

**Nominalization Nominalism and Ontological Nominalism
Naming and Saying**

Week 6

Plan:

Recap.

I. Nominalization Nominalism and Ontological Nominalism

- a) Ontological Nominalism. Kotarbinski. Real names vs. ‘Onomatoids’
- b) Sellars on metalinguistic onomatoids.
- c) Nominalization Nominalism.
- d) On reality or the world in “narrow” vs. “broad” senses.
- e) Lesson on the relation between Nominalization Nominalism and Ontological Nominalism

II. Naming and Saying

- a) Tractarian vs. Bergmannian views
- b) Jumblese
- c) Bradley’s argument and ‘Nexus’
- d) Ineffability
- e) Indispensability of Pragmatic Metavocabularies

III. Empiricist Rejection of *Abstracta*.

- a) *Abstracta* should be admitted by empiricists only if they are either directly observable or their theoretical postulation is required to “save the appearances.”
- b) Do we need them in psychology, as objects of direct awareness?
- c) Do we need them in semantics, to explain meanings?
- d) Perspective: Use of mathematical abstractions as explanatory language has at least as good credentials as postulation of unobservables for being distinctive of modern science.

Recap:

Rehearse main points from last time:

- i. Negative existentials as withholding of existential commitment.
- ii. Abstraction as a process of introducing new terms from old. Not clear it defines a kind of thing.
- iii. Carnap's metalinguistic view of abstract terms has two big problems:
 - "classifying contexts" are not straightforwardly about linguistic expressions, and
 - they threaten just to trade worldly universals for linguistic universals.
- iv. Response to first is a new kind of quotation: dot-quotes.
- v. There are many kinds of repeatable ones-in-many, and the differences all indicate different places nominalists can draw ontological lines.

For instance,

Goodman is OK with wholes comprising parts, but not with sets having members.

Sider is a mereological nihilist and doesn't think things with parts are "real": only the parts are.

Since I only address views of the world as "nameables or sayables" (particulars or facts), I won't so much as mention "gunk world" metaphysics (whose biggest challenge is connecting with thought and language, saying and naming), except possibly in connection with Sellars's late process ontology.

Part I. Nominalization Nominalism and Ontological Nominalism

Names and nominalism:

1. [Look at chart of the Lvov-Warsaw school of logic, flourishing in the 20's and then carried forward above all by Tarski.]
2. Kotarbinski's ontological nominalism says that only what can be named, nameables, exists.

Sometimes 'reism' (from Latin 'res'=thing): only things exist.

Nominalism/reism differ in whether one starts from the language or the world.

I think the version that comes from language, 'nominalism' is the better term—certainly in Sellars's case.

Though the part of speech 'name' is responsible for the term 'nominalism' (in the Ockham original, as in later uses), it is really **singular terms** that are at issue. (Frege's 'Eigenname'.)

These include, besides **proper names** like 'Frege', also **definite descriptions** (and some uses of indefinite descriptions), and some **demonstrative and indexical** expressions.

Should not run these together by treating demonstratives as a kind of indexical.

This is often done, with the thought that the 'index' (corresponding to speaker 'I', place 'here', time 'now', possible world 'actual') is a 'demonstration.' But a demonstration is whatever makes some referent salient. And that can be anything. Typically, one cannot pick out the demonstration without at the same time picking out the referent.

3. These last show that we should really be talking about **uses** of expressions as singular terms, rather than the types of expression. Though these are often called "**token-reflexive**" expressions (after **Reichenbach**), it is really **tokenings** that matter—the unrepeatable events of using terms.

(Example of religious fanatic with a sign in the shape of an arrow reading "You are a sinner", pointing it at various people.)

4. A good term for what can be named is '**particulars**', though often folks talk about 'objects'.

Sellars's late nominalism distinguishes processes (including events or episodes) from objects (things), as species of the genus of particulars.

5. **This view—ontological nominalism or reism—makes it important to distinguish *real* names from merely *apparent* names.**

For the appearance/reality distinction is now transposed into the linguistic realm of names, and so the activity of naming.

Kotarbinski called fake names, or things disguised as names 'onomatoids.'

6. In GE and AE,

Sellars diagnoses a particular kind of onomatoid: trans-categorial nominalizations, paradigmatically, forming singular terms and sortal terms from *predicates (adjectives)*. This is forming singular terms from other parts of speech:

‘triangular’ (really ‘...is triangular’) → ‘triangularity’.

This is adjectival predicate nominalization.

It forms singular terms for (one kind of) universal.

They come with associated *sortal terms*: ‘property’.

‘lion’ (really ‘...is a lion’, the adjectival part of the sortal term ‘lion’) → ‘lionhood’

This is sortal term nominalization.

It comes with associated sortal terms: ‘kind’.

Also:

‘The frog is on the log,’ → ‘that the frog is on the log’, or ‘the *proposition* (sortal) that the frog is on the log’. Compare: the *direction* of the Earth’s axis (a line).

7. Sellars’s view, as we have seen, is that **all such transcategorial nominalizations** (even the ones that start with sortal *terms*), which form *singular* terms (and associated sortals) from expressions of other parts of speech are **covertly metalinguistic**.

8. First, we use the *illustrating sign design principle* to form sortal expressions such as •triangular•, •lion•, and •The frog is on the log•.

These are **sortals**. So we can say things like

“The word ‘dreieckig’ is a •triangular•” and “The word ‘Löwe’ is a •lion•”.

DSTs:

9. Distributive singular terms (DSTs) are formed from *sortals*.

a) ‘The lion is tawny,’ (a DST) means that ‘Lions are tawny.’

Sellars understands that plural as saying of *each* lion that *it* is tawny.

(Note Michael Thompson’s crucial dissent in *Life and Action*: ‘Pines thrive in sandy soil,’ does *not* say that each and every one does. But this is special to biological forms and those downstream from them.)

The key point for Sellars is that there are lots of ways of talking about particulars.

‘Lions’, in ‘Lions are tawny,’ is still just talking about those particulars: Leo, and Leonina, and the others.

It just talks about them in the *plural*.

And all ‘the lion’ does is form a singular term for talking about those same particulars, the lions, in a *distributive*, rather than an explicitly *plural* way.

But he uses it as **equivalent to the plural**.

Though ‘the lion’ is a singular term, it is a way of talking about particulars.

- b) There is a special class of DSTs that are *functional role* DSTs. His paradigm is ‘the pawn.’ Here the point is that what *plays the role* of ‘the pawn’, what in that sense *is* a pawn, can be materially quite different from case to case. (Texas chess: Volkswagens vs. bits of wood with round tops.) ‘The pawn moves on space, except...’ is a way of talking about what pawns do *according to the rules that define them*.

10. **DSTs can be formed from dot-quoted expressions. We can talk about ‘the ·red·’.**

That is a way of talking about ·red·s, such as ‘rot’ and ‘rouge’, both of which are ·red·s.

- a) These are functional role DSTs, like ‘the pawn,’ not like ‘the lion.’
 b) Unlike ‘the pawn’, ‘the ·red·’ is *metalinguistic*. For all ·red·s are linguistic expressions.

These are still just ways of talking about linguistic *sign designs*: words in the sense of inscriptions in ink or noises, what Wittgenstein means when he talks about “the signpost thought of just as a piece of wood.”

11. Sellars makes heavy weather in AE of a second stage, where we introduce *distributive singular terms* (DSTs). Nonlinguistic examples are ‘the lion’ in ‘the lion is tawny’ and ‘the rook’ in ‘the rook move rectilinearly.’ These are just paraphrases of ‘lions are tawny’ and ‘rooks move rectilinearly.’

Metalinguistic versions are “The •triangular• is a predicate,” which means “•triangular• are predicates.”

I *think* the point here is that *subsuming* one collection of things under another, “lions are among the tawny things” is a *good* kind of one-in-many, contrasting with *predication*, which requires invocation of things that are not *terms* (singular or sortal), at all.

‘the lion’ is a way of referring to lions, distributively, but in the form of a singular term.

One way of thinking about this issue would be to say that treating each lion as a *part* of lions, and so a *part* of *tawnies* is a less committive kind of *classification* than invoking the *adjectival predicate* “...is tawny.”

This construal sounds *mereological*, and Sellars is careful never to invoke mereology—though he must have been familiar with it.

I conjecture that he thought there was something fishy about mereological wholes, because they don’t invoke any sort of unity of the ‘wholes’ they discuss: there is a mereological sum of this book, Jupiter, Julius Caesar’s left little finger, and some random, distant electron.

Key:

I think the goal of invoking DSTs is to

separate the two functions that sortal terms have, the two sorts of roles they play.

- On the one hand, they **include predicate adjectives**, and in that regard belong in a box with ‘red’ and ‘triangular’. “...is a lion” is a predicate adjective, like ‘...is red’ and ‘...is triangular.’ And here Sellars wants to deny that *being a lion*, which would be a property,

is “in the world in the narrow sense,” just as he denies that about *being red* or *being triangular*.

- On the other hand, **sortals are a kind of *term*: a way of picking out *particulars*.** Because Leo and Leonina, which are lions, are material particulars, they *are* “in the world in the narrow sense.” And because they are *lions*, that means that *lions* are in the world—in particular, Leo and Leonina. What shows up to Fregeans as “criteria of identity and individuation” (what distinguishes individual lions from one another, what makes Leo and Leonina *different lions*), *added* to “criteria of application” (and consequences of application) is what makes sortal terms *terms*.

They are part of the “term package”, that must be in place for *singular terms* to function as such.

‘Lions’ is not a *singular term*, but it is a *term*.

We can say that it is a ***plural term***.

That is how Boolos thinks of it.

Talking in terms of DSTs, “*the lion*” is a way of talking about *lions* as, as it were, a kind of particular.

It opens the way to thinking of **saying “Leo is a lion”** need not be understood as attributing a *property* to Leo, as saying “Leo is tawny” would be doing.

It is *subsuming Leo under the plural term ‘lions’: he is one of those.*

Talking about “*the lion*”, as a “distributed singular term” is a way of talking about the particulars Leo and Leonina, and the rest.

The program, then, is in two parts:

- a) To understand a claim such as “Leo is a lion,” as a relation between *particulars*: nameables, things that can be referred to by *terms*, even by *singular terms*, in a somewhat extended sense. And
- b) Then to translate whatever needs to be said about “the world in the narrow sense” into claims of this subsuming-individual-particulars-under-plural-particulars sort. This is the new, acceptable kind of one-in-many.

I am deeply skeptical that this second part of the program can be brought off, on the basis of what I call the “Fregean objection.” That is that one would have to reconstruct concepts formed using iterated alternating quantifiers, $\forall\exists$ in these terms. [See discussion in Part III, w/res to EAE.] But note that an analogous challenge faces *mereological* reductionists.

12. The present point is that **Sellars identifies a special class of *onomatoids*, diagnoses them as failing to be *true names*, because they are all covertly *metalinguistic*.**

Q: Why does their being metalinguistic preclude them from being *true names* (singular terms)? What is second-class about them?

A: Being metalinguistic is sufficient for them not to pick out referents that are “in the world in the narrow sense.”

Why? Because that sense is the world as it would be if there never were discursive practices or linguistic practitioners.

We haven't seen him motivate drawing this line where he does.

We'll see one version in 2 weeks, when we read “Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man” (PSIM), but won't get his mature account until we read *Science and Metaphysics*.

The clear answer here is from early in “Naming and Saying” where he argues that exemplification is a ‘quasi-semantic’ relation, and that it (and universals) are **“in the world” only in that broad sense in which the ‘world’ includes linguistic norms and roles viewed (thus in translating) from the standpoint of a fellow participant.**” [103]

[See the “Rant” from (II), repeated below.]

Rant here about the *interest* of the question “what is in the world (real), *in the narrow sense*”:
This is a clear line.

Kant: on the two things that thrill him: “The starry skies above me and the moral law within me.”

Hegel: the stars are just a “rash on the sky.”

He had no interest in anything that did not exhibit,

as **William James** said:

“The **trail of the human serpent** is over all.”

Cf. **Peirce:** The most interesting property of phosphorus atoms is the role they play in human brains.

This distinction will motivate and be motivated by Sellars's *SM* view of scientific realism as transcendental idealism. For it is a way to distinguish what is us-relative (appearance) from what is in-itself (real), phenomenal/noumenal.

The question is what the *consequences* of application of this distinction (which has relatively clear circumstances of application) should be.

It seems overwrought to identify *reality* with *material* reality in this sense.

He means it as *objectivity* vs. what is infused by *subjectivity* (the “trail of the human serpent”).

The basic distinction Sellars is after is between what is described or explained (*describable* and *explainable*), on the one hand, and what pertains to discursive activities of describing and explaining, on the other.

The necessary features of the latter are *categorial* concepts, in Kant's sense.

On this account, anything metalinguistic is clearly dependent on *our* activities, those of *subjects*, of *discursive practitioners*. It is in that sense “conditioned by” or “relative to” *us*. That is the line he is drawing.

Eventually (in *Science and Metaphysics*), he will identify this with Kantian *phenomenal* appearance, as opposed to *noumenal* reality.

13. This is the view I call “**nominalization nominalism.**”

It says that **names or singular terms formed by nominalizing other parts of speech are all *metalinguistic*, and in that sense and for that reason are *onomatoids*, in that they do not pick out particulars that are real or “in the world in the narrow sense,” in which natural science is supremely authoritative about what there is, according to the *scientia mensura*.**

a) The paradigm is nominalizations of **predicate adjectives**:

‘redness’ as the property of being red, ‘triangularity’.

These are *universals*, in the traditional sense.

b) But also **nominalizations of *sortal terms***—insofar as they *include* predicate adjectives: ‘**lionhood**’ as ‘being a lion’, nominalizing ‘...is a lion.’

c) Sellars includes under this heading names for **propositional contents** (propositions): ‘the proposition that things are thus-and-so,’ ‘the claim (claimable, not claiming) that the frog is on the log.’

14. This is a clear view.

It matters in the context of *ontological nominalism* because, as I indicated at the beginning, ontological nominalism (or ‘reism’) motivates caring a great deal about the distinction between proper singular terms or names, which refer to what there really is, real particulars, and ‘onomatoids’ that only *purport* to do so.

Nominalization nominalism, identifying *metalinguistic onomatoids*, is a good, clear way to do that.

15. The point I want to close this section with is:

Sellars’s *metalinguistic nominalization nominalism* can supply something ontological nominalism needs: a criterion of demarcation for at least an important class of onomatoids.

What it *cannot* do is to **motivate ontological nominalism**.

By itself, it gives us *no* reason to identify what there really is exclusively with particulars, with what can be named or referred to by singular terms.

For it restricts itself to saying that some *apparent* names are not *real* names.

But it is *not* yet an argument that nothing that is not properly nameable is “in the world.”

At most it shows that we need not think of properties, relations, and facts as “in the world, in the narrow sense,” *just because* there are names of them—for those, they claim, are only *apparently* names.

This does not say that predicates don’t correspond to or express anything about “the world in the narrow sense” when used in their un-nominalized forms.

Some independent motivation is needed for thinking that nothing is “in the world in the narrow sense” unless it can be named.

Transition to (II):

Sellars *begins* to address that issue by clarifying the difference between seeing a world of *nameables*, particular objects, and a world of *sayables*, *facts*, by looking at the *activities* of *naming* and *saying*.

Part II. “Naming and Saying”

Some Passages from “Naming and Saying” (1962)
Selected for Discussion

I. Overview: Tractarian view and Bergmann:

1. “The essay adopts the Tractarian view that configurations of objects are expressed by configurations of names.” [103]

This raises, as we will see, the challenge of *Bradley’s regress*, and the issue of how to understand “the unity of the proposition.” That is, what is it that makes a collection of names *say* something, in the way that declarative *sentences* (which are not just lists of names) do.

2. “Two alternatives are considered: The objects in atomic facts are (1) without exception *particulars*; (2) one or more particulars plus a *universal* (Gustav Bergmann). On (1) a mode of configuration is always an empirical relation: on (2) it is the logical nexus of ‘exemplification’. It is argued that (1) is both Wittgenstein’s view in the *Tractatus* and correct. It is also argued that exemplification is a ‘quasi-semantic’ relation, and that it (and universals) are “**in the world**” **only in that broad sense in which the ‘world’ includes linguistic norms and roles viewed (thus in translating) from the standpoint of a fellow participant.**” [103]

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II. Jumblese:

3. The crucial passage, of course, is 3.1432, “We must not say: ‘The complex sign “aRb” says “a stands in the relation R to b”’; but we must say, ‘*That* “a” stands in a certain relation to “b” says *that* aRb.’” [104]
4. “But the crucial point that Wittgenstein is making emerges when we ask ‘What are the parts of the statement in question the relation of which to one another is essential to its character as statement?’” [104]
5. “What Wittgenstein tells us is that while superficially regarded the statement is a concatenation of the three parts ‘a’, ‘R’ and ‘b’, viewed more profoundly it is a two-termed fact, with ‘R’ coming in to the statement as bringing it about that the expressions ‘a’ and ‘b’ are dyadically related in a certain way, i.e. as bringing it about that the expressions ‘a’ and ‘b’ are related as having an ‘R’ between them.” [104]
6. “Indeed, he is telling us that it is philosophically clarifying to recognize that instead of expressing the proposition that a is next to b by writing ‘is next to’ between ‘a’ and ‘b’, we could write ‘a’ in some relation to ‘b’ using only these signs. In a perspicuous language this is what we would do. Suppose that the Jumbles have such a language. It contains no relation words, but has the same name expressions as our tidied up English. Then we could translate Jumblese into English by making such statements as
$$\overset{a}{\underset{b}{\prime}}$$
 (in Jumblese) means *a is next to b*
and be on our way to philosophical clarification.” [105]
7. “[T]o represent that certain objects satisfy an n-adic concept, one makes their names satisfy an n-adic concept.” [105]
8. The second category of unperspicuous name-like expressions for LW is: “those which would not translate at all into that part of a perspicuous language which is used to make statements about what is or is not the case in the world. It is the latter which are in a special sense without meaning, though not in any ordinary sense meaningless. The ‘objects’ or ‘individuals’ or ‘logical subjects’ they mention are pseudo-objects in that to ‘mention them’ is to call attention to those **features of discourse** about what is or is not the case in the world which ‘show themselves’, i.e. **are present in a perspicuous language not as words, but in the manner in which words are combined**. Thus it is perfectly legitimate to say that there are ‘objects’ other than particulars, and to make statements about them. These objects (complexes aside) are **not in the world**, however, **nor do statements about them tell us how things stand in the world.**” [106]

III. Bradley's Argument

Relations are unintelligible.

Consider the relation ...is larger__.

We say "a is larger than b," and think we have thereby *related* a to b.

This is of the form 'aRb'.

But now, what is the relation between a and R, and between R and b?

These are *further* relations. Call them R' and R".

And if we can't understand them, we can't understand R.

But clearly there is an **Agrippan** regress here: must either regress, circle, or get grounded.

(Note how often this Agrippan structure of argumentation has arisen for us: justification, representation, now in effect, exemplification.)

In fact, the same argument goes through for *properties*.

We say P(a), that a has property P.

But what is the relation between a and P?

Exemplification.

But now what is the relation R' between the particular a and exemplification?

and the quite different relation R" between the property P and exemplification?

Bradley's own conclusion:

External properties are unintelligible. To be intelligible, we must conceive all relations as *internal* relations.

Example: ladder's relation to the wall it is leaning on is external to it.

Relations between rungs and rails of the ladder are internal to it.

IV. 'Exemplification' as unperspicuous:

9. "Now one can conceive of a philosopher who agrees with Wittgenstein that in a perspicuous language the fact that two objects stand in a dyadic relation would be represented by making their names stand in a dyadic relation, but who **rejects the idea that the only objects or individuals in the world are particulars**. Such a philosopher might distinguish, for example, within the fact that a certain sense-datum (supposing there to be such entities) is green, between two objects, a *particular* of which the name might be 'a', and an item which, though equally an *object* or *individual*, is not a *particular*. Let us suppose that the name of this object is 'green'. Let us say that **green is a universal rather than a particular**, and that among universals it is a quality rather than a relation. According to this philosopher, the perspicuous way of saying that a is green...is by putting the two names 'a' and 'green' in some relation, the same relation in which we would put 'b' and 'red' if we wished to say that b is red. Let us suppose that we write 'Green a'. Our previous discussion suggests the question: **What would**

be the *unperspicuous* way of saying what is said by ‘Green a’, i.e. which would stand to ‘Green a’ as, on Wittgenstein’s view ‘aRb’ stands to, say, ‘ $\overset{a}{b}$ ’? The philosopher I have in mind proposes the following answer:

a exemplifies green.” [107]

10. Summary: “According to the *Tractatus*, then, the fact that a is below b is *perspicuously* represented by an expression consisting of *two* names dyadically related, and *unperspicuously* represented by an expression containing, in addition to these two names, a two-place predicate expression. According to Professor Bergmann, if I understand him correctly, such facts as that a is below b are perspicuously represented by expressions consisting of *three* names triadically related, and unperspicuously represented by an expression containing, in addition to these three names (suitably punctuated) an expression having the force of ‘exemplifies’. What exactly does this difference amount to? And which view is closer to the truth?” [108]
11. “[T]he difference can be reformulated in such a way as to bring out its kinship with the old issue between realists and nominalists. **Wittgenstein is telling us that the only objects in the world are particulars, Bergmann is telling us that the world includes as objects both particulars and universals.**” [108]
12. “If we so use the term ‘relation’ that to say of something that it is a relation is to say that it is perspicuously represented in discourse by a configuration of expressions rather than by the use of a separate expression, then **for Bergmann there is...only one relation, i.e. exemplification, and what are ordinarily said to be relations, for example below, would occur in the world as *relata*.**” [109]
13. “To keep matters straight, it will be useful to introduce **the term ‘nexus’** in such a way that **to say of something that it is a nexus is to say that it is perspicuously represented in discourse by a configuration of expressions rather than by a separate expression.** If we do this, we can contrast Bergmann and Wittgenstein as follows:
Wittgenstein: There are many nexus in the world. Simple relations of matter of fact are *nexus*. All objects or individuals which form a nexus are particulars, i.e. individuals of type 0. There is no relation or nexus of exemplification in the world.
Bergmann: There is only one nexus, exemplification. Every atomic state of affairs contains at least one (and, if the thesis of elementarism be true, at most one) individual which is not a particular.
 If one so uses the term ‘ineffable’ that to eff something is to signify it by using a name, then **Wittgenstein’s view would be that what are ordinarily called relations are ineffable, for they are all nexus and are expressed (whether perspicuously or not) by configurations of names. For Bergmann, on the other hand, what are ordinarily called relations are effed; it is exemplification which is ineffable.**” [109]

Monadic predicates:

14. Discussion of attributions of *monadic* properties as “configurations of objects”: “[C]ould there be a configuration of one object?” [110] He discusses passages, and concludes: “the cumulative effect is to buttress the thesis that there is no provision in the *Tractatus* for monadic atomic facts.” [110] “Thus one can imagine a

philosopher who says that in a perspicuous language, monadic atomic facts would be represented by writing the name of the single object they contain in various colors or in various styles of type. The idea is a familiar one. Is there any reason to suppose that it was not available to Wittgenstein?" [110]

15. "Before continuing with the substantive argument of this paper, I shall say something more to the historical question as to whether Wittgenstein himself 'countenanced' monadic atomic facts." [115] Another detour, but the whole of Section II is devoted to it. The crux of the issue is this: "Now **if a philosopher combines the two theses, (1) there are no atomic facts involving only one particular, (2) all objects are particulars, it would be reasonable to say that he is committed to a doctrine of bare particulars.** For, speaking informally, he holds that though objects stand in empirical relations, they have no qualities. ... Now in my opinion Copi is correct in attributing to Wittgenstein the second of the above two theses (all objects are particulars). If, therefore, he were correct in attributing to Wittgenstein the first thesis, his claim that Wittgenstein is committed to a doctrine of bare particulars would be sound. Conversely, if Wittgenstein did hold a doctrine of bare particulars, then he was committed to the thesis that there are no monadic atomic facts." [116]
16. The overall discussion in Section II is nuanced and textually sensitive. WS admits that there are passages on both sides. He concludes by offering two attitudes LW might have taken on the issue of monadic atomic facts: "Thus, perhaps the correct answer to the historical question is that Wittgenstein would have regarded the question 'Are particulars bare?' as, in a deep sense, a factual one, a question to which he did not claim to have the answer, and to which, as logician, he was not required to have the answer. The second remark is that Wittgenstein may well have thought that there are monadic atomic facts, indeed that their existence is obvious, but that no statement in ordinary usage represented such a fact, so that no example could be given in the sense of written down." [120]
17. Footnote 13, at [118] says: "I find here the implication that primitive one-place predicates (configurations)—if not all primitive predicates—come in families (determinates) and that objects are of different logical form if, for example, one exists in the logical space of color, the other in the logical space of sound."

A minor but crucial difference between 'green' and 'triangular': 'green' can mean 'greenness':
[Discuss this very briefly, just rehearsing the main point.]

18. "The danger arises from the fact that such a word as 'red', for example, is really three words, an adjective, a common noun and a proper name, rolled into one. Thus we can say, with equal propriety,

The book is red.

Scarlet is a color.

Red is a color." [121]

BB: I think this display is a mistake on Sellars's part. The middle one should be:

Scarlet is a red.

That is the use as a common noun. (Sadly, we did not fix this, or mark it, in our edition.)

19. Appreciating this danger depends on a subtle but important argument:

"Now what makes this move all the more plausible is that there *is* an object *green* and that there *is* a relation which is often called exemplification, such that if *a* is green *then it is also true that a exemplifies green*. Thus it is tempting indeed to say that

a exemplifies green

is simply an unperspicuous way of saying what is said perspicuously by

Green a

And the fascinating thing about it is that this claim would be absolutely correct *provided that 'green a' was not taken to say what is ordinarily said by 'a is green'*.

The point stands out like a sore thumb if one leave colors aside and uses a geometrical example. Thus consider the statement

a is triangular

or, for our purposes,

Triangular a

It would clearly be odd to say

a exemplifies triangular

although it is not odd to say

a exemplifies green.

The reason is that ‘triangular’ unlike ‘green’ does not function in ordinary usage as both an adjective and a singular term. What we must say is

a exemplifies triangularity.

Now **in a perspicuous language, i.e. a language which had a built-in protection against Bradley’s puzzle** we might say *that a exemplifies triangularity* by concatenating ‘a’ and ‘triangularity’ or *that Socrates exemplifies Wisdom* by writing

Socrates : Wisdom.

Our language is not such a perspicuous one, and to bring this out in this connection, we might write,

We must not say, ‘The complex sign “a exemplifies triangularity” says “a stands in the exemplification relation to triangularity”,’ but **we must say ‘that “a” stands in a certain relation to “triangularity” says that a exemplifies triangularity.’**

20. “Professor Bergmann thinks that

Green a

consists of two names, ‘a’, the name of a particular, and ‘green’, the name of a universal, and, by being their juxtaposition, asserts that the one exemplifies the other. On his view, philosophers who insist that ‘a is green’ says that a exemplifies green but do not realize that ‘a exemplifies green’ is simply an unperspicuous way of juxtaposing ‘a’ with ‘green’ are attempting to eff the ineffable.

He thinks, to use the terminology I proposed earlier, that exemplification is the nexus, the mode of configuration of objects which can only be expressed by a configuration of names. Professor Bergmann sees configurations of particulars and universals where Wittgenstein saw only configurations of particulars.” [123]

21. “But what does

a exemplifies triangularity

say if it isn’t an unperspicuous way of saying

“Triangular a ?”

V. The final move in Sellars’s story: facts, truth, and things *done* (inferreds and statings):

22. Now if

a exemplifies triangularity

triangularity is true of a

triangularity holds of a

are to be elucidated in terms of

That a is triangular is true

then exemplification is no more **present in the world of fact in that narrow sense which**

tractarians like Professor Bergmann and myself find illuminating, than is meaning, or truth, and for the same reason.” [124]

The reason being that both are **metalinguistic**, and furthermore, make essential reference to what can only be said in **pragmatic metavocabularies**.

23. “The crucial ineffability in the *Tractatus* concerns the relation between statements and facts. Is there such a relation? And is it ineffable? The answer seems to me to be the following. **There is a meaning relation between statements and facts, but both terms are in the linguistic order.**” [124]

24. “To say that a statement means a fact is to say, for example,

‘Grün a’ (in German) means *Green a*, and it is a fact that Green a,

The first conjunct appears to assert a relation between a linguistic and a nonlinguistic item, between a statement and an item in the real order. And the second conjunct to say of this item that it is a fact. As I see it, the first conjunct does assert a relation, but the relation obtains between a German expression and an English expression *as being an expression in our language*. It has the force of

‘Grün a’ (in German) corresponds to ‘Green a’ in our language.” [124]

25. “What, then, does it mean to say

That green a is a fact

Clearly this is equivalent to saying

That green a is true

which calls to mind the equivalence

That green a is true \equiv green a

This, however, is not the most perspicuous way to represent matters, for while the equivalence obtains, indeed necessarily obtains, **its truth depends on the principle of inference—and this is the crux—**

From ‘that green a is true’ (in our language) to infer ‘green a’ (in our language). And it is by virtue of the fact that we *draw* such inferences that meaning and truth talk gets its connection with the world. In this sense, the connection is *done* rather than *talked about*.

Viewed from this perspective, Wittgenstein’s later conception of a language as a form of life is already foreshadowed by the ineffability thesis of the *Tractatus*. But to see this is to see that no ineffability is involved. **For while to infer is neither to refer to that which can be referred to, nor to assert that which can be asserted, this does not mean that it is to fail to eff something which is, therefore, ineffable.**” [125]

Something like *the* punchline of NS is:

We can sum up the line of thought in *NS* that I have been considering in the slogan: **Appeal to an ineffable semantic relation is a sign that one is trying to do in one’s *semantic* theory what can only be done in the *pragmatic* theory, the theory of the *use* of the language.**

Saying, putting something forward *as* true, asserting—the central and paradigmatic use of declarative sentences—is a *doing*, not a semantic relation.

So is *naming*, in the sense of referring (using an already established term, rather than naming in the sense of introducing such a term).

Referring is the central and paradigmatic *use* of singular terms.

Final Thoughts on Part II—“Naming and Saying”:

Figuring out what conclusion we should draw from this observation about saying as an activity does not end with the “punchline” formulated above.

It is an issue that will be with us from here on out.

But here are some considerations and tentative conclusions:

- a) In effect, Sellars is **assimilating Bradley’s problem to the one Lewis Carroll diagnoses** in “Achilles and the Tortoise.”

The conclusion we should draw from the Carroll anecdote is the one John Stuart Mill (whom Carroll is thinking of in this respect) had already formulated:

In addition to premises from which to reason, there must also be principles in accordance with which to reason.

If we insist on making those principles, paradigmatically *modus ponens* (but similar considerations apply to universal instantiation), into *explicit premises*, we will be off to the races of a regress.

To justify concluding q from p and $p \rightarrow q$, we need a principle that says that

$$(p \ \& \ (p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q,$$

And to get from that, plus p and $p \rightarrow q$ to q we’ll need a further conditional, and so on.

Note that **both have the Agrippan trilemmatic structure** of offering a forced choice between an infinite regress, circularity, or postulation of a foundationalist nonrelational regress-stopper that is qualitatively different from the relational statuses that generate the trilemma.

And in both cases, to break the regress, we need a qualitatively different kind of thing: a norm implicit in *doing*, rather than a mere *saying* of how things are.

- b) Sellars thinks that having a world-of-facts ontology (or even one that *includes* facts) is a consequence of a **descriptivist mistake**.

For he seems to see the point as being that we **should stop at what we can say in a pragmatic MV**, and not assume or infer that we should worry about how we are practically taking (representing, describing) the objective world to be by *saying* things, making claims. **This is the conclusion Pricean global expressivists draw.**

- c) I think such a conclusion, while right as far as it goes, depends on too simplified a picture of the relations between what one can *say* in *pragmatic* metavocabularies and representational-descriptive *semantic* MVs. This issue will be front and center next week, when we consider alethic modal vocabulary, and ask whether its broadly metalinguistic *categorial* function precludes talk of modal facts, states of affairs, and properties—such as laws of nature.

I address this particular issue in “Modal Expressivism and Modal Realism: Together Again”, in *FEE*.

- d) I make an effort to *show* how much more complicated the relations between pragmatic and semantic MVs can be, in my Locke lectures, *Between Saying and Doing*. Chapter One already makes the basic case.

VI. Alternative to this whole bottom-up setup:

Both Sellars and Bergmann, like Bradley in setting up his conundrum, begin with subsentential components—singular terms, and predicates, including sortals and predicate adjectives (including relational ones), and asks about the “unity of the proposition.”

That is a way of trying to build up sayables from below, from expressions one cannot use to make claims.

The Tarskian model-theoretic tradition continues with this strategy, and shows us how to fill in a lot of the moves along the way.

But this is not the only way of thinking about things.

One can go the other way around, and start with sayables as the conceptually and explanatorily basic form of semantic content.

This is a **top-down order of semantic explanation**.

Bradley himself drew a conclusion of this sort (looking over his shoulder at Hegel), leading him to the sort of **semantic holism** that repelled Russell, leading him to prefer **“bucket of shot” atomism to “bowl of jelly” holism**.

Indeed, we can conclude that we should start from the *pragmatics*—which is one way of understanding the lesson of the “ineffability of the nexus.”

Alternative: inferentialist beginning with *sayables*, in terms of *inference*.

Making claims and challenging and defending them.

Sayables as nodes in network of implications (and incompatibilities).

Q: How to get to names/predicates (subsentential expressions)?

A: Substitutionally: by the (Bolzano-Frege-Quine) method of “noting invariance under substitution”. For Quine, this was substitutions *salva veritate*. For inferentialists it is substitutions *salva consequentia*.

Observation (second punchline): This defines singular terms (and predicates as sentence-frames) by *abstraction*. For singular terms correspond to equivalence-classes of sentences. (Really, something more complicated, but still, formed by abstraction with substitution-*salva consequentia* as the equivalence relation, which corresponds to sorting substitutables into intersubstitution equivalence classes, corresponding to *coreferential terms*.)

My plan is to talk about this alternative to nominalistic—and so, essentially atomistic—semantic approaches in Week 13.