Idling and Sidling Towards Philosophical Peace

Huw Price

Centre for Time · University of Sydney
1. Introduction

2. Sidling on one hand

3. Idling on the other hand
Introduction

- Five philosophical errors
- Giving philosophy peace
- Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?
- My project: boxing-in the third way

Sidling on one hand

Idling on the other hand
Avoiding five errors
Avoiding five errors

The Myth of the Given
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoiding five errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The Myth of the Given

Bare naturalism

Rampant platonism

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five philosophical errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving philosophy peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My project: boxing-in the third way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Huw Price

Idling & Sidling Towards Philosophical Peace
Avoiding five errors

The Myth of the Given

Bare naturalism

Idealism/anti-realism

Frictionless spinning in the void

Rampant platonism

Idealism/anti-realism

Frictionless spinning in the void
Avoiding five errors

- The Myth of the Given
- Bare naturalism
- Naturalized platonism ("Re-enchanting nature")
- Idealism/anti-realism
- Rampant platonism
- Frictionless spinning in the void
“Giving philosophy peace”

The Myth of the Given

Bare naturalism

Naturalized platonism

("Re-enchanting nature")

Idealism/anti-realism

Rampant platonism

Frictionless spinning in the void
“Giving philosophy peace”

The Myth of the Given

Bare naturalism

Rampant platonism

Idealism/anti-realism

Frictionless spinning in the void
Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?

“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

“[I]t is one thing to recognize that the impersonal stance of scientific investigation is a methodological necessity for the achievement of a valuable mode of understanding reality; it is quite another thing to take the dawning grasp of this, in the modern era, for a metaphysical insight into the notion of objectivity as such … The detranscendentalized analogue of Kant’s picture that empiricist realism amounts to is not the educated common sense picture it represents itself as being; it is shallow metaphysics.” (MVR, 182)

My issue: Is the right philosophical pacifier – and is McDowell’s proposed pacifier – a better, deeper, metaphysics? Or does it renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or, perhaps, in favour of a blanket quietism)?
Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?

“[N]othing but good metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

“It is one thing to recognize that the impersonal stance of scientific investigation is a methodological necessity for the achievement of a valuable mode of understanding reality; it is quite another thing to take the dawning grasp of this, in the modern era, for a metaphysical insight into the notion of objectivity as such . . . The detranscendentalized analogue of Kant’s picture that empiricist realism amounts to is not the educated common sense picture it represents itself as being; it is shallow metaphysics.” (MVR, 182)

My issue: Is the right philosophical pacifier – and is McDowell’s proposed pacifier – a better, deeper, metaphysics? Or does it renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or, perhaps, in favour of a blanket quietism)?
“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

“[I]t is one thing to recognize that the impersonal stance of scientific investigation is a methodological necessity for the achievement of a valuable mode of understanding reality; it is quite another thing to take the dawning grasp of this, in the modern era, for a metaphysical insight into the notion of objectivity as such . . . The detranscendentalized analogue of Kant’s picture that empiricist realism amounts to is not the educated common sense picture it represents itself as being; it is shallow metaphysics.” (MVR, 182)

My issue: Is the right philosophical pacifier – and is McDowell’s proposed pacifier – a better, deeper, metaphysics? Or does it renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or, perhaps, in favour of a blanket quietism)?
Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?

“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

“[I]t is one thing to recognize that the impersonal stance of scientific investigation is a methodological necessity for the achievement of a valuable mode of understanding reality; it is quite another thing to take the dawning grasp of this, in the modern era, for a metaphysical insight into the notion of objectivity as such . . . The detranscendental-ized analogue of Kant’s picture that empiricist realism amounts to is not the educated common sense picture it represents itself as being; it is shallow metaphysics.” (MVR, 182)

My issue: Is the right philosophical pacifier – and is McDowell’s proposed pacifier – a better, deeper, metaphysics? Or does it renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or, perhaps, in favour of a blanket quietism)?
Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?

“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

“It is one thing to recognize that the impersonal stance of scientific investigation is a methodological necessity for the achievement of a valuable mode of understanding reality; it is quite another thing to take the dawning grasp of this, in the modern era, for a metaphysical insight into the notion of objectivity as such . . . The detranscendentalized analogue of Kant’s picture that empiricist realism amounts to is not the educated common sense picture it represents itself as being; it is shallow metaphysics.” (MVR, 182)

My issue: Is the right philosophical pacifier – and is McDowell’s proposed pacifier – a better, deeper, metaphysics? Or does it renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or, perhaps, in favour of a blanket quietism)?
“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

“[I]t is one thing to recognize that the impersonal stance of scientific investigation is a methodological necessity for the achievement of a valuable mode of understanding reality; it is quite another thing to take the dawning grasp of this, in the modern era, for a metaphysical insight into the notion of objectivity as such . . . The detranscendentalized analogue of Kant’s picture that empiricist realism amounts to is not the educated common sense picture it represents itself as being; it is shallow metaphysics.” (MVR, 182)

My issue: Is the right philosophical pacifier – and is McDowell’s proposed pacifier – a better, deeper, metaphysics? Or does it renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or, perhaps, in favour of a blanket quietism)?
Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?

“[N]othing but **bad metaphysics** suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

“[I]t is one thing to recognize that the impersonal stance of scientific investigation is a methodological necessity for the achievement of a valuable mode of understanding reality; it is quite another thing to take the dawning grasp of this, in the modern era, for a metaphysical insight into the notion of objectivity as such . . . The detranscendentalized analogue of Kant’s picture that empiricist realism amounts to is not the educated common sense picture it represents itself as being; it is **shallow metaphysics**.” (MVR, 182)

**My issue:** Is the right philosophical pacifier – and is McDowell’s *proposed* pacifier – a *better, deeper*, metaphysics? Or does it renounce *metaphysics* altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or, perhaps, in favour of a blanket quietism)?
Hemming-in the third way

My project

- I want to try to constrain McDowell’s third path from two sides – one “sidling”, the other “idling” – to see if I can reach a point at which it must jump one way or other.
- And I want the character of that choice to be a choice between an uncomfortable *metaphysical* commitment, on one side, and an acceptance of “sideways” though *non-metaphysical* philosophical stance, on the other.
My project

- I want to try to constrain McDowell’s third path from two sides – one “sidling”, the other “idling” – to see if I can reach a point at which it must jump one way or other.

- And I want the character of that choice to be a choice between an uncomfortable \textit{metaphysical} commitment, on one side, and an acceptance of “sideways” though \textit{non-metaphysical philosophical stance}, on the other.
Hemming-in the third way

My project

- I want to try to constrain McDowell’s third path from two sides – one “sidling”, the other “idling” – to see if I can reach a point at which it must jump one way or other.

- And I want the character of that choice to be a choice between an uncomfortable *metaphysical* commitment, on one side, and an acceptance of “sideways” though *non-metaphysical* philosophical stance, on the other.
Hemming-in the third way

My project

- I want to try to constrain McDowell’s third path from two sides – one “sidling”, the other “idling” – to see if I can reach a point at which it must jump one way or other.

- And I want the character of that choice to be a choice between an uncomfortable metaphorical commitment, on one side, and an acceptance of “sideways” though non-metaphysical philosophical stance, on the other.
Introduction

Sidling on one hand
- Sellars and McDowell
- Deflating “describing”
- Revision, idealism and anti-realism?
- Getting sidling right

Idling on the other hand
“Now, once it is granted . . . that empiricism in moral philosophy is compatible with the recognition that ‘ought’ has as distinguished a role in discourse as descriptive and logical terms, in particular that we reason rather than ‘reason’ concerning ought, and once the tautology ‘The world is described by descriptive concepts’ is freed from the idea that the business of all non-logical concepts is to describe, the way is clear to an ungrudging recognition that many expressions which empiricists have relegated to second-class citizenship in discourse, are not inferior, just different.

[Sellars, ‘Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities’, §79]
A fellow pluralist . . .

“Now, once it is granted . . . that empiricism in moral philosophy is compatible with the recognition that ‘ought’ has as distinguished a role in discourse as descriptive and logical terms, in particular that we reason rather than ‘reason’ concerning ought, and once the tautology ‘The world is described by descriptive concepts’ is freed from the idea that the business of all non-logical concepts is to describe, the way is clear to an ungrudging recognition that many expressions which empiricists have relegated to second-class citizenship in discourse, are not inferior, just different.

[Sellars, ‘Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities’, §79]
“Now, once it is granted . . . that empiricism in moral philosophy is compatible with the recognition that ‘ought’ has as distinguished a role in discourse as descriptive and logical terms, in particular that we reason rather than ‘reason’ concerning ought, and once the tautology ‘The world is described by descriptive concepts’ is freed from the idea that the business of all non-logical concepts is to describe, the way is clear to an ungrudging recognition that many expressions which empiricists have relegated to second-class citizenship in discourse, are not inferior, just different.

[Sellars, ‘Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities’, §79]
“Now, once it is granted . . . that empiricism in moral philosophy is compatible with the recognition that ‘ought’ has as distinguished a role in discourse as descriptive and logical terms, in particular that we reason rather than ‘reason’ concerning ought, and once the tautology ‘The world is described by descriptive concepts’ is freed from the idea that the business of all non-logical concepts is to describe, the way is clear to an ungrudging recognition that many expressions which empiricists have relegated to second-class citizenship in discourse, are not inferior, just different.

[Sellars, ‘Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities’, §79]
"Now, once it is granted . . . that empiricism in moral philosophy is compatible with the recognition that ‘ought’ has as distinguished a role in discourse as descriptive and logical terms, in particular that we reason rather than ‘reason’ concerning *ought*, and once the tautology ‘The world is described by descriptive concepts’ is freed from the idea that the business of all non-logical concepts is to describe, the way is clear to an *ungrudging* recognition that many expressions which empiricists have relegated to second-class citizenship in discourse, are not *inferior*, just *different*.

[Sellars, ‘Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities’, §79]
“Now, once it is granted . . . that empiricism in moral philosophy is compatible with the recognition that ‘ought’ has as distinguished a role in discourse as descriptive and logical terms, in particular that we reason rather than ‘reason’ concerning *ought*, and once the tautology ‘The world is described by descriptive concepts’ is freed from the idea that the business of all non-logical concepts is to describe, the way is clear to an ungrudging recognition that many expressions which empiricists have relegated to second-class citizenship in discourse, are not *inferior*, just *different*.

[Sellars, ‘Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities’, §79]
“We have learned the hard way that the core truth of ‘emotivism’ is not only compatible with, but absurd without, ungrudging recognition of the fact, so properly stressed (if mis-assimilated to the model of describing) by ‘ethical rationalists,’ that ethical discourse as ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse.

It is my purpose to argue that the core truth of Hume’s philosophy of causation is not only compatible with, but absurd without, ungrudging recognition of those features of causal discourse as a mode of rational discourse on which the ‘metaphysical rationalists’ laid such stress but also mis-assimilated to describing.” [CDCM, §82]
“We have learned the hard way that the core truth of ‘emotivism’ is not only compatible with, but absurd without, ungrudging recognition of the fact, so properly stressed (if mis-assimilated to the model of describing) by ‘ethical rationalists,’ that ethical discourse as ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse.

It is my purpose to argue that the core truth of Hume’s philosophy of causation is not only compatible with, but absurd without, ungrudging recognition of those features of causal discourse as a mode of rational discourse on which the ‘metaphysical rationalists’ laid such stress but also mis-assimilated to describing.” [CDCM, §82]
"We have learned the hard way that the core truth of ‘emotivism’ is not only compatible with, but absurd without, ungrudging recognition of the fact, so properly stressed (if mis-assimilated to the model of describing) by ‘ethical rationalists,’ that ethical discourse as ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse.

It is my purpose to argue that the core truth of Hume’s philosophy of causation is not only compatible with, but absurd without, ungrudging recognition of those features of causal discourse as a mode of rational discourse on which the ’metaphysical rationalists’ laid such stress but also mis-assimilated to describing.” [CDCM, §82]
Comparing Sellars and McDowell

Similarities

- Sellars and McDowell are both pluralists, non-reductionists, and non-“second-rate-ists” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- They agree that “ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse”.

Apparent differences

- Sellars thinks:
  - That there is nevertheless something right about the empiricist claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.
  - That there is a fruitful perspective “from sideways-on”, examining the distinctive “function” or logical role of these vocabularies – and, as for the empiricists, that this perspective provides an alternative to metaphysics (as a route to philosophical illumination about the matters in question).
Comparing Sellars and McDowell

Similarities

- Sellars and McDowell are both pluralists, non-reductionists, and non-“second-rate-ists” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- They agree that “ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse”.

Apparent differences

- Sellars thinks:
  - That there is nevertheless something *right* about the empiricist claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.
  - That there is a fruitful perspective “from sideways-on”, examining the distinctive “function” or logical role of these vocabularies – and, as for the empiricists, that this perspective provides an alternative to metaphysics (as a route to philosophical illumination about the matters in question).
Comparing Sellars and McDowell

Similarities

- Sellars and McDowell are both pluralists, non-reductionists, and non-“second-rate-ists” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- They agree that “ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse”.

Apparent differences

- Sellars thinks:
  - That there is nevertheless something right about the empiricist claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.
  - That there is a fruitful perspective “from sideways-on”, examining the distinctive “function” or logical role of these vocabularies – and, as for the empiricists, that this perspective provides an alternative to metaphysics (as a route to philosophical illumination about the matters in question).
Comparing Sellars and McDowell

Similarities

Sellars and McDowell are both pluralists, non-reductionists, and non-“second-rate-ists” (e.g., about ethical discourse).

They agree that “ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse”.

Apparent differences

Sellars thinks:

- That there is nevertheless something right about the empiricist claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.
- That there is a fruitful perspective “from sideways-on”, examining the distinctive “function” or logical role of these vocabularies – and, as for the empiricists, that this perspective provides an alternative to metaphysics (as a route to philosophical illumination about the matters in question).
Comparing Sellars and McDowell

Similarities

- Sellars and McDowell are both pluralists, non-reductionists, and non-“second-rate-ists” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- They agree that “ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse”.

Apparent differences

- Sellars thinks:
  - That there is nevertheless something right about the empiricist claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.
  - That there is a fruitful perspective “from sideways-on”, examining the distinctive “function” or logical role of these vocabularies – and, as for the empiricists, that this perspective provides an alternative to metaphysics (as a route to philosophical illumination about the matters in question).
Comparing Sellars and McDowell

Similarities

- Sellars and McDowell are both pluralists, non-reductionists, and non-“second-rate-ists” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- They agree that “ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse”.

Apparent differences

- Sellars thinks:
  - That there is nevertheless something right about the empiricist claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.
  - That there is a fruitful perspective “from sideways-on”, examining the distinctive “function” or logical role of these vocabularies – and, as for the empiricists, that this perspective provides an alternative to metaphysics (as a route to philosophical illumination about the matters in question).
Comparing Sellars and McDowell

Similarities

- Sellars and McDowell are both pluralists, non-reductionists, and non-“second-rate-ists” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- They agree that “ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse”.

Apparent differences

- Sellars thinks:
  - That there is nevertheless something *right* about the empiricist claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.
  - That there is a fruitful perspective “from sideways-on”, examining the distinctive “function” or logical role of these vocabularies – and, as for the empiricists, that this perspective provides an alternative to metaphysics (as a route to philosophical illumination about the matters in question).
Comparing Sellars and McDowell

Similarities

- Sellars and McDowell are both pluralists, non-reductionists, and non-“second-rate-ists” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- They agree that “ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse”.

Apparent differences

- Sellars thinks:
  1. That there is nevertheless something right about the empiricist claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.
  2. That there is a fruitful perspective “from sideways-on”, examining the distinctive “function” or logical role of these vocabularies – and, as for the empiricists, that this perspective provides an alternative to metaphysics (as a route to philosophical illumination about the matters in question).
Comparing Sellars and McDowell

Similarities

- Sellars and McDowell are both pluralists, non-reductionists, and non-“second-rate-ists” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- They agree that “ethical discourse is a mode of rational discourse”.

Apparent differences

- Sellars thinks:
  1. That there is nevertheless something right about the empiricist claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.
  2. That there is a fruitful perspective “from sideways-on”, examining the distinctive “function” or logical role of these vocabularies – and, as for the empiricists, that this perspective provides an alternative to metaphysics (as a route to philosophical illumination about the matters in question).
Deflating “describing”?

A tempting move¹

- Deflate “describing”, in order to undermine Sellars’ claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.

Yes, but …

- What does this do to Sellars’ *positive* program – his “sideways”, explanatory alternative to metaphysics?

- It makes no difference to his positive claims about the functions of ethical and modal vocabulary (because a *deflated* notion of description doesn’t provide any sort of *rival* theory).

---

¹Tempting for me, and I suspect for McDowell, too.

²In the lives of natural creatures like us – hence its naturalism.
Deflating “describing”? 

A tempting move

- Deflate “describing”, in order to undermine Sellars’ claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.

Yes, but . . .

- What does this do to Sellars’ positive program – his “sideways”, explanatory alternative to metaphysics?
- It makes no difference to his positive claims about the functions of ethical and modal vocabulary (because a deflated notion of description doesn’t provide any sort of rival theory).


1Tempting for me, and I suspect for McDowell, too.

2In the lives of natural creatures like us – hence its naturalism.
Deflating “describing”?  

A tempting move¹  

- Deflate “describing”, in order to undermine Sellars’ claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.

Yes, but . . .

- What does this do to Sellars’ positive program – his “sideways”, explanatory alternative to metaphysics?
- It makes no difference to his positive claims about the functions of ethical and modal vocabulary (because a deflated notion of description doesn’t provide any sort of rival theory).

¹Tempting for me, and I suspect for McDowell, too.

²In the lives of natural creatures like us – hence its naturalism.
Deflating “describing”? 

A tempting move

- Deflate “describing”, in order to undermine Sellars’ claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.

Yes, but . . .

- What does this do to Sellars’ positive program – his “sideways”, explanatory alternative to metaphysics?
- It makes no difference to his positive claims about the functions of ethical and modal vocabulary (because a deflated notion of description doesn’t provide any sort of rival theory).

---

1 T tempting for me, and I suspect for McDowell, too.

2 In the lives of natural creatures like us – hence its naturalism.
Deflating “describing”? 

A tempting move

- Deflate “describing”, in order to undermine Sellars’ claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.

Yes, but . . .

- What does this do to Sellars’ *positive* program – his “sideways”, explanatory *alternative* to metaphysics?
- It makes no difference to his positive claims about the functions of ethical and modal vocabulary (because a *deflated* notion of description doesn’t provide any sort of *rival* theory).

---

1 Tempting for me, and I suspect for McDowell, too.

2 In the lives of natural creatures like us – hence its naturalism.
Deflating “describing”? 

A tempting move¹

- Deflate “describing”, in order to undermine Sellars’ claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.

Yes, but . . .

- What does this do to Sellars’ positive program – his “sideways”, explanatory alternative to metaphysics?
- It makes no difference to his positive claims about the functions of ethical and modal vocabulary (because a deflated notion of description doesn’t provide any sort of rival theory).

¹ Tempting for me, and I suspect for McDowell, too.

² In the lives of natural creatures like us – hence its naturalism.
Deflating “describing”?

A tempting move¹

- Deflate “describing”, in order to undermine Sellars’ claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.

Yes, but . . .

- What does this do to Sellars’ positive program – his “sideways”, explanatory alternative to metaphysics?
- It makes no difference to his positive claims about the functions of ethical and modal vocabulary (because a deflated notion of description doesn’t provide any sort of rival theory).
- So deflating “describing” doesn’t alter the fact that Sellars is agreeing with empiricism that a fruitful approach is “sideways-on” – to explain the role of the vocabularies,² not to investigate the nature of moral or modal facts.

¹Tempting for me, and I suspect for McDowell, too.
²In the lives of natural creatures like us – hence its naturalism.
Deflating “describing”?  

A tempting move

- Deflate “describing”, in order to undermine Sellars’ claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.

Yes, but . . .

- What does this do to Sellars’ positive program – his “sideways”, explanatory alternative to metaphysics?
- It makes no difference to his positive claims about the functions of ethical and modal vocabulary (because a deflated notion of description doesn’t provide any sort of rival theory).
- So deflating “describing” doesn’t alter the fact that Sellars is agreeing with empiricism that a fruitful approach is “sideways-on” – to explain the role of the vocabularies, not to investigate the nature of moral or modal facts.

---

1 Tempting for me, and I suspect for McDowell, too.
2 In the lives of natural creatures like us – hence its naturalism.
Deflating “describing”? 

A tempting move¹

- Deflate “describing”, in order to undermine Sellars’ claim that ethical (and modal) vocabulary is not in the business of “describing reality”.

Yes, but . . .

- What does this do to Sellars’ positive program – his “sideways”, explanatory alternative to metaphysics?
- It makes no difference to his positive claims about the functions of ethical and modal vocabulary (because a deflated notion of description doesn’t provide any sort of rival theory).
- So deflating “describing” doesn’t alter the fact that Sellars is agreeing with empiricism that a fruitful approach is “sideways-on” – to explain the role of the vocabularies,² not to investigate the nature of moral or modal facts.

¹Tempting for me, and I suspect for McDowell, too.
²In the lives of natural creatures like us – hence its naturalism.
Interrogating “Sellars-lite”

- Let’s call this modified Sellarsian view “Sellars-lite” – roughly, it is Sellars minus the descriptive/non-descriptive “Bifurcation Thesis”.

- Questions:
  - Does Sellars-lite fall into the traps that McDowell takes to lie in wait for other varieties (especially empiricist varieties) of naturalism, such as reductionism and projectivism?
  - Is Sellars-lite guilty, e.g., of revisionism, idealism or anti-realism?
Interrogating “Sellars-lite”

- Let’s call this modified Sellarsian view “Sellars-lite” – roughly, it is Sellars minus the descriptive/non-descriptive “Bifurcation Thesis”.
- Questions:
  - Does Sellars-lite fall into the traps that McDowell takes to lie in wait for other varieties (especially empiricist varieties) of naturalism, such as reductionism and projectivism?
  - Is Sellars-lite guilty, e.g., of revisionism, idealism or anti-realism?
Interrogating “Sellars-lite”

- Let’s call this modified Sellarsian view “Sellars-lite” – roughly, it is Sellars minus the descriptive/non-descriptive “Bifurcation Thesis”.

- Questions:
  - Does Sellars-lite fall into the traps that McDowell takes to lie in wait for other varieties (especially empiricist varieties) of naturalism, such as *reductionism* and *projectivism*?
  - Is Sellars-lite guilty, e.g., of *revisionism*, *idealism* or *anti-realism*?
Interrogating “Sellars-lite”

- Let’s call this modified Sellarsian view “Sellars-lite” – roughly, it is Sellars minus the descriptive/non-descriptive “Bifurcation Thesis”.

- **Questions:**
  - Does Sellars-lite fall into the traps that McDowell takes to lie in wait for other varieties (especially empiricist varieties) of naturalism, such as *reductionism* and *projectivism*?
  - Is Sellars-lite guilty, e.g., of *revisionism*, *idealism* or *anti-realism*?
Interrogating “Sellars-lite”

- Let’s call this modified Sellarsian view “Sellars-lite” – roughly, it is Sellars minus the descriptive/non-descriptive “Bifurcation Thesis”.

- Questions:
  - Does Sellars-lite fall into the traps that McDowell takes to lie in wait for other varieties (especially empiricist varieties) of naturalism, such as reductionism and projectivism?
  - Is Sellars-lite guilty, e.g., of revisionism, idealism or anti-realism?
Interrogating “Sellars-lite”

Let’s call this modified Sellarsian view “Sellars-lite” – roughly, it is Sellars minus the descriptive/non-descriptive “Bifurcation Thesis”.

Questions:
- Does Sellars-lite fall into the traps that McDowell takes to lie in wait for other varieties (especially empiricist varieties) of naturalism, such as reductionism and projectivism?
- Is Sellars-lite guilty, e.g., of revisionism, idealism or anti-realism?
McDowell on a characteristic philosophical failing:

Ordinary modern philosophy addresses its derivative dualisms in a characteristic way. It takes a stand on one side of a gulf it aims to bridge, accepting without question the way its target dualism conceives the chosen side. Then it constructs something as close as possible to the conception of the other side that figured in the problems, out of materials that are unproblematically available where it has taken its stand.

Of course there no longer seems to be a gulf, but the result is bound to look more or less revisionist. . . . Phenomenalism is a good example of a philosophical construction with this traditional shape . . . . (MW, 94)

Comments:

- Sellars-lite isn't offering a construction of anything – that would be metaphysics, which is a different business entirely.
- Describing and explaining a linguistic practice – a “language game” – need not be at all revisionary.3

3 Though it might be, in some cases – its insights might incline us to reform or abandon the game in question.
Revisionism?

McDowell on a characteristic philosophical failing:

Ordinary modern philosophy addresses its derivative dualisms in a characteristic way. It takes a stand on one side of a gulf it aims to bridge, accepting without question the way its target dualism conceives the chosen side. Then it constructs something as close as possible to the conception of the other side that figured in the problems, out of materials that are unproblematically available where it has taken its stand.

Of course there no longer seems to be a gulf, but the result is bound to look more or less revisionist. ... Phenomenalism is a good example of a philosophical construction with this traditional shape ... (MW, 94)

Comments:

- Sellars-lite isn't offering a construction of anything – that would be metaphysics, which is a different business entirely.
- Describing and explaining a linguistic practice – a "language game" – need not be at all revisionary.¹

¹Though it might be, in some cases – its insights might incline us to reform or abandon the game in question.
McDowell on a characteristic philosophical failing:

Ordinary modern philosophy addresses its derivative dualisms in a characteristic way. It takes a stand on one side of a gulf it aims to bridge, accepting without question the way its target dualism conceives the chosen side. Then it constructs something as close as possible to the conception of the other side that figured in the problems, out of materials that are unproblematically available where it has taken its stand.

Of course there no longer seems to be a gulf, but the result is bound to look more or less revisionist. . . . Phenomenalism is a good example of a philosophical construction with this traditional shape . . . . (MW, 94)

Comments:

- Sellars-lite isn’t offering a construction of anything – that would be metaphysics, which is a different business entirely.
- Describing and explaining a linguistic practice – a “language game” – need not be at all revisionary.³

³Though it might be, in some cases – its insights might incline us to reform or abandon the game in question.
McDowell on a characteristic philosophical failing:

Ordinary modern philosophy addresses its derivative dualisms in a characteristic way. It takes a stand on one side of a gulf it aims to bridge, accepting without question the way its target dualism conceives the chosen side. Then it constructs something as close as possible to the conception of the other side that figured in the problems, out of materials that are unproblematically available where it has taken its stand.

Of course there no longer seems to be a gulf, but the result is bound to look more or less revisionist. . . . Phenomenalism is a good example of a philosophical construction with this traditional shape . . . . (MW, 94)

Comments:

- Sellars-lite isn’t offering a construction of anything – that would be metaphysics, which is a different business entirely.
- Describing and explaining a linguistic practice – a “language game” – need not be at all revisionary.¹

¹Though it might be, in some cases – its insights might incline us to reform or abandon the game in question.
McDowell on a characteristic philosophical failing:

Ordinary modern philosophy addresses its derivative dualisms in a characteristic way. It takes a stand on one side of a gulf it aims to bridge, accepting without question the way its target dualism conceives the chosen side. Then it constructs something as close as possible to the conception of the other side that figured in the problems, out of materials that are unproblematically available where it has taken its stand.

Of course there no longer seems to be a gulf, but the result is bound to look more or less revisionist. . . . Phenomenalism is a good example of a philosophical construction with this traditional shape . . . . (MW, 94)

Comments:

- Sellars-lite isn’t offering a construction of anything – that would be metaphysics, which is a different business entirely.
- Describing and explaining a linguistic practice – a “language game” – need not be at all revisionary.¹

¹Though it might be, in some cases – its insights might incline us to reform or abandon the game in question.
McDowell on a characteristic philosophical failing:

Ordinary modern philosophy addresses its derivative dualisms in a characteristic way. It takes a stand on one side of a gulf it aims to bridge, accepting without question the way its target dualism conceives the chosen side. Then it constructs something as close as possible to the conception of the other side that figured in the problems, out of materials that are unproblematically available where it has taken its stand.

Of course there no longer seems to be a gulf, but the result is bound to look more or less revisionist. . . . Phenomenalism is a good example of a philosophical construction with this traditional shape . . . . (MW, 94)

Comments:

- Sellars-lite isn’t offering a construction of anything – that would be metaphysics, which is a different business entirely.

- Describing and explaining a linguistic practice – a “language game” – need not be at all revisionary.³

³Though it might be, in some cases – its insights might incline us to reform or abandon the game in question.
Revisionism?

McDowell on a characteristic philosophical failing:

Ordinary modern philosophy addresses its derivative dualisms in a characteristic way. It takes a stand on one side of a gulf it aims to bridge, accepting without question the way its target dualism conceives the chosen side. Then it constructs something as close as possible to the conception of the other side that figured in the problems, out of materials that are unproblematically available where it has taken its stand.

Of course there no longer seems to be a gulf, but the result is bound to look more or less revisionist. ... Phenomenalism is a good example of a philosophical construction with this traditional shape ... (MW, 94)

Comments:

- Sellars-lite isn’t offering a construction of anything – that would be metaphysics, which is a different business entirely.
- Describing and explaining a linguistic practice – a “language game” – need not be at all revisionary.³

³Though it might be, in some cases – its insights might incline us to reform or abandon the game in question.
Revisionism?

McDowell on a characteristic philosophical failing:

Ordinary modern philosophy addresses its derivative dualisms in a characteristic way. It takes a stand on one side of a gulf it aims to bridge, accepting without question the way its target dualism conceives the chosen side. Then it constructs something as close as possible to the conception of the other side that figured in the problems, out of materials that are unproblematically available where it has taken its stand.

Of course there no longer seems to be a gulf, but the result is bound to look more or less revisionist. . . . Phenomenalism is a good example of a philosophical construction with this traditional shape . . . . (MW, 94)

Comments:

- Sellars-lite isn’t offering a construction of anything – that would be metaphysics, which is a different business entirely.
- Describing and explaining a linguistic practice – a “language game” – need not be at all revisionary.³

³Though it might be, in some cases – its insights might incline us to reform or abandon the game in question.
If there is nothing to the normative structure within which meaning comes into view except, say, acceptances and rejections of bits of behaviour by the community at large, then how things are—how things can be said to be with a correctness that must partly consist in being faithful to the meanings one would exploit if one said that they are thus and so—cannot be independent of the community’s ratifying the judgements that things are thus and so. (MW, 93)

Challenge: The view allows no gap between its *being the case* that P and *the community’s ratifying the judgement* that P.

Response:

- The view I have in mind isn’t offering *truth conditions* for P – again, that would be (something like) metaphysics, which is a different business entirely (and depends on the kind of sideways view I reject).
- There’s no such consequence “inside the language game”, so long as any actual community takes it that it might be mistaken – i.e., stands ready to justify its claims to *later or enlarged* communities.⁴

⁴Cf. Rorty. The idea of the “final” community again depends on the externalism I reject.
Idealism?

If there is nothing to the normative structure within which meaning comes into view except, say, acceptances and rejections of bits of behaviour by the community at large, then how things are—how things can be said to be with a correctness that must partly consist in being faithful to the meanings one would exploit if one said that they are thus and so—cannot be independent of the community’s ratifying the judgements that things are thus and so. (MW, 93)

Challenge: The view allows no gap between its being the case that P and the community’s ratifying the judgement that P.

Response:

- The view I have in mind isn’t offering truth conditions for P – again, that would be (something like) metaphysics, which is a different business entirely (and depends on the kind of sideways view I reject).
- There’s no such consequence “inside the language game”, so long as any actual community takes it that it might be mistaken – i.e., stands ready to justify its claims to later or enlarged communities.⁴

⁴Cf. Rorty. The idea of the “final” community again depends on the externalism I reject.
If there is nothing to the normative structure within which meaning comes into view except, say, acceptances and rejections of bits of behaviour by the community at large, then how things are—how things can be said to be with a correctness that must partly consist in being faithful to the meanings one would exploit if one said that they are thus and so—cannot be independent of the community’s ratifying the judgements that things are thus and so. (MW, 93)

**Challenge:** The view allows no gap between its *being the case* that P and *the community’s ratifying the judgement* that P.

**Response:**

- The view I have in mind isn’t offering truth conditions for P — again, that would be (something like) metaphysics, which is a different business entirely (and depends on the kind of sideways view I reject).
- There’s no such consequence “inside the language game”, so long as any actual community takes it that it might be mistaken — i.e., stands ready to justify its claims to *later or enlarged* communities.⁴

⁴Cf. Rorty. The idea of the “final” community again depends on the externalism I reject.
Idealism?

If there is nothing to the normative structure within which meaning comes into view except, say, acceptances and rejections of bits of behaviour by the community at large, then how things are—how things can be said to be with a correctness that must partly consist in being faithful to the meanings one would exploit if one said that they are thus and so—cannot be independent of the community’s ratifying the judgements that things are thus and so. (MW, 93)

Challenge: The view allows no gap between its being the case that P and the community’s ratifying the judgement that P.

Response:

- The view I have in mind isn’t offering truth conditions for P – again, that would be (something like) metaphysics, which is a different business entirely (and depends on the kind of sideways view I reject).
- There’s no such consequence “inside the language game”, so long as any actual community takes it that it might be mistaken – i.e., stands ready to justify its claims to later or enlarged communities.  
  
  4Cf. Rorty. The idea of the “final” community again depends on the externalism I reject.
If there is nothing to the normative structure within which meaning comes into view except, say, acceptances and rejections of bits of behaviour by the community at large, then how things are—how things can be said to be with a correctness that must partly consist in being faithful to the meanings one would exploit if one said that they are thus and so—cannot be independent of the community’s ratifying the judgements that things are thus and so. (MW, 93)

**Challenge:** The view allows no gap between its *being the case* that P and *the community’s ratifying the judgement* that P.

**Response:**

- The view I have in mind isn’t offering *truth conditions* for P – again, that would be (something like) metaphysics, which is a different business entirely (and depends on the kind of sideways view I reject).
- There’s no such consequence “inside the language game”, so long as any actual community takes it that it might be mistaken – i.e., stands ready to justify its claims to *later or enlarged* communities.⁴

⁴Cf. Rorty. The idea of the “final” community again depends on the externalism I reject.
Idealism?

If there is nothing to the normative structure within which meaning comes into view except, say, acceptances and rejections of bits of behaviour by the community at large, then how things are—how things can be said to be with a correctness that must partly consist in being faithful to the meanings one would exploit if one said that they are thus and so—cannot be independent of the community’s ratifying the judgements that things are thus and so. (MW, 93)

**Challenge:** The view allows no gap between its *being the case* that P and the *community’s ratifying the judgement* that P.

**Response:**

- The view I have in mind isn’t offering truth conditions for P – again, that would be (something like) metaphysics, which is a different business entirely (and depends on the kind of sideways view I reject).
- There’s no such consequence “inside the language game”, so long as any actual community takes it that it might be mistaken – i.e., stands ready to justify its claims to *later* or *enlarged* communities.¹

¹Cf. Rorty. The idea of the “final” community again depends on the externalism I reject.
Idealism?

If there is nothing to the normative structure within which meaning comes into view except, say, acceptances and rejections of bits of behaviour by the community at large, then how things are—how things can be said to be with a correctness that must partly consist in being faithful to the meanings one would exploit if one said that they are thus and so—cannot be independent of the community’s ratifying the judgements that things are thus and so. (MW, 93)

**Challenge:** The view allows no gap between its *being the case* that P and *the community’s ratifying the judgement* that P.

**Response:**

- The view I have in mind isn’t offering truth conditions for P – again, that would be (something like) metaphysics, which is a different business entirely (and depends on the kind of sideways view I reject).
- There’s no such consequence “inside the language game”, so long as any actual community takes it that it might be mistaken – i.e., stands ready to justify its claims to *later* or *enlarged* communities.\(^4\)

\(^4\)Cf. Rorty. The idea of the “final” community again depends on the externalism I reject.
Idealism?

If there is nothing to the normative structure within which meaning comes into view except, say, acceptances and rejections of bits of behaviour by the community at large, then how things are—how things can be said to be with a correctness that must partly consist in being faithful to the meanings one would exploit if one said that they are thus and so—cannot be independent of the community’s ratifying the judgements that things are thus and so. (MW, 93)

Challenge: The view allows no gap between its being the case that P and the community’s ratifying the judgement that P.

Response:

- The view I have in mind isn’t offering truth conditions for P – again, that would be (something like) metaphysics, which is a different business entirely (and depends on the kind of sideways view I reject).

- There’s no such consequence “inside the language game”, so long as any actual community takes it that it might be mistaken – i.e., stands ready to justify its claims to later or enlarged communities.⁴

---

⁴Cf. Rorty. The idea of the “final” community again depends on the externalism I reject.
If there is nothing to the normative structure within which meaning comes into view except, say, acceptances and rejections of bits of behaviour by the community at large, then how things are—how things can be said to be with a correctness that must partly consist in being faithful to the meanings one would exploit if one said that they are thus and so—cannot be independent of the community’s ratifying the judgements that things are thus and so. (MW, 93)

**Challenge:** The view allows no gap between its *being the case* that P and *the community’s ratifying the judgement* that P.

**Response:**

- The view I have in mind isn’t offering *truth conditions* for P – again, that would be (something like) metaphysics, which is a different business entirely (and depends on the kind of sideways view I reject).

- There’s no such consequence “inside the language game”, so long as any actual community takes it that it might be mistaken – i.e., stands ready to justify its claims to *later* or *enlarged* communities.\(^4\)

\(^4\)Cf. Rorty. The idea of the “final” community again depends on the externalism I reject.
Idealism?

If there is nothing to the normative structure within which meaning comes into view except, say, acceptances and rejections of bits of behaviour by the community at large, then how things are—how things can be said to be with a correctness that must partly consist in being faithful to the meanings one would exploit if one said that they are thus and so—cannot be independent of the community’s ratifying the judgements that things are thus and so. (MW, 93)

**Challenge:** The view allows no gap between its *being the case* that P and *the community’s ratifying the judgement* that P.

**Response:**

- The view I have in mind isn’t offering *truth conditions* for P – again, that would be (something like) metaphysics, which is a different business entirely (and depends on the kind of sideways view I reject).

- There’s no such consequence “inside the language game”, so long as any actual community takes it that it might be mistaken – i.e., stands ready to justify its claims to *later or enlarged* communities.⁴

⁴Cf. Rorty. The idea of the “final” community again depends on the externalism I reject.
Antirealism?

Challenge:

Isn’t the view committed to anti-realism – to denying that there are really any values, causes, meanings, or whatever?

Response:

- No, that would be metaphysics.
- Again, it would presuppose an illegitimate “external” standpoint from which to address the question whether there are such things (or whether they are “real”).
- From “inside” the language game, it is (of course) correct to say that there are such things – and there is nowhere else to stand.
Antirealism?

Challenge:
Isn’t the view committed to anti-realism – to *denying* that there are really any values, causes, meanings, or whatever?

Response:

- No, that would be metaphysics.
- Again, it would presuppose an illegitimate “external” standpoint from which to address the question whether there are such things (or whether they are “real”).
- From “inside” the language game, it is (of course) correct to say that there are such things – and there is nowhere else to stand.
Antirealism?

Challenge:
Isn’t the view committed to **anti-realism** – to *denying* that there are really any values, causes, meanings, or whatever?

Response:

- No, that would be metaphysics.
- Again, it would presuppose an illegitimate “external” standpoint from which to address the question whether there are such things (or whether they are “real”).
- From “inside” the language game, it is (of course) correct to say that there are such things – and there is nowhere else to stand.
Antirealism?

Challenge:
Isn’t the view committed to anti-realism – to denying that there are really any values, causes, meanings, or whatever?

Response:

- No, that would be metaphysics.
- Again, it would presuppose an illegitimate “external” standpoint from which to address the question whether there are such things (or whether they are “real”).
- From “inside” the language game, it is (of course) correct to say that there are such things – and there is nowhere else to stand.
Antirealism?

Challenge:
Isn’t the view committed to anti-realism – to denying that there are really any values, causes, meanings, or whatever?

Response:

- No, that would be metaphysics.
- Again, it would presuppose an illegitimate “external” standpoint from which to address the question whether there are such things (or whether they are “real”).
- From “inside” the language game, it is (of course) correct to say that there are such things – and there is nowhere else to stand.
Antirealism?

Challenge:
Isn’t the view committed to **anti-realism** – to *denying* that there are really any values, causes, meanings, or whatever?

Response:

- No, that would be metaphysics.
- Again, it would presuppose an illegitimate “external” standpoint from which to address the question whether there are such things (or whether they are “real”).
- From “inside” the language game, it is (of course) correct to say that there are such things – and there is nowhere else to stand.
Antirealism?

Challenge:
Isn’t the view committed to anti-realism – to denying that there are really any values, causes, meanings, or whatever?

Response:

- No, that would be metaphysics.
- Again, it would presuppose an illegitimate “external” standpoint from which to address the question whether there are such things (or whether they are “real”).
- From “inside” the language game, it is (of course) correct to say that there are such things – and there is nowhere else to stand.
After Carnap

Influenced by ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein, the [Vienna] Circle rejected both the thesis of the reality of the external world and the thesis of its irreality . . . ; the same was the case for both the thesis of the reality of universals . . . and the nominalistic thesis that they are not real . . . .

It is therefore not correct to classify the members of the Vienna Circle as nominalists, as is sometimes done. However, if we look at the basic anti-metaphysical . . . attitude of most nominalists . . ., then it is, of course, true to say that the Vienna Circle was much closer to those philosophers than to their opponents. [Carnap 1950, 215]

Compare McDowell:

Some of these essays can thus be taken to defend a version of what has been called “moral realism”. But that label would risk obscuring the fact that what I urge is more negative than positive; my stance in these essays is better described as “anti-anti-realism” than as “realism”. What I urge is that anti-realist positions such as emotivism and its sophisticated descendants, all the way down to Simon Blackburn’s projectivist quasi-realism, are responses to a misconception of the significance of the obvious fact that ethical, and more generally evaluative, thinking is not science. (MVR, viii).
After Carnap

Influenced by ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein, the [Vienna] Circle rejected both the thesis of the reality of the external world and the thesis of its irreality . . . ; the same was the case for both the thesis of the reality of universals . . . and the nominalistic thesis that they are not real . . . .

It is therefore not correct to classify the members of the Vienna Circle as nominalists, as is sometimes done. However, if we look at the basic anti-metaphysical . . . attitude of most nominalists . . ., then it is, of course, true to say that the Vienna Circle was much closer to those philosophers than to their opponents. [Carnap 1950, 215]

Compare McDowell:

Some of these essays can thus be taken to defend a version of what has been called “moral realism”. But that label would risk obscuring the fact that what I urge is more negative than positive; my stance in these essays is better described as “anti-anti-realism” than as “realism”. What I urge is that anti-realist positions such as emotivism and its sophisticated descendants, all the way down to Simon Blackburn’s projectivist quasi-realism, are responses to a misconception of the significance of the obvious fact that ethical, and more generally evaluative, thinking is not science. (MVR, viii).
After Carnap

Influenced by ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein, the [Vienna] Circle rejected both the thesis of the reality of the external world and the thesis of its irreality . . . ; the same was the case for both the thesis of the reality of universals . . . and the nominalistic thesis that they are not real . . . .

It is therefore not correct to classify the members of the Vienna Circle as nominalists, as is sometimes done. However, if we look at the basic anti-metaphysical . . . attitude of most nominalists . . . , then it is, of course, true to say that the Vienna Circle was much closer to those philosophers than to their opponents. [Carnap 1950, 215]

Compare McDowell:

Some of these essays can thus be taken to defend a version of what has been called “moral realism”. But that label would risk obscuring the fact that what I urge is more negative than positive; my stance in these essays is better described as “anti-anti-realism” than as “realism”. What I urge is that anti-realist positions such as emotivism and its sophisticated descendants, all the way down to Simon Blackburn’s projectivist quasi-realism, are responses to a misconception of the significance of the obvious fact that ethical, and more generally evaluative, thinking is not science. (MVR, viii).
After Carnap

Influenced by ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein, the [Vienna] Circle rejected both the thesis of the reality of the external world and the thesis of its irreality . . .; the same was the case for both the thesis of the reality of universals . . . and the nominalistic thesis that they are not real . . .

It is therefore not correct to classify the members of the Vienna Circle as nominalists, as is sometimes done. However, if we look at the basic anti-metaphysical . . . attitude of most nominalists . . ., then it is, of course, true to say that the Vienna Circle was much closer to those philosophers than to their opponents. [Carnap 1950, 215]

Compare McDowell:

Some of these essays can thus be taken to defend a version of what has been called “moral realism”. But that label would risk obscuring the fact that what I urge is more negative than positive; my stance in these essays is better described as “anti-anti-realism” than as “realism”. What I urge is that anti-realist positions such as emotivism and its sophisticated descendants, all the way down to Simon Blackburn’s projectivist quasi-realism, are responses to a misconception of the significance of the obvious fact that ethical, and more generally evaluative, thinking is not science. (MVR, viii).
After Carnap

Influenced by ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein, the [Vienna] Circle rejected both the thesis of the reality of the external world and the thesis of its irreality . . . ; the same was the case for both the thesis of the reality of universals . . . and the nominalistic thesis that they are not real . . . .

It is therefore not correct to classify the members of the Vienna Circle as nominalists, as is sometimes done. However, if we look at the basic anti-metaphysical . . . attitude of most nominalists . . ., then it is, of course, true to say that the Vienna Circle was much closer to those philosophers than to their opponents. [Carnap 1950, 215]

Compare McDowell:

Some of these essays can thus be taken to defend a version of what has been called “moral realism”. But that label would risk obscuring the fact that what I urge is more negative than positive; my stance in these essays is better described as “anti-anti-realism” than as “realism”. What I urge is that anti-realist positions such as emotivism and its sophisticated descendants, all the way down to Simon Blackburn’s projectivist quasi-realism, are responses to a misconception of the significance of the obvious fact that ethical, and more generally evaluative, thinking is not science. (MVR, viii).
Aside: Is Blackburn really an anti-realist?

“What then is the mistake of describing [quasi-realism] as holding that ‘we talk as if there are necessities when really there are none’? It is the failure to notice that the quasi-realist need allow no sense to what follows the ‘as if’ except one in which it is true. And conversely he need allow no sense to the contrasting proposition in which it in turn is true.” [Blackburn, ‘Morals and modals’.]
Aside: Is Blackburn really an anti-realist?

Q. 18. Aren’t you really trying to defend our right to talk ‘as if’ there were moral truths, although in your view there aren’t any really?

Ans. No, no, no. I do not say that we can talk as if kicking dogs were wrong, when ‘really’ it isn’t wrong. I say that it is wrong (so it is true that it is wrong, so it is really true that it is wrong, so this is an example of a moral truth, so there are moral truths).

This misinterpretation is curiously common. Anyone advancing it must believe themselves to have some more robust, metaphysically heavyweight conception of what it would be for there to be moral truths REALLY, and compared with this genuine article, I only have us talking as if there are moral truths REALLY. I deny that there is any such coherent conception.

“What then is the mistake of describing [quasi-realism] as holding that ‘we talk as if there are necessities when really there are none’? It is the failure to notice that the quasi-realist need allow no sense to what follows the ‘as if’ except one in which it is true. And conversely he need allow no sense to the contrasting proposition in which it in turn is true.” [Blackburn, ‘Morals and modals’.]
Aside: Is Blackburn really an anti-realist?

Q. 18. Aren’t you really trying to defend our right to talk ‘as if’ there were moral truths, although in your view there aren’t any really?

Ans. No, no, no. I do not say that we can talk as if kicking dogs were wrong, when ‘really’ it isn’t wrong. I say that it is wrong (so it is true that it is wrong, so it is really true that it is wrong, so this is an example of a moral truth, so there are moral truths).

This misinterpretation is curiously common. Anyone advancing it must believe themselves to have some more robust, metaphysically heavyweight conception of what it would be for there to be moral truths REALLY, and compared with this genuine article, I only have us talking as if there are moral truths REALLY. I deny that there is any such coherent conception.

“What then is the mistake of describing [quasi-realism] as holding that ‘we talk as if there are necessities when really there are none’? It is the failure to notice that the quasi-realist need allow no sense to what follows the ‘as if’ except one in which it is true. And conversely he need allow no sense to the contrasting proposition in which it in turn is true.” [Blackburn, ‘Morals and modals’.]
Claim:

There is an explicitly non-metaphysical option on the table here. (“Sellars-lite”)

- It agrees with McDowell in being pluralist, non-reductionist, and non-“second-rate-ist” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- It disagrees with Sellars (and Blackburn, usually) in rejecting the Bifurcation Thesis – the idea of a “genuinely descriptive” subset of declarative language.
- It is not idealist, or (necessarily) revisionist, or anti-realist. (On the contrary, it is like McDowell’s own view in being anti-anti-realist – though anti-REALIST, too!)
- But it insists that some serious philosophy needs to be done “sideways” – in an anthropological rather than a metaphysical sense – in that the proper focus is on vocabularies, not on their objects.
Claim:

There is an explicitly non-metaphysical option on the table here. ("Sellars-lite")

- It agrees with McDowell in being pluralist, non-reductionist, and non-“second-rate-ist” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- It disagrees with Sellars (and Blackburn, usually) in rejecting the Bifurcation Thesis – the idea of a “genuinely descriptive” subset of declarative language.
- It is not idealist, or (necessarily) revisionist, or anti-realist. (On the contrary, it is like McDowell’s own view in being anti-anti-realist – though anti-REALIST, too!)
- But it insists that some serious philosophy needs to be done “sideways” – in an anthropological rather than a metaphysical sense – in that the proper focus is on vocabularies, not on their objects.
Claim:

There is an explicitly non-metaphysical option on the table here. (“Sellars-lite”)

- It agrees with McDowell in being pluralist, non-reductionist, and non-“second-rate-ist” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- It disagrees with Sellars (and Blackburn, usually) in rejecting the Bifurcation Thesis – the idea of a “genuinely descriptive” subset of declarative language.
- It is not idealist, or (necessarily) revisionist, or anti-realist. (On the contrary, it is like McDowell’s own view in being anti-anti-realist – though anti-REALIST, too!)
- But it insists that some serious philosophy needs to be done “sideways” – in an anthropological rather than a metaphysical sense – in that the proper focus is on vocabularies, not on their objects.
Getting sidling right

Claim:

There is an explicitly non-metaphysical option on the table here. ("Sellars-lite")

- It agrees with McDowell in being pluralist, non-reductionist, and non-“second-rate-ist” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- It disagrees with Sellars (and Blackburn, usually) in rejecting the Bifurcation Thesis – the idea of a “genuinely descriptive” subset of declarative language.
- It is not idealist, or (necessarily) revisionist, or anti-realist. (On the contrary, it is like McDowell’s own view in being *anti*-anti-realist – though *anti-REALIST*, too!)
- But it insists that some serious philosophy needs to be done “sideways” – in an anthropological rather than a metaphysical sense – in that the proper focus is on vocabularies, not on their objects.
Getting sidling right

Claim:

There is an explicitly non-metaphysical option on the table here. (“Sellars-lite”)

- It agrees with McDowell in being pluralist, non-reductionist, and non-“second-rate-ist” (e.g., about ethical discourse).
- It disagrees with Sellars (and Blackburn, usually) in rejecting the Bifurcation Thesis – the idea of a “genuinely descriptive” subset of declarative language.
- It is not idealist, or (necessarily) revisionist, or anti-realist. (On the contrary, it is like McDowell’s own view in being anti-anti-realist – though anti-REALIST, too!)
- But it insists that some serious philosophy needs to be done “sideways” – in an anthropological rather than a metaphysical sense – in that the proper focus is on vocabularies, not on their objects.
Claim:

There is an explicitly non-metaphysical option on the table here. (“Sellars-lite”)

1. It agrees with McDowell in being pluralist, non-reductionist, and non-“second-rate-ist” (e.g., about ethical discourse).

2. It disagrees with Sellars (and Blackburn, usually) in rejecting the Bifurcation Thesis – the idea of a “genuinely descriptive” subset of declarative language.

3. It is not idealist, or (necessarily) revisionist, or anti-realist. (On the contrary, it is like McDowell’s own view in being anti-anti-realist – though anti-REALIST, too!)

4. But it insists that some serious philosophy needs to be done “sideways” – in an anthropological rather than a metaphysical sense – in that the proper focus is on vocabularies, not on their objects.
Claim:

There is an explicitly non-metaphysical option on the table here. (“Sellars-lite”)

1. It agrees with McDowell in being pluralist, non-reductionist, and non-“second-rate-ist” (e.g., about ethical discourse).

2. It disagrees with Sellars (and Blackburn, usually) in rejecting the Bifurcation Thesis – the idea of a “genuinely descriptive” subset of declarative language.

3. It is not idealist, or (necessarily) revisionist, or anti-realist. (On the contrary, it is like McDowell’s own view in being anti-anti-realist – though anti-REALIST, too!)

4. But it insists that some serious philosophy needs to be done “sideways” – in an anthropological rather than a metaphysical sense – in that the proper focus is on vocabularies, not on their objects.
Getting sidling right

Claim:
There is an explicitly non-metaphysical option on the table here. ("Sellars-lite")

1. It agrees with McDowell in being pluralist, non-reductionist, and non-“second-rate-ist” (e.g., about ethical discourse).

2. It disagrees with Sellars (and Blackburn, usually) in rejecting the Bifurcation Thesis – the idea of a “genuinely descriptive” subset of declarative language.

3. It is not idealist, or (necessarily) revisionist, or anti-realistic. (On the contrary, it is like McDowell’s own view in being anti-anti-realist – though anti-REALIST, too!)

4. But it insists that some serious philosophy needs to be done “sideways” – in an anthropological rather than a metaphysical sense – in that the proper focus is on vocabularies, not on their objects.
Claim:

There is an explicitly non-metaphysical option on the table here. (“Sellars-lite”)

1. It agrees with McDowell in being pluralist, non-reductionist, and non-“second-rate-ist” (e.g., about ethical discourse).

2. It disagrees with Sellars (and Blackburn, usually) in rejecting the Bifurcation Thesis – the idea of a “genuinely descriptive” subset of declarative language.

3. It is not idealist, or (necessarily) revisionist, or anti-realist. (On the contrary, it is like McDowell’s own view in being anti-anti-realist – though anti-REALIST, too!)

4. But it insists that some serious philosophy needs to be done “sideways” – in an anthropological rather than a metaphysical sense – in that the proper focus is on vocabularies, not on their objects.
Introduction

Sidling on one hand

Idling on the other hand

How idle can we be?
Contingency and plurality
McDowell = Sellars-lite?
Conclusion
Imagine this opponent (the “hyperquietist”, perhaps):

“i am what mcdowell terms a ‘rampant platonist’.

however, i prefer not to call myself ‘rampant’. when it comes to philosophical theory, i am a quietist – a mouse, not a lion!

and i prefer not to call myself a ‘platonist’, because that suggests a metaphysical viewpoint, and again, i am a quietist.

so i prefer to call myself simply a commonsense pluralist. ¹

i don’t see any need for mcdowell’s ‘third way’ – to me, that smacks of the philosophical excesses i have left behind.”

¹ apologies for the bold font.
Imagine this opponent (the “hyperquietist”, perhaps):

“i am what mcdowell terms a ‘rampant platonist’.

however, i prefer not to call myself ‘rampant’. when it comes to philosophical theory, i
am a quietist – a mouse, not a lion!

and i prefer not to call myself a ‘platonist’, because that suggests a metaphysical
viewpoint, and again, i am a quietist.

so i prefer to call myself simply a commonsense pluralist.¹

i don’t see any need for mcdowell’s ‘third way’ – to me, that smacks of the philosophical
excesses i have left behind.”

¹“apologies for the bold font.”
Imagine this opponent (the “hyperquietist”, perhaps):

“i am what mcdowell terms a ‘rampant platonist’.

however, i prefer not to call myself ‘rampant’. when it comes to philosophical theory, i am a quietist – a mouse, not a lion!

and i prefer not to call myself a ‘platonist’, because that suggests a metaphysical viewpoint, and again, i am a quietist.

so i prefer to call myself simply a commonsense pluralist.³

i don’t see any need for mcdowell’s ‘third way’ – to me, that smacks of the philosophical excesses i have left behind.”
Imagine this opponent (the “hyperquietist”, perhaps):

“i am what mcdowell terms a ‘rampant platonist’.
however, i prefer not to call myself ‘rampant’. when it comes to philosophical theory, i am a quietist – a mouse, not a lion!
and i prefer not to call myself a ‘platonist’, because that suggests a metaphysical viewpoint, and again, i am a quietist.
so i prefer to call myself simply a commonsense pluralist.¹
i don’t see any need for mcdowell’s ‘third way’ – to me, that smacks of the philosophical excesses i have left behind.”

¹“apologies for the bold font.”
Imagine this opponent (the “hyperquietist”, perhaps):

“i am what mcdowell terms a ‘rampant platonist’.

however, i prefer not to call myself ‘rampant’. when it comes to philosophical theory, i am a quietist – a mouse, not a lion!

and i prefer not to call myself a ‘platonist’, because that suggests a metaphysical viewpoint, and again, i am a quietist.

so i prefer to call myself simply a commonsense pluralist.⁵

i don’t see any need for mcdowell’s ‘third way’ – to me, that smacks of the philosophical excesses i have left behind.”

⁵“apologies for the bold font.”
Imagine this opponent (the “hyperquietist”, perhaps):

“i am what mcdowell terms a ‘rampant platonist’.

however, i prefer not to call myself ‘rampant’. when it comes to philosophical theory, i am a quietist – a mouse, not a lion!

and i prefer not to call myself a ‘platonist’, because that suggests a metaphysical viewpoint, and again, i am a quietist.

so i prefer to call myself simply a commonsense pluralist.  

i don’t see any need for mcdowell’s ‘third way’ – to me, that smacks of the philosophical excesses i have left behind.”

5“apologies for the bold font.”
Imagine this opponent (the “hyperquietist”, perhaps):

“i am what mcdowell terms a ‘rampant platonist’.

however, i prefer not to call myself ‘rampant’. when it comes to philosophical theory, i am a quietist – a mouse, not a lion!

and i prefer not to call myself a ‘platonist’, because that suggests a metaphysical viewpoint, and again, i am a quietist.

so i prefer to call myself simply a commonsense pluralist.\(^5\)

i don’t see any need for mcdowell’s ‘third way’ – to me, that smacks of the philosophical excesses i have left behind.”

---

\(^5\)“apologies for the bold font.”
Imagine this opponent (the “hyperquietist”, perhaps):

“i am what mcdowell terms a ‘rampant platonist’.

however, i prefer not to call myself ‘rampant’. when it comes to philosophical theory, i am a quietist – a mouse, not a lion!

and i prefer not to call myself a ‘platonist’, because that suggests a metaphysical viewpoint, and again, i am a quietist.

so i prefer to call myself simply a commonsense pluralist.  

i don’t see any need for mcdowell’s ‘third way’ – to me, that smacks of the philosophical excesses i have left behind.”

5 “apologies for the bold font.”
Imagine this opponent (the “hyperquietist”, perhaps):

“i am what mcdowell terms a ‘rampant platonist’.

however, i prefer not to call myself ‘rampant’. when it comes to philosophical theory, i am a quietist – a mouse, not a lion!

and i prefer not to call myself a ‘platonist’, because that suggests a metaphysical viewpoint, and again, i am a quietist.

so i prefer to call myself simply a commonsense pluralist.⁵

i don’t see any need for mcdowell’s ‘third way’ – to me, that smacks of the philosophical excesses i have left behind.”

⁵“apologies for the bold font.”
Imagine this opponent (the “hyperquietist”, perhaps):

“i am what mcdowell terms a ‘rampant platonist’.
however, i prefer not to call myself ‘rampant’. when it comes to philosophical theory, i am a quietist – a mouse, not a lion!
and i prefer not to call myself a ‘platonist’, because that suggests a metaphysical viewpoint, and again, i am a quietist.
so i prefer to call myself simply a commonsense pluralist.5
i don’t see any need for mcdowell’s ‘third way’ – to me, that smacks of the philosophical excesses i have left behind.”

The issue: What is this mouse missing, by McDowell’s lights?

5“apologies for the bold font.”
Imagine this opponent (the “hyperquietist”, perhaps):

“i am what mcdowell terms a ‘rampant platonist’.

however, i prefer not to call myself ‘rampant’. when it comes to philosophical theory, i am a quietist – a mouse, not a lion!

and i prefer not to call myself a ‘platonist’, because that suggests a metaphysical viewpoint, and again, i am a quietist.

so i prefer to call myself simply a commonsense pluralist.⁵

i don’t see any need for mcdowell’s ‘third way’ – to me, that smacks of the philosophical excesses i have left behind.”

**The issue:** What is this mouse missing, by McDowell’s lights?

⁵“apologies for the bold font.”
Contingency and plurality
Consider the facts on display in this Sellarsian scene:
Contingency and plurality

Consider the facts on display in this Sellarsian scene:
Contingency and plurality

Consider the facts on display in this Sellarsian scene:
Consider, in particular, the contingencies underlying our sensitivity to the facts displayed for our attention in the lower part of the scene . . .
Consider, in particular, the contingencies underlying our sensitivity to the facts displayed for our attention in the lower part of the scene . . .
Consider, in particular, the **contingencies** underlying our sensitivity to the facts displayed for our attention in the lower part of the scene . . .
Consider, in particular, the *contingencies* underlying our sensitivity to the facts displayed for our attention in the lower part of the scene...about what tie goes well with what shirt.

These facts are second nature (let’s suppose) to well-brought-up Italians – but not, presumably, to well-brought-up members of any conceivable community.
What the mouse is missing

- Consider, in particular, the **contingencies** underlying our sensitivity to the facts displayed for our attention in the lower part of the scene . . . about what tie goes well with what shirt.

- These facts are second nature (let’s suppose) to well-brought-up Italians – but not, presumably, to well-brought-up members of any conceivable community.
What the mouse is missing

- Consider, in particular, the **contingencies** underlying our sensitivity to the facts displayed for our attention in the lower part of the scene . . . about what tie goes well with what shirt.

- These facts are second nature (let’s suppose) to well-brought-up Italians – but not, presumably, to well-brought-up members of any conceivable community.
What the mouse is missing

- Consider, in particular, the **contingencies** underlying our sensitivity to the facts displayed for our attention in the lower part of the scene ... about what tie goes well with what shirt.

- These facts are second nature (let’s suppose) to well-brought-up Italians – but not, presumably, to well-brought-up members of any conceivable community.

[Laurence Pierce, “Man with Loud Tie”]
What the mouse is missing

The hyperquietist seems to lack resources to distinguish between this kind of contingency and that involved, say, in the fact that we might not have looked at the far side of the moon. The facts as they would appear from the standpoint of any possible observer – no matter what its nature, circumstances and upbringing – must all be thought of as simply "out there", in the same flat-footed sense.

[Laurence Pierce, "Man with Loud Tie"]
What the mouse is missing

- The hyperquietist seems to lack resources to distinguish between this kind of contingency and that involved, say, in the fact that we might not have looked at the far side of the moon.

[Laurence Pierce, “Man with Loud Tie”]
What the mouse is missing

- The hyperquietist seems to lack resources to distinguish between this kind of contingency and that involved, say, in the fact that we might not have looked at the far side of the moon.

- The facts as they would appear from the standpoint of any possible observer – no matter what its nature, circumstances and upbringing – must all be thought of as simply “out there”, in the same flat-footed sense.

[Laurence Pierce, “Man with Loud Tie”]
What the mouse is missing

- The hyperquietist seems to lack resources to distinguish between this kind of contingency and that involved, say, in the fact that we might not have looked at the far side of the moon.

- The facts as they would appear from the standpoint of any possible observer – no matter what its nature, circumstances and upbringing – must all be thought of as simply “out there”, in the same flat-footed sense.
Handling contingency

McDowell on the subjectivity of some subject matters:

Values are not brutally there—not there independently of our sensibility—any more than colours are: though, as with colours, this does not prevent us from supposing that they are there independently of any particular apparent experience of them. (MVR, 146)

Claim:

- If we want to combine this thought with a recognition that our sensibilities might well have been different – and if want to avoid both an implausible idealism and the kind of flat-footed pluralism that lay in wait for the hyperquietist – then we need to put the variability at the level of language games (and the contingencies on which they depend), not in metaphysical terms.
- In other words, we need the modest (non-metaphysical) “sideways” perspective of Sellars-lite.
Handling contingency

McDowell on the subjectivity of some subject matters:

Values are not brutally there—not there independently of our sensibility—any more than colours are: though, as with colours, this does not prevent us from supposing that they are there independently of any particular apparent experience of them. (MVR, 146)

Claim:

- If we want to combine this thought with a recognition that our sensibilities might well have been different – and if want to avoid both an implausible idealism and the kind of flat-footed pluralism that lay in wait for the hyperquietist – then we need to put the variability at the level of language games (and the contingencies on which they depend), not in metaphysical terms.
- In other words, we need the modest (non-metaphysical) “sideways” perspective of Sellars-lite.
Handling contingency

McDowell on the subjectivity of some subject matters:

Values are not brutely there—not there independently of our sensibility—any more than colours are: though, as with colours, this does not prevent us from supposing that they are there independently of any particular apparent experience of them. (MVR, 146)

Claim:

- If we want to combine this thought with a recognition that our sensibilities might well have been different – and if want to avoid both an implausible idealism and the kind of flat-footed pluralism that lay in wait for the hyperquietist – then we need to put the variability at the level of language games (and the contingencies on which they depend), not in metaphysical terms.
- In other words, we need the modest (non-metaphysical) “sideways” perspective of Sellars-lite.
McDowell on the subjectivity of some subject matters:

Values are not brutally there—not there independently of our sensibility—any more than colours are: though, as with colours, this does not prevent us from supposing that they are there independently of any particular apparent experience of them. (MVR, 146)

Claim:

- If we want to combine this thought with a recognition that our sensibilities might well have been different – and if want to avoid both an implausible idealism and the kind of flat-footed pluralism that lay in wait for the hyperquietist – then we need to put the variability at the level of language games (and the contingencies on which they depend), not in metaphysical terms.

- In other words, we need the modest (non-metaphysical) “sideways” perspective of Sellars-lite.
Handling contingency

**McDowell on the subjectivity of some subject matters:**

Values are not brutally there—not there independently of our sensibility—any more than colours are: though, as with colours, this does not prevent us from supposing that they are there independently of any particular apparent experience of them. (MVR, 146)

**Claim:**

- If we want to combine this thought with a recognition that our sensibilities might well have been *different* — and if want to avoid both an implausible *idealism* and the kind of *flat-footed pluralism* that lay in wait for the hyperquietist — then we need to put the variability at the level of language games (and the contingencies on which they depend), not in *metaphysical* terms.

- In other words, we need the modest (non-metaphysical) “sideways” perspective of Sellars-lite.
Handling contingency

McDowell on the subjectivity of some subject matters:

Values are not brutally there—not there independently of our sensibility—any more than colours are: though, as with colours, this does not prevent us from supposing that they are there independently of any particular apparent experience of them. (MVR, 146)

Claim:

- If we want to combine this thought with a recognition that our sensibilities might well have been different – and if want to avoid both an implausible idealism and the kind of flat-footed pluralism that lay in wait for the hyperquietist – then we need to put the variability at the level of language games (and the contingencies on which they depend), not in metaphysical terms.
- In other words, we need the modest (non-metaphysical) “sideways” perspective of Sellars-lite.
Handling contingency

McDowell on the subjectivity of some subject matters:

Values are not brutally there—not there independently of our sensibility—any more than colours are: though, as with colours, this does not prevent us from supposing that they are there independently of any particular apparent experience of them. (MVR, 146)

Claim:

- If we want to combine this thought with a recognition that our sensibilities might well have been different – and if want to avoid both an implausible idealism and the kind of flat-footed pluralism that lay in wait for the hyperquietist – then we need to put the variability at the level of language games (and the contingencies on which they depend), not in metaphysical terms.

- In other words, we need the modest (non-metaphysical) “sideways” perspective of Sellars-lite.
Handling contingency

McDowell on the subjectivity of some subject matters:

Values are not brutally there—not there independently of our sensibility—any more than colours are: though, as with colours, this does not prevent us from supposing that they are there independently of any particular apparent experience of them. (MVR, 146)

Claim:

- If we want to combine this thought with a recognition that our sensibilities might well have been different – and if want to avoid both an implausible idealism and the kind of flat-footed pluralism that lay in wait for the hyperquietist – then we need to put the variability at the level of language games (and the contingencies on which they depend), not in metaphysical terms.

- In other words, we need the modest (non-metaphysical) “sideways” perspective of Sellars-lite.
McDowell on the suggestion that his view is a form of projectivism:

Can a projectivist claim that the position I have outlined is at best a notational variant, perhaps an inferior notational variant, of his own position?

It would be inferior if, in eschewing the projectivist metaphysical framework, it obscured some important truth. But what truth would that be? (MVR, 147)
Is McDowell Sellars-lite?

McDowell on the suggestion that his view is a form of projectivism:

Can a projectivist claim that the position I have outlined is at best a notational variant, perhaps an inferior notational variant, of his own position?

It would be inferior if, in eschewing the projectivist metaphysical framework, it obscured some important truth. But what truth would that be? (MVR, 147)
Is McDowell Sellars-lite?

McDowell on the suggestion that his view is a form of projectivism:

Can a projectivist claim that the position I have outlined is at best a notational variant, perhaps an inferior notational variant, of his own position?
It would be inferior if, in eschewing the projectivist metaphysical framework, it obscured some important truth. But what truth would that be? (MVR, 147)
Is McDowell Sellars-lite?

McDowell on the suggestion that his view is a form of projectivism:

Can a projectivist [Sellars-lite] claim that the position I have outlined is at best a notational variant, perhaps an inferior notational variant, of his own position?

It would be inferior if, in eschewing [Sellars-lite’s] metaphysical framework, it obscured some important truth. But what truth would that be? (MVR, 147)
Is McDowell Sellars-lite?

McDowell on the suggestion that his view is a form of projectivism:

Can a projectivist [Sellars-lite] claim that the position I have outlined is at best a notational variant, perhaps an inferior notational variant, of his own position?

It would be inferior if, in eschewing [Sellars-lite’s] metaphysical framework, it obscured some important truth. But what truth would that be? (MVR, 147)

Proposal

- The ‘important truth’ isn’t a matter of a difference in *metaphysical* framework, for Sellars-lite shares McDowell’s quietism and pluralism about *that*.

- It is about the need to “go sideways” in a *non-metaphysical* spirit – a need perhaps obscured for McDowell by his concern with opponents who do “go sideways” in a metaphysical sense.
Is McDowell Sellars-lite?

McDowell on the suggestion that his view is a form of projectivism:

Can a projectivist [Sellars-lite] claim that the position I have outlined is at best a notational variant, perhaps an inferior notational variant, of his own position? It would be inferior if, in eschewing [Sellars-lite’s] metaphysical framework, it obscured some important truth. But what truth would that be? (MVR, 147)

Proposal

- The ‘important truth’ isn’t a matter of a difference in *metaphysical* framework, for Sellars-lite shares McDowell’s quietism and pluralism about *that*.
- It is about the need to “go sideways” in a *non-metaphysical* spirit – a need perhaps obscured for McDowell by his concern with opponents who do “go sideways” in a metaphysical sense.
Is McDowell Sellars-lite?

McDowell on the suggestion that his view is a form of projectivism:

Can a projectivist [Sellars-lite] claim that the position I have outlined is at best a notational variant, perhaps an inferior notational variant, of his own position?

It would be inferior if, in eschewing [Sellars-lite’s] metaphysical framework, it obscured some important truth. But what truth would that be? (MVR, 147)

Proposal

- The ‘important truth’ isn’t a matter of a difference in metaphorical framework, for Sellars-lite shares McDowell’s quietism and pluralism about that.

- It is about the need to “go sideways” in a non-metaphysical spirit – a need perhaps obscured for McDowell by his concern with opponents who do “go sideways” in a metaphysical sense.
Is McDowell Sellars-lite?

McDowell on the suggestion that his view is a form of projectivism:

Can a projectivist [Sellars-lite] claim that the position I have outlined is at best a notational variant, perhaps an inferior notational variant, of his own position? It would be inferior if, in eschewing [Sellars-lite’s] metaphysical framework, it obscured some important truth. But what truth would that be? (MVR, 147)

Proposal

- The ‘important truth’ isn’t a matter of a difference in *metaphysical* framework, for Sellars-lite shares McDowell’s quietism and pluralism about *that*.
- It is about the need to “go sideways” in a *non-metaphysical* spirit – a need perhaps obscured for McDowell by his concern with opponents who do “go sideways” in a metaphysical sense.
Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?

“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

Our issue

- Is the path to philosophical peace to find a better metaphysics?
- Or to renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or blanket quietism)?

My answer

- To renounce metaphysics in favour of another mode of philosophical enquiry . . .
- . . . which is significantly sideways.
Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?

“[N]othing but **bad metaphysics** suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

Our issue

- Is the path to philosophical peace to find a better metaphysics?
- Or to renounce *metaphysics* altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or blanket quietism)?

My answer

- To renounce metaphysics in favour of another mode of philosophical enquiry . . .
- . . . which is significantly sideways.
Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?

“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

Our issue

- Is the path to philosophical peace to find a better metaphysics?
- Or to renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or blanket quietism)?

My answer

- To renounce metaphysics in favour of another mode of philosophical enquiry . . .
- . . . which is significantly sideways.
“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

Our issue

- Is the path to philosophical peace to find a better metaphysics?
- Or to renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or blanket quietism)?

My answer

- To renounce metaphysics in favour of another mode of philosophical enquiry . . .
- . . . which is significantly sideways.
Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?

“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

Our issue

- Is the path to philosophical peace to find a better metaphysics?
- Or to renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or blanket quietism)?

My answer

- To renounce metaphysics in favour of another mode of philosophical enquiry …
- … which is significantly sideways.
Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?

“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

Our issue

- Is the path to philosophical peace to find a better metaphysics?
- Or to renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or blanket quietism)?

My answer

- To renounce metaphysics in favour of another mode of philosophical enquiry . . .
- . . . which is significantly sideways.
“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

Our issue

- Is the path to philosophical peace to find a better metaphysics?
- Or to renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or blanket quietism)?

My answer

- To renounce metaphysics in favour of another mode of philosophical enquiry . . .
- . . . which is significantly sideways.
Good metaphysics or no metaphysics?

“[N]othing but bad metaphysics suggests that the standards in ethics must somehow be constructed out of facts of disenchanted nature.” (MVR, 187)

Our issue

- Is the path to philosophical peace to find a better metaphysics?
- Or to renounce metaphysics altogether, in favour of some other mode of philosophical enquiry (or blanket quietism)?

My answer

- To renounce metaphysics in favour of another mode of philosophical enquiry . . .
- . . . which is significantly sideways.