

Week 14 Notes

**Conclusion:**

**A Model of Conceptually Articulated Appearances of Conceptually Articulated Reality**

Plan:

- I. Introduction: Bimodal Conceptual Realism.
  - a) Psychologism about the Conceptual.
  - b) A Non-Psychological, Structural Conception of the Conceptual.
  - c) Bimodal Conceptual Realism.
- II. Bilateral Deontic Normative *Pragmatics*.
  - a) The Harman Point: Inference vs. Implication.
  - b) Asserting/Denying, Challenging/Defending.
  - c) Reason Relations of Implication (Consequence) and Incompatibility.
- III. Truthmaker Alethic Modal *Semantics*.
  - a) Metaphysics.
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- IV. The Hlobil Isomorphism.
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- V. Conclusion.
  - a) Conceptual Contents and Rational Forms on this Conceptual Realist Account.
  - b) A Final Question: What Produces and Sustains the Isomorphism?

## I) Introduction: Bimodal Conceptual Realism.

### For Intro:

#### Plan and Rationale for Intro:

##### 1. Conceptual appearances (Kant):

The title of the course is “Sellars as Metaphysician: Norms and Nature, Appearance and Reality.” In this concluding week, I assemble Sellarsian raw materials (from the left-most diagonal triangle of the original diagram, the first half of the course) to address the relations between norms and nature and appearance and reality in a different way than Sellars himself does, in a conceptually realist way rather than a conceptually subjectivist way.

The issue that has emerged on the **Appearance/Reality** dimension is **the issue of conceptual structure**.

Kant transmuted **the distinction between appearance and reality**, whose home is *perception*, by introducing an idea of **specifically conceptual appearances**.

The idea of *conceptual* appearances, appearances in the form of claimables, sayables, thinkables, raises the issue whether the reality of which it is an appearance shares that conceptual structure, and if it does *not*, in what sense appearances can be *veridical*.

##### 2. Conceptual psychologism:

###### a) **To be in conceptual shape is to be fit to serve as or provide reasons.**

The MoG is the thought that something that is *not* in conceptual shape could do that.

###### b) **But the only grip we have on reasons comes from reasoning.**

It is inference in the sense of inferring that explains the inferential relation between premises and conclusion that is one claim or set of claims being a reason *for* (or against) another, and that conclusion being something reasons can be given for (or against).

**Reasoning here is something done, an act or a practice—probably a significance an act can have *within* a practice.**

###### c) A natural conclusion is that conceptual content is role in reasoning.

This is the origin of *psychologism about the conceptual*: only what plays a suitable role in practices of giving and asking for reasons can be in conceptual shape.

###### d) This is **conceptual psychologism is one large view-kind Sellars shares with Kant.**

It is restricting the understanding of what is conceptually contentful to the results of discursive practitioners (thinkers and talkers) *applying* concepts (for us post-linguistic-turn folks, using linguistic expressions). What they apply them *to* is not to be thought of as conceptually structured or conceptually contentful, apart from what concepts practitioners might apply *to* it. *Conceptual psychologism* (a kind of subjectivism about the conceptual) restricts conceptual structure to acts by thinkers-talkers (subjects) of applying concepts.

It leads to a picture of **conceptual appearances of nonconceptual reality**.

3. The Kantian problematic:

- a) Kant's transformation of the idea of *perceptual* appearances into the idea of *conceptual* appearances is the idea that discursive commitments *are* in conceptual shape, while what they seek to say or think or know *about* is *not* in conceptual shape.
- b) This second commitment of **Kant's is standing Plato on his head**. From K's point of view:

Plato had *nonconceptual* sensuous appearances of *conceptual* a reality.

- c) For Kant, reality as it is in itself, the topic of our reasoning practices, neither provides nor stands in need of reasons in reasoning practices.
- d) Sellars, like Kant sees conceptual appearances of a nonconceptual reality.
- e) On this point, Rorty is entirely with Kant and Sellars.

For Rorty the alternative is thinking of "nature's own language."

- f) This is what sets up **the Kantian problematic: the problem of making sense of conceptual appearances of a nonconceptual reality**.

In particular, it is making sense of the possibility and nature of *knowledge* in that situation.

That is, it is the task of understanding the kind of *veridicality* conceptual appearances of a nonconceptual reality can be understood to have.

4. Conceptual Realism:

- a) **Mind and World** botanizes various pathologies that result from conceiving the world we know of and act in, the natural world, as not already in conceptual shape before cultured knowers addressed it. McDowell's view is that the conceptual has no outer bound. There can be *language* entry and exit transitions, but no transitions into and out of the realm of the conceptual.

The world in the narrow sense is just the natural world: *nature*. It is to be construed privatively, as what is reference-independent of *culture*.

The first part of the course title: norms and nature, could just as easily be *culture* and *nature*.

For culture just is discursive practice, practices with language at their core, without which they would not be cultural activities. And the core of the linguistic practices is asserting, including giving and asking for reasons for them.

- b) **Mind and World** asserts the "**unboundedness of the conceptual**" as a way of evading the Kantian problematic, with its two alternatives of transcendental idealism (if not conceptually realistic) and subjective idealism (if conceptually realistic).

This is a **return to Aristotle**, where **rational forms** occur in nature as in minds, just in different modes of enmattering.

- c) The **third way** is to embrace **conceptual realism** (the "unboundedness of the conceptual") while rejecting the restriction of the reason relations that articulate conceptual contentfulness to reasonings.

- d) To make an alternative work, **a non-psychological, non-subjective, non-pragmatic understanding (conception) of the conceptual is needed**—in the sense of the conception not in principle being restricted to psychological, subjective, or pragmatic instances.
- e) To have conceptual appearances of conceptual reality (“unboundedness of the conceptual”) you need a **nonpsychological conception of the conceptual**. That would potentially be applicable to appearance *and* reality.
- f) We might have to *explain* the conceptual in terms of concept-use in judgment, but that only shows *sense* dependence of objective conceptual structure on subjective conceptual practices (structure of *use* of concepts by subjects). **It does not show reference-dependence**. That is, **sense-dependence of conceptual structure in objective reality on our mastery, but also our understanding of and discussion of concept-use in acts of judging in a pragmatic MV does not hinder understanding that structure as something that it would have had even if there never had been discursive beings**.

g) The variety I will elaborate is **a structural-rational conception of the conceptual**. I am concerned to show how one can agree that **conceptual content is role in reason relations**, and that reason *relations* can only be *understood* in terms of reasoning *practices* (so: a pragmatics-first order of explanation), while nonetheless understanding reason *relations* as extending *beyond* practices of giving and asking for reasons—justifying and challenging claimings.

## 5. Conceptual Psychologism and Conceptual Realism:

The restriction I am objecting to is the assumption, characteristic of **conceptual psychologism**, that what is conceptually contentful, or “in conceptual shape” is limited to *applications* of concepts in judgments, to representings (acts of representing, thinking) and their products. A principal non-psychological conception of the conceptual is **conceptual structuralism**.

- If one **combines conceptual psychologism with conceptual realism**, the claim that what is represented no less than representings of it is in conceptual shape, **the result is Berkeleyan subjective idealism**. That is the view that the objective world consists exclusively of *thinkings, representings*.
- **Kant’s transcendental idealism combines conceptual psychologism with the rejection of conceptual realism**. The result is the two-world or two-aspect conception (the difference does not make a difference for *this* point), of **conceptual appearances of a nonconceptual reality**.
- **Hegel’s absolute idealism rejects conceptual psychologism** in favor of conceptual structuralism, and **asserts conceptual realism**.

The view I will begin to fill in is **bimodal structural conceptual realism**.

	Conceptual Representings (Appearance) of Nonconceptual Representeds (Reality)	Conceptual Realism: Representings (Appearance) and Representeds (Reality) Both Conceptual
Conceptual Psychologism: Only Representings Conceptual	<b>Transcendental Idealism</b> (Kant, also Sellars)	<b>Subjective Idealism</b> (Berkeley)
Structural Conception of the Conceptual	?	<b>Absolute Idealism</b> (Hegel, also Spinoza)

6. Sellars gives us two sorts of clues about a nonpsychological conception of the conceptual:

- a) His appeal to *situation in a space of subjunctively robust implications as functionally defining conceptual content* (description in a declarativist sense that goes with asserting and so assertibility = truth-evaluability). [Somewhere make point about truth-evaluability as applicability of ‘...is true’ *is coextensive with* declarativism about truth-evaluability. It will carve out the same subclass. And that functional classification goes with *asserting* on the pragmatic side.]
- b) His gnomic pronouncement “**the language of modality is a ‘transposed’ language of norms.**”

7. Here is a way to put those ideas together: **bimodal conceptual realism.**

- a) For the conceptual realism, we appeal to S’s lesson (a) above, and **look to *reason relations of implication (or consequence) and incompatibility as functionally defining conceptual contentfulness.*** This is **rational structuralism about the conceptual.** What is in the first instance conceptually articulated is what can stand in these relations. And we can understand what stands in those relations functionally, *as* what stands in those relations. (This transformation can be as simple as Ramsification or as complex as the functional definition of a new item in terms of the relations it stands in in category theory, starting with Yoneda’s Lemma.)
- b) I will just call these ‘*reason relations*’—and am for the moment just asserting that there are two flavors: implication and incompatibility.

For the ‘bimodal’ part, we appeal to S’s lesson (b) above, and think of the *use* of concepts by discursive subjects in *normative*, that is, *deontic modal* terms, as corresponding to conceptual structure on the side of objective reality articulated in *alethic modal* terms.

Putting (a) and (b) together, *what* is articulated is relations of *consequence* and *incompatibility*. These can be inferential consequence and exclusion, or subjunctively robust necessitation and impossibility.

Example:

Sentences: ‘The coin is copper’ *implies* (and in *that* sense has as a consequence) ‘The coin would melt at 1084 degrees’, and is *incompatible* with “The coin is an electrical insulator.”

States of Affairs:

8. If what you mean by ‘conceptually contentful’ is ‘standing in relations of consequence and incompatibility to other such items’ then both judgments do, on the side of subjects, and states of affairs do on the side of objective reality. That understanding defines a kind of conceptual realism (contrasting with conceptual subjectivism).

And the ‘bimodal’ part is the suggestion that the distinction between the two sides of the subjective appearance/objective reality is between what is expressed in a *deontic normative pragmatic* metavocabulary, on the one hand, and what is expressed in an *alethic modal semantic* metavocabulary (specifying what is represented, described, stated, and so on).

This is all quite general a characterization of an account one might aim to develop—the core of a constellation of commitments to which one aspire to be entitled.

Here is a way to fill in a *bimodal conceptual realist* conception in a broadly *inferentialist* or *rationalist*

9. Sellars gives us important clues about a *rational functionalist* approach to conceptual content:

It is only because the expressions in terms of which we describe objects...locate these objects in a space of implications, that they describe at all, rather than merely label. [CDCM §108]

Kant was on the right track when he insisted that just as concepts are essentially (and not accidentally) items which can occur in judgments, so judgments (and, therefore, indirectly concepts) are essentially (and not accidentally) items which can occur in reasonings or arguments. [IM I-4]

[Some of what I want here is under the “5 Sellarsian commitments” in the notes for Section II below.]

10. Sellars gives us an important clue about bimodality:

The language of modalities is ... a ‘transposed’ language of norms. [IM V-21]

‘Transposed’ here is in quotes. Not that he is either quoting someone else’s usage, or talking about the word (in the sense of the sequence of letters). These are scare quotes.

The scare quotes [might tell MIE story: buried in Chapter 8 of *MIE* is my formal semantic treatment of scare quotes, along with a philosophical argument that they are an essential expressive resource, since they are the duals of *de re* ascriptions of propositional attitude]—warn us that ‘transposed’ is not used in the ordinary way. He is giving it some special meaning, which he is not explaining.

I’m going to elaborate a way of understanding the relations between these two kinds of vocabulary.

11. From Reasoning *Practices* to Reason *Relations*:

- a) The strategy for doing that is to distinguish reasoning *practices* from reason *relations*, *within* reasoning practices, via the Harman point, and then show how a *version* (modulating the modality) of reason relations can show up in the *world* (reality).
- b) **Faced with the contradiction of *veridical* conceptual appearances of a *nonconceptual* world, we make a distinction between two modal flavors of reason relations**, visible as *reason* relations because of their role in reasoning *practices*. In this way we retain the insight of conceptual psychologism—that our only grip on reason relations, and so conceptuality, is from practices of reasoning—while avoiding the conclusion that what is *known*, which does *not* engage in reasoning practices in the sense of making claims or defending and challenging them, cannot be in conceptual shape.
- c) McDowell, like Kant, focuses on the confrontation of discursive practice with the known world in *perception*. (And that is the home of Sellars’s argument against the MoG.)

**I am suggesting that the issues can be approached without that focus, purely at the level of language-language moves** (inferring, giving and asking for reasons by defending and challenging claimings), with the bimodal character of language-*entry* transitions (not only normatively governed by but epistemically tracking the world perceptually, via subjunctively robust RDRDs) only coming into the story *much* later, in explaining how the bimodal isomorphism between discursive practice, with its deontic-normative reason relations, and the objective world, with its alethic-modal reason relations, is established and maintained.

12. All this motivates a transition to pragmatics, where the discussion of pragmatics begins with **the Harman point** about the need to distinguish, *within* our story about giving and asking for reasons, between implicitly normative practices of reasoning and the reason *relations* that articulate those norms.

Explain how that distinction can structure our pragmatics, by realizing that the practices of *making* claims and the practices of *challenging* and *defending* them are two sides of one coin, two essential aspects of any practice that should count as *discursive*, hence as conferring *conceptual* content, in the original form of *claimable* contents.

## II) Bilateral Deontic Normative *Pragmatics*.

Here Gilbert Harman (one of my teachers) has made the crucial argument, followed up more recently by a famous paper by John MacFarlane—a proud Pitt product.

1. **The Harman point:** Must distinguish reasoning *practices* from reason *relations*: inferring from implication.

He argues that “**there is no such thing as deductive inference.**”

For, if there were, a paradigm would be reasoning from  $p$  and *if  $p$  then  $q$*  to  $q$ .

But that might be a *bad* inference.

If one has better evidence *against  $q$*  than one has *for  $p$* , then one should *reject  $p$* .

Conclusion:

What deductive logic tells us is not what to infer from what, but what rational constraints on inferring are: One must not accept all of  $p$ ,  $p \rightarrow q$ , and *not- $q$* —or accept  $p$ , and  $p \rightarrow q$ , but reject  $q$ . That is the meaning of an *implication relation*, which only normatively *constrains*, but does not *determine* proper inferential *practice*.

Let’s think about these **reason relations** in connection with a simple, I will argue, *minimal* model of discursive practice.

2. Here we may start with **5 Sellarsian commitments** (from the first bit of the course):

- a) Statements saying what some expression means classify the expression functionally, i.e. according to the role it plays in a functional system. MFC.
- b) Sellars on pragmatics of discursive practice:
  - Language-language *moves* (essence of argument against MoG is insistence on these for conceptual contentfulness, hence for epistemic-justificatory role), language-entry and language-exit *transitions*. (SRLG)
- c) The functional system w/res to which we determine roles (cf. Ramsification) is in the first instance a *normative* system (rather than a *causal* one—though causal-dispositional relations are induced by the norms), concerned with the *correctness* of positions and moves, according to norms that when made explicit take the form of *rules*. Discursive practice is “fraught with ought,” as he says in *SM*. SRLG.
- d) Using expressions according to those norms is “situating them in a space of implications” corresponding to (at least) the *inferential language-language moves*. CDCM, IM. This is a *necessary* condition of being genuinely *descriptive* vocabulary (CDCM)—though Sellars does *not* claim that it is *sufficient* for descriptiveness.
- e) Grasp of a concept is practical mastery (a kind of know-how or ability) of the proper *use* of the expression according to those rules. SRLG.
- f) Some passages:

The meaning of a linguistic symbol *as a linguistic symbol* is entirely constituted by the rules which regulate its use.

[LRB]



To talk about awareness<sub>2</sub> is to use a **pragmatic metalanguage**. A pragmatic metalanguage includes a semantic metalanguage as a proper part, just as a semantic metalanguage includes a syntactical metalanguage as a proper part. [Outline 1.63]

[I]t is only if there is a pragmatics that is *not* an empirical science of sign-behavior, a pragmatics which *is* a branch of the *formal* theory of language, that the term is rescued for philosophy. And ...that the analytic philosopher can hope to give a nonpsychologistic account of the key concepts of traditional epistemology. [PPE §7] [P]hilosophical propositions are propositions in the pure theory of languages (the pure syntax of pragmatic meta-languages)...[PPE §48:]

Kant was on the right track when he insisted that just as concepts are essentially (and not accidentally) items which can occur in judgments, so judgments (and, therefore, indirectly concepts) are essentially (and not accidentally) items which can occur in reasonings or arguments. [IM I-4]

Anything which can properly be called conceptual thinking can occur only within a framework of conceptual thinking in terms of which it can be criticized, supported, refuted, in short, evaluated. To be able to think is to be able to measure one's thoughts by standards of correctness, of relevance, of evidence [justification]. [PSIM 374]

It is only because the expressions in terms of which we describe objects...locate these objects in a space of implications, that they describe at all, rather than merely label. [CDCM §108]

Can begin with "space of implications" passage about necessary conditions on description, which I've claimed are sufficient conditions for fact-stating uses in the very broadest, declarativist sense. Then SRLG on language-language inferential *moves* as what makes *all* the sentences, including those involved in language-entry and language-exit *transitions* specifically *conceptually* contentful. Failing to appreciate that is the basic form of the Myth of the Given. Both passages and the lines of thought they articulate, are about conceptual contentfulness. The first addresses it in terms of 'implication' and the other in terms of 'inference': *moves* in a practice of giving and asking for *reasons* for claims. This latter is a notion in what Sellars early on calls "pure pragmatics." [Passages.]

### 3. A model of discursive practice:

In general, discursive practice is at core a game of giving and asking for reasons (GoGAR).

At its base are activities of **asserting and inferring**.

**Asserting (and with it, denying) or claiming** is taking up a stance or position "in the space of reasons", **undertaking a distinctive doxastic kind of commitment**.

**Inferring is giving reasons for (and against) doxastic commitments**. This is making *other* assertions (and denials) that *entitle* the speaker to their stance (status, attitude) or *preclude* the speaker from such entitlement.

The glue that holds it together is reason relations, of implication and incompatibility.

What is the relation between *implication* relations among the conceptual contents expressed by declarative sentences and *inferential* moves or practices relating acts of asserting or claiming?

Here is the role-relation of the two:

Reason relations of implication and incompatibility determine what claimables (assertibles-deniables) would provide reasons for or against what others.

i) Re: relation between

- a) Language-language inferential *moves* in S's pragmatics in SRLG
- b) Location in a space of *implications* as distinguishing conceptual (declarative) description from labeling. (CDCM)

So what is the relation between practices of *inferring* and *implications*?

Beginning of wisdom in thinking about reasons is to distinguish

- reasoning, inferential practices, *offering* reasons for and against, from
- reason *relations* such as implication and incompatibility, which articulate the norms that govern those inferential (and so, assertional) practices.

This is the Harman point.

ii) Discursive practice I: Taking up a stance, undertaking a commitment.

- Speech acts of claiming: assertion and denial,
- Evincing *attitudes* of acceptance and rejection, two kinds of *commitments*.
- of *declarative sentences* expressing *claimables*.  
Cf. the “iron triangle of discursiveness.”

iii) Discursive Practice II: Entitlement and Reasons

- **A Default and Challenge Structure of Entitlement.**
- One *challenges* (another's entitlement to a claim = doxastic commitment) by making *another* claim (producing or performing a *claiming* that undertakes acceptance or rejection of what is expressed by a declarative sentence) related to the first as a *reason against it*.
- One *defends* (another's entitlement to a claim = doxastic commitment) by making *another* claim (producing or performing a *claiming* that undertakes acceptance or rejection of what is expressed by a declarative sentence) related to the first as a *reason for it*.
- Scorekeeping: interlocutors keep track of and understand each other, by *attributing* commitments and entitlements to commitments to each other.  
*MIE* Ch. 3 offers more details of a model of this *deontic scorekeeping* kind.

iv) Reason Relations:

- There are two kinds of reason relations, norms for reasons *for* and reasons *against*. These are *implication* and *incompatibility*.
- We can write them as ‘ $\Gamma|\sim p$ ’ and ‘ $\Gamma\#p$ ’.
- These should not be understood in terms of *logical* consequence and inconsistency. (That is why the funny ‘snake’ turnstile.) These are *material*

inferential relations, articulating the conceptual contents of *nonlogical* concepts, such as copper, and lion.

Indeed, we will distinguish specifically *logical* vocabulary as having the job of letting us talk about reason relations: the conditional to codify *implications* (' $p \rightarrow q$ ' saying *that*  $p$  implies  $q$ ) and negation to codify *incompatibilities* (' $p \rightarrow \neg q$ ' saying *that*  $p$  and  $q$  are incompatible).

4. Q: How should we understand material reason relations of implication and incompatibility?

A: Bilateral Normative Pragmatic Reading of Reason Relations, after Restall and Ripley:

5. Summary of Pragmatics:

1. Discursive practice as such involves reasoning. For in addition to accepting and rejecting what is expressed by declarative sentences, interlocutors must be able both to **defend and to challenge** the rational credentials of those stances or practical attitudes.
2. **Defending** (the credentials of) a claiming is producing further claimings that provide **reasons for** the acceptance or rejection being challenged.  
**Challenging** (the credentials of) a claiming is producing further claimings that provide **reasons against** the acceptance or rejection being challenged.
3. If accepting  $A$  functions practically as a reason *to accept*  $B$ , then  $A$  provides a reason *for*  $B$ , and if accepting  $A$  functions practically as a reason *to reject*  $B$  then  $A$  provides a reason *against*  $B$ . Reason relations are relations that one set of claimables stands in to another when the first consists of reasons for or against the other.
4. We can **call these reason relations “implication” and “incompatibility.”** To give a reason *for* is to commit oneself to accept premises that *imply* the claimable a reason is being given for. To give a reason *against* is to commit oneself to accept premises that are *incompatible* with the claimable a reason is being given against.
5.  $\Gamma$  implies  $A$  ( $\Gamma | \sim A$ ) just in case commitment to accept everything in the premise-set  $\Gamma$  precludes entitlement to *reject*  $A$ .
6.  $\Gamma$  is incompatible with (rules out)  $A$  ( $\Gamma \# A$ ) just in case commitment to accept everything in premise-set  $\Gamma$  precludes entitlement to *accept*  $A$ .
7. Any set of commitments that *precludes entitlement to reject*  $A$  thereby *implicitly* commits one to *accept*  $A$ .
8. Any set of commitments that *precludes entitlement to accept*  $A$  thereby *implicitly* commits one to *reject*  $A$ .

9. Restall-Ripley normative bilateral pragmatic reading of implication:  $\Gamma \mid\sim A$  iff any position that includes accepting all of  $\Gamma$  and rejecting  $A$  is normatively incoherent or “out of bounds”: one cannot be entitled to such a constellation of commitments.

6. Some summary passages from *RLLR*:

**Specifically discursive practices are distinguished as those in which some performances are practically accorded the pragmatic significance of *claimings*.** The idea is that discursive practices can be picked out as practices of explicitly expressing doxastic practical attitudes. They are practices that permit one to **say *that things are thus-and-so***. Declarative sentences are identified as linguistic expressions whose free-standing (unembedded) utterance has the default significance of claimings.

It affirms **the critical rational character of basic discursive practices**. This is the claim that it is essential to the pragmatic significance of claimings as such that they are subject to rational challenge by some other claimings, and in need of rational defense by yet different claimings. Challenging and defending can be thought of as analogous to illocutionary forces claimings can have. Challenging is making claims that serve as reasons against the challenged claim. Defending (justifying) is making claims that serve as reasons for the challenged claim. The idea is that **performances can have the pragmatic significance of claimings only in the context of practices of giving and asking for reasons**. Claimings are what both can be given as reasons and for which reasons can be asked—what can both serve as and stand in need of reasons.

**The bivalence of doxastic attitudes of acceptance and rejection, manifested in the bivalence of speech acts of assertion and denial, together with the essential critical rational articulation of claimings as such together entail the dyadic structure of reason relations: their division into relations of implication and incompatibility.** They may be thought of as relations of rational inclusion and exclusion. Semantic inferentialism is the thesis that the claimables expressed by the declarative sentences used to assert and deny are to be understood in terms of the roles those sentences play with respect to reason relations of implication and incompatibility. This is what we shall mean by “conceptual roles” and “implicational roles.”

The two-sorted deontic normative pragmatic metavocabulary is expressively sufficient to permit the bilateral definition of reason relations. A set of sentences  $G$  implies a sentence  $A$  ( $G \mid\sim A$ ) if and only if commitment to accept all of  $G$  precludes entitlement to reject  $A$ . A set of sentences  $G$  is incompatible with a sentence  $A$  if and only if commitment to accept all of  $G$  precludes entitlement to accept  $A$ . If  $G$  implies  $A$  we can say that commitment to accept all of  $G$  implicitly commits one to accept  $A$ , equating preclusion from entitlement to reject with implicit commitment to accept. If  $G$  is incompatible with  $A$  we can say that commitment to accept all of  $G$  implicitly commits one to reject  $A$ . Inferring is explicitly acknowledging implicit commitments: actually accepting something that one’s other commitments preclude one from

entitlement to reject, or actually rejecting something that one's other commitments preclude one from entitlement to accept.

### III) Truthmaker Alethic Modal *Semantics*.

#### 1. Intro:

You perhaps noticed that although I have been talking about sentences, during my discussion of pragmatics I have said nothing about *truth*.

Attitudes (commitments): accepting is taking to be *true*, rejecting is taking to be *false*.

I've suggested we can understand those attitudes *without first* having to understand the semantic dichotomy true/false.

For we can understand what one is *doing* in accepting/rejecting (asserting/denying, doxastically committing) in terms of the practices and reason relations.

**True/false is evidently closely tied to accepting/rejecting, and so to asserting/denying (claiming-true, claiming-false).**

In the end, I think the deepest dichotomy, responsible for all the others, is that between the two kinds of reason relation: implication and incompatibility, corresponding to reasons *for* and reasons *against*. But I won't argue for that.

We show how to pursue a *pragmatics first* explanatory strategy.

#### 2. Truth-maker Semantics

One of the most sophisticated, flexible, and expressively powerful formal semantic understandings of conceptual content available today is Kit Fine's truth-maker semantics.

##### I. Alethic Modal Semantics: Truth-maker semantics.

a) **Metaphysics:** The *universe* (on the basis of which *semantic interpretants* will be defined for sentences at the semantic stage of the story) consists of

- states,
- such that any set of them make up a whole. That is, there is a mereological monoid specifying the results of **fusing any set of states into a new state**. This defines a state/substate relation.
- **These states are partitioned into possible and impossible.**

Can get **possible worlds** as special case of maximal (by inclusion) *possible* states (fusions of other states).

Fine uses 'world-states' *w* that are *possible* and **every possible state is either a substate of *w* or incompatible with *w* (i.e. fusing it with *w* yields an impossible state).**

But the fact that there are **multiple impossible states** (of which there is in effect only 1 in traditional possible worlds universes).

In addition to maximal possible states, there is the fusion of all the states into a giant impossible state, and a minimal state (the identity element of the commutative fusion monoid) that is a part (a substate) of every state.

**Can put various structural conditions on the fusion monoid**, for instance, requiring that **all the states that contain any impossible state are themselves impossible**—that is, that the result of fusing any state with an impossible state is always an impossible state.

This is a major degree of freedom, enhancing the expressive power of the truth-maker framework.

- b) **Semantics:** An interpretation function assigns each sentence to a pair of sets of states, thought of as the (exact) *truth*-makers and *falsity*-makers of that sentence.

One can put various conditions on the relations between these two sets:

Perhaps it would be good if they were disjoint: nothing is both a truth-maker and a falsity-maker of any sentence. Fine requires that the fusion of any truth-maker with any false-maker of the same sentence must be an impossible state. He calls this condition *Exclusivity*

This is another major degree of freedom, enhancing the expressive power of the truth-maker framework.

**c) Metaphysics Again: Propositions**

Even if severe structural conditions are put on the truth-maker and falsity-maker sets of states, there will be far more licit pairs available as meanings for sentences than there will be sentences to express them in any one vocabulary. Even if there are a countably infinite number of sentences (as there are in English, or any language that contains logical operators or other suitable operators forming sentences from sentences). But even if there were only a countable number of states (and these are usually thought of as degenerate metaphysical cases), there would still be an uncountable infinity of what Fine appropriately calls *propositions*. On this usage, *propositions* are not linguistic entities, but metaphysical ones. They are just ordered pairs of sets of states, which meet the minimal structural conditions to be eligible to be truth-makers and false-makers of some sentence.

Notice that this way of picking out propositions is *sense-dependent* on the semantics. It is only the truth-maker/falsity-maker semantics that leads us to focus on *pairs* of sets of states, meeting special conditions such as *Exclusivity*. But Fine is still entitled to describe the *propositions* as part of reality as it is apart from any concern with the *semantics* that relates metaphysical reality to its *appearance* in (expression by) *sentences*.

**d) Reason relations**

Fine has two semantic notions of *consequence*: entailment and containment.

Both are defined entirely in terms of *verifiers*=truth-makers. (Entailment is that all verifiers of p are verifiers of q).

And the fusion of verifying states yielding an impossible state gives us a good notion of *incompatibility*.

**e) Conceptual Realism:**

**Note that by having *propositions* (possible and impossible) and their subjunctively robust modal relations of consequence and incompatibility, Fine's *modal* realism qualifies as also a *conceptual* realism, given the Sellars-inspired non-psychological conception of the conceptual I am working with.**

Passage from "Reasoning, Reason Relations, and Semantic Content" [Make this essay available in Supplementary Readings.]

It is built on a space of what he calls “states.” We are invited to think of the states as facts or situations, but the notion is an adaptable one, sufficiently general to include whatever it is that we might think of as making declarative sentences true or false.

A subset of the space of states is distinguished as the *possible* states.

The only structure imposed on the state space is a partial ordering of part-hood: some states are parts of others. It is assumed that every subset of the space has a least upper bound. It can be thought of as the fusion of the elements of the subset: the unique whole of which they are all parts.

The content or proposition expressed by a sentence A is then specified bilaterally, as a pair of sets of states: those “verifying” states that would make it true and those “falsifying” states that would make it false. Like intensional semantics appealing to possible worlds, truth-maker semantics advances from the fundamental opposition of truth and falsity to a notion of content as truth conditions. It is more general in including also a notion of falsity conditions, which are not assumed in general to be uniformly computable from the truth conditions.

Its basic notion of a state is more capacious than that of possible world. Possible worlds are included as special cases of states. For two states can be defined as compatible just in case their fusion is one of the states distinguished as possible. And a state can be understood as a possible world just in case it is a maximal possible state, in the sense of containing as parts every state compatible with it.

Further flexibility (in the form of hyperintensionality) is secured by not restricting the state space to possible states, but embedding those in a larger structure that includes multiple distinct *impossible* ones.

In addition, the mereological structure of the state space provides expressive resources in the truth-maker semantic metavocabulary that have no analogue in classical possible worlds semantics.

The bilateral conception of content, including falsifiers as well as verifiers and not assuming that either sort of semantic interpretant can straightforwardly be computed from the other, turns out to pay large expressive dividends.

The truth-maker semantic framework permits various definitions of the reason relations of implication and incompatibility. As state  $t$  counts as incompatible with a set  $S$  of states just in case the fusion of it with all the states in  $S$  is an impossible state. We can then say that  $\Gamma \# A$  just in case any fusion of verifiers of all the members of  $\Gamma$  with any verifier of  $A$  is an impossible state.

On the side of implication, there are a number of different notions of semantic consequence definable in the truth-maker setting, and Fine considers it a signal virtue of his approach that it can express and compare such a variety of senses of “follows from.” For instance,  $\Gamma$  verifier-*entails*  $A$  in case every state that verifies all the sentences of  $\Gamma$  verifies  $A$ .



#### IV) The Hlobil Isomorphism: Bimodal Conceptual Realism Again

a) But Ulf Hlobil realized that we *can* define a different notion of consequence in the truth-maker framework. It is much more in the spirit of the enterprise not to ignore falsity-makers entirely in defining semantic implication. **We can say that  $\Gamma$  implies A just in case every fusion of truth-makers of all of  $\Gamma$  with any falsity-maker of A is an impossible state.**

b) This should remind you of the Restall-Ripley bilateral definition of implication, and the extension of it to a two-deontic-sorted normative pragmatic idiom of *commitment* and (preclusion of) *entitlement*.

There **a premise-set of sentences has another sentence as a consequence just in case commitment to accept all of  $\Gamma$  precludes entitlement to deny the conclusion A.**

That combination of doxastic statuses is normatively *out of bounds*, *deontically* ruled out. We can paraphrase that as

**Commitment to *take-true* all of  $\Gamma$  precludes entitlement to *take-false* the conclusion A.**

This is now to be compared to the Hlobil notion of consequence in the truth-maker setting:

**The combination (fusion) of anything that *makes-true* all of  $\Gamma$  with anything that *makes-false* the conclusion A is an impossible state, that is, is *alethic-modally ruled out*.**

c) What I am *doing* in taking it that what is expressed by sentence  $p$  implies what is expressed by sentence  $q$  consists in **practically treating a constellation of commitments as normatively out of bounds or ruled out**, and we can now see that it is *also* a **saying that one worldly proposition (a set of pairs of states) implies another, because certain fusions of states yield impossible states as results.**

d) When all goes well, the deontic normative and alethic modal relations of consequence or implication and incompatibility will coincide.

This is the vision **Spinoza** had, the conclusion he drew from Descartes's algebraic geometry for what representation requires.

e) **Define conceptual contents by roles w/res to reason relations of consequence and incompatibility.**

They are **rational forms** that can be *enmattered* in two modally distinct ways.

Ulf Hlobil shows how the truth-maker framework allows the definition of a further notion of implication, which Fine does not consider.

**$\Gamma \mid\sim \Delta$  iff any fusion of a state that verifies all the members of  $\Gamma$  with a state that falsifies all the members of  $\Delta$  is an alethically impossible state.**

He invites us to compare this semantic notion of multisuccedent implication with Restall and Ripley’s bilateral pragmatic notion. Recall that they understand

$\Gamma \sim \Delta$  iff any position that includes accepting all of  $\Gamma$  and rejecting all of  $\Delta$  is anormatively *inadmissible, inappropriate* or “out of bounds” position—as we have read it: one cannot be entitled to such a constellation of commitments.

Both conceptions can be thought of as stemming from the same intuition that led **C. I. Lewis** to define his notion of **strict implication** by saying that in this sense of “implies” A implies B in case it is **impossible for A to be true and B to be false**.

(Lewis’s definition is the strengthening by necessitation of the horseshoe of bivalent classical logic.)

It is clear that **these are isomorphic understandings of implication**. The role played in the truth-maker semantic definition by verifiers and falsifiers of sentences is played in the bilateral pragmatic definition by practical attitudes of acceptance and rejection of sentences. And the role played in the truth-maker semantic definition by the impossibility of the state that results from fusing those verifiers and falsifiers is played in the bilateral pragmatic definition by the normative incoherence (or “out of bounds-ness”) of the position that results from concomitant commitment to those acceptances and rejections. The isomorphism extends to incompatibility as well as implication. In the single-succedent formulation, we can lay alongside the truth-maker semantic reading:

$\Gamma \# A \Leftrightarrow$  the state resulting from fusion of any verifiers of all the members of  $\Gamma$  with any verifier of A is an impossible state, the normative pragmatic reading:

$\Gamma \# A \Leftrightarrow$  the position resulting from concomitant commitment to accept all of  $\Gamma$  and to accept A is normatively incoherent (“out of bounds”)—a constellation of commitments to which one cannot be entitled (entitlement is precluded).

I believe that **this isomorphism between the definitions of reason relations of implication and incompatibility in the bilateral semantic framework of verifiers and falsifiers and the bilateral pragmatic framework of acceptance and rejection is deep and revealing**.

To begin with, it shows how **the connection between two paired truth values and two paired doxastic attitudes expressed in the principles that accepting is taking-true and rejecting is taking-false** is reflected, and can be further elaborated at the level of **the reason relations of implication and incompatibility** that articulate the contents that can be true/taken-true and false/taken-false.

In particular, substantial new light is shed on what one must do to count thereby as adopting a practical attitude of taking some claimable to be true or false when those attitudes are situated in the wider context of practices of giving reasons for and against claimables that are constrained by reason relations of implication and incompatibility.

The isomorphic relation between what is expressed by semantic metavocabularies of truth-makers and false-makers and what is expressed by pragmatic metavocabularies of bilateral commitments and preclusions of entitlement clarifies the relations between what one is saying and what one must be doing in order to say that in using the object language those semantic and pragmatic metavocabularies address.

In practically acknowledging that commitment to accept some claimables precludes entitlement to reject some others and to accept still others, practitioners are, we can now see, thereby taking it that the fusion of verifiers of the premises and falsifiers (respectively, verifiers) of the conclusions are impossible states.

**Alethic modal relations of possibility, impossibility, and necessity are part of the essential structure of the worldly states and situations that, according to the truth-maker semantic model, make claimables true or false,** and so are what is represented and talked of or thought about by the use of declarative sentences.

**Deontic normative relations of commitment, entitlement, and preclusion of entitlement are part of the essential structure of discursive practical attitudes** adoption of which, according to the pragmatics-first model, is what practitioners must do in order thereby to count as taking or treating what is expressed by declarative sentences as true or false, thereby representing the world as being some ways and not others by saying or thinking that things are thus-and-so.

The very same reason relations of implication and incompatibility, which articulate the claimable contents expressed by declarative sentences, what can both be true or false and be practically taken to be true or false by affirming or denying them, can be construed equally and isomorphically both semantically, in alethic modal terms of making true or false, and pragmatically, in deontic normative terms of the practical doxastic attitudes of taking true or false (accepting or rejecting).

In *A Spirit of Trust* I attribute a view recognizably of this shape to **Hegel**, under the rubric “**bimodal hylomorphic conceptual realism.**” He emphasizes reason relations of material incompatibility (Aristotelian contrariety) over those of implication or material consequence—his notion of “determinate negation” over his notion of “mediation”—though both are always in play. As I read him, Hegel begins with the thought that ways the world can objectively be, facts, are determinate just insofar as they exclude and entail one another in a way properly expressed in alethic modal terms. That the coin is copper makes it impossible that it remain solid at 1100 degrees Celsius and necessitates its being an electrical conductor. By contrast, our subjective takings of the world to be some way, thoughts, are determinate just insofar as they exclude and entail one another in a way properly expressed in deontic normative terms. As I’ve suggested here that we put this point, my commitment to the coin’s being copper precludes entitlement to accepting that it would remain solid at 1100 degrees Celsius and precludes entitlement to rejecting that it is an electrical conductor. One and the same determinate conceptual content, that the coin is copper, can take two forms, an objective one in which it is understood as articulated

by relations of exclusion and consequence construed in the alethic modal vocabulary proper to the expression of laws of nature, and a subjective one in which it is understood as articulated by relations of exclusion and consequence construed in the deontic normative vocabulary proper to the expression of discursive practices. That is why I use the term “bimodal hylomorphism.” The view is properly denominated conceptual “realism” because the very same conceptual content to which we adopt attitudes in thought is understood as present, albeit in a different form, in the objective world thought about. The world is accordingly construed as essentially always already in a thinkable shape.

The isomorphism Hlobil has worked out between Restall and Ripley’s normative pragmatic bilateral construal of implication and incompatibility relations and a version of Fine’s truth-maker semantics is a colorable contemporary development of a thought cognate to the bimodal hylomorphic conceptual realism I attribute to Hegel. It suggests how something like this thought can be worked out in detail. For it maps onto one another a semantic idiom of great power and flexibility and a pragmatic idiom that has shown its substantial utility in understanding sequent calculi. Each has been used to characterize the fine structure of reason relations in actual applications to multifarious different object vocabularies.

Note that Fine never says how the interpretation function that assigns propositions to sentences by assigning sets of truth-making and falsity-making sets of states to them. What is it about the *use* of a sentence (no doubt, in concert with the use of its fellow sentences) that *confers* that assignment of states to it as verifiers and falsifiers? For surely, there is nothing *else*, nothing *other than* its use to make *this* sentence mean ‘copper is a metal’? We can argue about what sort of terms should be deployed in the pragmatic metavocabulary in which we specify that use: normative specifications of proprieties or rules? Only alethic modal specifications of dispositions?

The Hlobil isomorphism as making definite a bimodal conceptual realism and our bare-bones model of fundamental discursive practice together *do* provide an answer for what it is about the use of expressions that warrants their interpretation by one truth-maker/falsity-maker assignment of pairs of states rather than another.

Of course, that answer is only up to role in reason relations. Any features of states that is not relevant to the reason relations propositions stand in will not be relevant to the interpretation of sentences by use in the basic discursive practices I have described.

**There is an isomorphism** here, just as **Spinoza** said there needed to be.

But notice that **it is *not* at the level of *sentences*.**

**It is at the level of *reason relations*.**

It *induces* a mapping at the level of sentences, just insofar as it underwrites an understanding of the *contents* of sentences as roles in reason relations—whether we understand those reason

relations pragmatically (in terms of reasons for/against, so defense/challenge) or semantically (in terms of truthmakers and falsitymakers).

This result is just what we should have expected from Spinoza's insight about the fundamentally *holistic* character of representation, and so intentionality.

But it proceeds in the opposite direction from the *atomistic*, bottom-up approach to "correspondence theories of truth" that are elaborated along the lines of Tarskian model theory. Fine's truthmaker framework is the most sophisticated descendant of that line (via possible worlds semantics), but it has brought us to where we can see the dependence of a proper correspondence theory of truth on a coherence theory of meaning (conceptual content).

And it shows us why, how, and in what sense **modal realism entails conceptual realism**.

## V) Conclusion:

### 1. **Conceptual Realism, Appearance and Reality, the Subjective and Objective Poles of the Intentional Nexus**, as they now show up.

- Bimodal conceptual realism as:
- One form of bimodal: **Taking-true/making-true.**  
**Taking-true by representing subjects and making-true by the represented world.**  
It is the *same things* (conceptual contents as functional roles w/res to relations of consequence and incompatibility) that discursive subjects *take* true and worldly states *make* true.
- The native modality of taking-true is *deontic* normative.  
The native modality of making-true is *alethic*.
- **Rational forms** as conceptual contents, functionally defined are as good a thing as any to mean by **rational forms**, which, as shareable by mind and world bring us back to **Aristotle**, or at least to a more up-to-date neo-Aristotelianism.
- By **Spinozan global isomorphisms**:  
“the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things,” as his reading of Cartesian representation, given his foregrounding of the analytic-algebraic geometry model.
- **Isomorphism is at the level of reason relations, that is, meanings**—the relations that functionally define (cf. Sellarsian “meaning as functional classification”) conceptual contents =rational forms)—**not at the level of truth of sentences.**  
For all we have said (apart from the pragmatics of how the isomorphism is instituted and maintained, about which more soon) one *could* have perfect isomorphism between bilateral normative pragmatics and truth-maker semantics with mereological metaphysics and have *no* true claims (as verified by *actual* states).

For it only constrains, but is in no way constituted by, correlations between (sets of) *actual* states and *true* sentences. The idea of “coherence theories of truth” was always later misunderstandings of *holistic* theories of *meaning*. But now we see that “correspondence theories of truth” were *also really* about holistic theories of meaning.

Recall that all this is in aid of avoiding the two exclusive and exhaustive alternatives mandated if one accepts a view of conceptual contentfulness that restricts it to discursive *acts* and *attitudes*: to claimings, statings, thinkings, describings, or representings, and what they bring into existence.

Those two alternatives are divided between:

- the *transcendental idealist* alternative, developed by **Kant** in the wake of his idea of extending the notion of appearance from its *perceptual* home to the idea of *conceptual* appearances. This line of thought is embraced by Sellars. It takes the real world that is described, represented, and so on to be *non-conceptual* (the conclusion McDowell criticizes)  
and
- the *subjective idealist* alternative, which restricts accepts **the restriction of conceptual contentfulness to representings**, so that **conceptual realism** can only take the form of understanding the real world that is described and represented as consisting exclusively of *representings*: thinkings of a world-thinker.  
This subjective idealism is the view of the philosopher of Yeats referred to as:  
“God-intoxicated **Berkeley**,  
Who proved all things a dream.  
That this great farrowing pig of a world,  
That doth so solid seem,  
Would vanish in an instant  
If the mind but change its theme.”

**I have suggested rejecting the common presupposition, which I have called “conceptual psychologism”, in favor of a *structural* view of conceptual content.**

The one recommended here retains the essential connection between conceptual content or conceptual structure and concept-*use* in practices of reasoning (giving and asking for reasons in defending and challenging claims) via the crucial intermediate conception of reason *relations* of consequence and incompatibility.

That permits a **conceptual realism** (the McDowellian idea of the “**unboundedness of the conceptual**”) without requiring crazy Berkeleyan subjective idealism.

This, I have claimed elsewhere, is a core *Hegelian* idea.

And it is, not coincidentally, a (neo-)Aristotelian idea, which **avoids the twin mistakes of *Plato and Kant***, each of whom lined up the appearance/reality distinction with the distinction between what is and what is not in specifically *conceptual* shape—although they disagreed about whether it was reality or appearance that was on the conceptual side of the gulf they excavated between them.

## 2. Closing Question:

**Q: What is the source of the deontic-pragmatic alethic-semantic isomorphism—and so of the institution of the shared conceptual contents or rational forms that are roles w/res to the common conceptual structure?**

Why *is* the order and connection of ideas the same as the order and connection of things (Spinoza)?

Is it a pre-established harmony?

No.

[Here is the punchline:]

A: **It is the product of a distinctive *process and practice*:**  
the practice of applying *empirical descriptive concepts*.

These, it will be recalled from last week, are concepts expressed by locutions whose use is both *normatively governed* by the states described and which *epistemically tracks* those states. The first is a deontic normative relation between languagings and worldly states, and the second is a subjunctively robust alethic modal relation between languagings and worldly states.

The effect of using empirical descriptive concepts subject to these paired normative and alethic constraints is to **refine and improve the fit of reason relations among doxastic attitudes and the reason relations among sets of worldly states: to sand off the rough edges where they do not coincide.**

Here we can once again appeal to the example of a **toy concept acid\*** that Sellars offers in an early paper. If the term ‘acid’ is used with circumstances of application that include tasting sour and consequences of application that include turning Litmus paper red, users become vulnerable to the discovery that their usage is not epistemically tracking what it is normatively governed by. For one might find something that tastes sour and does not turn Litmus paper red, but blue. The commitments one acquires inferentially are not tracking the states one is describing and observing, *by one’s own lights*. Changing the concept, perhaps so only clear liquids that taste sour qualify as acids, can bring the consequences and incompatibilities acknowledged to govern commitments into better line with (so as better to track) objective subjunctively robust relations of consequence and incompatibility.

- Note that **this process grooms and improves *both* the doxastic commitments interlocutors become entitled to *and* the reason relations articulating the norms that govern their use.**

**The selecting and sharpening process shapes *belief and meaning* alike**, as aspects of a single process and critical practice of challenging and defending doxastic commitments by offering reasons for and against them.

- Note further—as a final observation about the metaphysics of this conceptually realistic account of discursive practice—**the subjunctively robust relations of consequence and incompatibility expressed by *alethic modal vocabulary* can be empirically described**, *empirical facts* about them can be stated in the double-barreled empirical descriptive sense that subjunctively robust conditionals can both be normatively governed by and epistemically track *modal facts*, about what *really* follow from what. According to the



truth-maker semantics, that is a matter of what constellations of (truth-making and false-making) states have objectively impossible fusions, and are in that sense metaphysically ruled out.

**The same can in fact be said of what is expressed by deontic normative vocabulary** articulating the reason relations that normatively govern the *use* of ordinary empirical descriptive (OED) vocabulary. In this case, however, the subjunctively robust epistemic tracking of actual commitments and entitlements by deontic normative vocabulary will necessarily be mediated by linguistic tokenings in a way that precludes it from counting as empirically descriptive *in the narrow sense*. But that is altogether as it should be.

- **I conclude that the conceptual materials Sellars has assembled can be recruited into a satisfying story about the relations between norms and nature, and *conceptual* appearances of material reality (in the “narrow sense” that subtracts culture from nature) that has a very different structure, and a very different metaphysics from the ones Sellars commits himself to.**

In particular, we can tell a *conceptually realist* story, according to which the world as it is in itself is always already conceptually structured.

For on this account, **to be a modal realist**, in the sense of thinking that there is an *objective, natural* distinction of worldly states into possible and impossible ones, **is to be a conceptual realist**.

The objective world, so conceived, is richer than Sellars’s nominalism permits (even in its process version).

- I have disagreed with a lot of Sellars’s *positive* metaphysics: his pinched nominalistic view of what “the world in the narrow sense”, nature as independent of culture, is like. But what about the brilliant analyses that constitute his *negative* metaphysics?

As I told the story, the young Sellars’s epiphany (circa 1947), which prompted his conversion to “**the new way of words**,” was his realization that **Carnap** could be understood as offering a new way of understanding *Kantian categories*.

Those categorial concepts (“pure concepts of the Understanding”) are concepts whose defining expressive job is not to describe or explain empirical goings-on, but to make explicit features of the *framework* within which alone describing and explaining empirical goings-on are intelligible.

Sellars saw that Carnap was in fact—though Carnap himself did not realize it—exploring a construal of such **categorial concepts as metalinguistic**.

Sellars took this bit between his teeth and ran with it.

The bimodal conceptual realist story I have been telling is incompatible with the consequences Sellars drew from the possibility of such analyses in the case of *alethic modal* vocabulary.

Also, I want to contest the ontologically invidious conclusions he drew about terms that specify the structure of the objective world, terms such as ‘*fact*’ (or *proposition*: claimable)

For these *ontological* terms are also *categorial*.

The underlying association is of

facts with assertings (and so, declarative sentences),

- **laws** with **inferreds** (and so, subjunctively robust inferences)
- **objects** (particulars) with **referrings**,
- **properties and relations** with **predicatings** (including **classifying**s).

These categories all articulate the structure of *conceptual contentfulness* as such.

That does *not* mean—*pace* Kant—that they are restricted to applying to our activities.

**One important conclusion from the Hlobil isomorphism:**

**We can see how these concepts can *both* be categorial in a metalinguistic sense *and* characterize the objective world (reality) of which they articulate the conceptual appearance.**

Put another way:

Sellars's *negative* metaphysics, his brilliant *metalinguistic* analyses, tell us what we are *doing* when we use, for instance, subjunctive conditionals. We are endorsing patterns of inference, acknowledging implication relations.

That is something we would specify in a *pragmatic* metavocabulary.

**What our isomorphism shows is *that*, and *how* the correctness of such a story about what we are *doing* in using these expressions is *not* incompatible with *doing* that being intelligible as *saying how things really, objectively are*.**

One specifies what one is *saying*, as opposed to what one is *doing* in saying that, in a *semantic* metavocabulary: for instance, in the truth-maker metavocabulary, with its own metaphysics.

- If we had time for a few more class sessions in the semester, I would have liked to have explored how this conceptual realist combination of a two-sorted (commitment/entitlement) bilateral normative pragmatics and a truth-maker modal semantics can be combined with the deeply insightful *metalinguistic* analyses Sellars offers of universals and *abstracta*, which motivate his negative metaphysics, with its relegation of all such things to the realm of culture rather than nature.

For the considerations I advanced just now for finding facts, laws, and properties and related particulars in the natural world do not evidently apply to the referents of terms introduced by *abstraction*.

Though I am skeptical about Sellars's invidious ontological demotion of *abstracta* as well, much more thought is needed on this point.

So much Being, so little Time.

**But perhaps we have brought things to the point that others can walk further down that path, even though we have reached the end of our journey together here and now.**

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Left over:

The world “in the narrow sense” is the world considered as it would and could be if there never were any discursive practitioners, hence no *acts* of representing. Well, except for the material stuff (in that sense) that is produced or altered in ways that depend on discursive creatures and their activities. After all, that is true of *all* natural linguistic objects (qua natural *linguistic* objects), which stand in picturing relations, which are supposed to be in the world in the narrow sense. So Sellars seems to want to include those, as he would the physical locomotive, thought of as a material object, as it were a mere *vehicle* in the (non-punning) sense of bearer of the further properties that relate it to discursive practitioners.

It would be a mistake *identify* the material objects with things we talk about. At most they *materially constitute* those things.

“In our world,’ said Eustace, ‘a star is a huge ball of flaming gas.’ ‘Even in your world, my son, that is not what a star is, but only what it is made of.’” - C.S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*

Sellars’s picture is that they are the *best realizers*, specified in natural scientific (CSP-ish) material object talk of what is in the world in the narrow sense, of the *functional roles* gotten by Ramsifying our manifest image talk, holding fixed what? A sensible answer would be: spatiotemporal and subjunctively relational properties. Maybe that is an answer S can endorse. But he certainly says some things that seem to commit him to withhold both spatiotemporal (in the metric, mathematical sense of fundamental physics) and alethic modal connections from citizenship in the world in the narrow sense.