

Sellars, Realism, and Kantian Thinking
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This essay is a response to Patrick Reider's essay "Sellars on Perception, Science and Realism: A Critical Response." Reider is correct that Sellars's realism is in tension with his generally Kantian approach to issues of knowledge and mind, but I do not think Reider's analysis correctly locates the sources of that tension or how Sellars himself hoped to be able to resolve it. Reider's own account of idealism and the reasons supporting it are rooted in the epistemological tradition that informed the British empiricists, rather than in the metaphysical reasons that ruled within the German tradition from Leibniz through Hegel that has much more in common with Sellars's position. Thus, Reider takes Sellars's notion of picturing to be just another version of the representationalism that has dominated the Anglo-American tradition since Locke, whereas, in my view, because picturing is a non-semantic relation, it is an important ingredient in naturalizing the coherentist theories of the idealists.

Section I

Reider starts off, appropriately, with a discussion of analogy and science in Sellars's thought. The target here is correct, but the discussion goes awry in some important ways. This is most directly seen in Reider's speaking as if Sellars wants to exploit something like a Thomistic "analogy of proportion," when, in fact, Sellars is claiming that the kinds of analogies he's exploiting, *unlike* the Thomistic version, offers us "new *determinate* concepts" [my emphasis], rather than an allusion to something of some general nature whose specific reality remains beyond our ken.

Granted, there is something like a Thomistic analogy of proportion in play when, in the midst of his analysis of perception, Sellars tells us that "sheer phenomenology or conceptual analysis takes us *part* of the way" in understanding sensory episodes, namely, "to the point of assuring us that

Something, somehow a cube of pink in physical space is present in the perception other than as merely *believed in* (SSOP §26: 89)."

This result yields, like a Thomistic analogy of proportion, a highly indeterminate concept of what is present to us in the perception: *something* that is *somehow* a colored, shaped object in physical space. However, for our purposes the main point is that scientific theorizing goes far beyond this; eventually, it will develop a determinate conception of what is present in the perception and how it can manage to be colored and shaped, that is, what properties it has that are counterparts to the properties of the physical objects that normally cause such sensory states. This will be a family of determinate concepts of *sensa*.

There are two significantly different forms in which Sellars thinks analogies can lead to new determinate concepts. One is a matter of analogical relations between sets or families of concepts. Scientists use such analogies to generate new conceptual schemes that might

prove explanatorily useful and be subject to empirical test. So, for instance, around the turn of the 20th century, after the discovery of the electron, J. J. Thomson proposed the "plum pudding" model to explain the structure of the atom, which was fairly quickly replaced by the Rutherford "planetary" model, which was then quantized by Bohr. Analogies to plum puddings and solar systems enabled scientists to think about the objects they were investigating and the principles that might explain their behavior by using concepts of domains with which we were already familiar. This facilitated the development of new tests that drove the scientists to new models. Sellars has this kind of analogy in mind when he argues, as he did in so many places, that our mentalistic concepts are formed by means of such an analogy, and in fact, by two different analogies. One likens our intentional states to episodes of 'inner speech', the other likens our sensory states to 'inner replicas.'

The second significant form of analogy that Sellars considers is based on an isomorphism between two domains of *objects* and their relations (as opposed to *concepts* and their relations). When the objects and their relations in one domain bear a useful isomorphism to those in some other, nominally different domain, Sellars often speaks of "counterpart properties and relations." We can find at least two or three different places where Sellars claims that such an isomorphism plays an important role. One is in the analysis of the sensory domain, where our sensory states exhibit counterpart properties to those exhibited by the manifest image sensory objects they are typically caused by, and are arranged in a scheme that involves counterparts of spatial and temporal relations (SM I ¶74). The other is in Sellars's difficult notion of picturing. Some tokens of a linguistic type (what Sellars calls a "natural linguistic object") *picture* some objects in nature in virtue of participating in a complex system of such natural linguistic objects that, in virtue of an unimaginably complex projection relation, is isomorphic (in certain respects) to the worldly objects thus pictured.

Notice, these two forms of analogy occur at different levels, one is purely within the conceptual realm, the other between objects. It is important not to confuse the two, though that can be easy to do, since wherever there is an isomorphism between objects an analogy between the relevant concepts of those objects will be available. Reider sometimes writes as if Sellars thought that representation depended not only on analogies, but analogies of proportion.

Any truth that one can glean from a stick figure representing a man lies in our ability to understand the differences, i.e., the 'proportional relation,' between the representation and the actual person. Sellars believes that science can help us establish the proportional differences between our representations and reality by developing new and better schematizations (Reider 41).¹

¹ Editor's Note: Page numbers for quotes from Reider's article "Sellars on Perception, Science, and Realism: A Critical Response" can be found in the PDF version of: Reider Patrick J. 2012. "Sellars on Perception, Science, and Realism: A Critical Response." *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective* 2 (1): 39-56. Shortlink: <http://wp.me/p1Bfg0-B8> Accessed: 16 December 2012.

But this seems to me a confusion: For one thing, it sounds like representation depends on a relatively simple geometric projection relation, the way perspective drawings represent spatial objects. That is not a recognizably Sellarsian thought, because it seems to hark back to the old and awful theory that representation is a matter of resemblance. Bringing the notion of proportionality in here at all is misleading.

Section II

Reider is led further off base by faulty characterizations of logical positivism and scientific instrumentalism. He characterizes logical positivism as "the belief that all existents are material objects persisting in determinable points in time and space" (41), but this confuses logical positivism with a kind of materialism. The logical positivists were originally committed sense-datum theorists who believed that material objects were logical constructions from ontologically and epistemologically prior sense data. It is only in the late '30s and thereafter that the positivists came around to the view that the physical-thing language is basic. Logical positivism is better identified as a philosophical approach that accepted the anti-metaphysical, science-idolizing notions of classical positivism and combined them with a high regard for the advances in logic of the early 20th century. Verificationism was the logical positivists' bulwark against metaphysical excess, until that doctrine self-destructed in the '30s.

Reider claims that instrumentalism denies that theories can "pertain to or accurately account for the individual and discrete nature of material objects and occurrences" simply because theories are *general* and material objects are not. He even argues that instrumentalists hold that general claims are incapable of being true or false. But this misconstrues instrumentalism. For one thing, it would mean instrumentalism would apply even to observation-level empirical generalizations. Surely a general but easily observable claim such as "All the coins in my hand are pennies" is capable of truth or falsehood and, indeed, of being *known* to be true or false. Reider's characterization cannot account for the fact that central to the instrumentalists is the distinction between the observable and the unobservable, for this distinction does not track any distinction between the general and the particular. (Observation is not always of particulars; I can just see that all the coins in my hand are pennies.) In the eyes of the instrumentalist, observability afforded assurance of metaphysical solidity; unobservability puts it in doubt.

What is of central concern to instrumentalism is the ontological status of so-called 'theoretical entities': objects, events, and states that are unobservable (at least in the current state of science) but postulated to exist by an explanatory scientific theory. Our evidence for the existence of such theoretical entities must itself come back down to observable objects, events, and states. The instrumentalist is skeptical enough to wonder, then, whether we have the right to believe in the existence of any such entities unavailable to direct inspection, and decides that we really do not. The apparatus of our theories, including any mention they make of theoretical entities such as electrons or quarks, serves merely as a grand calculational device. The only serious ontological commitments made by theories that postulate unobservables are to the existence of the

observable entities involved in the evidence for and the corroboration of the claims and results of the theory.

The instrumentalist, from our point of view, is one who holds that theoretical statements of all kinds, including singular statements, are essentially instruments for generating statements *in the observation framework*. Thus, if he went along with our distinctions he would hold that (ampliative) theoretical statements are simply more sophisticated instruments which along with molecular, quantified and law-like statements in the observation framework are means of constructing *observation framework* pictures of objects and events (SM V §82: 144).

Reider claims that "Sellars takes a quasi-instrumentalist stance" (42). But this is a misunderstanding of Sellars's admission that "a correct account of matter-of-factual truth, even at the perceptual level, must contain "instrumentalist" components" (SM V, §81: 143). What I think Sellars has in mind here is that theories and conceptual frameworks of all kinds "can be fruitfully compared to instruments" (loc. cit.). This, he points out, "is true even of the conceptual framework of common sense" (loc. cit.). While Sellars readily admitted that the fundamental metaphor behind instrumentalism — that theories are tools — is correct, he was an implacable foe of instrumentalism in any more full-bodied sense. Since the tool metaphor is applicable to *any* theory or conceptual framework (this is part of Sellars's pragmatism), he relocates the fundamental issue in the debate between instrumentalist and realist into new territory; namely, "whether basic singular statements (in a sense to be defined) in the language of such a theory can meaningfully be said to "correspond" to the world in the "picture" sense of 'correspond'" (loc. cit.).

So Reider correctly understands the significance of picturing as the key to Sellars's defense of realism. He also correctly reminds the reader that Sellarsian picturing is not a kind of visualization or imagination. But his positive characterization of picturing points in us in the wrong direction. Reider says "when we 'picture' what something is like, we can use relevant sensory content and apply such content in a manner that is compatible with scientific theories" (42). But I don't think it makes sense, using Sellars's notion of picturing, to speak of picturing *what something is like*, at least as the "what it is like" phrase is used today. Reider's description also makes it sound as if picturing is something that we do with conscious intent tied to scientific theorizing. Sellars's discussion of picturing in SM thus needs to be read with extreme care, so I'd like to review a few of the basic claims made there about picturing.

First, picturing is a natural, empirical relation (an isomorphism) between *objects*. "What something is like" (whatever it is) is not an object, thus not suitable fodder for picturing. Second, the existence of a picturing relation between "natural linguistic objects" (or their mental counterparts "natural intentional objects") and objects in the world is, in Sellars's view, a transcendental requirement on the empirical meaningfulness of the language or conceptual framework. This is just as true of the conceptual framework and language of the manifest image as it is of the eventual scientific image. Hence there is no special connection between picturing and science. The language(s) of highly advanced science(s)

will, indeed, bear a different picturing relation to the world from the language of common sense; it will be a much finer grained picture than that of common language, but both must picture in some way. We will return to issues concerning picturing later.

Section III

There are also problems with Reider's interpretation of the notion of a perceptual taking. To begin with, when he says that "What makes perceptual takings a special kind of representation is that they represent *one* subject, despite the fact that we are always experiencing a succession of appearances" (44), Reider speaks too loosely. There is a perfectly good sense in which *every* intuitive and conceptual representation represents one subject, despite the fact that we are always experiencing a succession of appearances, for *concepts* are representations of the unity of a succession of appearances. What distinguishes perceptual takings and the Kantian intuitions Sellars wants to illuminate via the comparison is the fact that they combine the characteristics of (1) unifying the (successive) manifold of sensation in a single representation and (2) relating *immediately* to the object so represented.

Reider goes further off the mark, however, when he asserts that "The *non*-perspectival representation of the house is an instance of what Sellars call a 'perceptual taking'"(44). Perceptual takings are clearly, in Sellars's view, *always* perspectival. Consider the examples Sellars gives of paradigm perceptual takings:

I do not simply perceptually accept a house; the content of my perceptual acceptance is something like

 this house over there facing me left-edge-of-front-wise (KTI ¶45 in KTM: 435).

Or as Sellars himself pulls his points together:

 The object of a perceptual representing of a house is the non-perspectival content house; yet as the sort of item that can be the object of a perceptual representing, it must provide rules for explaining (together with other factors) why such and such sequences of perceptual takings with perspectival contents were necessary (KTI ¶50 in KTM: 436).

And again:

 The essential structure of the content of perceptual takings is not just

 house from a certain geometrical point of view

but, to make a complicated point in a simple way,

 house in front of my *sightful eyes*
 ship in water moving to the left of my *sightful eyes*.

In my argument I have thinned out this mutual involvement of object, circumstances and embodied perceiver into a ghostly 'object from a point of view' (KTI ¶51 in KTM: 436-7).

Or, from a different essay:

A perceptual believing *in* [i.e., a perceptual taking] would be illustrated by the subject constituent of the believing expressed by

This red brick facing me edgewise is too large to fit that gap
(SRPC ¶22, in KTM: 454).

What is non-perspectival is the house itself, which is the thing taken, though not the taking of it.

...[I]f the total content of a *perceptual* act is point-of-viewish, it is because it is the content of a perceptual act. Thus, while the content house is not a point-of-viewish content, it explains (together with certain other factors) why such and such perceptual representings with contents which can be subsumed under the rubric

house-from-such-and-such-a-point-of-view

take place. Thus, the concept of a house as a perceptible object essentially involves a reference to perceptual acts, i.e., to the perceptual takings of a perceiver (KTI ¶49, in KTM: 436).

This misunderstanding of the nature of a perceptual taking becomes doubly dangerous when it is combined with another thesis that Reider seems committed to. After discussing the ways in which objects differ from perspectival *views* of objects, he maintains that "any particular perspective cannot accurately 'represent' a mind-independent object. This is the case, because *vantage-points* are the products of the observing subject and should therefore not be confused with the mind-independent object" (44). Few philosophers would be tempted to confuse a vantage-point with an object, but there is a deeper worry here.

Reider infers that perspectival views of an object cannot "accurately 'represent'" (44) (Why the quotes around 'represent'?) it, because (1) the object has many sides, while the perspectival view shows only one; (2) the object is not foreshortened, while the perspectival view is; (3) "in brief, mind-independent entities are not the facing side of the object we are looking at" (44). The inference Reider makes thus seems to rely on the notion that an accurate representation of an object *duplicates* the object itself. But surely the representation 'relation' is neither some form of identity relation nor even any kind of resemblance relation. If part of his argument that Sellars is trapped in a form of idealism

rests on the notion that representing reality would require a duplication of reality 'in the mind,' then the argument cannot carry much weight.

Section IV

The section of his paper in which Reider discusses Sellars's criticism of Kant's treatment of space and time is undermined by several misconceptions or misinterpretations of Sellars's text. Let's briefly set the context. Kant thought that space and time are the forms of receptivity, entirely dependent on our constitution. Therefore, he concluded, any object that appears *in* space and time must be ideal, itself also dependent on our constitution and thus not the thing as it is in itself. Sellars thinks that Kant missed a significant distinction between the forms of sensibility strictly so-called, which would pertain to "the characteristics of the representations of receptivity as such" (that is, as sensations), from the space and time in which our conceptual representations (including our intuitions) locate their objects. Roughly, Kant needed to better distinguish the phenomenal space and time that psychologists (even transcendental psychologists) can investigate from the space and time about which physicists develop theories. Physicists, Sellars contends, are free to develop a theory of space-time that is in principle quite independent of the peculiarities of the constitution of human sensibility. The constitution of space-time can be teased away from our subjective experience and grounded in objective experimental results that do not rely in any direct way on the peculiarities of our subjective constitution. Differently constituted beings investigating the world would, in principle, come to the same theory of space-time as us. That earns the theory the right to claim to be a description of the real, of things as they are in themselves.

Reider thinks that Sellars supports his view that ideally good theories describe reality with a clearly question-begging argument. But the argument he attributes to Sellars could not be Sellars's own, for it ignores or misinterprets a number of crucial Sellarsian distinctions. The first one I want to focus on here distinguishes "the perception of a sequence from a mere sequence of perceptions" (SM Appendix ¶11: 232). According to Reider, "In this passage, Sellars distinguishes between the succession that occurs in *mind-independent existence* and the *mental* succession found in perceptual experience" (48). Then he attributes a fairly simple but bad argument to Sellars: that mental succession depends on (is possible only because of) the mind-independent succession, so time is not just a form of intuition. But this is not what Sellars (or Kant) is doing at all.

What is Sellars up to? A mere sequence of perceptions is, in one sense, mental, for it is a sequence of mental states. Sellars's own example is the perception of a whiz followed by the perception of bang. But this is a sequence in *actual* time; it is an *actual* succession. The perception of a sequence, however, is a unitary state of mind, and, as a single item, is not itself successive. It *represents* a sequence; a sequence is part of its intentional content. There is no actual succession, but only a represented succession. Sellars always emphasized in his Kant course that Kant's predecessors, with their unsophisticated conception of ideational composition, tended to think that one represented a complex object via a complex of ideas. But it just isn't true. A simple representation, say, a proper name, can represent something complex. In the other direction, a sequence of

representations is not thereby a representation of a sequence; an array of representations is not thereby a representation of an array. Notice, this is a point about the semantic relationships among our representations, and by no means directly about our relations to 'external reality'.

Reider thinks Sellars simply assumes that any conceptualization of succession must be caused by some actual, *non-mental* succession, thus assuming realism rather than vindicating it. In order to explain the succession of mental states according to Reider's version of Sellars, we have to assume that there are physical successions responsible for them. Notice how very unSellarsian this argument is. It assumes the distinctively Cartesian notion that we have prior access to our mental states and their relations, which in turn we explain by reference to physical states and relations.

Sellars emphatically rejects the Cartesian conception that we have prior (and better) access to our own mental states and their relations. This is one of the places where reading Sellars on Kant becomes very difficult, because Kant remains to a not insignificant degree under the spell of the Cartesian conception. Kant may have thought — at least at times — that we do have some prior access to our mental states and their relations, and thus may countenance the general idea of an argument from our knowledge of the mental to knowledge of so-called 'external' reality. But it is clear that this view is not compatible with the 2nd edition refutation of idealism. The accusations that the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* was just warmed over Berkeley forced Kant to clarify his position. For Sellars, however, this Cartesian viewpoint is a nonstarter. His commitment to realism cannot be vindicated in such a fashion.

Section V

Reider's whole discussion seems framed by the Cartesian assumptions — the "new way of ideas" — that Kant came to reject and Sellars sought to dismantle. Reider's Hegel, for instance, sounds much more like Bishop Berkeley than the Hegel I know and love. Notice that what Sellars says he wants to avoid is, not Hegel, but "the dialectic which leads from Hegel's *Phenomenology* to nineteenth-century idealism" (SM I ¶40: 16). What Sellars really wants to avoid is Bradley and Bosanquet. Reider attributes to Hegel the claim that "only human consciousness and its varied contents are knowable," (50) and I'd like to see the textual basis for that attribution. As far as I can see, the claim is either trivial (equivalent to the claim that we can know only what we can think about) or it makes hash of Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* as well as of any knowledge of the Absolute, for neither Nature nor the Absolute are themselves contents of human consciousness, except in the trivial sense that they are things we can think about. I have argued elsewhere that Hegel and Sellars are not nearly so much at odds as one might think, and others have echoed this claim.² So I will not linger over these issues here. Rather, I return to thinking about the role of picturing in Sellars's theory.

² See, e.g., "Sense-Certainty and the 'This-Such'" *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Critical Guide*. Cambridge Critical Guides. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008: 63-75; "Getting Beyond Idealisms" in *Empiricism, Perceptual Knowledge, Normativity and Realism: Essays on the Anniversary of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind"*, W. A. deVries, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009:

Let me boil down what I think is wrong with Reider's reading of Sellars. He would make of Sellarsian pictures a "veil of ideas" that we cannot get beyond. Like an "external world skeptic" he argues, roughly, as follows:

We know our pictures.

We have no reason to think that our pictures are like, resemble, or are analogous to anything extra-pictorial (things in themselves).

So our pictures cannot afford us any knowledge of things in themselves.

Thus, Reider sees Sellars as committed to an epistemologically-based idealism. I have argued against any such reading of Sellars in my "Getting Beyond Idealisms," and I do not want to repeat those arguments here, but I would like to point out why Reider's picturing-focused version does not gain traction.

Reider starts his argument against Sellars by claiming that "Sellars' method for knowing the thing-in-itself is 'picturing'." (52) This cannot be right. According to Sellars, the method that leads us to knowledge of things in themselves is science. Picturing is not a *method* at all, nor is it essentially connected to science itself. As we've seen, picturing is a transcendental condition on the empirical applicability of any conceptual framework. Furthermore, picturing can't be the method involved in science, because science and its commonsense ancestor has been around for millennia, whereas the conception of picturing is a relatively late acquisition developed in the attempt to comprehend naturalistically how our thoughts and theories engage with the world of which they are a part.

Reider then claims the Sellars's argument insists that we know things in themselves by knowing our pictures and then (and independently) drawing an inference by analogy to the nature of those things. This is where he treats pictures as similar to the "veil of ideas" that early modern thinkers had so much difficulty getting out from behind. But, of course, the 'picture' Reider employs of the role of pictures is faulty. We do not independently construct pictures of chunks of the world and then notice (to our surprise?) that there is an analogy between them and reality. Rather, paying attention to evidence and orchestrating one's responses to it in accordance with appropriate rules enables one to produce *maps* or *pictures* of chunks of space-time that can be employed in devising or controlling further activity. For the most part, the pictures that we produce while employing the manifest framework are produced unconsciously. They belong in the animal representational system that we employ unconsciously on a minute-by-minute basis to modulate our behavioral responses to the flood of sensory information we constantly receive. The accuracy of those maps or pictures is vindicated by the success of the activities based on them.

211-45. For others, see Terry Pinkard, "Sellars the Post-Kantian" in *The Self-Correcting Enterprise: Essays on Wilfrid Sellars*. Michael P. Wolf and Mark Norris Lance, eds. Poznan Studies in the Philosophy of Science and the Humanities, 93 Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006: 21-52.

The central point here is that these pictures are not, in the first instance, *objects* of knowledge from which we inferentially derive beliefs about things in themselves. Rather, pictures enable our engagement with the world around us. Once language evolved, the first-order atomic statements that occur within a system of such statements that bear a picturing relation to the world are *expressions* of our knowledge of things in that world. They do not function as independent premises *about* a picture for an analogical inference to a further, distinct claim about what there is and how things relate; rather, they *embody* our current best knowledge of what there is and how things relate. They are actively involved in the modulation of our behavior in the pursuit of our goals. Even so, directly inferring how things in themselves are from any stage of our conceptualization of the world short of the Peircean ideal would be a mistake. For it is only in the Peircean ideal that such statements express, not merely 'best knowledge,' but *final* knowledge, knowledge that never fails to be vindicated. Action guided by such an ideal map of the world will never be ill-guided. As Hegel himself would say, knowledge that is not of things as they are in themselves is not knowledge at all. The important point remains that we do not know things by first constructing a picture and then inferring from that how things are; rather, we know how things are (in part) by representing them in ways that conform to the requirements of picturing.

Reider asserts that Sellars "merely assumes that the manner in which the mind maps or pictures spatial relations is analogous to mind-independent reality" (53). But this just isn't true. First off, if this were the case, Sellars would not have tried to give us a transcendental argument that picturing is a presupposition of the empirical meaningfulness of a representational system. Second, there is no single way in which we map or picture reality. There may be a kind of instinctive or hard-wired form of mapping built into our sensibility, but there are as many different forms of conceptual maps or pictures of reality as there are conceptual frameworks that we evolve and then develop. It is ironic that he thinks that Sellars assumes that picturing is "the inalienable prerogative of the perceptual level" (SM V ¶82: 144; quoted by Reider on 41 and 53). For Sellars *rejects* this idea: this is one of the points that separates him from the instrumentalist. Sellars thinks that picturing, *at its best*, is the prerogative of the *theoretical* level, and that is why he is a scientific realist. Of course, since Sellars rejects a hard-and-fast distinction between the language of observation and the language of theory, picturing will always be one of the functions of perceptual states — but it is not a function solely or ideally of perceptual states.

Sellars must not be shoved into a Procrustean bed structured by the old "new way of ideas" that claimed we know mental occurrences first and best and must infer from that knowledge to any knowledge we might be able to gain about external reality or things in themselves. Sellars rejected that old form of representationalism, just as Hegel did. We are a part of the world, engaged with it, engaged, indeed, with things as they are in themselves. The more in tune we are with the world, the more we can understand and explain it in its multi-dimensional complexity, the more right we have to accept the higher-order belief that we grasp things as they are in themselves. It is the explanatory adequacy of our conception of the world that really grounds our ontological confidence in

that conception. Picturing plays a role in explaining the explanatory adequacy of our framework, and is thus important — but it is not the whole picture in ontology.

Section VI

Sellars's realism is in tension with his Kantian approach to conceptuality to the degree that we want to keep the notion of *reality* connected to that of *truth*. The picturing relation that plays an indispensable role in tying our conceptual activity to the world in which we live is a sub-conceptual relation. Pictures are neither truth nor false. Pictures are also inarticulate: some language use may picture, but pictures, it turns out, cannot be said, at least not *as such*. Yet the concept of an object turns out, for Sellars, to be framework- or language-dependent. This must be just as true for the objects of ultimate science as for the objects of the manifest image. Sellars paints for us a picture of ultimate reality as a Tractarian/Humean extreme: just one damn thing after another. Causal relations — any property or relation that contains some modal force — are not 'in the objects', but expressions of how *we*, in our conceptual dealings, recognize commitments and entitlements to utilize and transform our representations. So, one might say, everything formal, which is almost everything interesting, is mind-dependent. In order properly to pressure Sellars on these points, however, Reider needs to leave behind the Cartesian new way of ideas and recognize that a different mode of thought is in play in Sellars, precisely because he adopts a Kantian and sometimes even post-Kantian approach.

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