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Abstract: Although commonly cited as one of the philosophers responsible for the resurgence of interest in pragmatism, Wilfrid Sellars was also the son of Roy Wood Sellars, one of the most dedicated critical realists of the early 20th century. Given his father's realism and his own 'scientific realism,' one might assume that the history of realism – and, despite contemporary interest, not pragmatism – would best serve as the historical background for Wilfrid Sellars' philosophy. I argue that Wilfrid Sellars, far from being the adherent to classical pragmatism assumed by some, holds more in common with critical realism – specifically, a realism that was framed in opposition to pragmatism – than one finds amongst the writings of Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, or John Dewey. I support this claim by examining Wilfrid Sellars' adoption of his father's criticisms of C.I. Lewis, and offer various arguments and historical considerations against thematic accounts that insist on a strong connection between Wilfrid Sellars and pragmatism.
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