own judgment with human reason in general and thus escape the illusion that arises from the ease of mistaking subjective and private conditions for objective ones . . . we compare our judgment not so much with the actual as rather with the merely possible judgments of others, and put ourselves in the position of everyone else, merely by abstracting from the limitations that happen to attach to our own judging" (1987, §40).

[5] Kant (1964, A79/B104). This judgment was repeated in even stronger form in the well known footnote to §16 of the B-Transcendental Deduction, where Kant said, "The synthetic unity of apperception is therefore that highest point, to which we must ascribe all employment of the understanding, even the whole of logic, and conformably therewith, transcendental philosophy. Indeed this faculty of apperception is the understanding itself."

[6] I cover the objections to Reinhold in chapter five of Pinkard (2002).

up on the difficulties in Reinhold's position as stemming from Reinhold's foundationalist approach to Kantianism. If the so-called "fact of consciousness" is to serve as a foundation, it must itself be conceptually apprehended, which means in turn that it would beg all the questions to use it as a foundational "fact" since the report of such a fact itself already presupposes that other conceptual capacities are in play (or that we are in possession of them), and the issue has to do with how we can claim *entitlement* to those concepts. As Fichte rephrased the issue, if there simply can be no base level "fact" of any sort that we could know without knowing anything else or which could be apprehended without bringing any conceptual capacities into play, then the issue in rethinking Kantianism was much more severe than Reinhold himself had seen.

Fichte saw that if this were the case, then a particular problem that had surfaced in Kant's practical philosophy between the publication of Kant's *Groundwork* in 1785 and the *Critique of Practical Reason* in 1788 covered all of Kant's philosophy. In the *Groundwork* Kant had declared that

> [T]he will is therefore not merely subject to the law, but is so subject that it must be considered as also *giving the law to itself* and precisely on this account as first of all subject to the law (of which it can regard itself as the author). (1998, p. 98/AA431)

However, as Kant himself clearly saw, taken literally, this would be paradoxical; a lawless will cannot obligate us, and a choice of practical principle made on the basis of *no* law would be simply arbitrary, so if the will were to give itself a law, it would need another law to choose that law; but if only a self-legislated law was obligatory, that prior law could not itself be obligatory. By the time of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant had decided to call this the "fact of reason" (using the term, "*Faktum,*" with its overtones of "making" instead of the more ordinary "*Tatsache,*" a fact in the non-normative sense, indeed, in the sense that Reinhold put into play). Kant clearly recognized that the very notion of there being a kind of moment of existential choice in which we somehow freely elect to impose a binding law on ourselves without any prior commitment is itself a pure fantasy (although something like that seems at least to have been Jean-Paul Sartre's position at one point); we *always* find ourselves in the space of reasons, bound by the commitments of reason itself, and there is no getting outside of that space, no non-normative foundation on which the normative space of reasons could metaphorically sit.

Yet Kant's use of the "fact of reason" also showed that he did not think that he had disposed of the paradox, since he acknowledged that we nonetheless must see this law as having been self-authored at least in the sense that "reason" is said to "originate" (to be legislative, "*gesetzgebend*" for) the law.[7] If indeed, however, as Kant claimed, "the same function which gives unity to the various representations *in a judgment* also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations *in an intuition*," then there can be no "given" of any sort, the apprehension of which could possibly serve as the basis for other epistemic claims. If "pure intuitions" put no normative constraints on the "synthesis of various representations in an *intuition*," then, so Fichte saw, the paradox in practical reason extends itself to cover *all* problems of normative authority. For Fichte, giving up the "given" means that the "Kantian paradox" takes center stage.[8]

Fichte thus put forward the view that the problem of the "self-authorization" of reason was simply *the* philosophical problem that had to be solved, and to that end, Fichte devised an ingenious answer. (Here we shall have to content ourselves only with the barest of sketches of Fichte's immensely subtle and complex position.) First, Fichte argued that even assertions of apparent certainty, such as "*A = A*," in fact get their necessity from something like a prior inference license to the effect of "if *A*, then *A*,"[9] which, as he saw, raised the question of how or from what such inferences are licensed; and, since he had ruled out any apprehension of some kind of object (even a pure meaning), it followed that its authority must come from us, that is, from what he called the "I," indicating by that term the subject that supposedly both *institutes* the license and also simultaneously *authorizes* itself to institute such licenses. This "I" must thereby come to grasp itself not as a natural "thing," and "object" out there in the world, but as something more like a *normative status*, which it quasi-paradoxically attributes to itself. To cut a long story (Fichte's story) short, the "I," so Fichte claimed, could attribute

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[7] "The consciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason, since one cannot ferret it out from antecedent data of reason, such as the consciousness of freedom (for this is not antecedently given) and since it forces itself upon us as a synthetic a priori proposition based on no pure or empirical intuition . . . one must note that it is not an empirical fact but the sole fact of pure reason, which by it proclaims itself as originating law." (Kant 1956, p. 31/AA 31)).

[8] This is the name I give to this general problem of the authority of reason in Pinkard (2002).

[9] Fichte formulates this in the terms of a logic that is not at all familiar to us nowadays; he says in one place, for example, that the proposition, "*A = A*," "has content only under a certain condition. If *A* is posited, it is naturally posited as *A*, as having the predicate *A*. But this proposition still tells nothing as to whether it is actually is posited, and hence whether it is posited with any particular predicate" (Fichte 1982, p. 96).

such a status to itself only by virtue of positing that there was something (the "not-I") that authorized it to do so. The tension (if not contradiction) had to do with the "not-I's" getting its authority from the "I," even though the "I" was authorizing it to be the non-normative basis of the "I's" assertions. That "not-I," so Fichte went on to claim, is to be conceived quasi-causally, quasi-normatively as an *Anstoß*, a "stimulus," that is, a "check" on the "I's" otherwise unconstrained power to posit things. To put it in less Fichtean terms: The world is experienced as a constraint (both causally and normatively) on what would be our otherwise unchecked inferential powers, but the normative force of that constraint is something *we bestow* on it, not something that it wears on its sleeve as it presents itself to us. The "Not-I" is, on Fichte's view, a *necessary* posit since without it, we would be left with a view of our mindedness as simply frictionlessly spinning in the void (to appropriate a phrase from John McDowell). However, he just left the mind-world connection at the level of a causal event on which we bestowed normative significance, with its remaining rather mysterious how we were to apprehend that quasi-causal event, the *Anstoß*, without its already having some kind of conceptual status. (Fichte later amended this in his practical philosophy to make the "Not-I" into another "I," that is, another agent, since he came to believe that only another agent and not a natural fact simply impacting on me can give me a *reason* for believing something; but that is another, longer story.)

There was a group of young people attending Fichte's lectures who more or less came to the conclusion that Fichte's solution did not so much resolve Fichte's problem as it just renamed it. (They came to be known as the "early Romantics.") As Fichte saw, we require a doctrine of receptivity (of the "Not-I") to make any sense of our own activity, but that receptivity is itself a "posit" made by the spontaneous subject. The very idea of the "stimulus" (the *Anstoß*, in Fichte's terms) served to point out the difficulty of rejecting the given and avoiding the kind of frictionless spinning in the void (that many of Fichte's readers took him to be doing anyway). Some of them (particularly Hölderlin, Schelling, and Novalis) took the problem to be Fichte's way of thinking the distinction between the "I" and the "Not-I" was something established by the "I" itself; or, to put it differently, Fichte's idea that since the distinction between the subjective and the objective was itself not a natural distinction to be found in the world, it was therefore itself a normatively established and *therefore* a *subjective* distinction. That way of putting things, so the early Romantic thinking went, would take you nowhere except perhaps to the point where subjectivity is conceived along the lines of (only self-constrained) inferentialism, and the relation to the world would be

conceived as purely causal, and, ultimately, Kant's doctrine of unknowable things in themselves would have to be brought back into play.

The early Romantics instead tried to show how we could intelligibly get a grip on both items: On our own *spontaneity* and even creativity in fashioning accounts of the world, and on our nonetheless being *responsive* to a world that is not in any terms the product of our creation and which does indeed put normative constraints on our beliefs.[10] To do that, some of them implicitly abandoned the kind of inferentialism that Fichte endorsed, holding instead that there are variety of entitlements that must be in play in our epistemic activities that do not normally themselves count as knowledge or as evidence for a claim but which must be in play (or can be at least partly made conscious) for us to be able to make even the ordinary perceptual judgments we make.[11]

Schelling (along with Hölderlin and Novalis) took that a step farther and proposed that we see the distinction between the subjective and the objective as being itself *neither* subjective *nor* objective but as something itself established by something more basic, which Schelling took to calling the "absolute." Starting the argument with the distinction between subjects and objects already in place, so these early Romantics argued, is starting with a kind of separation between elements that should itself not be taken as final. In Schelling's account, the idea that there is a metaphysical line dividing the subjective from the objective is misleading; in our own experience, we are always on both sides of the line, alternately seeing ourselves as subjects with a point of view on the world and as objects in the natural world (or, as subjects who are one among many other subjects, and as objects who are one among many other objects).

On Schelling's account, naturalists tend to want to make everything an object, whereas subjective idealists (like Fichte) tend to want to make everything a posit from the "I," and therefore, so Schelling had concluded by the late 1790s, philosophy had to pursue a two-track method: On the one hand, it had to understand that we were organic beings in a natural world and that there was no need to explain the status of agency by appeal to some other kind of non-empirical "stuff" (such as mental substance) that would supposedly form our constitution, which led him to construct a *Naturphilosophie* in which he developed a conception of nature as a series of "powers" (*Potenzen*, in Schelling's terminology) that played off each other, resulting in new and more

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[10] This is a theme that has been taken up by a number of commentators and defenders of early Romanticism. See Eldridge (1989 and 1997); Larmore (1996); Seyhan (1992); Frank (1997 and 1989).

[11] See Manfred Frank's (1997) masterly account of this movement.

complex forms of organization in nature that culminated in human communal self-consciousness; and since we also had to take the reality of human subjectivity equally seriously, he constructed an independent Kantian-Fichtean transcendental philosophy that culminated in an account of human communal self-consciousness that was the same as that offered by the *Naturphilosophie*. For Schelling, the mutual irreducibility of the subjective to the objective and the necessity of keeping faith with *both* points of view required us therefore to understand that neither could be simply be *added* to the other, nor could one be *reduced* to the other, nor could we simply be satisfied in holding onto with two competing points of view (the subjective and the objective); the *unity* of the two points of view (or the two tracks that philosophy had to follow) was therefore not itself something that was up for argument or inferential articulation. Instead, it was somehow itself the product of a way of *seeing* the world that necessarily *included* both viewpoints within itself, indeed, was the viewpoint from which both were to be derivative but which could not be stated in the terms appropriate to any one of those viewpoints. In keeping with the terminology of the time (some of which he had introduced), Schelling called this an "intellectual intuition" of the absolute, something that could be shown (or metaphorically seen) but not adequately said.

However, to bring this off, Schelling realized that he had to do more than simply offer this as a piece of therapy for perplexed readers or just to leave it at the level of advice on how to avoid both the Fichtean dead-end of "subjective idealism" and the Kantian dualism between deterministic appearance and the practical necessity of presupposing a kind of noumenal, transcendental freedom. Instead, he had to construct an appropriate theory of nature as it includes human agency within itself, and he had to construct an appropriate theory of subjectivity that required that same conception of nature for its own self-image to be rational. To carry that project out without reducing subjectivity to any form of naturalism, however, Schelling came to the conclusion that the account of *disenchanted* nature that Kant had constructed (a view of nature as a machine championed by the Newtonians) instead had to be replaced with a more or less *re-enchanted* account of nature in terms of the metaphor of an organism, and he also thought such a view of nature was also fully compatible with all the findings of the natural sciences; indeed, it was supposed to be (in a sense that Schelling never fully worked out) an implication of the findings of the natural sciences.

In Schelling's initial conception of his project, part of it was to supposed to be therapeutic in that it diagnosed a set of philosophical problems as stemming from an inadequate picture of how things hung together in the broadest sense of the term, substituting instead another picture in which those problems were not so much solved as they were dissolved. As Schelling put it about the so-

called problem of skepticism about the existence of objects apart from our mental representations of them: "Hence this question cannot be dissolved (*aufgelöst*) except in the way in which Alexander dissolved the Gordian knot, that is, by canceling and superseding (*aufzuheben*) the question. Hence it is quite simply unanswerable, because it can be answered only in such a way that it can never again be raised" (1927, p. 175). On the other hand, Schelling was not content to leave it that, since he also thought that we needed some kind of general *systematic* account of how things hang together (in the broadest sense of the term). That unity of the two viewpoints – grasped through the intellectual intuition of the absolute – joined the picture of human agents as free beings with a picture of nature that was both dynamic and (so Schelling went to great lengths to show) consistent with modern science.

There were of course some developments Schelling could not have foreseen, such as the development of Darwinian evolutionary theory, even though recent reinterpretations of Schelling have put him as an essential figure for the development of such views (see Richards 2002). What split Schelling off, however, from later developments was his thoroughgoing antipathy to any kind of "disenchanted" nature. This seems to have been a bad bet on Schelling's part; certainly the sciences since Schelling's day have developed more and more in the direction of vindicating the "disenchanted" view of the world.

2. Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man

For those who know Sellars's own work, the very general comparison being suggested here is perhaps obvious. In some ways, Sellars too opts for a "two track" system of philosophy, and in his early essays, he shows himself to be struggling with the same kinds of issues about "saying" and "showing" that worried Schelling and his followers namely, how one is to express the unity of the two tracks (but now transposed by Sellars into the more contemporary notion of the unity of different "frameworks"). In the later works, such as "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," Sellars argued that what is at stake are not simply modern, science-inspired visions of "disenchanted" nature in contrast to a view of agency that is indebted to Kantian conceptions of spontaneity but something even deeper, to which he gave the names of the "scientific" and the "manifest images." The manifest image is that view of ourselves that we have developed over the eons in our development of what Husserlian phenomenologists call the "life-world." However, the scientific image is more than just an outgrowth from that world (or an idealization of the life-world, as Husserl himself thought); it is instead another framework

altogether, and which, although it grew out of that framework of the life-world, detached itself from it and became a *competitor* to that framework. (On Sellars's view, science postulates imperceptible entities to explain the inductively established correlations drawn from the life-world of the manifest image, explaining even why those inductive correlations sometimes do not hold.) The problem with the two images is that, as competitors, there is no obvious way to unite them, since each claims different sorts of things to be the basic objects of its framework – each has a different view of what really exists in the world – which is to say that the scientific image makes claims about what is the true account of the world, all things considered, that is fundamentally at odds with that of the manifest image, the life-world.[12] The scientific image is not merely a different framework that has historically emerged from out of the manifest image; it is a *competitor* to the manifest image.

Sellars's metaphor for how to deal with that competition is, as is well known, that of *stereoscopic* vision (suggesting again the difficulty both he and Schelling faced as they each drew on metaphors of vision to express how it is that we could grasp the seemingly incompatible frameworks as one unity). As the metaphor of the stereoscope suggests, the two frameworks had to be seen as filling out the full image in "depth," as opposed to the heavily detailed but ultimately "flat" images provided by the manifest and scientific frameworks. The problematic aspect in providing any "depth" to those two images is the (manifest image's) conception of a person, an agent, which as Sellars admits, *cannot* be reconstructed within the framework of the scientific image; such a reconstruction is, as he puts it, "in principle impossible, the impossibility in question being a strictly logical one" (1963, p. 38) – namely, because the conception of an agent is a normative conception – that is, that agency itself is a kind of norm – and *as normative*, it can find no place in a rigorously scientific account of the world.

If, however, neither Cartesian mental/physical, nor Kantian phenomenal/noumenal dualisms are live options to reconcile the two, then as Sellars puts it, "the conceptual framework of persons is not something that needs to be *reconciled* with the scientific image, but rather something to be *joined* to it," and, Sellars admits, "we can only realize this direct incorporation

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[12] See Sellars (1963, p. 9), and also Sellars's claim there: "It is not the denial of a belief within a framework, but a challenge to the framework. It is the claim that although the framework of perceptible objects, the manifest image of everyday life, is adequate for the everyday purposes of life, it is ultimately inadequate and should not be accepted as an account of what there is all things considered" (1963, p. 27).

of the scientific image into our way of life only in imagination. And to do so is, if only in imagination, to transcend the dualism of the manifest and scientific images of man-in-the-world."[13] But leaving it at that sounds suspiciously close to Fichte's own idea of joining the "I" and the "Not-I" (the source of all normative authority and the idea that normative authority comes from something not itself normative, to which we are simply responding) as constituting an "infinite task," a kind of regulative idea of the unity of nature and freedom – indeed, begins to look suspiciously close to Kant's own conception of how the practical necessity of our freedom is irremediably coupled with its theoretical unintelligibility.

Indeed, as Sellars notes, something virtually identical to the "Kantian paradox" is at work in this conception of agency. To be a person (an agent) is both to hold oneself to norms and to be held to norms by other such agents; or, in Sellars's words, to think of something "as a person is to construe its behavior in terms of actual or potential membership in an embracing group each member of which thinks of itself as a member of the group."[14] Being a person therefore involves taking a *self-conscious* stance toward being a person, since it involves not merely *being* a member of a group but actually *thinking* of oneself as such a member. This in turn leads to the Kantian paradox, since it means that our self-*conceptions* as agents make us into the agents we are, yet (barring a "given" that Sellars argues against), we could not become these agents unless we already had some kind of self-conception already in hand.[15] (In developmental terms, the Kantian paradox points out that we cannot conceive of a group of beings who are not concept-users instituting the norms necessary to make themselves concept-users, which is the version that Sellars seems to invoke.)

However, the paradox within the "Kantian paradox" is itself not even easy to see, as Sellars himself obliquely notes. Since the ability to guide one's

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[13] Sellars (1963, p. 40). (In this citation, Sellars's text speaks of "man-of-the-world," which I presume is a typographical error in the printed edition.)

[14] Sellars (1963, p. 39) and: "Yet the essentially social character of conceptual thinking comes clearly to mind when we recognize that there is no thinking apart from common standards of correctness and relevance, which relate what I do think to what anyone ought to think. The contrast between 'I' and 'anyone' is essential to rational thought" (1963, pp. 16-17).

[15] See Sellars (1963, p. 6): "For it is no merely incidental feature of man that he has a conception of himself as man-in-the-world, just as it is obvious, on reflection, that 'if man had a radically different conception of himself he would be a radically different kind of man'. I have given this quasi-historical dimension of our construct pride of place, because I want to highlight from the very beginning what might be called the paradox of man's encounter with himself, the paradox consisting of the fact that man could not be man until he encountered himself."

thoughts and deliberations is constituted by the ability "to measure one's thoughts by standards of correctness, of relevance, of evidence," (1963, p. 6) we seem to be driven to the rather Kantian conclusion that because we must always presuppose the "fact of reason," reason itself is therefore not only prior to any act of self-legislation, it is indeed itself even constitutive of it, and thus there is no paradox in acting or thinking in accordance with the standards that constitute acting and thinking itself. However, in invoking the "fact of reason," even Kant realized that such an invocation involves a kind of circularity in that such a "constitutive standards" view – that there are standards which are constitutive of something like thinking such that anything that does not meet those standards simply does not count as thinking – cannot presuppose that we can acquire or come to be acquainted with those standards in any way that does not already presuppose those standards itself. That is, presupposing the "fact of reason" does not get one out of the paradox unless one also presupposes that "reason" has some other kind of metaphysical status as existing prior to us, as the timeless essence that establishes the standards of rational thought prior even to the emergence of self-conscious life itself, and that conformity to that metaphysical essence (or to the "meaning" of the terms) is all that is required of reason.[16] (That conception of our conforming our maxims to the standards of reason is, interestingly enough, almost identical to the Wolffian view of reason that Kant so vehemently rejected (see Pippin forthcoming). Or, that this is just the *meaning* of the word, "thinking" or "thought," and that such meanings can be fixed in advance of any linguistic or behavioral expression of them.

Given that difficulty of confronting the Kantian paradox, the temptation might seem so great as to be inescapable either, first, to construe normativity in terms of non-normative facts (especially in light of the obvious explanatory potential of the approach of the scientific image), or, second, to posit some normative facts and just leave it that (leaving oneself content to point out the inconsistencies of those who try to explain away the normative in terms of the non-normative).[17] Sellars focuses his energy on trying to avoid the first

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[16]That conception itself was argued against by Sellars as ultimately requiring a kind of direct apprehension of meanings and rules that is itself unintelligible (or at least is impossible to square with a scientific view of the world). See Sellars's (1953, p. 337): "There is nothing to a conceptual apparatus that is not determined by its rule, and there is no such thing as choosing these rules to conform with antecedently apprehended universals and connexions, for the 'apprehension of universals and connexions' is already the use of a conceptual frame, and as such presupposes the rules in question. The role of the given is rather to be compared to the role of the environment in the evolution of species."

[17] For the latter approach, see Thomas Nagel's short but subtle *The Last Word* (2001).

temptation while providing overall a picture that avoids having to think of the normative as simply a "fact of reason" requiring no further explanation as to how it fits into the scientific image, especially into that part having to do with evolutionary biology. To that end, he focuses most of his attention (or at least at greatest length) on classical empiricist doctrines of the "given" (leaving his attack on rationalist doctrines of things like "intellectual intuition" for other papers).[18] Sellars's attack on the empiricist version of the "given" is well known, and the commentaries on it are legion. The rudiments of it involve arguments against the view that we could have non-inferential knowledge of anything like atomistically construed data of experience without also being able to exercise conceptual capacities in the apprehension of those data (and hence against the view that that apprehension cannot be used to explain our apprehension of the concepts themselves), and arguments to the effect that the ease of maintaining the illusion that we could have such non-inferential knowledge is to be explained by the fact that the concepts (or conceptual capacities) at work in the apprehension of such data (typically expressed in "looks" expressions, such as, "This looks green to me") are not typically there on the surface of the apprehending activity itself; or to put it another way, one must already know a good bit more than one is stating when one says something like, "This looks green to me" in order to be able to make that statement in any cognitively significant way at all. Otherwise, one would have to start with an apprehension of something like "redness," which itself would have to be itself something we do not acquire by any learning.

Part of Sellars's argument reprises an argument from Kant to the effect that some rules cannot be acquired by virtue of other rules; otherwise, there would be a infinite regress of rule learning. The idea that one learns the meaning of "red" by learning something like the rule, "Say 'red' when confronted by red objects" already presupposes that one has learned the rule by which one discriminates red objects from not-red objects. There must therefore be a way of acquiring rules (and norms) which is not itself a matter of acquiring other rules. If the behaviorist model of rule-acquisition and learning is to be rejected,

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[18] Sellars does not, of course, ignore those parts in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," but they are not the focus of his arguments there. (In the early part of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," Sellars does note that "Many things have been said to be "given": sense contents, material objects, universals, propositions, real connections, first principles, even givenness itself." (1997, §1/p. 14). The early papers on "Inference and Meaning" and especially "Language, Rules, and Behavior" contains perhaps his clearest statements of the impossibility of basing one's grasp of conceptual norms (which he there calls "rules") in terms of some kind of mind's eye apprehension of ideal entities (such as universals).

then there must be some other way of acquiring rules that is not incompatible with their normative character. To that end, in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," Sellars focuses his attention on "looks" talk and what it purports to report. If such talk (as in "It looks green to me") does not *report* atomistically construed items such as "this green here now" (which themselves supposedly also do not require any conceptual capacities for their apprehension), on what *does* it report? Sellars's answer is a version of the realist notion that it reports (when it does accurately report) on the presence of green objects in the perceiver's environment. For that account to work, the realist must be able to give a satisfactory account of the status of inaccurate reports, where "It looks green to me" turns out to have been made in the presence of something not green but which seemed to be green. Sellars's own account turns on his argument that "looks" talk is parasitic on "is" talk, so that learning to say things like "It looks green to me" is parasitic on learning to say things like "It is really is green." (Sellars thus reverses the implicit doctrine of classical empiricism, which holds the opposite: We begin with things seeming to be such and such, like "green," and on the basis of that we then go to learn how to infer the presence of things really being green.) Even Sellars seems to think, however, that this point, difficult as it is to make, is not the hard part of his account. The "decisive hurdle" (his term) to be taken is coming to terms with the fact

> [T]hat to be the expression of knowledge, a report must not only have authority, this authority must *in some sense* be recognized by the person whose report it is . . . not only must it be a *symptom* or *sign* of the presence of a green object in standard conditions, but the perceiver must know that tokens of 'This is green' *are* symptoms of the presence of green objects in conditions which are standard for visual perception. (1997, §35/pp. 74-75)

Sellars actually seemed to have two different responses to his own self-proclaimed "hurdle." On the one hand, Sellars claims that "not only must the conditions be of a sort that is appropriate for determining the color of an object by looking, the subject must *know* that conditions of this sort *are* appropriate" (1997, §19/p. 44). That is, there must be a *self-conscious* stance taken toward to the situation in which the agent finds himself; the agent has to know, in some sense, what he is doing in making those claims. At one point in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," Sellars takes that to imply that for Jones to *know* that the object is green "requires that Jones could *now* cite prior particular facts as evidence for the idea that these utterances *are* reliable indicators" of the presence of green things (1997, §37/p. 77). But this makes the criteria for self-conscious possession of these concepts too stringent, since

it requires the agent to be able to adduce *evidence* for everything that she claims to know.

To shift the terms of exposition a bit: this way of putting Sellars's own views is too Fichtean. For Fichte, something could function as a piece of data for such reports only to the extent that it was *self-consciously* taken up by the perceiver *as data*, that is, taken up as something having a cognitive potential, which Fichte neatly summed up as: "No activity of the self, no check" (1982, p. 191). As Fichte also put it, "I can be conscious of any object only on the condition that I am also conscious of myself, that is, of the conscious subject. This proposition is incontrovertible," by which he meant not that we are directly aware of any internal mental states in addition to being aware of the object but that we had to have an "intellectual intuition" of the various "posits" carried out by the "I" – or, in other words, that we had to be able, in principle, to cite evidence for all our claims if they were to count *as claims* and not just random noises or merely well formed sentences that expressed neither assertions nor judgments.[19] If one were to take Sellars's "Kantian" variation in that Fichtean direction, one would end up with something very much like the Fichtean picture: one would have the "I" (now construed in more contemporary terms as a "inferential network" of inferences and inference licenses) which responds to the "Not-I" by conferring some kind of authority on it, but in which the "Not-I" itself must be construed as the non-normative, that is, the causal order of things. In seeing Sellars that way, one would then take him to be putting forward something like this: The person is a biological entity who learns through socialization to make inferences (which themselves can in principle be mapped out into something like a flow chart); this being then learns to respond non-inferentially to the causal inputs of the world (as effects on the sensory organs, responding to what Fichte calls the "check," the *Anstoß*) by acquiring reliably responsive dispositions to respond to, for example, the presence of green things by making utterances such as "This is green" (or "This seems green to me"), which in turn he or she can then integrate into the network of inferential connections and thus transform it from being merely a natural response into something that counts as knowledge (or, in Fichte's terms, the "check" becomes knowledge only when the "I" has made that "Not-I" into a *posit* – i.e., something integrated into an inferential network – carried out by the "I").[20]

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[19] Fichte (1994, p. 112; 1971, pp. 526-527). I discuss Fichte's views as relating to his conception of the "I" as a normative status in chapter five of my (2002).

[20] To turn the tables and put Fichte into Sellarsian terms: Fichte wanted to deny the "given" by transforming it into something that is cognitively meaningless until taken up as a posit by the "I,"

However, even in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," and in other essays, Sellars qualifies that claim in a manner reminiscent of the early Romantics' critique of Fichte's exuberant idealism (or, what we could call without too much anachronism, Fichte's exuberant inferentialism). Sellars notes that "while this does not imply that one must have concepts before one has them, it does imply that one can have the concept of green only by having a whole battery of concepts of which it is one element" (1997, §19/p. 44). In some other texts, Sellars qualifies what this "battery of concepts" might be in terms of his notion of a "lived rule" – as he puts it, "a rule, properly speaking, is not a rule unless it lives in behavior."[21] The notion of the "battery of concepts" and the "lived rule" is, of course, metaphorical, but it suggests that Sellars is open to something like a more Wittgensteinian (or even Merleau-Ponty inspired) idea of the "battery of concepts" as a kind of implicit background practice that functions not as *evidence* for a claim but as a forming a kind of pre-reflective background of various conceptual capacities that we must already have and which therefore are in some sense already *at work* even though they are not in any way explicitly present for consciousness for us to be able to make such claims. Indeed, such pre-reflective knowledge would be of things that we might find difficult, perhaps even impossible, to articulate.[22]

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which he did by calling his "Not-I" the Anstoß, thus positioning it ambiguously between something that has a cognitive standing and something that is a mere causal input, or something offering a "resistance" to the subject's otherwise unimpeded cognitive activity.

[21] Here are two citations from Sellars on the idea of "lived rule": "On the other hand, we must not say that a rule is something completely other than a generalization. The mode of existence of a rule is as a generalization written in flesh and blood, or nerve and sinew, rather than in pen and ink." And: "We saw that a rule, properly speaking, is not a rule unless it lives in behavior . . . Linguistically we always operate within a framework of living rules. To talk about rules is to move outside the talked-about rules into another framework of living rules . . . In attempting to grasp rules as rules from without, we are trying to have our cake and eat it. To describe rules is to describe the skeletons of rules. A rule is lived, not described" (1971, p. 299; p. 315).

[22] This reading of Sellars texts forms one of the many points of disagreement between the influential readings offered by John McDowell and Robert Brandom. Brandom's reading is "Fichtean" in that Brandom takes Sellars to be arguing for our direct connection to the world to consist in "reliable dispositions," whose reliability is not determined by the agent whose dispositions they are but by some other agent – as Brandom works that out in his overall account of "scorekeeping," in which the contents of one's commitments are "administered" by someone other than the agent whose commitments they are; the reliability of the response is thus not a matter of "knowledge" on the part of the agent making the response but is only a reliable disposition to utter phrases like, "This is green" when in the presence of green things; on Brandom's account, the agent may thus be entitled to make the claim, "This is green," even though she does not know that she is entitled; the entitlement is bestowed by somebody else (the "scorekeeper"). (In this way, Brandom, in following out a version of the dialectic that was

Articulating Sellars's position along those (early Romantic) lines puts him in the position of being able to claim what he quite clearly intends to claim: We can give up the "Myth of the Given" *without* giving up the idea that we are in possession of non-inferential knowledge because such non-inferential knowledge nonetheless always presupposes a background of non-articulated conceptual capacities that have to be *at work* even if not, perhaps ever, being made explicit or even *being able* to be made explicit (and one thus avoids the regress of making the knowledge too self-conscious so that one would need a rule to apply the rule to apply the rule, etc., without having to reduce that background to a set of mere non-cognitive dispositions).

However, by giving the life-world (or the "manifest image") no priority – in effect, by cutting off an entire movement in phenomenology that relies on something like the priority of "originary human experience" to undercut the scientistic (not the scientific) misunderstanding of human agency – and by insisting on the truth of the scientific image in its competition with the manifest image, Sellars might seem to be putting himself firmly on the side of the "scientistic" school of thought and denying any significance to human

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originally at work in post-Kantian thought, in the way he makes a move very similar to that made by Fichte, who, as he worked out his practical philosophy, came to see that the real "check" had to come from another agent, not from non-agent objects in the world. For Brandom, that goes on, as it did for Fichte, among individuals, with Brandom using the much more determinate device of "scorekeeping" to work the idea out, whereas Fichte simply kept it at a fairly general level of "checking" each other; but in that way, Brandom also has to come to terms with Hegel's criticism of Fichte: "First of all, by virtue of that the 'I' keeps the significance of being an individual actual self-consciousness over and against the universal, the absolute, that is, against spirit, in which it itself is only a moment; for individual self-consciousness is just this, that it remains fixed and standing on one side vis-à-vis an other. When the "I" consequently was called the absolute essence, there was an enormous scandal, because "I" in fact only makes its appearance in the sense of being an individual self-consciousness, that is, the subject, opposed to the universal. Second, Fichte [for that reason] never arrives at the idea of reason" (1971, vol. 20, p. 408). McDowell makes the Wittgensteinian point against Brandom's suggestion that we thereby just eschew what Sellars's called his "decisive" hurdle: "Sellars is driven to his implausible picture because he assumes that for a reporter to count as recognizing her own authority (which he only says is required "in some sense"), she must be able to adduce evidence of her reliability – premises for an argument in which the claim that she is reliable figures as conclusion. But that is not the only possible sense for the idea of recognizing one's own observational authority. Along with most adults, I know that, at least in a good light, I can tell a green thing when I see one. That is, I am cognizant of my authority as a reporter of greenness. But I would be at a loss if someone pressed me for evidence of it. It stands firm for me in a quite different way, about which I would suggest we can find the beginning of wisdom in Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*. There is no need to decline Sellars's second hurdle. We simply need to adopt a different posture when we jump it" (McDowell forthcoming-b, pp. 13-14).

subjectivity (in effect, dissolving it, seeing it as a kind of illusion, a distorted version of the truly objective). That is certainly not Sellars's intention. It is another story altogether, but part of the project of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" is to introduce a notion of "inner episodes" (that is, thoughts) which, although modeled on "outer behavior" (in other words, on speaking and communicating in language), can nonetheless become the objects of a kind of non-inferential knowledge. That is, we can non-inferentially know that we are thinking such and such without having to make an inference based on any outward behavior and we acquire that capacity to immediately know our thoughts by learning to use the language of inner episodes; in that way, Sellars opens the door to preserving a relatively rich sense of subjectivity when it is "joined" to the scientific image without having also to buy into any kind of dualistic or reductionist picture of subjectivity. Moreover, in holding that "humanity" is (in a Kantian and post-sense) an "Idea" that humanity gives to itself, Sellars is arguing against a view that would see the subjective and the objective as divided by any kind of bright metaphysical line (as both the Cartesian and the classical empiricist pictures would have it). The difference itself is a *normative* difference, something constituted *within* the space of reasons, not a bedrock metaphysical fact about human agents and the world. But, as we noted, that is another story altogether, important as it is to Sellars's overall scheme of thought.

3. Experience

Nonetheless, by developing this conception of the status of "inner episodes," Sellars puts himself in a position to endorse the (B-Edition) Kantian conception of the unity of concepts and intuitions by interpreting it to mean that such a *unity* of *experience* is the same kind of unity as that expressed in overt *linguistic* judgments and assertions, and this puts Sellars in the position of having a recognizably richer, post-Kantian conception of experience itself. In "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" and in *Science and Metaphysics* (with its metaphorically musical subtitle: *Variations on Kantian Themes*), Sellars takes himself to have adequately constructed a conception of experience that forsakes the classical empiricist, atomistic conception in favor of a richer conception of experience as containing *claims* within it(mostly epistemic, but leaving the account open for other types of claims). That is, experience is not first of independently cognized "data" about which we then proceed to make claims; experience itself, for it to be human experience, already contains claims within it, even though those claims are not usually self-consciously present or self-consciously entertained. Instead, the

experience of, say, seeing a bird outside the window, is possible as a seeing-a-bird, etc., only by virtue of a pre-reflective *background* of conceptual capacities that have to have already been acquired and be at work in order for that type of (non-inferential) experience to be possible in the first place.

As Sellars notes, that only ups the ante for justifying the authority of that background "battery" of concepts. Sellars's own commitment, however, to the idea of a "framework" as the proper way to think of concepts and their relation to each other (and of human behavior that evinces or employs concepts) leads him to some conclusions that run against the grain of the rest of his thought. For Sellars, there are two such "frameworks," as we have seen, and the truth of one (the "scientific image") leads us inexorably to the conclusion that the experiences we have under the older and original framework (that of the "manifest image") are in some deep sense false, even illusory. However, the superiority of one framework over another is something Sellars finds it difficult to justify. In his more mature writings, one finds him committed to something like the explanatory superiority of the scientific image, a superiority that is supposed to be evident even to those operating completely within the manifest image. It does not take the intellectual elegance of a Foucault or a Rorty, though, to show that that way of justifying the superiority of one "framework" over another inevitably begs all the questions it should be answering if all our conceptual capacities really are relative to a framework.[23]

It is therefore not surprising that even Sellars finds himself more or less resorting to something like the claim that there are simply some "constitutive standards" for thought (or perhaps, if one wants to stay Kantian, to claim that these constitutive standards are the "transcendental presuppositions" of thought and agency); that brings two commitments with it: First, anything that does not meet those standards is simply ruled out of court as counting as thought, and second, these constitutive standards must be themselves rich enough to give us some very concrete guidance in choosing, for example, among the manifest and scientific images, or among competing modes of conduct.[24] The "constitutive standards" view does rule the Kantian paradox as

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[23] Neo-Sellarsians like Richard Rorty draw the valid conclusion from those premises that we can only allow ourselves to say that we find one framework more attractive since though we cannot give any ultimate reasons to those operating within another framework to opt for our framework which in their own terms would count as reasons for them (even if those reasons are, from within our framework, decisive reasons).

[24] This appeal to "constitutive standards" is also one of the ways of avoiding the Kantian paradox, since if it is just "constitutive" of thought to obey certain determinate norms (rich enough to guide us in selecting or constructing other determinate norms), there is no paradox to be dealt with. This line is also taken by McDowell himself, who claims to reconcile the spontaneity and autonomy of

being out of bounds (in the manner of something like a judicial ruling on the basis of some kind of reading of what is implied by the cosmic constitution), but it does not fit into Sellars's own view of what a "joining" of the manifest and scientific images is supposed to be. One suspects, in fact, that Sellars himself kept the doubts he expressed in his 1949 essay, "Language, Rules and Behavior," when he said:

> How is the adoption of a set of rules to be justified? . . . The more I brood on rules, the more I think that Wittgenstein was right in finding an ineffable in the linguistic situation, something which can be *shared* but not *communicated* . . . To learn new rules is to change one's mind. Is there a rational way of losing one's reason? . . . The convert can describe what he was. Can he understand what he was? But here we are on Wittgenstein's ladder, and it is time to throw it away. (1949, pp. 314-315)

In even toying with any notion of a "constitutive standard," Sellars is not only pushing against the direction of his own self-professed pragmatism and his conception of the historical synthetic a priori, he is also avoiding coming to terms with the basic post-Kantian direction he gave to his very own thought. There are two ways in which that comes to the fore. First, there is Sellars's own invocation of the *social* nature of thought; and second, there is Sellars's own (at least implicit) working out of a specifically Kantian insight of the "B" edition of the first *Critique* about the unity of concepts and intuitions (where, as we noted earlier, Kant says that "the same function which gives unity to the various representations *in a judgment* also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations *in an intuition*; and this unity, in its most general expression, we entitle the pure concept of the understanding" (1964, A79/B104)). Such a *unity* of concepts and intuitions itself undermines the notion that anything like a "framework" can work in the way that Sellars seems (or at least sometimes seems) to think it does, particularly when it is set against his conception of experience as "containing claims" within itself (in the sense that human experience involves the possession of conceptual capacities that are at work there, although not necessarily consciously in play,

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norm-setting thought with the more common sense notion (itself surely correct) that if we do not submit ourselves to norms not of our own individual choosing, we are not submitting to norms at all: "The sense in which the source of the norms is in us is just that the norms are constitutive of the practice of thinking, and the practice of thinking is not optional for us" (McDowell forthcoming-a, p. 16). The term 'constitutive standard' is also put to similar use by Korsgaard in her "Locke Lectures," made available in a preliminary format at her website: *http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~korsgaar/#Locke%20Lectures*

and which function as a kind of pre-reflective background for our deliberations).

"Experience" in the Anglo-American philosophical literature has in fact been so overlaid with atomistic, empiricist interpretation that it is perhaps difficult to see how close Sellars's own conception of "experience as containing claims" actually is to the later post-Kantian conceptions of experience that one finds, particularly in Hegel. If indeed we cannot, on Sellarsian grounds, separate experience into "given" data which are then organized according to conceptual form (or in terms of "frameworks"), then we must approach experience more holistically; and if there is no real appeal to "constitutive standards," then the *authority* of those conceptual capacities must be dealt with in some way that acknowledges that they can change but which preserves the idea that there is such a things as critical, rational revision of those norms and which does not lapse into the fantasy that we can, out of nowhere, freely will to construct those standards.

Sellars's own hunch about this – "I should like to be able to say that one justifies the adoption of rules pragmatically, and, indeed, this would be at least a first approximation to the truth" (1949, p. 314) – certainly points to the idea that what is at stake is something more along the lines of Wittgenstein's conception of a "form of life." What is at stake, that is, is not a series of different ways of conceptually organizing the same "given" data but of "unities of concepts and intuitions," which, to make the last post-Kantian leap, would be to conceive of those unities as embedded in *practices*, that is, in whole ways of living. The conceptual capacities that we acquire are indeed *social* in a deep sense, not merely in the sense that we acquire them by being initiated into forms of life (which just about everybody acknowledges) but also in the sense that their normative authority has to do with their being socially instituted and sustained over time. The "Kantian paradox" is more paradoxical (even unintelligible) when it is construed as a problem for an individual agent who would be making himself into a thinking being (governed by norms) by an act of thinking already governed by norms. The more intelligible picture is the one that is also the more obvious and commonsensical: We never begin by legislating norms for ourselves; we instead are born into a form of life, we are initiated into various practices (among which, obviously, is intelligible language use), and we thus always, already find ourselves bound to norms not of our own choosing.

The *experience* we have of the world is thus deeply social in nature, and that experience can, and does, change in the course of human history. To say that our *experience* of the world changes (and not to make the mistake of concluding, as subjective idealists must, that the *world* thus changes, at least not in anything other than a metaphorical sense) is to say something more

along the lines that very basic concepts that function as authoritative for us themselves change, and that therefore some very basic orientations for our lives change. Indeed, part of the alleged superiority of what Sellars calls the "scientific image" has to do with how it has built on the failures of past attempts (from Aristotelian physics to medieval alchemy), that is, how it is the result of (to use the common-sense expression) of a kind of *communal* "learning from experience" about what has worked and what has not. And this is the sense of "experience" that figures in more widespread, although common phrases, such as a "literary experience" and a "historical experience."

Such a view captures, so we might put it, the "true motion" of Sellars's thought (in distinction from the "apparent motion," if one only sees it in the terms of post-war analytical philosophy), even if it might not be the motion in which Sellars thought he was moving; moreover, that "motion" also expresses the direction in which the internal dialectic of post-Kantian philosophy found itself, which then found its expression in the *Meditations Hegeliennes* carried out by Hegel himself. After all, Hegel characterized his 1807 *Phenomenology* as the "science of the experience of consciousness," where (as he put it a few years later in his *Logic*), one dispenses with the "abstract form of apriority over and against aposteriority," looking instead at the unities in question (namely, those of intuition and concept) "in terms of their own particular content," and a "phenomenology" (in physics) distinguishes true from merely apparent motion (Hegel 1971, vol. 5, p. 62).

There are three points to make about this conception of experience. First, although one might want to call it an "enriched" conception, the classical empiricist conception is so impoverished that it should really count more as the "common-sense" conception. Second, it is both tied to the kinds of beings we are as organisms that have evolved on the planet (although Hegel himself denied the validity of evolution, a point to which I shall return, although very briefly) and to the kinds of social beings that we are by virtue of both our sociality and our history. Third, it puts us in a position to understand the Kantian paradox of our being subject only to those norms of which we can regard ourselves as the authors as being better rephrased in terms of Hegel's dialectical conception of thought. To take up the third point first: When Hegel says things like, "the concept . . . is that alone which has actuality (*Wirklichkeit*), specifically in the way that *it gives itself actuality*," he is giving expression to the way he understands the "Kantian paradox" to be transformed

into his "dialectic."[25] "Actuality" is for Hegel one of his technical terms that he takes over from Aristotle, and he gives it the Aristotelian sense of indicating what is *at work* in reality; in particular, Hegel is concerned is what concepts are *at work* in the way in which humanity conceives of itself and what concepts are *at work* in the kinds of experience that we have. (This conception of being "at work" is bound up with the German, *wirklich*.[26]) Just as Kant held that we find ourselves always, already committed to the normative priority of reason in undertaking any deliberations at all, Hegel too holds that what "actuality" reason has for us is to be found in the way that the practices of giving and asking for reason explain our actions, such that in holding ourselves and others to norms, *we make them real*, or, socially viewed, those norms tend to *make themselves true* in that the practices tend to reinforce the way in which people on the whole hold to these norms and to shape certain types of practical conclusions into being drawn. What Hegel in his more colorful (and in many ways more accurate) language calls "a shape of spirit" is structured by the kinds of authoritative norms that hold it together – by a sense of what counts *absolutely* for it, what makes certain things worth sacrificing, enduring, promoting, and holding onto (sometimes at all cost). These *norms* cannot become "actual," cannot come to be *at work*, until they become *generalizations*, matters of disposition, to be matters therefore of conformity and regularity – to be, as Hegel puts it, "second nature" – which therefore sets up the unavoidable tension between facticity and normativity that characterizes our mindedness and like-mindedness.

In Hegel's words, "the concept's" determinations and laws are those it "gives itself, not those it already *has* within it and which it finds," which is to say that such concepts only have their full reality, their actuality – that is, can only be genuinely *at work* – in the *practices* of giving and asking for reasons, and that the model for how concepts come to be *at work* in experience (including those that are passively drawn into our intuitive apprehension of the world in what Husserl, straining for the right terminology, called "passive synthesis") is best captured in a developmental, historical model and not in any

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[25] See Hegel (1971, vol. 7, §1). (" . . . daß der Begriff . . . allein es ist, was Wirklichkeit hat und zwar so, daß er sich diese selbst gibt.") (Italics in the body of the text above added by me.)

[26] For example, in his *Logic*, Hegel says that "what is actual is what is efficacious" ("was wirklich ist, kann wirken") (1971, vol. 6, p. 208). A.V. Miller translates the relevant phrase as "what is actual can act" (1989, p. 546).

kind of appeal to a "constitutive standard" (not what, as Hegel says, it merely "finds" within itself).[27]

That sets the stage for the second point: We must be able to make intelligible to ourselves how we, as the natural organic beings we are, could develop our capacities for conceptual reasoning, and, as Schelling saw, that itself requires a rethinking of nature. It would obviously require much more room than we could give it here, but the Hegelian outline of such a conception would run, very roughly, along the following lines. Contrary to what Schelling thought, nature in the modern, scientific image of it, must be conceived as fundamentally *meaningless*, de-divinized, devoid of spirit (*entgöttert* and *geistlos*, as Hegel calls it[28] – in Max Weber's well known term, nature in the modern world must be seen as thoroughly *disenchanted*; and Hegel provocatively insists that this modern disenchantment is precisely the *problem* with nature, since as properly explained by the means of modern natural science, nature displays itself to modern reflection as simply incapable *on its own* of organizing itself into anything like "better exemplifications" of itself, (something which Hegel ironically calls the "impotence (*Ohnmacht*) of nature"[29]) and hence cannot provide any normative standard for practice. It is only when organic *life* appears in nature that it first makes sense to speak of any *particular* things in nature as "better" and "worse" since only organisms display the kind of self-directing, internally functional teleological structure that can make the application of such terms meaningful. As Hegel stresses, this becomes apparent in our use of the term, "disease"; it makes sense to speak of an organism as *diseased* when it is in some kind of state where it prevented from achieving goals proper to the internal teleology of that organism; but it makes no sense to speak of a diseased planetary system, a diseased structure of crystals, a diseased mountain range, and so forth. Moreover, disease is not something we *project* onto the world as kind of subjective addition to nature devoid of spirit; a diseased animal or plant *really is* diseased, *really is* hindered in its ability to be the organic creature it is and to achieve what is proper to its well-functioning; it is not just an animal or plant that we see *as* diseased.[30] (In

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[27] The discussion of "passive synthesis" occurs throughout Husserl's later writings, but it is to be found in its clearest form in Husserl (1985).

[28] The reference to "de-divinized" is from Hegel (1971, Vol. 13, p. 27). The reference to "geistlos" is from Hegel (1971, Vol. 14, p. 137).

[29] There are a variety of references to the *Ohnmacht der Natur*: See (1971, §250; §24, Zusatz 2)

[30] In my (2002), I did not state this point with nearly enough accuracy. The language used there suggests that the attribution of disease is solely based on Geist's interests and thus also suggests that disease and defects in organisms are only something we "read into" the world. This is misleading: That the concept of disease is relative to Geist's interests is not the same as saying

other words, although only humans have the *concept* of disease, there are diseased things in the world even though they do not themselves have the concept of disease.)

This is not to say that organisms (or the concept of disease) introduce anything non-natural into nature; the same type of causality remains at work there as elsewhere. It is only to note how we can get a handle, in a way that Deweyian pragmatists have always appreciated, as to how human reason develops out of organic nature. Because organisms, especially the so-called higher organisms, have this kind of internal teleology to them, they can be said to have things that are good or bad for them. Thus, organisms develop means of *registering* those items in their environment that are good and bad for them as tools for survival and flourishing; that there are these goods for various organisms, moreover, opens the space for the further claim that within the terms of the modern, fully scientific image of nature, since organisms have goods, they may also have *reasons* to act even if those organisms themselves cannot be *aware* of those reasons *as* reasons (or, to put it differently, they may *register* those reasons but not register them in any way *as* reasons). To put it in Hegelian terms: There can be goods, and therefore reasons, *in* nature even though reason itself cannot be said to be *at work* in nature (since neither nature as a whole, nor, for the most part, nature in any of its parts is guided by any kind of concept of itself); or, to put it another way, organisms can *have* reasons, although it is only we *as reasoning beings* who can note that *about them*. (Indeed, we might say that it is only a Davidsonian prejudice that links reasons with beliefs and thus prevents us from seeing this distinction.)

It is therefore only human beings (although this will surely be disputed by some) who have developed ways not only of *registering* what counts as a reason but have developed the capacity to *reason about* those reasons (who have developed what Sellars calls "rules of criticism"). Even if some higher animals (perhaps dolphins, some apes, and maybe even some elephants) can be said to make inferences, they do not, as far as we know, make inferences about their inferences, since that requires the presence not just of a sophisticated system of communication but also of a fully fledged *language* with its capacity to speak about itself on various meta-levels, which itself requires (besides the obvious neurological basis) a *social* group of a particular sort.

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that when we form that kind of concept, we are merely "reading" it into neutral matter, which on its own is not diseased. The diseased lion is a diseased lion independently of our descriptions; but nature, as geistlos, cannot form this concept of itself and cannot orient itself in terms of better or worse, cannot have a concept of itself.

Second, although humans as organisms obviously *have* reasons, as do all organisms (since there are things that are naturally good in this sense for them), what is distinctive about humans is that, as reasoning beings, they are, to use Charles Taylor's term, "self-interpreting animals" such that even the natural goods of organisms become transformed and reordered in light of other goods that are non-natural (although not for all that in any sense supernatural). Their lives are not structured completely around the good functioning of the organism but in terms of, as we might put it, their *concept* of themselves, or, in Sellars's words, "the fact that man couldn't be man until he encountered himself," (1963, p. 6) and the proper account of how it is that we come to grasp ourselves and revise our self-conceptions requires something like the very complex Hegelian *phenomenology* of our own mindedness, that is, a philosophical history of our collective self-conceptions structured in terms of how the very determinate failures of earlier self-conceptions not only led to their successors but explain why their successors (taken as "shapes of spirit" or forms of life) took on the determinate shape they did (in a process Hegel colorfully calls "determinate negation") and in turn how our modern self-conception (including our conception of our own place within the scientific image) is only to be understood not as our having finally drawn the proper conclusions from the premises of the "constitutive standards" of thought but in the way they have been *required* by those past failures to take on the shape they have.

The proper metaphor, therefore, as Sellars saw, had to do not with how to *replace* that account of the historical and social nature of our self-conceptions but how to *join* that view of agency to the scientific image. That image of "joining," however, itself pulls the carpet out from under Sellars's own refusal to see how his own reading of Kant's B edition version of the unity of concepts and intuitions itself undermined his view that the objects of perception in the manifest image were unreal, the illusory effects of imperceptible things in themselves which were only adequately grasped in the scientific image; Sellars seemed to think (as did Kant in an analogous way) that only such a distinction preserved the idea of independently existing objects exercising any kind of normative authority for us. The latter view, though, is possible only from the standpoint of what Hegel called "reflection," or what (following John McDowell's nice metaphor) we might call the "sideways-on" view. The "sideways-on" view steps outside of the practices of giving and asking for reasons and looks at the complex of agent-and-world as if it consisted of a subject on one side, an object on the other, and some kind of metaphysical line separating them – exactly the picture, one would have thought, that Sellars's richer notion of experience and his critique of the Myth of the Given would have prevented him from taking. The distinction of

"subject" and "object" is already a distinction made from within the space of reasons – from within pretty much what Hegel called the "Idea" (the *Idee*, to distinguish it from a *Vorstellung*, an "idea"-as-a-representation, something which naturally suggests the "sideways-on" view). What Hegel called the "opposition of consciousness" (the "sideways-on" view, which he thought Kant stubbornly adhered to while undermining it at the same time) is to be superseded and integrated into a larger story in which the existential independence of objects of nature is not undermined, but their normative authority comes to be situated in a much larger developmental, historical, and social story of how the space of reasons came to have the determinate shape it now does.

Much, much more needs to be said about this, but in general we can get the outlines of how a post-Kantian conception would try to make out how there can be reasons *in* nature without having to deny the reality of the scientific account of nature; that conception (again, in outline) gives us a way to understand and bring down to earth our own non-natural self-conceptions and to join the images without having to opt for the idea that only one of them tells us what there really is. The details of that story would require not just a few more pages but several other books, but in Hegel's telling of that story (in his "phenomenology of consciousness") such self-conceptions develop in light of a self-instituted *liberation* from nature on the part of humanity not in any metaphysical but in a totally normative sense such that those conceptions came less and less to depend on natural facts (such as procreative facts about men and women) for their normative force. Indeed, what it means to be a human being in general, and in particular what it means to be a father, daughter, friend, business associate, citizen, artist, professor, natural scientist and so on involve telling a story of how certain options vanished for us because of our own collective self-legislation in human time, that is, human history, in which "man encountered himself," and, in so encountering himself, began to initiate that self-instituted normative liberation from nature.

4. Post-Kantianism?

This might make it sound as if all Sellars needs is some Hegelian correction so that his "Kantian variations" would once and for all merge with his *Meditations Hegeliennes*. That, of course, would be to deny the obvious. Hegel's own *Naturphilosophie* was, after all, written in the first half of the nineteenth century, and, as the cliché rightly has it, there has been a lot of water under the bridge since that time. Even worse: In his *Naturphilosophie*, Hegel notoriously denied that explanation of the structure of organisms in

terms of evolution was a satisfactory explanation at all. Hegel's reasons for this had to do with his acceptance (as did so many Germans of his generation) of a certain model of comparative anatomy favored by Georges Cuvier, the basic tenets of which held that, first, each species of organism was so perfectly adapted to its environment and was therefore a self-contained whole, and, second, because of that, any slight change in its makeup would make it impossible to for that species to continue living, and thus, third, the kind of gradual change that evolution requires has to be ruled out.[31] (Hegel also thought that the leading model of the competing evolutionary theory given by Lamarck was anchored in too much external teleology to make it believable.) Hegel extended that model into his philosophy of history (and thus also into his phenomenology of the development our mindedness), in that he came to see each "form of life" as a self-contained "shape of spirit" whose appearance on the stage of history vanishes when its reason for being (its internal self-conception of what it is and what counts absolutely for it) vanishes (when its own internal constitution breaks down under the weight of its self-contained contradictions and existential tensions). Needless to say, Sellars's conception of nature is not burdened by that kind of conception, and his ethics need not be burdened by it. Nonetheless, Sellars only had a very general, generally progressivist, "social achievement" story to tell (with an overlay of a general Kantian approach to ethics), with no determinate account of how one might *rationally* comprehend the move from one ethical community to the another except in terms of changes in empirical belief.

One of the things that prevented a revival of Hegel at the same time as the Neo-Kantian revival was getting into full swing was the failure of the Hegelians to come up with a philosophy of science (whereas the Kantians had little trouble with that). If we were, however, to rephrase Hegel's own views in a self-consciously anachronistic way, he would be taken to have given his *Naturphilosophie* pride of place over any kind of more narrowly conceived modern "philosophy of science"; Hegel would not comprehend the authority of natural science as resting in a special methodology reserved to it or resting in a structure of theories that is independent of what it is studying; instead, he would see the authority of the scientific approach – including the *virtues* involved in being a scientific *researcher* – in the very disenchantment of nature that is itself a condition of the modern normative conception of subjectivity, that is, of the modern "encounter of man with himself"). The pure "externality" of nature (in Hegel's jargon) makes it a fit object for the

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[31] I have tried to tell that story in some more detail in Pinkard (2002).

mathematical techniques of natural science, just as the relative "externality" (still his jargon) of modern economic life makes it also the fit object of mathematical modeling.

Amidst the conflicts circulating within the Hegelian school after Hegel's death, David Friedrich Strauss made the joke that, just as in the French Revolution (which Hegel championed for his whole life), the Hegelian school had dissolved into the quarrel between the "left" and the "right" Hegelians. There is a similar joke about Sellars's school (usually attributed to Richard Rorty but the origins of which are apparently disputed) splitting into quarrels between the "left" and "right" Sellarsians. More recent historians of the Hegelian school have pointed out that the "left/right" distinction covers over a more fine-grained set of distinctions: There were in fact old-left, old-right, new-left, and new-right Hegelian schools. If we wanted to keep the jest going, we might likewise hold that there is an old-right Sellarsianism (with its emphasis on the scientific realism and naturalism in Sellars's views), and there is a Sellarsian old-left, sharing a version of its own of the naturalism it has in common with the old-right. But perhaps there is also a new-left Sellarsianism that does not eschew Sellarsian naturalism but tames it. (Perhaps John McDowell is the forefather, maybe even the Eduard Bernstein, of that new left.) Perhaps the new-left Sellarsians can make the case that Sellars himself was slyly really a new-left Sellarsian all along; and maybe there is an even newer-left formation on the Sellarsian front that would run his Haydnesqe variations on Kantian themes all the way up to Hegelian symphonies.

However that turns out, to make sense of Sellars, we need to bring in Hegel as a interpretive background; and, of course, to make sense of Hegel, we need to understand more deeply Sellars's own contribution to the post-Kantian debate that began in the late eighteenth century, an earthquake whose aftershocks we are still experiencing.

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