Sellars, Truth Pluralism, and Truth Relativism

Lionel Shapiro
University of Connecticut

Abstract. Two currently much discussed views about truth, *truth pluralism* and *truth relativism,* are found in Sellars's writings. I show that his motivations for adoping these views are interestingly different from those shared by most of their recent advocates. First, I explain how Sellars comes to embrace a version of truth pluralism. I argue that his version overcomes a difficulty confronting pluralists, albeit at a serious cost. Then I argue that Sellars's truth pluralism isn't motivated by his interest in domains of discourse beyond the "matter-of-factual." Rather, the key to his truth pluralism, his analysis of truth as "semantical assertibility," is motivated by the same consideration that leads him to adopt truth relativism. This is his interest in applying semantic notions to discourse that embodies conceptual structures other than ours. Despite their common motivation, I conclude that Sellars's relativism is independent of, and indeed stands in tension with, the analysis of truth that underlies his pluralism.

Wilfrid Sellars wrote about truth throughout his career, but his views appear to have had little impact.[1] In part, this may be due to the implausibility of the positions he has been represented as defending. For example, Richard Rorty includes him among those who "identify 'true' with 'warranted[ly] assertible by us'" (1979, 296), while Hilary Putnam describes him as "identifying truth . . . with warranted assertibility *in the ideal limit* of scientific investigation" (1978, 36). In fact, Sellars tried to ward off such interpretations:

> It might be thought that I am offering something like the 'warranted assertability' theory of truth . . . . But to make this move is to confuse truth with probability, for presumably to be warranted is to be warranted by evidence. (NI 664; cf. NAO 4 §95: 85)

It won't help to invoke an ideal limit: as I'll argue below, Sellars doesn't explain truth in terms of evidence at all.[2] A related reason for the lack of attention to Sellars's views may be the impression,

---

[1] They've also rarely been discussed in any detail, other than in sympathetic expositions of his thought (Bonjour 1973; Seibt 1990; deVries 2005; O'Shea 2007). Exceptions include Harman (1970), Armour-Garb and Woodbridge (2012), Price (2013, 160–70), L. Shapiro (2014), and especially Williams (2016). I lack space here to fully address Williams's rich paper. See also the chapter by O'Shea in this volume.

[2] Rorty's and Putnam's claims likely result from misunderstanding two notions Sellars uses in his theory of truth: *correct assertibility* and (for "matter-of-factual" claims) *correct assertibility with respect to an ideal conceptual structure*. These will be explained in Sections 3 and 5. As we'll see, neither is an epistemic notion. Sellars doesn't give an "epistemic account of truth" (Williams 2016, 238) or "confuse the theory of evidence with the theory of truth" (Harman 1970, 417).

endorsed by Donald Davidson ([1969] 1984, 50–51), that he failed to grasp the importance of Alfred Tarski's work.[3] According to Davidson, what he missed is how Tarski ([1933] 1983) vindicated a "correspondence theory" of truth by explaining truth in terms of the relation of satisfaction between open sentences and sequences of objects (Davidson [1969] 1984, 48). There's irony to this rebuke, since the claim that Tarski thus vindicated a correspondence theory is one Davidson would come to firmly repudiate ([1977] 1984, 218, 223–4).[4]

Though Sellars's approach to truth hasn't been influential, it bears closely on topics of current interest. This chapter will reexamine his work through the lens of recent proposals, with the dual aim of bringing into focus aspects of his position and broadening our view of the terrain by adding his perspective. As we'll see, Sellars adopts versions of both *truth pluralism* and *truth relativism*. Moreover, he shares the commitment that motivates most of their current advocates, a commitment to recognizing heterogeneity within our truth-apt discourse.[5] However, what accounts for his own adoption of these doctrines turns out to be something very different: his interest in "conceptual structures" *other than ours*. That motivation yields an interesting and distinctive form of truth relativism, but I'll argue that Sellars goes wrong when he takes his pluralism about conceptual structures to pave the way for truth pluralism.

Contemporary truth pluralism emerged in Crispin Wright's *Truth and Objectivity* (1992), where it's introduced to explain how some discourses can be truth-apt yet display failures of objectivity. Contemporary truth relativism likewise originated as a way of accommodating subjective discourses: one harbinger was Max Kölbel's *Truth Without Objectivity* (2002). In Sections 1–3, I examine the evolving ways in which Sellars's own interest in the heterogeneity of discourses shows up in his views about truth. He eventually embraces a version of truth pluralism

---

[3] Davidson comments with remarkable condescension: "There is less excuse for the widespread misunderstanding of . . . the semantical [i.e. Tarski's] approach. The following example [the second paragraph of Sellars's TC] is no worse than many that could be quoted." Harman (1970, 413–14) too surmises Sellars "has not fully appreciated Tarski's theory." Sellars responds, addressing Davidson's paper, in the Sellars-Harman Correspondence.

[4] Moreover, his reasons are ones Sellars had long embraced. Davidson notes that a Tarskian *list-like specification* of referents for primitive expressions "does not explain or analyse the concept of reference." He also claims the *truth* of sentences, not the reference or satisfaction of their constituents, is the "place where there is direct contact between linguistic theory and events, actions, or objects described in non-linguistic terms" (Davidson [1977] 1984, 218–23). Sellars stresses both points in the Sellars-Harman Correspondence (L. Shapiro 2013, 307–8), but they already appear in the paper Davidson criticized.

[5] This commitment of his is highlighted by Brandom (2013, 89) and Price (2013, 151–52, 160–61).

that overcomes a challenge confronting pluralists, albeit at a serious cost.[6] That's because the key to his pluralism is his unsatisfactory analysis of truth as "semantical assertibility." Section 4 argues that Sellars adopts that analysis in order to formulate a semantic notion that remains applicable to discourse, including "matter-of-factual discourse," even when it embodies conceptual structures other than ours. In Section 5, I explain how the same motivation leads him to truth relativism. Section 6 argues that despite their common motivation, Sellars's relativism is independent of, and indeed stands in tension with, the analysis of truth that underlies his pluralism. (Two appendices are included: the first puts Sellars's relativism to use in making sense of his rejection of bivalence; the second addresses the relation between Sellars's and W.V. Quine's views of truth.)

1. Truth pluralism: points of contact

Recent truth pluralists share three core commitments with Sellars:

(i)   'True' applies univocally to propositions expressed in all domains of discourse.

(ii) Still, truth behaves differently in different domains.

(iii) One domain features propositions whose truth requires a relation of "representation" or "correspondence" to hold between linguistic or mental items and items in the world.

Admittedly, commitment (i) is merely implicit in Wright (1992). But Wright has since clarified that on the proposal he intended, 'true' expresses a "single *concept*" (2013, 128). Likewise, Sellars claims that "*all* true statements of whatever kind are true in the same sense of 'true'" (TC 223; SM V §1: 116, IV §30: 102). He isn't equivocating when he says some of his claims "apply . . . to all truths, whether empirical or mathematical or metaphysical or moral" (TC 206–7).

As for (ii), Wright holds that despite this univocity "one wants to think differently about the import of 'true'" as it applies to discourse about the comic and about mathematics (2013, 123). Similarly, Michael Lynch explains that "the pluralist about truth begins with the intuition that there is more than one way for propositions to be true" (2009, 82). Sellars shares this intuition that truth "takes specific forms" or "modes" in different discourses (SM V§1: 116, §9: 119; Sellars-Harman Correspondence, Feb. 26, 1970). He speaks of the different "essential features of different varieties of truths" (TC 198), and later of "the varieties of truth" (SM IV §26: 101, §31: 102; NAO 4 §94: 85).

But it's with respect to (iii) that Sellars most strikingly anticipates Wright. Wright argues that in some domains, truth involves a "correspondence" more substantial than anything that can be

---

[6] The pluralist theme in Sellars's discussion of truth has been noted by Williams (2013, 131n1; 2016, 232) and myself (L. Shapiro 2014, 805n27).

extracted from the claim that a truth bearer is *true just in case things are the way it says they are*. He concedes that this "correspondence platitude" is captured by the "equivalence schema" according to which the proposition that *p* is true just in case *p* (Wright 1992, 24–25). Anyone who recognizes that schema as essential to truth will

> have no difficulty accommodating intuitions about the relationship between truth and correspondence so long as doing so is held to require no more than demonstrating a right to the *phrases* by which those intuitions are characteristically expressed. (ibid., 27)

But Wright adds that the equivalence schema fails to supply an "intended further substantive content" of correspondence theories. There's something "more substantial there, struggling for an outlet" (ibid., 143).

All this could have been written by Sellars thirty years earlier. According to Sellars, the philosophical content of Tarski's "semantical account" of truth is exhausted by the equivalence schema. Since that schema is common ground to *all* theorists, it fails to vindicate the correspondence theorist:

> But what comfort can the correspondence theorist take in a victory which, to all appearances, reduces his claim to a formula which . . . has, according to his erstwhile antagonists, nothing to do with the philosophical problem of truth? (TC 198)

This raises the central question of Sellars's paper:

> Is there a place for a correspondence theory of truth (*some* truth, at least) in addition to the semantical account? Or, at least, for a theory that finds a nontrivial job for a 'correspondence' other than the correspondence which finds its expression in the familiar equivalences of semantic theory? (TC 198)

Wright and Sellars both answer affirmatively. According to Wright, the "intended substance" of correspondence theories

> is the idea that . . . talk of 'representation of the facts' is not just admissible phrasing, a harmless gloss on talk of truth, but incorporates a philosophically correct—as we might say, *seriously dyadic*—perspective on the truth predicate (at least for discourses where realism is appropriate). (Wright 1992, 83)

For such domains, there's "real substance in the idea that . . . we function as representational systems, responsive to states of affairs which, when we are successful, our beliefs and statements serve to map" (ibid., 147). Sellars agrees. In his view, "the most likely domain for a substantive correspondence theory of truth . . . is the domain of empirical or matter-of-factual truth" (TC 198). Solving "the problem of empirical truth" requires going beyond the equivalence schema, which

doesn't point to a "relational property of statements" (TC 206). Doing so requires recognizing a relational property of "correct picturing," defined in terms of an isomorphism between a certain "structure of natural-linguistic objects" (true sentence tokenings, considered in abstraction from their semantic features) and a "structure of nonlinguistic objects" (TC 222). Sellars comes to describe this relational perspective in the very language later used by Wright, in terms of "representational systems" and what they "map" (NAO 5 §§37, 42: 104–5).

2. Varieties of *truth* or varieties of *truths*?

Despite these strong points of contact with Wright's truth pluralism, Sellars isn't clear in "Truth and 'Correspondence'" (1962) about whether he's proposing a genuine truth pluralism. His comments are consistent with a weaker and a stronger version of commitment (ii). On the stronger version, *truth amounts to something different* in different discourses—there are differences between, e.g., moral and empirical truth. This is a natural way to understand his suggestion that there's "a place for a correspondence theory of . . . *some* truth." Yet he concedes it would suffice to "at least" find some "job" for correspondence, even if it doesn't count as a kind of truth. This suggests a weaker version of (ii), according to which there's only one kind of *truth*, but different kinds of *truths* (true statements). In particular, true statements of empirical discourse enjoy a relational property of correspondence, whereas those of moral discourse don't. Sellars's talk of "different essential features of different varieties of truths" (TC 198), and of correspondence as characteristic of "a significant variety of truths" (TC 197), likewise suggests the weaker view (note his use here of 'truths' rather than 'truth'). Summarizing the paper's conclusions, he speaks of "finding a mode of 'correspondence' *other than truth* that accompanies truth in the case of empirical statements" (TC 222).

Hence there's good reason to deny that Sellars is distinguishing *varieties of truth*, as opposed to just claiming that different properties *accompany* truth in different discourses. Compare: triangles come in different varieties, e.g. isosceles and scalene, with different characteristic properties. This doesn't show that being a triangle amounts to something different for isosceles and for scalene triangles; it doesn't yet show that there are different *varieties of triangularity*. As Michael Williams aptly observes (2016, 232), "acknowledging that there are different kinds of *truths* is no reason to introduce domain-specific concepts of truth," or (I would add) domain-specific truth properties.[7]

---

[7] To be sure, Sellars in later writings discusses two senses in which we *can* speak of different "varieties of triangularity." First, he's willing to recognize an uninteresting sense in which species of triangle do correspond to

The same ambiguity attaches to Wright's initial discussion of "a *pluralist* view of truth" (1992, 23n, 25, 38). Subsequently, Wright resolves it in favor of the stronger position. He describes his "pluralistic conception of truth" as one that "allows us to think of truth as constituted differently in different areas" (1999, 225), i.e. as "variably constituted" (1996, 926). Pluralism denies "that truth everywhere must possess a *uniform constitution*: that the truth of any true proposition always consists in the same sort of thing" (1999, 224; 1996, 924). Pluralists following Wright hold that there's a single property of truth, but each true proposition instantiates it in virtue of instantiating some further property.[8] No *one* such property is available to perform this work for propositions in discourses as diverse as morality, mathematics and empirical science.

To understand where truth pluralism goes beyond Sellars's conclusion in 1962, let's look at what Wright and Sellars say about the concept and property of truth. We find two parallels. First, both hold that the *concept* is implicitly defined by the equivalence schema. Wright explains:

> [I]f we are dealing with a range of genuine contents . . . , then nothing can stand in the way of the definitional introduction of a predicate . . . which is subject to the equivalence schema: that p is φ if and only if p. (Wright 1999, 230n; 1992, 74, 96)

Such a predicate will express "the concept of truth" (1999, 226, 229–30). Similarly, Sellars concludes that "the word 'true' gets its sense from" the "principle of inference" that governs the inference from 'that p is true' to 'p' and its converse, and thereby explains the apriority of "the necessary equivalences highlighted by the semantic theory" of Tarski (TC 206). Second, both hold that whenever a concept applies to an object, a correlative *property* is instantiated. Wright employs an "abundant metaphysics of properties" on which "properties are essentially tied to well-determined satisfaction-conditions of predicates" (2013, 150, 131–33). Sellars too recognizes such a conception: "one use of the terms 'property' and 'relation' is such that it is correct to say of any meaningful expression which has the grammatical characteristics of a predicate that it means a

---

species of triangularity, e.g. "isosceles triangularity" and "scalene triangularity." But the interesting distinction, he argues, is that between (e.g.) Euclidean triangularity and Riemannian triangularity (SM V §§37–41: 128–30; CC §§49–52: 89–90 [NAO 4 §§132–36: 94–95]). This distinction, he argues, is a matter of there being different ways for a *word* to mean *triangular*. While we'll find Sellars recognizing different meanings of the word 'true', he never speaks of there being different ways for a word to mean *true*. As discussed in the present paper, truth pluralism is a doctrine according to which there are different ways for a sentence to be true, not different ways for a word to mean *true*. Hence neither of Sellars's two versions of *triangularity pluralism* can serve as a model for a Sellarsian truth pluralism.

[8] Here I ignore the fact that Lynch (2009, 90–91) restricts this claim to atomic propositions.

quality [sic] or relation" (EAE 451).[9]

Where Wright goes beyond Sellars is in holding that instantiating truth always "consists in" instantiating some further "truth property." Wright and followers invoke an "analytic functionalism" inspired by David Lewis (1972).[10] On this approach, applied to a predicate '*F*', one first identifies a set of "platitudes" expressed using '*F*' and uses these to specify a "role" playable by a property. Thus Wright's "correspondence platitude" for 'true' specifies a role: a property *x* plays this role just in case an item *y* exemplifies *x* when and only when things are the way *y* says they are.[11] Next, one identifies some property that plays the role—or some properties, each of which plays the role over a different domain of entities. Finally, something's instantiating *F*ness is said to consist (perhaps in a local domain) in its instantiating the relevant property.

This is far removed from anything in Sellars.[12] Moreover, as debates between pluralists show, it's not clear how the functionalist approach makes sense of truth being variably constituted (Wright 2013). How are we to understand the relation between truth and its domain-specific constituting properties? Pluralists sometimes analyze truth as a "second-order role property," that of *having some first-order property that plays the truth role over the relevant domain* (Lynch 2004). This yields a clear sense in which each true proposition is true in virtue of having some *further* property. However, it can seem an *ad hoc* way to ensure truth counts as variably constituted. Why not instead recognize truth as a first-order property that plays the truth role and enjoys different accompanying properties across different domains?[13] Lynch has since proposed that truth is a first-order property "manifested by" domain-specific properties (2009, 74–77). A property *F*ness other than truth is said to manifest truth for some domain provided it's *a priori* that being *F* plays the truth role over that domain. The problem now is that this seems indistinguishable from a monism on which truth has different *a priori* accompanying properties across different

---

[9] This paper was complete by 1954. See also SM IV §32: 103. Admittedly, Sellars insists on giving a "non-metaphysical account of abstract entities" such as properties (EAE 442), but his successive attempts at rejecting "Platonism" while countenancing talk of properties aren't directly relevant to the present topic.

[10] Lynch (2009, 71–72); Wright (1996, 919; 1999, 228; 2013, 128).

[11] Unlike Lynch, Wright thinks the equivalence schema yields all platitudes for 'true' (1999, 230n).

[12] Sellars discusses the "Ramsey sentence approach" on which analytic functionalism is based, but only as a failed proposal for maintaining instrumentalism about talk of theoretical entities (SRI 342–43).

[13] This objection needn't extend to the proposal as applied to psychological predicates. The "pain role" involves *causal relations*. It might turn out, *based on causal facts*, that no single property plays this role for all organisms. This would be reason to infer that different organisms are in pain *in virtue of* exemplifying different properties.

domains (cf. Caputo 2012, 860–61).

3. Sellars's analysis of truth and his truth pluralism

Despite sharing key commitments of truth pluralists, we've seen, Sellars *doesn't* advocate truth pluralism in 1962. However, he soon changes his mind and embraces a distinctive pluralism, one that meets the challenge just raised.

Sellars's truth pluralism results from a new account of the concept of truth. In an endnote added in 1963 to "Truth and 'Correspondence'" (TC 224), he retracts his claim there that this concept is constituted by a "principle of inference" that ensures the apriority of the equivalence schema's instances (L. Shapiro 2014). His new account has two components, elaborated respectively in chapters III and IV of *Science and Metaphysics*. First, talk of the proposition that *p* is analyzed as a way of talking generically about concrete items that mean *p*. Here meaning *p* is playing a "linguistic role"; roles are individuated by "semantical rules" governing items that play them. Second, the claim that the proposition that *p* is true is analyzed as the claim that it's *correct*, by the rules of a language containing items that mean *p*, to assert such items. To make explicit the way an assertion that *it's true that p* licenses an assertion that *p*, Sellars no longer thinks we need to state the principle of inference 'It's correct to infer that *p* from the proposition that it is true that *p*'. Rather, since it's a claim about correct assertibility, an assertion that *it's true that p* already makes explicit such licensing (TC 224; SM IV §28: 101–102).

The analysis of truth as "semantical assertibility" ("S-assertibility") thus furnishes a new explanation of why instances of the equivalence schema are "conceptually necessary."

> The account of this conceptual necessity I wish to recommend is that these equivalences 'follow' from the 'definition' of truth in that for a proposition to be true is for it to be . . . *correctly* assertible; assertible, that is, in accordance with the relevant semantical rules, and on the basis of such additional, though unspecified, information as these rules may require. (SM IV §26: 100–101)[14]

This requires elucidation. First, the "relevant semantical rules" apply to *transitions*: "intra-linguistic" transitions exemplified in inference as well as "world→language" and "language→world" transitions exemplified, respectively, in perception and action (SM IV §61:

---

[14] Sellars's scare quotes allude to "Convention T" (Tarski [1933] 1983), according to which the instances of '"*p*" is true if and only if *p*' must follow from any correct definition of sentential truth for an object language contained in the metalanguage of the definition. Sellars thinks Tarski only achieves this in an *extensional* sense of 'definition', while he himself only achieves this in a *pragmatic* sense of 'follow'.

114). As Rosenberg (2007, 199) complains, it isn't clear what correctness according to these rules amounts to. Sellars says little, but the rough idea might be captured by the following reconstruction. A proposition is correctly assertible according to a system of semantic rules provided it's the last member of some sequence of propositions that starts with one or more propositions whose assertion is *permissible* in light of a world→language rule, and where each additional proposition in the sequence is such that, in light of some intra-linguistic rule, it's *impermissible to reject it while asserting all the previous propositions*.[15]

Second, to say that a proposition is assertible in accordance with relevant semantic rules and on the basis of relevant "additional information" isn't to say that someone could justify asserting the proposition by citing those rules and that information. In particular, Sellars isn't thinking of the "additional information" as information possessed by the *asserter*, even hypothetically. Rather, it's information an *assessor* would need in order to determine whether the agent's assertion is correct in light of the rules. That is to say, the information concerns whether an *externalist* condition is satisfied (O'Shea 2007, 218n3; contrast Williams 2016, 239–45). But semantic assertibility isn't an *externalist epistemic notion* either: it isn't an epistemic notion at all. By this I mean that the truth of someone's assertion isn't a matter of the asserter's actual, potential, or counterfactual epistemic standing. To be sure, if one were to assert a true proposition as a result of (i) *inferring* by the intra-linguistic rules and (ii) exhibiting permissible world→language transitions while *recognizing one's own tendency* not to exhibit impermissible ones, then one would enjoy good epistemic standing (EPM §35: 167–68). But this subjunctive conditional doesn't serve as Sellars's explanation of what the proposition's truth consists in. Rather, he explains truth entirely in terms of his externalistically formulated semantic rules. Williams's construal of Sellarsian truth in epistemic terms, as "justifiability in epistemically ideal conditions" (2016, 239), is responsible for a revealing error. For Sellars, he claims, "an important reason for identifying truth with semantic assertibility is to avoid identifying a proposition's being true with its being assertible here and now, when perhaps not all the relevant evidence is on hand" (2016, 238). On

---

[15] Sellars explains intra-linguistic rules as "ought-not-to-be's" or "constraints" (e.g. SM V §§5–6: 117–18; MFC 86 [NAO 4 §23: 67–68]). While the deontic modality of his world→language rules is less explicit, they could be understood as stating that assertion of a proposition, e.g. that expressed on an occasion by 'This is red', is *permitted* if a certain extra-linguistic circumstance obtains and *prohibited* otherwise. They would thus count as both "may-be's" and "ought-not-to-be's" (their former role is suggested by a remark in LTC 512n4). One limitation of the above reconstruction, which grounds semantic assertibility in the existence of derivations that involve no *assumptions*, is that it makes no room for Sellars's category (discussed in Section 4 below) of propositions that are correctly assertible on the basis of *intra-linguistic rules alone*. See also note 37.

the contrary, for Sellars a proposition's truth *is* its assertibility here and now—that's why "the cash value of S-assertibility is assertion by us *hic et nunc*" (SM V §53: 134). But assertibility here and now isn't a matter of the *evidence* available here and now.[16]

Williams rightly points out that Sellars takes his analysis to give rise to a truth pluralism (2013, 131n1; 2016, 232; cf. also L. Shapiro 2014, 805n27). Thus Sellars immediately proceeds to introduce "varieties of truth" that we attribute using "specific forms" of the "generic concept":

> 'True', then, means *semantically* assertible ('S-assertible') and the varieties of truth correspond to the relevant varieties of semantical rule . . . . [V]arieties of semantical correctnesses . . . correlate with the varieties of truth . . . . (SM IV §26: 101, §31: 102)
>
> [T]he concept of truth as S-assertibility is universal in its scope, applying to propositions of the most divergent types. On the other hand, as a generic concept it takes specific forms which are functions of the semantical rules which govern these different types of propositions. (SM V §1: 116, SM vii, ix; also NAO 4 §95: 85)

As I understand Sellars here, the claim is that a proposition's truth is a matter of its being assertible according to *whatever system of semantic rules governs propositions of its type*. Accordingly, each specific truth property is the property of being assertible according to some particular system of rules.

To illustrate his pluralism, Sellars concentrates on two cases. For mathematical propositions, the relevant rules are those of an "axiomatic framework," whence truth consists in provability (SM IV §62: 115, V §55: 135; see Appendix 1). The rules for atomic propositions of empirical discourse are different. For one thing, they involve world → language and language→ world correctnesses. But Sellars's key claim is that propositions whose assertion these rules license enjoy a special property: items expressing them, considered "as items in the order of causes and effects," count as "correctly picturing" some configuration of objects (SM V §§8–10: 118–19, §§56–59: 135–37). For such "matter-of-factual discourse," truth consists in assertibility according to rules whose being in force is explained by the fact that items assertible according to them are correct as pictures.

The pluralism made possible by Sellars's new analysis of truth avoids the difficulty raised at the end of Section 2 about the sense in which truth is variably constituted. A proposition's being true is its having the following property: *being assertible by the rules "relevant" to the class of*

---

[16] Sellars cautions that "'correctly assertible' does not mean the same as 'assertible with good reason or warrant'. Semantic and epistemic oughts must be handled with the same care as that involved in distinguishing (and relating) the various senses in which an action can be said to be morally suitable" (NAO 4 §95: 85). Presumably he has in mind "objective" and "subjective" moral oughts.

propositions it belongs to. Compare *owning the house one lives in*. A person has that property in virtue of having the property of owning some particular house. In an unproblematic sense, what it consists in for Alice to own the house she lives in may differ from what it consists in for Brian to own the house he lives in. Likewise, what it consists in for a chess move to be *permissible by the rules of the game it's made in* differs from what it consists in for a checkers move to have that same property. In the same way, a proposition will be true in virtue of having some specific truth property.[17]

While Sellars's pluralism overcomes one obstacle, it faces another. The problem is his entitlement to the equivalence schema's instances, e.g. "That snow is white is true ↔ snow is white" (SM IV §§24–29: 100–102).[18] These biconditionals must still *in some sense* "follow from" his account of the concept of truth, though the account is no longer based on a "principle of inference" that derives the biconditionals. The biconditionals are now justified by pragmatic considerations that involve no such semantic rule for 'true' (L. Shapiro 2014, 803–804). The left-to-right direction of 'That snow is white is true ↔ snow is white' allegedly follows from the fact that "the assertion of the right-hand side of the implication statement is a *performance of the kind authorized by the truth statement on the left*." Pressed by Gilbert Harman regarding the right-to-left direction, Sellars claims a "pragmatic implication" arising from the Moorean "incoherence" of asserting a proposition while refusing to assert that it's correctly assertible (Sellars-Harman Correspondence, Feb. 26, 1970; cf. NI 664–65). Harman's rejoinder is devastating. He notes a crucial difference between pragmatic implications and principles of inference: the former *don't* underwrite conditionals.

> There is a pragmatic implication in either direction between 'I believe that *p*' and '*p*'. Notice, however, that it is not true that I believe that *p* if and only if *p*. Pragmatic implications do not in general support conditional statements. (ibid., March 24, 1970)

---

[17] Edwards (2013) suggests pluralists should understand the relation between *truth* and domain-specific truth properties on the analogy of that between *being a winner* and game-specific "win-making" properties. Sellars offers a particularly simple way to substantiate Edwards's analogy. Just as what it is to be a winner in chess can be spelled out in terms of the rules of chess, what it is to be a truth of empirical discourse can be spelled out in terms of the relevant semantical rules.

[18] See L. Shapiro (2014, 805n28) and Williams (2016, 239–45). I agree with Williams that this obstacle shows Sellars's definition of truth to be "more trouble than it is worth," but I reject his *reasons* for holding that Sellars fails to establish the equivalence schema, since they presuppose that Sellars offers an "epistemic definition of truth." There isn't space to examine the idea, suggested by Jaroslav Peregrin, that Sellars might have justified the schema by showing that its instances are *themselves* assertible.

In his reply to Harman, Sellars ignores this objection, though there are notes that suggest it did bother him.[19]

In fact, then, Sellars's analysis of truth won't vindicate the equivalence schema. This carries a cost. As Hartry Field argues (2008, 209–10), some of our uses of a truth predicate depend on intersubstitutivity strong enough to yield the schema's biconditionals. In the conditional 'If anything he said is true, someone will have to resign', the antecedent allows us to simulate an existential generalization over 'He said that *p*, and *p*' without using quantification into sentence position. But it can do this only because 'He said that *p*, and *p*' is intersubstitutable with 'He said that *p*, and that *p* is true' in the antecedent of a conditional. And that's what the pragmatic implication claimed by Sellars fails to ensure.

4. Alternative conceptual structures

We've now seen how the analysis of truth Sellars endorses starting in 1963 yields a distinctive but problematic pluralism. He no longer merely recognizes different "varieties of truths"; truths of different discourses are now said to exemplify different "varieties of truth." What explains his change of view from the position of "Truth and 'Correspondence'"? I'll argue that his chief motivation has nothing to do with discourses beyond the "matter-of-factual."[20] To identify this motivation, we must return to his earlier work.

The main thesis of "Inference and Meaning" (1953) is that "material rules of inference," which Sellars equates with Rudolf Carnap's non-logical "P-rules" (Carnap [1934] 1937 §51: 180), "determine the descriptive meaning of the expressions of a language" (IM 25; also ITSA 316).[21]

---

[19] Papers, box 14, folder 30: 2–3. Harman's objection applies equally to an earlier strategy Sellars tried out for vindicating the equivalence schema. In the 1963 note announcing his new analysis of truth (TC 224), Sellars had reported that the schema's right-to-left direction requires a "somewhat more complicated argument" than the "straightforward" left-to-right one. Williams (2016, 243) observes that Sellars nowhere publishes such an argument. But we find one sketched in notes dated March 10, 1963 and marked "SAVE" (Papers, box 17, folder 9: 10–11). Here Sellars argues that on the supposition that *p*, we can't coherently say that *it's assertible that ~p*. Explicitly assuming bivalence ("assertible that *p* ∨ assertible that *~p*"), he then derives that *it's assertible that p*. Harman's objection already vitiates the first step: there is no pragmatic incoherence in merely *supposing* that *p* but that it's assertible that *~p*. Moreover, Sellars himself subsequently rejects bivalence (SM IV §62: 115). See Appendix 1.

[20] Previously (L. Shapiro 2014, 805n27), I suggested Sellars was chiefly motivated by the need to *explain how* truth has different "essential features" in different domains. Cf. also Williams (2016, 232). Given the better-supported alternative defended here, I no longer find this persuasive.

[21] He doesn't include rules governing *world→ language* or *language→ world* transitions, as he hasn't yet figured out how such transitions could be rule-governed.

He draws a consequence:

> In other words, where 'ψa' is P-derivable from 'φa' . . . it is . . . correct to say that 'φa ⊃ ψa' is true by virtue of the meanings of 'φ' and 'ψ'.

Concept-constitutive inference rules yield cases of conceptual *truth*, "truth *ex vi terminorum*" (ITSA 317–18; see Brandt 2017).

Before long, Sellars qualifies this conclusion. In a footnote added in 1958 to another 1953 paper, he cautions:

> Note that, strictly speaking, one can only say that a sentence of L is true *ex vi terminorum*, as one can only say that a sentence of L is true *simpliciter*, if one's own language contains a translation of these sentences, which will not be the case if expressions occurring in these sentences conform to different P-rules from those obeyed by their closest counterparts in one's own language. (ITSA 317n)

If we can only apply 'true' to sentences translatable into our own language, this poses a difficulty for Sellars. One of his key claims is that "there are an indefinite number of possible conceptual structures (languages) or systems of formal and material rules" (IM 26; P 293; ITSA 318). In each case, conditionals corresponding to the material rules state "laws of nature" (P 293; SRLG §29: 331). These languages may be so "radically different" as not to be "mutually translatable" (SRLG §77: 353–54). As he later says, such languages don't embody the same conceptual structure (SM V §49: 132). Where a language isn't translatable into ours, we "must abandon indirect discourse" in describing it: we can't describe any sentence as *meaning p* (SRLG §79: 354). Sellars infers that we can't describe the "lawlike sentences" of such a language as *true*, let alone true *ex vi terminorum* (SRLG §77–78: 354).[22]

By contrast, it remains "appropriate" to call such sentences "unconditionally assertable." A journal entry makes the point succinctly:

> [T]o say of S that it is true is, in effect, to say 'S means p and p' where 'p' is an expression in one's language—that is, the language one uses . . . . In short, one can correctly say S is true *ex vi terminorum* only when one uses a translation of S (as German is a translation of French). But one can say that S is unconditionally assertable by virtue of the linguistic rules governing S, without using a *translation* of S. (Dec. 24, 1953, Papers, box 25, folder 2: 119)

Most likely, Sellars doesn't mean that correctly applying the concept of truth to someone's

---

[22] More generally, a description of a natural language can only "include semantical statements provided that the language is translatable into the language in which the study is made" (EAE 453). This is Tarski's position concerning formal languages.

utterance requires *actually being in a position* to ascribe a content. For he's not interested in cases where what precludes indirect-discourse ascription is ignorance. Rather, he thinks there are cases where making correct indirect-discourse ascriptions to other speakers' utterances would require changing our conceptual structure. It's when faced with alien conceptual structures that we can't correctly apply the concept of truth.

What he appears to have in mind is a language otherwise much like ours, but in which 'All swans are white' or 'Combustion requires release of phlogiston' are "unconditionally assertable by virtue of the linguistic rules." He thinks it reasonable for speakers of such a language to modify their conceptual structure, on empirical grounds, in a way that makes them abandon these sentences. Yet he worries that nothing can make it "*reasonable* to abandon true sentences" (SRLG §77: 354). His solution to this puzzle is that we shouldn't call such "lawlike sentences" *true*.[23] Later writings suggest cases where we might more plausibly think truth can't be used to evaluate speakers of a language embodying another conceptual structure. Imagine a proponent of non-Euclidean physical geometry evaluating a Euclidean's assertion of 'The angles of any triangle in physical space sum to 180°', or an intuitionist evaluating a classical mathematician's assertion of 'Every statement is true or not true' (SM V §39: 128–29; CC §§49–52: 89–90 [NAO 4 §§132–36: 94–95]). I'll return to his treatment of such cases below. Suffice it to say here that Sellars, unlike Davidson ([1974] 1984, 194–95), doesn't think the *unavailability of truth ascriptions* to propositions of an alien conceptual structure calls into question the very idea of such a conceptual structure.

Even where truth is inapplicable, we can attribute *assertibility by the rules* of the language or conceptual structure. But Sellars isn't content to forswear truth talk in describing alien conceptual structures. A parenthetical insertion in SRLG's 1955 revision already proposes a way we *can* speak of truth: we can "'relativise' the notion of truth as true in W [the world of L], true in W′ [the world of L′], etc.—as opposed to true of *this* world" (SRLG §78: 354, brackets in original).[24] Subsequently, this so-called "relativized" notion takes priority in Sellars's thought. He concludes that "the fundamental form of 'true' is 'true in conceptual structure CS_i'" (SM V §50: 132–33).

---

[23] Sellars had previously defended the contrary view that it *can* be "rational to abandon" a sentence that's "true *ex vi terminorum*" when modifying one's concepts (P 293n3). In his abstract for a 1951 draft of ITSA, he wrote: "Our language is . . . but one of a large number of possible languages each with its own set of truths *ex vi terminorum*" (Papers, box 25, folder 1: 220).

[24] For an earlier discussion distinguishing the "semantic predicate 'true'" from the "true-in-S" of "pure pragmatics," see PPE 191. ("S" is a "story" said to designate a world.)

(1) A proposition belonging to a conceptual structure CS$_i$ is "**true in CS$_i$**" just in case it's semantically assertible according to the rules of CS$_i$.

Only when the "truth" we're attributing is *truth in our own conceptual structure CSO*, i.e. assertibility according to the semantic rules of CSO, does correct attribution of truth require the in-principle availability of indirect-discourse ascriptions.

To summarize: Sellars is committed to restricting attributions of *truth* to propositions of our conceptual structure, while recognizing a truth-like notion of *assertibility* for propositions of arbitrary conceptual structures. The key step he takes after 1963 is to unify these two commitments by *identifying* truth as semantic assertibility in CSO. It is this step that leads to his truth pluralism.

5. Sellars's truth relativism

We've now seen how Sellars's analysis of truth is motivated by his interest in describing alternative conceptual structures. Next, I'll explain how the same interest leads him to truth relativism. The first thing to appreciate is that despite Sellars's above use of 'relativise', there's really nothing *relativized* about truth or falsity in a conceptual structure. A proposition can be true or false only in the conceptual structure it belongs to, whence a proposition can never be true in one conceptual structure yet false in another.

Stated using the terminology of Quine (1970, 19), truth in CS$_i$ is an "immanent" rather than "transcendent" notion: only propositions belonging to CS$_i$ can be true in CS$_i$ (or false in CS$_i$, i.e. have negations that are true in CS$_i$). In being immanent, Sellars's notion resembles its ancestor, Carnap's notion of being "valid in [language] S" ([1934] 1937 §51: 180), as well as the notion of "truth relative to a scheme" repudiated by Davidson ([1974] 1984: 198). To see why the immanent notion expressed by 'x is true in CS$_i$' shouldn't be called relativized, compare the notion expressed by 'x is the national capital of y'. Once one knows that the only country Melbourne belongs to is Australia, it would be absurd to reflect thus: "Melbourne isn't the capital of Australia, but might it be the capital of some other country?" Being the capital of a country is a *relational* notion rather than a monadic one (it's expressed by a two-place predicate), but it isn't a *relativized* notion. Contrast the paradigmatic relativized notion expressed by 'x is a national capital in the year y'. No prior fact about a city fixes one specific year as the only year during which it can be a national capital. Relativized notions can also be monadic, such as the notions of *being a national capital in 1920* (which applies to Melbourne) and *being a national capital in 1930* (which doesn't).

When Sellars says that 'true in CS$_i$' is the "fundamental form of 'true'," that's because he uses it to define a number of derivative notions (SM V §§49–53: 132–34). Among these will be a

genuine notion of relative truth. Specifically, he introduces a relativized predicate 'true with respect to CS_i' in terms of the non-relativized 'true in CS_i'. We can streamline Sellars's explanations, some of which are needlessly confusing, as follows.[25] For now, I'll just provide definitions, where terminology in quotation marks is Sellars's own. Later, when I turn to the question of why Sellars introduces the defined notions, I'll apply the definitions to several examples he uses. As Figure 1 displays, there are really three contrasts in play: between immanent and transcendent notions, between relational and monadic notions, and between relativized and non-relativized notions.

First among the derivative notions of truth, we have the immanent notion expressed by the monadic predicate obtained by replacing the variable 'CS_i' in Sellars's fundamental predicate 'true in CS_i' by the name 'CSO' of our own conceptual structure.

(2)   A proposition belonging to CSO is **"absolutely true"** provided it's true in CSO.

Absolute truth plays the role that was played in Sellars's prior thought by *truth*. It's said to obey the equivalence schema, and can't apply to propositions in alien conceptual structures. Here 'absolute' isn't intended to mark a contrast with relativized truth. The contrast is instead with other non-relativized immanent notions, such as the notions of being a true sentence of English or being a true sentence of French.[26]

Additionally, there are transcendent notions of truth, notions that can apply to propositions in any conceptual structure. The first of these, which is again monadic and non-relativized, isn't explicitly marked by Sellars. But it's worth singling out, since it plays the role we saw played in his prior thought by *assertibility*.

(3)   A proposition is **intrinsically true** provided it's true in the conceptual structure it belongs

---

[25] Cf. Rosenberg (2007, 121–22), who appears to overlook *simple* truth, mistaking 'true *simpliciter*' for a variant of 'absolutely true'. One cause of confusion is that on the page where Sellars distinguishes these notions, he uses the unqualified 'true' for *both* of them (SM V §§50, 52: 133). Another is that when Sellars defines the "truth of a proposition in CS_1," he means the *simple truth* of a proposition belonging CS_1, not its property of being *true in CS_1*. Worse, shortly after reaffirming that "the 'absolute' sense of 'true' . . . amounts to 'true proposition belonging to CSO'" (§52: 133), Sellars mischaracterizes it as a sense in which "a proposition in one conceptual structure can be true . . . with respect to our current conceptual structure" (§53: 134). That's *simple* truth.

[26] Sellars himself places 'absolute' in scare quotes; the reference is to Carnap's (1942, 89–90) use of the term for the truth of *propositions*, as contrasted with sentences of a given language system. Sellars wishes to distance himself from what he sees as Carnap's mistake of regarding talk of the proposition that *p* as talk about "non-linguistic" matters. On Sellars's view, it's really talk about "inter-linguistic" matters, i.e. about items in any language that mean *p* (SM IV §22–23: 99–100, V §48: 131–32; WSNDL II §53: 78–79).

to. (That is to say, it's semantically assertible by whatever rules constitute that structure.) The remaining transcendent notions are relativized. To introduce them, Sellars uses his idea that a proposition belonging to one conceptual structure can have a "counterpart" in another. This lets him define a relational and relativized notion, "a sense in which a proposition in one conceptual structure can be true . . . with respect to any suitably related conceptual structure." Here a conceptual structure is suitably related when it contains a counterpart of the proposition in question.

> (4) A proposition is **true with respect to CS_i** ("true *quoad* CS_i") provided it has a "counterpart" in CS_i that's true in CS_i. (Equivalently: provided it has a counterpart in CS_i that's intrinsically true.)[27]

By replacing the variable 'CS_i' with the name 'CSO', Sellars defines another transcendent notion, which he later calls "truth *simpliciter*" (SM V §96: 148). While monadic, this notion is still relativized.

> (5) A proposition is **simply true** ("true *simpliciter*") provided it's true with respect to CSO.

For propositions belonging to CSO, intrinsic and simple truth amount to the same as absolute truth. However, propositions belonging to other conceptual structures are ineligible for absolute truth, and in their case intrinsic and simple truth can come apart.

	non-relativized		relativized	
	relational	*monadic*	*relational*	*monadic*
immanent	(1) **truth in CS_i**	(2) **absolute truth** (truth in CSO)		
transcendent		(3) **intrinsic truth** (truth in the proposition's own conceptual structure)	(4) **truth with respect to CS_i** (having a counterpart in CS_i that's intrinsically true)	(5) **simple truth** (truth with respect to CSO) (6) **ideal truth** (truth with respect to CSP)

Figure 1. Six notions of propositional truth

---

[27] Sellars appears to assume that a proposition in one conceptual structure will have *at most one* counterpart in another conceptual structure. In any case, he nowhere contemplates a proposition's being *both true and false* with respect to a conceptual structure (due to having both intrinsically true and intrinsically false counterparts in that structure).

Why does Sellars introduce relativized truth? One of his motivations resembles that of relativists such as Kölbel (2002) and John MacFarlane (2014), who point to cases where the following seems to occur. One speaker affirms *the very proposition* another rejects, yet due to their divergent perspectives, both meet the relevant criteria of "correctness." Examples often involve "subjective" claims, e.g. that some food is tasty or some joke funny. Sellars, by contrast, is most interested in "matter-of-factual discourse," though mathematics is in view too (SM V §55: 135; see Appendix 1). In the matter-of-factual case, the phenomenon arises in some cases of scientific progress. Sellars wants to say that a community of speakers can come to *correctly reject* the very proposition their predecessors *correctly affirmed*.[28] Here, too, the explanation is supposed to lie in the fact that the communities have divergent perspectives: they differ with regard to their "conceptual structure (which is necessarily the point of view from which we view the universe)" (SM V §63: 138).

This idea already surfaces in Sellars's 1958 discussion of "thing-kind words" such as 'gold' and 'salt':

> [I]t can be reasonable to say "That wasn't really gold" in spite of the fact that the object in question was correctly called gold according to the criteria used at the time the claim that is being disputed was made. And the statement that the object *really* wasn't gold is not to be construed as a queer way of saying that the word 'gold' no longer means exactly what it did. (CDCM §48: 261).

It could be that an object that *isn't* gold was correctly "called gold." And this isn't just to say that the English word 'gold' would have been correctly applied to it, given the meaning this word had at that time. Rather, the idea is that the object really was correctly *called gold*, *i.e. said to be gold*. Sellars revisits the example in 1974:

> There is obviously no puzzle about saying that some of the stuffs which people once correctly called gold weren't really gold. Here we recognize both the kinship and the difference between their use of 'gold' and ours. (R 462)

According to Sellars, there's no incoherence in imagining a prehistoric speaker who correctly asserted, of a given nugget of fool's gold, *that it is gold*. Here it's crucial that 'correctly' doesn't just mean *warrantedly*.

We can explain what he has in mind using intrinsic and relative truth. On the one hand, in

---

[28] It's well known that Sellars introduces structure-relative truth as a resource for describing scientific progress (O'Shea 2007, 161; Rosenberg 2007, 121–3; Williams 2016, 250), but how he deploys it remains underexplored.

view of the kinship in use, we can characterize the prehistoric speaker as expressing the concept *gold*. This is to describe them as expressing a proposition belonging to *our* conceptual structure CSO. We might then elaborate by characterizing their expression as belonging to a 30,000 BCE-ish subvariety within the class of words meaning *gold* (SM V §45: 130–31; CC §§50–51: 89–90 [NAO 4 §§135–36: 94–95]; MFC 95n14 [NAO 4 §63: 78n19]). On the other hand, in view of the difference in use, we can *also* describe the speaker as employing a *distinct* structure CS_{30K}. In this case we'll say they express a counterpart in CS_{30K} of our concept *gold*. We can thus give *either* of the following descriptions of our speaker:

(a) They expressed a proposition belonging to CSO, to the effect that the nugget is gold. This proposition is **intrinsically false**, yet **true with respect to CS_{30K}**.

(b) They expressed a different proposition, belonging to CS_{30K}. This proposition is **intrinsically true**, yet **false with respect to CSO**.[29]

Each description accommodates Sellars's sense that what the speaker said is correct from their perspective but incorrect from ours. Crucially, each does so using the relativized notion of truth with respect to a conceptual structure.

Furthermore, regardless which proposition we describe our speaker as expressing, Sellars thinks we may reasonably hold that the proposition is **false with respect to CSP**, where CSP is a "Peirceish" structure that achieves ideally adequate picturing. That's how he comes to explain what he means when he speaks of something not being "really" gold. Completing Figure 1, we have a further transcendent notion (SM V §§73–75: 141–42, §96: 148; SM ix).

(6) A proposition in CS_i is **"ideally true"** provided it's true with respect to CSP.

This explains how even something *we ourselves* are correct to call gold might not "really" be gold:

But does it *make sense* to say that some of the stuff *we* correctly call gold *really* isn't gold? Yet is not this possibility implied by the very idea of what gold really is? Is not the concept of the ideal denotations of 'gold' and 'water' correlative with the concept of the ideal *meanings* of these sortals? (R 462).

When we say the stuff is gold, the proposition we express is absolutely true, yet it may be *ideally false*: that is to say, the proposition may have a counterpart belonging to a structure of "ideal meanings" that is intrinsically false.[30]

---

[29] According to both (a) and (b), the proposition asserted is *simply false*.

[30] Here Sellars appears to reject a principle he had earlier said "would seem to be valid," according to which an absolutely true matter-of-factual proposition must also be ideally true (SM V §74: 141–42). In *Science and Metaphysics*, that is to say, he assumes that if a proposition belonging to CSO is intrinsically true, then its counterpart

On Sellars's view, whether description (a) or (b) is more appropriate "shift[s] with context and purpose" (MFC 95n14 [NAO 4 §63: 78n19]; cf. SM V §47: 131). In some contexts, it's useful to affirm sameness of meaning. In others it's useful to deny it. Here he closely anticipates what Stewart Shapiro has written about logical vocabulary:

> Whether we say that the logical terms have the same meaning, or different meanings, in the different [mathematical] structures or theories, depends on what is salient in a conversation comparing the structures or theories. For some purposes—in some conversational situations—it makes sense to say that the classical connectives and quantifiers have different meanings than their counterparts in intuitionistic . . . systems. In other situations, it makes sense to say that the meaning of the logical terminology is the same in the different systems. (S. Shapiro 2014, 5, 127ff)

Sellars makes the same point with the same example. He says features of "context" account for our "willingness," on some occasions but not others, to affirm that "classical negation and intuitionistic negation are varieties of negation" (CC §52: 90 [NAO 4 §136: 95])—i.e., that classical and intuitionistic mathematicians use the English 'not' or German 'nicht' to mean *not*.

> Thus in a given context
>
> > This 'nicht' is a •not• [LS: this is Sellars's regimentation of the ascription 'This token of "nicht" means *not*']
>
> will be true or false depending upon whether the criteria for being a •not• include or do not include the consequence relations involved in the principle of excluded middle. (TTP §55: 296).[31]

Accordingly, as in the case of 'gold', context will affect how we use attributions of *intrinsic and relative truth* in assessing claims expressed by speakers whose usage is both akin to and different

---

in CSP will also be intrinsically true (cf. Rosenberg 2007, 123–26). I won't here be able to adequately explore this discrepancy. But Sellars's intention in the earlier discussion could be related to his interest in recognizing a "sense in which one proposition can be said to be 'more true' than another" (SM V §§54: 134). Perhaps an absolute truth will be more true than a merely ideal truth. If we additionally understand *x's being more true than y* as requiring that *x* possesses any kind of truth that *y* possesses, then Sellars's principle would follow. However, that requirement would be tendentious. I might add that his later discussion makes room for a second sense of 'more true', according to which a proposition that's ideally true is more true than one that's merely absolutely true.

[31] Sellars and Stewart Shapiro take no position on whether this is because the *content*, or just the *extension*, of 'have the same meaning' or 'means *not*' varies with context (S. Shapiro 2014, 137). Perhaps they can, without generating vicious circularity, simply say that whether 'means *not*' expresses the same content in two contexts will *itself* vary with our purposes.

from ours. In this regard too, Sellars anticipates Stewart Shapiro, whose own discussion invokes a form of truth relativism (2014, 154–55).[32]

6. Conclusion: a tension in Sellars's view

I've now argued that Sellars's truth pluralism and his truth relativism are both motivated by the desideratum of having semantics take into account a plurality of conceptual structures. Huw Price (1992, 389–90) distinguishes a "vertical pluralism" of functionally heterogeneous domains of discourse (e.g., empirical, ethical, mathematical) from a "horizontal pluralism" of alternative worldviews. Sellars's truth relativism results from a horizontal pluralism of conceptual structures, unlike those present-day versions of relativism concerned with "subjective" domains of our own conceptual structure. On the surface, his truth pluralism would seem to result from a vertical pluralism of domains. However, while it's *applied* vertically, I've argued that his truth pluralism *results from* considerations of horizontal, cross-structure variation. That's because such considerations underlie his analysis of truth as semantic assertibility, which is what leads him to formulate his approach to heterogeneous domains as a truth pluralism.

Whereas Sellars's truth pluralism can't be understood apart from his problematic analysis of truth, his truth relativism is independent of that analysis. In fact, as I'll explain in closing, that analysis is responsible for a tension in his relativism. The tension is revealed by a contrast between Sellars and present-day truth relativists. As we saw, Sellars defines "absolute" truth, the ordinary monadic notion said to obey the equivalence schema, using his "fundamental" notion of *truth in a conceptual structure*. Present-day relativists *don't* use their semantic primitives to define ordinary monadic truth. They use their primitives to specify the conditions for an assertion's *semantic correctness*. But they don't equate such correctness with the asserted proposition's truth. MacFarlane is especially clear: rather than define ordinary truth in terms of truth relative to a context, he uses the latter to specify the semantics of a monadic predicate 'true'. This is done in a way that ensures that 'The proposition that *p* is true if and only if *p*' expresses a proposition that's true relative to all contexts, and hence correctly assertible in all contexts (MacFarlane 2014, 93–94; Cappelen and Hawthorne 2009, 12–14).

For MacFarlane's purposes, it's important not to follow Sellars and equate the ordinary truth

---

[32] By contrast, Williams argues that we needn't "proliferate senses of 'true'" to enable suitable truth assessments across differences in usage; context-dependence of meaning ascriptions suffices (2016, 250). This doesn't accommodate Sellars's relativist intuition that there are contexts in which it makes sense to assess another speaker as having correctly asserted the *very claim* we deny.

of the propositions we express with their truth *relative to our context*. Suppose my interlocutor denies that the food I'm savoring is tasty. Then she should also deny that the proposition that the food is tasty is *true*. However, on MacFarlane's theory, she should concede that this proposition is *true relative to my present context*, given the standard this context supplies. This explains why it would be a mistake to identify the truth of the proposition with its truth relative to my present context. The point here isn't that on the relativist view it's *possible* for someone to disagree with me about the (absolute) truth of the proposition while agreeing with me about its truth relative to my standard of taste. That could simply be a matter of their being *ignorant* that (absolute) truth is truth relative to my standard. The point is rather that according to relativists, my interlocutor would be *correct* in doing so. In that case (absolute) truth can't be truth relative to my standard.

Turning to Sellars's own relativism, suppose we're classical mathematicians evaluating an intuitionist, and that our "context and purpose" are such that we describe the intuitionist as rejecting the very proposition we express by an instance of excluded middle. If we accept the relativist description of what's going on, we'll presumably claim that the intuitionist ought not regard the excluded middle proposition as *true*, in the ordinary sense of 'true' that (as Sellars insists) satisfies the equivalence schema. Yet, we'll say that the intuitionist ought to agree that the proposition is *S-assertible by the rules of our classical CSO*. Consequently, there's at least a tension between two uses Sellars makes of assertibility by the rules of a conceptual structure. On the one hand, we have his truth relativism, according to which it would seem that our intuitionist correctly rejects the proposition in question, and thus *ought not* regard it as true. On the other hand, we have his analysis of (absolute) truth, according to which, still on the assumption that CSO embodies classical logic, the intuitionist *ought* to regard the proposition as true.[33]

Could Sellars have relativized the correct assertibility of propositions to a conceptual structure without adopting his analysis of (absolute) truth? Had he instead continued to elucidate propositional truth using the equivalence schema, as present-day truth relativists do, he would also have sidestepped the signal shortcoming in his treatment of truth: the failure of his pragmatic

---

[33] This reasoning could be resisted. Perhaps the proposition that *it's true (=S-assertible in CSO) that p* and the proposition that *p* are equivalent, yet speakers whose usage differs sufficiently from ours may affirm the former without commitment to the latter. But it's at least awkward to describe someone as correctly affirming the truth of a proposition they correctly reject. A second awkward option would be to insist that the intuitionist, even when interpreted as expressing the proposition that *p*, shouldn't be interpreted as expressing the proposition that *it's true that p*, but at most a counterpart.

justification of the claim that the proposition that *p* is correctly assertible if and only if *p*.[34] Without the analysis of truth as S-assertibility, we have seen, he would have lacked the grounds that led him to adopt truth pluralism. Still, he could have retained the more moderate position of "Truth and 'Correspondence'," according to which the heterogeneity of discourses is reflected in varieties of *truths* rather than in varieties of *truth*.[35]

Appendix 1: Relativism and Failures of Bivalence

In *Science and Metaphysics*, Sellars rejects the law of bivalence. After sketching the semantic rules for a language that suffices for rudimentary logical, descriptive, and practical discourse, he remarks: "A realistic account of these semantical rules precludes that every proposition of the relevant variety is either true or false" (SM IV §62: 115; Williams 2016, 244). He is most naturally understood as denying that every proposition expressible in the language is either true (i.e. assertible in accordance with the language's rules) or false (i.e. has a negation that's so assertible). One might worry that this rejection of bivalence conflicts with Sellars's endorsement of the equivalence schema for truth. Recall that he affirms the "conceptual necessity" of each instance of 'The proposition that *p* is true if and only if *p*' (SM IV §26: 100). Given modest logical assumptions, this is incompatible with counterexamples to bivalence (Dummett 1991, 64; Holton 2000, 149–51). Suppose the proposition that *p* is a counterexample to bivalence, i.e. a proposition that's neither true nor false. Then it will be untrue that *p*, and also untrue that not-*p*. By *modus tollens*, these claims together with the equivalence schema for truth yield that not-*p* and also that not-not-*p*. If he asserts that there are counterexamples to bivalence, Sellars is thus committed to a

---

[34] He might have added that the proposition expressed by an instance of 'The proposition that *p* is true if and only if *p*' is correctly assertible relative to *any* conceptual structure that contains a counterpart proposition.

[35] It could remain part of the position that truth is accompanied by representational correctness in some domains. That is the view endorsed by Price (2013, 160–70), who has pointed out its resemblance to that of Sellars.

contradiction. In this appendix, I argue that Sellars's truth relativism lets him escape the objection: it gives him a way to recognize failures of bivalence while avoiding contradiction.

There are at least three contexts in which Sellars discusses bivalence, and in each he may seem to countenance counterexamples to bivalence. The first is the above-quoted remark, where he seems to say that *not every proposition under discussion is true or false*. Using any logic that validates the De Morgan equivalences for quantifiers, it would follow that *some proposition under discussion is neither true nor false*. Sellars gives no indication that he intends to reject the relevant De Morgan equivalence, e.g. by employing intuitionistic logic.

To resolve this problem, the first thing to notice is that it only arises for languages that embody *our* conceptual structure (CSO). Instances of the equivalence schema 'The proposition that p is true if and only if p' can only be stated for propositions in CSO, since these are the only propositions we can refer to using instances of 'the proposition that p'. Consider now a formulation of bivalence concerning an arbitrary language L.

(BV$_L$) Every proposition expressed in L is assertible, or has a negation that is assertible, according to the semantic rules of the conceptual structure L embodies.

There would be no problem had Sellars written that it would be *unrealistic to include* (BV$_L$) in an account of a language L as expressive as those under discussion. The problem concerns whether such an account can "preclude" bivalence, in the special case where L is a language embodying CSO, such as English (or E). Can our account of English include (BV$_E$)'s *negation*? I'll now explain how Sellars is in a good position to assert (BV$_L$)'s negation for other languages L while refusing to assert or deny (BV$_E$)'s negation.

The relevant fact about English is that Sellars assumes it's an example of a language L that embodies a conceptual structure CS$_L$ whose users express the notion of being true in CS$_L$ (since he assumes English expresses absolute truth, the notion of being true in CSO).[36] For some languages L of this sort, the CSO-proposition we express by (BV$_L$)'s negation will be absolutely true. Yet speakers of CS$_L$ can't themselves, without contradiction, assert that proposition's CS$_L$-counterpart, a proposition that's nonetheless true with respect to CSO. In the same way, the CSO-proposition we express using (BV$_E$)'s negation is one we can't assert without contradiction, though we may be confident that it's true with respect to a more adequate conceptual structure such as the Peirceish CSP. There's a sense, then, in which Sellars can consistently recognize the failure of

---

[36] Here I won't be able to address what resources Sellars's position has for responding to the challenge to this assumption posed by the Liar paradox.

bivalence for our own language. He can say that the claim that our language expresses propositions that are neither true nor false is *ideally true*.

Furthermore, there is textual support for connecting Sellars's approach to bivalence with his truth relativism. Immediately following his above-cited remark about empirical languages, he turns to mathematical truth, a second context in which he discusses bivalence.

> Indeed, in the case of logical and mathematical propositions, *where S-assertability means provability*, the law of bivalence can be defended only by defining a sense in which propositions in one axiomatic framework can be 'identified' with propositions in a more inclusive axiomatic framework. (SM IV §62: 115)

His reason is Gödel's first incompleteness theorem. When he revisits the topic of arithmetic after introducing relative truth, he goes beyond questioning the *defensibility* of bivalence. He now asserts counterexamples.

> In the case of arithmetic . . . the concept of truth (S-assertibility) coincides with that of provability. It follows, of course, from Goedel's results that, with respect to the conceptual structure (in the sense of axiomatics) to which it belongs, not every arithmetical proposition is either true or false. (SM V §55: 135)

Sellars's claim concerns a proposition's truth "with respect to the conceptual structure . . . to which it belongs," which is equivalent to what I've called its *intrinsic truth*. Since he justifies the claim by citing Gödel's theorem, it's clear he holds the following.

(G) If A_i is a recursive axiomatic system containing basic arithmetic, and A_i is consistent, then there's a proposition belonging to A_i that's *neither* intrinsically true (true in A_i) *nor* intrinsically false (false in A_i).[37]

Provided we can assert that A_i is consistent, we can thus assert that there are counterexamples to

---

[37] Sellars appears to assume that an "axiomatic framework" is recursive, i.e. that whether a given sequence of sentences is a proof is mechanically decidable. (I thank Marcus Rossberg for calling my attention to this.) It's not obvious, though, that being an instance of a Sellarsian inference rule must be recursive. Perhaps there could be an infinitary "ought-not-to-be" rule to the effect that an agent ought not to assert each of propositions P_1, P_2, . . . while rejecting proposition Q. Such a rule couldn't be used as a "rule of criticism" (SM V §4: 117; LTC 508), since no finite agent could be criticized for *violating* it. But might such a rule *be in effect* nonetheless, where this would make itself felt by rendering propositions "semantically assertible"? That appears to be the position of Peregrin (2014, 156–159, 83, 72), who endorses Sellars's analysis of truth. In an early paper, Sellars briefly mentions Carnap's distinction ([1934] 1937 §14: 37–39) between the recursive relation of being "directly derivable" and the non-recursive relation of being a "direct consequence." Alas, he dismisses it as "irrelevant to our problem," namely the role of material rules of inference in a conceptual structure (IM 19).

bivalence for *truth in A$_i$*. Invoking relative truth, Sellars adds that such an undecidable proposition

can be said to be true in a derivative sense, if its counterpart in a richer axiomatics, A$_j$, which is also, in a sense difficult to define, an axiomatics of arithmetic, is provable in A$_j$. Thus, a proposition in A$_i$ can be said to be true *quoad* A$_j$. In the case of arithmetic there is no end to the series of 'more adequate' axiomatic systems. (ibid.)

This may explain the attenuated sense in which Sellars thinks "the law of bivalence can be defended" for arithmetical propositions. The defensible thesis may be that for every proposition in A$_i$, there is a more adequate A$_j$ with respect to which it is either true or false, and with respect to whose more adequate successors it retains its truth value.

What if we apply (G) to an axiomatic system that captures arithmetic in CSO? This yields no conflict with the equivalence schema. Gödel's methods can't be used to prove, concerning such a system, the existence of a sentence that's neither provable nor disprovable by that system's own rules. To do that, it won't suffice to prove the respective instance of (G). We would also need to prove the consistency of that system, an arithmetically formalizable claim which Gödel's second incompleteness theorem tells us the system, if consistent, won't prove. Hence Gödel's results, together with Sellars's view of mathematical truth, don't commit Sellars to asserting that our mathematical framework contains propositions that are *neither true nor false*. To recognize failures of bivalence, he can instead say that the arithmetical proposition formalizing the claim that there are undecidable arithmetical propositions will be true with respect to a more adequate successor axiomatic system.

Still, Gödel's results do point to a genuine problem for Sellars's account of mathematical truth. Sellars's embrace of the equivalence schema turns out to conflict with his claim that (absolute) arithmetical truth consists in provability in a recursive axiomatic system within CSO, say A$_O$. These views jointly commit him to the conditional

(*) If '1=0' is provable in A$_O$, then 1=0.

and thus to the truth, and hence the provability in A$_O$, of (*)'s arithmetical formalization. But if (*)'s formalization is provable in A$_O$, then so is the sentence formalizing the claim that A$_O$ is consistent (Gödel [1933] 1995; Artemov 2007, 4). By Gödel's second incompleteness theorem, that sentence will be provable in A$_O$ only if A$_O$ is inconsistent. So even though Sellars's embrace of the equivalence schema needn't clash with his rejection of bivalence, it does clash with his account of mathematical truth.

A third context in which Sellars discusses bivalence pertains once again to matter-of-factual propositions. He states that "[t]he law of bivalence analytically holds for matter-of-factual

propositions in CSP, but it need not hold for matter-of-factual propositions in less developed conceptual frameworks." This is offered as commentary on a principle he formulates using the notion of truth with respect to a conceptual structure.

> If a proposition in CSP is true *quoad* CSP its counterparts in such frameworks (CS_i) as contain a counterpart are true *quoad* CSP, but not necessarily true *quoad* CS_i, though not false *quoad* CS_i. (SM V §74: 142)

If we unpack this principle using the definition of "truth *quoad* CS_i" for CSP-propositions, we find Sellars saying that an ideally true CS_i-proposition may be neither intrinsically true nor intrinsically false.[38] This poses a problem when CS_i is CSO, as it would imply that CSO-propositions may be neither absolutely true nor absolutely false. Again, though, he should refuse to assert that ideally true CSO-propositions must be absolutely true or absolutely false, without asserting that they may be neither absolutely true nor absolutely false. Instead, he can allow that it may be *ideally* true, concerning an ideally true CSO-proposition, that it's neither absolutely true nor absolutely false. Such a proposition will be ideally true, but the claim that the proposition is absolutely true won't be ideally true. On the other hand, I argued in Section 6 that Sellars would have done better to avoid paradoxical-sounding consequences like this one by giving up his identification of absolute truth with semantic assertibility according to the rules of CSO.

Appendix 2: Sellars, Quine, and "De-quoting"

In a much-cited passage from his *Philosophy of Logic* (1970), W.V. Quine gives Sellars credit for having formulated a claim about truth Quine there endorses. And the attribution might seem to find support in Sellars's remark about Quine in a recently published lecture. The purpose of this appendix is to set the record straight.

Introducing his own view that "the truth predicate is a device of disquotation," Quine writes: "So long as we are speaking only of the truth of singly given sentences, the perfect theory of truth is what Wilfrid Sellars called the disappearance theory of truth" (1970, 11). This theory holds that the truth predicate is unnecessary in such cases: rather than say that 'Snow is white' is true, we could just say that snow is white. To be sure, Quine (who provides no citation to Sellars) doesn't claim that Sellars *advocates* a disappearance theory of truth ascriptions to quoted sentences. Still,

---

[38] He also says that such a proposition will never be intrinsically false. In note 30, I suggested that this is a claim he repudiates in later work, when he seems to allow that the claim that some object *fails to be gold* might be absolutely (whence intrinsically) false yet ideally true.

Quine appears to be attributing the phrase "the disappearance theory of truth" to Sellars, and to be including Sellars among those who at least formulated a component of disquotationalism.[39]

Furthermore, in writings predating and contemporaneous with Quine's remark, Sellars does explain truth in terms of "de-quoting" (SM IV §51: 110; Sellars-Harman Correspondence). Subsequently, in a 1975 letter, he even speaks of his "interpretation of truth in terms of de-quoting" (Sellars-Marras Correspondence). Most intriguingly, in a 1969 lecture, Sellars appears to claim precedence for disquotationalism: "I've been interested to know that Quine is now coming around to the position that 'true' functions essentially as a de-quoting device" (WSNDL II §57: 79–80). Taken together, Quine's and Sellars's remarks raise the question of how Sellars's discussions of truth relate to Quine's disquotationalism.

In fact, Quine's reference to Sellars and Sellars's reference to Quine are equally misleading. In the published work that would appear most relevant to Quine's attribution, Sellars's contribution to the *Library of Living Philosophers* volume on Carnap, Sellars does include a remark on "'definitions by disappearance' of semantical concepts" (EAE 464). But here he's quoting P.F. Strawson, and endorsing Strawson's skepticism about the idea of a "definition-by-disappearance" of a predicate (Strawson 1949, 88). More importantly, when Sellars later appeals to "de-quoting" himself, he's advocating something very different from Quine's disquotationalism, namely his own analysis of 'true' as 'semantically assertible'. That analysis is profoundly un-Quinean in two respects. First, as Williams (2016, 236) stresses, it holds that truth ascriptions are *normative claims*, claims about the "correctness of a certain performance—roughly the de-quoting of a quoted expression" (SM IV §51: 110). Second, it presupposes talk of *meaning* and *propositions*. The reason Sellars says truth is only 'roughly' a matter of correctness of de-quoting is that for him, truth ascriptions don't apply to sentences considered with respect to the syntactical characteristics singled out by Quine's quotation marks. Rather, truth ascriptions apply primarily to propositions, where proposition talk is construed as talk of sentences considered with respect to their meaning. Sellars introduces his own use of quotation marks, dot-quotation, to classify sentences according to their meaning. Thus, his "interpretation of truth in terms of de-quoting" is really the view that truth is *correctness* of de-*dot*-quoting. In no sense did Quine come around to that position.

---

[39] Decades later, again without citation, Quine ([1999] 2008, 163) attributes the phrase "the disappearance theory of truth" to Frank Ramsey instead. This time, however, he claims to "deplore" the use of that label for the "disquotational account." He calls talk of "disappearance" in this connection the "crowning outrage of my primordial philosophical bugaboo: the confusion of use and mention." Presumably, he now thinks such talk wrongly suggests that '"Snow is white" is true' can be replaced by the *name* '"Snow is white"' rather than the sentence 'Snow is white'.

Sellars's discussion of disquotation raises a further historical question. After presenting his idiosyncratic use of the idea, according to which "the force of 'true' [is] to say that the quotation marks which precede it, together with itself, may be erased" (SM IV §29: 102), Sellars adds that this fact "has often been noted." Which discussions might he have in mind? One very likely candidate is a claim by Peter Geach.

> In ["'More than twenty people came to Smith's party' is a true statement"], the use of "is true" or "is a true statement" is superfluous; we could cancel out these words along with the pair of opening and closing quotes preceding them . . . . [W]e write a statement in quotes in order to mention that statement; if we now write after it "is (a) true (statement)", this cancels the quotes, and it is as though we simply used the quoted statement. (Geach 1957: 96)

This claim appears in a context that had already caught Sellars's attention, namely Geach's independent defense of the characteristically Sellarsian "general thesis that language about thoughts is an analogical development of language about language" (Geach 1957: 98; Sellars notes the agreement in a paper published in 1966, FD 150). Despite the similarity in wording to Sellars's remark in *Science and Metaphysics*, what Geach advocates here resembles Quine's view of truth ascriptions to quoted sentences, not Sellars's very different view of truth as correct assertibility. Geach's point is that a truth ascription to a quoted sentence *has the effect of* canceling the quotation marks; it has what Quine later calls "cancellatory force" (1970, 12). Sellars, by contrast, claims that the truth ascription has cancellatory *sense*, i.e. that truth ascriptions to dot-quoted sentences "say that" the quotation marks may be removed.

References

Armour-Garb, Bradley and James Woodbridge. 2012. "Sellars and Pretense on 'Truth and "Correspondence"' (With a Detour Through Meaning Attribution)." *Discusiones Filosóficas* 13 (21): 33–63.

Artemov, Sergei. 2007. "On Two Models of Provability." In *Mathematical Problems from Applied Logic II*, edited by Dov Gabbay et al. New York: Springer.

Bonjour, Lawrence. 1973. "Sellars on Truth and Picturing." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 13 (2): 243–65.

Brandom, Robert. 2013. "Global Anti-Representationalism?" In Price 2013, 85–111.

Brandt, Stefan. 2017. "Sellars and Quine on Empiricism and Conceptual Truth." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 25 (1): 108–32.

Capellen, Herman and John Hawthorne. 2009. *Relativism and Monadic Truth*. Oxford: Oxford
University Press.

Carnap, Rudolf. (1934) 1937. *The Logical Syntax of Language*. Translated by Amethe Smeaton.
London: Routledge.

———. 1942. *Introduction to Semantics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Caputo, Stefano. 2012. "Three Dilemmas for Alethic Functionalism." *Philosophical Quarterly*
62 (249): 853–61.

Davidson, Donald. (1969) 1984. "True to the Facts." In Davidson 1984, 37–54.

———. (1974) 1984. "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme." In Davidson 1984, 183–98.

———. (1977) 1984. "Reality Without Reference." In Davidson 1984, 215–25.

———. 1984. *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

DeVries, Willem. 2005. *Wilfrid Sellars*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Dummett, Michael. 1991. *The Logical Basis of Metaphysics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard
University Press.

Edwards, Douglas. 2013. 'Truth, Winning, and Simple Determination Pluralism'. In *Truth and
Pluralism: Current Debates*, edited by Nikolaj Pedersen and Cory Wright, 279–91.
Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Field, Hartry. 2008. *Saving Truth from Paradox*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Geach, Peter. 1957. *Mental Acts*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Gödel, Kurt. (1933) 1995. "An Interpretation of the Intuitionistic Propositional Calculus."
Translated by John Dawson in *Collected Works*, vol. 1., edited by Saul Feferman et al.,
301–303. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harman, Gilbert. 1970. "Sellars' Semantics." *Philosophical Review* 79 (3): 404–19.

Holton, Richard. 2000. "Minimalism and Truth-Value Gaps." *Philosophical Studies* 97 (2): 137–
68.

Kölbel, Max. 2002. *Truth Without Objectivity*. London: Routledge.

Lewis, David. 1972. "Psychophysical and Theoretical Identifications." *Australasian Journal of
Philosophy* 50 (3): 249–58.

Lynch, Michael. 2004. "Truth and Multiple Realizability." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*
82 (3): 384–408.

———. 2009. *Truth as One and Many*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MacFarlane, John. 2014. *Assessment Sensitivity: Relative Truth and its Applications*. Oxford:

Oxford University Press.

O'Shea, James. 2007. *Wilfrid Sellars*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Peregrin, Jaroslav. 2014. *Inferentialism: Why Rules Matter*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Price, Huw. 1992. "Metaphysical Pluralism." *Journal of Philosophy* 89 (8): 387–409.

———. 2013. *Expressivism, Pragmatism and Representationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Putnam, Hilary. 1978. *Meaning and the Moral Sciences*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Quine, W.V.O. 1970. *Philosophy of Logic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

———. (1999) 2008. "Where Do We Disagree?" In *Quine in Dialogue*. Edited by Dagfinn Føllesdal and Douglas B. Quine. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 159–66.

Rorty, Richard. 1979. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Rosenberg, Jay. 2007. "Sellarsian Picturing." In *Wilfrid Sellars: Fusing the Images*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Seibt, Johanna. 1990. *Properties as Processes: A Synoptic Study of Wilfrid Sellars' Nominalism*. Atascadero: Ridgeview.

Sellars, Wilfrid. 1947 [PPE]. "Pure Pragmatics and Epistemology." *Philosophy of Science* 14 (3): 181–202.

———. (1952) 1963 [P]. "Particulars." In SPR, 282–97.

———. (1953) 2007 [IM]. "Inference and Meaning." In *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, edited by Kevin Scharp and Robert Brandom, 3–27. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

———. (1953) 1963 [ITSA]. "Is There a Synthetic *A Priori*?" Revised version of 1958 in SPR, 298–320.

———. (1954) 1963 [SRLG]. "Some Reflections on Language Games." Expanded version of 1955 in SPR, 321–58.

———. (1956) 1963 [EPM]. 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind'. In SPR, 127–96.

———. 1957 [CDCM]. "Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities." In *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science, Vol. 2*, edited by Herbert Feigl, Michael Scriven, and Grover Maxwell, 225–308. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

———. 1962 [TC]. "Truth and "Correspondence'." Revised version in SPR, 197–224.

———. 1963 [EAE]. "Empiricism and Abstract Entities." In *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap*, edited by Paul Schilpp, 431–68. LaSalle, IL.: Open Court.

———. 1963 [SPR]. *Science, Perception, and Reality*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

———. 1964 [NI]. "Notes on Intentionality." *Journal of Philosophy* 61 (21): 655–65.

———. (1965) 1967 [SRI]. "Scientific Realism or Irenic Instrumentalism: A Critique of Nagel and Feyerabend on Theoretical Explanation." In *Philosophical Perspectives: Metaphysics and Epistemology*, 337–69. Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview.

———. 1966 [FD]. "Fatalism and Determinism," in *Freedom and Determinism*, edited by Keith Lehrer, 141–74. New York: Random House.

———. 1967 [SM]. *Science and Metaphysics*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

———. 1969 [LTC]. "Language as Thought and as Communication." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 29: 506–27.

———. 1973 [CC]. "Conceptual Change." In *Conceptual Change*, edited by Glenn Pearce and Patrick Maynard, 77–93. Dordrecht: D. Reidel.

———. (1974) 2007 [MFC]. "Meaning as Functional Classification." In *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, edited by Kevin Scharp and Robert Brandom, 81–100. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

———. 1974 [R]. "Reply" (to Putnam and Dennett). *Synthese* 27 (3–4): 457–66.

———. 1979 [NAO]. *Naturalism and Ontology*. Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview. Pagination of 1996 printing.

———. 1985 [TTP]. "Towards a Theory of Predication.'" In *How Things Are,* edited by James Bogen and James. E. McGuire, 285–322. Dordrecht: D. Reidel.

———. 2018 [WSNDL]. Notre Dame Lectures 1969–1986. Revised edition, edited by Pedro Amaral and David Landy. Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview.

———. Wilfrid S. Sellars Papers. University of Pittsburgh Library, collection number ASP.1991.01 (http://goo.gl/ndRd91).

———. Sellars-Harman Correspondence (1970). Edited by A. Chrucky. http://www.ditext.com/sellars/sh-corr.html

———. Sellars-Marras Correspondence (1972–76). Edited by A. Chrucky. http://www.ditext.com/sellars/csm.html

Shapiro, Lionel. 2013. "Intentional Relations and the Sideways-on View: On McDowell's Critique of Sellars." *European Journal of Philosophy* 21 (2): 300–319.

———. 2014. "Sellars on the Function of Semantic Vocabulary." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22 (4): 792–811.

Shapiro, Stewart. 2014. *Varieties of Logic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Strawson, P. F. 1949. "Truth." *Analysis* 9 (6): 83–97.

Tarski, Alfred (1933) 1983. "The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages." Translated by J.H. Woodger. In *Logic, Semantics, Metamathematics*, edited by John Corcoran (second edition), 152–278. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Williams, Michael. 2013. "How Pragmatists Can Be Local Expressivists." In Price 2013, 128–44.

———. 2016. "Pragmatism, Sellars, and Truth." In *Sellars and His Legacy*, edited by James O'Shea, 223–60. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wright, Crispin. 1992. *Truth and Objectivity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

———. 1996. "Response to Commentators." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 56 (4): 911–41.

———. 1999. "Truth: A Traditional Debate Reviewed." In *Truth,* edited by Simon Blackburn and Keith Simmons, 203–38. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2013. "A Plurality of Pluralisms." In *Truth and Pluralism: Current Debates*, edited by Nikolaj Pedersen and Cory Wright, 123–53. Oxford: Oxford University Press.