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Butler and Postanalytic Philosophy

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Abstract

This article has two aims: (i) to bring Judith Butler and Wilfrid Sellars into conversation; and (ii) to argue that Butler's poststructuralist critique of feminist identity politics has metaphilosophical potential, given her *pragmatic* parallel with Sellars's critique of conceptual analyses of knowledge. With regard to (i), I argue that Butler's objections to the definitional practice constitutive of certain ways of construing feminism is comparable to Sellars's critique of the analytical project geared toward providing definitions of knowledge. Specifically, I propose that moving away from a definition of *woman* to what one may call poststructuralist *sites of woman* parallels moving away from a *definition of knowledge* to a pragmatic account of *knowledge* as a *recognizable standing in the normative space of reasons*. With regard to (ii), I argue that the important parallels between Butler's poststructuralist feminism and Sellars's antirepresentationalist normative pragmatism about knowledge enable one to think of her poststructuralist feminism as mapping out *pragmatic* cognitive strategies and visions for *doing philosophy*. This article starts a conversation between two philosophers whom the literature has yet to fully introduce to each other.

I

If one is to see the transformative metaphilosophical potential of Judith Butler's position about gender categories in terms of prioritizing poststructuralist feminist resources over purely analytical ones, one first needs to have Wilfrid Sellars's reflections on conceptual analysis of knowledge in view. In *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, Sellars aimed to *radically* revise the project of normative epistemology. Central to his Kantian commitment to the conceptual irreducibility of normativity and intentionality is his rejection of an *analysis of knowledge*:

> [T]he idea that epistemic facts can be analyzed without remainder—even "in principle"—into nonepistemic facts, whether phenomenal or behavioural, public or private, with no matter how lavish a sprinkling of subjunctives and hypotheticals is, I believe, a radical mistake—a mistake of a piece with the so-called "naturalistic fallacy" in ethics. (Sellars 1956/1997, §5)

> In characterizing an episode or a state as that of *knowing*, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says (§36).

Rather than conceive of knowledge in terms of justified true belief, [1] or even in terms of that model's Nozickean modifications[2] Sellars abandons any *talk* about knowledge that frames it as something to be analyzed.[3] The concern about analysis here from the (left-wing[4]) Sellarsian perspective,[5] which differs importantly from Timothy Williamson's arguments for the category of knowledge as fundamental and therefore unanalyzable (see Williamson 2000), is that conceptual analysis of knowledge fails to do justice to the *normative, pragmatic dimensions of epistemic practice* (cf. Rouse 1987; Tanesini 1999). As Sellars writes:

> [O]ne couldn't have observational knowledge of *any* fact unless one knew many *other* things as well. And let me emphasize that the point is not taken care of by distinguishing between *knowing how* and *knowing that*, and admitting that observational knowledge requires a lot of "know how." For the point is specifically that observational knowledge of any particular fact, for example, that this is green, presupposes that one knows general facts of the form "*X is a reliable symptom of Y*." And to admit this requires an abandonment of the traditional empiricist idea that observational knowledge "stands on its own feet." (Sellars 1956/1997, §36)

In perceptual experience, for Sellars, human beings do not just produce responses to causally affecting stimuli by means of verbal mechanisms, whether these are just atomic or complex propositions. Rather, in responding to stimuli in this linguistic way, *human beings are articulating the representational content of perception in such a way as to enable reflection on it*. Because we *reflect* on the content of our experience, we see ourselves, to use an expression from John McDowell, as "having the world in view," and, as such, rationally constrained by and answerable to the world. For us to be in this phenomenological position, the content of our experience must be brought under concepts, because reflection is impossible without concepts. Sellars, in opposing the Myth of the Given,[6] allies with Kant, who is one of the forbears of inferentialism, because Kant's claim that intuitions without concepts are blind underpins the idea that nothing can count as a legitimate component of experience (or phenomenological state) if it is not subject to concepts whose function is to structure content in such a manner as to make contents inferentially relevant. In other words, perception is epistemically valuable if and only if it is inferentially relevant. Inferential relevance is determined by how perceptual contents are structured so that they can figure as elements of conceptually articulated judgments, as being involved in either premise or conclusion; to put this more clearly, *concepts, as the logical functions of judgment, are used in the formation of judgments, and the form of judgment articulates experiential states*. In articulating experiential states *qua* the form of judgment, experiential states become inferentially significant and relevant, because these states now figure in *the space of reasons*. Therefore, concepts play a crucial role in the inferential articulation of experiential states, given the relationship between concepts and judgment.

Focusing on the *production* and *reproduction* of epistemic norms and knowledge-attributions that undercut the Myth of the Given necessarily involves articulating knowledge as a particular kind of *language-game*—where this epistemic practice is inherently normative, insofar as one is, to use Robert Brandom's well-known left-wing

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Sellarsian expression, *playing the game of giving and asking for reasons*. To put this another way, the idea of framing questions about knowledge in this manner views such an epistemic kind as something one cannot intelligibly grasp independently of a deliberative public sphere. Since Sellars construes human beings as *persons*—that is, *intentional, linguistic, discursive, agentive beings*—the normative *space of reasons* clearly contrasts with the descriptive *space of nature*.[7] As Sellars puts it:

> To say that a certain person desired to do A, thought it his duty to do B but was forced to do C, is not to describe him as one might *describe* a scientific specimen. One does, indeed, describe him, but one does something more. And it is this something more which is the irreducible core framework of persons. . . . Now, the fundamental principles of a community, which define what is "correct" or "incorrect," "right" or "wrong," "done" or "not done," are the most general common *intentions* of that community with respect to the behavior of the members of the group. It follows that to recognize a featherless biped or dolphin or Martian as a person requires that one think thoughts of the form "We (one) shall do (or abstain from doing) actions of kind A in circumstances of kind C." To think thoughts of this kind is not to *classify* or *explain*, but to *rehearse an intention*. (Sellars 1963, 539–40)

In Hegelian fashion, Sellars insists that what individuates *persons* is not just a description of their practices, but also an account of how those practices convey persons' sensitivity to a normative community; the ways in which persons are sensitive to fellow language-using agents. For Quill Kukla (writing as Rebecca Kukla) and Mark Lance, "Sellars is getting at the point that recognizing someone as a person is not merely an observative act, but also a practical act of the second kind. . . . We become and remain the types of beings that have specific, agent-relative engagements with others through an ongoing network of hails and acknowledgments . . ." (Kukla and Lance 2009, 180–81). Equally, epistemic kinds are not discrete, purely representational kinds that can be broken down into primitives, *to the extent that epistemic kinds are articulated asocially*.[8] Speech-acts involved in playing the game of giving and asking for reasons "are the acts they are in virtue of being planted within and constituted by a rich social and institutional context" (Kukla and Lance 2016, 86). Any commitment to the social dimension of knowledge-attribution must involve a commitment to viewing the fixation of belief, to use Peirce's term, as something that cannot be achieved independently of *practices* of inquiry.[9] Since knowledge-attribution is a *normative* practice through-and-through, it is necessarily social, as norms can be meaningfully established only through *deliberative discourse* in order to be deemed authoritative, legitimate, and valid for those engaging in such discourse.

According to Sellars, because norms are "social achievements" (Brandom 2002, 216) established by the *intersubjective* epistemic practices between agents, norms get their normative purchase—that is, their *rational bindingness*—by virtue of being assented to and acknowledged by a community of discursive agents.[10] To quote Steven Levine here, "[n]orms have no existence outside of their being taken as correct or incorrect—as being authoritative or not—by a community of persons" (Levine 2019, 253). Crucially, though, the practice of assenting to and acknowledging normative constraints and normative entitlements (see Haugeland 1997) comprises determining the content of norms "through a 'process of *negotiation*' involving ourselves *and* those who attribute norms to us" (Houlgate 2007, 139). By virtue of being a process of *negotiation*, norms and identities are never *fixed* but always subject to "further assessment, challenge, defence, and

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correction" (Brandom 1994, 647). As such, for Sellars, one replaces the model of conceptual analysis with a normative pragmatic framework: *knowing is a recognizable standing in the normative space of reasons*.

A crucial motivation for Sellars's move here is not simply his Kantianism-Hegelianism about normativity and meaning.[11] His *pragmatic* abandonment of the framework of analysis about knowledge in 1956 also seems to spring from a prophetic concern with an apparently ossified noetic state of play: mainstream analytic epistemology's apparent inability to get over Gettier-style problematics since 1963 led to discursive banality in *talk* about knowledge. One either had to find a counterexample to Gettier cases that safely secured the third necessary and sufficient condition for knowledge; or, one had to put forward a fourth necessary and sufficient condition for knowledge, having recognized the hopelessness of the tripartite model. Since Sellars aligned himself in complex ways with the pragmatist tradition, one has good reason to suppose his critique of the project of analysis about knowledge is, in part, a William James-inspired worry, insofar as normative epistemology was *talking* about normative matters in the wrong way. Overcoming the rigidity of conceptual analysis in *this* context would involve *broadening one's sense-making vocabulary*.

Thus far, I have reconstructed Sellars's critique of the analytical project geared toward providing definitions of knowledge. In what follows, I argue that Butler's critique of feminist identity should be understood as comparable to the Sellarsian critique of conceptual analysis here: *definitional practices tend to oversimplify and exclude other equally cogent and rich sense-making enterprises in favor of a nonpluralistic explanatory scheme*. Moving away from definitions of *woman* to what one may call poststructuralist *sites of woman* concerning performativity and social constitution parallels moving away *from* a *definition* of knowledge *to* a *pragmatic* account of "knowledge" as a recognizable standing in the normative space of reasons.[12] The important similarities between Butler's poststructuralist position on gender and Sellars's normative pragmatism about knowledge enable one to think of her poststructuralist feminism as mapping out *pragmatic* cognitive strategies and visions for *doing philosophy*.

II

For Butler, the emancipatory function of feminism should not be predicated on *any* attempt to define *woman*. As she writes:

> If a stable notion of gender no longer proves to be the foundational premise of feminist politics, perhaps a new sort of feminist politics is now desirable to contest the very reifications of gender and identity, one that will take the variable construction of identity as both a methodological and normative prerequisite, if not a political goal. . . . The identity of the feminist subject ought not to be the foundation of feminist politics. (Butler 1999, 9)

> [T]he identity categories often presumed to be foundational to feminist politics, that is, deemed necessary in order to mobilize feminism as an identity politics, simultaneously work to limit and constrain in advance the very cultural possibilities that feminism is supposed to open up. (187)

Under Butler's account, feminist identity politics,[13] since it is grounded on an analysis of *woman*, risks presupposing gender essentialism insofar as feminist identity politics is

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said to be organized around women as a *unitary collective*. Group membership is fixed by some "golden nugget of womanness" (Spelman 1988, 159), a set of *natural conditions*, *experiences*, *practices*, or *features* that women *qua* women supposedly share and that are necessary and sufficient for their gender: for example, a human being who (i) has an XX chromosome, female physical features and sex organs, (ii) female somatic phenomenology, and (iii) the social phenomenological features traditionally associated with the term *woman*. As K. Anthony Appiah notes on the logic of identity politics *tout court*, "[c]ollective identities, in short, provide what we might call scripts: narratives that people can use in shaping their life plans and in telling their life stories" (Appiah 1994, 159–60). For Butler, the danger of defining *woman* lies in how the definitional practice (a) oversimplifies; and (b) is itself *ideological* and risks deeming some women as inauthentic.

Regarding (a), unitary gender notions narrow the conceptual field and fail to take differences *among* women into account, thus failing to recognize "the multiplicity of cultural, social, and political intersections in which the concrete array of 'women' are constructed" (Butler 1999, 19–20).[14] Blindness to plurality is the result of a conceptual lacuna in which the vocabulary and discursive matrix for coordinating discourse about identity is overly restricted. As Susan Strickland phrases it:

> [D]ominant theories and categories were wrong not simply in universalising beyond their scope, i.e., that they were partial in the sense of being limited, not universally applicable, but that they were also partial in the sense of being ideological, interested and distorted; in short to a greater or lesser extent false. . . . The assertion of feminist "difference" was and is, basically a challenge and critique. (Strickland 1994, 267)

From this perspective, then, I would argue that whatever deficiencies there are in making sense of "women" are instantiations of a more *general* and *structural* conceptual failure that is part and parcel of identity politics *eo ipso*. To quote Appiah here:

> But it seems to me that one reasonable ground for suspicion of much contemporary multicultural talk is that it presupposes conceptions of collective identity that are remarkably unsubtle in their understandings of the processes by which identities, both individual and collective, develop. (Appiah 1994, 156)

Though one could argue that definitional practice is *politically useful* for mobilizing attention, a powerful left-wing worry about contemporary identity-talk is that its propensity for construing groups as monolithic blocs risks articulating identities in Parmenidean ways. Using a turn of phrase from Andrew Pringle-Pattison, an overly simple and unsubtle discursive framework about groups sees individuals "devoured, like clouds before the sun, in the white light of the *unica substantia*" (Pringle-Pattison 1897, 173). As if failing to make substantive room for differences *within* groups is not problematic enough, the Parmenidean articulation of identity would also render inquirers conceptually blind to the *genealogical* backdrop for developing an approach to identity as what one might call a "hermeneutic sphere." Conceptualizing identity through a narrow prism that does not refer to historical, sociological, cultural, psychological, psychoanalytic, and anthropological backdrops, serving as the crucible in which identities are formed, reformed, molded, developed,

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redeveloped, and *contested* would seem a rather impoverished way of making sense of things (see Butler 1999, 7).

Regarding (b), in the attempt to undercut phallogocentric ways of conceptualizing the feminine subject, feminist identity politics created a *new* form of *ideology*.[15] The definition of *woman* invariably *reifies* gender,[16] which, as Linda Nicholson argues, "operates as a policing force which generates and legitimizes certain conditions, experiences, practices, experiences, etc., and curtails and delegitimizes others" (Nicholson 1998, 293). However, one should not lose sight of how the ideological-reificatory features of *gender* definitions spring from the ideological-reificatory features built into *identity* definitions *eo ipso*, since "[i]dentity categories are never merely descriptive, but always normative, and as such, exclusionary" (Butler 1991, 160). As William Connolly writes:

> An identity is established in relation to a series of differences that have become socially recognized. These differences are essential to its being. If they did not coexist as differences, it would not exist in its distinctness and solidity. Entrenched in this indispensable relation is a second set of tendencies, themselves in need of exploration, to congeal established identities into fixed forms, thought and lived as if their structure expressed the true order of things. When these pressures prevail, the maintenance of one identity (or field of identities) involves the conversion of some differences into otherness, into evil, or one of its numerous surrogates. Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty. Identity is thus a slippery, insecure experience. . . . (Connolly 2002, 64)

The significant problem with feminist identity politics is that if one does not satisfy the definition of "woman," the implication is that one is not *truly* a woman; one is not *authentically* a woman; one is not *really* a woman. And, extending this to the political sphere, if one is not *truly* a woman, if one is not *authentically* a woman, if one is not *really* a woman, then one is highly unlikely to receive feminist representation at *any* level of concerted resistance to androcentric environments. In other words, feminist identity politics involves symbolic violence with material effects, insofar as *woman* can *never* be defined in a way that does not suggest—either implicitly or explicitly—some "unspoken normative requirements" (Butler 1999, 9) to which women should conform, so as to be deemed *real women*. As Appiah writes, "[i]t is at this point that someone who takes autonomy seriously will ask whether we have not replaced one kind of tyranny with another" (Appiah 1994, 162–63).

I agree with Appiah about how the dialectic shifts to *intra*-group struggles—however, there is room to substantiate the particular notion of tyranny here and explicate in more detail what exactly is so dangerous about this type of tyranny: mobilizing discourse and *praxis* around unitary collective identity invariably means that membership in that collective turns on how *pure* one's identity claims are judged.[17] This, as Christopher Zurn rightly phrases it, "fosters illiberal pressures toward conformity against supposedly 'inauthentic' members; it perpetuates subordinating intra-group hierarchies whereby only some have the privilege of defining and speaking for the group's collective identity" (Zurn 2015, 88). For example, consider the following table, which illustrates how a first-person question about inclusion in a relevant social group can often be met with a gatekeeping response concerning the "purity" and "legitimacy" of that individual's claim for inclusion in that particular social group:

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Ain't I Black/Latinx/Asian/White?	Is X Black/Latinx/Asian/White Enough? (see Dodson 2017; Hall 2017)
Ain't I a Man?	Is X Enough of a Man? (see Parke 2016; Finch 2017)
Ain't I a Woman?	Is X Enough of a Woman? (see Parke 2016; Finch 2017)
Ain't I a Conservative?	Is X Conservative Enough?
Ain't I a Radical?	Is X Radical Enough?
Ain't I a Liberal?	Is X Liberal Enough?
Ain't I Disabled?	Is X Disabled Enough?
Ain't I Queer?	Is X Queer Enough? (see Valocchi 2005)
Ain't I Poor?	Is X Poor Enough?
Ain't I Young/Old?	Is X Young/Old Enough?

This powerful quote makes all these worries about *intra*-group hierarchies clear:

> When the General Federation of Women's Clubs was faced with the question of the color line at the turn of the [twentieth] century, Southern clubs threatened to secede. One of the first expressions of the adamant opposition to the admission of colored clubs was disclosed by the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Examiner* during the great festival of fraternization at the Atlanta Exposition, the Encampment of the GAR in Louisville, and the dedication of the Chickamauga battlefield. . . . The Georgia Women's Press Club felt so strongly on the subject that members were in favor of withdrawing from the Federation if colored women were admitted there. Miss Corinne Stocker, a member of the Managing Board of the Georgia Women's Press Club and one of the editors of the *Atlanta Journal*, stated on September 19: "In this matter the Southern women are not narrow-minded or bigoted, but they simply cannot recognize the colored women socially. . . . At the same time we feel that the South is the colored woman's best friend. (Logan 1997, 235)

Furthermore, bell hooks importantly reminds her readers that in this example of the *Georgia Women's Press Club*:

> Here we have the spectacle of educated, refined, and Christian women who have been protesting and laboring for years against the unjust discrimination practiced against them by men, now getting together and the first shot out of their reticules is fired at one of their own because she is black, no other reason or pretence of reason. (Letter to the *Chicago Tribune* sent by a white male—referenced by hooks 1982, 130)

In their respective ways, both Rayford Logan and hooks portray systemic testimonial as well as hermeneutic injustice in these contexts, to the extent that these socio-epistemic pathologies are revealed as the workings of an epistemic *hierarchy*: white women claimed to understand black women better than black women understood themselves. According to the white feminists here, black women lacked the discursive architecture

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to produce knowledge; as such, the white feminists epistemically and politically managed the black women as they defined them.

Tragically, the irony is that movements that are deemed *progressive* and hallmarks of the New Left contain *fascistic features with the concern for purity and authenticity*,[18] *to the extent that oppressive and marginalizing power relations are being ideologically reproduced rather than being systematically eroded*. To quote Butler here:

> [T]he premature insistence on a stable subject of feminism, understood as a seamless category of women, inevitably generates multiple refusals to accept the category. These domains of exclusion reveal the coercive and regulatory consequences of that construction, even when the construction has been elaborated for emancipatory purposes. Indeed, the fragmentation within feminism and the paradoxical opposition to feminism from "women" whom feminism claims to represent suggest the necessary limits of identity politics. (Butler 1999, 7–8)

As such, the mistake of feminist identity politics was *not* that they gave a bad definition of *woman*, *but that feminist identity politics aimed to define woman.*[19] The definitional practice operates *juridically*, since "the subjects regulated by such structures are, by virtue of being subjected to them, formed, defined, and reproduced in accordance with the requirements of those structures" (Butler 1999, 4). In order to overcome the limitations of such a way of theorizing about gender and its corresponding story of political representation and participation, Butler argues one ought to adopt a *performativity* thesis. A performativity thesis necessarily involves understanding *woman* as "a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end. As an ongoing discursive practice, it is open to intervention and resignification" (43).[20]

Genders and gendered traits (like being nurturing or ambitious) are the "intended or unintended product[s] of a social practice" (Haslanger 1995, 97). Females *become* women through a process whereby they acquire "womanly" traits and learn "womanly" conduct (Beauvoir 1949/1984, 273). Children are often dressed in gender-specific clothes and colors, and parents tend to buy their children gender-specific toys and games. Parents also (regardless of intentions) tend to reaffirm certain "appropriate" gender-specific behaviors: girls *qua* "girls" are often discouraged from playing sports like rugby; boys *qua* "boys" are often told not to cry. For Butler, then, gender is not "a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is . . . instituted . . . through a stylized repetition of [habitual] acts" (Butler 1999, 179). These acts include wearing certain clothing that *marks* one's gender, moving and positioning one's body that *marks* one's gender, and so on. Understood in such a manner, performativity and its new vocabulary involves *pragmatic* constitution: gender is not something one *is*, it is something one *does*; it is a sequence of acts, a *doing* rather than a *being*. "Gender only comes into being through these gendering acts" (Mikkola 2019). Repetition and institutionalization of these performative acts—speech, behavioral, and so on—crystallizes gender, and, in doing so, invariably encourages people to think of gender as a *natural* kind. The *critical* perspective on gender provided by performative theory and its conceptual allies, therefore, aims at the progressive transformation of society from one structured in accordance with *reified* and *oppressive* gender norms.

The *epistemic* advantages of performative theory are that, unlike definitional practices, performativity is better equipped to *make sense* of gender: it recognizes how gender is a "messy" concept and therefore requires a discursive matrix that can *sensitively* coordinate and capture *the complex phenomenological and hermeneutic textures*

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indicative of gendered bodies and gendered experiences.[21] Both Natalie Stoljar and Mari Mikkola, to varying extents, write in a supportive manner on the subject of acknowledging just how complex and multidimensional gender is:

> *womanness is something complex, not something simple, and the ingredients in the complex structure of womanness are not always the same ingredients from one woman to another*. The same ingredients make up the components in our concept of woman but are not always all instantiated in the individuals to whom the concept applies. (Stoljar 2011, 40)

> Women may simply have an extremely complex and, thus, unanalysable feature of womanness in common that makes them women. (Mikkola 2006, 92)

I would argue that applying definitional practices to such a domain of inquiry is a *category error* insofar as definitions are "too buttoned-up and white-chokered and clean-shaven a thing" (James 1906/2003, 146) to adequately make sense of *not only* messy and contested bodies and experiences, *but also the norms and power dynamics governing gender-attribution*. In this way, one increasingly moves away from definitions of *woman* to what one may call poststructuralist *sites of woman*.[22] From this perspective, then, the following *pragmatist* critique of early modern rationalism by James is particularly relevant to Butler's poststructuralism here:

> A pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once for all upon a lot of inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers. He turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad *a priori* reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns toward concreteness and adequacy, toward facts, toward action and toward power. (James 1907/2000, 27)

However, a crucial set of points must be made before directly returning to the proposed Sellars–Butler conversation, as the stakes are *philosophically and politically* high here. Analytic feminists, of course, are not blind to the complex phenomenological and hermeneutic textures indicative of gendered bodies and gendered experiences. Indeed, Katherine Ritchie has recently argued that talk about racial, gender, disabled, and sexual orientation groups *needs greater nuance*, helpfully distinguishing between Organized Social Groups and Feature Social Groups (Ritchie 2015; 2018).

For Ritchie, Organized Social Groups are groups like sports teams, committees, and clubs, typified by a formal structure. Feature Social Groups are racial groups, gender groups, disabled groups, and sexual-orientation groups constituted by a *shared feature*. "Social groups of this sort are not simply collections of people, for they are more fundamentally intertwined with the identities of the people described as belonging to them. They are a specific kind of collectivity, with specific consequences for how people understand one another and themselves" (Young 1990, 43). Ritchie, crucially, notes that "sharing a feature" must *not* be interpreted in such a way that involves a commitment to essentialism about gender or race or disability or sexuality: "[o]ne might argue that the view that social kinds are property clusters rather than properties is preferable, as taking there to be a property *womanness* or *Blackness* is to essentialise.[23] One might argue that not all women or all Black people have a shared (even socially constructed) feature; one should be anti-essentialist" (Ritchie 2018, 30, n. 27).

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Ritchie stays neutral on the subject of whether the shared feature emblematic of racial groups, gender groups, disabled groups, and sexual-orientation groups is *a natural property* or *a socially constructed property* or *some combination of natural and socially constructed property*.[24] However, though this quasi-Lockean position on the metaphysics of Feature Social Groups could be construed as dissatisfying, insofar as one is none the wiser about the *positive* nature of the shared feature, Ritchie's position should *not* be dismissed. This is because her commitment to anti-essentialism in conjunction with her notion of a cluster concept at least seems to *explicitly* resist the urge to reduce gender and so on in "an all or nothing way as a simple idea" (Armstrong 1978, 54). To quote Brian Epstein, "[the aim here is] to challenge the idea that they have simple answers. There seems to be a powerful drive among theorists to unify and simplify the endless diversity and variation among kinds of groups" (Epstein 2019, 2).

My concern about Ritchie's position, though, is that she appears to deploy investigations into social ontology in a manner that creates insufficient scope for *critical* social ontology. Ritchie claims that her articulation of the metaphysics of social groups is in service of "better understand[ing] our world and ourselves" (Ritchie 2018, 17). However, following Marx, the task for philosophy is not merely to interpret the world, but to *change* it. Therefore, with regard to the project of social ontology, *it is not sufficient to better carve the social at its joints; one must also have in view whether the metaphysical categories we use to make sense of gender, race, disabled* (see Barnes 2016)*, and sexual-orientation groups are themselves prone to ideological distortion and vitiation*. In other words, one must prepare to not only recognize that our vocabulary for talking about gender and the like is not fit for the purpose, but also prepare to *transform* that very vocabulary for the *emancipatory* purpose of ending oppression, domination, and marginalization. This is why, as Sally Haslanger writes, "[a]t the most general level, the task is to develop accounts of gender and race that will be effective in the fight against injustice" (Haslanger 2012, 226).

It is worth stating that there seems to be some degree of tension between Haslanger's claim here and her own *ameliorative* definition of *woman*.[25] The tension seems to lie in how it would appear that, although Haslanger's definition of woman clearly designates those under the oppressive forces of patriarchal misogyny and sexism, it seems to exclude *those who identify as women who do not genuinely find themselves systematically subordinated in some dimension and who are not marked in marginalizing ways*.[26] The problem is that if one does not satisfy the *ameliorative* definition of *woman*, the implication is that one is not *truly* a woman; one is not *authentically* a woman; one is not *really* a woman. *Woman* can *never* be defined *amelioratively* in a way that does not suggest—either implicitly or explicitly—*some* unspoken normative requirements to which women should conform, so as to be deemed *real women*: the *ameliorative* definition of *woman*, regardless of its *critical* dispositionality, remains a *definition*, and therefore operates under *juridical* logic.[27] As Kukla and Lance express a similar point:

> to be a member of the community is not, in the first instance, to have some feature in common with other community members. Rather, the "we" is constituted and sustained through the transactions among the various mutually recognizing subjects who make it up. The community is not a predefined space into which candidates may fit or fail to fit; it is a space *created* and given its character and its boundaries by the discursively interacting individuals who make it up—individuals who can speak from a first-person perspective to others in a second-person voice. (Kukla and Lance 2009, 192)

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III

The question now concerns the ways in which Sellars's critique of analysis and Butler's critique of feminist identity politics bear on each other: both Butler and Sellars, in their respective ways, object to discursive matrixes that *narrow* the conceptual field. For example, as I have argued, Butler worries that unitary categories of gender and identity are cognitively and politically destabilizing, since they are inherently exclusionary and reifying;[28] Sellars worries that *analyzing* knowledge instead of construing such an epistemic kind *pragmatically* renders inquirers unable to make sense of playing *the game of giving and asking for reasons*.

(i) Sellars's critique of analysis is decidedly uninterested in finding any *features* or *states* or *properties* serving as conditions of knowledge. Rather, knowledge is conceptualized in terms of a recognizable standing in the logical space of reasons, the "network of discursive holdings" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 192) comprising the norm-constituting practices of language-using discursive agents. Crucially, the act of playing the game of giving and asking for reasons is *relational*. Importantly, those "relationally defined activities sustained by mutual recognition" (183) are *complex* through and through, to the extent that the practices occurring in the logical space of reasons are articulated in *processist* terms. The processist inflections of the game of giving and asking for reasons reveal that *certain* normative functions can be performed *only* by relational, as opposed to substantival, categories. The idea that epistemic norms are *formed, molded, and developed* implies that *ordinary analytical vocabulary is subject to an error theory*. Understood in such a manner, normative pragmatism about knowledge illustrates how conceptual analyses of knowledge rest on construing epistemic norms as *substantival, rather than as relational*; how conceptual analyses of knowledge mistakenly rest on *reifying* epistemic norms and kinds; how conceptual analyses of knowledge mistakenly rest on the ""Platonic scorecard" vision of normative space as an abstract network" (193).

The *normative* space of reasons' clear contrast with the *descriptive* space of nature means that one cannot apply conceptual analysis, a strategy best conducive for making sense of *natural* kinds (for example, water), to the *social* space of reasons. Know*ing* is to be baptized in a deliberative public sphere of fallible discursive transactions; know*ing* is to move sufficiently well in the normative space of reasons through *sensitivity to reasons*. For Sellars, since personhood and knowledge are "equiprimordial [normative] phenomena" (189), persons and knowledge are irreducible to the ideal scientific image, not because they are "emergent" kinds over and above the descriptive-explanatory categories of science, but because *personhood and knowledge are not in the business of describing and explaining in the first place*.

(ii) Butler's critique of definitional practice is decidedly uninterested in finding any *features* or *states* or *properties* serving as conditions of "woman." Rather, gender is articulated as involving repetitive and stylized *performative acts*. Crucially, those performative acts constituting the norms governing gender attribution and the like are *relational*. Importantly, the relationally defined performative activities sustained by recognition are *complex* through and through, to the extent that repetitive and performative stylized acts can be understood in *processist* terms. The processist inflections of gender performativity reveal that certain normative functions can be performed *only* by relational, as opposed to substantival, categories: to be gendered is not to satisfy a fixed set of biological or cultural criteria, but to be baptized in *a system of power relations* imbuing one's body and experiences with social significance. The idea that gender is *formed, molded,*

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and developed implies that *ordinary vocabulary is subject to an error theory*: gender performativity illustrates how definitional practice rests on construing gender as *substantival, rather than as relational*;[29] how definitional practice mistakenly rests on *reifying* gender. As Karen Barad phrases it, "[i]t is hard to deny that the power of language has been substantial. One might argue too substantial, or perhaps more to the point, too substantializing" (Barad 2003, 802).

I contend that the ways in which Sellars's critique of analysis about knowledge and Butler's critique of definitions of *woman* bear on each other consist predominantly in how both thinkers espouse conceptual frameworks that are *democratically oriented*. For both Butler and Sellars, in their respective ways, "[t]he ideal exercise of the rational capacities that any of us has now, from an epistemic as well as a political point of view . . . , seeks to cultivate and educate these same capacities in the direction of maximal inclusiveness" (Kukla 2006, 92).

It is reasonable to claim that Sellars's commitment to antifoundationalism and expansive conceptual frameworks, typified by his notion of *synoptic vision*,[30] is democratic and nonsupremacist because the activity of playing the game of giving and asking for reasons is sustained by *mutual* recognition. Sellars's notion of *synoptic vision*, namely his attempt to fuse or combine the *manifest image* of the world[31] with the *ideal scientific image* of the world,[32] aims to be democratic and nonsupremacist because there must be a pluralism of vocabularies in play to *adequately make sense of things*. To quote James O'Shea here, "the manifest image conception of persons as thinking and intending beings is supposed to be *preserved* rather than 'overwhelmed' (Sellars 1963, 8–9)" (O'Shea 2007, 136) when combined with the ideal scientific image of the world. Above all, Sellars's commitment to antifoundationalism and to the synoptic vision paints a picture of a thinker who wishes to replace, as Adriana Cavarero would phrase it (see Cavarero 2016), a *rectitudinal and vertical* image of sense-making practice and philosophical inquiry with a *stereoscopic* image of sense-making practice and philosophical inquiry:[33]

> The aim of philosophy, abstractly formulated, is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term. . . . To achieve success in philosophy would be, to use a contemporary turn of phrase, to "know one's way around" with respect to all these things . . . in that reflective way which means that no intellectual holds are barred (Sellars 1963, 51). . . . The conceptual framework of persons is the framework in which we think of one another as sharing the community intentions which provide the ambience of principles and standards (above all, those which make meaningful discourse and rationality itself possible) within which we live our own individual lives. A person can almost be defined as a being that has intentions. Thus the conceptual framework of persons is not something that needs to be *reconciled with* the scientific image, but rather something to be *joined* to it. Thus, to complete the scientific image we need to enrich it *not* with more ways of saying what is the case, but with the language of community and individual intentions, so that by construing the actions we intend to do and the circumstances in which we intend to do them in scientific terms, we *directly* relate the world as conceived by scientific theory to our purposes, and make it our world and no longer an alien appendage to the world in which we do our living. We can, of course, as matters now stand, realize this direct incorporation of the scientific image into our way of life only in imagination. But to do so is, if only in imagination, to transcend the dualism of the manifest and scientific images of man-in-the-world. (Sellars 1963, 40)

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Such a vision of what philosophy looks like and what its particular mode of cognitive engagement aspires to achieve seems to be shared by Nicholas Rescher:

> The definitive mission of philosophy is to provide a basis for understanding the world and our place within it as intelligent agents—with "the world" understood comprehensively to encompass the realms of nature, culture, and artifice. The aim of the enterprise is to provide us with cognitive orientation for conducting our intellectual and practical affairs. . . . Given this massive mandate, the prime flaw of philosophizing is a narrowness of vision. Granted the issues are complex and specialisation becomes necessary. But its cultivation is never sufficient because the details must always be fitted into a comprehensive whole. (Rescher 2017, 32)

> A philosopher who achieves her proximate, localized ends at the cost of offloading difficulties onto other sectors of the wider domain is simply not doing an adequate job. With rationally cogent philosophizing, it is not local minimalism but global optimalism that is required. To be acceptable, a philosophical problem-solution must form an integral part of a wider doctrine that makes acceptably good sense overall. Here only systemic, holistically attuned positions can yield truly satisfactory solutions—solutions that do not involve undue externalities for the larger scheme of things. (42)

Central to both Sellars's and Rescher's respective conceptions of the aims and task of philosophy is a commitment to *holism*. The kind of holism one can reasonably attribute to Sellars and Rescher is a Hegelian variety; in the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel (in)famously claimed that "[t]he True is the whole. However, the whole is only the essence completing itself through its own development" (Hegel 1807/2018, §20, 13). Here, the framework for understanding objects of experience is *not* restricted to the level of *ordinary* consciousness, where we can make only "thin" judgments that express their atomistic separation and only an artificial kind of unity. This is why, for Hegel, a move from *ordinary* to *philosophical* consciousness consists in recognizing, to use Paolo Diego Bubbio's terminology, "mediate objectivity"—"an ongoing process of mediation between subject and object which is always already in place" (Bubbio 2016, 238–39).

Rather than viewing reality as loosely connected sets of objects, we ought to conceive of Being as a complex and interconnected whole in which finite members are dialectically related. Such a move aims to supplant the perspective of *Verstand* with the perspective of *Vernunft* in discourse about sense-making. For Hegel, the advantage of drawing this distinction between reason and understanding is that we can be in a position to not be wrapped up in the various dualisms that are the inevitable consequence of reflecting only from the perspective of *Verstand*, that is, purely *analytical* forms of reflection. *Vernunft* provides consciousness with the means to avoid the problems of analysis by thinking *dialectically*, that is, by drawing distinctions yet establishing interconnectedness to a whole.

Butler's Foucauldian critique of feminist identity politics as well as her performativity thesis are clearly democratic and nonsupremacist:

> Foucault points out that juridical systems of power *produce* the subjects they subsequently come to represent. Juridical notions of power appear to regulate political life in purely negative terms—that is, through the limitation, prohibition,

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> regulation, control, and even "protection" of individuals related to that political structure through the contingent and retractable operation of choice. But the subjects regulated by such structures are, by virtue of being subjected to them, formed, defined, and reproduced in accordance with the requirements of those structures. If this analysis is right, then the juridical formation of language and politics that represents women as "the subject" of feminism is itself a discursive formation and effect of a given version of representational politics. And the feminist subject turns out to be discursively constituted by the very political system that is supposed to facilitate its emancipation. (Butler 1999, 4)

> For the purposes of a radical democratic transformation, we need to know that our fundamental categories can and must be expanded to become more inclusive and more responsive to the full range of cultural populations. This does not mean that a social engineer plots at a distance how best to include everyone in his or her category. It means that the category itself must be subjected to a reworking from myriad directions, that it must emerge anew as a result of the cultural translations it undergoes. What moves me politically, and that for which I want to make room, is the moment in which a subject—a person, a collective—asserts a right or entitlement to a livable life when no such prior authorization exists, when no clearly enabling convention is in place. (Butler 2004, 223–24)

Crucially, if one's metaphysics of gender is performative, then one is committed to the *fallibilist* view that the category of gender identity is never *fixed*, so much so that "[t]his field of possibilities is not static or singular but rather is a dynamic and contingent multiplicity" (Barad 2003, 819). Above all, these theoretical gains have an important transformative and emancipatory advantage: *they enable more democratic forms of association*, "to produce new forms of intimacy, alliance, and communicability" (Butler 2004, 208).

To my mind, a particularly evocative example of a category itself needing to be subjected to a reworking from myriad directions, for the purposes of a radical democratic transformation, *one bound up with Butler's poststructuralism about gender*, is Butler's queering of kinship, namely "the radical project of articulating and supporting the proliferation of sexual practices outside of marriage [producing] variations on kinship that depart from normative, dyadic heterosexually based family forms secured through the marriage vow" (Butler 2002, 16–17). For Butler, the contention that marriage—*whether heterosexual or homosexual*—is what *legitimates* kinship and sexual relations between partners is "unacceptably conservative" (21). States explicitly disincentivize nonmarital relationships and arrangements, for nonmarital kinship structures are not admitted into state-protection and state-incentive protocols *despite having caring relationships*. Therefore, the liberal claim to progressiveness, extending marriage to homosexuals, is not just premature, but a disturbing form of ideology.

Coded ideology serves to create a pathological genus of doubt about the *metaphysical* legitimacy of one's nonmarital relationship. This particular variety of doubt is hermeneutically crippling and deeply distressing, preventing a healthy, practical relation to one's beloved. *If your lover is not officially recognized, can you even mourn for them? If your lover is not officially recognized, can you even be said to have lost them if the relationship ends?* As Butler writes:

> If you're not real, it can be hard to sustain yourselves over time; the sense of delegitimation can make it harder to sustain a bond, a bond that is not real anyway, a

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> bond that does not "exist," that never had a chance to exist, that was never meant to exist. Here is where the absence of state legitimation can emerge within the psyche as a pervasive, if not fatal, sense of self-doubt. And if you've actually lost the lover who was never recognized to be your lover, then did you really lose that person? Is this a loss, and can it be publicly grieved? Surely this is something that has become a pervasive problem in the queer community, given the losses from AIDS, the loss of lives and loves that are always in struggle to be recognized as such. (25–26)

However, in response to my central comparative point concerning Butler and Sellars, namely the democratic and nonsupremacist character of what they substitute for definitional analysis of key concepts, one may object that there is a substantive difference between the sense in which Butler's poststructuralism is aspiring to a radical democratic transformation, which concerns *political subjects*, and a democratic and nonsupremacist relation between Sellars's two images. Under the Sellarsian synoptic vision of fusing the manifest and scientific images together into *one* coherent image, as O'Shea correctly notes, "Sellars does indeed want to hold that the ontology of persons as rational agents and conceptual thinkers within the space of reasons is in principle successfully accommodated *within* the comprehensively physicalist ontology of the ideal scientific image of the world" (O'Shea 2009, 194). Since the Sellarsian synoptic vision is structured *primarily* by the comprehensively physicalist ontology of the (ideal) scientific image, the purely third-person naturalistic vocabulary will invariably have *priority* over the first-person intentional vocabulary of the *manifest* image. Under Sellars's synoptic vision, so the argument goes, there is still some kind of epistemic hierarchy: *noneliminativist supremacy of the scientific image*.

There is much to agree with in this objection, *since there is a real risk of equivocation here*. However, though I am happy to concede that, given the *fundamental ambiguity* of Sellars's conceptual irreducibility of the manifest image-cum-strong scientific realism, his synoptic project is not radically transformative in exactly the *same* way that Butler's project is radically transformative about kinship structures, I contend that there is still an important sense in which Sellars can be legitimately regarded as radically transformative in the same *formal* way as Butler. *Both thinkers are focused on myth-debunking*: in Sellars's case, overcoming the Myth of the Given; in Butler's case, overcoming what one might call the Myth of Immutability—where the ideological contention that marriage is the grounds of kinship shares the same *formal* fixed character as the Given's foundationalism.

The important parallel between Butler's poststructuralist thesis about gender (as well as kinship structures) and Sellars's normative pragmatism about knowledge enable one to think of her feminism as mapping out *pragmatic* cognitive strategies and visions for *doing philosophy*. What I mean by this is that her approach to gendered bodies and experiences employs conceptual resources providing a particularly rich and engaging way of *doing philosophy*, so much so that philosophy's "self-image" (Williams 2006, 202) can be improved, confirming Gary Gutting's claim that "feminism promises to improve not only the climate for women but also philosophical thinking itself" (Gutting 2017).

If one wishes to remain wedded to a view of philosophy as a *second-order* discipline concerned with critical reflection on the ways in which one makes sense of sense-making practices, then Butler's poststructuralist antirepresentationalist variety of feminist theorizing makes a substantive *metaphilosophical* contribution, precisely because

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overturning the paradigm of definitional practice here is *a prime instantiation of critical reflection on making sense of sense-making*.

So, as Bernard Williams would put it, *what might philosophy become now*? It is reasonable to claim that the professional self-image of philosophy in the Anglo-American analytic tradition is "naturalism," the view that *the image of the world provided by the natural sciences is all there is to the world* (see Papineau 1993; De Caro and Macarthur 2004; Ritchie 2008; De Caro and Macarthur 2010; and Giladi 2019a). Naturalism, therefore, has metaphysical *and* methodological dimensions: (i) at the most fundamental ontological level, reality is just what the natural sciences deem it to be; (ii) our ways of intelligibly articulating reality, the ways in which we make sense of things, are ultimately justifiable only by the methods and practices of the *Naturwissenschaften*. The conjunction of (i) and (ii) is often referred to as "scientific naturalism." In what follows, I propose to treat "naturalism" and the philosophy–science relation in a way close to the anti-essentialist spirit ascribed to Sellars on epistemology and Butler on feminism. *Crucially, though, having eschewed definitional treatments of "knowledge" and "woman" in favor of pragmatic/democratic treatments, such a metaphilosophical lesson cannot now insist upon a definitional treatment of "naturalism," a particularly contested philosophical term*.

According to Williams, Jaegwon Kim, and Mario De Caro and David Macarthur respectively:

> It is hard to deny that over too much of the subject, the idea of getting it right which has gone into the self-image of analytic philosophy, and which has supported some of its exclusions, is one drawn from the natural sciences; and that the effects of this can be unhappy. (Williams 2006, 203)

> If current analytic philosophy can be said to have a philosophical ideology, it is, unquestionably, naturalism. (Kim 2003, 84)

> Naturalism is the current orthodoxy, at least within Anglo-American philosophy. (De Caro and Macarthur 2004, 1)

In terms of one's philosophical coming of age in many analytic departments, one is baptized a naturalist, to remove the original sin of supernaturalism. And, in terms of one's aspirations to be taken seriously in the Anglophone philosophical world and maintain good working relationships with the relevant powers that be, naturalism must be a doctrine that demands absolute loyalty on pain of some intellectual *auto-da-fé*. To quote Hilary Putnam:

> Today the most common use of the term "naturalism" might be described as follows: philosophers—perhaps even a majority of all the philosophers writing about issues in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind and philosophy of language—announce in one or another conspicuous place in their essays and books that they are "naturalists" or that the view or account being defended is a "naturalist" one; this announcement, in its placing and emphasis, resembles the placing of the announcement in articles written in Stalin's Soviet Union that a view was in agreement with Comrade Stalin's; as in the case of the latter announcement, it is supposed to be clear that any view which is not "naturalist" (not in agreement with Comrade Stalin's) is anathema, and could not possibly be correct. (Putnam 2004, 59)

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Over many years, however, the naturalistic self-image of Anglo-American analytic philosophy has come under scrutiny by analytically trained thinkers, such as Richard Bernstein, Brandom, Stanley Cavell, Donald Davidson, Susan Haack, John Haugeland, Alasdair MacIntyre, Joseph Margolis, John McDowell, Adrian Moore, Stephen Mulhall, Thomas Nagel, Putnam, Rescher, Rorty, Sellars, Charles Taylor, and Williams,[34] who are—in varying respects and with varying levels of intensity—*internal critics* of the Anglo-American analytic tradition.[35] Crucially, though, these "postanalytic"[36] thinkers are *not* clustered together because each of them contributes to a fully defined and articulated philosophical tradition. Rather, Bernstein et al.[37] are clustered in terms of how they all *broadly* share a critical stance toward the naturalistic self-image, *where the more critical a thinker is of the naturalist orthodoxy, the closer such a thinker is to being branded "apostate."*[38] Postanalytic philosophy's self-image is no longer a conception of philosophy as handmaiden to the *Naturwissenschaften*, but rather a conception of *philosophy as an amphibious humanistic discipline*, at home with both the natural sciences *and* cultural theory. To quote Williams here, who provides a *mantra* of postanalytic philosophy's metaphilosophical outlook:

> I very much prefer that we should retain the category of philosophy and situate ourselves within it, rather than pretend that an enquiry which addresses these issues with a richer and more imaginative range of resources represents "the end of philosophy." The traditions of philosophy demand that we reflect on the presuppositions of what we think and feel. The claim which I am making, from here, from inside the subject, is that in certain areas, at least, this demand itself cannot be adequately met unless we go beyond the conceptions of getting it right that are too closely associated with the inexpressive models drawn, perhaps unconsciously, from the sciences. . . . We can dream of a philosophy that would be thoroughly truthful and honestly helpful. . . . It would need resources of expressive imagination to do almost any of the things it needed to do. . . . (Williams 2006, 211–12)

> Philosophy is, rather, in these fields, the extension of our most serious concerns by other means, but at least it should introduce our ordinary concerns in a humanly recognizable form. . . . (206) But we should remember that work may be unimaginative not because it is badly argued but because it is arguing with the wrong people; not because it has missed an argument, but because it misses the historical and psychological point. . . . (212)

Of course, Butler is *not* a postanalytic philosopher—and therefore unlikely to identify with the very specific ways in which Williams places philosophy—but it would be incorrect to suppose this stultifies the potential for *instituting some communicative space* between Butler and postanalytic philosophers like Sellars. Butler's antirepresentationalist poststructuralist variety of feminist theorizing, and Sellars's antirepresentationalist normative pragmatism about knowledge are *prime instantiations of critical reflection on making sense of sense-making*. The anti-essentialist spirit ascribed to Sellars on epistemology and Butler on feminism means that it would be incorrect to deem Williams's position as "antinaturalist," as he is critical of *scientistic* varieties of naturalism only.[39] As he said in a 2002 interview, "in philosophy the thing that irritates me is smugness, particularly scientistic smugness. What makes me really angry these days are certain kinds of reductive scientism that knock all the philosophical difficulties

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out" (Jeffries 2002). Williams, therefore, aims to occupy a middle-ground position between what McDowell calls "bald naturalism" (reductionism or eliminativism) and "rampant Platonism" (antinaturalism):

> It can easily seem that there is no space to move here. Setting our faces against bald naturalism, we are committed to holding that the idea of knowing one's way about in the space of reasons, the idea of responsiveness to rational relationships, cannot be reconstructed out of materials that are naturalistic in the sense that we are trying to supersede. This can easily seem to commit us to a rampant platonism. It can seem that we must be picturing the space of reasons as an autonomous structure—autonomous in that it is constituted independently of anything specifically human, since what is specifically human is surely natural . . . and we are refusing to naturalise the requirements of reason. . . . But there is a way out. We get this threat of supernaturalism if we interpret the claim that space of reasons is *sui generis* as a refusal to naturalise the requirements of reason. But what became available at the time of the modern scientific revolution is a clear-cut understanding of the realm of law, and we can refuse to equate that with a new clarity *about nature*. This makes room for us to insist that spontaneity is *sui generis*, in comparison with the realm of law, without falling into the supernaturalism of rampant platonism. (McDowell 1994, 77–78)

For Williams et al., recognizing the autonomy and heterogeneity of the normative space of reasons in no way entails conceiving of its features as "imaginary skyhooks" (Baker 2013, xxii). Reality is, as Lynne Baker beautifully phrased it, "capacious . . . more English garden than desert landscape" (234). In this respect, anti-essentialism can analogously help *democratically treat* "naturalism." I would argue that the "scientism wars" are frustrating, principally because on one side, there are hermeneutic humanists who think that naturalists *tout court* are denying discourse-pluralism; and on the other, there are scientistic naturalists who think hermeneutic humanists are denying that, *in the dimension of describing and explaining the world*, science is the measure of all things. Because the Unity of Science thesis, whether reductionist or eliminativist, is *not* grounded in a careful examination of scientific practice, it risks opening the door to the charge of scientism. However, if one considers *those philosophers of science who are looking at science in terms of practices*, such as John Dupré, Nancy Cartwright, Steven Horst, and Joseph Rouse, a careful explication of how scientific practices yield a pragmatically efficacious grip on reality, there is reason to reject any top-down commitments to the Unity of Science (as for example driven by some *a priori* commitment to mechanistic physics as the epistemic ideal of inquiry). But, once one sees that pragmatic realism in philosophy of science does not entail—*and in fact, strictly speaking, undermines*—the Unity of Science thesis, "scientism" just becomes a chimera.[40]

What I hope to have achieved in this article is to start a conversation between two philosophers "to produce new forms of intimacy, alliance, and communicability." The anti-essentialist spirit I have ascribed to Sellars on epistemology and Butler on feminism reveals a plethora of additional interesting and difficult questions about *how the space of reasons is organized*, *where its epistemic authority comes from*, *how one negotiates the space of reasons*, and especially, *how one gets into normative space at all*. The task of further articles is to "keep conversation going" (Rorty 1979, 377).

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Notes

1 S knows that *p* iff

(1) *p* is true
(2) S believes that *p*
(3) S is justified in believing that *p*.

2 S knows that *p* iff

(1) *p* is true
(2) S believes that *p*
(3) S would believe that *p* if *p* was true
(4) S would not believe that *p* if *p* was false.

See Nozick 1983.

3 "Modern analytical empiricism . . . differs from that of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume by its incorporation of mathematics and its development of a powerful logical technique. It is thus able, in regard to certain problems, to achieve definite answers, which have the quality of science rather than of philosophy. It has the advantage, in comparison with the philosophies of the system-builders, of being able to tackle its problems one at a time, instead of having to invent at one stroke a block theory of the whole universe. Its methods, in this respect, resemble those of science . . ." (Russell 1945, 834).

4 "Left-wing" Sellarsians (most notably Richard Rorty, Robert Brandom, John McDowell, and Michael Williams) emphasize Sellars's Kantian commitment to the conceptual irreducibility of intentionality and the manifest image. "Right-wing" Sellarsians (most notably Ruth Millikan, Patricia Churchland, Paul Churchland, William Lycan, Jay Rosenberg, Daniel Dennett, and Johanna Seibt) emphasize Sellars's commitment to a strong form of scientific realism pointing to either the eliminability or reducibility of normativity.

Crucially, the cost of putting Sellars into dialogue with Butler should not be fixing on *one* aspect of his complex views, the conceptual irreducibility of the logical space of reasons, at the expense of his strong scientific realism.

5 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind' is clearly hostile to foundationalist approaches to knowledge, but such antifoundationalism does not obviously entail a rejection of *analyzing knowledge as such*. One might even call Sellars's antifoundationalist conception of knowledge a "protracted re-analysis" of knowledge. In response, I contend that the Sellarsian objection to analyzing knowledge *as such* rests on the notion that since *knowledge is not a natural kind*, making sense of it requires a different framework from analysis, which is used to best make sense of natural kinds.

6 The Myth of the Given can be explicated thus: it refers to the traditional empiricist claim that perceptual judgments are epistemically justified by nonconceptual sense contents. At the *base* of our perceptual experience, there are things that do not have propositional content that immediately provide us with epistemic relations, particularly relations of justification. But perceptual judgments, for Sellars, can only be justified to the extent that they have epistemic relations with cognitive states, things with propositional content. As Edrie Sobstyl puts it: "[t]he whole point of his challenge to the Myth of the Given is to undermine foundationalism in empiricism. The empiricist tradition . . . holds that you cannot have observational knowledge without other kinds of knowledge, on pain of succumbing to the Myth of the Given. And, Sellars goes on to argue, it is impossible to make sense of our agency in the world without giving up this myth" (Sobstyl 2004, 133).

See also the following helpful explications of what the Myth of the Given is from James O'Shea and Quill Kukla respectively:

"Roughly speaking, one version of the idea of the Given that Sellars famously rejects, at least in one of its traditional epistemological roles, is the idea that since it would seem not all items of knowledge can be epistemically dependent on other items of knowledge, there must be some items of knowledge that are directly warranted for us simply in our immediate experience or apprehension of them, whether by sense or by reason, independently of any other knowledge that we might possess. Sellars, however, argued that there are no

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epistemically autonomous or independent items of directly given knowledge that could coherently fit that bill. And like Kant, the ways in which Sellars argued for this claim made it a point not just about knowledge, but about the more basic possibility of having any contentful and potentially self-aware experience of objects in a world at all—a point about intentionality or representational purport itself" (O'Shea 2016, 2).

"Sellars argues that if perception is to be able to provide any warrant, its contents have to have conceptual structure sufficient to allow them to bear rational relationships to other conceptually articulated judgments. We must be able to perceive *that* x is F, rather than just taking in brute sense data. But, Sellars contends, our ability to *perceive that* some perceptual fact of the form 'x is F' holds requires that we grasp the conditions for the appropriate application of the concept F. That is, we must understand the conditions under which things that *appear to be F are F*, and vice versa. To use his example, I cannot *see that* a necktie is green unless I understand facts such as that green things look green under natural lighting, that they don't look green when seen on a black and white television, and so forth (EPM, §18). Now, grasping such conditions for property recognition involves understanding under what conditions various inferences (such as the inference, in a certain context, to x's actually being F) are or are not licensed by appearances. Without this normative and inferential mastery, we cannot distinguish between *seeing that* x is F and it merely *looking as though* x is F, in which case, according to Sellars, we could not drive the crucial wedge between appearance and reality that is necessary for our perceptual states to count as properly epistemic states. Hence for him, the ability to recognize a piece of evidence cannot be neatly separated from our ability to use it in inference, and hence perception cannot be taken as a capacity for discovery that lies outside the context of justification" (Kukla 2006, 85–86).

7 Cf. "The image marks a contrast between two kinds of intelligibility: the kind that is sought by (as we call it) natural science ['the kind we find in a phenomenon when we see it as governed by natural law'] and the kind we find in something when we place it in relation to other occupants of 'the logical space of reasons' ['the kind of intelligibility that is proper to meaning']" (McDowell 1994, 70).

8 Cf. Lorraine Code's feminist empiricism (Code 1991).

9 To quote Sobstyl here, such an approach heralds "[a] shift away from Cartesian individualism toward more social models of knowledge" (Sobstyl 2004, 119).

10 As Herbert Feigl puts this point: "The quest for scientific knowledge is regulated by certain standards or criteria . . . the most important of these regulative ideals [is] intersubjective testability. . . . What is here involved is . . . the requirement that the knowledge claims of science be in principle capable of test on the part of any person properly equipped with intelligence and the technical devices of observation and experimentation" (Feigl 1949 139). Interestingly, though, one should note here that Feigl is rather more friendly to conceptual analysis than my construal of Sellars.

11 There is a sizeable literature on this subject. See Brandom 1994; McDowell 1994, Brandom 2000; 2002; O'Shea 2007; Brandom 2008; deVries 2009; Kukla and Lance 2009; McDowell 2009; O'Shea 2009; Brandom 2015; deVries 2016; Kukla and Lance 2016; and O'Shea 2016, in particular.

12 A potential critique of my argument concerning poststructuralist dimensions of gender could come from Cressida Heyes, who argues that a Wittgensteinian form of feminism—one focused on *family resemblances* (Wittgenstein 1953/2009, §§65–67)—may be better than a poststructuralist variety of feminism (Heyes 2000). Crucially, though, both Heyes and I reject any articulation of feminism that is foundationalist and questing for purity. As such, the structure of the dialectic here shifts from a *suasive* interplay between essentialist and anti-essentialist to a debate concerning *explanatory* arguments for anti-essentialism. The advantage of such a Dummettian shift consists in opening new frontiers of discussion. Addressing whether Heyes's Wittgensteinian variety of feminism is the most convincing anti-essentialist feminism is the task of another article, but I would venture to note at least I have initial concerns about the usefulness of family resemblances here.

13 For further on identity politics, see Alcoff 1997; 2000; 2006a; 2006b.

14 For further on this subject, see Spelman 1988.

15 "Do the exclusionary practices that ground feminist theory in a notion of 'women' as subject paradoxically undercut feminist goals to extend its claims to 'representation'?" (Butler 1999, 8).

16 "Is the construction of the category of women as a coherent and stable subject an unwitting regulation and reification of gender relations? And is not such a reification precisely contrary to feminist aims?" (Butler 1999, 8–9).

17 "You're not black enough for them. You're not R&B enough. You're very pop. The white audience has taken you away from them"—Whitney Houston, after being booed at the 1989 Soul Train Awards.

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18 Particularly evocative examples of this can be seen in the conflict between Trans-exclusionary Radical Feminist (terf) activism and trans-activism. What is common to terf-activism, to quote Katherine O'Donnell in conversation with me, is "a yearning for a taxonomy that can provide for stability, hierarchy, and purity."

19 Cf. the following from Monique Wittig: "What is woman? Panic, general alarm for an active defense. Frankly, it is a problem that the lesbians do not have because of a change of perspective, and it would be incorrect to say that lesbians associate, make love, live with women, for 'woman' has meaning only in heterosexual systems of thought and heterosexual economic systems. Lesbians are not women" (Wittig 1992, 32).

20 A very common critique of Butler's poststructuralism, which is most clearly evidenced by Martha Nussbaum's extraordinarily vicious "The Professor of Parody," centers on the claim that Butler's position undermines feminist activism and politics, since poststructuralism depoliticizes the feminine standpoint, stultifying its emancipatory potential (Nussbaum 1999). However, on the contrary, there is *every* reason to see Butler's poststructuralism as *furthering* feminist activism and politics by articulating a genealogical and performative framework, a framework that is *far more* democratic and inclusive. For further on this point, see Stone 2004.

21 Cf. "The move toward performative alternatives to representationalism shifts the focus from questions of correspondence between descriptions and reality (e.g., do they mirror nature or culture?) to matters of practices/ doings/actions. I would argue that these approaches also bring to the forefront important questions of ontology, materiality, and agency . . ." (Barad 2003, 803; see also Haraway 1997).

22 See Stoljar 2011, 42 for a useful counterpoint here.

23 See Stoljar 1995; 2011 for a sophisticated account of gender as a cluster concept.

24 "I am staying neutral on the nature of the features or properties. They might be natural, socially constructed, or partially natural and partially social in nature" (Ritchie 2018, 28, n. 2)

25 "S is a woman if S is systematically subordinated along some dimension (economic, political, legal, social, etc.) and S is 'marked' as a target for this treatment by observed or imagined bodily features presumed to be evidence of a female's biological role in reproduction" (Haslanger 2000, 39).

26 According to Mikkola, "Haslanger's position is gender realist and she maintains that women have a feature in common that makes them women: they are all socially positioned as subordinate or oppressed where this social positioning is sex-marked" (Mikkola 2006, 87). See Stoljar 2011 for a response to Mikkola's reading of Haslanger.

27 In response to what I have just argued, as helpfully raised by one of the reviewers of my article, I recognize the risk that I fail to appreciate the *externalist* aspect of the ameliorative definition given by Haslanger. That is, women are in some sense defined by others as such when they are oppressed as women. Thus, my critique that some women do not think of themselves as oppressed may not apply to *Haslanger*'s definition of women. First, because whether one thinks and/or feels they are oppressed is often *not* a good test of oppression. Second, being oppressed might be considered a concept that applies counterfactually. For example, if x is treated as a subordinate (systematically penalized for being not a man) under conditions C, then one *is* a woman. There is an important place for the externalist approach in making sense of oppression. However, my critical remark should be viewed more modestly, insofar as I want to draw attention only to how there is also an important place for an internalist dimension. To clarify, I am talking only about the internalist approach *here*.

28 And that border control, rather than an emancipatory vision, becomes the focus of our politics.

29 Cf. Karen Barad's agential realist ontology.

30 Synoptic vision is "his attempt to bring his scientific naturalism fully to bear on his Kantian-pragmatist conception of the manifest image as the holistic and conceptually irreducible domain of persons and norms, of meaning and intentionality" (O'Shea 2016, 7).

31 The perspective of first-person intentionality and irreducible normative vocabulary.

32 The "Peirceish" perspective of natural science and purely descriptive and nonevaluative ways of sense-making.

33 See O'Shea 2007; 2009; deVries 2016, Giladi 2019b; forthcoming; and Levine 2019 for responses to whether Sellars's notion of the synoptic vision is ultimately coherent and plausible.

34 Williams gave the Inaugural Lecture at the Centre for Post-Analytic Philosophy at Southampton University in November 1997.

35 There is some similarity but also some difference between my cluster and the original cluster comprising the first collection of writings on postanalytic philosophy by John Rajchman and Cornel West, which

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regards Rorty as the *paradigmatic* postanalytic philosopher (Rajchman and West 1985). As far as I am aware, the only other volume on postanalytic philosophy is Reynolds et al. 2010.

See the following from Williams: "it is particularly important that 'post-analytic' should not be understood in terms of the supposed distinction between analytic and continental philosophy. I say this as one who is, both deniably and undeniably, an analytic philosopher: deniably, because I am disposed to deny it, and undeniably, because I suspect that few who have anything to say on the subject will accept that denial. What I do want to deny is the helpfulness of the distinction itself, and I shall mark that in particular by saying very little about it. But it is worth emphasising that what is unhelpful in this contrast goes beyond the matter of the unfortunate labels it uses" (Williams 2006, 201).

36 The following from George Duke, Elena Walsh, James Chase and Jack Reynolds is helpful here: "The term 'postanalytic' has been used to characterize the work of thinkers who, having started out in the mainstream analytic tradition, came to place in question some of its central presuppositions" (Duke et al. 2010, 7).

Construed in such a manner, one may now wonder where Quine fits into the cluster here, for Quine played arguably the most important role in moving analytic philosophy out of its Carnapian phase with his critique of the analytic/synthetic distinction, his critique of semantic reductionism, and his articulation of ontological relativity and the indeterminacy of translation. More to the point, Quine self-described as *post-analytic*. However, for all of his radical dismantling of the two dogmas of empiricism and break from Carnap and analyticity, Quine's strict and conservative variety of naturalism and conception of philosophy as the abstract arm of empirical science means that he is a *different kind* of postanalytic philosopher from Bernstein et al.

Another sketch of postanalytic philosophy is provided by Christopher Norris, who writes: "What chiefly unites [various ideas and movements of thought under the broad rubric of 'post-analytic' philosophy]—on the negative side—is a growing dissatisfaction with the analytic enterprise as it developed in the wake of logical empiricism. That project is now taken to have failed in all its main objectives, among them more recently the attempt to develop a truth-theoretic compositional semantics for natural language and a theory of beliefs (or propositional attitudes) that would explain how speakers and interpreters display such remarkable—though everyday—powers of communicative grasp. These ideas have come under attack from many quarters during the past two decades. Most influential here has been Quine's assault on the two 'last dogmas' of empiricism and—supposedly following from that—his case for ontological relativity and meaning-holism as the only way forward in default of any method for individuating objects or items of belief. The result, very often, is an attitude of deep-laid skepticism with regard to the truth-claims of science and the idea that philosophy might offer grounds—reasoned or explanatory grounds—for our understanding of language and the world" (Norris 1997, x). "What these approaches share is a sense that philosophy has now arrived at a stage—with its holistic turn against any version of the logical-empiricist paradigm—where talk of 'truth' (as hitherto conceived) becomes pretty much redundant. That is to say, it either drops out altogether (as in Rorty's neopragmatist appeal to what is 'good in the way of belief'), or else figures merely as a product of formal definition" (2). "Such is at least one sense of the term 'post-analytic philosophy': the quest for an alternative to that entire tradition of thought, starting out from logical empiricism, whose upshot—after so much critical labor—would seem to be either a formalized (semantic or metalinguistic) theory of truth devoid of explanatory content, or on the other hand a pragmatist conception that reduces truth to the currency of in-place consensus belief" (6).

Although some of what Norris writes about postanalytic philosophy is helpful, my concern is that (a) he misconstrues Quine's critique of logical empiricism as undermining the epistemic authority of the natural sciences; and (b) Norris's reliance on Rorty's pragmatist-cum-deconstructionist critique of analytic philosophy as the exemplar of the postanalytic risks postanalytic philosophers such as Williams and Haack being seen as *postmodernist* thinkers.

37 One might counter my point here by claiming that it is disingenuous on my part to deem liberal naturalists as outside the mainstream of the analytic tradition, since there is already a sharp conflict underway to claim that position as mainstream.

38 The way I have characterized postanalytic philosophy in the broad sense differs from how Hans-Johann Glock articulates the concept: "continental philosophy presented by Anglophone commentators who refer to analytic thinkers like Wittgenstein, Quine and Davidson (e.g. Taylor, Cavell and Mulhall)" (Glock 2008, 256).

39 All antinaturalists reject scientism, but not all rejections of scientism are also rejections of naturalism.

40 Given this, the following pertinent question arises: "why, from a diagnostic perspective, does scientism still *persist* despite resting on implausible grounds?" One compelling answer to this question involves

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explaining scientism's persistence in terms of scientism's status as the theoretical concomitant of the kind of social pathologies caused by the ideological exercise of formal reason in capitalist modes of production. Scientism can (and *should*) be conceived of as an ideological partner concept of capitalism, not only by noticing how both scientistic varieties of naturalism and increasingly unfettered forms of market capitalism are historically symbiotic with one another, but also by noticing how scientism and capitalism are logically bound instantiations of formal reason: scientistic varieties of naturalism are typified by systematic practices of nomothetic reason aimed at subsuming all phenomena under the laws of fundamental physics; capitalism is typified by systematic practices of strategic reason aimed at subsuming all phenomena under the commodity form, construing humanity exclusively as *homo oeconomicus*. More to the point, neoliberal capitalism exercises modern, disciplinary power by producing and reproducing an epistemic hierarchy in which STEM is positioned at the top of the recognition order, which is itself structured entirely by the non-humanistic focus on "positive ROI" (return on investment).

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