

Abstract: A Model for McDowell

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My intention is to propose a visual model for John McDowell's theory that human perception is characterized by conceptualizing. The model I am proposing appeared to me in a dream in 1976, but I believe it is of use in the present for picturing the central features of McDowell's theory. I use the dream's narrative of the model in its setting to provide an item-by-item visual depiction of what has been called McDowell's "pervasiveness theory." It is particularly intended as an aid in understanding the *central* feature of McDowell's theory, the idea that conceptual capacities pervade human sensory contact with the world's objects in such a way that our knowledge of the world can have objective validity when the conditions are right. These sorts of "right condition" experiences, McDowell claims, provide immediate contact between the mind and the world in a way that undermines both traditional empiricist skepticism and Cartesian downplaying of the role of the senses. McDowell's approach has deep roots in the epistemologies of Kant and Wilfrid Sellars; I will show how the model represents McDowell's inspiration by and distinction from each. Most significantly, the model visualizes McDowell's formula for salvaging a reformed empiricism by employing an "innocent" version of Sellars' dreaded Myth of the Given. The key to McDowell's approach is his notion that sensibility *implicitly* possesses conceptual capacities which make "available" to our understanding the possibility of believing in, warranting, and justifying the reality of objects which we observe under the right conditions. My goal is to show how by helping us to visualize McDowell's theory my model provides us with a better grasp of that theory.

A Model for McDowell

1. A dream (May, 1976):

I am walking in a wasteland near a cliff where the World of the Dead meets the World of the Living. The entry to the World of the Dead is hidden in darkness at the base of the cliff. The occupants of this netherworld, I am told, are "Classical Greeks." A "Germanic Man" who has recently died has returned from this World of the Dead in order to bequeath to me an object which he has forgotten to leave in The World of the Living. He is wearing a long, drab overcoat like men wore in the 1930s and stands at a crossroads, holding the object he wants to leave with me. I am watching him with great curiosity from the top of a distant hill and want to try to get close to him so I can take the object. The land where we are standing is a true Wasteland, very stark and desolate, with no vegetation; the only things breaking up the plain are the crossroads and many scattered small piles of stacked stones (what the Greeks called herms).

My sole task is to get to the man so that he can give me the object below:



It is about five feet high and five feet across where it rests on the ground. It consists of three gold rings, all perfectly circular, two smaller ones, each about a foot in diameter, and one larger one, about five feet in diameter, that are connected by six leather thongs. The two smaller rings are connected by two of the thongs at opposite points on the rings. The lower ring is wrapped "very, very tightly" (this fact is emphasized) around an amorphously shaped and very ordinary stone. The wrapping is so snug that the ring seems almost to be part of the stone itself. This, I am told, is the most important feature of the object. The upper small ring is also connected by four thongs to the large gold ring which is resting, like the stone, on the ground. This large ring and the lower small ring are not connected by thongs. The thongs allow this entire contraption to be collapsible while remaining connected. The Germanic Man is grasping the upper ring and with a steady rhythm lowers the upper ring until it completely rests on the lower ring. Next he raises the same ring, keeping the rhythm until the six cords are fully stretched. It is also emphasized that the cords must be fully extended until they cannot be stretched any more. He repeats this lowering and raising of the upper ring with a steady rhythm.

This rhythm of lowering and raising of the upper ring is determined by the Classical Greeks below the ground chanting a single word that resounds in The World of the Living through the many herms. It is a word which I cannot make out no matter how hard I try. Every time the word is chanted the man lowers the upper ring onto the lower ring...and there is a tremendous earthquake tremor. The tremors are delivered with such force that I am knocked to the ground each time the upper ring is lowered. I am only able to advance a few feet toward the man before a new tremor and the chanted word knock me to the ground again. How am I ever to get the object?

After many attempts and much falling, I arrive at the crux of the crossroads where the man stands with the object. But, as he puts the upper ring into my hands, I am still struggling to make out the word that is being chanted. This is all without success: the word is either chanted too loudly to make out or it is a Greek word which I don't know. Suddenly, as the dream comes to its conclusion, the answer appears suspended in mid-air:

The Word in the Tone Is the Sword in the Stone

[note] I had this dream the week Heidegger died (May 26, 1976, although I was not aware at the time that he had died.

The essay is in three parts. First, I offer a brief interpretation of the dream's key elements, starting from the dream's "center" (the Stone) and moving outward to the periphery (the Waste Land and its suggestion of an Underworld). In the second section, I give a brief reading of how these elements picture particular fundamentals of Kant's epistemology. And, third, in the major part of the essay, I lay out a lengthy interpretation of how the model provides a clear picture of McDowell's theory of pervasiveness. This third part is organized using the same sequence of the dream's features that are set out in Part 1.

Part I

1. **The Stone** represents any object in the world in the particular moment it is captured in the focus of a rational perceiver. For Kant, in the Transcendental Deduction, there is a distinction between the object itself and the appearance of the object in human knowledge. The dream never shows the Stone by itself. By enclosing the stone tightly in the grasp of the two small rings, the model gives us a picture of the role of appearance according to the Deduction, not a picture of the stone itself (*ding an sich*) as it might exist apart from its appearance. In this way, the dream is closer in spirit to McDowell's theory than it is to Kant's since McDowell drops Kant's distinction between objects of perception and objects themselves.
2. **The Model** The three rings and the six cords joined together with the Stone, represent what I mean by "the model, itself." This model pictures the conditions and limits of human experience in its relationship to the world. It pictures how the rational mind and the world stand in immediate contact each other when the mind aims its focus intentionally at a particular object at a particular moment. McDowell argues that a capacity for conceptualizing is pervasive in such experiences. Consistent with McDowell's theory is the idea that the upper ring represents what Sellars calls "the logical space of reasons" (judgments, truth claims, beliefs, etc.), while the lower ring represents sensibility, including for rational animals a capacity for conceptualizing. McDowell says, "...the higher faculty [the understanding as the faculty of concepts] enters into the constitution of intuitions." The key phrase is "enters into the constitution of" since, by McDowell's lights, it is crucial to Kant's idea that "Thoughts without content are empty, Intuitions without concepts are blind" (A5/B76). This conjunction, which is essential for knowledge, is pictured in the model by the upper ring's periodically resting on the lower ring and the Stone. McDowell holds that conceptual capacities are necessarily integrated *a priori* in sense experience; however, he cautions, "That need not imply...that intuitions as such involve the understanding, the capacity to think. If there is thought in an intuition, its content must have been articulated, analyzed, into contents for determinate conceptual capacities" (*Having the World in View*, p. 109). That means that content for conceptualizing is made "available" in human sense experience but that sense experience alone is not capable of carrying out those conceptual activities; as McDowell's claims, "The idea of actualizations of conceptual capacities does not belong in the logical space in which the natural sciences function." That logical space is symbolized by the small upper ring. The small lower ring represents what Kant calls sensibility or "the capacity (receptivity) for receiving representations through the mode in which we are affected by objects" (A19/B33). By itself, sense cannot provide human experience of the world; Wilfred Sellars, using Kant's theory to explain his own, says "My thesis will be that sense is a cognitive faculty only in the sense that it makes knowledge possible and is in an essential element in knowledge, and that of itself it knows nothing. It is a necessary condition of the intentional order, but does not of itself belong to this order" (*Science and Metaphysics*, p. 46). The trick for McDowell is, stated in the model's terms, to bring the two small rings into immediate contact with the Stone...to the point that they can *almost* be said to be the same thing. The two rings as the understanding and sensibility require each other for humans to know the world. Importantly for Kant, the understanding is involved in the constitution of perceptual episodes, while

also, according to Sellars' employment of Kant, it brings the intentions of a language-equipped subject into play. This is accomplished both by directing focus onto an object and by justifying knowledge claims of that object. The object must be characterized as providing a capacity for conceptualizing that is present *already* in the moment of sense experience. That conceptualizing is not something added on by the understanding "downstream" from the sense experience. The model is a "tool" or a "skill" in the Wittgensteinian sense of language as a tool or our understanding as a skill. This tool/skill allows for the world to show up for us the way that it does. As Alva Noe explains, "The world shows up for us thanks to what we can do—to the way we achieve access—and this depends not only on us (our brains and our bodily makeup), but also on the world around us and our relationship to it. We make complicated adjustments to bring the world into focus" ("On Overintellectualizing the Intellect," in *Mind, Reason, and Being in the World: the McDowell-Dreyfus Debate*, p. 191). The model is the picture of how this tool/skill works in its relation to the world.

3. **The Germanic Man** represents the notion in Kant's theory of an 'I' of apperception. For Kant this "I" is a parallel of the Stone itself, a "transcendental object" which he pictures as something apart from its appearance in the mind. In Kant, these two, the transcendental subject and the transcendental object, are the pre-categorical conditions of experience and are situated in a parallel equipoise. They are respectively the subjective and objective preconditions of epistemological experience. By bringing them into contact with the model, the dream offers a picture of the conditions which for Kant make the subject-object relation possible. The key idea which Kant proposes here is of an *identical* unity: "the unity which the object makes necessary is identical to the formal unity of consciousness" (A105) and where "the unity of the subject is ... reproduced on the side of the object," (Gardner, p. 157). Kant makes an additional claim that the object also makes the subject possible (A108 and B133). The Germanic Man is the 'I' of apperception which brings unity to what would otherwise be a mere chaos of representations; but the man also stands as the counterpart to the unity *already* given in appearances by their conceptual form, pictured in the model by the two small rings and the Stone. The Germanic Man as the knower, at least in Wilfred Sellars' description, must know that he is knowing; that is, he is self-conscious that his credentials for knowing are good. I feel the model works better for McDowell's theory than it does for Kant's because the dream never suggests the Germanic Man is transcendental: much to the contrary, he is pictured directly grasping the upper ring and lowering it.
4. **The Lowering and Raising of the Upper Small Ring in Sync with the Chant "The Word in the Tone is the Sword in the Stone"** The Germanic Man's lowering and raising of the upper ring, the rhythmic earthquake tremors, and the indecipherable chanted word by subterranean Classical Greeks introduce time into the scene. This suggests a move from a particular experience to memory of past experiences and anticipations of future experiences. This repeated motion introduces language and the placement of particulars in general categories, the "linguistic turn," and issues beyond Kant's considerations. By my interpretation, the Stone is the world and the Sword that is stuck inside it symbolizes the human capacity of speech, the ability to shape meaningless sounds into words with meanings.
5. **The Waste Land** is the setting for human knowledge, the world in which it is possible for an object and a perceiving mind to cooperate in producing human knowledge. Wittgenstein taught us that the workings of the intellect always take place in a setting and against a background, but what Wittgenstein suggested is symbolized by what the large lower ring encloses. It is never suggested that that is the entire world. Everything outside the model and its large lower ring goes pretty much unnoticed, subject only to peripheral sensibility.

It is described in the dream as the border where the “world of the dead” meets the “world of the living,” an expression of Hegel’s historicist “correction” to Kant, where understanding meets up with the history of ideas, particularly the Classical Greeks who initiated the questioning that has led to our current interpretations of the mind/world relationship. There is also, I believe, a reading of this Wasteland as Samuel Beckett’s “landscape of nowhere,” as the post-Holocaust world world where Beckett himself looked for for a “new kind of art” characterized by “the expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express” [dialogues with Georges Duthuit, 1949; see *The New York Review of Books*, June 7, 2018, p. 22]. I do not discuss this possible reading here. But, there is more in the dream, I believe, than the references to Kant, Hegel, and McDowell, which I discuss.

Part II

The Model Viewed as Kantian

First, the lower small ring which is wrapped tightly around the amorphous stone works as a suitable visual image of what Kant means by Intuition: “...that through which [an object] is in immediate relation to us” (A19/B33; unless otherwise noted all references are taken from the N. Kemp Smith translation of *The Critique of Pure Reason* (2nd ed., London: Macmillan, 1933, hereafter referred to as *CPR*, with ‘A’ designating Kant’s first edition and ‘B’ Kant’s second edition). Sebastian Gardner clarifies the difference between Kant’s notion of intuitions and his notion of concepts: “...the deepest distinction being drawn is between, on the one hand, an object’s being *given* to us, and, on the other, its being *thought* about [*The Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 66]. If the stone represents “the object, itself,” the lower small ring represents “the object as *given* to us” in appearance, that is, in intuition; and the upper small ring represents the “understanding,” or those concepts which humans bring *ready-made* to those representations of sense experience. In my interpretation, it is important to conceive of that moment when the two rings are joined to the Stone as the moment when a single entity is produced: that entity is valid objective knowledge for a rational human under the right conditions. Kant’s transcendental deduction says that this “objective validity of the categories” is achieved by the understanding when it aids the sensibility in constructing the object which appears before the mind in “experience’ (*Erfahrung*). This is the moment of empirical knowledge, according to Kant. The understanding’s contribution to this appearance of the object consists of the concepts which characterize its twelve categories. These categories ‘fit’ with the world’s objects because they have helped to construct those objects as they appear in experience. As Gardner explains, “...the categories must enter into intuition and thus be constitutive of anything presented in intuition” (Ibid., p. 141). Thus, the upper small ring along with the lower small ring cooperate to ‘fix’ the Stone in its space and time. The model pictures the way in which Kant claims that the non-sensible understanding and the sensible intuition work *in concert* to fix an object spatially and temporally in its setting. This cooperation allows an

object to appear before the mind as a unity rather than as a chaotic flurry of unrelated sensations. Also, Kant's Transcendental Deduction has a problem: it does not make explicit how a concept, like circularity for example, can be "homogeneous" (Kant's demand in A137/B176) with an intuition, since nothing like true circularity appears in the world. True circularity can only be thought; it is intellectual, not natural. Gardner explains that Kant needs to show what "the sensible instantiation of a pure concept could amount to. Concepts must...be brought somehow closer to intuition, if objects of intuition are to be able to assume conceptual form" (p. 167). Kant must do more than simply *demand* a connection. This dilemma shows up in the model by its rendition of "closeness" as the 'entity' of the two small rings' embedded in the Stone. Somehow neither the rings' circularity nor the Stone's bumps and valleys are compromised. Kant's solution is to imagine "'some third thing' which is homogenous with both the categories and intuitions or appearance' (A138/B177). This 'mediating representation' must be in one respect intellectual, and in another sensible. Kant calls it a *schema* (plural, *schemata*). Schemata are, Kant says, produced by imagination (A140/B179, A142/B181), the mediating faculty..." (p. 168). Schemata are distinct from images (A140-1/B179-80) like my dream's model, since they involve intellectual strategies. It is these strategies that place objects in their categorical concepts. For Kant, the understanding's twelve categories are "transcendental schemata" (A138/B177). Placement of particular objects in categories, according to Kant, can only be achieved *by the employment of thoughts about time* and thoughts like those are not delivered in intuitions by themselves. Non-rational animals do not have such thoughts. The understanding must constitute the appearance of an object in such a way that such thoughts about time can make an object available for inclusion in a general classification or concept. Time is the essential ingredient for this cooperation between the concepts of the understanding and the appearance of sensible objects. Gardner explains,

Since something must provide the meeting point between pure concepts and empirical intuition, and nothing else could do so, pure intuition must do so. And the reason why it should be time specifically which provides the key to transcendental schematism is that time is the most general unifying condition of intuitions and concepts. All sensible objects are intuited in time, and all conceptual activity stands under the condition of self-consciousness, the objects of which are temporal. Subjects with non-temporal forms of sensibility would, therefore, schematise the categories differently, and could not comprehend the categories as schematised by us. (p. 169)

The dream pictures this schemata in the model by introducing time in the rhythmic chanting of the word, a temporal sequence, and in the two cords that connect the upper ring (the understanding and its categories) to the lower ring (the sensibility and its a priori forms of space and time). Space and time can be thought of as the two cords connecting the sensibility's intuitions with the understanding's categories. That is, the schemata are not empirical but are applied to objects in this a priori arrangement.

I interpret the large ring lying on the ground as representing the immediate spatial and temporal context within which any known object is set. Like the two smaller rings it is a human-constructed object but it rests on the same physical ground on which the Stone rests.

This large ring marks these boundaries because it marks the focus, both temporally and spatially, of a human epistemological experience of an object. Objects do not appear in isolation but appear in relationship to other objects. “Beyond these boundaries, they (space and time) do not represent anything at all, for they are only in the senses and outside of them have no reality at all. Also, it is helpful to think of this large ring as setting a boundary separating content that Kant is *not* concerned with (“Kant is not seeking to establish something about a preformed world which might in itself be one way or another; nor is he considering the point of view of a subject that can already take itself to be in contact with objectivity”) from content he *is* concerned with (“Kant’s question concerns the original conceptual form of the given, not inferences about reality that may be made on the basis of it.” [Gardner, p. 178]). Those former concerns are the concerns respectively of Leibniz and Hume.

A crucial move by Kant that is expressed clearly in the dream’s model is a move which he makes after the Transcendental Deduction in his “Refutation: The Fourth Paradigm.” This move concerns Kant’s demand contra Berkeley that there must be “a *thing* outside me” and not merely the “representation of a thing outside me.” As Gardner makes clear (pp. 185 - 6), Kant claims that objects *themselves*, and not merely their appearances, must exist because they are required for us to have representations of them. But he does not want to make that claim based on “some general theory about the real, extra-representational, conditions of representation” (pp. 185 -6). Instead, he wishes to base his claim on the assumption that an object is “the kind of thing the existence of which is tied to...necessities of representation” (p. 186). Instead of saying that objects exist because we need them to, something which Kant is dead-set against, Kant is saying that “the existence of [objects] can be inferred from the necessity of our representing [them], *because [objects] are something whose very existence is a function of such necessities* (crudely: it exists because we make it, and we make it because we need it...the outer things which [transcendental idealism] establishes are appearances” (p. 186). It is crucial to understand that appearances for Kant are “outer things.” In the dream’s model, this assumption is pictured in the unity of the upper and lower small rings and the Stone. The object of knowledge is this combination which has been constituted conceptually by the understanding and with sensory content by an intuition. Outer objects we know exist because they *function* as the appearances we shape and produce according to our needs. The breakthrough idea here is that “outer things are appearances.” The dream’s model does not present a mere stone as merely imagined, but presents a physical stone set in the context of its environment in the immediate grasp of a rational mind shaping its sensory inputs. The dream is careful not to give priority to either the interior subject (the Germanic Man and his model) or the exterior object (the Stone); rather, both are contained in a geometric (the model) and rhythmic “dance” (the lowering and raising of the upper ring) that holds them in a balanced equipoise.

In other words, the dream pictures the attempt to say that we experience immediately real appearances which are ‘outer’ (not merely our ‘interior’ imaginings) but shaped by ‘interior’ understanding. Can Kant justify this picture? Gardner sees a problem:

The problem for any transcendentalist realist reading of the Refutation is that, since real things can only play justificatory roles in cognition via their representations, a representation will, it seems, always do just as well as the real thing. Thus faced with the claim that X is a necessity of representation the skeptic can agree that it is necessary that we have the representation of X, and deny that this representation can be known to have an object (p. 186).

In the model's terms, this would amount to not having the Stone as *an object*, something Kant demands. Gardner then says, "What the transcendentalist realist needs, of course, is to demonstrate that the necessity of X is not merely representational, but of a kind that pertains to extra-representational things. This is expressed in the dream's expression of the intimate embeddedness of the two small rings with the Stone that occurs with the lowering of the upper ring. The fact that this is difficult to picture (how can two perfectly circular rings fit tightly with no open spaces around an amorphous stone?) visually reflects the difficulty of intellectually conceiving of Kant's argument.

Kant explains that all transcendental arguments are grounded in real experience: "The proof proceeds by showing that experience itself, and therefore the objects of experience, would be impossible without a connection of the a priori synthetic kind" (A783/B811). In the Analytic, he says, "The a priori conditions of a possible experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of objects of experience" (A111). The dream expresses this idea in the model, or more accurately in the entire model as it grasps the Stone: the model works in the same way as the sword works in the stone, both at one with it and extracted from it. The chanted word of the Greeks identifies this extraction with language. Objects of experience are made possible and objectively valid by means of the synthetic a priori conditions of knowing.

Finally, the Germanic Man manipulating the model I take to be what Kant calls the 'I think' ("the necessary unity of self-consciousness") which he claims must accompany all our intuitions (see #16, B132, p. 246). The fact that the Germanic Man grasps the upper ring symbolizes a key element in Kant's rejection of both Berkeley's idealism and Descartes' object-independent ego: he maintains that our subjectivity depends upon our *immediate* contact with objects ("...we have *experience*, and not merely imagination, of outer things...even our inner experience, which for Descartes is indubitable, is possible only on the assumption of outer experience" [B275]). In other words, for a subject to *be*, the contact it has with an objects is *as it exists* and not with the mere representation of the object *as it is imagined*. There must be an "...immediate consciousness of the existence of other things outside me" (B276). Kant continues, "I am conscious of my own existence as determined in time" and I have "*empirical consciousness of my existence*" (BxI). Every time the Germanic Man lowers the upper ring onto the lower ring and its Stone, that rhythmic action pictures the necessary immediacy of the contact between subject and object *in time and in space*. If we changed the model to make it symbolize Descartes' theory, the Germanic Man might grasp the upper ring but that ring would lack the cords which connect it to the lower ring. Its cords, if it possessed them, would be dangling in midair. Also, if Kant's argument is to successfully undermine Hume's skepticism, he must make an argument that perception establishes self-consciousness, that the unity of self-consciousness is tied to the unity of perceived objects. In other words, that objects appear unified is directly connected to the "unity of apperception" which characterizes subjects. As far as Kant is concerned, I as a knowing subject have more than the mere awareness of myself as thinking (something he demonstrates in the Transcendental Deduction), I have an empirical awareness of my existence in the world by means of direct contact. Without that contact symbolized by the Germanic Man's lowering of the upper onto the lower ring and its stone, we remain either in a Cartesian solipsism or a Humean skepticism.

Kant worries that we might confuse the object-as-given in experience (the appearance of objects as real) with the *object-in-itself* (something which is outside experience). He insists that the object-as-given is empirically real, but that it is also “transcendentally ideal.” That is, the object-as-given, even though it is empirically real, must conform to the human mode of cognition which actively grasps the object in accord with the understanding’s a priori concepts. Henry Allison clarifies this crucial part of Kant’s argument by distinguishing between “conditions of the possibility of knowing things” and “conditions of the possibility of the things themselves” [McDowell, HWV, n15, p. 80], but he uses this distinction to differentiate transcendental idealism from transcendental realism. Transcendental realism, Allison argues, accepts this distinction in its claim that knowledge originates in the latter conditions, while transcendental idealism claims that knowledge originates in the former conditions. McDowell says in response that Allison misses the significant feature of Kant’s deduction-B, the feature that so moved Hegel: “What goes missing is the Hegelian alternative, which is inspired by how Kant wants to think of the requirements of the understanding: that the relevant conditions are inseparably both conditions on thought and conditions on objects, not primarily the one or the other” [HWV, n15, p. 80 and *Mind and World*, p. 43]. McDowell’s correction to Allison is expressed in my model by the role two chords play in connecting the lower (intuition) and upper (the understanding) small rings. Both the intuitions (the representations by which objects are given to us) and the basic concepts (the Categories of the Understanding) are necessary to affording human epistemological experience objective validity. Objects like ordinary stones can only be known to the extent that their appearance in intuitions conforms to the a priori modes of cognition set by the understanding. Satisfying this demand yields knowing that has objective validity.

Finally, an argument might be made that my dream’s model fails to qualify as a vehicle for knowledge of the world, because according to Kant it is “mere imagination” and lacks an object. It is merely “a blind play of representations” (Gardner, p. 163, Kant A112), lacking the necessary constitution supplied by the categories to intuitions: “intuitions without concepts are blind.” Gardner’s counter-argument is that “while not *fully* determined by the categories, (dreams) are not without connection to the understanding: to dream...is necessarily to have experience expressible in judgmental form; the intentional objects of dream are dependent on the categories.” In other words, dreams possess more than a merely “blind” sensible character and often incorporate concepts. This argument, I believe, extends particularly to individual images in dreams like my model that offer pictures of knowing. I believe Gardner’s clarification qualifies my model as a *possible* tool for grasping Kant’s transcendental theory of cognition.

Part III

The Model Viewed as McDowellian

1. The Stone for McDowell

An important added feature for McDowell, one which I have only mentioned briefly so far, concerns the fact that the conceptual element involved in the construction of an intuition is something “suitable to be the content associated with discursive capacity.” This feature holds even if discursive activity in the form of a judgment about a perceptual experience has not yet begun. The “soil” for discursive activity has already been “prepared” by the presence of the conceptual forms of the understanding:

If intuitional content is not discursive, why go on insisting it is conceptual? The content of an intuition is such that its subject can analyze it into significances for discursive capacities, whether or not this requires introducing new discursive capacities to be associated with those significances. Whether by way of introducing new discursive capacities or not, the subject of an intuition is in a position to put aspects of its content, the very content that is already there in the intuition, together in discursive performances. [HWV, p. 264]

The conceptual-in-the-intuition is symbolized in my model is by the dream’s concluding play of language, specifically the phrase “the Word in the Tone.” I interpret this final message as the claim that words are already contained in tones, prior to experience, as opposed to the claim that tones are taken from sounds *after the perception of the sound only* and then shaped into words. The dream concludes that words for rational animals need merely to be extracted from tones like Arthur’s sword is extracted from its stone. This is the claim of a contact theory like McDowell’s.

The stone as fixed in the model represents any object in the world which is “fixed” in the focused perception of a rational animal. It is this world of objects like stone that must never be seen as delivering *on its own* the sort of “concept-involving” characterizations that count as what we call “epistemic facts” (*Having the World in View*, p. 5). By avoiding Sellars’ Myth of the Given, McDowell seeks instead a way of saving a reformed empiricism, claiming an “innocent” lower-case myth of the given. My model, I believe, serves as a picture of that possibility.

2. The Model: the Six Chords and Three Rings

The Two Small Rings and the Two Internal Cords

McDowell explains one of Sellars' takes on Kant as follows: "Experiences and intuitions are not just thinkings, but also shapings of sensory consciousness" (*Having the World in View*, p. 113). The idea of *shaping* is expressed in the model by the intimate way in which the lower and upper rings are wrapped tightly into the amorphous stone. Because of this conceptual shaping of the object, the state of the subject is "modified." But Sellars and McDowell insist that for Kant this modification works in both a subjective and an objective direction. Intuitions shape sensory consciousness in much the same way as the subject shapes the object into how it appears. This shaping, because it is conceptual, is not included in the perceptions of non-rational animals.

The cords are the image of the mind's attachment to the world, the constraint on the upper ring (Sellars' "logical space of reasons") that prevents it from "flying off" to some other world. Gardner says that Kant's problem in the *Analytic* is to show "how one and the same object can figure in relation to both sensibility and understanding—why there are not...two worlds of objects, one for each faculty" [p. 162]. The cords which connect the upper (understanding) and lower (sensibility) rings picture them as *necessarily* connected. It is the visual expression of Kant's dictum "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (*CPR*, A51/B75). For perceiving humans like the dream's Germanic Man, all appearances of objects must agree with the mind's categories. Despite their separate functionality, in perception they remain conceptually connected. The four cords which connect the upper ring to the large lower ring "grounds" the entirety of human knowledge in a single world. By this means, Kant undermines the empiricist two-step process whereby the mind first passively encounters objects as "given" and then secondarily posits the existence of objects employing intellectual activities. For Kant, the objects are "given" in appearances before the mind only *after* having been conceptually shaped by the categories. This conceptual shaping enables humans with language to make inferential claims like "This tree is green because I am seeing it in good light and I am not color blind." And such claims can have objective validity. Without this shaping, according to Kant's theory, objects could not be known.

According to McDowell, Kant's theory evolves in this direction as he is writing *CPR*. McDowell explains that in the opening of *CPR*, for Kant

...sensibility is supposed to account, by itself, for intuitions, while understanding is supposed to account for concepts, which are, on this picture, simply separate from intuitions. As he proceeds, however, it emerges that in his view the spontaneous cognitive faculty that, in the

guise of the understanding, is responsible for concepts also enters into the constitution of intuitions” (HVV, p. 108, my emphasis).

This emendation by Kant marks a significant turning point. It means that conceptual capacities are *already* in the representation of objects at the instant of perception, making objects “available” for knowing. The categories of the understanding have infiltrated the object on which the mind is focused as if preparing the object for its appearance in a perception. By this insight, Kant undermines the empiricists’ notion that objects are delivered on their own to passive minds (the confusion that Sellars would label the Myth of the Given). To picture Kant’s first iteration of his theory of the relation of subject to object, the dream would have to remove the cords and the rhythmic lowering of the upper onto the lower ring. This is what is missed, according to McDowell when theorists fall victim to the Myth of the Given: “Givenness in the sense of the Myth would be an availability for cognition to subjects whose getting what is supposedly Given to them does not draw on capacities required for the sort of cognition in question” (HVV, p. 256).

Language matters. It is important to McDowell’s theory that these conceptual capacities which the understanding lends to perceived objects are “capacities that could be deployed in discursive activity”...even if not all the relevant concepts could be employed at that moment. A perceiver might initially recognize only “a small winged creature” and later come to realize that it is a “bird,” or even a “cardinal.” The perceiver does not need to know the “bird” was a “cardinal” for us to claim that the perception is conceptually shaped. Midway through the writing of *CPR*, Kant has made the crucial change:

...what Kant is considering under the label “intuitions” is not those supposed immediate givens that figure in the empiricist version of “the framework of givenness”—operations of sensory receptivity conceived as prior to and independent of any involvement of the understanding—but episodes of sensory receptivity already structured by the understanding. (p. 95).

Human sensory experience is never fully independent of the understanding. If it were it would be “blind,” in the Kantian sense of “intuitions without concepts are blind.” In addition, the unity that unifies the judgments of the understanding is the same unity which sensibility gives to the objects of sensory experience. This is how I read the similarity of the dream’s two small rings: they’re the same geometric shape, the same size, and made of the same gold. Their only difference is their respective position in the model. For Kant, according to McDowell’s interpretation, the forms of unity supplied by sensibility to experience are supplied *only* in cooperation with the forms of unity supplied by the understanding to the object’s appearance. McDowell calls this cooperation “the principle that drives the whole [Transcendental] Deduction” (the second half of the B-Deduction, explained on p. 101 of McDowell’s essay). He claims Sellars misses this cooperation. It is imaged in my model by the two cords connecting the upper and lower small rings. Avoiding this confusion is what is suggested by the model, first by the lowered upper ring’s “shaping” the stone so that the stone accommodates the geometric circularity of the rings and then by the raised upper ring’s attachment by the two cords to the lower ring and stone so that the upper ring is pictured as not losing its connection to the world. The absence of the cords would suggest a Berkelean idealism, a mind unhinged from the world. Instead, subjective knowledge of an object is rendered possible and valid by the way concepts have made the object available for that knowledge. McDowell says, “We

might say [Kant] conceives an intuition—that through which a cognition is immediately related to an object (see A19/B33)—as sensory consciousness of an object” (HWV, p. 109).

One proviso which McDowell demands of Sellars’ interpretation of Kant concerns Sellars’ idea that the conceptual *always* involves intentionality. McDowell amends this to the view that intuitions have only a “proto-intentionality.” This is necessary for the demand that the concepts of the understanding enter into the constitution of intuitions in order to make objects available for knowledge *before* the perception occurs. Again, this is pictured in my model as the lowered upper ring resting in a fixed manner directly onto the lower ring, enclosing the Stone with such an intimate embrace that the three objects, the two rings and the Stone, appear as though they were one entity.

McDowell’s interpretation of Kant hangs together with his view that conceptual capacities figure in human perceptual experience before experience, never “downstream” as it were. Instead, he argues that “perceptual experience is [itself] an actualization of conceptual capacities” [n2: p41], that “we normally just find ourselves knowing things that experience gives us to know” [n3: p. 43]. In other words, conceptual capacities are there *already* in the experience [“...having it disclosed to one in experience that things are a certain way is *already* an actualization of capacities that are conceptual...n4: p. 43, emphasis mine]. The trick, McDowell warns, is to show that this “already-ness” does not fall victim to the Myth of the Given (“the idea that there is a non-conceptual experiential intake that can constitute a reason or a warrant for believing that such and such is [the case]” [n5, *Mind and World*, pp 18 & 21]). We are able to avoid the Myth of the Given, according to McDowell, by the claim that there are capacities for conceptualizing in the experiential intake, itself. McDowell says that our knowing “draws on” [n6: p. 43] these capacities; if they did not, knowing would be impossible. He clarifies this relationship by employing the phrase “conceptually shaped awareness” [see “Hegel’s Idealism as Radicalization of Kant,” in *Having the World in View*, Harvard, 2009, p. 70]. That there is an availability of conceptual capacities “that belong to [an agent’s] rationality” [n7: p. 43] is the meaning McDowell finds in the term “attached mindedness,” with an emphasis on how these capacities are deeply involved in the *constitution* of intuitions. This attachment not only undermines the gap in knowledge we have inherited from Cartesianism and traditional empiricism, but allows us to make the best uses of Kant’s epistemological breakthrough.

McDowell also warns us not be tempted by an upper-case Myth of the Given when he says we should not “conceive the operations of sensory experience as prior to and independent of any involvement in conceptual capacities, [because when we do] we debar them from intelligibly standing in rational relations to cases of conceptual activity” [“Self-determining Subjectivity and External Constraint, in *Having the World in View*, p. 93]. Avoiding this independence is expressed in my model by the embeddedness of the two small rings in the stone. Sensory receptivity is symbolized by the lower ring as not prior to or independent of conceptual capacities. That is, sensory receptivity has capacities for conceptualizing but these capacities are only “implied” and not yet articulated as full-blown discourse-worthy concepts. Conceptualizing itself as equivalent to Kantian understanding is symbolized by the upper ring. If the lower ring did not possess these capacities the sensory receptivity could not “stand in rational relations to cases of conceptual activity.” This arrangement amounts to what

McDowell wants to call the “innocent given” in distinction from the Myth of the Given. This arrangement also makes possible, according to McDowell, a Kantian “cooperation between the spontaneity of the understanding and the receptivity of sensibility,” [p. 93].’

A complaint might be that McDowell conflates the *presence* of a concept with the mere *availability* of something that can later be shaped into a concept. It might even be argued that my model depicts the same conflating by asking how the lower ring can be both perfectly round and at the same time embedded into an amorphous stone? Circles are not amorphous! But I think one of the best reasons for my offering this particular model is the way in which it depicts this conflation. In the dream, something impossible to picture was heavily stressed: the geometric ring is *embedded into* the amorphous stone. The best expression I know of for this paradox of a unified entity composed of parts which somehow remain distinct is found in Kafka’s *The Trial*. The paradox occurs when Joseph K is being escorted from his home by two guardians of the state:

While still on the stairs the two of them tried to take K by the arms, and he said: “Wait till we’re in the street, I’m not an invalid.” But just outside the street door they fastened on him in a fashion he had never before experienced. They kept their shoulders close behind his and, instead of crooning their elbows, wound their arms round his at full length, holding his hands in a methodical, practiced, irresistible grip. K walked rigidly between them, the three of them were interlocked in a unity which would have brought all three of them down together had one of them been knocked over. It was a unity such as can hardly be formed except by lifeless matter.

[Franz Kafka *The Trial: The Definitive Edition* (trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, revised by E. M. Butler): New York, Schocken Books., 1937/1992, p. 224.

This “unity” of Kafka’s three figures is as an apt analog of the “unity” suggested in my model at the moment the small upper ring is lowered around the onto the small lower ring and around the stone: “a unity which can hardly be formed except by lifeless matter.” The rings and the stone are understood to be only one thing at this instant, an “exact fit” despite the problem of merging the geometric circularity of the two rings with the amorphous stone’s bumps and crevices.

The two small rings pictured wrapped round the stone are, taken as a unity, what Kant calls an “appearance” or “an undetermined object of an empirical intuition” (A20/B34). The entire contraption represents what human mindedness brings to the world, particularly in rendering the contents of intuitions as available to the understanding for making judgments. Sensibility alone cannot provide knowledge, according to Kant, and for that reason the conceptual capacities of the understanding are required in order to make an appearance available for knowledge. The stone is any object which is undergoing this process on a particular occasion. The large ring encloses the immediate context within which the object is perceived.

A reasonable question at this point might be: is “being conceptual” the same as “being available for conceptualizing”? McDowell’s answer is that the content with which the

understanding has helped to construct intuitions is “suitable to be the content associated with discursive capacity” (*HWV*, p. 264). One of Kant’s key insights is, in McDowell’s words, “what gives unity to intuitions is what gives unity to judgments” (*HWV*, p. 264). That is, the conceptual capacity that allows for discursive activity on the part of the understanding for making judgments is the same conceptual capacity that gives unity to intuitions. Intuitions have unity because the understanding has entered into and *constructed* them. This is the idea pictured by the “unity” of the two small rings and the stone. This latter also suggests the necessary unity which Kant claimed was provided by apperception: as McDowell says, “If an experience is world-disclosing [in the Heideggerian sense], any aspect of its content hangs together with other aspects of its content in a unity of the sort Kant identifies as categorical” [*The Engaged Intellect*, p. 318]. The relationship between Heideggerian world-disclosing and discursive activity will get a closer look below when we come to the section that ponders the dream’s final assertion, “The Word in the Tone/Is the Sword in the Stone.”

This unity shared by intuitions and judgments is pictured in the model at that moment when all the cords are completely slack and the upper ring rests on the lower ring with both embracing the stone. This moment when the cords are slack stands in contrast to its opposite moment when the cords are fully stretched. This opposite moment represents another part of McDowell’s picture. He sometimes employs the image of a human “stepping back” from perception in order to picture what McDowell calls “rationality in a strong sense.” This is the rationality possessed by a language speaker, something which I see pictured in my model by the upper small ring being raised to the full extension allowed by the six of the cords. This “strength” is what perception allows to the mind; anything more would result in what McDowell calls a “disengaged intellect.” He says,

*I have invoked the image of stepping back, with a view to distinguishing rationality in a strong sense—responsiveness to reasons as such—from the kind of responding to reasons that is exemplified by, say, fleeing from danger, which is something non-rational animals can do. The idea was that in a subject the ability to step back, the capacities that are operative in ordinary engagement with the world, and in ordinary bodily action, belong to the subject’s rationality in the strong sense: they are conceptual in the sense in which I claim that our perceptual and active lives are conceptually shaped. When one is unreflectively immersed one is exactly not exercising the ability to step back. But even so the capacities operative in one’s perceiving or acting are conceptual, and their operations are conceptual. [*The Engaged Intellect*, “Response to Dreyfus,” p. 324]*

The upper ring at its height symbolizes the Germanic Man’s discursive activity. The picture of stepping back retains the connectedness of language to experience suggested by the cords and by the lowering of the upper ring. This raising of the upper ring represents what non-rational animals lack. And the lowering of that ring by which the two rings enclose the stone expresses what McDowell’s emphasis on the fact that “the capacities in one’s perceiving are conceptual.” When the upper ring is lowered and rests perfectly on the lower ring, it lends to the construction of the appearances the conceptual capacities necessary for human knowledge.

McDowell provides another caution regarding a misreading of his pervasiveness theory by Dreyfus, a misreading concerning embodied copings. It is a caution suggested in my model:

Nothing is discursively explicit in these goings-on [i.e. in embodied copings], so it might seem natural to say, as Dreyfus does, that my view is that they are implicitly conceptual. But it is easy to hear that as amounting to “only implicitly conceptual”, with an implication that conceptuality would be properly on the scene only after something had been made explicit in discourse or discursive thought—that is, only after the subject had exercised the ability to step back. And that is not my view at all. Making things explicit is not a theme of my thinking. [Ibid., pp. 324-5]

This insistence by McDowell that “exercises of rationality with the detachment characteristic of explicit *commentary* (on the passing scene or on what one is doing)” [ibid, p. 325] forms no part of his theory is pictured in my model only if the lower ring is pictured as already having been fixed in place around the Stone *before* the upper ring is lowered. The dream pictures the lower ring as *always* embracing the stone. This symbolizes the sensibility’s always placing objects under inspection in space and time. But a reasonable question is “When do the concepts of the understanding enter the picture?” In the dream this magic moment occurs rhythmically every time the upper ring is lowered onto the lower ring and the Stone. Remember that McDowell insists that the conceptuality going on in embodied coping is *implicit*, without the suggestion that those goings-on are “*only* implicitly conceptual” [ibid., p. 324]. When they converge the two rings and the Stone symbolize the unity of an appearance. This unity includes an implicit conceptuality as part of its construction. Importantly this unity is tied to Kant’s Unity of Apperception: “The same function which gives unity to the various representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations in an intuition; and this unity, in its most general expression, we entitle the pure concept of understanding” (quoted by McDowell on *HWV*, p. 94). If this were not so, knowledge would be impossible. The raising of the upper ring should then be viewed as the “remove” or the “stepping back” which is necessary for discursive activity and claims of objective knowledge. The cords keep the distance of this remove connected to sensibility. As Gardner explains regarding Kant’s view, “the objects of our cognition are mere appearances: they are empirically real but transcendently ideal. To say that they are transcendently ideal is to say that they do not have in themselves, i.e. independent of our mode of cognition, the constitution which we represent them as having; rather our mode of cognition determines this constitution. Transcendental idealism entails that things cannot be known as they are in themselves” (Gardner, p. 95). The distinction between an appearance and a thing-in-itself is a Kantian theme which McDowell’s theory undermines. For McDowell, the lowering of the upper ring gives to appearances the cognitive capacities that make objective knowledge possible. The cords hold the model together by constraining the upper ring from losing contact with the rest of the model (the Stone, the lower small ring, and the lower large ring). That possible separation suggests an Idealism, a superfluous “intellectualism,” or an “internalism” unconstrained by the real world. I believe the main point of the model, as the main point of McDowell’s theory, is conceptualized contact with the world.

Another question concerns the fact that the dream is unclear regarding which came first, the raising or the lowering of the upper ring. However, this doesn’t matter since the dream pictures the raising and lowering as *always going on*; that is, as far as the model’s picture goes there is no “original” move. That means that every time the upper ring is lowered it rests in the same position where it has previously been. My take is that this means that the conceptual capacities of the understanding have *already* prepared the scene for valid objective knowledge and discursive justification.

A good way to see how this works is to consider McDowell's attack on what he feels is a "misreading" of Sellars by Tyler Burge [Perception as a Capacity for Knowledge, Marquette, WI: Marquette University Press, 2011, pp. 21-30]. The two small rings in the model, by my lights, picture the distinction in Sellars' approach that McDowell accuses Burge of failing to see. This distinction is between how a belief based on a perception is formed and how a belief based on a perception is structured. Burge believes that perceptual states provide warrants for beliefs even when those warrants go unused. For him, the world provides warrants that sometimes go unused. McDowell says that according to Burge,

Even for a subject for whom a perceptual warrant is conceptually accessible— a subject who can justify a belief she holds by citing a perceptual state she is in—the warrant that the perceptual state itself affords to the belief...is a warrant of the same sort that perceptual states provide for subjects who cannot conceptualize that warrant. [p. 19]

McDowell, inspired by Sellars, seeks instead to offer an account of a specific sort of warrant available only to rational subjects. For Burge, this approach involves flirting too close to "intellectualism" and to privileging the "interior." Burge sees instead a provision of warrants with no inferential steps. In support of his own view, McDowell cites Hegel's attempts at synthesizing objectivity and subjectivity, but his goal is not Hegelian Absolute Knowledge. Instead, he seeks an enlightened empiricism and an "innocent" givenness by making the claim we just discussed above, that implicit conceptual capacities construct our perceptions.

This move requires an acceptable contact theory. The possibility of such a theory is pictured in my dream's model as the image of the lowering of the upper ring onto the lower ring and the merging of the two rings with the Stone. To review what I have already said above, in order for the model to work for McDowell, it must suggest the logical and literal "impossibility" of a geometrically perfect circle (the lower ring) fitting into an amorphous stone's bumps and valleys so tightly that there are no open spaces remaining between the rings and the Stone. All of this must somehow be accomplished without compromising the ring's perfect circularity or the Stone's amorphousness. In the dream, the merging of the two rings with the Stone is only "suggested" as an idea; it would obviously be impossible to draw such an image without compromising either the circularity of the ring or the amorphousness of the stone. This sort of fixed and fast contact is articulated by McDowell in the following:

If a perceptual state makes a feature of the environment present to a perceiver's rationally self-conscious awareness, there is no possibility, compatible with someone's being in that state, that things are not as the state would warrant her in believing that they are, in a belief that would simply register the presence of that feature of the environment. The warrant for belief that the state provides is indefeasible; it cannot be undermined. [p. 31]

One could say, then, that the universal geometric circularity of the small rings is "imposed on" the amorphous Stone, but to be true to Kant and McDowell, one would also have to say that the Stone's particularity, the specific peaks and valleys that give it its amorphousness, work as a sort of Quinean "tribunal" on the rings. The Stone's amorphousness constrains what the understanding can say about the Stone. This then is a suitable picture of McDowell's goal, inspired by Hegel's converging of the "interior" and the "exterior," of subjectivity and objectivity in perceptual experience. For Burge, because there is no such contact like that suggested by the model, "all perceptual competencies are subject to possible error" [ibid].

Burge's "blind spot," according to McDowell, is his assumption that Sellars restricts perceptual knowledge to making inferences. In this way Burge is overcorrecting for his mistaken supposition of Sellars' "internalism." Sellars' theory, the part which Burge misses, allows for a species of perceptual knowledge that is warranted even though it does not involve inference. Missing this feature of Sellars' theory is the error that Burge's confusion "turns...on," according to McDowell, i.e. the assumption that the warrant a perceptual state provides for a belief cannot guarantee the truth of the belief" [p. 30]. Burge feels that perceptual states can only supply inconclusive warrants, whereas McDowell feels there is a "special kind of knowledge" that is unique to rational subjects. McDowell argues for another sort of warranted perceptual knowledge that rational humans share with non-rational humans and animals, even though no rational humans and animals do not make use of that warrant. In my model this second species of perceptual knowledge is symbolized by the convergence of the two small rings with the stone.

Using my model, we can say that the account which Burge calls for lacks connecting cords between the two small rings resulting in an unbridgeable gap between the upper ring and the Stone. He asks for a general "viable conception of warrant and knowledge [that] must include both primitive and sophisticated types" ["Perceptual Entitlement," 505]. McDowell, however, wants an account of "sophisticated" perceptual knowledge (the sort of knowledge enjoyed by rational animals and symbolized by the upper small ring in my model) to stand alongside a separate account of "primitive" perceptual knowledge (the sort experienced by non-rational animals and pre-rational children symbolized by the lower small ring in my model). *For McDowell, these two sorts stand as "species" under the "genus" of perceptual knowledge.* McDowell agrees with Burge that non-rational subjects can have perceptual knowledge, but insists that that sort of perceptual knowledge belongs to a different "species." A full-blown internalism, like that which Burge finds in McDowell's theory, would undermine McDowell's claim that non-rational animals experience perceptual knowledge. Burge's charge of "excessive intellectualism" is tied directly to his claiming that a "seeing such and such" (e.g. seeing that a tree is green) can only invoke an inconclusive warrant for a perceptual belief. He cannot admit the possibility of a conclusive warrant for a belief occurring without conceptual sophistication. But McDowell can, and this feature of his theory is depicted in my model by the two small rings' direct contact with the Stone. This contact pictures what McDowell calls "an exercise of a capacity to enjoy perceptual states in which features of the environment are perceptually *there* for one, without needing a level of sophistication beyond what might be possessed by someone who was only minimally articulate and reflective" [p. 32]. Conceptual capacities can be present without intellectual sophistication. I find this claim by McDowell also expressed in the dream by the phrase "the Word in the Tone." Tones have a capacity to make words and meanings available.

McDowell employs the word "grounded" to explain the sort of direct contact required for conclusive warrant:

There is no excessive intellectualism in a conception of a capacity in whose exercise a subject acquires knowledge that is grounded, and known by her to be grounded, in the perceptual presence to her of objective states of affairs. [p. 32]

This statement allows a perceiver to avoid the skepticism generated by Kant's distinction between a thing's *appearance* and the unknowable thing-in-itself. *For McDowell the warrant for a belief about a perceptual state is the perceptual state, itself, and not as Burge claims, a belief about the perceptual state based on inferential reasoning.* In my model, McDowell's theory is portrayed as a drawing of our attention to the immediate contact with the Stone that occurs with the two small rings. That image of "grounded" contact symbolizes the possibility of a fully warranted claim; this full warrant is due to the fact that Kant's Understanding and Sellars' "logical space of reasons" have had a hand in the *constructing* of the object of knowledge as it appears directly to the subject. There is no gap between the appearance and the object as known, but McDowell wants to go one step further in the direction of grounded contact: the subject experiences a perception grounded in the object by the conceptual capacities which have constructed the object. This takes place without the addition of sophisticated inferences. Such inferences and the rational capacity they require are symbolized by the small upper ring which has participated in the construction of the object as it appears.

The difference between Burge and McDowell rests primarily in the fact that there is nothing in Burge's theory that suggests a clear direct contact with the world. This is a theme which is at the very heart of McDowell's project. McDowell contends that "Burge's accusation of excessive intellectualism turns on the assumption that perceptual states, in themselves, can provide only feasible warrants for beliefs. What persuades him of that? I think the answer is that he thinks it follows from...the undeniable fact that anti-perceptual capacity is fallible" [pp. 34-5]. In the language of my model, this is why the image of "fixedness" (the fixed situation of the Stone in the grasp of the two rings and their momentary merging into a single entity) works so well for what McDowell wants to say. Burge says, "...every perceptual state...could in principle have been in circumstances in which it was prone to error" ["Perceptual Entitlement," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* vol. 67 no. 3 (2003), p. 535]. But this is impossible in McDowell's scheme. Similarly, the model fixes the Stone in its immediate circumstances at the same time that it places it in immediate contact with the conceptual capacities of the upper ring (the Understanding), implicit and "unsophisticated" though those capacities might be.

The Large Ring And the Four Exterior Cords

The large ring works in the model in the same way that peripheral vision works when a rational human focus on a particular object. It represents the boundary of the immediate local focus for a perceiver, setting off what is to be perceived from the rest of one's environment. In Heideggerian terms the large ring marks the boundary of "world-disclosure." That is, it does not present the perceiving subject with the whole world, but instead frames the object of knowledge in the setting of the outer boundary of its immediate circumstances. In this way the object does not appear isolated in a void, but in a contained and particular scene of relationship to other objects. For Heidegger's famous dictum "When one walks through a forest, one walks through the word "forest," the large ring marks the boundary of the forest. In the dream, the Stone rests in the Waste Land, a wasteland where the World of the Living Meets the World of the Dead. But the large ring marks the *immediate* locale where the conceptual construction of the Stone as a perceived object takes place. Perception of objects, although obviously taking place in the world, does not usually involve itself with claims regarding the

whole world. Even less so do knowledge claims regarding perceptions involve metaphysical claims about the world of the dead and the world of the living. On rare occasions it does. Kant's notion of a realm of the Noumenal flirts with this and his distinction between appearance of an object (what we perceive) and the object-in-itself seeks to avoid the problem. The large ring, in my interpretation at least, marks off the space of perpetual knowledge; in the example from Heidegger, it marks the difference between the forest boundary and the rest of the world. The Germanic Man, as well as I can remember, was standing just inside this large lower ring. He had to be able to hold the small upper ring and to stretch to its full extension at the level of his eyes. The diameter of this lower ring is about five feet across, a little larger than a Hula Hoop.

In "Conceptual Capacities in Perception," McDowell addresses Donald Davidson's claim that "nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief" ["A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge," in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 141]. Davidson changed his mind on this, but at the time of the paper he held that experiences themselves do not provide beliefs by serving as a Quinean "tribunal." McDowell offers the stipulation that experiences must contain something that "belongs to" one's rationality, something which is "available" for reason to make use of in its conceptualizing...otherwise conceptualizing would be impossible ("empty" in the Kantian sense). This approach becomes for McDowell a "contact theory, and something obviously at odds with Davidson's coherence theory. McDowell wants to save a modified but viable empiricism. Experience for McDowell still has "rational significance" (p. 138), but only as making available a *potential* for conceptualizing. Non-rational animals do not make use of this potential, even though it is present; McDowell feels that a circumstance which might give rise to a non-rational animal's flight has this capacity since it lies in objects, but that the capacity goes unused until a rational animal facing the same circumstance flees *for a reason*. It's like saying in the terms of my model that there are words available in the tones that non-rational animals hear (for example, in the howls of howler monkeys, but that the howler monkeys do not hear them). Human hear them because their understanding constructs sounds in a particular way. For example, I can remember as a bored child in the back of our car on long trips, I would play with the sound of the wind blowing in the car by cupping my hands around my ears and shaping these amorphous sounds into words. Important I did not usually choose these words before I heard them; they came to me *already formed*. This is the image of what McDowell wants to articulate as his pervasiveness theory. The human thus "self-determines" (the categories of the Understanding are available in the objects as they are presented in appearances) while the animal merely acts.

For all of this to work, McDowell must show that his "contact theory" is not merely another form of "detached-minded" idealism. He claims to have made this argument as early as 1996 in *Mind and World*, in which he explained that

...the conceptual content of a perceptual experience can be, and if all goes well, is something that is the case, an element in the world. We can see experience as directly taking in part of the world, because the world, understood as everything that is the case, is not outside the sphere of the conceptual. I remark that this can seem to be "a sort of idealism, in the sense in which to call a position 'idealism' is to protest that it does not genuinely acknowledge how reality is independent of our thinking" (p. 26). But I work to dislodge such an appearance.

("Conceptual Capacities in Perception," p. 142)

The part of the model that pictures this dislodging is the feature of the upper and lower small ring depicted as *both unified with and separate from* the Stone, something expressed in the rhythmic lowering and raising motion. This pictures McDowell's claim and something which Ayers says is impossible. The cords ensure that the contact and separation are momentary and part of a whole process. The large ring and its four cords connecting it the upper ring keep the process in the immediate space where our usual knowledge claims make references. In the model, the entire contraption consisting of the three rings and six cords represents the conceptual capacity of any particular human awareness at a particular time focused upon an object in the world. The "oneness" of the rings and the Stone pictures the claim that the mind has sufficient contact with the world to make conceptualizing capacities available in sense experience. But the fact that the rings and a stone are depicted also as separate things keeps the world and "everything that is the case" independent of any tempting idealism. The model pictures clearly McDowell's demand for both possibilities: a constrained, limited distance from and a merging with the Stone. A world of independent objects that are already available for conceptualizing. To claim full warrant for valid "objective" knowledge, McDowell wants perceptions to be both ways, at-one-with and independent. The model pictures these two ways in the lowering and raising of the small rings, but also in the concluding claim that "the Word is in the Tone." Ayers does not admit this possibility. With McDowell's "stipulation" that objects in the world have the capacity to render certain features available for conceptualizing, he claims to have kept alive his scaled-down version of empiricism. Because it is a contact theory, it undermines the Cartesian two-world "gap" and Humean Enlightenment skepticism.

McDowell says that "a zebra can be described, but that that is no reason to suppose the zebra itself has a form it shares with a description, or with a thought a description expresses" (p. 142). The world, he goes on to say, does not appear to the senses with subtitles. In the model this important thought is depicted by the small rings' momentarily appearing as a unity with a stone; that is, the Stone is as close as possible, forming a unity with the rings *for an instant*, only to separate from the rings in a show of independence before being restrained by the length of the six cords and forced into a reuniting with the Stone. The intuition's contribution of time and space as the "forms of intuition" in Kant's theory allows for this momentary unification and separation of the Stone and the rings. The movement happens in space and time. In other words, the small rings and the Stone are in contact sufficiently for the mind to make use of a conceptual capacity the Stone as perceived possesses. Thanks to a contribution from the mind itself, concepts are available when contact occurs. But the object has an independence and is not always perceived. *For a word to appear out of a tone, the tone must have a capacity for being "worded."* That capacity is implicit in the hearing of the word. Sense experience alone does not have conceptual form, but that doesn't prevent it from having a conceptualizing *capacity* when it is under the focused attention of a human mind that constructs its appearance.

Does any of this matter?

McDowell answers this pragmatic question with the Kantian argument that the epistemological question is tied to the freedom question, that we are also talking about what separates humans from non-rational animals and therefore talking about something that produces our understanding of moral agency. Our ability to give reasons for our beliefs and behaviors (“I walked into the sun in order to get warm”) is tied directly to our self-determination and self-determination is a necessity for moral action. The epistemological question matters because it is tied to the question of moral agency. The model “wants” to depict that the Stone and the small rings are so merged momentarily that they become a single entity, a *concept/object*. But it also, as I said, wishes to keep them separate to show that non-rational animals lack the attention, focus, and conceptualizing capacities that humans possess. Non-rational animals lack the rings and cords which depict our ability to combine conceptualizing with sense perception.

McDowell’s pervasiveness theory, as he acknowledges, makes claims regarding both agency and experience. So far we have been talking primarily about agency, but to do this we have had to touch on experience as well since for McDowell they are closely linked. This is the most difficult part of McDowell’s scheme to grasp because it entails an apparent ambiguity, an ambiguity caused by McDowell’s desire to avoid the Myth of the Given. In my model this ambiguity is expressed visually by the two small rings being so tightly fitted to the Stone that the “suggestion” is they merge momentarily with the Stone. McDowell claims a feature of perception which it is difficult if not impossible to depict visually. Perhaps my model is as close we can get to that depiction. McDowell claims human perceptual experience is always characterized by conceptual capacities, but in a form that provides an “innocent” and “lower-case” givenness. This innocent form is expressed by the two rings construction of the object prior to the perception. If the small rings were not *both* separated and merged with the Stone we would have a visual expression of upper case Givenness...we would have Sellars’ upper-case Myth since we would have a picture of “believ[ing] that you have things given to you in experience without capacities of a special kind, capacities of a self-conscious rational being, capacities that could be deployed in discursive activity.” Sensibility (the lower ring) cannot provide the conceptual capacities (the upper ring as the Categories of the Understanding) necessary for human knowing *on its own*; the two small rings must join. This allows for the certain “shaping” of the appearances before the perception experience. It matters that in the dream the gold of the ring and the minerals of the stone are distinct. The rings are human-made, the Stone is not. This retains McDowell’s idea that there is no non-conceptual experiential intake that can constitute a reason or warrant for believing that such and such [is the case].” The gold of the lower ring represents sensibility capacities which we share with non-rational animals, but the entire “contraption” (the human-made parts) in the dream is a human-made object. This distinction disappears for the moment when the two small rings merge with the Stone to form a unity. The closeness of the rings to the Stone and its customized fit express how difficult it is to keep these two, conceptual capacities and non-human natural objects, separate, i.e. how easy it is to collapse into the Myth. Thus the necessary ambiguity (how does one picture geometry circularity that is at the same time amorphous) in the model.

In his paper “What Myth?,” McDowell acknowledges that humans and non-rational animals share absorbed coping experiences, but he differentiates humans from other animals by claiming a Heideggerian “openness” to the world that is lacking in other animals. This openness includes conceptualizing which he calls “the human being’s rationality at work” [p. 314 *The Engaged Intellect*]. A human walks through a door like a cat does (an example of “affordances”); but the human’s openness includes a “background,” “the fact that perception discloses a world to us is intelligible only in a context that includes the embodied coping competence, the responsiveness to affordances, that we share with other animals” [p. 315]. This *more* for humans “transforms the nature of the disclosing that perception does for us. Affordances for rational humans become data “for [one’s] rationality, not only [one’s] practical rationality but [one’s] theoretical rationality as well” [p. 315]. Importantly, “human embodied coping skills *are not independent of any openness in which rationality appears.*” [p. 315]. McDowell’s metaphor to illustrate this is architectural: there is for humans “a ground floor level, supporting a distinct upper story at which openness involves rationality” [p. 316]. These “stories” show up respectively in the model’s lower and upper small rings. This openness occurs for humans not only in embodied coping with affordances, but in human openness in its relations with the rest of the world. The Stone in the model represents *any object* in the grasp of a human perception. The upper ring stretched to the full extension of the cords represents our “rational responses in the shape of personal beliefs” and the justifications that might accompany those beliefs, but the lowering of the upper ring onto the lower ring and the Stone represents the fact that there are already (prior to perception) conceptual capacities in perceptual experience that allow for later “downstream” rational activities like believing and justifying. The model with its cords and raising and lowering of the upper ring pictures the necessity of attached mindedness, attached in order to supply the perception with the conceptual capacities which render the object knowable. This possibility, McDowell argues, stands as one of the major contributions of Sellars’ theory:

*What Sellars’ thought comes to in this context is that the perceptual experiencing of rational animals is itself a rational openness to the world—which includes openness to affordances, as I have been insisting. So capacities that belong to a subject’s rationality must be operative in the subject’s experiencing itself, not just in responses to it. [p. 317 *The Engaged Mind*]*

This openness must be emphasized because of the dual danger of a sense-discounting Cartesianism on the one hand and of a mind-discounting empiricism on the other. What must be avoided at all costs is Dreyfus’ idea that conceptual capacities are not given in certain perceptual experiences like embodied coping. In the model, we can think of the two rings resting on the stone as the image of the preparing of a sensed object that renders it “conceptually ready” (McDowell’s term) for the upper ring, after it is later raised, to carry out belief, justification, and other rational judgments.

McDowell offers an analogy from physics to help explain Sellars’ idea that sensory experience contains propositional claims:

...as the particles that are posited to explain the behavior of gases under pressure are modeled on, say, tiny bouncing balls, the posited non-overt propositional episodes are modeled on episodes in which propositional content is overt, for instance claims literally so called [Sellars,

Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind, 56-9]. *That goes for experiences in particular. What Sellars does, then, is not exactly to cash out the metaphorical talk of experiences as “containing” propositional claims, but rather to tell us something about what kind of extended use of language is in question in such talk. Expressed claims are the model we need to exploit in grasping the concept of experiences.* [“Self-determining Subjectivity and External Constraint,” p. 94].

The lower ring in my model represents the Kantian idea that intuitions (sensory experiences) have logical structure. This is McDowell’s interpretation of Kant’s Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories (A79/B104-5). To repeat lines from the *CPR*: “The same function which gives unity to the various representations *in a judgment* also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations *in an intuition*; and this unity, in its most general expression, we entitle the pure concept of understanding” (quoted by McDowell on p. 94). This is the central move eliminating the Cartesian gap between mind and world and replacing it with a breakthrough contact theory. A logical structure is present in the mind’s contact with the world. This logic at the level of sense experience does not arrive in the form of statements as claimed by victims of the Myth of the Given, but in “speech acts [that] can serve as a model for ‘thoughts’” (p. 95). These speech acts model the same unity by which objects appear to us as unified. The circular form of the rings in my model pictures the enclosed unity of our thoughts about objects, of the objects as the objects which they are. The difference between the model provided for thinking about sense experience and sensory experience itself is that sensory experience is focused on a *particular object* in a *particular space* at a *particular time*. This is helpful in seeing how my model works as a picture of McDowell’s pervasiveness theory: the raised upper ring represents *overt* propositional content while the lowered upper ring wrapped around the stone represents the implied conceptual capacities available in perception for a downstream “extended use of language.”

Among other sorts of discourse, the upper ring represents means/end deliberations. Such talk is an activity which McDowell says is missing in absorbed coping. But McDowell insists that this does not mean that mindedness itself is missing from absorbed coping. As I said above, this is why the lower ring of the model looks *exactly* like the upper ring...in perceptual experience it represents a sort of mindedness like the upper ring does, but a mindedness that is not at the level of means/end deliberation. McDowell says Dreyfus thinks as follows: human absorbed coping and certain activities of non-rational animals exhibit behavior that “exploits something that is *like* means-end rationality except that it belongs to the body as opposed to the person, [and, therefore] it must be non-conceptual.” (p. 326) Dreyfus, according to McDowell, thus falls for the “dangerous metaphor” that allows him to accuse McDowell of seeing a pervasiveness of concepts in absorbed coping activities that Dreyfus reads as a “full-blown means-end rationality that belongs to the agent.” This “full-blown” sort belongs to the upper ring of my model. In the symbolic language of my model, Dreyfus’ theory lacks any possible lowering of the upper ring onto the lower ring except in the form of full-blown means/end reasoning. Dreyfus’ theory is therefore imaged as having the two small rings separated and frozen in place. This pictures Dreyfus’ theory of the absence of concepts in absorbed coping. He misses the particular kind of conceptualizing which McDowell sees in absorbed coping, a conceptualizing that is less than “full-blown,” less than inference-driven, and “below” means/end conceptualizing.

The resting of the upper ring onto the lower ring pictures the central idea that McDowell wants to argue in his debate with Dreyfus, i.e. when a human performs an action, like catching an unexpectedly thrown frisbee, she is “realizing a concept of a thing to do.” This action is an example of a skill that can be performed by some non-rational animals, but for her because she is rational the action is pervaded with conceptualizing. McDowell verbalizes the difference between the upper and lower rings by the following: “She does not [catch the frisbee] by realizing other concepts of things to do. She does not realize concepts as contributory things to do, in play for her as concepts of what she is to do by virtue of her means-end rationality in a context in which her overarching project is to catch the frisbee. But she does realize a concept of, say, catching *this*.” [p. 327] The unity of the two rings and the Stone pictures what McDowell refers to as ‘this’.

Another arena in which we can find my model helpful to McDowell is in his disagreement with a position Robert Pippin’s takes on Hegel. Pippin, according to McDowell, overcorrects when he says that Hegel is so set on constituting free agency in subjectivity and communal practices that he “recoils into an equally one-sided attribution of independence to the [social] practices, refusing to countenance any sense in which reasons have the independence, as against the practices, that the realist imagery requires. The right response is a Hegelian balance, with independence and dependence on both sides. That yields a realism of a different kind” [“Towards a Reading of Hegel on Action, *Having the World in View*, p. 172.] It is just this “realism of a different kind,” one that is innocent of the Myth of the Given, that is imaged in my model by the unity of the two small rings and the Stone. The model like McDowell seeks to avoid excessive intellectualism on the one side and excessive realism on the other; the model attempts to picture this equipoise visually.

Another place to see how the lower ring in my model pictures McDowell’s theory is to consider his warning regarding a possible misreading of the way Sellars uses Kant:

It can be tempting to cast the empiricistic version of the Myth of the Given that is Sellars’ primary target as an interpretation of the familiar Kantian duality of understanding and sensibility, spontaneity and receptivity. In this interpretation, sensory receptivity yields immediately given cognition. Conceptual capacities, which belong to the spontaneous understanding, come into play only subsequently, in basic empirical judgments, conceived as directly warranted by those immediately given cognition and in turn warranting the further reaches of a world view. [Having the World in View, p. 92].

That is what McDowell means by someone’s having a “hopeless” picture that misses one of Sellars’ main contributions, the possibility of an “innocent” givenness. McDowell calls this innocent version a “non-traditional empiricism...purged of the ‘framework of givenness’ [ibid., p. 93] and adds, in a quote I mentioned above, “When we conceive the operations of sensory receptivity as prior to and independent of any involvement of conceptual capacities, we debar them from intelligibly standing in rational relations to cases of conceptual activity,” [ibid., p. 93]. McDowell’s repairing of this “hopeless” picture, his different interpretation of Sellars’ Kant, appears in the model, for reasons I have already given in this section, in the image of the two small rings’ embeddedness in the Stone.

3. The Germanic Man

What we must not neglect in how we relate the dream to McDowell's theory is the role of the Germanic Man. After all, he is the agent who carries out the lowering and raising of the upper ring. I see this unknown but Germanic man as possible Kant: or at least the image of Kant's "Unity of Apperception," the unity Kant refers to when he says, "all my representations must belong to one self-consciousness." This is what Kant calls "an objective condition for all knowledge...a condition under which every object must stand in order *to become an object for me*" (B138). The model, the contraption itself, is human-made and symbolizes the structure of knowing as a process, whereas the man is a subject and requires a different explanation. Or is he Hegel, for reasons suggested at the conclusion of the last section. Perhaps he is Heidegger or Heidegger's *dasein*, the human experience of world-disclosing in the Clearing (*Lichtung*). The man is dressed in the style of European clothing of the Thirties and Forties, a long drab overcoat and a film-noir hat shading his face. Also, the dream occurred during the week that Heidegger died in May, 1976, an event I was not aware of. We can also perhaps add Wittgenstein to this list for reasons I suggest in the next section. But I prefer to avoid interpreting the dream and would rather take it at face value: the figure is merely "The Germanic Man," the representative of the historical German philosophical conversation that has shaped so deeply how we have come to see the relationship between the mind and the world.

4. The Chant "The Word in the Tone is the Sword in the Stone"

The lowering and raising of the upper ring is carried out by the Germanic Man with the same rhythm as the subterranean earthquake tremors. I cannot remember whether in the dream the upper ring is raised or lowered with each tremor. I only know that they were synchronized. I interpret this synchronized action as representing the periodic grounding of "the space of reasons" in the natural world, the fundamental image of a genuine contact theory like McDowell's. The warrant for a knowledge claim made by inference must have its source in perceptual experience, itself, and this experience must be in direct contact with the world. Without this contact, McDowell would fall victim to the sort "excessive intellectualizing" which he sees favored by Rorty, Davidson, and Burge. As I have already show, such excessive intellectualizing ends up in the tangles of the half-hearted "inconclusive warrants" that Burge and McDowell both worry about. McDowell claims to have found a way out of this dilemma and I believe this way out is pictured in the model's image as the lowering and raising of the upper ring which is synchronized with the earthquake tremors and the underworld chanting of the dead Classical Greeks. These same earthquake tremors that cause me in the dream to fall to the ground are another symbol of the need to maintain contact with the world.

McDowell, without expressly saying so, is accusing Burge (for whom "any perceptual capacity is fallible," p. 35) of being "held" by the Cartesian "picture" (*bild*) which Wittgenstein in the opening of the *Philosophical Investigations* (1947) famously accused practically all of us as falling victim to since Descartes. "A picture holds us captive" (Ein *Bild* hielt uns gefangen) Wittgenstein admonishes, it is the epistemological picture of the last 400 years which has trapped ("captivated") us in its frustrating skepticism. Charles Taylor calls it "a kind of

captivity, because it has prevented us from seeing what is wrong in this whole line of thought” [“Retrieving Realism,” in *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World*,“ p. 61]. According to Taylor, Montaigne was the last mainstream Western philosopher who felt immediate and direct contact with the world. Cartesian Dualism and Humean skepticism “‘misunderstand’ knowledge as ‘mediational,’” says Taylor. Descartes complained that “The reality I want to know is outside my mind and my knowledge of it is within” [Ibid., p. 61]. “Because of the ‘mind’ we have a distorted view of things; we don’t know what we think we know; or what it is to know.” That is, in a mediational view I only have knowledge of the outer world through inner states and cannot know if those inner states accurately represent the outer world. Burge says, “...every perceptual state...could in principle have been in circumstances in which it was prone to error” (“Perceptual Entitlement””, 535). This divide between “outside” and “inside” is what the Germanic Man in the dream seeks to cure by returning from the dead. This image represents McDowell’s correction to Burge’s “blind spot”...his overlooking the possibility of perceptual warrant provided by mind-world contact. McDowell claims his inspiration for making this correction is in Sellars. In addition, McDowell claims Burge’s blindspot is “pervasive” (p. 3) and symptomatic of a wide-ranging tendency in contemporary epistemology.

One of McDowell’s principal arguments regarding perceptual knowledge addresses the skeptic’s question “How do I know I’m not fooled by a perception?” McDowell acknowledges repeatedly that perceptions are sometimes fallible, but his response is to argue that that does not entail that a perceiving subject cannot ever know when she is in a position to know that when she perceives how the world is she can also know that her knowledge is indefeasibly warranted. Knowing there is a chance she could be wrong on certain occasions, for example where the lighting is poor, does not rule out the possibility of indefeasibly warranted perceptual knowledge on other occasions where the lighting is not a problem. Knowing a problem is possible does not entail knowing there *is* a problem. McDowell says, “The mere fact that it is *possible* for lighting conditions to be undetectably unsuitable for knowing the colors of things by looking at them is not a reason to say that for all she knows the present lighting conditions are unsuitable” (p. 49). The “general case” of perceiving color does not involve impediments, even though particular cases do. To claim knowledge the subject would not have to eliminate all the possibilities of poor lighting conditions. This approach retains the acknowledgement of fallibility without sacrificing the possibility of perceptual knowledge. “The sheer fact of fallibility does not show that on an occasion when she makes such a claim and that risk does not materialize, she was not giving expression to knowledge, and knowledge that she knew she had” (p. 50). The reason for this in the model’s terms is the embeddedness of the contact between mind and world *on most occasions*, that is in the unity of the two small rings and the Stone.

This does not mean that her knowledge claim is based on the “high probability” that the conditions are good for accurate viewing. That approach is still caught in the Cartesian picture of a gap separating mind and world. McDowell: “A high probability of being correct in what one says is not the right kind of thing to underwrite a claim to know something” (p. 50). McDowell says it had nothing to do with probability, that probability is “posing no threat to the following idea: when all goes well in the exercise of a fallible perceptual capacity, its possessor is in a position that conclusively warrants her in believing something” (p. 52). That is, there *are* occasions where the conditions for knowing colors are right, states “that make a feature of her

environment present to her and so provide(s) conclusive warrant for the corresponding belief,” (p. 53). The key phrase in this claim is “present to her.” Presentness *is* contact, therefore there is no assuming of contact by the perceiving subject. That present-ness provides an indefeasible warrant for belief. Mere probability is not a sufficient warrant, only the present-ness of genuine contact can suffice. “Her warrant for believing the thing is green is that she can see that it is,” McDowell says, making a clear claim of mind/world contact (p. 13).

A genuine contact theory, like McDowell’s, must leave open no possibility for skepticism regarding perceptual knowledge...regardless of other legitimate instances of fallibility. When conditions are suitable perceptual knowledge occurs, even without inferences. Because Burge over-worries about perceptual knowledge being restricted to “God-like critical reasoners” he misses McDowell’s way of seeing a “species” of perceptual knowledge shared by rational and non-rational animals. McDowell’s aim of producing a theory that accounts for the “ancient idea that humans are rational animals” depends upon the adequacy of his account regarding the two species of perceptual knowledge. The two cords connecting the lower small ring (which represents the non-inferential species of perceptual knowledge we share with non-rational animals) to the upper ring (which represents the inferential species of perceptual knowledge belonging only to humans as rational animals) ensures that the “ancient idea” survives, at least in the image which the model provides. The two cords represent McDowell’s defense against the “excessive intellectualism” of which Burge has accused him. This is perhaps another way of stating McDowell’s goal: “...to integrate reason with animality,” as he concludes in his final paragraph (p. 57). His mind/world contact theory is also a “humans are rational animals” theory.

At this point, I must quote in full a crucial passage in McDowell’s “What Myth?” in which he explains the difference between a cat’s and a human’s experience of an object. This difference highlights what is happening in the model with the image of the unified two rings and the Stone:

...my claim is that when experience is world-disclosing, its content has a distinctive form. This does not imply anything about the matter of the content that is present in that form—to bring in the other half of the metaphor that this talk of form involves. Materially identical content can show up elsewhere in a different form. My experience might disclose to me that an opening in a wall is big enough for me to go through. A cat might see that an opening in a wall is big enough for it to go through. My experience would be world-disclosing and so conceptual in form....The cat’s perceptual intake would not be world-disclosing and so, in the relevant sense, not conceptual in form. It is irrelevant to this difference between the cases that there is that match in what the cat and I would be getting to know through the exercise of our perceptual capacities.

Importantly, McDowell adds that in our attempts at producing a phenomenological account of embodied coping we should “reject” Dreyfus’ goal of answering the question “how the non-conceptual given is converted into a given with conceptual content” [“What Myth?,” p. 321 and Dreyfus’ “Overcoming the Myth of the Mental,” p. 59]. McDowell insists that conceptual capacity is embedded in experience, itself, and not something that perceptual experience is

later converted into. This idea is expressed visually in the model in the lowering of the upper small ring. The lower small ring is what we share with the cat when we perceive an opening in the wall that we can pass through. The Stone in the model is a stand-in for the opening in the wall, and the entire contraption consisting of the rings and leather cords, because it is a human construction, symbolizes the way in which a human experiences an object as suffused with conceptual capacities. This is the world-disclosing character of *dasein*. *The object experienced has been infused with conceptual categories in its construction as an appearance; these conceptual categories make downstream assertions about the object possible.* This is the reason for the repeated lowering and raising of the upper ring. In this way, the lowering of the upper ring shows the nature of human embodied coping, saturated with conceptual capacities that later can be employed discursively. When the upper ring is lowered onto the lower ring it engages the conceptual capacities already placed there in a previous lowering. Experience uses these conceptual capacities to express beliefs, intentions, justifications, and the rest. This is the visual expression of the Heideggerian dictum “When we walk through the forest, we walk through the word ‘forest’.” That is, in terms of the model, the upper and lower rings are “already” a custom-fit around the stone when the human (the Germanic Man) turns his attention to it. This custom-fit is as “silent” as a word which you can’t quite make out in a conversation or a word in a foreign language not yet interpreted. The Word is *already* there! McDowell takes his inspiration from Gadamer’s insight that “language enables us to have experience that is categorically unified, apperceptive, and world-disclosing, and hence has content that is conceptual in the sense I have introduced; not, absurdly, that we are ready in advance with words for every aspect of the content of our experience, nor that we could equip ourselves with words for every aspect of the content of our experience” [“What Myth?,” p. 320]. A helpful quote regarding the role played by words in human perception which is pervaded with concepts is the line Robert Brandom ascribes to Sellars: “grasping a concept is mastering the use of a word” [cited by Dreyfus in *Articulating Reasons*, p. 6]. The concept ‘forest’ is not added on after the perception, rather it has shaped the forest itself in the way it appears for the human who perceives it.

McDowell insists that we understand the correct sequencing that occurs in human perception. We have what other animals have who perceive the world non-conceptually, but something happens with us that is connected to language and is essential to world-disclosing. This ‘something’ is symbolized by the dream’s phrase “The Word in the Stone.” McDowell makes this clear in the following counter to Dreyfus:

Now, consider an aspect of the content of a world-disclosing experience that is not already the content of a conceptual capacity the subject possesses, in that sense. If it is to become the content of a conceptual capacity of hers, she needs to determine it to be the content of a conceptual capacity of hers. That requires her to carve it out from the categorially unified but as yet, in this respect, unarticulated experiential content of which it is an aspect, so that thought can focus on it by itself. It is overwhelmingly natural to cash out this image of carving out an aspect of content from a world-disclosing experience in terms of annexing a bit of language to it.

We can thus interpret dream in the following way: the Germanic Man (or even myself as the dream’s narrator) “carves out of” a mere Tone a meaningful Word (‘in his case “*stein*” or in my case “stone”) in the same way that one might “carve out” of any perception the concepts which work meaningfully in the descriptions of whatever has been perceived.

The word chanted by the subterranean Greeks in this way introduces language into the scene, one of the innovations which Sellars brings to the way he reads Kant's "pure concepts of the understanding." Objects must be "thinkable." Nature becomes thinkable by the process which is depicted in the Germanic Man's lowering and raising of the upper ring. **There is no thinkability without concepts; this is true in sense of Davidson's assertion that "a person cannot be said to have lost language while still maintaining an ability to conceptualize."** The chanting also introduces the passage of time into the space where knowing occurs, symbolizing perhaps McDowell's emphasis on "generality" (that is, the role of the past and the future in conceptualizing), lifting the scene out of the mere immediate occasion of a particular experience. The location of this deep contact is exactly at that point in our experience where a tone becomes a word. That is, words aufheben tones, overcome and include tones, and that marks the achievement of what McDowell means by "present to her" and what Heidegger meant by "walking through the word 'forest'." For the dream to say "The Word in the Tone is the Sword in the Stone" is to say that the key to understanding what McDowell means by "present to her" is to think about words in tones as swords in stones. Such "word-swords" are easily extracted by the right person at the right moment, as conceptual capacities embedded in and extracted from sense experience. But such word-swords are not available to minds detached from the world.

McDowell suggests that the key to understanding world-disclosing is:

*...if an experience is world-disclosing, which implies that it is categorially unified, all its content is present in a form in which...it is suitable to constitute contents of conceptual capacities. All that would be needed for a bit of it to come to constitute the content of a conceptual capacity, if it is not already the content of a conceptual capacity, is for it to be focused on and made to be the meaning of a linguistic expression. ("What Myth," in *The Engaged Intellect*, p. 319). If it is an ordinary stone we are perceiving we may come to know that it is not just a stone but perhaps a piece of fine-grained igneous Andecite. Even when the perceiver has no knowledge that the stone is Andecite "all the capacities that are operative in enjoying a world-disclosing experience, whether or not they are geared to aspects of the experience for which the subject has linguistic expressions, are conceptual, since they are capacities to enjoy content that is...conceptual in form." (Ibid., p. 320). And "conceptual" implies the presence of language, whether it is for disclosing stones in a Waste Land or "equality" in the Declaration of Independence.*

The Wasteland

Objects appear in contexts and not in isolation. As Alva Noe says, channeling Wittgenstein, "Our understanding, our thinking, and our deliberations, themselves, always *only* take place in a context, against a background, and for certain purposes" (*Mind, Reason, and Being in the World*, p. 182). The rest of the dream scene, everything that the dream calls a "Waste Land," has strong suggestions, for me at least, of Heidegger's "Clearing" (*Lichtung*), within which unconcealing occurs. But the dream's image of a clear line at the cliff between the two "worlds" of the living and of the dead, suggests Kant's phenomenal/noumenal boundary. I belong to the World of the Living, but the World of the Dead is populated by Classical Age

Greeks. The Germanic Man, recently died, has made one final trip back to the world of the living, because he neglected to “bequeath” something for the living. What he forgot to leave is the model. It is as if it is only of use for the living since it concerns living bodies and perceptual knowledge. The Living are the present and the Dead are the past; but in the dream the Dead inform the Living regarding the Mind/World contact Point. The Waste Land with its Crossroads is that contact Point and the model that is resting at the crossroads pictures the thinking through of the sort of Mind/World contact that fees from the “captivity” outlined by Wittgenstein. If the Germanic Man is Heidegger, he bequeathes us a way of looking at and thinking about this Mind/World Contact by “bequeathing” us the model. In Celtic Arthurian myths, particularly in the ancient Irish myth, *Echtrae Airt medic Cuinn*, and in 12th Century Chretien de Troyes’ *Perceval*, the Waste Land’s infertility is associated with the castration wound of the sinful Fisher King. It is image which plays a central role in T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922).

A Final Thought

At the conclusion of “Self-Determining Subjectivity and External Restraint,” McDowell defends his theory against Rorty’s demand that the solidarity of the human community should replace the traditional scientific view that truth claims are answerable to the “authority” of the world as *it is*:

Rorty has argued that the very idea of being answerable to objects in our thinking about them is a betrayal of the ideal of self-determination. (See, e.g., “Solidarity or Objectivity?”). In Rorty’s view, aspiring to make one answerable to the world is a secular counterpart of subjecting oneself to the will of an authoritarian deity. Full human maturity requires liberation from dogmatic religion....We should replace this ideal of answerability to the non-human with an ideal of answerability to our fellow human beings, in a context of free negotiation between equals...solidarity rather than objectivity.

[p. 103]

This view is a direct challenge to McDowell’s desire to keep alive a revised version of Empiricism in a way that allows for an “innocent” Myth of givenness. McDowell’s position, I believe, is expressed in my model. Also, my model takes McDowell’s theory in the direction Rorty wants to go politically, but without sacrificing completely McDowell’s demand for a limited answerability to the world. McDowell reads Rorty’s call for trading an objectivity for a solidarity among human subjects as a form of Idealism, one that unwittingly ignores Hegel’s demand for a dialectal merging of subjectivity and objectivity.

End