# The underappreciated philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars

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## The underappreciated philosopher Wilfrid Sellars

**Daniel:** Today we're going to talk about something really interesting, it's a very important paper by the philosopher Wilfred Sellars, it's called "philosophy and the scientific image of man," and it was based on two lectures that were given at the University of Pittsburgh in 1960. And the paper is very interesting, in that I would argue it's both very influential and almost completely ignored. So I know people, on whom it's had a tremendous influence, one of your colleagues David Rosenthal is a big Sellars fan. And Rosenthal is a major player in consciousness and of that related series of areas in the philosophy of mind.

He also is a professor of mine when I was at the graduate centre, so there's a number of people I think who would sight Sellars as a major influence and this paper as being one of the reasons, but he also is not one of the people that's typically brought up in the history of analytic philosophy, he's not brought up in the way that Equine or a Hilary Putnam, or even a Kirkby is brought up. And I wonder maybe some of the reasons will come out in the discussion of the paper, the paper is quite difficult, but I think Massimo, let's see if you'll agree with me, it provides a really remarkable framework within which to express a whole number of problems, that I think is really useful.

**Massimo:** Yes, oh I completely agree, so I didn't study Sellars in graduate school, and I actually came across the distinction between scientific and the manifest image of which we will talk about in a few minutes, I think reading Dan Dennett of all things because I think we should go back to that as well, and then I used to eventually traced back to the source, and then when I read the paper, thought holy crap, this is really good stuff and I think you're right that everybody, in the living tradition, in philosophy and beyond sort of recognizes Sellars importance, but his name doesn't come up, hasn't become an household name, although rereading recently the entry about Sellars in the Stanford encyclopida of philosophy I agree with the claim of the author there that actually, that there's been a revival of interest in Sellars ideas and therefore hopefully in its broader philosophy.

I would go as far as saying that when I read some of his stuff, a lot of things for me clicked because as you know, I'm probably sure some of our viewers will know,

my background is a dual one in science and philosophy, and so ever since I moved profession, to do philosophy I looked for sort of a framework from which making sense of my two careers, as well as my two different ways of looking at the world, right? As a philosopher and as a scientist, and I think that Sellars actually provides a pretty much perfect ready-made sort of framework.

And I would actually go as far as saying that actually Sellars to me, may help make sense of what the whole point of modern philosophy actually is and that may be going further than even maybe you want to go, but I think there is something to be said there on that behalf, and you know of course no individual thinker has ever had the last word ever. So I'm sure there are things that that will need to revise and improve upon, but I think that Sellars contributions are really ideas that ought to be taken seriously and read more widely now, which is why we have this conversation to begin with.

**Daniel:** Yeah I would say, I mean tell me if you think this is maybe part of the reason, it's part of the reason for the revival of fortunes of Sellars and particularly this piece, is because people have become increasingly frustrated with the seeming intractability of the reduction program, and they're looking for other ways, and the sort of the appeals to superveiniance have seemed less than satisfying, in so far as they really don't say very much. Other than that, you know, one thing supervenes or another, if you were to replace one particle by particle, you would wind up with the same thing, which doesn't say very much about the relationship between the two.

**Massimo:** No in fact it says very little, and so I think you're right that one of the problems here, is that on the one hand again as a scientist, you know if you were to tell me, well this conversation that we're having is made possible by the laws of physics, and it's really a bunch atoms you know swinging around, and I'll say yeah sure of course, but that tells me nothing about the conversation, it tells me nothing about you as a person, or about me as a person or as professional philosophers or what we're talking about.

So yeah, in a sense that's true, I would say at this point it's trivially true, but it's not helpful at all, and so the question is how do you reconcile as you know the scientific view or image as Sellars puts it with the evolving understanding of the world, we have as some particularly thinking human beings, so perhaps we should start with...

## The "manifest image" vs. the "scientific image"

**Daniel:** Yeah why don't you go ahead and tell me how you see the difference, so that the major distinction that this paper makes, and then we'll link to the paper obviously, that Sellars makes between what he calls the manifest image and the scientific image, and then you want to give your account of what you think it is and if I agree entirely I'll just nod and if I think that something needs to be added I'll say so afterwards.

**Massimo:** Well actually we have a quote from Sellars himself it's very short and then we have a short commentary immediatly following that quote that you can find in the Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy. Then I'll tell you what I think about it

**Daniel:** Okay sounds good.

**Massimo:** So the quote from Sellars is:

> 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.[1]
>
> Thus, philosophy is a reflectively conducted higher-order inquiry that is continuous with but distinguishable from any of the special disciplines, and the understanding it aims at must have practical force, guiding our activities, both theoretical and practical.[2]

So I take this to mean that what Sellars was aiming at and he thought the point of philosophy was, you know modern philosophy, is to develop a sort of a stereoscopic vision, where we can see simultaneously and integrate in a good way, you know satisfactory way, the scientific image and the manifest image.

Which means that even though Sellars was a naturalist, he said explicitly that when it comes to understanding the natural world, well that science is the only game in town, that's it, there's nothing else that can replace it.

But that does not mean that one can do a useful reduction or elimination of concepts, such as normativity, you know meaning and things like that. Most concepts have to stay, not in the sense that there are some kind of mystical, you know hanging around above or beyond science or you know whatever people sometimes seem to think. But just in the sense that they are irreducible to the scientific discourse, we simply cannot do without them and we should not try to do without them, and the way to proceed in our understanding of the world is to keep these two views in mind. And therefore

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[1] Philosophy and the scientific image of man by Wilfred Sellars.
<selfpace.uconn.edu/class/percep/SellarsPhilSciImage.pdf>
Under 'things in the broadest possible sense' I include such radically different items as not only 'cabbages and kings', but numbers and duties, possibilities and finger snaps, aesthetic experience and death. 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, not in that unreflective way in which the centipede of the story knew its way around before it faced the question, 'how do I walk?', but in that reflective way which means that no intellectual holds are barred

[2] Wilfrid Sellars — Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sellars/>
Norms are not reduced away in Sellars's naturalism; he accommodates normativity, not as a basic, ontologically independent feature of the world, but rather as a conceptually irreducible, indispensable aspect of distinctively human activity grounded in the collective institution of principles and standards. We will return to the question of norms later in this article.

I would say the aim or a major aim of philosophy is you know to see how these two things hang together.

You know how is it that every new discovery of science, what kind of import does it have on our manifest image because manifest image does changed over time, you know we don't have the same image today in the 21st century that people had you know a thousand years ago.

**Daniel:** Yes that's right, that's right.

**Massimo:** But at the same time, you know we are human beings, we're limited in understanding, we want to understand things and so to get the idea that we can eliminate somehow, talk of meaning and purpose and normativity, and all that kind of stuff in favors of talk of atoms and neural-fibers and things like that is just nonsense. And I think that is what Sellars is saying and then I'm completely on board. What's your take?

**Daniel:** Yeah so on, we probably in order to do this well, we need to sort of give the definition of each for him because it's important to note that he emphasizes that the manifest image is not unscientific, meaning that in the sense that it's not it's not necessarily un-rigorous or even it does not necessarily preclude things like enumerative induction, right? I mean he specifically talks about, he says that "the manifest image is subject to empirical refinement,"

**Massimo:** Right

**Daniel:** And so he calls it under the heading of "correlational induction." He says what really distinguishes the scientific image from the manifest image, is that there is nothing in the manifest image that corresponds to the scientific images use of theoretical entities. In other words you're right that the manifest image changes, but one way in which it does not change, is that it does not change by way of the introduction of theoretical entities and theoretical concepts in the way that it does in the scientific image, right?

**Massimo:** Yes that's right.

**Daniel:** And so I don't want people to think that the manifest image is just an ordinary folk view of the world.

**Massimo:** No.

**Daniel:** It includes a lot of philosophy for one thing,

**Massimo:** Yes

**Daniel:** It includes a lot of what we would call, let's say casual social science, in the sense and I would even argue maybe that if you took social science, about half of it is working in the manifest image and then the other half is at least trying to work in a scientific image.

**Massimo:** Yeah I think that's right, and in fact one of the reasons, so I found this other thing, right at the end of the article, which I thout was interesting, it says that Stellar studies are dominated by a clash between the right-wing Selarsians and left-wing Selarsians and it's interesting what the distinction is.

So the right wing is exemplified by people like the Churchland's, Ruth Milligan, J Rosenberg, these are people who emphasize Sellers scientific realism and nominalism, while the left-wing is people like Rorty and McDowell and random who emphasize instead that Sellars insistence on the irreducibility and sociality of rules and norms.

And I can't believe I'm going to say this, but i find myself closer to the Rortian angel.

**Daniel:** Yeah we're on the left wing aha!

**Massimo:** And I can say this honestly, as somebody who doesn't actually have a lot a lot of sympathy for Rorty, I think that you know Rorty went over the deep end towards the end of his career, with too much weird stuff about rejecting philosophy itself and pragmatism that wasn't really pragmatism.

But nonetheless, I think he's definitely closer to what I think is a sensible interpretation of Sellars, than the Churchland's, I mean the classic example of the Churchland's approach to things, is that eventually neuroscience would allow us to do away with talk of mental states and pain and things like that, because pain really is "you know the firing of C-fibers and things like that."

Well no, pain isn't really the firing of C-fibers, C-fibers are the material biological basis, by which we feel pain, but pain is a subjective experience that is typical of humans and other animals and not of anything else. And that needs to be described on its own terms and the two terms, in fact going back into, this is the perfect example I think of the stereoscopic vision, as a scientist, particularly as a biologist, I can easily switch between these two versions and say; "oh! I'm in pain," I have the subjective state and that description is meaningful, it need not to be eliminated, in fact it cannot be eliminated. I cannot talk sensibly...

**Daniel:** And there's certainly all sorts of modes of discourse, in which that's the way you have to talk about it, in order for the discourse to make sense, right?

**Massimo:** Exactly.

**Daniel:** Where talking about it in the scientific language so to speak, would makes no sense in the kind of conversation you're engaged in and that's why I think it's important to note that one of the things he notes about the manifest image, and I actually think this is at its heart, I mean people focus on the point about theoretical entities, and I think that's important because I think that is a very distinctive way in which science does its business, that is sometimes defining. But I think that really the more important element of the manifest image, that distinguishes it from the scientific one, is that the manifest image includes people and their point of view in it.

**Massimo:** Yes.

**Daniel:** In other words, it's not just about the world from a neutral description, from a neutral vantage point, it's about the world as represented by people, all right? And that's why a world that has normativity in it, that has agency in it. In the neutrally described world of science, there is no agency, that dryer, there is no normativity to me and are no values.

**Massimo:** That's right and I think that's why, the tension there I think comes out, still out of the fact that even though other scientists, even today in the 21st century suffer from physics envy. And so the physics has been, since Galileo and Newton, you know the paragon of science, and yes it is a great science, is a great approach to reality, but it is in fact the furthest away from the subjective point of view, from the normative point of view and so on and so forth. What biology gets closer and then definitely the social sciences get right there, and that's why we have a plurality of Sciences, that's why we're not going to do away with the social sciences and reduce it to biology and then when we've got just biology reduce it to physics, that project to me is a non-starter, it makes no sense.

"Norms are not reduced away in Stellars naturalism..." and it's important to remember that he is in fact a naturalist, he does accept the scientific image, doesn't question it, doesn't reject it, he's not a mysticist, you know nothing like that. "He accommodates normativity, not as a basic ontological feature of the world, but whether as a conceptually irreducible indispensable aspect of the distinctively human activity, that ground's those human activities," so that I think is a very reasonable way of looking at them.

**Daniel:** I agree

**Massimo:** Right, and the more I think about it, the more it bothers me that it isn't painfully obvious to others, there are others like the Churchland's and even Dan Dennet.

**Daniel:** I agree. Yeah. Or people on your blog that I fight with all the time that I routinely get. You have to scold me for being mean to because I don't have your stoic patience. Yeah, but you know, on the other hand, it is kind of subtle, right?

**Massimo:** Yes.

**Daniel:** I mean, it's kind of. Especially if you were brought up in a very sciency way of looking at things, right, you don't and and. And, you know, I think also one can one can make a mistake. The part that you read about it not being fundamental, it's not fundamental automatically. But it is fundamental in another sort of way, right? And in, in other words, and maybe that way is a little hard to articulate in that. Look, I mean you you can't go below it and still be talking about what you were talking about, right?

**Massimo:** And that's that's why the quote that I just mentioned uses the word irreducible irreducible as opposed to you know. So means that yeah, this is the bottom level of discourse, not the bottom ontological level. The we all agree that the bottom ontological. Level of the universe.

**Daniel:** Is Clark. Right. And neutrinos and and.

**Massimo:** Works or springs fields or whatever the hell physicists agree you know on on, on today as opposed to tomorrow. What's the the the the the basic ontological level. That is the basic ontological level. But as a level of discourse as a level of understanding. There are some things. There simply are irreducibly conceptually, that you're not going to be able to replace. Doctor Pain with neurobiology and you're not

going to be able to replace talk of of values and normativity with fundamental physics, not even in principle. This isn't a question of Oh well, we're not able to do it now. So we'll get there. Now there is. It makes no sense to even think.

**Daniel:** Yeah.

**Massimo:** About the fact that you could possibly do. Something like that.

**Daniel:** Yeah. Yeah. And and that's because, I mean, I would argue that that's because all of these notions are only intelligible when one, when one looks at the world's from the point of view of agents, right, and and so and so because you can't talk about. Social reality, let's call it that. OK, which includes agents and agency and thus norms and and values. You can't talk about them, but from points of view it's simply you are no longer than talking about those things anymore. And so you know if. You want to talk ontologically. You know. You know, in that sense you. Know you wonder whether. There are elements of sort of social reality that are not ontologically reducible beyond a certain point. As types, right? I mean, once you get once you get below the certain point, all you can do is is, is, is, is give a let's say, an anonymous account of. So so for example, I could give an atomistic account of the motor movements that are involved in my arms coming together like this, and my adopting a certain posture, but I couldn't give that account of praying. And so and so there is something irreducible there and I don't know that it's just explanatorily irreducible, right. Once you get below. A certain level. The thing you were talking about isn't. There anymore, right? The act isn't there anymore. Maybe that's the difference between an action and an event.

**Massimo:** Yeah, I I I hear what you're saying. The reason I. Don't want to go as far as saying that you know, this is ontological impossibility to to reduce or ontological limit reduction, because then you then you need to actually articulate very carefully what you mean by ontological, right? So are you talking about? Cities are you talking about, you know? What is it that that? That that's going on there and. I don't think we need. To that is in order to block the what I would what I would consider so the scientistic move, which is no, no, everything can be viewed eventually at least.

**Daniel:** Right, right.

## Why scientism bothers Massimo

**Massimo:** Theory to science and scientific and scientific. Let's put it this way, in fact. So let me get back for a second. One of the reasons I find. Sellers analysis interesting is because it finally makes sense for me. What is it that? Really bothers me about scientism, right? I mean, other than that, there are sort of attitudinal aspects of scientism that bother me. Right, this that this is. Sort of cocky, you know. Attitude of our science is all the the end of all, and it's, you know, if you're not a scientist, you're not really doing anything interesting. And strong for that, but. That's a psychological thing that just annoys me. And as you, as you point out as a story trying not to get. Annoyed by things? But that's not the problem I'm trying to figure out I've been.

Trying to figure out for a while. What what exactly is? It conceptually that bothers me about about science. And I think Sellers provides the answer there that is. What science scientism is trying to do, one way to understand scientism is as the program that eliminates the manifest image in favor of the scientific image, right? So that's that's one way to, I think that very constructive way actually. To understand what scientist means and I can point out to people actually. Really do want to do that.

**Daniel:** An effort to replace the replace, in other words, to to eliminate the manifest image and just have the scientific image right.

**Massimo:** But and there. Are people who are on board clearly with that program, at least in philosophy, people like the churchlands that we already mentioned. Yeah. Yeah. I think that this point, especially after this latest thing that we might want to talk about.

**Daniel:** Jay Rosenberg. Alex. Alex Rosenberg. That consciousness is an illusion.

**Massimo:** Right in the consciousness as illusion kind of thing. So all those people are philosophers that seem to be on board at this point with that kind of program. And of course, it's not difficult. Find you know, physicists like Lawrence Krauss and and associates. They are the same, the same board. So and and I think about it, that was finally. Made it clear to me what is. It other than the. Psychological expert that bothers me about this. Thing that I. Think there are very good reasons and some of. Seller, which are spelled out by sellers himself for why that program is nonsensical. It's just it's not going to happen. That's not what you want. You don't want to be on that sort of thing. It's not possible. To have you, you brought up the idea of sort of joining hands and prayer and you know, so that you that if you look at it from a sort of independent to the sort of objective perspective, you cannot make sense of what's going on. I would say that goes for most human activities, right.

**Daniel:** Yes, all action. I would actually say that that's what distinguishes an action from a mere event that an action is something. That can be. Understood from a person's point of view. Right, that makes sense from a point of view.

**Massimo:** So I can give a description of every action that I do during a particular day during a particular day, right? And from an entirely physical perspective or biological perspective, if you will, or both. Right. And those are, you know, sort of third person independence, you know, view from above kind of thing you know non subjective. Jessica. Descriptions. The problem is those descriptions once, once that I reinterpret my actions during the day in terms of physics, then those actions are no different at all from anything else is going on in the universe from the planet Earth rotating around the sun from a rock falling down from an animal. Doing something or a plant doing something else. There's no death. Now, if the scientific image is incapable of recovering the difference between me and the rock, then let's. Say it's a problem.

**Daniel:** Yeah, and more substantially. It's a problem because. All the elements of significance and meaning and value that attach to the action attached to it, insofar as it is in action, not in so far as it is right. You know what makes something an act of aggression is the fact that it involves me representing you a certain way, right. It's not

that it involves atoms colliding in in various, in various fashions, and you could have two 222 things that are identical in terms of the underlying event. Yes. But one of which is. An act of aggression, and one which is not right and and. Unless people want to say none of. That matters, right? Right. And I don't think that they do, I mean, I mean that's that's the thing that. Bothers me the most is that. These are these aren't people. These aren't anarchists who want to get rid of law and morality and and. And all of these sort of thing. They think that they're just gonna be able to have it all. I mean, this is hard.

**Massimo:** Many, many days ago actually.

**Daniel:** Yes, right. This sort of glib I can just get rid of all of these things, but I still can keep civilization.

**Massimo:** Yeah, right now. So they don't. They want it. They seem to be want wanting to get rid of of the manifest image. You know. So that that as a intellectual exercise.

**Daniel:** Cheaply, cheaply. Yeah.

**Massimo:** Yes, as an intellectual exercise. But then keep all the all the stuff that actually matters in their day-to-day life. So here's another example. Well, you know, I've been interested as a biologist for a long time into the research on the neurobiology and and even Physiology of sort of falling in love. Right. So there's all these things these talk about. Oh, well, this, this, this, this, this famous, influential psychologists who is at Rutgers. In Stony Brook University, Ellen Fisher, thank you. Who wrote that lots of interesting articles about oh, you know what happens to people typically is they fall into certain surfaces first, you know, there is lust, which you have almost indiscriminate or, you know, a bunch of different people and. And there's a sort of romantic involvement which becomes, you know. Directed at one particular person and then if things keep going, you have sort of attachment and to the long term relationships and all that stuff and those phases are marked by different. Or model profile. Certain certain hormones flood your brain when you are when experiencing, you know, sort of sexual attraction towards somebody, a different set of hormones is flooding your brain or characterizing your brain patterns. When you know romantic phase or when you're. In attachment. Great. This is all interesting to me as a biologist, and actually it does help me. Makes sense of the manifest image of what it is that people find. Why is it people find attractive certain people? Why people you know fall in love? And all that, but if I. So far saying ohh then falling in love or having, you know, romance or attachment. It's just a matter of or normal profiles there I would be making a huge mistake because it isn't. It is underpinned in part physiologically by those or mono profiles. But if I take if I strip out the social context. The fact that there are social expectations about how to behave with other people, and the fact that there are values that are involved in the falling in love or not falling in love with a person. The fact that this adds or subtract meaning from your life and all that, all of that is entirely missing from a. Neurophysiological and, you know, study of what happens when people fall well, that does not mean that the science is somehow irrelevant. Of

course it's relevant. I like to know. You know, that part of the story. But that part of. The story is not the full story, and if I think that it is the full story, then I'm missing. Actually the more important. Because you know all you're saying, after all, at the end of. The day all. That Adam Fisher and others are saying is that look, when people have certain emotions, those emotions are underpinned by some kind of plain function. You know, brain machine well, no kidding. Yeah. The function. No brain. I would have. Emotions to begin with so that.

**Daniel:** Right, right. But that's that's a consequence of us being embodied, right? I mean, I mean, I mean, I mean.

**Massimo:** Exactly.

**Daniel:** Again, that's. That's the consequence of the fact that actions involve events, right? And that love involves physical interaction between people. But what makes it love is the way those people represent those physical actions, those physical events. And what the significance of those representations.

**Massimo:** How else would it go right?

**Daniel:** Which is why, although I do, I mean you're right. Of course that the biological things do tell you something about. The manifest thing, yes, I would say that that the reasons the person tells you, tell you a lot more, right? Yes. About the love. About the love, not about the underlying correct Physiology, but about the love itself. You know, the the person. What the person tells you the reasons why he loves this person. I think tell you a lot more than than than than the hormonal account.

**Massimo:** I would agree that that the way in. Which we talk and explain what. Happens to our, to our own subjective cells and those conditions. Is much more informative than the underlying Physiology. As much as I. Said as I find interesting, the studies about impact.

**Daniel:** I think it's fascinating and actually. It just makes me. Amazed at just how. Bizarrely complicated complicated the biological world is right. I mean, I mean, I don't want to say it. It almost always seems to me a little Rube Goldberg like but. But, but I don't. I don't know. I mean, you you're the scientist is is biology actually efficient?

**Massimo:** Yes. Oh, that's a good question. Maybe.

**Daniel:** We should because because whenever people give me arguments from design for God, I said the thing looks like a *******. Rube Goldberg to me.

**Massimo:** That's right. And actually I think a lot of biologists have come to see natural selection. I mean this is this is sort of a side topic here, but but what biologists come to have come to see natural selection as an optimizing process. But that's what they call what they call a satisfying process, that is.

**Daniel:** It's good enough, sort of. That's like.

**Massimo:** Really now and works on this this famous paper that came out of decades ago now that was presenting natural selection as a tinkerer. As something that it's a process that takes whatever materials are about around in the in the garage and puts them together in some kind of creative way.

**Daniel:** Which would give you a Rube Goldberg and a. Lot of a lot of times. Yeah. Yeah. Well, we could do another one on. We could do another one on that. That's a good one, so.

## Don't blame me, my brain made me do it!

**Massimo:** Yes, going back to Sellers. Here's another quote that I want to present to our work, to our listeners and and take and your your take on it. This is again from the Stanford treatment of of the topic which is very good as as usual as often is the. Case so he says. Cellus treatment of Mentalistic concepts has also inspired eliminativist philosophies of mind, such as those expelled by the Churchlands. The idea of those of that approach is that if folk psychology is like a theory, then, like any theory, it could be superseded and replaced by a better theory as scientific psychology. And neuroscience progresses, but selling himself through them, exactly selling himself crucially, was unmoved by.

**Daniel:** Says it's not a scientific theory.

**Massimo:** This idea, because the concept of folk psychology, and therefore the manifest image, are not focused solely or even maybe principally on the description and explanation of phenomena, the language of agency to which we will shortly return in the article is indispensable and cannot be replaced by the language of any scientific theory. So folks, I got. That's something that when I started the church lands. In middle school. I thought that's. Odd to consider folk psychology a similar or equivalent to a scientific it's clearly not. Yes, it does have an explanatory aspect to it, sure. And in that sense, it has a component that is. Kind of theory. Like, but unlike scientific theories, that's not the major work that it does.

**Daniel:** No.

**Massimo:** What your work is in terms of meaning and normality and so on and so forth.

**Daniel:** Right. Is it? Yeah, no. You know, to be fair to the churchlands though, this is something that folks like folk psychology enthusiasts have partly brought on themselves because people like fodder.

**Massimo:** Yes.

**Daniel:** Have tried to take intentional psychology and claim that it is causal explanatory in the manner of of it's a matter of theory and so then of course it's not a surprise that you know people who are even more science fetishistic than voter is are going to come along and say, well, but you know and point out to all these flaws. But look, I mean, this gets to. An even deeper. Argument that's been going on that's sort of been swaying back and forth. You know, prior to the 1960s. Reasons. So when I mean my reasons, I mean when we get when somebody gives a. Reason for an action? Or reason for a belief we're not typically understood as causes. Right. Because the influence then was Wittgenstein. It was Davidson who, in his very influential papers

on action, argue that reasons are causes and that then led us into this into this period that we're in now.

**Massimo:** Yes.

**Daniel:** In which reasons are taking those causes now if reasons are causes and the explanations that we give of actions when we cite reasons have to be taken as quasi scientific explanations now, in my opinion, as I wrote in this essay, that you very kindly linked to in your in your blog in. My opinion that. Just lends you right. In the free will problem. And and you're not gonna get out. Of it, yeah.

**Massimo:** Yep, Yep.

**Daniel:** And I think that it's a mistake to go that in there to begin with. I don't think that actions are events.

**Massimo:** Or at least they're.

**Daniel:** Not just events. And I don't think reasons or causes in the sense that, or at least they're not just causes. Maybe they're causes. Maybe that causes at all. But once you, once you do, I I don't see. I don't see how you get out of it. And and you know seller is something that sellers. Warns against. In the paper and you said. You use the word stereo stereoscopic now several times, and that's crucial. Him. He says what? You must never. Do is try to piece meal, introduce concepts from the scientific image into the manifest image. You could you could hold them up as two holes. Here are two ways of looking at the world and ask yourself. What is the? Relationship between the two. You can't do. Is start with and I think that maybe 70% of contemporary. Philosophy is piece meal, importing of little pieces of the scientific image. So bringing the notion from classical mechanics of A cause into. Psychological explanations when in the sense of giving a reason for something you did. Is exactly that sort of move, and it gets. You nothing but trouble.

**Massimo:** I agree. I think that was the crucial mistake that, as you say, is still reverberating in analytical philosophy and that it's leading to a lot of things that are to you. Here. Yeah. And you've actually done its own classification. These kind of things is playing mess instead of chess.

**Daniel:** Yeah, yeah.

**Massimo:** It's it's a lot of very, very clever arguments because you know the the, the, the, the church lands and a bunch of the other people that we mentioned there, these are really seriously serious philosophers. You're very clever and all that sort of stuff, except that all most of what they're saying is irrelevant because they start out with the wrong moves. They they made a wrong turn. And so all of that stuff is playing.

**Daniel:** Right.

**Massimo:** Mess, which is the. This game, according to Bennett, that is just like chess, except for one rule difference and nobody plays it except for a few people.

**Daniel:** Right. Except for those people, right? Right, right. And that's why, you know. No. Look, nobody really doesn't believe that people have agency.

**Daniel:** Exactly. That's evident from the. Way we speak and behave towards each other. But I, but I think that. It's not just a few philosophers that are doing it now,

and scientists there is a danger because we are increasingly, I don't know if you, if you agree with this, but we are increasingly more and more trying to medicalize behavior. In a way that seems to me. At least could run the risk. Of inducing a culture wide loss of belief in genuine agency. Now I don't know if. You think that that's true?

**Massimo:** No, I actually am worried about that as well. That's one of the consequences of the scientistic. Confusion of the of the scientific versus the the manifesting match. I mean just just the the typical example is all these articles which fortunately I think I began to subside a little bit, but there was a period of several years during which you know you couldn't open a magazine or a newspaper or a website without looking at a neural scan. Of the brain and and whatever, like your brain on whatever right. Moral thinking and all that sort of. And there was a lot of pushing. There's been a lot of pushing until until then, later on a little bit of pushback start. You know, there's a couple of books out there now on, on on newer myths that is in fact to be fair and number of neuroscientists themselves have begun to push back. Yeah.

**Daniel:** Yeah. I'm starting to push back against this.

**Massimo:** And rightly so.

**Daniel:** The scientists will have to or else it will never get pushed back on. I mean, because nobody's gonna listen to the philosophers who are.

**Massimo:** That's it.

**Daniel:** Pushing back, right?

**Massimo:** So but that. Actually does worry me because then it does present things to people. Oh, so this is your brain on molarity, let's say on moral thinking. Ohh. So that means that I'm not doing the moral thinking my brain. Like what? What? What are you talking about? Your brain is part of the physiological machinery, by way of which you can take it. But it's still you, my friend. You can't blame the damn brain for it.

**Daniel:** Right. That's right. That's right, you should put a brain riding a bicycle and a brain should.

**Massimo:** Or. A brain on that port stand and being let's.

**Daniel:** Writing an essay, yeah.

**Massimo:** Say, oh, you know the brain defense. Right. It used to be.

**Daniel:** Yeah.

**Massimo:** Something like the the tricky difference. I think it was called at some point if I thought, oh I I had sugar high sugar and then maybe being in a certain way and now it's becoming the brain defense there is effect and and emerging, yeah.

**Daniel:** Yeah.

**Massimo:** Discipline of new new law or and it's.

**Daniel:** It's it's terrifying and and part of the reason it's terrifying is that actually. I think the. Law is one of the areas that has resisted making this mistake and let me give you an. Example I'm thinking of. The legal notion of insanity is not a medical notion. Right, So what gets you out of legal responsibility is not simply being mentally ill. It is. Showing that one has an inability to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

Now that is an intentional characterization right that is not a biological or a medical characterization. And I think it's telling that the law, at least as. It currently stands says. Because you are not removed from responsibility simply for having an illness for your body having an illness, you have to be able to show that you, the person, don't recognize a certain crucial distinction right now that strikes me.

**Massimo:** Which implies that there is such a. Thing, as you the person. Now I want to go back for a second to to the thing of talk of causality maybe, maybe actually that should be another separate. You know, you might wanna take notes on.

**Daniel:** Yeah. Yes, please, please.

**Massimo:** All these episodes.

**Daniel:** Yeah, reasons and causes.

**Massimo:** Yeah, the reasons, causes and causality more in general because as you know, causality is a big field. In you know, in philosophy it's got it in, in, in metaphor. Physics in epistemology, there's lots of stuff about bringing about causality. Ever since David Hume. And actually, as it turns out recently, I was working on. I've been working on a presentation in a book chapter that I have to to do in Vienna in a couple of months at a in A at a meeting about theoretical biology and philosophy. And the meeting is.

**Daniel:** Sweet.

**Massimo:** About. Causality in biology. And so I had to reread some of the basic literature. And causality and it's a mess. It's a complete mess. I mean, there's, there's, there's so many different philosophical concepts that.

**Daniel:** The literature in. Biology is a mess in philosophy, OK? Yeah.

**Massimo:** Knowing philosophers? Yeah, I mean, biologists usually don't. Don't think too much about it, they just use the word cause in a sort of a intuitive fashion. And, you know, they say, you know, this, this phenomenon caused that or or that, that kind of action by a particular Organism caused that sort of thing.

**Daniel:** Yeah.

## What Daniel Dennett gets wrong in his new book

**Massimo:** But but in in philosophy there are many, many different accounts of of causality. Cell which are completely decoupled as far as I can tell from anything that's going on in the sciences. I mean, a scientist wouldn't recognize some of many of these accounts as anything to do with what. They're doing and. And it strikes it strike me as probably what's going on there. Is that causality actually refers to a multiplicity of things. And that should be kept distinct and we should be using different words for it, which is I think why there is so much confusion about well, our reason causes or not reasons are certainly explanation for behaviors.

**Daniel:** And it might cause you mean something like explanations. And then it's a cause, right? But it's not a cause in the sense of a.

**Massimo:** Right. And.

**Daniel:** Cause in classical mechanics.

**Massimo:** Exactly. So you know, one of the popular understanding of causes which I actually have a lot of sympathy for. Is is clearly based on physics and it is that a cause, you know, cause and interaction basically is it transferring of a conserved quantity from one object to another, right? So conserved quantities are things like energy, momentum and things like. That right. So yeah, I could. Say that if I bang my my fist on on my desk at this moment. What is happening there? You know I'm causing a noise and I'm causing a vibration. And yes, that caused. Can be described very nicely as a transference of conserved quantities. Physical quantities from my body to the desk. Absolutely. That is in fact a very good description. Of what's going on. Right now try to translate. That to the reason or. Cause while Massimo last night went out to dinner after the movie is because he wanted to enjoy a nice meal with his companion. No, that. In terms of constructed quantities that somehow changed, it's like no, that's another story. But you're talking about. But now, does that mean that my, my behavior then was uncaused that that, you know, that had no reasons for doing? Well, of course they did. But those reasons are actually not describable.

**Daniel:** Right, right.

**Massimo:** In terms of causality understood in that particular physicalist way, that's not to say of course there was something non physical going on there. As you know I'm a material I don't.

**Daniel:** Right.

**Massimo:** Believe in non physical.

**Daniel:** And even though a lot of the underlying motor movements involve. We're caused and precisely the way that you're talking about, but the act of going to the dinner was not caused in that way. And unless you want to say there are no acts of going to dinner.

**Massimo:** Right. It's all an e-mail.

**Daniel:** Which which you almost wonder whether, right, it's an illusion, right? I mean, you can't even believe people. Say these things. As they're doing. Things.

**Massimo:** Yeah. Which brings us to dennet. Come on. So here's the thing that struck me.

**Daniel:** Right.

**Massimo:** I want to hear what?

**Daniel:** This is this recent book that Dennett wrote that's just been reviewed by Thomas Nagle in the New York. Review of books. Which we will link to, I don't think. It's behind a paywall, so. We'll link to it. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Massimo:** Not anymore. When it came out, but not. Anymore. So you know. Let me let me step back for a second here and then there are two interesting characters. As far as I'm personally concerned, I actually think they're both very, very interesting. Offers. I think there are seriously mistaken for different reasons. I mean, when I when I read nails latest Nagles own latest book which I.

**Daniel:** It was mine and Cosmos.

**Massimo:** Yeah, which which we can link to.

**Daniel:** Yeah, you just you, yeah.

**Massimo:** As well. You know that one also struck me as seriously misguiding in sort of the opposite way in which. Then it's.

**Daniel:** Yeah. Did you do a review of that?

**Massimo:** Well, that no, I didn't really a formal. I think I heard something about.

**Daniel:** Did you OK.

**Massimo:** It in a. Blog post, but in fact I think actually one good good way.

**Daniel:** OK.

**Massimo:** Understanding that. The discrepancy and differences in the opposition between that and nickel is that to some extent I don't want to oversimplify what they're doing, but to some extent I think nego is too far on the way to the to the manifest image. Too skeptical of the scientific one, and then it is exactly the opposite. Is is going forward. The action is at this point on the scientific image and and so the morning or dismissing as an illusion, much of the manifest image. So what David was doing in his latest book is, you know, sort of articulating his idea that consciousness is quite. Important and illusion. What does he? Mean by that. So. So some of the commenters are reading my.

**Daniel:** You're already annoyed, you're already annoyed, and it's only the first day, which is what you find so far.

**Massimo:** It's it just came out to that and it wasn't. Even a post as you know. It's just a series of links to articles that are interested to read for a weekend and yet. That generated a lot of comments already. Some of those comments are on the lines of, well, let's see what what does it mean to have an illusion? So an illusion, broadly speaking, can be simply a misperception of what's going on, right? Well, that's not. I think that it's not what then it means because.

**Daniel:** No, that's not interesting at all.

**Massimo:** If it's if. It's not interesting enough because at that level everything pretty much becomes an illusion, you know? So right now, for instance, I'm looking at. View through a computer screen through a screen of my my iPad, but instead, of course, all of this is an illusion. It's all. Electrons that are. Put together in a particular way by the underlying mechanism of the of the iPad, right? So it's so it's. I'm looking at an illusion in a in a broad sense, but that's not helpful at all. Nobody would be, you know. First, you don't. Get any explanatory insight when you say that I'm looking at an illusion right now and second of all, nobody will disagree. Yes, of course. In that sense, it is an illusion, but it's not useful. Well. Then it actually says. Yes. Comes out by by way of one of these analogies. He says that consciousness is a a lot like the those little icons of folders that you have on a desktop computer, right? So those folders so you. Look at if you if you're. A user of a computer, you have these folders. From. Is on your desktop and you click on them and they open just as if there were folders and then inside quote UN quote. There's stuff that you can look at and transfer copy and

so on and so forth, right? But of course that really is an illusion. There's nothing like a folder.

**Daniel:** There is no inside, there's no, it's not an actual container, right? It's.

**Massimo:** They know inside. But it's not a container. There's nothing inside and therefore that really qualifies as an illusion, right? It's a useful illusion because it's something that allows me to move this. And to operate with things on my computer. But that really is in fact an illusion. But to say that consciousness is like that, to quote a famous phrase by John Ciao, he of the Chinese room is that that's denying the data. The data there is that. Of course it's consciousness unconscious right now. I know that.

**Daniel:** That's what we're trying to explain, right? Right.

**Massimo:** That's what you need to explain right. You say that that's an illusion because you know really what it is is some kind of neural machinery at the bottom. You're not saying anything. You're really not telling me anything, but I don't. Know. Yes, of course there's something.

**Daniel:** You're just dodging the you're. You're just saying I refuse. To explain it is what you're really saying.

**Massimo:** Right, right. You're saying, well, I understand that there's a neural machinery in the bomb that that makes conscious possible. The question. Is. How does that work? And you don't say you don't explain how it works by telling me that. No, really, this is not happening. Similarly, of course. We talked earlier about the the churchlands approach to pain in terms of. C fibers, right? Telling me that pain is really the C5. Others of my neurons, you know, firing, it's not making pain. Go away. It's not the pain is an illusion. I have an undeniable irreducible experience of pain.

**Daniel:** Right.

**Massimo:** Understood in circumstances. And that's not going to go away. It's not an illusion. It's a perfectly valid description of a psychological state. Of a subjective. If you tell me, yes, but what's really going on is that certain particular neurons made in a particular way I find in your your brain responding a certain way. I would say that is not what is really going on, that is a. Part of what's going on that is, that's. The physical substrate and makes it possible for me to feel pain.

## The limits of science

**Daniel:** Yeah, yeah. So let me ask you this then, because this, this brings us back to sellers. All that really talk.

**Massimo:** Yeah.

**Daniel:** Is a way of expressing the view. That the scientific image is primary. Right and. Sellers, at least the the general consensus, is that sellers thought that in an important way, the. Scientific image was. Primary, but nonetheless insisted on ultimately a synoptic vision that included both the scientific and the manifest image. Now I don't

think it matters as much what sellers meant by it as what we. Can do with it. It seems to me. The impossible to say that one or the other is primary in any absolute sense. It seems to me that the only way the only sense you can make of anything being primary is relative to a set of interests or relative to A-frame of reference are you of that view also or do. You think there? Is a way in which the scientific image. Is properly primary.

**Massimo:** No, I don't think there is. And I think that actually sellers from what I understand, I mean I'm not a seller scholar of course, but but from what my understanding is that sellers wouldn't say that scientific image is primary and. Now certain sense. What it is is if. Your goal is to understand. At bottom, how? The world works. Mechanistically then, the way we go is the scientific image. If I want to know how galaxies are put together, how human beings evolved, how you know anything else physical happens in the world, then yes, the scientific image is the way to go, because that gives the a better description, not the correct description, because it's still a. You know, we we keep forgetting that science is still human activity and therefore it's bounded by human rationality, human epistemic limitations, and so on and so forth. But nonetheless, if I if my goal is to understand how the world works, yes, that that scientific image is primary. But my goal is to interact with other people in a meaningful way. To run my life, to make, to to, to establish priorities, to have social relations, to engage in normative statements and transport, then the scientific image is not primary. It tells you not to do that. It just gives me background information, you know, like like the example of the sorry, the. The pains in my brain there going on when I fall in love. Yes, but that's secondary. That's just a curiosity. Yeah. You know, it's not like I go out with somebody and I develop a relationship and I keep thinking, well, you know, certain moments in my in my brain right now that that tells me that that's a. Curious, that's just. A harbor thing? It's like not a. Trick but but it's a it's a. Conversation that we can have over dinner, but. That is no in. No way influences the way in which I interact with other people. So if the goal is to interact with other people, to choose goals for your life, to figure out where meaning your life goes comes from, and so on and so forth, priorities and all that sort of stuff that make the fabric of a human life. Then I think the the the manifest image is primary, not the, not the scientific one, so that's why I like the idea of this stereoscopic. Vision, yeah. Now here's here's. Another way in which I was surprised, but it actually makes some sense to me. Here's another way in which the Stanford article puts it, he says. That the distinction between the scientific image and the and the manifest image is analogous to crons distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal. Yeah. And and it's kind of because of course, Kant would say, well, yeah, but we don't have any access to the new.

**Daniel:** Right, But that's not the sense in which it's analogous. I don't think. I mean, it's it's analogous in the sense that the numeral.

**Massimo:** So.

**Daniel:** Is the world as not, not as represented, right, right.

**Massimo:** The world as it is in itself without representation. Right.

**Daniel:** From a neutral point, the way we put it is from a non personal point of view from a. From a neutral perspective, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Massimo:** Exactly, exactly. And I find that very useful. I find that very, very, very appealing again because, and and especially as a scientist philosopher. I really appreciate these these ideas, this these stereoscopic vision, because I do like the the idea that I'm able to switch back and forth and then integrate also whenever it's necessary, whenever it's useful. The the two images because as we were saying earlier, sometimes the scientific image does in fact influence the manifest image. When we change our view of the world, in part, as a result of major insights from science, right, I mean once that science, for instance, demonstrated. That the universe is much, much larger than we thought, you know, let's people that people forget that galaxies were not discovered until the early part of the 20$^{th}$ century.

**Daniel:** Which is amazing. You realize how? How recent, right? Most of our understanding is, right, I mean, I mean, yeah.

**Massimo:** Right now, but once next.

**Daniel:** So we thought there was just one. Galaxy.

**Massimo:** Yeah, we, we we thought it. Was just one little thing with.

**Daniel:** The universe was the Milky. Way Galaxy, yeah.

**Massimo:** Yeah, it was stars and things, but, but you know these, these nebula they were called nebulae originally and they were thought to be intra galactic objects. It was only in the earlier I think. Things with research by Hubble and others that it was it became clear that this. Actually actually very very. Far, far from there. And there are in fact, things just like our Milky Way. Now then seems to me did change or should change my manifest image because now I feel part of a much broader cosmos. Much larger Cosmos, and that that's changed the way in which I sort of broadly think about. Things.

**Daniel:** Ohh so it changes the way. You represent everything. It seems to me I. Mean it even affects. The the the that's the significance you attach to things and and right and and. Yeah. No, I agree with that. Do you think? It goes the other way that I mean maybe some of the reason why people think and I'm. Not not talking. About crude scientists, but more thoughtful people think that there's a certain prime primacy to the scientific image is because while the scientific image. Can inform the manifest image. Perhaps they think that it can't go. The other way. Then the manifest image does not ever inform the scientific image. Now, what do you think of that? I mean, do you think the manifest image ever informs the scientific?

**Massimo:** Uh, that's a good question. Uh, I'm not. Sure that the that the. Manifest image informs the scientific image as much as it puts constraints on it. And I think that's.

**Daniel:** Agree with that.

**Massimo:** Yes, and find that in, in, in, in so.

**Daniel:** Yeah, he says. He says, look, without a manifest image, there would be no signs of. The. Game and so in a sense, genealogically and methodology. Basically, the

scientific image is dependent upon the manifest, but it purports to give an independent account of all of reality. At least all of reality from no perspective, so to speak. Yeah, yeah.

**Massimo:** In case one way this happens, so it looks so let's take let me give one example. Let's take quantum mechanics, which is, you know, the quintessential, you know, example of scientific image of the world, right. Quantum world is so weird. And that in fact it is very weird. But we had trouble and because of that weirdness, we had trouble. Understanding it. Beyond sort of the calculation, right, so there's there's a whole. There's a whole school of thought in in fundamental physics, that sort of excuse any interpretation of quantum mechanics. And it's referred to after jokingly as the shut up and calculate school. Right, that that. You know, quantum mechanics is a mathematical theory and. All you need to do with it is to plug in. The numbers and it gives you very precise. You know.

**Daniel:** But that these interpretations are, in a sense, fantasies.

**Massimo:** Right. The interpretations are metaphysics. They're unnecessary, and they're certainly.

**Daniel:** That seems kind of. Credible, don't you think? Well, that that seems credible. Don't you think?

**Massimo:** It is credible now. The problem is that a lot of. Scientists just are not. Happy with that. Why are they? Not happy with that because they want to understand the world, not just to describe it, right? Science isn't just in the business of making predictions. Let's say experimental, because if that were the case, then we could just all do statistics. You know, with no understanding underlying causality not understanding.

**Daniel:** Right. So it's almost like they want they want to bring it into the manifest image. They want to be able to understand they want. To be able to represent it.

**Massimo:** Exactly. This is why.

**Daniel:** Yeah.

**Massimo:** We get all these discussions about, you know, metaphors to understand.

**Daniel:** Many worlds and. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Massimo:** Worlds, or even more simply, oh, light is both a particle and their way. That is an attempt to reduce the scientific image to the manifest image, because we can think about.

**Daniel:** Yeah.

**Massimo:** They're metaphors, metaphors we can think about particles and about ways we can't think about what life actually is. Light is neither particle nor what it's something else. It's it's its own thing that behaves in in very precise and very, you know, clearly understood. Wayne, from a mathematical perspective. But in terms of metaphor, we are.

**Daniel:** That's really interesting.

**Massimo:** We keep insisting in using metaphors we cannot do without metaphors.

**Daniel:** Because people do science.

**Massimo:** Right, exactly.

**Daniel:** And science is an activity, right?

**Massimo:** We cannot do with our metaphors, even in science, right? So genes as blueprints, for instance, which I think it's.

**Daniel:** Frightening.

**Massimo:** Actually a flawed metaphor, but.

**Daniel:** But again, it's a metaphor, because that's really interesting. So you're you're you're. You're saying that if you wanted to see what science would look like. If it wasn't. Being in some ways interpreted in terms of the manifest image, it would just be pure statistics is what you're saying.

**Massimo:** Yeah, yeah, we'll do your math. Yeah, that's right. There will be no interpretation as. Soon as you bring in your.

**Daniel:** That's so interesting.

**Massimo:** What you're doing is to bring. You have. To bring in metaphorical language. And why? What you want to do that? Because we're human beings. We want to understand things we don't just want to describe things. We don't want things, you know, we don't have an instrumental view of science. Only. Yes. Science is also instrumental, of course. But we want to understand. You don't get, you know, when I got into science as a young, you know.

**Massimo:** Kid growing up in, in, in Italy, I didn't get into it because so I could make very precise predictions. About things in the world, I got into it because I wanted to understand things, to make sense of things, but to understand makes sense means that to some extent you have to reconcile the scientific and.

**Daniel:** Right. It involves interpreting this. It involves interpreting the material that you're that you're. That you're talking about?

**Massimo:** And the only interpretations we can do are in terms of this the manifest image, because that's how we think.

**Daniel:** Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Yeah. So I guess the only way to do science in the other way was to have. Machines do them right. Right, exactly. So when the computer when when we hand over tasks to a computer?

**Massimo:** Sure. Sure. Yeah.

**Daniel:** But you know, still we interpret the we interpret what the the what the computer then tells us, right? I mean, it's still science for someone. Right. Exactly.

**Massimo:** And I think, therefore, that it is true that I think it's fair to say that the scientific image constantly influences and hopefully updates the manifest image. I don't think the manifest image does the same, but what the manifest image does is it constrains the way in which we make sense of the scientific.

**Daniel:** That's good stuff. Yeah, it it it, it does it in a different way. I mean they both affect each other. I mean the the scientific image actually contributes information. To that the manifest image can make use of, although it has to be careful not to do these sort of piece meal. Importing of notions like mechanistic causality over into human action, let's say, right, but what the but the manifest image does it is, it's

the frame in which we interpret everything that we find that we discover might have science and thus make it meaningful.

**Massimo:** We cannot. Yes, exactly. And we cannot do without it because what you.

**Daniel:** Us.

**Massimo:** Beings and human beings want to understand things and and. Put meaning into. It the meaning understanding values all the stuff. Those are part those are those are within the manifest image, not the scientific they don't.

**Daniel:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Massimo:** Enter into the science.

**Daniel:** Yeah, it's interesting. I realize now and I don't know whether even you realize that because you say it so often. If you realize that that this was the point, the and that is, I can't say how many times I've heard you say to people that science is a human activity. And I wonder if if you, if you realize the full like resonance of what that meant when you said that to people, right, I mean.

**Massimo:** Yeah, not not until not as I said, not until I started thinking in terms of self. I mean service has now become one of my favorite philosophers. Of the 20.

**Daniel:** This paper is just amazing. For that reason, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Massimo:** It helped me make sense of a lot. Of things that I had. Some kind of intuitions about it? And I felt. Some discomfort about it. But it I I was missing the general overarching sort of. Framework to make sense of them and and now I think I have them and I hope our our listeners and you know we're we're actually going out and check at least the the Stanford article and and if not as you say the.

**Daniel:** Yeah. It's hard, but I don't think it's unreadable for an education. And if you read it with the Stanford article, I think you can probably get through it pretty well. Well, this is really fascinating. This is really good stuff, Massimo, and I appreciate it very much. And we have to postpone the taping. We're going to do another one. That's going to be with Massimo and another person's sky Cleary on the subject of stoicism and existentialism. We had some, and I'm going to be moderating as a disembodied voice so you don't have to look at this going. But one of my students actually told me it was cute, which sort of bolstered me.

**Massimo:** Right.

**Daniel:** A little bit because she was quite attractive. And 20 but. So that we're going to be doing that. On Monday. No, Tuesday. Tuesday. Excuse me. And so that'll that'll go out not too long after this one. And your book is is going to be out.

**Massimo:** So yeah. So it's going to come up soon. May 9$^{th}$. So that's that's yes please.

**Daniel:** May 9$^{th}$. On the new start Go pre-order it. Damn. It.

**Massimo:** OK, I checked the other day.

**Daniel:** How about are you, how are the pre-orders?

**Massimo:** Yeah, it was #1 new release. In Greek and Roman philosophy, so on Amazon. So yes, if people keep pre ordering it then it will keep it there, which helps.

Yeah, I'm told by my publisher that pre-orders now are actually crucial to make or break it for a book, because if there is enough. The orders, then, people start paying attention and gets high on the rankings. Reviewers paying. Attention and the model.

**Daniel:** People start talking about it and sort of, yeah, yeah, great. Well, we'll, we'll be sure to talk about that when it comes out. All right, Mason. Well, take care of yourself, alright. Talk to you soon.

**Massimo:** I'm sorry. You too. Thank you. Bye.

Daniel Kaufman and Massimo Pigliucci
The underappreciated philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars
Mar 26, 2017

<youtube.com/watch?v=1g1AGMYcT8k> & <meaningoflife.tv/videos/38394>