HAVING THE WORLD IN VIEW

ESSAYS ON KANT, HEGEL, AND SELLARS

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England 2009

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

McDowell, John Henry.
Having the world in view : essays on Kant, Hegel, and Sellars / John McDowell.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 978-0-674-03165-4 (alk. paper)
1. Kant, Immanuel, 1724–1804. 2. Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 1770–1831.
3. Sellars, Wilfrid. I. Title.
B2798.M4235 2009
190—dc22 2008013843

Contents

IV Sellarsian Themes

Preface

The title of this collection is the title under which I presented versions of the essays in Part I as the Woodbridge Lectures at Columbia University in 1997.

Those essays appear here under what I used as the subtitle of those lectures. Their topic is Wilfrid Sellars's deeply Kantian account of perceptual experience. In the experience of rational subjects, things are given to them to be known, in knowledge of a kind only rational subjects can have, knowledge that is a standing in the space of reasons. Is this givenness a case of what Sellars rejects as the Myth of the Given? No, but that is only because the experience of rational subjects, experience in which things are given for rational knowledge, itself draws on capacities that belong to the rational intellect, the understanding.

Even as enjoyed by rational subjects, perceptual experience involves sensibility. And sensibility is not peculiar to rational subjects. As Sellars interprets what a Kantian account would require, sensibility constrains the involvement of the understanding in experience from outside. I contrast that with a conception according to which the role of sensibility in a Kantian account is that it is sensory consciousness that is informed by conceptual capacities in the experience of rational subjects. When I wrote the essays in Part I, I thought Sellars's picture included this informing of sensory consciousness by capacities that belong to the understanding, and that he added external constraint, by what he calls "sheer receptivity", as a distinct further role for sensibility. I retract that reading of Sellars in Essay 6. (Readers should be alert to what this is an instance of: I would not now affirm everything on every page of this collection.)

Sellars holds that it is not as possessors of significance that words bear relations to elements in extra-linguistic reality. In Essay 3 I discuss how this doctrine, which I think we should reject, conspires with other features of

Sellars's thinking to make the contrasting conception of the role of sensibility invisible to him.

If, as I recommend, we deny that the rational intellect needs a certain sort of external constraint, even in its empirical operations, we are sounding what can be easily heard as a Hegelian note. In Essays 2 and 3 I make some remarks about the Hegelian character of the denial, and that is the central topic of the first two essays in Part II.

Of the other essays in Part II, Essay 6 is a further discussion of the contrast that shapes the essays in Part I, between Sellars's view of the role of sensibility in a Kantian account of experience and the alternative I recommend. And in Essay 7 I try to motivate and defend the thought—which is common between Sellars's version of Kantianism and the alternative I recommend—that experience can make rational knowledge available only by itself involving the understanding.

The first two essays in Part III sketch readings of parts of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Essay 8 begins with a restatement of some material from Essay 4; I use that to introduce an interpretation of the Master/Slave dialectic, according to which the point of that section of the *Phenomenology* is closer to the main theme of this collection than it is on more standard readings. Essay 9 is further removed from the topic of having the world in view, but there is a counterpart here to a feature of my preferred treatment of that theme. If, as I recommend, we deny that sensibility constrains the understanding from outside, then, even though sensibility is characteristic of animals as such, not just rational animals, we are debarred from conceiving the sensibility of rational animals as simply separate from the rationality they manifest in their guise as experiencing the world. In Essay 9 I find in Hegel's treatment of action an analogous drive towards integrating the rationality of rational animals, now in their guise as agents, with their bodily nature, even though embodiment, like sensibility, is characteristic of animals as such, not just rational animals.

Essay 10 brings together some of the main points in the reading of Kant and Hegel that underlies the treatment I recommend for the theme of having the world in view.

Part IV contains miscellaneous essays on Sellarsian topics. Essay 11 largely repeats material from Part I, adding more comparison between Sellars and Donald Davidson. In Essay 12 I urge that Sellars's "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" should be read, not as dismissing empiricism altogether, but as recommending a reformed empiricism, an empiricism struc-

tured so as to avoid the Myth of the Given. Essay 13 discusses Sellars's doctrine, which figures in Essay 3 and again in Essay 11, that significance is not a matter of relations between bearers of significance and elements in extralinguistic reality. In Essay 14 I offer one more treatment of the question how we should conceive the kind of experience that makes rational knowledge available, in the face of the pitfall constituted by the Myth of the Given. This essay makes more of the Kantian notion of intuition than I manage in any of the others, including Essays 2 and 3 where that notion is central.

I have cited works by author's name and title, relegating other details to the bibliography at the end of the volume.

Many people have helped with this volume. I want to express special thanks to James Conant, who helped with the substance of many of the essays, and did indispensable editorial work on the collection.

HAVING THE WORLD IN VIEW

PART I

Sellars, Kant, and Intentionality

ESSAY 1

Sellars on Perceptual Experience

1. In his seminal set of lectures "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", Wilfrid Sellars offers (among much else) the outlines of a deeply Kantian way of thinking about intentionality—about how thought and language are directed towards the world. Sellars describes *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes*, his major work of the next decade after "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", as a sequel to "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" (p. vii). The later work makes explicit the Kantian orientation of the earlier; Sellars now shows a conviction that his own thinking about intentionality (and, indeed, about everything) can be well expounded through a reading of Kant. I do not think it is far-fetched to attribute to Sellars a belief on the following lines: no one has come closer to showing us how to find intentionality unproblematic than Kant, and there is no better way for us to find intentionality unproblematic than by seeing what Kant was driving at. That means rethinking his thought for ourselves, and, if necessary, correcting him at points where we think we see more clearly than he did what he should have been doing. Sellars does not hesitate to claim, on some points, to have a better understanding of the requirements of Kantian thinking than Kant himself achieved.

Now, I share this belief I have read into Sellars, that there is no better way for us to approach an understanding of intentionality than by working towards understanding Kant. I also believe that coming to terms with Sellars's sustained attempt to be a Kantian is a fine way into beginning to appreciate Kant, and thereby—given the first belief—into becoming philosophically comfortable with intentionality. I mean this as a partly backhanded compliment to Sellars. Sellars makes the way he thinks he has to correct Kant perfectly clear, and I want to suggest that the divergence is revealing. I think a fully Kantian vision of intentionality is inaccessible to Sellars, because of a

deep structural feature of his philosophical outlook. I believe we can bring the way Kant actually thought about intentionality, and thereby—given that first belief—how we ourselves ought to think about intentionality, into clearer focus by reflecting on the difference between what Sellars knows Kant wrote and what Sellars thinks Kant should have written.[1]

The reading of Kant that I aim to give a glimpse of in this and the next two essays is under construction in a collaborative enterprise that I am privileged to be engaged in with my colleagues James Conant and John Haugeland. Here I want to make a standard prefatory remark, which I mean in a less ritualistic manner than is perhaps usual. Conant and Haugeland should receive full credit for anything in what follows that is helpful towards the understanding of Kant, and thereby towards the understanding of intentionality. The blame for anything unhelpful, or simply wrong, is mine alone. In particular, Conant and Haugeland should not be held responsible for the perhaps perverse idea that we can approach an understanding of Kant through seeing how close Sellars comes to Kant's picture; nor should they be held responsible for the details of my reading of Sellars.[2]

2. Sellars's master thought in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" is this. There is a special category of characterizations of states or episodes that occur in people's lives, for instance, characterizations of states or episodes as *knowings*; and, we might add, corresponding characterizations of the people in whose lives the states or episodes occur, for instance, characterizations of people as *knowers*. In giving these characterizations, we place whatever they

1. It is a measure of how difficult it is to come to terms with Kant that this sort of indirect approach can be helpful. In "Zwei Naturalismen auf Englisch", Dieter Henrich describes my references to Kant, in my earlier engagement (in *Mind and World*) with the issues I shall be considering in these three essays, as "platitüdinnahen". No doubt it is nearly platitudinous that sensibility must have a central role in any even approximately Kantian attempt at making intelligible the very idea of intentionality, the directedness of subjective states or episodes towards objects. But that is nearly platitudinous just because it is neutral between Sellars's reading of Kant and the quite different picture I was trying to give. Sellars thinks a properly Kantian position requires that conceptual episodes occur in perception in a way that is guided by "sheer receptivity". I do not believe that is a correct picture of the transcendental role of sensibility in a properly Kantian position. If this belief were platitudinous, Sellars could not have understood Kantian thinking as he does. I hope this will become clearer in these three essays.

2. I have also benefited from years of fruitful exchange with Robert Brandom, and from his very helpful comments on a draft of these essays.

characterize in "the logical space of reasons" (§36). Sellars's thesis is that the conceptual apparatus we employ when we place things in the logical space of reasons is irreducible to any conceptual apparatus that does not serve to place things in the logical space of reasons. So the master thought as it were draws a line; above the line are placings in the logical space of reasons, and below it are characterizations that do not do that.

That is a merely negative specification of what we must distinguish from placings in the logical space of reasons. But Sellars is concerned to warn against a particular philosophical pitfall, the temptation to suppose, of certain specific below-the-line characterizations, that they can fulfil tasks that can in fact be fulfilled only by above-the-line characterizations. This temptation is urgent in respect of some, in particular, of the characterizations that function below Sellars's line, and we need a positive specification of the characterizations that activate the temptation. Sellars sometimes suggests this helpful way of putting his thought: characterizations that affirm *epistemic* facts need to be distinguished from characterizations that affirm *natural* facts.[3] In these terms, his central thesis is that we must not suppose we can understand epistemic states or episodes in terms of the actualization of merely natural capacities—capacities that their subjects have at birth, or acquire in the course of merely animal maturation. I think "epistemic" here amounts to something like "concept-involving"; I shall justify this interpretation shortly.

Assuming this interpretation for the moment, we can bring Sellars's thought into direct contact with Kant. The logical space of reasons, on this reading, is the logical space in which we place episodes or states when we describe them in terms of the actualization of conceptual capacities. Now what corresponds in Kant to this image of the logical space of reasons is the image of the realm of freedom. The way to understand the correspondence is to focus on the Kantian idea that conceptual capacities are essentially exercisable in judging. It is true, and important, that judging is not the only mode of actualization of conceptual capacities; I shall be exploiting the point in these three essays. But even so, judging can be singled out as the paradigmatic mode of actualization of conceptual capacities, the one in terms of which we should understand the very idea of conceptual capacities

3. See §17, and note the echo of §5, where Sellars warns of a mistake in epistemology that is "of a piece with the so-called 'naturalistic fallacy' in ethics". At §36, he contrasts placing things in the space of reasons with "empirical description"; I think this formulation is less helpful.

in the relevant sense. And judging, making up our minds what to think, is something for which we are in principle responsible—something we freely do, as opposed to something that merely happens in our lives. Of course a belief is not always, or even typically, a result of our exercising this freedom to decide what to think. But even when a belief is not freely adopted, it is an actualization of capacities of a kind, the conceptual, whose paradigmatic mode of actualization is in the exercise of freedom that judging is. And this freedom, exemplified in responsible acts of judging, is essentially a matter of being answerable to criticism in the light of rationally relevant considerations. So the realm of freedom, at least the realm of the freedom of judging, can be identified with the space of reasons.

Sellars describes the logical space of reasons as the space "of justifying and being able to justify what one says".[4] We can see this as a distinctively twentieth-century elaboration of a Kantian conception, the conception of the capacity to exercise, paradigmatically in judgment, a freedom that is essentially a matter of responsiveness to reasons. The twentieth-century element is the idea that this capacity comes with being initiated into language.

3. At a pivotal point in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" (Part VIII), Sellars addresses the question whether empirical knowledge has foundations. His answer is nuanced.

In an empiricistic foundationalism of the usual kind, it is not just that the credentials of all knowledge are ultimately grounded in knowledge acquired in perception. Beyond that, the grounding perceptual knowledge is atomistically conceived. Traditional empiricists take it that each element of the grounding knowledge can in principle be acquired on its own, independently not only of other elements of the grounding perceptual knowledge, but also of anything in the world view that is grounded on this basic stratum of knowledge.

What Sellars objects to in traditional empiricism is just this supposed independence. He writes:

> There is clearly *some* point to the picture of human knowledge as resting on a level of propositions—observation reports—which do not rest on other propositions in the same way as other propositions rest on them. On the other hand, I do wish to insist that the metaphor of "foundation" is mis-

4. §36. This connects with the perhaps infelicitously labelled thesis of "psychological nominalism": see §29, §31, and, for an anticipation early in the lectures, §6.

> leading in that it keeps us from seeing that if there is a logical dimension in which other empirical propositions rest on observation reports, there is another logical dimension in which the latter rest on the former.[5]

Sellars does not deny that there is a logical dimension in which observation reports are basic. His point is just to insist on the other logical dimension, in which observation reports depend on the world view that is grounded on them, that is, dependent on them in the logical dimension that a traditional empiricism restricts itself to. The result is a picture that is still in a way empiricist, by virtue of its acknowledgment of one of these logical dimensions, though it is separated from traditional empiricism by virtue of its insistence on the other.

Of course Sellars's point here is at least partly epistemological, in an intelligibly narrow sense; he is telling us how we should conceive the credentials in virtue of which a world view counts as knowledgeably held. But the divergence from traditional empiricism means that we cannot take Sellars to be doing epistemology in some sense that contrasts with reflecting about intentionality. It is indeed perceptual *knowledge* (knowledge expressed in observation reports) about which he is here urging that it depends, in respect of the concepts that figure in it, on a world view. But that is just a case of something more general; his thought is that the conceptual equipment that is operative in perceptual experience generally, whether the experience is such as to yield knowledge or not, is dependent on a world view, in the logical dimension that the metaphor of "foundation" risks leading us to forget. We can capture this part of the picture by saying that the intentionality, the objective purport, of perceptual experience in general—whether potentially knowledge-yielding or not—depends, in that logical dimension, on having the world in view, in a sense that goes beyond glimpses of the here and now. It would not be intelligible that the relevant episodes present themselves as glimpses of the here and now apart from their being related to a wider world view in the logical dimension Sellars adds. But the wider world view depends, in turn, in the logical dimension that figures in traditional empiricism, on perceptual experience that is capable of yielding knowledge, in the form of glimpses of the here and now. With this mutual dependence, the non-traditional empiricism that Sellars espouses constitutes a picture both of the credentials of empirical knowledge and of the intentionality of empirical thought in general.

5. §38. Compare §19.

This makes it unsurprising that we find Sellars speaking of "the epistemic character, the 'intentionality' ", of expressions such as "thinking of a celestial city".[6] When he introduces the image of the logical space of reasons, he singles out the episodes or states whose characterizations place them in the space of reasons as episodes or states of *knowing*.[7] And of course episodes or states of knowing would have an epistemic character in an etymologically obvious sense. But it would be wrong to conclude that Sellars's concern is narrowly epistemological. In the remark about "thinking of a celestial city", he makes this clear by showing that he is willing to equate epistemic character with intentionality, and to talk of epistemic character in a case in which there need be no question of knowing. In the remark about "thinking of a celestial city", "epistemic" can amount to no more than "concept-involving".[8] This is the interpretation I announced and promised to vindicate.

I have been urging that Sellars's non-traditional empiricism is not only a picture of the credentials of empirical knowledge, a topic for epistemology in a narrow sense, but also a picture of what is involved in having one's thought directed at the world at all, the topic of reflection about intentionality. This enables me to forestall a possible objection to the proposal that we read Kant, Sellars's model, as a philosopher of intentionality. I do not mean the feeble objection that "intentionality" is not a Kantian term. "Intentionality" is a scholastic term, which did not come back into mainstream philosophical currency until (I think) Brentano, but obviously that does not prevent us from supposing that the topic is a Kantian topic. What I have in mind is rather the potentially more challenging objection that Kant's concern is epistemological. As a putative reason for supposing that Kant is not concerned with intentionality, I can neutralize this by saying: certainly Kant's concern is epistemological—in just the way in which Sellars's is.

Against a "neo-Kantian" reading of Kant, Heidegger says: "The *Critique of Pure Reason* has nothing to do with a 'theory of knowledge'."[9] I think we can make the point Heidegger is trying to make more effectively—certainly we

6. §7. Compare §§24, 25. Consider also the implication, at §17, that looking red is an epistemic as opposed to a natural fact about objects. Looking red is not an epistemic fact in the etymologically obvious sense that I mention in the text below.

7. §36.

8. See *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 23: for purposes of the philosophy of mind, "the intentional is that which belongs to the conceptual order".

9. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, p. 11. Heidegger's word is "Erkenntnistheorie", which might have been translated "epistemology"; see Taft's note, p. 188.

can put it in a form in which it is easier to swallow—by saying, not that epistemology is *no* concern of the first *Critique*, but that it is no more *the* concern of the first *Critique* than it is of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" or of *Science and Metaphysics*.

4. Early in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" (§7), Sellars diagnoses "the classical concept of a sense datum" as "a mongrel resulting from a crossbreeding of two ideas": first, an idea of non-concept-involving sensory episodes, such as sensations of red; and, second, an idea of non-inferential knowings that such-and-such is the case. This is a mongrel, a conflation, because attributions of non-concept-involving episodes belong below the line drawn by Sellars's master thought, whereas attributions of knowings belong above it. When Sellars repeats the diagnosis a few pages later, he extracts from it a programme for the rest of the lectures: "to examine these two ideas and determine how that which survives criticism in each is properly to be combined with the other" (§10). The programme, then, is to arrive at an acceptable picture of how the sensory and the conceptual—sensibility and understanding—combine so as to provide for the intentionality of perceptual experience, and (the same function viewed from a different angle) to provide for how perceptual experience figures in the acquisition of a knowledgeable view of the world. We have looked ahead in Sellars's work, so we know that this case of intentionality, the intentionality of perceptual experience, is going to be in one way basic to intentionality in general, though not in a way that involves its being intelligible in advance of the idea of having a world view that goes beyond the immediate deliverances of perception.

The above-the-line element in the mongrel conflation is the idea of non-inferential knowings. Sellars mostly focuses on one sensory modality, and considers seeings.[10] But in pursuing his programme in connection with this particularization to one sensory modality of the above-the-line element in the mongrel, he expands the topic from seeings to a wider class of experiences, which he initially introduces as ostensible seeings. Seeings are a

10. For a self-conscious comment on this, see *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 9. There is a minor complication (nothing turns on it): seeings are not, as such, non-inferential knowings or acquirings of knowledge (that was how the above-the-line elements in the mongrel conflation were first introduced), but rather opportunities to know, which may not be taken. Consider how it might be intelligible to say this: "I thought it merely looked to me as if the tie was green, but I now realize that I was seeing it to be green."

singled-out subclass of ostensible seeings.[11] Evidently Sellars takes it that for purposes of separating and correctly combining what survives criticism in the ideas that are conflated into the mongrel, what matters is to understand the wider class. The goal is to understand the intentionality of visual experience in general, whether potentially knowledge-yielding or not.

Ostensible seeings are experiences in which it looks to their subject as if things are a certain way, and Sellars devotes some effort to elucidating that idea. Centrally important here is the image of an experience as, "so to speak, making an assertion or claim", or as "containing" a claim (§16). Sellars introduces this image in an explicitly promissory way, pointing forward to the culmination of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". There he vindicates a notion of non-overt conceptual episodes, on the ground that they can be understood by analogical extension from overt conceptual episodes, linguistic acts.[12] Visual experiences "make" or "contain" claims in that they are conceptual episodes, actualizations of conceptual capacities, and as such are to be understood on the model of linguistic performances in which claims are literally made.

This bears some elaboration. I have mentioned the Kantian view that conceptual capacities have their paradigmatic mode of actualization in judgings. We can approach the idea that visual experiences are conceptual episodes, and as such "make" or "contain" claims, through this identification of judging as the paradigmatic kind of conceptual episode. Consider, say, judging that there is a red cube in front of one. There is a conceptual capacity that would be exercised both in making that judgment and in judging that there is a red pyramid in front of one, and another conceptual capacity that would be exercised both in judging that there is a red cube in front of one and in judging that there is a blue cube in front of one. In judging that there is a red cube in front of one, one would be exercising (at least) these two capacities together. What does "together" mean here? Not just that one would be exercising the two capacities in a single act of judgment; that would not distinguish judging that there is a red cube in front of one from judging, say,

11. For seeings as veridical members of a class of ostensible seeings, see "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §7. This points towards the discussion of "looks" statements in Part III. I shall comment in Essay 3 below on the idea, which is implicit in at least the first version of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", that veridicality is all it takes for an ostensible seeing to be a seeing.

12. The first phase of the myth of Jones; for the application to perceptual experience, see §60.

that there is a red pyramid and a blue cube in front of one. In a judgment that there is a red cube in front of one, the two conceptual capacities I have singled out would have to be exercised with a specific mode of togetherness: a togetherness that is a counterpart to the "logical" or semantical togetherness of the words "red" and "cube" in the verbal expression of the judgment, "There is a red cube in front of me". Here we see the point of the idea that non-overt conceptual episodes are to be understood on analogy with linguistic acts; it affords a way to make a distinction that we need to make.[13]

The conceptual episodes Sellars is concerned with, when he speaks of visual experiences as "containing" claims, are not as such cases of judging. Even if one does judge that things are as they look, having them look that way to one is not the same as judging that they are that way. In some cases, perhaps, one does judge that things are a certain way when they look that way—acquiring the belief that they are that way by freely making up one's mind that they are that way. But more typically, perceptual belief-acquisition is not a matter of judging, of actively exercising control over one's cognitive life, at all. Unless there are grounds for suspicion, such as odd lighting conditions, having it look to one as if things are a certain way—ostensibly seeing things to be that way—becomes accepting that things are that way by a sort of default, involving no exercise of the freedom that figures in a Kantian conception of judgment.

So there is a disconnection between perceptual experience and judging. But even so, we can exploit the apparatus of the conception of judging I have sketched in order to vindicate Sellars's image of experiences as "containing" claims. A free, responsible exercise of certain conceptual capacities, including at least the two I mentioned, with a suitable mode of togetherness would be judging that there is a red cube in front of one. Now we can say that in an ostensible seeing that there is a red cube in front of one—an experience in which it looks to one as if there is a red cube in front of one—the *same* conceptual capacities would be actualized with the *same* mode of togetherness. This cashes out the idea that an experience so described "contains" a claim,

13. I mean this quick sketch of a conception of judging, as the joint exercise of different conceptual capacities, to recall Gareth Evans's discussion of "the Generality Constraint": *The Varieties of Reference*, pp. 100–5. Evans's discussion has its roots in P. T. Geach's account of judging on analogy with saying, in *Mental Acts*. Geach's analogical account of judging is roughly contemporary with Sellars's in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind"; independent of it; and (I would argue) more satisfactory, in being free of the scientistic baggage with which Sellars encumbers his version. But I shall not be considering the scientistic details of Sellars's version in these essays (though Sellars's scientism will matter in other contexts).

whose content is just what one would be judging in the corresponding judgment. But this actualization of the relevant conceptual capacities, unlike the one that would be involved in the corresponding judgment, would be involuntary; that is why I say "actualization" rather than "exercise".

This idea of conceptual capacities being involuntarily actualized in perceptual experience partly captures the point of a striking remark Sellars makes about the way an experience "contains" a claim; he says that the claim "is, so to speak, evoked or wrung from the perceiver by the object perceived" (§16 bis). When Sellars says this, he is talking about experiences of seeing, but the point he is making surely applies also to members of the wider class, ostensible seeings, even the ones that are not seeings. Ostensible seeings are experiences that, as conceptual episodes, "contain" claims, but in a special way that differentiates them from conceptual episodes of other kinds. They "contain" their claims as ostensibly *necessitated* by an object ostensibly seen. In *Science and Metaphysics*, Sellars puts the same point by saying that if one says it looks to so-and-so as though there were a red and rectangular physical object in front of him, one is attributing to so-and-so (who may of course be oneself) a conceptual representation, of a particular kind, that there is a red and rectangular physical object in front of him; and the kind is "that kind of conceptual representation which is being under the visual *impression* that . . . there is (or of there being) a red and rectangular physical object in front of one" (p. 14; my emphasis). In the language of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", this is to say that ostensible seeings "contain" their claims in a distinctive way, one that distinguishes them from other conceptual episodes; they "contain" their claims as ostensibly visually *imposed* or *impressed* on their subject.[14]

14. I have, I think charitably, discounted "evoked or wrung *from the perceiver*" in the formulation Sellars uses in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". A claim evoked from a perceiver would surely be a claim that the perceiver makes. But it seems wrong to imply that a perceiver makes the claim his experience "contains"—wrong even before we widen the focus from seeings to ostensible seeings. Whether an ostensible seeing is a seeing turns on whether its "contained" claim is true, and that is a separate question from whether its subject makes (endorses) the claim. (See n. 10 above.) So even a seeing, let alone a merely ostensible seeing, does not necessarily "contain" a claim made by its subject. Where I have marked an omission in my citation of the parallel remark from *Science and Metaphysics*, Sellars glosses "being under the visual impression that" with "(visually taking it to be the case that)", and this seems wrong in the same way. We can correct Sellars on this without posing a threat to something he wants to insist on, that one gets to have conceptual episodes (representations) of the relevant kind occur in one's life at all only by acquiring the capacity to make the claims they "contain".

So it is not simply that conceptual episodes of the relevant kind consist in actualizations of conceptual capacities that are involuntary. (We have that also with other kinds of conceptual episodes; for instance, when one is, as we say, struck by a thought.) In visual experiences conceptual capacities are actualized with suitable modes of togetherness; this is how we cash out the idea that the episodes "contain" claims. But they are actualized with an involuntariness of a specific kind; in a visual experience an ostensibly seen object ostensibly impresses itself visually on the subject. And presumably parallel things are to be said about other sensory modalities.[15]

5. I have been considering what survives criticism, from the above-the-line element of the mongrel conflation, in a conception of visual experience that would be acceptable by Sellars's lights. Sellars's programme for "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" presupposes in addition that something survives criticism from the below-the-line element in the mongrel conflation, and needs to be acceptably combined with conceptual episodes of the distinctive kind I have been discussing, in a total picture of visual experience. In the course of executing his programme, Sellars says it is "clear" that there is more to visual experience than conceptual episodes of that distinctive kind; and specifically, that a full picture must also include non-concept-involving episodes of the kind exemplified, in the original description of the mongrel conflation, by sensations of red.[16] But why is this supposed to be clear?

The question is especially pressing when we realize how much goes into what we already have above Sellars's line—how much goes into the idea of a conceptual episode of the relevant kind. Even after we have said not just that a visual experience "contains" a claim but also that the "contained" claim is, so to speak, "evoked" by an ostensibly seen object, Sellars still says it is clear that we need to add something about visual episodes of a non-conceptual

15. Compare the conception of experience I recommended in *Mind and World*, where I wrote of states or episodes in which conceptual capacities are operative in sensibility. I think such a formulation simply captures, in explicitly Kantian language, the way Sellars shows us how to conceive perceptual experience—at any rate what he sees as the above-the-line element in the total truth about perceptual experience. In *Mind and World* (e.g. pp. 140–1) I focused on the below-the-line role that Sellars credits to sensibility, and missed the fact that he has an above-the-line conception of perceptual impressions that matches the conception I was recommending.

16. "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §16 bis. Compare the use of "of course" at §22; and again at §45.

kind. In his view, conceptual episodes of the relevant kind are already, as the conceptual episodes they are, cases of *being under the visual impression* that such-and-such is the case. It is not that as conceptual episodes they are phenomenologically colourless, so that they would need to be associated with visual sensations in order that some complex composed of these conceptual episodes and the associated visual sensations can be recognizably visual. These conceptual episodes are already, as the conceptual episodes they are, shapings of visual consciousness.[17] If we need a below-the-line element in our picture, it is not in order to ensure that the picture depicts states or episodes of visual consciousness.

So why does Sellars think our total account of visual experience needs to include visual sensations as well? About the presence of the corresponding element in the mongrel conflation, he says:

> [This] idea clearly arises in the attempt to explain the facts of sense perception in scientific style. How does it happen that people can have the experience which they describe by saying "It is as though I were seeing a red and triangular physical object" when either there is no physical object there at all, or, if there is, it is neither red nor triangular? The explanation, roughly, posits that in every case in which a person has an experience of this kind, whether veridical or not, he has what is called a 'sensation' or 'impression' 'of a red triangle.'[18]

And in the view that emerges as his own, in the course of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", it is not in this explanatory motivation for its below-the-line element that the mongrel conflation goes wrong, but just in the way it conflates the below-the-line element so motivated with the above-the-line element, episodes that would have to be actualizations of conceptual capacities. Sensations figure in the picture, at least initially, as posited on the ground that they are needed for an explanatory purpose.[19]

17. Contrast, for instance, Robert B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment*. In his chapter 4, Brandom undertakes to give an account of observational claims and observational knowledge while sedulously avoiding any mention of sensory consciousness. Brandom here diverges from something that is quite central to Sellars's thinking.

18. "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §7.

19. See §§21–22; a programmatic passage, and he returns to its programme, and executes it in the rest of the lectures. Much of the work needed is in qualifying the idea of sensations as posited, in order to make room for immediate self-attribution of sensations. This is why I say "at least initially".

What explanatory purpose? In "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", the envisaged explanation is, as we have seen, "in scientific style". And the question that the explanation is to answer seems to be this, to put it in terms that become available during the execution of Sellars's programme: how is it that the *same* claim would be "contained" in, say, each member of a trio of possible experiences of which one is a case of seeing that there is a red and triangular physical object in front of one, one is a case in which something in front of one looks red and triangular although it is not, and one is a case in which it looks to one as if there is something red and triangular in front of one although there is nothing there at all?[20]

If what we still need to ask for is an explanation of the *sameness* of claims "contained" in such a trio of experiences, the request for an explanation apparently assumes that we are already entitled to think of experiences as "containing" some claims or other, independently of the explanation we are asking for. After all, we might say, the idea that experiences "contain" claims is already accounted for in the part of the story that belongs above the line; we have already entitled ourselves to it by talking about actualizations of conceptual capacities, before questions arise about a below-the-line element in the total story. But in that case it is not clear why we should suppose that our explanatory need can be met only by finding a sameness at the level of visual *sensations*—items in consciousness—between the members of such a trio, as opposed to a sameness at the level of, say, patterns of light impinging on retinas. When he elaborates "the attempt to explain the facts of sense perception in scientific style" by positing sensations, Sellars himself says: "The core idea is that the *proximate cause* of such a sensation is only for the most part brought about by the presence in the neighborhood of the perceiver of a red and triangular physical object."[21] In this remark, Sellars is suggesting that we should expect to find a sameness between seeings and ostensible seeings that "contain" the same claims, at a level that he here specifies as that of *proximate causes* of sensations; for instance, at the level of retinal images. But then why not suppose a sameness at this level will do the explanatory work for which Sellars thinks we need to appeal to

20. See §45 for a formulation on these lines. Sellars notes at §22 that it is not strictly accurate to say that the same claim is "contained" in each member of such a trio: the claim "contained" in each of the first two is referential, whereas the claim "contained" in the third is not. This will start to be significant in Essays 2 and 3 below, but it does not matter here, any more than it does at the point where Sellars acknowledges it.

21. §7; emphasis altered.

sensations? Conceptual episodes of the relevant kind are triggered by impacts from the environment on a perceiver's sensory equipment. If the impacts are suitably similar, there is nothing puzzling about a similarity between the conceptual episodes they trigger. And it is not clear why it should seem necessary to describe these suitably similar impacts in terms of non-conceptual impingements *on consciousness* (sensations), as opposed to saying that consciousness comes into play only with conceptual episodes, triggered by non-mentalistically described impacts on sensory equipment. It seems that what Sellars here introduces as proximate causes of sensations can themselves meet the explanatory need, conceived as he seems to conceive it in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". The sensations look like idle wheels.

In *Science and Metaphysics* (p. 18), Sellars explicitly confronts an objection on these lines. And he responds in a way that changes the picture rather radically from the one he seemed to be giving in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". First, he no longer formulates the explanation-seeking question in terms of the sameness of the claims "contained" in different possible experiences—as if we could anyway help ourselves to the idea that experiences "contain" claims at all. The explanation-seeking question now is: how is it that sensory relatedness to the environment takes the form of conceptual episodes, episodes that, in the terminology of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", "contain" claims, at all?[22] And second, the explanatory need that sensations are supposed to satisfy is not a need for scientific understanding, as it seemed to be in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind"; rather, it is *transcendental*.[23] I think these are two ways of putting the same thought: the reason Sellars thinks our complete account of visual experience must include visual sensations—non-conceptual visual episodes—is that he thinks this is the only way we can find it intelligible that there should so much as be the conceptual shaping of sensory consciousness that constitutes the above-the-line element in his account of visual experience.

22. At p. 18, in the course of urging that the explanatory question is not specially about non-veridical experiences, Sellars writes: "even in normal [veridical] cases there is the genuine question, 'Why does the perceiver *conceptually represent* a red (blue, etc.) rectangular (circular, etc.) object in the presence of an object having these qualities?"

23. See p. 9. Sellars says that manifolds of sensation are "postulated on general epistemological or, as Kant would say, transcendental grounds". I think this equation, in the context of the understanding I am offering of "the 'sense impression inference' ", reinforces the impression given by his willingness to equate "intentionality" with "epistemic character" in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind"; he does not conceive epistemology narrowly.

"Transcendental" figures here in a recognizably Kantian sense. The explanation Sellars envisages is transcendental because it is needed, he thinks, in order to vindicate the legitimacy of the apparatus—the talk of experiences as actualizations of conceptual capacities, which as such "contain" claims, but in a distinctively sensory way—in terms of which we enable ourselves to conceive experiences as ostensibly *of objects* at all.[24] Sellars thinks his picture, with sensations playing such a transcendental role, just is the picture Kant would have given if he had been fully clear about the drift of his own thinking.

On this reading of "the 'sense impression inference'" as it figures in *Science and Metaphysics*,[25] visual sensations or sense impressions are not simply an extra part of the truth about visual experiences, over and above the part that deals with the distinctive way in which visual experiences "contain" claims. That is how it might have seemed from "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". But in the view Sellars urges in *Science and Metaphysics*, it is not that visual experiences "contain" claims in their distinctive way, and then there is a simply additional fact about them, that they involve visual sensations. The reason we have to acknowledge the "additional" fact, in Sellars's view, is that only so can we be entitled to have spoken as we did when we gave our above-the-line characterization of visual experiences—when we spoke of visual experiences as "containing" claims, and so having objective purport, in the distinctive way they do.

Sellars's "sense impression inference" is a piece of transcendental philosophy, in the following sense: it is directed towards showing our entitlement to conceive subjective occurrences as possessing objective purport. Notice that that description of transcendental philosophy implies nothing in particular about the nature of the activity. There is a temptation to suppose transcendental philosophy would have to be done at a standpoint external to that of the conceptual goings-on whose objective purport is to be vindicated—a standpoint at which one could contemplate the relation between those conceptual goings-on and their subject matter from sideways on. Sellars's move fits this conception; he undertakes to vindicate the objective purport of conceptual occurrences from outside the conceptual order. I shall be taking issue

24. See, e.g., *Critique of Pure Reason*, A11–12/B25: "I entitle *transcendental* all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*."

25. For the phrase, see p. 17.

with this conception of transcendental philosophy. It is important to see that this is not to take issue with the very idea of transcendental philosophy.[26]

6. When Sellars vindicates the idea of inner episodes, at the culmination of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", he does so in two phases: first for conceptual episodes and then for non-conceptual episodes. Each phase has two stages, and the structure is parallel in each phase. First, there is an account of how concepts of episodes of the relevant kind could have been introduced in the context of a theory; at this stage the episodes are envisaged as attributable, to others or oneself, only inferentially, in a way mediated by the theory. But then, second, there is an account of how a non-inferential, self-attributing ("reporting") employment of the relevant conceptual apparatus could have been introduced, by training people in such a way as to leave them immediately disposed to make self-attributions—"immediately" in the sense that they do not need to advert to the evidence that the theory provides for—on occasions when, according to the theory, those attributions are correct. By the end of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", conceptual episodes, including those that "contain" claims in the distinctive way in which visual experiences do, and non-conceptual sensory, and in particular visual, episodes—impressions or sensations—are on a level, in respect of being available for non-inferential self-attribution.[27]

In *Science and Metaphysics* Sellars modifies this picture in a way that belongs, I think, with the fact that he now explicitly sees "the 'sense impression inference' " as transcendentally driven. He suggests that the visual impressions or sensations that "the 'sense impression inference' " requires us to posit are states of consciousness, but not objects of consciousness; or—the same

26. The idea that transcendental philosophy would have to be done from a special standpoint is implicit at p. 293 of Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, where Rorty writes of the "demand . . . for some transcendental standpoint outside our present set of representations from which we can inspect the relations between those representations and their object". Kant distinguishes "transcendental" and "transcendent" (see, e.g., A296/B352–3). In Rorty's phrase "transcendental" could be replaced by "transcendent". Not that that shows Rorty to be misusing "transcendental"; he is suggesting that transcendental philosophy requires a transcendent standpoint. That is what I think we should dispute. When I wrote disparagingly about Kant's "transcendental story" in *Mind and World* (pp. 41–3, 95–8), I was acquiescing, in a way I now regret, in a reading of parts of Kant's transcendental activity that fits Rorty's phrasing. (I would still disparage the philosophy such a reading finds in Kant.)

27. See §59 for conceptual episodes, and §62 for non-conceptual episodes.

thought differently expressed—that these impressions or sensations are states of consciousness that are not apperceived, where "apperception" can be explained as "non-inferential self-knowledge".[28] He is suggesting, then, that the transcendentally posited visual impressions or sensations figure in visual consciousness in a way that does not amount to their achieving the immediate or non-inferential attributability to oneself that he works to secure at the culmination of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind".

Now it is hard to see how, on Sellarsian or indeed any principles, there could be a class of items in consciousness whose members were permanently and constitutionally incapable of being apperceived, incapable of being directly available for self-attribution. Sellars cannot mean to be suggesting that the visual impressions or sensations that, according to his transcendental "sense impression inference", must figure in episodes of "outer sense" are, simply as the visual impressions or sensations they are, incapable of being objects of consciousness. I think his thought must rather be on the following lines. The visual impressions or sensations in question are not apperceived *when they are playing their transcendental role.* That is not to say that they are not *apperceivable.* It is just to say that if they do get to be apperceived—if they do become objects for consciousness—they can no longer be playing their transcendental role, that of enabling episodes of "outer sense", episodes that "contain" claims about the environment. One can focus one's attention on the manifold of "sheer receptivity" that was, a moment before, enabling one's attention to be directed towards the ostensibly seen environment. But in doing so—in bringing it within the scope of one's apperception—one ensures that it ceases to perform that function.

I think this thought strengthens Sellars's position by immunizing it against a certain objection. If it were right to endorse Sellars's "sense impression inference", it would be a good idea to construe its conclusion in this way. Considering only "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", I used to think one could complain that the below-the-line items that figure in Sellars's picture of visual experience would be opaque; not something through which the environment could intelligibly be revealed to us, but at best something on the basis of which, if we knew enough about how features of the environment cause these affections of our sensory capacities, we could infer conclusions about the environment.[29] In "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", the

28. *Science and Metaphysics,* pp. 10, 11. For the gloss on "apperception", see p. 72.
29. See *Mind and World,* p. 145.

only way Sellars considers for something to be in consciousness is for it to be an object of consciousness. This leaves it seeming that the sensations that are part of Sellars's picture of perceptual experience would have to be objects of consciousness, on pain of not figuring in consciousness at all. If that were not what Sellars wants, why does he need to work at securing that they can be objects of consciousness, as he does at the culmination of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind"? And if we try to make out that they are objects of consciousness, it does seem that they would engross the attention, and prevent it from fixing itself—except indirectly, through inference—on environmental objects, although it was perception of environmental objects that we were supposed to be trying to make intelligible.

But the picture Sellars gives in *Science and Metaphysics* is immune to any such objection. Now Sellars can concede that if a manifold of visual sensations is figuring as an object for its subject's consciousness, the subject's attention can no longer pass through it to features of the environment directly, but at best inferentially. But this leaves unthreatened the idea that such a manifold is transcendentally required for perceptual awareness of the environment. Sellars is now equipped to say that the transcendentally required manifold, when it is doing its transcendental job, figures in consciousness not as an object, in which case it would indeed prevent the free passage of the subject's attention to the environment, but precisely as that through which the subject's attention is directed without hindrance to features of the ostensibly seen environment. The idea is that attention, which involves apperception, can be directed either at the ostensibly seen environment or at the visual sensations that were enabling the environment to be ostensibly seen, but not both; if the attention is directed at the sensations, they can no longer be enabling the ostensible seeing of environmental objects.

This complication, however, does not undermine the fact that a Sellarsian account of the non-inferential self-attribution of visual sensations—when it does occur, as it surely can—will have the structure established in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". The concepts under which visual sensations are apperceived when they are—which is not when they are enabling episodes of "outer sense"—will be concepts whose original home is a transcendentally required theory concerning how manifolds of sensations enable episodes of "outer sense". When visual sensations become objects for consciousness, it will be under concepts whose original function is to connect these episodes, in a theory-mediated way, with the claim-"containing" character of visual experiences.

Some people think we can vindicate a role for sensations in the total picture of visual experience on the basis of a theoretically innocent introspection. The idea is that sensational properties are introspectively available in any case, whatever we say about what figures, in this conception, as the subsequent question how, if at all, the sensational properties of experiences relate to their claim-"containing" character. I have ignored this conception, because it makes no contact with Sellars's thinking.[30]

It is important not to be misled by the fact that Sellars uses the word "impression" both in the phrase "being under the visual impression that . . .", which characterizes a kind of conceptual episode, and for the below-the-line element in his picture of perceptual experience.[31] Conceptual episodes that belong to the kind, being under the visual impression that . . . , are, simply as conceptual episodes, available for apperception when they occur.[32]

30. See, e.g., chapter 1 of Christopher Peacocke, *Sense and Content*. Peacocke says the sensational properties of visual experience are arrayed in a two-dimensional visual field, and he does not suggest that "two-dimensional" here means anything different from what it might mean in describing, say, a surface in the environment. By Sellars's lights this is naive; for Sellars the spatiality of the arrangement of visual sensations is not the spatiality of "outer" configurations, but something that needs to be understood by analogical extension from it, in a sophisticated exercise of concept-formation.

Even on their own terms, I think Peacocke's phenomenological arguments are unconvincing, but I shall not argue this here. Perhaps the thinness of the supposedly independent phenomenological considerations reveals that Peacocke's conception of what a supposedly innocent introspection would yield is really controlled by an implicit acceptance of something like Sellars's transcendental thought.

There is another putative ground for supposing that visual experiences must have a sensational aspect, equally non-Sellarsian, which I shall also not discuss in these essays. This is the thought that there must be a two-dimensional sensational array to serve as a vehicle for the representational content of a visual experience, somewhat as an arrangement of pigment on a surface is a vehicle for the representational content of a picture.

31. See *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 19, where Sellars distinguishes "an impression of a red rectangle" from "an impression of a man lurking in the corner". The latter would, as he says, be "a conceptual state" (or episode); one of the kind identified at p. 14, the kind "being under the visual impression that . . .".

32. This is not to say that they are actually apperceived. The "I think" of apperception must be *able* to accompany all my representations (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B131), which is not to say that it actually accompanies them. But conceptual representations are available for apperception in a way that differs from that in which, in a plausibly Sellarsian picture, perceptual sensations are; apperceiving the latter would require equipping oneself with something new, a conceptual representation involving concepts whose primary home is the transcendental theory of how conceptual representations of outer reality are guided by manifolds of "sheer receptivity".

Impressions in the other sense, in contrast, can be apperceived only when they are not serving as the below-the-line element in the total truth about some perceptual experiences.

The fact that the same word naturally acquires these two uses is perhaps suggestive about the shape of Sellars's picture. When a conceptual episode is apperceived as belonging to the kind, being under the visual impression that . . . , what is apperceptively available, according to Sellars's picture, is *that* the flow of one's conceptual representations, of the sort involved in normal perceptual activity, is being guided into "containing" the relevant claim by the flow of one's impressions in the below-the-line sense, and perhaps this is why "being under the visual impression that . . ." is an appropriate specification of the kind to which the conceptual representation apperceivably belongs. But apperception does not embrace the specifics of *how* this guidance is effected; if the formerly guiding items get to be apperceived, they can no longer be performing their guiding function.[33]

7. Sellars thinks this picture is essentially the one Kant is aiming at, although he has to acknowledge that it is not to be found adequately set out on Kant's pages. For one thing, Kant "tends to restrict the term 'consciousness' to apperceiving and the apperceived as such", which makes it difficult to find in Kant the idea that impressions or sensations can figure in consciousness without being apperceived.[34] A more substantial problem is that Sellars has to find Kant seriously confused in his thesis that space is the form of outer sense.[35] One is bound to wonder whether Sellars has Kant wrong. And, since Sellars's reading of Kant is, perfectly properly, shaped by Sellars's own conviction about how we should conceive perceptual experience, that is inextricably bound up with wondering whether Sellars is mistaken in thinking that sound philosophy requires impressions or sensations to be credited with the role he attributes to them. These are my questions for the next of these three essays.

33. For the image of guiding, see *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 16.

34. See *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 11.

35. See *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 8: "the idea that Space is the form of outer sense is incoherent."

ESSAY 2

The Logical Form of an Intuition

1. In the first of these three essays, I elicited from Sellars a picture of the intentionality of perceptual experience—visual experience, to stay with the case Sellars mostly concentrates on.

Sellars's picture has elements both above and below a line that importantly shapes his thinking. The line separates characterizations of occurrences in people's lives that need to be understood in terms of the actualization of conceptual capacities from characterizations that do not need to be understood in those terms.

Above the line in a Sellarsian picture of a visual experience, there is a conceptual episode of a distinctive kind. Just by virtue of being a conceptual episode, such an episode "contains" a claim about the environment. But episodes of this kind are differentiated from conceptual episodes of other kinds in that they "contain" their claims in a distinctive way: as ostensibly required from or impressed on their subject by an ostensibly seen object.

Below the line in a Sellarsian picture of a visual experience, there is a complex or manifold of visual sensations, non-concept-involving visual episodes or states. Why does Sellars think the picture has to include this element as well as conceptual episodes of the relevant kind? Not to ensure that the picture respects phenomenological facts—as if there would be nothing sensory, let alone visual, about the episodes that are in view before we advert to this below-the-line element. On the contrary, the above-the-line episodes that figure in Sellars's picture of visual experience are, as conceptual episodes of their special kind, already conceived as conceptual shapings of sensory, and in particular visual, consciousness. Sellars's thought is rather this: it is for transcendental reasons that we need to acknowledge the below-the-line element in the picture. The idea is that we are entitled to talk of conceptual episodes in which claims are ostensibly visually

impressed on subjects—the above-the-line element in the picture—only because we can see the flow of such conceptual representations as guided by manifolds of sensations; non-concept-involving episodes or states in sensory, and specifically visual, consciousness.

Sellars takes this picture to be fundamentally Kantian, although he complains that Kant failed to make the necessary distinction clear even to himself. As I suggested at the end of Essay 1, this invites us to consider a different exegetical possibility. Perhaps the idea that perception involves a flow of conceptual representations guided by manifolds of "sheer receptivity" is not Kantian at all. I am going to urge that that is indeed so; the idea is foisted on Kant by Sellars, even with his eyes open to the price, which is that he needs to accuse Kant of confusion. Sellars is willing to pay the price, because he is convinced that the idea is required for a satisfactory execution of Kant's project. In this essay and the next I am going to urge that Sellars is wrong about that, too. I want to suggest that, so far from helping to make us comfortable with the intentionality of perception, and thereby contributing towards making us comfortable with intentionality in general, the below-the-line element in Sellars's picture actually stands in the way of a useful conception of how perception and thought are directed towards objects—one we can find, at least in germ, in Kant, once we discard Sellars's interpretation of the transcendental role Kant credits to sensibility.

2. Sellars is firm in his conviction that what Kant usually calls "intuitions" are representations of individuals that already involve the understanding, the faculty associated with concepts. He suggests that an intuition on this interpretation of the term should be taken to represent an individual as a *this-such*.[1] I think this is very helpful, and I am going to exploit it. In an intuition on this interpretation of the term, sensibility and understanding are both involved. We might describe intuitions on this interpretation as shapings of sensory consciousness by the understanding—to echo the wording I used in connection with Sellars's conception of the conceptual episodes, as such "containing" claims, that figure above the line in the picture of perceptual experience he gives in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind".

1. See *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 3: "On this model, which I take to be, on the whole, the correct interpretation, intuitions would be representations of *thises* and would be conceptual in that peculiar way in which to represent something as a *this* is conceptual." This is elaborated at pp. 4–7, where Sellars suggests that representing something as a *this* is representing it as a *this-such*.

But as I have said, Sellars is convinced that Kant also needs to speak about sensibility in a way that belongs below his line, as the talk of sensory consciousness with which we can gloss this first notion of intuition does not, because in intuitions, on this first interpretation, sensory consciousness is already shaped by the faculty of concepts. Sellars thinks the transcendental role that Kant needs sensibility to play consists in its supplying manifolds of sensory items that are not shaped by the understanding, to guide the flow of conceptual representations in perception. So Sellars thinks Kant needs the word "intuition"—his most general term for sensibility in operation—to apply also to occurrences in which the understanding, the faculty of concepts, is not involved: "We seem . . . to be led to a distinction between intuitions which do and intuitions which do not involve something over and above sheer receptivity."[2]

Sellars sees it as a failure on Kant's part that he does not distinguish these two interpretations of "intuition". And Sellars sees this failure as an implicit counterpart to the mongrel conflation that, in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", he finds in the classical concept of a sense datum:

> Kant's use of the term 'intuition', in connection with human knowledge, blurs the distinction between a special sub-class of *conceptual* representations of individuals which, though in some sense a function of receptivity, belong to a framework which is no sense prior to but essentially includes general concepts, and a radically different kind of representation of an individual which belongs to sheer receptivity and is in no sense conceptual.[3]

This is just like the mongrel conflation: a failure to separate items that belong above and below Sellars's line.

The fact that Sellars finds this implicit conflation in Kant helps to account for some features of the above-the-line notion of intuitions that he finds in Kant. In Sellars's reading, Kant's above-the-line notion of intuitions is distorted, in some of its applications, by the implicit conflation with a below-the-line notion.

An intuition on the above-the-line interpretation represents its object as a *this-such*. For instance, a visual intuition might represent its object as *this cube*. Now what does the word "cube" contribute to such a specification of the content of an intuition? According to Sellars, Kant thinks it can be

2. *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 4; see also p. 7 (§17).

3. *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 7; compare "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §7.

something prior to the concept of a cube, as that concept might figure in a judgment that something is a cube. In Sellars's reading, Kant thinks the concept of a cube—the concept that figures predicatively in such a judgment—is derived, by an analytic activity of the understanding, from something that is not yet that concept, figuring in intuitions that, even though they do not involve that concept, are nevertheless enabled to represent their object as *this cube* by a synthetic operation of the understanding functioning in the guise of the productive imagination.[4]

On this view, *cube* in a representation of an object as *this cube* can be prior to *cube* in a judgment that something *is a cube*. As Sellars remarks, this suggestion of a priority is "puzzling".[5] But it might seem to make sense in the context of the counterpart Sellars finds in Kant to the mongrel conflation of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". The idea Sellars finds in Kant is that some intuitions are only proto-conceptual. This can be seen as a response to the pressure—*ex hypothesi* not properly understood by Sellars's Kant, who is implicitly entangled in the mongrel conflation—to have the mongrel notion of an intuition provide for an idea that can in fact become clear only when the conflation is unmasked; only as the idea of an episode that is not conceptual at all.

Sellars says: "Kant's thesis . . . requires the existence of completely determinate 'basic' perceptual this-suches."[6] This fits the view that Kant thinks concepts proper, at least at a basic level, are derived by abstraction from representations of *this-suches* that are only proto-conceptual. Taking Kant's thinking to be distorted by an implicit commitment to the mongrel conflation fits with finding in Kant, as Sellars does, a conception of how the most basic empirical concepts are formed that is in a certain sense abstractionist.[7]

4. See *Science and Metaphysics*, pp. 4–7.

5. *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 5.

6. *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 7.

7. The abstractionism is of a peculiar kind. Elsewhere (e.g., "Phenomenalism", p. 90) Sellars credits Kant with seeing that concepts cannot be abstractively derived from *sensation*, in a process we would have to picture in terms of content being transferred into the intellect "as Jack Horner transferred the plum" (compare *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 20). In the position he attributes to Kant in *Science and Metaphysics*, it is not sensation from which concepts are abstractively derived, but intuitions conceived as already shaped by the understanding. But the position still violates a basic Sellarsian conviction, that the capacity to experience things as thus-and-so should be seen as coeval with the capacity to judge that they are thus-and-so.

3. On Sellars's view of the requirements for a properly Kantian position, the Transcendental Aesthetic should have dealt with forms exemplified in manifolds of intuition on the second interpretation of the term—manifolds of sensory impressions that are prior to any operations of the understanding, and that transcendentally subserve intuition on the first interpretation of the term, according to which intuitions involve the understanding as well as sensibility. Kant's topic in the Aesthetic, in so far as the Aesthetic bears on "outer sense", should have been a form exemplified in the manifolds of "sheer receptivity" that transcendentally enable outwardly directed episodes in which the understanding is also operative. Kant says the form of outer sense is space. If his topic had been what Sellars thinks it should have been, Kant would have had to mean that space informs the below-the-line element in the transcendental picture of outer awareness as a shaping of sensory consciousness by the understanding. But—as Sellars complains—space, as Kant considers it in the Aesthetic, is a form of outer intuitability on the first interpretation, a form of availability to intuition on the interpretation according to which intuition already involves the understanding. It is a form in accordance with which the *this-suches* that are objects of outer intuition on the first interpretation of the term, episodes of sensory consciousness shaped by the understanding, are given to the subjects of those episodes. That is: what space informs is above the line, and the Aesthetic fails to discuss what it should have discussed, a form that does its informing work below the line.[8]

In making this complaint, Sellars ignores a certain reading of how the Aesthetic fits in the overall scheme of the *Critique*. On this reading, we are supposed to account for the outwardness of outer sense by invoking space as an autonomous form of sensibility, intelligible independently of any involvement on the part of the understanding. When Kant then brings the understanding into play, in the Transcendental Analytic, the outwardness that, on this reading, the Aesthetic has already provided for takes on a new form, as directedness towards determinate *objects*. On this reading, space as the Aesthetic considers it would after all do its informing work below

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Largely below the surface in *Science and Metaphysics* is a detailed picture of how the productive imagination generates intuitions out of (strictly) sensory material, which helps account for the view of concept-formation Sellars attributes to Kant. See Sellars's paper "The Role of the Imagination in Kant's Theory of Experience". I cannot go into this here.

8. See *Science and Metaphysics*, pp. 8, 28–30.

something corresponding to Sellars's line, with operations of the understanding above the line.

Sellars's complaint leaves no room for this reading. The complaint implies that as he reads Kant, the idea that space informs an outward directedness of subjectivity cannot be understood independently of the idea that objects are available to outer intuition on the first interpretation of the term, according to which intuitions are shapings of sensibility by the understanding. That is: space as the Aesthetic considers it, under the title of the form of outer sense, is not meant to be fully intelligible until we have the Analytic as well as the Aesthetic. For Sellars, space as an autonomous form of "sense as such"—what Kant, he thinks, should have concerned himself with—would have to be, not an already outer matrix or arena waiting, as it were, to be determinately populated with objects, but a form of inner states or episodes. Our comprehension of it would have to be constructed by analogical extension from our comprehension of space as the outer matrix in which intuitions on the first interpretation, shapings of sensibility by the understanding, locate objects.[9]

I think Sellars here shows a fine understanding of how Kant intends the thesis that space is the form of outer sense, and a fine understanding of the possibilities for making sense of spatiality as the matrix in which outer objects are given to us. The reading Sellars ignores does not fit Kant, and it does not make philosophical sense.[10] What I dissent from in Sellars is his conviction that Kant's failure to discuss a formedness of "sense as such",

9. See *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 29. The Appendix on inner sense (pp. 230–8) offers a parallel move with respect to time as the form of inner sense.

10. I have to be dogmatic here. On the philosophical question, I simply follow Sellars. On the question of fit with Kant (on which I am also following Sellars, though disagreeing with him over whether what he finds in Kant is a ground for complaint), see the footnote at B160. Kant there says that in the Aesthetic he represented the formal intuition, space, "as belonging merely to sensibility", but that was misleading; it does indeed "precede any concept", but it presupposes an operation of the understanding. I suppose a defender of the reading I am following Sellars in setting aside might claim that the form of outer intuition, which Kant here distinguishes from the formal intuition, could still, for all that the footnote says, be a topic for an autonomous inquiry into sensibility considered in abstraction from the understanding. But it is hard to see how spatiality, as the form of outer intuition, could be separated from the possibility of the "formal intuition", space itself as an object of intuition. And if it cannot, the footnote implicitly instructs us not to suppose that the thesis that space is the form of outer sense is meant to be intelligible independently of the Analytic.

independent of any involvement on the part of the understanding, is a ground for complaint.

Sellars's complaint is that "the characteristics of the representations of receptivity as such, which is what should *properly* be meant by the forms of sensibility, are never adequately discussed, and the so-called forms of sensibility become ever more clearly, as the argument of the *Critique* proceeds, forms of conceptual representations".[11] "Never adequately discussed" seems an understatement; so far as I can see, Kant never so much as mentions what Sellars thinks he should have meant by the forms of sensibility. It is perhaps implicit in the Aesthetic that Kant thinks of sensation as the matter of empirical intuition (A20/B34), and thereafter he occasionally speaks of sensation as the matter of perception or of empirical knowledge (e.g., A42/B59–60; A167/B209). But he never suggests that this matter has its *own* form as the matter it is, independently of its being formed into intuitions, perceptions, and empirical knowledge in the understanding-involving way that, as Sellars says, becomes increasingly clearly Kant's concern as the *Critique* unfolds.[12]

Sellars is convinced that a properly Kantian position requires forms of sense as such, forms of "sheer receptivity". Correctly in my view, he takes it that the Aesthetic does not consider such a topic. So something that should, he thinks, be fundamental to Kant's position is absent from the appropriate place in Kant's own presentation of it. (This conviction is reflected also in the other peculiarities Sellars finds in Kant's thinking: the counterpart to the mongrel conflation, and the "puzzling" abstractionist view of concept-formation.) One is bound to wonder whether Kant can have so egregiously missed what is required for his own thinking. Perhaps a properly Kantian conception of outer sense needs no form of sense as "sheer receptivity", but only space in the role that Sellars, rightly in my view, takes Kant to attribute to it: as the form of outer intuitability on the interpretation according to which intuition involves the understanding as well as sensibility. That is: perhaps a below-the-line conception of sensibility need not have the transcendental role that Sellars credits to it. That is what I am going to urge.

4. Sellars quotes from a passage in the section of the *Critique* headed "The Clue to the Discovery of All Pure Concepts of the Understanding" (the

11. *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 30.

12. Compare how one might think of bronze, say, as having its own form, independently of the forming of bits of it into statues or spearheads.

so-called Metaphysical Deduction), where Kant says: "The same function which gives unity to the various representations *in a judgment* also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations *in an intuition*" (A79/B104–5).[13] But as I have noted, Sellars reads Kant as holding that when we take an intuition to represent its object as a *this-such*, what goes in place of "such", at least in the case of intuitions at a certain basic level, need not yet be an expression of the corresponding concept as it might figure predicatively in a judgment. This means, I think, that Sellars cannot give the remark from the "Clue" its full weight.

Here I need to hark back to something I said in the first of these three essays, when I was trying to give the flavour of the Kantian idea that conceptual capacities have their paradigmatic actualization in judgment. If one judges, say, that there is a red cube in front of one, one makes a joint exercise of a multiplicity of conceptual capacities, including at least a capacity that would also be exercised in judging that there is a red pyramid in front of one and a capacity that would also be exercised in judging that there is a blue cube in front of one. And this joint exercise of these capacities is not simply their being exercised in a single act of judgment. That would be equally true of a judgment that there is a red pyramid and a blue cube in front of one. The capacities have to be exercised with the right togetherness. If the judgment is to be that there is a red cube in front of one, the two capacities I have singled out have to be exercised with a togetherness that is a counterpart to the "logical" togetherness of "red" and "cube" in the linguistic expression of the judgment, "There is a red cube in front of me".

We can connect this with the remark from the "Clue". This analogical specification of the mode of togetherness with which the two capacities I have singled out have to be exercised, if one is to be judging that there is a red cube in front of one, is a partial specification of the function that gives unity to the various representations in a judgment with that content, to put things in Kant's way.

In the first of these three essays, I used this conception of judgment as the basis for a parallel conception of the way in which perceptual, and specifically visual, experiences "contain" claims, as Sellars puts it in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". An ostensible seeing that there is a red cube in front of one would be an actualization of the *same* conceptual capacities that would be exercised in judging that there is a red cube in front of one,

13. For Sellars's citation, see *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 4.

with the *same* togetherness. This captures the fact that such an ostensible seeing would "contain" a claim whose content would be the same as that of the corresponding judgment.

As actualizations of conceptual capacities with the appropriate togetherness, the judgment and the ostensible seeing would be alike. They would differ only in the way in which the relevant conceptual capacities are actualized. In the judgment, there would be a free responsible exercise of the conceptual capacities; in the ostensible seeing, they would be involuntarily drawn into operation under ostensible necessitation from an ostensibly seen object.

But since the two kinds of conceptual episodes are alike in respect of being actualizations of the appropriate conceptual capacities with the appropriate togetherness, the "logical" point of the remark from the "Clue" applies to ostensible seeings just as it applies to judgments. Following Sellars's lead, I have exploited an analogy between judging and claiming, in order to offer a partial specification of the function that gives unity to the various representations in a judgment that there is a red cube in front of one: a conceptual capacity corresponding to "red" and a conceptual capacity corresponding to "cube" have to be exercised with a togetherness corresponding to the togetherness of "red" and "cube" in "There is a red cube in front of me". Now the same specification is equally and by the same token a partial specification of the function that gives unity to the various representations in an ostensible seeing that there is a red cube in front of one. We can recast the remark from the "Clue" to say: the function that gives unity to the various representations in an ostensible seeing is the same as the function that gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations in an intuition.

Any ostensible seeing will have more specificity to its content than just that there is a red cube in front of one, even if its content includes that.[14] For my purposes here, I can ignore much of what makes this true. But it matters for my purposes that in an ostensible seeing whose content can be partly specified as that there is a red cube in front of one, the apparent red cube will be *placed* more determinately than just somewhere or other in front of one. From the standpoint of the subject of such an ostensible seeing, its content will be expressible by saying something like "There is a red cube *there*". Here we have to imagine a use of "there" that has a determinate significance by virtue of the subject's directing it in a specific way at the ostensible layout of the ostensibly seen environment. The same goes for

14. See "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §22.

a counterpart to such a use of "there" in a non-overt conceptual occurrence that is to be understood on the model of making a claim by uttering those words (such as an ostensible seeing would be in the picture Sellars gives in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind").[15]

Imagine, then, an ostensible seeing whose content is (in part) that there is a red cube *there*. (To imagine an ostensible seeing in these terms, we have to imagine it from the subject's point of view.) And now suppose this ostensible seeing is not a merely ostensible seeing, but a seeing. In that case there *is* a red cube at the position the subject can mean by this kind of use of "there" in an overt expression of the content of the experience in question, or by its counterpart in the non-overt conceptual occurrence that the experience is. In the conceptual occurrence that the experience is, the red cube that there actually is, given that the experience is a seeing, is itself directly in the subject's view. It is in the subject's view as *that red cube*. We can put it like that if we imagine ourselves into the subject's point of view; we have to imagine this use of "that" as having a determinate significance by virtue of the same directedness at the (ostensible) layout of the (ostensibly) seen environment that we imagined as giving "there" a determinate significance, when we imagined "there" being used in specifying the content of the occurrence considered as an ostensible seeing that . . . .

What I have arrived at here is a conception of a kind of representation (or at any rate *Vorstellung*) of an object that fits a standard Kantian characterization of intuitions: immediate sensible representations of objects.[16] The conception coheres with Sellars's insistence that intuitions in Kant's dominant sense belong above the line. "Immediate" in a characterization of intuitions on these lines does not mean "not involving the understanding"; the intuitions that this characterization fits are not intuitions in the sense Sellars thinks Kant also needs, operations of "sheer receptivity". Sellars offers a different and better gloss on "immediate" by urging that intuitions in the dominant Kantian sense are representations of *thises* (or *thats*); more fully, of *this-suches* (or *that-suches*), which makes it unavoidably clear that even though they are immediately of objects, such representations already involve the understanding.[17] The remark from the "Clue" points to how we

15. Compare the notion of *conversio ad phantasmata* that Geach borrows from Aquinas in *Mental Acts*, pp. 65, 72, 74.

16. See, e.g., A19/B33.

17. Compare *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 3.

can conceive intuitions in this sense as actualizations of conceptual capacities with a suitable "logical" togetherness.

An ostensible seeing is an actualization of conceptual capacities with a specific "logical" togetherness. What makes it an ostensible seeing, as opposed to a conceptual episode of some other kind, for instance a judgment, is that this actualization of conceptual capacities is a conceptual shaping of sensory, and in particular visual, consciousness. The remark from the "Clue" says that an intuition is characterized by the same "logical" togetherness. If an ostensible seeing is a seeing, then the conceptual shaping of visual consciousness that constitutes it, those very conceptual capacities actualized in visual consciousness with that very "logical" togetherness, constitute—looked at, as it were, from a different angle—an intuition: an immediate presentness of an object to sense. A seeing that . . . is a seeing *of an object*, at least if its content is of the sort that figures in the example I have been working with. To apply what Kant says in the "Clue" to my example: the function that gives unity to the various representations in a judgment whose content we can imagine capturing from the subject's viewpoint as that there is a red cube *there* (the function that unites the various conceptual capacities exercised in such a judgment), or (this comes to the same thing) the function that gives unity to the various representations in an ostensible seeing with that same content (the function that unites the various conceptual capacities actualized in such an ostensible seeing), is the same function that—in the sort of case in which there *is* an intuition; that is, in the sort of case in which the ostensible seeing is a seeing—gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations in an intuition of *the red cube there* or *that red cube*, to speak again from an imagined occupation of the subject's viewpoint.[18]

Here the fact that, say, "cube" figures in a specification of the content of an intuition—the intuition represents its object as that red *cube*—reflects the

18. How can something describable as a seeing that there is a red cube *there*, an intuition of *that* red cube, be a conceptual episode, given the characteristic Kantian association of concepts with generality (see, e.g., A320/B377)? There is no problem in the idea of a general conceptual capacity, an actualization of which is indicated by the fact that a particular experience can be described in those terms (where the description indeed exploits the particularity of a subject's experiential situation). This capacity (a capacity to mean determinate places by utterances of "there" or non-overt counterparts, and to mean determinate objects by utterances of "that . . ." or non-overt counterparts) is not restricted to the particular actualization of it we are imagining.

fact that for one to be the subject of such an intuition is in part for there to be actualized in one's sensory consciousness the very same *conceptual* capacity—possession of the concept of a cube—whose exercise would partly determine the predicative element in the content of a judgment whose content we could specify, with that imagined occupancy of the subject's viewpoint, in the form "That is a red cube". In fact the actualization of the relevant conceptual capacity in the intuition *is* an actualization of it in a conceptual occurrence whose content is, so to speak, judgment-shaped, namely a seeing (a seeing that . . .) whose content is that there is a red cube *there*—as we can put it with the same imagined occupancy of the subject's viewpoint. This seeing that . . . , in describing which we explicitly place an expression for the concept in question in a predicative position, is the very same conceptual occurrence—an actualization of the same conceptual capacities with the same "logical" togetherness—as the intuition.

So when we say that an intuition represents its object as a cube, the word "cube" does not signal a merely proto-conceptual contribution of the understanding to the constitution of the intuition, as it can in Sellars's Kant. Sellars insists, rightly in my view, that intuitions in the dominant Kantian sense already involve the understanding. I have been expressing this by speaking of intuitions not as *conceptual* shapings of sensory consciousness but as shapings of sensory consciousness *by the understanding*. That was to make room for the fact that in Sellars's reading, although the understanding, the faculty of concepts, is operative in the constitution of intuitions, concepts proper are not, at least in the case of intuitions at a certain basic level. But with the different reading I have arrived at, I can drop the circumlocution, and speak of intuitions, just like seeings that . . . , simply as *conceptual* shapings of sensory consciousness. Visual intuitions *of objects* simply are seeings that . . . , looked at as it were from a different angle. There is no opening here into the abstractionist picture of the formation of basic empirical concepts that Sellars finds in Kant.

In the passage in the "Clue", Kant speaks of "the mere synthesis of various representations" in an intuition. The insertion of "mere synthesis" implicitly differentiates the unity of an intuition from the unity of a judgment. It is plausible that this is connected with a passage Sellars also quotes, from just before the remark I have been considering, in which Kant speaks of synthesis as "the mere result of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul" (A78/B103). Sellars might cite this in support of his view that Kant envisages intuitions that are only proto-conceptual,

even though they already involve the synthetic powers of the understanding, so that they can be a source from which concepts proper can be derived. But these remarks of Kant's are perfectly intelligible on the different reading I am giving. The point is simply that it does not take cognitive work for objects to come into view for us. "Mere synthesis" just happens; it is not our doing, unlike making judgments, deciding what to think about something. This is quite consistent with holding that objects come into view for us in actualizations of capacities that are fully conceptual, capacities whose paradigmatic mode of actualization is in the exercise of cognitive responsibility that judging is.

5. I am following Sellars in taking it that we can express the content of a Kantian intuition by a phrase such as "that red cube". We might suppose that conceptual occurrences whose content can be given like that, with a phrase that is less than a whole sentence, are essentially potential ingredients in some more extensive conceptual goings-on—say, in the judgment that that red cube is too big to fit in the box. (As before, in order to make sense of this use of "that", we have to imagine ourselves into the viewpoint of the subject of a specific case of the kind of conceptual occurrences in question.)

I do not want to dispute this suggestion. But the point that matters for my purposes is that these conceptual occurrences, whose content we can express with mere phrases, can also be conceived in a way that equips them—the very same conceptual occurrences—with judgment-shaped contents: specifically, for my example, the judgeable content that there is a red cube *there*. (Again, we have to imagine ourselves into the subject's viewpoint in order to deal with this use of "there".) The other thought—that intuitional content is essentially a fragment of judgmental content—would imply that the ability to have objects come into view for one is essentially dependent on the ability to make judgments, and that is indeed an implication of the position I am finding in Kant. But the point I am stressing yields not just that but also something more radical: that an actualization of the capacity to have objects come into one's view is itself already an actualization of the capacity to have occur in one's life occurrences with the sort of content that judgments have, not just an element in such an actualization.

So far as that goes, we might suppose the capacity to be a subject of actualizations of conceptual capacities with judgmental content just happens to

be, but might not have been, sometimes actualized in the shape of intuitions: occurrences in which objects come into view, literally in the case of visual intuitions. But this cannot be Kant's view; that would fly in the face of his insistence that intuitions are indispensable if thought is to be contentful at all.[19] Kant's view must rather be something like this: the very idea of a conceptual repertoire is the idea of a system of capacities that allows, as it were at the ground level, for actualizations in which objects are immediately present to the subject.

This suggests a new twist to the non-traditional empiricism that, in Essay 1, I found in Sellars's discussion of the metaphor of foundations of knowledge, in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". Sellars's picture there is already deeply Kantian, and we can now see how to make it even more so.

As I pointed out, Sellars does not dispute the empiricist thought that everything else in a world view depends on perceptual knowledge, in a logical dimension in which we are moving when we relate beliefs to their credentials. He transforms the empiricist picture by adding another logical dimension in which a different kind of dependency is traceable in the opposite direction. What he insists is that the very idea of perceptual knowledge, and more generally the very idea that perceptual experiences, whether knowledge-yielding or not, "contain" claims, so that they can be so much as putatively knowledge-yielding, depend in this other logical dimension on the fact that the claims "contained" in perceptual experiences have their places in a world view. This dependence of foundations, now at best awkwardly so called, on superstructure is a transcendental matter. The claim is that we can intelligibly credit perceptual experiences with objective purport only in virtue of how the conceptual apparatus that constitutes their objective purport fits into the world view that is, in the other logical dimension, grounded on the deliverances of experience. But the downward dependence, the dependence of superstructure on foundations, is still narrowly epistemological.

The new twist is that, with the conception of Kantian intuitions that I am urging, we can put into the picture a downward dependence that is not narrowly epistemological but, like the upward dependence that is already in Sellars's picture, transcendental, a matter of requirements for it to be intelligible that the picture depicts directedness at objective reality at all. Kant

19. See, e.g., A50–2/B74–6.

implies that thought without intuitions would be empty.[20] We can now see that his point is not—at least not in the first instance—to insist that concepts must be capable of figuring in, say, judgments that can be *grounded* in experiences (which, to play this role, would have to be conceived as possessing judgeable content, for instance as seeings that . . .). The transcendental requirement is that it must be intelligible that conceptual activity has a *subject matter*. And Kant's thought is that this is intelligible only because we can see how the very idea of a conceptual repertoire provides for conceptual states or episodes in which a subject matter for conceptual activity is sensibly present, plainly in view in actualizations of capacities that belong to the repertoire.[21]

Not, of course, that we cannot direct thought at objects that we are unable to bring into view, perhaps because they are too small or too far away. But thought so directed is carried to its object, so to speak, by theory. The ultimate credentials of theory must lie in experience. And we can make sense of the idea, which is so far epistemological in the narrow sense, that the ultimate credentials for theory lie in experience—we can make sense of experience as made up of, for instance, seeings that . . .—only because we can make sense of experience as bringing objects into view. Concepts, which make thought what it is, can intelligibly be what they are—thought can intelligibly be of the objective at all—only because we can see how there can be conceptual occurrences in which objects are manifestly there for thinkers, immediately present to their conceptually shaped sensory consciousness. But equally, there can intelligibly be such conceptual occurrences only because we can see how thought can also be related to its subject matter in a way that is mediated by theory; this is Sellars's upward dependence applied to the relation between intuitions and world view.

That last remark opens into a topic I have so far passed over in silence. Kant's "Clue" is only a clue, to the discovery of the so-called pure concepts of the understanding; when he makes the remark I have been exploiting, we are still waiting for the transcendental deduction of the "pure concepts".

20. This is implicit in the remark "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (A51/B76).

21. This corrects the picture I gave, meaning it to be Kantian, in *Mind and World*. There I took it that "object", in the Kantian idea that intuitions are of objects, just meant "objective somewhat", including, for instance, states of affairs. I now think it means something much closer to what "object" means in the standard translations of Frege.

So even supposing I am on the right track in the conception of intuitions I have elicited from the "Clue", Kant's thought must be that work still needs to be done for us to be entitled to the idea of an immediate presentness of objects to subjects in intuition. We still need to understand how the categories make experience possible.

This is a large and complex matter, which I cannot go into in these essays. (So far as I can see, the categories are in a similar way not explicitly present in the parallel region of Sellars's partial reading of Kant, which is what I am aiming to exploit and improve on.)[22] However, what I have already said yields a hint as to the direction in which this topic lies from the position we have reached. I have found a conception of intuitions suggested in the "Clue", and I have been importing that conception of intuitions into a variant of the picture Sellars gives when he reflects on the metaphor of foundations. In doing that, I have been tacitly pointing to a place for something on the lines of the categories. In order to be entitled to see conceptual activity as having objective purport, we have to see how actualizations of conceptual capacities include intuitions. But—the new version of Sellars's upward dependence—we can make sense of objects coming into view in intuitions only because we can see how objects fit into a view of the world. Something like the categories, and the principles Kant connects with them, would figure in giving substance to that thought.[23]

6. Sellars thinks the transcendental role of sensibility, in properly Kantian thinking, is to supply manifolds of "sheer receptivity" to guide conceptual representations. At one point he suggests that Kant needs this picture if he

22. But see his paper "Some Remarks on Kant's Theory of Experience".

23. Sellars says "there is an important sense in which one has *no* concept pertaining to the observable properties of physical objects in Space and Time unless one has them all—and, indeed, as we shall see, a great deal more besides" ("Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §19). "As we shall see" points forward to the discussion of the metaphor of foundations, where the claim becomes that one has no concept of the observable unless one knows a great deal about the world. We can put Sellars's thought here in Kantian terms: acquiring one's first conceptual capacities is necessarily acquiring many conceptual capacities, interlinked in such a way that the totality amounts to a conceptual repertoire that exemplifies the necessary forms of the understanding. It comes to the same thing to say that acquiring one's first conceptual capacities is necessarily acquiring a world view that conforms to the associated principles of pure understanding. (Of course this allows divergence from Kant over what these forms and principles are.)

is to "avoid the dialectic which leads from Hegel's *Phenomenology* to nineteenth-century idealism".[24] This remark is instructive.

Sellars is invoking Hegel as a bogeyman: as someone who, by failing to acknowledge any external constraint on thought, makes it unintelligible how what he is picturing can be directed at what is independently real, as it must be if it is to be recognizably thought at all. But this takes no account of the fact that Hegel thinks he finds his notion of Reason, moving freely in its own sphere, adumbrated precisely in Kant's attempts to characterize the interpenetration of sensibility and understanding, in the first and third *Critiques*.[25] Hegelian Reason does not need to be constrained from outside, precisely because it includes as a moment within itself the receptivity that Kant attributes to sensibility.

Now perhaps the conception of Kantian intuitions that I have arrived at is a way to begin bringing this difficult conception down to earth. Sellars's idea is that for thought to be intelligibly of objective reality, the conceptual representations involved in perceptual experience must be guided from without. And indeed they are, I can say. But there is no need for manifolds of "sheer receptivity" to play this guiding role. In a way we are now equipped to understand, given the conception of intuitions adumbrated in the passage from the "Clue", the guidance is supplied by *objects* themselves, the subject matter of those conceptual representations, becoming immediately present to the sensory consciousness of the subjects of these conceptual goings-on.

Sellars's own imagery for expressing his sense of the need for external constraint—his talk of guidance and the like—actually fits this constraint by subject matter better than it fits Sellars's candidate, constraint by "sheer receptivity".

24. *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 16. See also p. 29, where, in connection with Kant's failure to distinguish what he supposedly needs the forms of sensibility to be from "the 'forms' of that which is represented by the intuitive conceptual representations which are 'guided' by receptivity", Sellars says that "no sooner had [Kant] left the scene than these particular waters were muddied by Hegel and the Mills, and philosophy had to begin the slow climb 'back to Kant' which is still under way". Presumably the idea is that Hegel tried to do everything in terms of what is above the line, without the transcendentally needed guidance by "sheer receptivity", whereas the Mills reverted to an empiricistic version of the Myth of the Given, trying to do everything ultimately in terms of what is below the line.

25. I have learned here from Béatrice Longuenesse, "Point of View of Man or Knowledge of God: Kant and Hegel on Concept, Judgment and Reason".

Any faithful student of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" must be made uneasy by finding Sellars, in *Science and Metaphysics*, saying that states or episodes below his line *guide* states or episodes above it. This seems dangerously close to a lapse into the Myth of the Given, by Sellars of all people.[26]

At one point, speaking of the operations of the understanding in perception, in the guise of the productive imagination, Sellars is led to say, even more poignantly, that the transcendentally posited manifold of nonconceptual sensory impressions "is an independent factor which has a strong voice in the outcome".[27] This runs the same risk of seeming to lapse back into the idea of the Given. But even apart from that, this image of voice is difficult to cash out. When the manifold of "sheer receptivity" is playing the role Sellars tries to capture here with the image of voice, it is not speaking to *us*; that is a natural metaphor for Sellars's own thought, which I discussed in Essay 1, that when it is playing that role it is not apperceived. When a manifold of "sheer receptivity" does speak to us, on this natural interpretation of the image, it is no longer playing its transcendental role. To whom or what, then, is it supposed to speak when, in playing its transcendental role, and hence not being apperceived, it is having its say in the outcome of the operations of the understanding in perceptual experience? Perhaps to the understanding at its work? But if the manifold of "sheer receptivity" speaks to our understanding but not to us, we have an awkward separation of our understanding from ourselves, as if the understanding were a distinct cognitive subject within a person, doing its work as it were behind our backs.

But suppose we take it that the external constraint Sellars sees to be required is exerted, in intuition, by objects themselves, the subject matter of the conceptual representations involved in perception. Now the image of

26. Starting here, one can see how Brandom's conception of observational claims and knowledge, in chapter 4 of *Making It Explicit*, might be represented, not as radically non-Sellarsian, but as a charitable reading of Sellars's basic intentions. On this view, Sellars's own wish to keep sensory consciousness in the picture is a vestige of an archaic and risky philosophical outlook, which he himself undermines in his attack on the Myth of the Given. A hygienic replacement is the bare idea of reliable differential responsive dispositions. On this view, sentience is a mere detail of the causal connection between the responses and what they respond to; taking it to have more philosophical importance than that merely courts pre-Sellarsian dangers, as Sellars himself surprisingly does in *Science and Metaphysics*. I agree with Brandom that Sellars's thinking needs a charitable reading; but I am offering a way to preserve Sellars's Kantian thought that sensibility is transcendentally important, without running the risks that Brandom rightly wants to avoid.

27. *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 16.

voice fits more easily. A seen object as it were invites one to take it to be as it visibly is. It speaks to one; if it speaks to one's understanding, that is just what its speaking to one comes to. "See me as I am", it (so to speak) says to one; "namely as characterized by *these* properties"—and it displays them.

Of course this comparison of images cannot settle the question raised by Sellars's invocation of Hegel. After all, in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", Sellars himself exploits an image in which conceptual representations in perception are "evoked" or "wrung" from us *by objects*. His transcendental thought is that we can be entitled to this image of external constraint—a version of the idea Kant expresses by saying objects are what prevent our cognitions "from being haphazard or arbitrary" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A104)—only if we acknowledge that the conceptual representations we want to think of in those terms are guided by "sheer receptivity".

Sellars's thinking here is bound up with a doctrine of his about the relation between "the scientific image" and "the manifest image", which he puts in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" by saying: "*speaking as a philosopher*, I am quite prepared to say that the common-sense world of physical objects in Space and Time is unreal—that is, that there are no such things."[28] According to this doctrine, the red cubes and so forth that are, apparently, immediately present to us in intuitions do not really exist. So they cannot be what guide our conceptual representations in perception from outside. Presumably we must suppose that our conceptual representations are guided by the items that the scientific image substitutes for these merely apparent objects—swarms of colourless particles or whatever. But this real guidance cannot have the immediacy of the guidance by red cubes and the like that figures in the manifest image. So if that apparent immediate guidance by objects is to figure in the transcendental project of showing how it is that our conceptual activity is intelligibly conceptual activity at all, directed, as that requires, towards objective reality, then we have to reconceive it—transcendentally, or speaking as philosophers—as mediated guidance by genuinely real, non-sensible objects. If we want to conceive this mediated guidance by real objects as immediate guidance by something real, it can only be as guidance by the sensory goings-on out of which the productive imagination constructs the red cubes and the like that figure in the manifest image as the immediate objects of intuition.

28. §42. See "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man". I am indebted to Anders Weinstein for insisting on the relevance of this aspect of Sellars's thinking.

Sellars is committed to this as a reading of Kant's distinction between appearances, as immediate objects of intuition, and things in themselves.[29] Here I think his often wonderful attunement with the spirit of Kant's thinking deserts him. This Sellarsian picture cannot accommodate Kant's insistence that the things in themselves that matter for his thinking about empirical knowledge are the very same things that make their appearance in intuition.[30] I think it comes to the same thing to say: Sellars's idea that the red cubes and so forth of common sense do not really exist is philosophically misguided. I cannot properly justify these beliefs in these essays, but I hope to have begun on making it plausible that there is an alternative to what Sellars represents as compulsory.

It might be tempting to defend Sellars on these lines. If we do not acknowledge a transcendental need for guidance by "sheer receptivity", then we face a dilemma. On one horn, our attempt to make sense of conceptual activity as having objective purport degenerates into an "idealistic" fraud; the so-called

29. See chapter 2 of *Science and Metaphysics*.

30. See, e.g., Bxxvii, where Kant speaks of "the distinction, which our Critique has shown to be necessary, between things as objects of experience and those same things as things in themselves". When we speak as philosophers, we do not start to speak of a new range of objects, genuinely real as the objects of the manifest image were not. We speak of the same objects, under a special mode of consideration in which we abstract from the way in which the objects figure in our world view. Sellars reads Kant as a scientific realist manqué; in Sellars's view, had Kant only been sophisticated about the possibilities for scientific concept-formation, he would have cast the objects of the scientific image in the role of things in themselves. But for Kant, objects as they appear in the scientific image would be just another case of objects as they appear, with a transcendental background for that conception just as necessary here as anywhere. Sellars's attempt to be responsive to Kantian transcendental concerns goes astray in his idea that an appeal to science could do the transcendental job; here Sellars's scientism is seriously damaging.

I here correct the two-worlds picture of Kant that I presupposed in *Mind and World*. But note that what Kant insists on, in passages like Bxxvii, is an identity of things as they appear in our knowledge and "those same things as things in themselves"; not "those same things as they are in themselves". (This latter wording pervades, e.g., Henry E. Allison's non-two-worlds reading, in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*.) Things in themselves are the very things that figure in our knowledge, but considered in abstraction from how they figure in our knowledge. That is not to say: considered as possessing, unknowably to us, other properties than those they appear as possessing in our knowledge of them. With this latter construal of things in themselves, the non-two-worlds reading might as well be a two-worlds reading. The picture still involves two realms of fact, one knowable by us and one unknowable by us; it does not undermine the damage this does to say that the same objects figure in both.

reality towards which we see our so-called conceptual activity as directed is a mere projection of the activity. On the other horn, we fall into an impossible transcendental realism, which we can make vivid by coalescing the image of objects speaking to us with an image of Richard Rorty's; on this horn, we picture objects as speaking to us in the world's own language.[31]

But this dilemma does not threaten the position I am urging.

I do not picture objects as speaking to us in the world's own language. Objects speak to us, in the metaphor that fits the position I am urging, only because we have learned a human language. We can play with the image of objects speaking to us in a language we know, say English, as I did a moment ago. But, less fancifully put, the point is that objects come into view for us only in actualizations of conceptual capacities that are ours. To entitle ourselves to this, we must acknowledge whatever we need to acknowledge for the conceptual capacities to be intelligibly ours. The fantasy of conceptual capacities that belong to the world itself is not to the point.

That does not land me on the other horn of the dilemma, according to which the so-called objects can only be projections of our thinking. Objects come into view for us in actualizations of conceptual capacities in *sensory* consciousness, and Kant perfectly naturally connects sensibility with receptivity. If we hold firm to that, we can see that the presence of conceptual capacities in the picture does not imply idealism, in the sense in which Sellars means invoking idealism to frighten us. If we conceive subjects as receptive with respect to objects, then, whatever else we suppose to be true of such subjects, it cannot undermine our entitlement to the thought that the objects stand over against them, independently there for them.

31. See, e.g., *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 298: "successfully representing according to Nature's own conventions of representation." For a Sellarsian formulation close to this imagery, see "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §34.

ESSAY 3

Intentionality as a Relation

1. Sellars shows us how to understand visual experiences as ostensible seeings, occurrences in a subject's visual life that "contain" claims about an ostensibly visible region of objective reality. That they "contain" claims is the same fact as that they are conceptual occurrences, actualizations of conceptual capacities with a suitable "logical" togetherness. In that respect they are like judgments. But they are unlike judgments in the way in which they "contain" their claims. Judgments are free exercises of conceptual capacities with a suitable togetherness. But in an ostensible seeing whose content includes that of a given judgment, the same conceptual capacities are actualized, with the same togetherness, in a way that is ostensibly necessitated by the objective reality that is ostensibly seen. A visual experience is a case of being under the *visual impression* that things are thus-and-so in the ostensibly visible environment.

This picture of visual experiences as conceptual shapings of visual consciousness is already deeply Kantian, in the way it appeals to sensibility and understanding so as to make sense of how experiences have objective purport. But Sellars thinks that to be fully Kantian the picture needs a further element. He thinks this idea of conceptual shapings of visual consciousness is something we can entitle ourselves to only by means of a transcendental postulation, according to which these conceptual shapings of visual consciousness are guided by manifolds of "sheer receptivity": occurrences in visual consciousness that are not conceptually shaped. Only so, Sellars thinks, can we legitimately take perception to yield conceptual representations of objective reality. If we do not acknowledge that the conceptual goings-on in perception are guided by "sheer receptivity", then however we work towards purporting to equip ourselves with an object of perceptual awareness, the supposed object can be no better than a projection of our mental activity.

This is what Sellars implies by invoking the idealism that Hegel made room for, as a pitfall awaiting Kant if he fails to credit sensibility with the role Sellars thinks it must have.

In holding that a properly Kantian view requires this guidance by "sheer receptivity", Sellars commits himself to taking a dim view of some features of the first *Critique*. The problems in Kant's own exposition, as Sellars sees them, come to a head with Kant's thesis that space is the form of outer sense. What space informs is outwardly intuitable phenomena, and it becomes increasingly clear as we progress through the *Critique* that outer intuition involves the understanding as well as sensibility. Focusing on space as informing outer intuitability, Kant fails to discuss what, according to Sellars, ought to be a crucial topic for him, the form of the manifolds of "sheer receptivity" that Sellars thinks must guide conceptual representations of outer reality in perception. Sellars says Kant does not "adequately" discuss this supposedly crucial topic, but really he does not discuss it at all.

Now obviously this mismatch between what Kant wrote about forms of sense and what Sellars thinks he ought to have written should give us pause. By itself, however, this carries little weight. No doubt the mismatch gives Sellars pause too, but he self-consciously claims to see better than Kant what Kant ought to have written. His thought is that there must be guidance by "sheer receptivity" if we are to be entitled to the basically Kantian idea that, by conceiving sensibility as shaped by the understanding, we make it intelligible how sensory consciousness can be directed towards objective reality, and thereby how thought in general can have objective purport. If Sellars is right about that, then he is right that, in failing to discuss forms of "sheer receptivity", Kant overlooks something crucially required by fundamental features of his own thinking. So the real question is whether Sellars is right about the necessity for guidance by "sheer receptivity".

In the second of these three essays, I began urging that Sellars is wrong about that. Kant conceives intuitions as representations in which objects are immediately present to subjects. From a remark in the section called "The Clue to the Discovery of All Pure Concepts of the Understanding", I elicited this suggestion: intuitions are conceptual occurrences that exemplify exactly the "logical" togetherness, on the part of actualizations of conceptual capacities in sensory consciousness, in terms of which we can make it intelligible that ostensible seeings "contain" claims about the objective environment. In fact, visual intuitions just are the actualizations of conceptual capacities, with the requisite togetherness, that constitute those ostensible

seeings that are seeings. If an ostensible seeing that . . . is a seeing that . . . , it is itself an intuition, at least if the content of the ostensible seeing deals with an ostensible object—as in the case of an ostensible seeing that there is a red cube at a position in the ostensibly visible environment that one can single out as *there*.

Sellars thinks the conceptual representations in perception must be guided by manifolds of "sheer receptivity", because he thinks that only so can we make it intelligible to ourselves that conceptual occurrences in perceptual experience—and thereby ultimately thought, conceptual activity, in general—are constrained by something external to conceptual activity. And as he sees, we need such external constraint in our picture if we are to be entitled to take it that conceptual activity is directed towards an independent reality, as it must be if it is to be intelligible as conceptual activity at all. But I suggested that once we understand how objects can be immediately present to conceptually shaped sensory consciousness in intuition, we can take this need for external constraint to be met by perceived objects themselves. The transcendental task is entitling ourselves to see conceptual activity as directed towards a reality that is not a mere reflection of it. To discharge that task, we need not see conceptual representations in perception as externally constrained by anything except the relevant elements of the very independent reality towards which we are in the course of entitling ourselves to see conceptual activity, in general, as directed. There is a kind of circularity here, but not one that should make it look as if the putatively constraining objects can only be projections of what we are trying to see as conceptual activity—in vain, if we could not do better than this. The actualizations of conceptual capacities that we are focusing on when we do this transcendental work are shapings of *sensory* consciousness, and thus of what Kant describes, with an obvious appropriateness, in terms of receptivity. That ensures that the objects we are entitling ourselves to see as present to subjects in intuition are genuinely independent of the subjects.

Sellars himself talks of conceptual representations evoked by perceived objects, in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". But he would relegate the appropriateness of such talk to the manifest image, and he would urge that we need to give it a transcendental vindication by showing how it correlates with the scientific image. Otherwise the putative objective purport that figures in the manifest image would be a mere illusion; the apparently perceived objects—such things as red cubes—do not really exist. Now of course there are familiar supposed grounds, of a scientistic sort, for denying

independent reality to the immediate objects of perception, and attributing it only to their counterparts in the scientific image. I think these grounds are unconvincing, but I am not going to consider them in this essay.[1] What I am going to discuss is a different and I think more interesting feature of Sellars's thinking: a different way to understand why, for Sellars, guidance by the immediate objects of intuition cannot itself figure in transcendentally vindicating the very idea of objective purport.

2. In the original version of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", Sellars implies that seeings are the veridical members of the class of ostensible seeings.[2] For the reprinting in *Science, Perception and Reality*, he adds a couple of footnotes suggesting that if an ostensible seeing is to be a seeing, not only must it be veridical, but in addition the subject must know that the viewing circumstances are normal.[3]

Now it was surely wrong to imply that veridicality is all it takes for an ostensible seeing to be a seeing. Consider a case in which someone is screened off from a red cube by a successful *trompe l'oeil* painting in which an indistinguishable red cube is depicted as being precisely where the unseen red cube actually is. Here we have a veridical ostensible seeing that is not a seeing. But Sellars's attempt to correct this mistake, in the added footnotes, seems unhappy. Surely one might have occasion to say: "I now realize I was seeing a red cube, although at the time—because I thought the circumstances were abnormal—I did not realize it." Here what is perfectly intelligibly claimed is that the case was one of seeing, even though the subject did not know that the viewing circumstances were normal. What matters is that the circumstances should be normal, not that the subject should know they are.

Sellars's first thought would have been better put by saying that an ostensible seeing is essentially an ostensible *seeing*. His mistake was just to forget that being non-veridical is not the only way an ostensible seeing can be merely ostensible. Sellars's second thought poses a risk that is definitely avoided if we correct his first thought in that way; the invocation of normality

1. Finding them unconvincing does not require me to debunk the scientific image, but only to question its claim to exhaust reality.

2. §7; compare §22.

3. §22 (pp. 151, 152 in *Science, Perception and Reality*). I am grateful to Paul Coppock for drawing my attention to these footnotes.

encourages supposing we can build up to the notion of seeing by adding conditions to an independent notion of visual experience.

I extracted from Kant's "Clue" the idea that if an ostensible seeing that . . . is a seeing that . . . , the very actualization of conceptual capacities that accounts for its "containing" its claim also constitutes—at least if the content of the claim deals with an ostensible object—its being an intuition, in which an object is immediately present to the subject. Now we debar ourselves from this notion of immediate presentness of objects to subjects if we let it seem that a seen object would have to figure in the content of a conceptual occurrence that is a seeing of it as, for instance, occupying a position at the outer end of a causal chain that generates the subject's current experiential situation in some suitably designated way. And Sellars's second thought suggests just that. It suggests that seeings that . . . would need to "contain" not just claims about the environment but also claims to the effect that the subject's experience is "normally" related to the ostensibly seen environment (this being part of what the subject is supposed to know in enjoying an experience of the relevant kind). That introduces a mediation that would threaten our ability to take these same conceptual occurrences to be intuitions, immediately of objects, as the remark from the "Clue" suggests we should be able to.

This connection of immediacy with an absence of extra conceptual content matches an element in Gareth Evans's account of perceptually demonstrative thoughts.[4] Evans says demonstrative thoughts in the most basic sense are carried to their objects by an information-link that connects the objects to the subjects, rather than by a thought of the link. (Of course the counterpart I have arrived at is compatible with insisting, as Evans does, that thought can go directly to its object like this only against the background of a richly situating self-consciousness on the part of its subject.)

And we can take this correspondence with Evans further. The actualizations of conceptual capacities that constitute ostensible seeings can amount to intuitions, cases of having objects immediately present to one, only if the ostensible seeings are seeings. Of course merely ostensible seeings are ostensible *seeings*, so that—at least if their content deals with ostensible objects—they ostensibly constitute intuitions. But the mere appearance of an intuition is just that; it is not an actual intuition. I have been following Sellars in connecting the immediacy of intuitions with their being "representations

4. See chapter 6 of *The Varieties of Reference*.

of *thises*".[5] Now if I put the point that merely ostensible seeings afford mere appearances of intuitions in terms of this connection between intuitions and demonstratives, it amounts to this: Kant's conception of intuitions embodies a version of Evans's thesis that perceptual demonstrative content is *object-dependent*. If one is under the illusion of being perceptually confronted by an object, then one is liable to a counterpart illusion that there is available to one, for employment in conceptual activity, content expressible by a perceptual demonstrative reference to the supposed object—the content one might think one could express, in such a situation, by using a phrase such as "that red cube". This is just what the immediacy of intuitions comes to; if there can be conceptual shapings of sensory consciousness in which objects are immediately present to subjects, then illusions that objects are present to one in that way, which obviously can happen, are at the same time illusions about the contents of one's conceptually shaped consciousness.

This imputation of an illusion of content is often found counterintuitive (to use an indispensable term in spite of its awkwardness in this context). But the remark from the "Clue" makes it doubtful that this complaint has any substance. In a merely ostensible seeing that there is, say, a red cube at a position one can mean by a use of "there", there are *actualized* in one's visual consciousness conceptual capacities corresponding to the presence of the words "red", "cube", and "there" (in a use that exploits one's experiential situation) in a verbal expression of the experience's content. None of that conceptual content is an illusion. In the language of the remark from the "Clue", there is a function that does indeed give unity to the various representations in the content of the ostensible seeing, or rather this part of its content (since any actual ostensible seeing will have more to it). The content in question is the same as the content of a judgment the subject might express by saying "There is a red cube *there*". What is illusory is just the appearance that the same function also gives unity to a synthesis of the same representations in an intuition. The relevant function—the "logical" togetherness with which the relevant conceptual capacities are actualized—certainly *seems* to give unity to a synthesis of the representations in an intuition; that is to say that there *seems* to be a red cube immediately present to the subject. But since there is no such red cube—since the ostensible seeing is merely ostensible—this seeming intuitional unity is a mere semblance of

5. *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 3.

an intuitional unity; that is to say that there *merely* seems to be a red cube immediately present to the subject.

3. Exploiting the way Sellars suggests we should understand the immediacy of intuitions, I have arrived at a notion of object-dependent conceptual content expressible in demonstrative reference. But the notion I have arrived at is radically alien to Sellars. This yields a way to bracket Sellars's doctrine that the objects of the manifest image do not really exist, but still have an explanation for his inability to countenance the transcendental role I have suggested we can attribute to this conception of intuitions.

The point is that the picture depicts intuitions as, *qua* conceptual occurrences of a certain kind, *related* to objects. The idea that there is only an illusion of content in certain situations simply makes vivid the relational character of the conceptual occurrences that are intuitions. The idea is that for a conceptual episode to possess intuitional content just is for it to stand in a certain relation to an object; so if there is no object suitably related to a conceptual episode, then there is no such relation, and accordingly no such content. (Of course there is still a conceptual episode, an ostensible perceiving.) But it is central to Sellars's thinking that elements in the conceptual order can stand in content-involving or semantical relations only to elements in the conceptual order, not to elements in the real order. He thinks this "non-relational character of 'meaning' and 'aboutness' " is "the key to a correct understanding of the place of mind in nature".[6]

4. How can meaning and aboutness be non-relational? In expounding this Sellarsian thought, it is easiest to begin with the semantical character of elements in language, in the sense in which language is a repertoire for overt linguistic acts.

By saying what an expression means or stands for, we capture the expression's potential for making it the case that a linguistic act in which it occurs has a specific directedness towards extra-linguistic reality.[7] In this context, the thesis we are concerned with is that such semantical statements do not relate the expressions they deal with to elements in extra-linguistic reality.

6. *Science and Metaphysics*, p. ix.

7. For "means" in this role, see "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §31; for "stands for", see chapter 3 of *Science and Metaphysics*.

On the face of it, the forms ". . . means —" or ". . . stands for —" are relational. If the expressions that figure on the right-hand sides of statements of such forms were used in the way they are used in ordinary (non-semantical) discourse, we could take that appearance at face value; we could suppose that the expressions refer to certain elements in extra-linguistic reality, those towards which ordinary uses of them enable linguistic acts to be directed, so that the statements could be taken to assert relations between these elements in extra-linguistic reality and the expressions mentioned on their left-hand sides. But according to Sellars the expressions on the right-hand sides of these statements are not used, at any rate not in that ordinary way. And they are not exactly, or not merely, mentioned either. If they were merely mentioned, it would be possible to understand what semantical statements say without thereby knowing what determinate directedness towards objective reality is said to be enabled by the expressions that the statements deal with, in linguistic acts in which those expressions occur; but that is not possible. In Sellars's view, the expressions that figure on the right-hand sides of these semantical statements are neither ordinarily used nor ordinarily mentioned, but *exhibit* their own propriety-governed use. We can understand this as a special kind of use, differentiated from using words in general in that it does not serve, for instance, to refer to an object; or alternatively as a special kind of mention, differentiated from mentioning words in general in that there is a presupposition that it is addressed to people who understand the expressions mentioned.[8]

How can a statement that relates an expression only to another expression serve to determine an intentional character associated with the first expression, a role it plays in enabling linguistic acts it occurs in to be determinately directed towards elements in extra-linguistic reality? As I said, the expression on the right-hand side of a specification of significance is supposed to

8. For a special kind of use, see, e.g., "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §31: "not *mentioned* but *used*—used in a unique way; *exhibited*, so to speak." For a special kind of mention, see, e.g., "Being and Being Known", p. 55, where Sellars initially says, of the statement " 'Mensch' signifies [another variant for "means" or "stands for"] *man*", that it "says, in effect, that the German word 'Mensch' has the same use as the English word 'man' "; then notes that on that account one could know what the statement of significance says without thereby knowing what "Mensch" means; and finally suggests that "this can be remedied by interpreting [the statement of significance] as presupposing that the word 'man' is in the hearer's vocabulary", so that it amounts to " 'Mensch' (in German) has the same use as *your* word 'man' ".

exhibit its own propriety-governed use. If we were to formulate the relevant proprieties explicitly, we would be saying that there *ought to be* certain relations between, on the one hand, uses of the expression in question, considered now as elements in the real order (not the conceptual order), and, on the other hand, other elements in the real order, which can be, unlike the first set of parties to these relations, entirely extra-linguistic.[9] That is: these proprieties require a certain determinate relatedness to extra-linguistic reality on the part of occurrences in the real order in which speakers make ordinary uses of the expression that figures on the right-hand side of a semantical statement. By virtue of the non-ordinary use to which the expression is put there, the content of that requirement—a certain determinate relatedness to extra-linguistic reality—is reflected into what the statement says about the expression mentioned on its left-hand side, even though the statement relates that expression only to another expression. This is how a statement that affirms a relation between expressions is supposed to be able to capture the contribution made by the expression mentioned on its left-hand side to the intentional character, the directedness towards extra-linguistic reality, of linguistic acts in which the expression figures.

Sellars instructs us to model non-overt conceptual episodes on linguistic acts, and the structure of this account of meaning carries over into how he conceives the intentional character ("aboutness") of unexpressed thought. A conceptual episode's being intentionally directed towards an element in the real order is analogous to, say, a linguistic episode's containing an expression that functions as a name of an element in the real order. According to Sellars, this "aboutness" must not be conceived as a relation between an element in the conceptual order and an element in the real order. There are no semantical relations between the orders; aboutness, like meaning, is non-relational. But the content of the relation, wholly within the conceptual order, that is affirmed by a statement of aboutness is partly constituted by relations that would ideally relate conceptual episodes considered as elements in the real order to other elements in the real order.

9. The linguistic terms of these relations that there ought to be are what Sellars calls "natural-linguistic objects". See "Truth and 'Correspondence' ", p. 212: "although we may, indeed must, know that these linguistic objects are subject to rules and principles—are fraught with 'ought'—we abstract from this knowledge in considering them as objects in the natural order. Let me introduce the term 'natural-linguistic object' to refer to linguistic objects thus considered."

5. Why does Sellars think we must thus explain away the appearance that there are semantical relations between the conceptual order and the real order? His remarkable paper "Being and Being Known" suggests an answer.

Sellars there aims to motivate his non-relational conception of intentionality by discussing two versions of the opposing idea that intentionality can be relational. He formulates the opposing idea like this: "intellectual acts"—the "conceptual episodes" of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind"—"differ *not* in their intrinsic character as acts, but by virtue of being directly related to different relata."[10]

He finds the first version of this conception in an inheritance, on the part of Cartesian philosophy, of some scholastic apparatus. "For the Cartesian", Sellars says, "the immediate relatum is an item having being-for-mind ('objective' reality). Thus the thought of a golden mountain is a thought which is related to a golden mountain *qua* having being-for-mind, being for the mind that is thinking of it."[11] "Content" is a natural label for something seen as having "objective" being *in* a thought. Using the term in that way, Sellars suggests that "the Cartesians postulated a domain of contents to mediate between the intellect and the real order".[12]

The second version Sellars identifies as the position of "the extreme realists of the early decades of the present century". In this version, the immediate relata of conceptual episodes are elements of the real order, not contents that mediate between conceptual episodes and elements of the real order. Philosophers in the Cartesian tradition had thought they needed those mediating contents in order to handle cases where the supposed real-order target of a conceptual episode does not exist; instead, in this version of the relational conception, the real order is expanded so as to include, for instance as "subsistent", the non-existent objects "which had puzzled previous philosophers into the theory of contents".[13]

Sellars urges, reasonably enough given how he sees them, that each of these options has drawbacks. The mediating function of "contents" becomes

10. "Being and Being Known", p. 41. The terminology of "intellectual acts" reflects the fact that "Being and Being Known" is a discussion of how to interpret Aquinas. But the issues are exactly those raised by "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" and *Science and Metaphysics*.

11. "Being and Being Known", p. 41.

12. "Being and Being Known", p. 42.

13. Both quotations in this paragraph are from p. 42.

problematic, as the Cartesian tradition succumbs to a tendency towards scepticism and idealism; and in any case the language of "objective" being that Descartes inherits from scholastic philosophy merely labels the supposed relation between thought and objects, and does nothing towards explaining it. But the only alternative so far in view, extreme realism, is unsatisfactory just because of its extremism.

What seems to force a choice between these unattractive options is the assumption that conceptual episodes differ only extrinsically, in being related to different objects. This brings the assumption into doubt. And Sellars says, surely correctly, that the assumption—"the notion that acts of the intellect are intrinsically alike regardless of what they are about"[14]—is odd anyway, even apart from the awkward choice it confronts us with.

At this point Sellars writes: "But what is the alternative? In general terms it is to hold that acts of the intellect differ intrinsically *qua* acts in a way which systematically corresponds to what they are about, i.e. their subject-matter."[15] This "alternative" is Sellars's non-relational view of meaning and aboutness. Acts of the intellect—conceptual episodes—differ intrinsically, *qua* acts, in their intentional character. If we were allowed to understand intentional character as consisting in a relation to the extra-conceptual order, we could put that thesis—that intentional character is the intrinsically differentiating character of a conceptual episode—by saying that conceptual episodes differ intrinsically *in* being about what they are about. But according to Sellars, intentional character is non-relational. So the intrinsic differences between conceptual episodes cannot be differences *in* their subject-matter; they can have to do with subject-matter at all only by *systematically corresponding* to differences in subject-matter. The systematic correspondence is the reflection into statements of significance—which, Sellars insists, set up relations only between elements in the conceptual order, not across the boundary between the conceptual order and the real order—of relations ideally required, relations there ought to be, between conceptual episodes considered as elements in the real order and other elements in the real order.

Here, then, Sellars recommends his position by eliminating alternatives. But as my paraphrase of the argument has brought out, there is a possibility he does not consider, even to reject it: namely, that conceptual

14. "Being and Being Known", p. 42.
15. "Being and Being Known", p. 43.

episodes might differ intrinsically, not in a way that *systematically corresponds* to what they are about, but *in* being about whatever they are about. He assumes that anyone who wants to say intellectual acts differ only in what they are about, as opposed to differing in some way that systematically corresponds to differences in what they are about, will admit to supposing that intellectual acts do not differ intrinsically at all. (That was his formulation of the alternative to his non-relational conception.) He simply does not consider that someone might want to say a difference in what they are directed towards can itself be an intrinsic difference in intellectual acts. (That is just how it is with intuitions on the conception I have extracted from Kant's remark in the "Clue".) So the argument from exhaustion of possibilities is inconclusive; it depends on a tendentious formulation of the alternative to Sellars's position, according to which the alternative includes not just the idea that intentional directedness is relational but also—what Sellars assumes—that being related in the relevant way to an extra-conceptual item cannot be intrinsic to an intellectual act.

And it is not just the last step of the argument that looks unsatisfactory in this light. Sellars's incomplete conception of the possibilities shapes his reading of the two other positions he considers. The prospects for positions on those lines look different once we query Sellars's assumption.

Consider again the apparatus Descartes inherits from scholastic philosophy. Crediting intellectual acts with "content" is, as Sellars sees, just another wording for the idea that elements of the real order have "objective" being in them. But that in turn can be, as Sellars does not see, just another wording for the idea that they have an intrinsic character that consists in their being immediately related to elements of the real order. So conceived, "content" does not *mediate* between the intellect and the real order, as in Sellars's reading. Rather, crediting intellectual acts with "content" is a way to express the thought that goes missing in Sellars's argument, that an unmediated relatedness to elements in the real order can be an intrinsic character of an intellectual act.

It is true that the scholastic terminology does no more than label the relatedness in question. But the apparatus need not preclude a vindicating explanation—perhaps on the lines of the one I am suggesting we can find in Kant. (This would require that when we set about entitling ourselves to the scholastic terminology, we focus primarily on intuitions, in which real objects are actually present to subjects, rather than such intellectual acts

as the thought of a golden mountain.) It need not be the apparatus itself that drives Cartesian reflection towards scepticism and idealism.

I think a Kantian rehabilitation of the scholastic-Cartesian apparatus would point to a version, purged of its extremism, of the twentieth-century realism that is the other option Sellars considers. In discussing this option, Sellars strangely implies that Russell's theory of descriptions belongs with a distinction between existence and subsistence, as another device for including non-existent objects in the real order, where they can be relata for intellectual acts.[16] But surely the point of the theory of descriptions is exactly to avoid an apparent need for non-existent real objects as relata for intellectual acts. In cases in which a relational conception of intellectual acts would require them to stand in relations to possibly non-existent objects, Russell instead takes their content to include *specifications* of objects. If no objects answer to the specifications, that does not threaten the contentfulness of the acts. There are indeed cases for which this Russellian strategy is unsatisfying, cases for which one wants to keep the idea of a relational intentionality in play even though the putative object of such intentionality may not exist. But one beauty of the idea that there can be illusions of relationally intentional content is that it enables us to gratify this quasi-Meinongian motivation without needing to postulate relations to merely subsistent objects. An illusion of a relation to an ordinarily real object does the work that seemed to require an actual relation to a merely subsistent object.[17]

6. I have brought out how Sellars's attempt to justify his non-relational conception of intentionality turns on the assumption that intentionality could be relational only if how a conceptual episode is directed at objective reality were not intrinsic to it. Reasonably enough, Sellars finds the idea that conceptual episodes are intrinsically alike, whatever they are

16. "Being and Being Known", p. 42: "Thus non-existent objects . . . found their place in the real order by means of a distinction between existence and subsistence and such other devices as Russell's theory of descriptions."

17. Sellars also ignores the difference between Russell's earlier conception of judgment as a relation to a state of affairs, which may or may not be existent, and his later conception of judgment as a multiple relation to objects and properties. Here again, the point of the later conception (unsatisfactory as it certainly is) is to avoid the Meinongian commitment that the earlier conception incurs, to non-existent states of affairs as real relata for false judgments.

about, unprepossessing.[18] But so far from justifying the assumption that a relational conception of intentionality would commit us to that idea, Sellars does not even identify it as an assumption. This looks like a blind spot.

We can describe the blind spot in another way. In "Being and Being Known", Sellars formulates his conception of intentionality in terms of the Thomistic notion of the intellectual word. In this terminology, the intrinsic character of intellectual acts consists in their being (second) actualizations of intellectual words, and their intentionality is determined by the semantics of the intellectual words in question. Sellars reads this as a version of his own standard conception, according to which unexpressed thought is to be understood on the model of linguistic acts, literally so called—performances of overt speech. And his account of the semantics of intellectual words fits the familiar pattern. A statement of the meaning of an intellectual word affirms a relation only within the intellectual order, not between the intellectual order and the real order, but nevertheless contrives to capture an intentional directedness towards the real order, because what it says is partly constituted by an ideally required relatedness between elements in the real order. So we can formulate the possibility Sellars does not consider in terms of the semantics of intellectual words. The missing possibility is that a statement of the semantical character of an intellectual word might relate the word, as an element in the intellectual order, to an element in the real order, towards which intellectual acts in which the word figures are intentionally directed. I shall put this by saying that the semantics of the language of the intellect might be Tarskian.

This would be a counterpart to the thought that the semantics of ordinary words might be Tarskian, which is ruled out by Sellars's doctrine that meaning is non-relational. Sellars occasionally discusses Tarskian semantics for ordinary words, but his discussions are quite unsatisfactory, and we can see this as a symptom of the same blind spot.

18. At p. 63 of *Science and Metaphysics*, Sellars is happy to "take for granted that the concept of a diaphanous act . . . is unsatisfactory". The concept of a diaphanous act is the concept Sellars finds in the views to which, in "Being and Being Known", he represents his own position as "the alternative": the concept of an act that differs from other acts in what it is intentionally directed towards, but not intrinsically. See *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 34.

Sometimes he suggests that the very idea of word-world relations as they figure in Tarskian semantics is "Augustinian", in the sense that fits the opening sections of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.[19] But this is simply wrong. It is perfectly congenial to Tarskian semantics to say that the notions of such word-world relations as denotation and satisfaction are intelligible only in terms of how they contribute towards capturing the possibilities for "making moves in the language-game" by uttering whole sentences in which the relevant words occur. These relations between words and elements in the extra-linguistic order should not be conceived as independently available building-blocks out of which we could construct an account of how language enables us to express thoughts at all.[20]

In other places Sellars suggests that proponents of relational semantics conceive the word-world relations that they take semantical statements to affirm in terms of "ideal semantical uniformities". This is an allusion to those propriety-governed genuine relations, between linguistic acts considered as elements in the real order and other elements in the real order, that figure in his picture as partly constitutive of the content of semantical statements.[21] Here Sellars is reading Tarskian semantics in the light of his own understanding of the possibilities. Statements of those "ideal semantical uniformities"—which are not themselves semantical statements, though they enter into the determining of what semantical statements say—are the closest his view can come to the idea of statements that are both semantical and deal with relations to elements in the real order. So Sellars takes it that proponents of relational semantics mistakenly think these statements of "ideal semantical uniformities" *are* semantical statements. This is to assume

19. For a suggestion in this direction on Sellars's part, see "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §30. Compare Brandom's contemptuous remarks about "a supposed word-world relation of reference", *Making it Explicit*, pp. 323–5.

20. A way of putting this is to say that Tarskian semantics can perfectly well accommodate the point Sellars makes about truth, directing it against Carnap, at pp. 100–102 of *Science and Metaphysics*. (Carnap tends to be teamed with Tarski in Sellars's discussions of semantics; see, e.g., *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 83: "semantics of the Carnap-Tarski type.") Sellars's point does not tell against doing semantics in terms of relations; rather, it is a way of saying why the derivability of conclusions conforming to "Convention T" is a good adequacy condition on a relational semantical account of a language. For a clear statement of the point that there is nothing "Augustinian" about Tarskian semantics, see Donald Davidson, "In Defence of Convention T".

21. See *Science and Metaphysics*, pp. 86–7; the same suggestion is made at p. 112. The "uniformities" in question here are those described at pp. 75–7.

that his opponents are working within a dimly grasped version of his structure, and misconstrue the significance of its elements.[22]

But that is not what is meant by saying that statements of, for instance, the form ". . . denotes —" relate words to objects. The point is rather this. First, the expression that figures on the right-hand side of such a statement is used in an ordinary way, not in the peculiar way that figures in Sellars's account of semantical statements. So we can see the statement as itself affirming a relation between the expression mentioned on the left-hand side and whatever element in the real order can be mentioned by a standard use of the expression on the right. Second, and crucially, the ideality or normativity that is relevant to such a statement is not that of the "ideal semantical uniformities" that figure in Sellars's own picture of the semantical. "Denotes" expresses a relation between elements of the linguistic order and elements of the extra-linguistic order, the very idea of which is—to borrow a Sellarsian phrase—fraught with "ought",[23] in a way that reflects what ensures that this conception of semantics is not "Augustinian". The very idea of such relations makes sense only in the context of how they enter into determining the conditions under which whole sentences are *correctly* or *incorrectly* asserted. The normativity expressed by those uses of "correctly" and "incorrectly" is reflected back into the content of such concepts as that of denotation.[24]

Sellars holds that we should understand non-overt conceptual episodes on the model of overt linguistic acts. So if it were acceptable to understand the semantics of intellectual words in Tarskian terms, that would be because our analogical understanding of intellectual words can exploit its being acceptable to understand the semantics of ordinary words in Tarskian terms. But Sellars's blind spot obscures the very idea that the semantics of intellectual words might be Tarskian, except as an expression of the unprepossessing conception in which intellectual acts have no intrinsic character. This helps

22. See *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 86: "It is a mistake to suppose, as Carnap does, that semantical statements in *his* sense, i.e. statements which involve such expressions as 'denotes' or 'designates', are semantical statements in the sense that they formulate (ideal) semantical uniformities."

23. See, e.g., "Truth and 'Correspondence' ", p. 212.

24. Another consideration Sellars brings to bear against "semantics of the Carnap-Tarski style" connects this region of his thinking with his doctrine about the manifest image and the scientific image; he objects to a relational semantics for the language of the manifest image, on the ground that it would commit one to the reality of the objects of the manifest image. See "The Language of Theories", p. 109, n. 3.

to make it intelligible that the idea of relational semantics for ordinary words does not come into Sellars's thinking in the authentic form in which I have just sketched it.[25]

7. At the beginning of these three essays, I spoke of a structural feature of Sellars's thinking that, I suggested, makes a fully Kantian vision of intentionality inaccessible to him. I have now come close to uncovering what I meant. Sellars cannot see how a determinate intentional directedness can be both a relation to an element in the real order and an intrinsic character of a conceptual occurrence, and this corresponds to an inability to see how denoting, say, can be a relation that relates elements of the conceptual order to elements of the real order.

Why does Sellars not contemplate the possibility I am urging?[26] I do not mean to suggest that his blind spot is superficial.

It helps to compare two ways of interpreting the idea that our thought of meaning and aboutness is fraught with "ought".

On Sellars's interpretation, the content of a statement of significance is a reflection, into a statement of a relation within the conceptual order, of relations that there ought to be, according to the proprieties that constitute a linguistic practice, between two sets of elements in the real order, one of which comprises linguistic items considered in abstraction from the practical proprieties in virtue of which they are meaningful at all. The "ought" with which meaning and aboutness are fraught gets into the picture as a sentential operator, in whose scope there occur specifications of relations that would ideally hold between linguistic items so considered and other

25. This has a damaging effect on the thinking of some people who have been influenced by Sellars. Rorty, for instance, sees that the Tarskian semantics Davidson envisages for natural languages involves word-world relations, and concludes that Davidsonian semantical talk, so far from being fraught with "ought", is not even coherently combinable with a way of talking about language that is fraught with "ought". See "Pragmatism, Davidson and Truth". This misses the fact that the very idea of the word-world relations in question, for instance denotation, is itself already "ought"-laden, in a different way from any that comes into view in Sellarsian semantics. Rorty's reading of Davidson looks like a descendant of Sellars's blind spot.

26. It is not that Sellars cannot see how something as natural as sensory consciousness could be shaped by conceptual capacities, our possession of which is what elevates us above mere nature. (That is the supposed difficulty I tried to deal with in *Mind and World*.) Sellars has, and exploits, the idea of conceptual shapings of sensory consciousness.

elements in the real order. The content of the "ought" with which some fact about significance is fraught—what it is that, according to the "ought" in question, ought to be the case—can be factored out from the statement of significance and specified in terms that are not themselves meaning-involving.[27]

Contrast the Tarskian conception. Here denoting, say, is a relation, itself fraught with "ought", between an element in the linguistic or conceptual order and an element in the real order. There is no suggestion that to a statement of what some expression denotes there corresponds an "ought" whose content could be factored out, so that the "ought" in question could be seen as a separable determinant of the semantical character of the expression. The "ought" with which a statement of what some expression denotes is fraught reflects how the expression's denoting what it denotes enters into determining conditions for the correctness of assertions. The normativity that the "ought" conveys is an aspect of the expression's meaning, its impact on the significance of sentences it occurs in. This normativity is not something pre-semantical that could figure in constitutively explaining what meaning is from outside the semantical.

So I can formulate a structural feature of Sellars's thinking like this: he cannot see how semantical thinking could be "ought"-laden except by taking it to be fraught with "oughts" that can be seen as determining significance from outside the semantical. He thinks there must be proprieties of (what is in fact) linguistic practice, formulable in non-semantical terms, that underlie and constitute the semanticity of linguistic expressions.

Kant suggests an understanding of thought's being of the objective that centres on the immediate presentness of objects to conceptual consciousness in intuition. I have suggested a reading in which this immediate presentness is relational. Sellars wants to exploit the Kantian idea of a transcendental role for sensibility, but for him the idea that intuitional content might be understood in terms of a relation between the conceptual order and the real order is not an option. Now the contrast I have drawn between two ways of understanding fraughtness with "ought" suggests that we can see this as reflecting a general conception of what it takes to execute Kant's transcendental project. For Sellars, our entitlement to see elements in the

27. See, e.g., p. 92 of *Naturalism and Ontology*: "The rule governed uniformities . . . which constitute a language (including our own) can, in principle, be exhaustively described without the use of meaning statements. . . ."

conceptual order as intentionally directed towards elements in the real order has to be transcendentally secured from outside the semantical, from outside the conceptual order. We have seen this structural feature of Sellars's thinking operative in connection with the "ought" with which our thought of meaning and aboutness is fraught, but the idea that the transcendental work needs to be done from outside the semantical has a more general application. Given a conviction to that effect, a transcendental role for sensibility can only be the sort of thing Sellars envisages, a matter of conceptual activity being guided by "sheer receptivity". On this view, we cannot spell out a transcendental role for sensibility in terms of the immediate presence of objects to intuitionally structured consciousness, as in the reading of Kant that I have recommended. That would be already a case of conceptual directedness towards the real, so it could not figure in a vindication, from outside, of the very idea of conceptual directedness towards the real.

How can there be a semantical relatedness, itself fraught with "ought", between the conceptual order and the real order? It might be the beginning of an answer to say: this "ought"-laden relatedness to the real order must be itself embraced within the conceptual order. I have deliberately given that formulation a Hegelian ring, in order to suggest that what I have been representing as Sellars's blind spot, his inability to contemplate the possibility that intentionality might be relational, is part of a package with his conviction that to give philosophical reflection about intentionality a Hegelian shape is to abandon objectivity rather than to vindicate it.

We now have a variety of ways of describing this structural feature of Sellars's thinking. One is that it reflects his conviction that Hegel merely muddies the Kantian waters.[28] Against this, I have urged that if we see intuition in the way Kant proposes, we can take perceived objects themselves to supply the external constraint on conceptual goings-on for which Sellars thinks we need to appeal to "sheer receptivity". A non-sheer receptivity is operative in intuition so conceived, and that is enough to undermine the threat of "idealism", the threat that the supposed objects of these conceptual shapings of consciousness can only be projections of our conceptual activity. At any rate there is nothing against this reading of the transcendental role of sensibility except the putative reasons yielded by scientism for denying

28. See *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 29.

genuine reality to the objects that, speaking within the manifest image, we say are immediately present to us in intuition, and hence for refusing to allow that they themselves provide the transcendentally needed external constraint on conceptual activity. Discounting such scientism, we can refuse to be frightened by Sellars's invocation of Hegel. I am encouraged in this by the availability of another way to describe Sellars's idea that there must be guidance by "sheer receptivity": it reflects his blind spot for the Tarskian approach to the semantical.

It may seem a dizzying project to embrace relatedness to the real order within the conceptual order. But Tarskian semantics points to a sober interpretation. It is crucial to a proper understanding of Tarskian semantics that we have to *use* the words on the right-hand sides of semantical statements. (Contrast Sellars's conception of the way words figure on the right-hand sides of statements of meaning.) Sellars himself holds that unexpressed thought is to be understood on the model of linguistic acts. Exploiting that, we can apply the same point to unexpressed thought: we have to *use* the words that figure in specifications of what non-overt conceptual episodes are intentionally directed towards. In statements of meaning and aboutness, we relate the conceptual order to the real order, mentioning elements of the real order by making ordinary uses of the words on the right-hand sides of these statements. But we affirm these relations without moving outside the conceptual order—without doing more than employing our conceptual capacities.

How can our minds get into relations to elements in the real order simply by acquiring suitably shaped conceptual contents? That is just what we are enabled to find unmysterious by putting intuitional content, understood in the way Kant indicates, at the centre of our picture of the conceptual.

8. I began these three essays by suggesting that Sellars's thinking is especially instructive towards understanding Kant, and thereby finding intentionality unproblematic. I can now end by giving that suggestion a somewhat more determinate shape. The point is that the key question for understanding Kant, and thereby seeing how to become comfortable with intentionality, is just the question Sellars brings into focus: can the transcendental project be acceptably executed from within the conceptual order, or does it require a sideways-on point of view on the directedness of the conceptual at the real?

In the first of these three essays, I distinguished transcendental philosophy as such from a conception of it as requiring the sideways-on perspective. Sellars's position exemplifies this more specific conception, according to which the transcendental project needs to be undertaken from outside the thought whose objective purport it seeks to vindicate. Correctly in my view, Sellars fails to find anything answering to this conception of transcendental philosophy in Kant's Aesthetic; and he contrives to find this kind of thing in the Analytic only by ignoring Kant's insistence that appearances, things as they appear, are the same things that can also be conceived as things in themselves. The very idea of transcendental philosophy is a Kantian invention, and we can hardly suppose there really is none in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The fate of Sellars's reading constitutes a powerful argument that the thought Hegel tries to capture with the image of Reason as subject to no external constraint—the rejection of a sideways-on standpoint for philosophy—is already Kant's own thought.

It is common for people not to see so much as a possibility that intentional directedness might be a relation to objects; this shows in the resistance or incomprehension typically encountered by Evans's work. Often this is combined with taking for granted the idea that conceptual activity is intentionally directed towards the world. Now Sellars is special in being responsive to the Kantian thought that we need a transcendental exercise in which we show our entitlement to the very idea of objective purport. He is also responsive to the more specific Kantian thought that this transcendental exercise must centre on intuition, so that we can exploit the receptivity of sensibility. But he is unresponsive to the Hegelian conceit of incorporating receptivity within Reason, and I have tried to display this as a blindness to a more soberly describable possibility. Given his conviction that the transcendental exercise must be undertaken from outside the conceptual, Sellars's responsiveness to Kant gives him no alternative but to construe the transcendental role of sensibility in terms of guidance by "sheer receptivity".

Suppose we agree with Sellars that it is an insight on Kant's part that the receptivity of sensibility must play a transcendental role. Reflecting on the context Sellars supplies for that thought, we can see that, aside from minor details, the conviction that Kant is right about the significance of sensibility presents us with a quite simple choice: either Sellars's picture of guidance by "sheer receptivity", or the idea I have recommended, that the guidance

Sellars thinks we need to credit to "sheer receptivity" can be displayed, in the course of the transcendental project, as exercised by the immediate objects of perception themselves.[29] I hope to have made it plausible that there is more to be said for the second option than Sellars allows.

29. The only alternative, at this level of generality, is to deny a transcendental role to sensibility altogether. Brandom's *Making It Explicit* is the most worked-out attempt I know to take this non-Kantian path and still purport to accommodate intentionality. In chapter 4, where Brandom undertakes to deal with empirical content, he deliberately refrains from attributing a transcendental role to sensory consciousness, thus denying himself the resources for a Kantian notion of intuitions. (The same fact about Brandom's thinking is reflected in his non-central placing of the situations that permit "strong de re ascriptions", in chapter 8.) In his chapter 8, Brandom undertakes to provide for the "representational character" of thought and language, without a transcendental exploitation of anything on the lines of intuitions, by appealing to the idea of a specification by A of what B's thought is about in which A takes responsibility for the way the object is specified. In "Replies", he claims that this apparatus legitimates an idea of word-world relations. I think this cannot work. See *Science and Metaphysics*, pp. 82–7, where Sellars shows, I think, that if we start with the idea that word-world relations are impossible or at least problematic (as Brandom does), then considerations about substitution inferences, of the sort Brandom exploits, cannot get us any closer to vindicating semantical relations between the conceptual order and the real order.

PART IV

Sellarsian Themes

ESSAY 11

The Constitutive Ideal of Rationality: Davidson and Sellars

> The nomological irreducibility of the mental does not derive merely from the seamless nature of the world of thought, preference, and intention, for such interdependence is common to physical theory, and is compatible with there being a single right way of interpreting a man's attitudes without relativization to a scheme of translation. Nor is the irreducibility due simply to the possibility of many equally eligible schemes, for this is compatible with an arbitrary choice of one scheme relative to which assignments of mental traits are made. The point is rather that when we use the concepts of belief, desire, and the rest, we must stand prepared, as the evidence accumulates, to adjust our theory in the light of considerations of overall cogency: the constitutive ideal of rationality partly controls each phase in the evolution of what must be an evolving theory. An arbitrary choice of translation scheme would preclude such opportunistic tempering of theory; put differently, a right arbitrary choice of a translation manual would be of a manual acceptable in the light of all possible evidence, and this is a choice we cannot make. We must conclude, I think, that nomological slack between the mental and the physical is essential as long as we conceive of man as a rational animal.[1]

Richard Rorty has recently[2] aimed to represent the ideas expressed in this familiar passage as an aberration, something that could be removed while leaving the basic thrust of Davidson's philosophy undamaged and indeed purified. I have some reservations about some of the detail of the passage, but I think, against Rorty, that its basic claim—that an ideal of rationality is constitutive of the very idea of the mental, and that that ensures a special

1. Donald Davidson, "Mental Events", pp. 222–3.
2. For instance, in "McDowell, Davidson, and Spontaneity".

irreducibility of concepts of the mental to concepts of the natural sciences and their kin in everyday thought and speech—is central to an authentically Davidsonian philosophy. To begin on urging that Rorty's suspicions are misplaced, I am going to juxtapose the Davidsonian irreducibility claim with a parallel claim made by another great twentieth-century North American philosopher, and another of Rorty's heroes, Wilfrid Sellars—a claim expressed by Sellars in passages that, it seems to me, Rorty bowdlerizes, in a way that fits with his distaste for this and similar passages in Davidson.

The point Davidson makes in this passage relates to the constitutive role of rationality in our thought and talk of the mental in general. In the second part of this essay, I want to consider an aspect of how the point applies to the semantical in particular—the characteristics of our linguistic repertoires that enable us to give expression to our mental states, as we might say in order to bring out the connection between the semantical and the explicit topic of that passage from "Mental Events". Here too I shall exploit Sellars, this time not as thinking in parallel with Davidson, but as subject to a blind spot concerning a feature of Tarskian semantics about which Davidson is completely clear. The blind spot persists, I think, into Rorty's attempt to appropriate Davidson for his own purposes, and it vitiates Rorty's reading of Davidsonian semantics.

1. First, then, an echo of the Davidsonian irreducibility thesis in Sellars. Where Davidson says that our thought and talk of the mental is governed by a constitutive ideal of rationality, and that this ensures that its concepts cannot be reduced to concepts that figure in ways of thinking and talking that are not so governed, Sellars says that our thought and talk of the epistemic needs to be understood as functioning in the logical space of reasons, and that this ensures that concepts of the epistemic cannot be understood in terms of concepts that do not so function.[3] It seems irresistible to suppose that the logical space of reasons, in Sellars, plays a role that corresponds to the role of the constitutive ideal of rationality, in Davidson.

When Sellars's thought is put, as I have just put it and as Sellars sometimes does, in terms of the epistemic, it can seem that it relates exclusively to knowledge, so that Sellars's irreducibility claim has a different topic from Davidson's. This appearance enables Rorty to thin down Sellars's thought

3. See "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §36.

into the idea that the acceptability of knowledge claims—the supposed exclusive target of Sellars's remarks about the logical space of reasons—is a matter of "victory in argument".[4] Thus Rorty can suggest that the point is to discourage the idea that knowing is a factual feature of a person, irreducible, in a way that risks looking mysterious, to what can be truly said about her in naturalistic terms, let alone that mindedness is such a feature, by registering that victory in argument cannot be had without actually arguing; who wins an argument is not, for instance, predictable by exploiting a theory in some special science.

I think this is a misreading. Sellars exploits attributions of knowledge only as a particularly clear case for the point he wants to make. In fact, he uses "epistemic" as a term of art, covering far more than what the word's etymology would suggest. For instance, he counts something's looking red as an epistemic fact about the thing, as opposed to a natural fact.[5] ("Natural" is his way of gesturing towards the concepts to which concepts of the epistemic cannot be reduced, as we are to appreciate by seeing that concepts of the epistemic function in the logical space of reasons.) And at one point he writes, strikingly, of "the epistemic character, the intentionality" of expressions such as "thinking of a celestial city".[6] Here it is even clearer that the word "epistemic" comes loose from its etymology. I think this example shows that the epistemic, for Sellars, covers states or episodes that involve the actualization of conceptual capacities and as such have intentionality or objective purport, whether or not they amount to cases of knowledge. This makes the irreducibility thesis that Sellars underwrites by invoking the logical space of reasons a pretty exact match for the irreducibility thesis that Davidson underwrites by invoking the constitutive ideal of rationality. A thesis that applies to thinking of a celestial city cannot be captured by Rorty's appeal to victory in argument. Sellars's thought is a version of the irreducibility claim that Rorty wishes Davidson had not embraced.

There is a precedent for Sellars's using "epistemic" in this at first sight strange way, so that it matches the way Davidson uses "mental" in "Mental Events". The precedent I mean is Kant's first *Critique*. From the language of that work, one might think knowledge is its primary concern. But in fact

4. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 156.
5. "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §17.
6. "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §7.

Kant's concern is not knowledge so much as the directedness of thought at objects, the intentionality or objective purport, that is a prerequisite for anything to be even a candidate to be a case of knowledge. Heidegger says: "*The Critique of Pure Reason* has nothing to do with a 'theory of knowledge' ".[7] That is surely excessive, but in its over-the-top way it points towards a claim that would be correct, and one that could also be correctly made about Sellars's "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind".

Of course the presence in Sellars of a thesis to the effect that the intentional or the conceptual has a special irreducibility, matching the special irreducibility Davidson attributes to the mental, does not by itself address Rorty's wish that there were no such thing in Davidson. If I am right that the same thought is in Sellars, Rorty will simply include Sellars in the wish that it were not so. We need to consider the grounds for the wish.

So why does Rorty deplore the irreducibility thesis? The answer is: he fears that it merely encourages philosophy in a certain traditional vein—philosophy of a sort that he is surely right to think Davidson, like Rorty himself, wants to display as superfluous, rather than something that responsible intellectuals have an obligation to go in for. Davidson urges that concepts of the mental are irreducible to concepts of the natural sciences in a special way, to be traced not simply to the fact that talk and thought of the mental hang together holistically—as perhaps talk and thought of, say, the biological do also—but to the need to invoke rationality in characterizing this as a particular and special instance of holistic interconnection. The point turns not on holism as such but on a special holism, in which the elements hang together in a way that can be captured only by invoking an ideal of rationality. Rorty's fear is that when Davidson thus singles out concepts of the mental as subject to a special irreducibility, that encourages a familiar sort of philosophical mind-boggling at how peculiar the mental is, and a familiar sort of philosophical project in which we take ourselves to have to tell supra-empirical stories to reestablish connections to ordinary reality for minds, conceived thus as peculiar and concomitantly as separated from ordinary reality. Within this sort of project, it will seem that we need to choose among the standard options for dealing with "the mind-body problem" and "the problem of knowledge", thus engaging in the kind of traditional philosophical activity whose unsatisfactoriness Rorty is so

7. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, p. 11. Heidegger's word is "Erkenntnistheorie", which might have been translated "epistemology"; see Taft's note, p. 188.

good at bringing out. Rorty cannot see how the thesis of a special irreducibility can do anything but undermine a purpose he and Davidson share, to dissolve the appearance that we are intellectually obliged to go in for that sort of activity. The shared purpose is, for instance, that we should entitle ourselves to "tell the sceptic to get lost", rather than look for a way to answer him.[8]

I think this is exactly wrong. The idea of a special irreducibility, which I am representing as common to Davidson and Sellars, is precisely a condition of properly understanding how it comes to seem that the mental poses that kind of problem for philosophy, and thereby a condition of achieving the very goal that Rorty thinks the idea threatens: seeing through the potentially gripping illusion that we need to acknowledge and deal with problems of that kind.

The separation of logical spaces or constitutive ideals that underwrites the irreducibility thesis reflects a distinction between two ways of finding things intelligible. Both involve placing things in a pattern. But in one case the pattern is constituted by regularities according to which phenomena of the relevant kind unfold; in the other it is the pattern of a life led by an agent who can shape her action and thought in the light of an ideal of rationality. In the modern era a distinction on these lines acquired a deep cultural significance, with the first kind of understanding, as contrasted with the second, coming to be seen as the business of natural science—a pursuit that achieved intellectual maturity in part precisely by virtue of having the kind of understanding that is its proper goal increasingly sharply separated from the kind exemplified by seeing a phenomenon as an agent's attempt to live up to an ideal, so that, for instance, it no longer counted as science to read nature as a meaningful text. While this kind of significance was attaching itself to the distinction between the two sorts of understanding, there will have been an increasingly sharp sense of a specialness on the part of concepts whose functioning is bound up with finding things intelligible in the second way, the way that involves conceiving of human beings as rational animals (to echo the passage I quoted from "Mental Events"). This is the sense of specialness that Davidson and Sellars formulate in the theses that disturb Rorty, and so far it is, I think, an innocuous recapitulation of something that was essential to the maturing of modern natural science.

8. Compare Davidson's "Afterthoughts".

However, at a primitive stage in the intellectual and cultural development I am talking about, it would be natural that there should be an attempt to accommodate this specialness, as yet only vaguely sensed, by trying to conceive the subject matter of thought and speech about the mental as a special region of what was, at the stage I mean to be considering, only beginning to come clear as the proper subject matter of the natural sciences—the disciplines whose business is in fact the other kind of understanding. This is a recipe for making sense of Cartesian philosophy of mind, at least on the more or less Rylean reading under which Descartes figures in the standard contemporary picture of how philosophy of mind developed. On this reading, Descartes confusedly wanted the relations that organize the mental to be just special cases of the sorts of relations that organize the proper subject matter of the natural sciences—relations that are displayed when phenomena are captured by descriptions suited for subsuming them under laws. But the specialness of the mental, to which on this reading Descartes was responding without a proper comprehension of its basis, requires those relations, supposedly suitable for natural-scientific treatment, to do duty for the relations that constitute the space of reasons. That is why Cartesian thinking takes a form to which Ryle's term of criticism "para-mechanical" is appropriate. Cartesian immaterialism is intelligible within the framework I am describing; no part of material nature could be special enough to serve the essentially confused purposes of this way of thinking. If one tries to make connections of the sort that figure in descriptions of law-governed processes do duty for relations of justification or warrant, one will naturally lapse into an appeal to magic, masquerading as the science of a weird subject matter; what one intends to postulate as simply mechanisms, though of a special kind, will degenerate into what Ryle lampoons as para-mechanisms.

On this account, the Cartesian Real Distinction, which is the point of origin of the supposed "mind-body problem", reflects a confused attempt to make a distinction within the subject matter for natural science—a distinction that inevitably degenerates into pseudo-science on one of its sides—out of the differentiation of batteries of concepts that is common to Davidson and Sellars, which is in fact not that kind of distinction at all. The puzzlements of traditional epistemology have the same source. Understanding the illusory obligations of traditional philosophy, which includes appreciating how the illusion can be gripping, requires that we understand the temptation to fall into this confusion. Hence it exactly requires that we not discard the distinction of batteries of concepts that bothers Rorty, but rather that we

understand it correctly, seeing through the temptation to misconceive it in the Cartesian way.

I said that I have reservations about some of the detail of the passage I quoted from "Mental Events", and I shall end this first part of my essay by connecting one of them with the way I have been formulating its basic claim. I have been expressing the point of invoking the constitutive ideal of rationality by talking in terms of a distinctive way of finding things intelligible: seeing them as part of the life of an agent concerned to live up to an ideal of rationality. I have not connected the point, as Davidson does, with Quine's thesis of the indeterminacy of translation. Some of the resonances of that way of pointing to what underwrites the irreducibility strike me as unfortunate. In particular, if the appeal to indeterminacy imports Quine's thesis that there is no fact of the matter concerning correct interpretation, it risks leaving the impression that the claim is that the mental is non-factual, or at least less factual than what it is contrasted with; as if we were to suppose that on the one hand there is finding out how things are, and on the other hand there is making sense of people. I think making sense of people is a case of finding out how things are—a case that is special, in ways that Davidson has shown us how to understand without letting it seduce us into philosophy in the Cartesian vein, but a case for all that. Denying that, as we certainly seem to if we accept that there is no fact of the matter, is merely an extreme move in the kind of philosophy that lets its agenda be set by Cartesian conceptions; that is, precisely the kind of philosophy from which Davidson's thought, properly seen, promises to help us liberate ourselves.

2. I have been considering the Davidsonian thesis that making sense of people, in general, is governed by the constitutive ideal of rationality. I now want to consider an issue that arises when we apply the thesis to making sense of what people say, in particular.

According to Rorty, the results of interpreting linguistic behaviour as Davidson conceives that activity, formulated in theories of truth in the style of Tarski, are "descriptive", and as such not just to be distinguished from, but not even combinable in a unified discourse with, any way of talking in which "true" expresses a norm for inquiry and claim-making. In particular, truth in a sense that can be glossed in terms of disquotability, which is that whose conditions of application to the sentences of this or that language Tarski showed how to pin down in the kind of theory Davidson adapts to his purposes (provided that we can find a suitable logical form in, or impose a

suitable logical form on, the sentences of the language), must, according to Rorty, be held separate from truth as a norm for inquiry.[9]

I think this makes no sense of the obvious connection between, on the one hand, the familiar T-sentences of Tarskian theories and, on the other, such truisms as this: what makes it *correct* among speakers of English to make a claim with, say, the words "Snow is white" (to stay with a well-worn example) is that snow is indeed white. I stress "correct": truth in the sense of disquotability—what Tarskian theories of truth are theories of—is unproblematically normative for the practice of using the sentences mentioned on the left-hand sides of T-sentences in order to make assertions. It does not take much inquiry to entitle oneself to make the particular assertion that I have picked as an example, but the point obviously carries over: truth in the sense of disquotability is a norm for inquiry, just because it is a norm for the claim-making that inquiry aims at. The force of this norm is part of the demandingness of the constitutive ideal of rationality. Rorty's attempt to separate Tarskian theory from such a norm cannot be sustained.

I surmise that this aspect of how Rorty reads Davidson traces back to a doctrine of Sellars about the very idea of the semantical. In discussing this, I shall no longer be drawing a parallel between Sellars and Davidson, but rather setting Sellars in a contrast with Davidson that is to Sellars's disadvantage. The relevant Sellarsian doctrine is that there are no semantical or meaning-involving *relations* between, as he puts it, elements in the linguistic order or the conceptual order, on the one side, and elements in the real order, on the other. Sellars holds, indeed, that this "non-relational character of 'meaning' and 'aboutness' " is "the key to a correct understanding of the place of mind in nature".[10]

How can Sellars hold that meaning and aboutness are, flatly, non-relational? Consider a statement of what some expression stands for, say " 'Londres' stands for London". It certainly looks as if that affirms a relation, between a name and a city. But according to Sellars, if such a statement is indeed of semantical import, the expression that figures on its right-hand side is not used, or at any rate not used in the ordinary way, namely to mention a city—as it would need to be for the statement to affirm a relation between the mentioned expression and the city. Rather, the expression serves to *exhibit* its own propriety-governed use. If we were to *state* the relevant

9. See "Pragmatism, Davidson and Truth".

10. *Science and Metaphysics*, p. ix.

proprieties, we would be saying that there *ought to be* certain relations between, on the one hand, utterances of the expression, considered as elements in the real order, and, on the other hand, other elements in the real order, most notably in this case a city. A relatedness to extra-linguistic reality is normatively required of ordinary utterances of the expression that figures on the right-hand side of a statement of meaning. By virtue of the non-ordinary use to which the expression is put there, the substance of that required relatedness to extra-linguistic reality is reflected into what the statement says about the expression mentioned on its left-hand side, even though it relates that expression only to another expression. That is how Sellars thinks a statement that affirms a relation only within the linguistic order can nevertheless capture the contribution made by the expression mentioned on its left-hand side to the intentional character, the directedness at the extra-linguistic order, of linguistic acts in which the expression figures.

Sellars's conviction that we must thus explain away the appearance that semantics deals with relations reflects, I believe, a failure to see the point of Tarskian semantics. He sometimes discusses Tarskian semantics, but he never, so far as I know, engages with the genuine article.

Sometimes he suggests that the very idea of word-world relations as they figure in Tarskian semantics is "Augustinian", in the sense that fits the opening sections of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.[11] But that is simply wrong. It is perfectly congenial to Tarskian semantics to say that the notions of such word-world relations as denotation and satisfaction are intelligible only in terms of how employments of such notions contribute towards specifying the possibilities for "making moves in the language-game" by uttering whole sentences in which the relevant words occur. These relations between words and elements in the extra-linguistic order should not be conceived as independently available building-blocks out of which we could construct an account of how language enables us to express thoughts at all. Davidson has made this perfectly clear, for instance in "In Defence of Convention T".

In other places Sellars suggests that proponents of relational semantics conceive the word-world relations that they take semantical statements to affirm in terms of "ideal semantical uniformities".[12] This is an allusion to

11. See "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §30. Compare Robert Brandom's contemptuous remarks about "a supposed word-world relation of reference", at pp. 323–5 of *Making It Explicit*.

12. See *Science and Metaphysics*, pp. 86–7, 112.

those propriety-governed genuine relations, between linguistic acts considered as elements in the real order and other elements in the real order, that figure in his picture as partly constitutive of the non-relational content of statements of meaning. Here Sellars is reading Tarskian semantics in the light of his own understanding of the possibilities. Statements of those "ideal semantical uniformities"—which are not themselves semantical statements—are the closest his view can come to the idea of semantical statements that themselves affirm relations to elements in the real order. So the best Sellars can do in the way of understanding this idea is to suppose that proponents of relational semantics mistakenly think those statements of "ideal semantical uniformities"—which do deal with relations, relations that there ought to be, with elements in the extra-linguistic order among their relata—*are* semantical statements. He assumes that his opponents are working within a dimly grasped version of his picture, and misconstrue the significance of its elements.

But that is not the point of the idea that statements of, for instance, the form ". . . stands for —" relate words to objects. Sellars simply does not engage with a proper understanding of that idea, which is on the following lines. First, the expression that figures on the right-hand side of such a statement is used in an ordinary way, not in the peculiar way that figures in Sellars's account of semantical statements; so we can see the statement as itself affirming a relation between the expression mentioned on the left-hand side and whatever element in the real order can be mentioned by a standard use of the expression on the right—for instance a city, in my earlier example. But second, the idea of the relation thus expressed by "stands for" is—to borrow a Sellarsian phrase—itself fraught with "ought", in a way that reflects what ensures that this conception of semantics is not "Augustinian".[13] We make sense of the very idea of such relations only in terms of how cases of them enter into determining the conditions under which whole sentences are correctly or incorrectly asserted. Here "correctly" and "incorrectly", applied to performances of making claims, indicate the "oughts" with which relations of, say, denotation are fraught. As I said about the norm constituted by truth as disquotability, these "oughts" ultimately reflect the demands of rationality on inquiry and the claim-making that gives expression to its results.

13. For "fraught with 'ought' ", see, e.g., "Truth and 'Correspondence' ", at p. 212.

A descendant of this Sellarsian blind spot for Tarski can account for Rorty's getting himself into the impossible position of needing to deny that disquotability is a norm. Rorty knows that the Tarskian "semantics" Davidson adapts to his purposes is nothing if not relational. Sellars would insist that as such it cannot really be semantics, but the point is not just about the word. The Sellarsian blind spot operates in Rorty's reading of Davidson in the form of a thought on these lines: since the Tarskian theories that Davidson envisages certainly deal with relations between elements of the linguistic order and elements of the extra-linguistic order, they cannot be semantical in Sellars's sense; that is, they cannot deal with meaning or aboutness in any sense that is fraught with "ought". This shows up in Rorty's idea that the Tarskian theories Davidson envisages can have nothing to do with truth as a norm for inquiry. But this line of thought inherits the flaw in Sellars's take on Tarski. It misses the fact that "ought" is already built into the very idea of such word-world relations as those expressible, in neo-Tarskian theory, by ". . . denotes —" (or ". . . stands for —") or ". . . is satisfied by —". That is a way of putting the point of "In Defence of Convention T". There is no basis for Sellars's thought, still present in Rorty's reading of Davidson, that we have to choose between relationality and normative import.

Sellars has a blind spot for Tarski. Is that the end of the story? I shall mention two ways of putting the blind spot in context. I think they are ways of approaching the superiority, and philosophical fruitfulness, of the way of thinking about the semantical that Davidson, exploiting Tarski, has made available to us.

First, it has emerged that there are two different ways in which one might construe the idea that our thought of meaning and aboutness is fraught with "ought". Sellars contemplates only one, and it is less satisfactory than the other, which he does not consider. On the Tarskian-Davidsonian conception the "oughts" in question—the "oughts" that are built into the idea of, say, denotation—are not separable from the idea of correctness in assertion. So they are not seen as prior to the very idea of directedness at the world or objective purport. Sellars, by contrast, envisages "oughts" that relate uses of expressions, as happenings in the real order, to other elements in the real order, in statements of proprieties that can be specified independently of anything semantical; these proprieties can then be seen as determinants, from outside the semantical, of the significance of elements in a language or of the aboutness of unexpressed thoughts. He thinks a language

must be constituted by "rule-governed uniformities" that "can, in principle, be exhaustively described without the use of meaning statements".[14] This opens the way to the transcendental sociologism that is elaborated by Robert Brandom in his *Making It Explicit*.

I think once we see that the intuition that meaning and aboutness are "ought"-laden does not require the relevant "oughts" to be pre-semantical, as they are in Sellars's picture, we can see that there is no ground for the idea that linguistic behaviour must be able to be seen as governed by the sort of proprieties Sellars and Brandom envisage, proprieties that can be formulated in non-semantical terms. There is no reason to suppose the directedness of thought and speech at the world must be thus constituted, from outside the semantical, by norms that, though social, are not yet themselves semantical. One might think that if such formulations are not available, that leaves meaning and aboutness irredeemably spooky. But once we see that the relevant "oughts" can be as it were on the semantic surface, we can take in stride that meaningful speech, and thought directed at the world, are unproblematically part of our lives—as Wittgenstein says, "as much part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing".[15]

The second approach to Sellars's blind spot for Tarski that I want to exploit is through an argument from Sellars's remarkable paper "Being and Being Known". The context is a standing Sellarsian thesis, that the aboutness of unexpressed thought is to be understood on the model of the semanticity of speech. In "Being and Being Known", Sellars frames that thesis in terms of a Thomistic conception of intellectual acts as (second) actualizations of intellectual words. This allows him to express the idea that the intentionality of non-overt intellectual acts—mental acts—is to be *modelled* on the semanticity of overt intellectual acts—acts of speech—by representing the intentionality of non-overt intellectual acts as a *case* of the semanticity of words. The intentionality of a non-overt intellectual act is determined by the semantics of the intellectual words that are actualized in it. And now his blind spot for the possibilities for Tarskian semantics shows up as a blindness to the possibility that the semantics of intellectual words might be captured in Tarskian terms.

This blindness matters for an argument Sellars offers for his doctrine that aboutness is non-relational. The argument works by assuming that the

14. *Naturalism and Ontology*, p. 92.
15. *Philosophical Investigations*, §25.

alternative is to suppose that "intellectual acts differ *not* in their intrinsic character as acts, but by virtue of being directly related to different relata".[16] For my purposes here, I do not need to go into the detail of the argument, which consists in finding drawbacks in two different ways of spelling out such a conception. Independently of detail, Sellars is surely right to find the conception—"the notion that acts of the intellect are intrinsically alike regardless of what they are about" (p. 42)—utterly unprepossessing.

Having arrived at this conclusion, with more detail than I have rehearsed, Sellars writes (p. 43): "But what is the alternative? In general terms it is to hold that acts of the intellect differ intrinsically *qua* acts in a way which systematically corresponds to what they are about, i.e. their subject-matter." This is a version of his standard view of meaning and aboutness. Acts of the intellect, mental acts, differ intrinsically in their semantic properties, which, in the Thomistic image, are the semantic properties of the intellectual words that are actualized in them; and the semantic properties systematically correspond to what the acts are about by way of the reflection, into what semantical statements say, of relations there ought to be whose relata include what the acts are about.

This has the form of an argument to establish Sellars's doctrine that aboutness is non-relational by eliminating any alternative. But the argument is vitiated by the blind spot for Tarski. Sellars's argument assumes that, if someone wants to say intellectual acts differ, not in a way that systematically corresponds to what they are about, but *in* being about what they are about, she will admit to supposing that intellectual acts do not differ intrinsically at all. He assumes that a relational difference between a pair of intellectual acts could only be an extrinsic difference. And a proper appreciation of Tarski gives the lie to this assumption. It is Sellars's own reasonable thought—the basis on which he rejects the only competing possibility he considers—that a difference in intentional directedness between a pair of intellectual acts is an intrinsic difference between them. It is Sellars's own reasonable thought that we can frame a difference in intentional directedness between a pair of intellectual acts as a difference in the semantics of the intellectual words that are actualized in them. If we conceive the semantics of intellectual words in a Tarskian way, as involving relations between elements in the intellectual order and elements in the real order, with the relations fraught with "oughts" ultimately reflecting the demands of the

16. "Being and Being Known", p. 41.

constitutive ideal of rationality, that yields, untouched by Sellars's argument, a conception according to which intellectual acts, mental acts, can differ intrinsically *in* being related—semantically in the extended sense opened up by the Thomistic image—to different things.

We open this possibility by exploiting the conception of the semantical that Davidson, exploiting Tarski, has made available. I want to end by mentioning an implication for the idea of the subjective. Under the label "The Myth of the Subjective", Davidson has attacked a conception of the subjective whose effect is to make our access to the objective, and our understanding of ourselves, problematic in the familiar ways that characterize philosophy in the Cartesian vein.[17] Of course I have no wish to defend the target of that attack. However, it seems to me to be a shame to concede the very idea of the subjective to philosophy in that vein. A Davidsonian understanding of semantics allows us to take it that mental acts are intrinsically characterized by being semantically related—in the extended sense of "semantically"—to elements in the extra-mental order. On that basis we can begin to reclaim an idea of the subjective from the philosophical distortions that enter into the Myth. In the first part of this essay, I urged that the point of invoking the constitutive ideal of rationality, in situating the idea of the mental, is to dismantle Cartesian assumptions. This exploitation of a relational conception of intentionality would go further in that direction.

17. See "The Myth of the Subjective".

ESSAY **12**

Why Is Sellars's Essay Called "*Empiricism* and the Philosophy of Mind"?

1. I take my question from Robert Brandom, who remarks in his "Study Guide" (p. 167): "The title of this essay is '*Empiricism* and the Philosophy of Mind,' but Sellars never comes right out and tells us what his attitude toward empiricism is." Brandom goes on to discuss a passage that might seem to indicate a sympathy for empiricism on Sellars's part, but he dismisses any such reading of it. (I shall come back to this.) He concludes: "Indeed, we can see at this point [he has reached §45] that one of the major tasks of the whole essay is to dismantle empiricism" (p. 168).

I am going to argue that this claim is quite wrong.

To do Brandom justice, I should note that when he defends his claim, what he mentions is, specifically, *traditional* empiricism. But he nowhere contemplates a possibility left open by this more detailed (and correct) specification of Sellars's target—the possibility that Sellars might be aiming to rescue a *non-traditional* empiricism from the wreckage of traditional empiricism, so that he can show us how to be good empiricists. I think that is exactly what Sellars aims to do in this essay.

2. Traditional empiricism, explicitly so described, is in Sellars's sights in the pivotal Part VIII of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind".

Traditional empiricism answers the question "Does empirical knowledge have a foundation?", which is the title of Part VIII, with an unqualified "Yes". Traditional empiricism is foundationalist in a sense Sellars spells out like this (§32):

> One of the forms taken by the Myth of the Given is the idea that there is, indeed *must be*, a structure of particular matter of fact such that (a) each fact can not only be noninferentially known to be the case, but presupposes no

> other knowledge either of particular matter of fact, or of general truths; and (b) . . . the noninferential knowledge of facts belonging to this structure constitutes the ultimate court of appeals for all factual claims—particular and general—about the world.

This formulation is in abstract structural terms. It does not mention experience. But from the way Part VIII flows, it is clear that what Sellars is rejecting when he rejects this form of the Myth is what he labels "traditional empiricism" at the part's conclusion (§38). To make the connection, all we need is the obvious point that according to traditional empiricism, *experience* is our way of acquiring the knowledge that is supposed to be foundational in the sense Sellars explains in §32. In traditional empiricism, experience is taken to yield non-inferential knowledge in a way that presupposes no knowledge of anything else.

Sellars takes pains to draw our attention to this supposed freedom from presuppositions, the second sub-clause of clause (a) in his formulation of an unqualified foundationalism. §32 continues like this:

> It is important to note that I characterized the knowledge of fact belonging to this stratum as not only noninferential, but as presupposing no knowledge of other matters of fact, whether particular or general. It might be thought that this is a redundancy, that knowledge (not belief or conviction, but knowledge) which logically presupposes knowledge of other facts *must* be inferential. This, however, as I hope to show, is itself an episode in the Myth.

When he rejects traditional empiricism at the end of Part VIII, he is rejecting that sub-clause in particular. The rest of the affirmative answer to the question about foundations can stand. In §38 he says:

> If I reject the framework of traditional empiricism, it is not because I want to say that empirical knowledge has *no* foundation. For to put it in this way is to suggest that it is really "empirical knowledge so-called," and to put it in a box with rumors and hoaxes. There is clearly *some* point to the picture of human knowledge as resting on a level of propositions—observation reports—which do not rest on other propositions in the same way as other propositions rest on them. On the other hand, I do wish to insist that the metaphor of "foundation" is misleading in that it keeps us from seeing that if there is a logical dimension in which other empirical propositions rest on observation reports, there is another logical dimension in which the latter rest on the former.

Dependence in this second dimension is the presupposing missed by traditional empiricism. To recognize the second dimension is to accept that what is now—just for this reason—only misleadingly conceived as foundational knowledge presupposes knowledge of other matters of fact, knowledge that would have to belong to the structure that can now only misleadingly be seen as built on those foundations. If we stayed with the metaphor of foundations, we would be implying that the foundations of a building can depend on the building.

This passage characterizes a non-traditional empiricism. To make that explicit, we only need to register that it is *experience* that yields the knowledge expressed in observation reports. Recognizing the second dimension puts us in a position to understand observation reports properly. The knowledge they express is not inferentially grounded on other knowledge of matters of fact, but—in the crucial departure from traditional empiricism—it presupposes other knowledge of matters of fact. It is knowledge on which Sellars continues to hold that other empirical knowledge rests in the first dimension. By introducing an explicit mention of experience, we made it possible to see Part VIII as beginning with a formulation of traditional empiricism, as we needed to do in order to make sense of how Part VIII ends. The same move enables us to see that the position Sellars recommends at the end of Part VIII, as a replacement for traditional empiricism, is a reformed empiricism.

3. That is still somewhat abstract. To fill out this specification of a reformed empiricism, we would need to give a detailed picture of experience, explaining how it can yield non-inferential knowledge, but only in a way that presupposes other knowledge of matters of fact—in contrast with the presupposition-free knowledge-yielding powers that experience is credited with by traditional empiricism.

And that is just what Sellars offers, starting in Part III, "The Logic of 'Looks' ". Experiences, Sellars tells us, contain propositional claims (§16). That is an initially promissory way (as Sellars insists) of crediting experiences with intentional content. He delivers on the promissory note in the first phase of the myth of Jones (Part XV). The topic there is "thoughts"—inner episodes with intentional content—in general. But Sellars reverts to the intentional character of experiences in particular in a retrospective remark at the beginning of the next part, in §60. There he indicates, in effect, that he has finally put the verbal currency he issued in §16 on the gold standard.

In §16 bis, Sellars says it is clear that a complete account of (visual) experience requires "something more", over and above intentional content, namely "what philosophers have in mind when they speak of 'visual impressions' or 'immediate visual experiences' ". (It can be questioned whether this *is* clear, or even correct, but since my aim is entirely exegetical I shall not consider that here.) When Sellars introduces this "something more", he remarks that its "logical status . . . is a problem which will be with us for the remainder of this argument". His final treatment of this topic comes at the end of the essay, in the second phase of the myth of Jones (Part XVI). The myth of Jones offers an account of the non-dispositional mental in general. But in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" it clearly has a more specific purpose as well: to complete the account of *experience*, in particular, that Sellars begins on in Part III. The first phase vindicates his promissory talk of experiences as having intentional content, and the second deals with the "something more" he thinks is needed to accommodate their sensory character.

And already in Part III, when the attribution of intentional content to experiences is still only promissory, and Part VIII is yet to come, Sellars has his eye on ensuring that the capacity to yield non-inferential knowledge that he is beginning to provide for, by attributing intentional content to experiences, is not as traditional empiricism conceives it. In Part III Sellars is already insisting—to put things in the terms he will use in Part VIII—that an experience's having as its intentional content that such-and-such is the case, and hence the possibility that such an experience might yield non-inferential knowledge that such-and-such is the case, presupposes knowledge other than that non-inferential knowledge itself.

Part III is largely devoted to a telling example of this: visual experience of colour. Here it might be especially tempting to suppose experience can yield knowledge in self-standing chunks, without dependence on other knowledge. Experiences that, to speak in the promissory idiom, contain the claim that something in front of one is green are experiences in which it is at least true that it looks to one as if something in front of one is green. Some experiences that are non-committally describable in those terms are experiences in which one *sees*, and so is in a position to know non-inferentially, that something in front of one is green. The ability to enjoy experiences in which it looks to one as if something in front of one is green is part of what it is to have the (visually applicable) *concept* of something's being green. And Sellars argues that having colour concepts "involves the ability to tell what colors things have by looking at them—which, in turn, involves knowing in

what circumstances to place an object if one wishes to ascertain its color by looking at it" (§18). The possibility of having experiences in which it looks to one as if something is green, and hence the possibility of acquiring non-inferential knowledge that something is green by having such an experience, depend—not inferentially, but in what is going to come into view as the second dimension—on knowledge about, for instance, the effects of different lighting conditions on colour appearances.

4. Brandom conceives observational knowledge, the knowledge expressed in observation reports, as the upshot of a special kind of *reliable differential responsive disposition*—a kind that is special in that the responses its instances issue in are not *mere* responses, like an electric eye's opening a door when its beam is broken, but claims, moves in an *inferentially* articulated practice. Brandom attributes this picture of observational knowledge to Sellars; he calls it "Sellars's two-ply account of observation".[1]

In favourable circumstances dispositions of this kind issue in expressions of observational knowledge. But a disposition of this kind can be triggered into operation in circumstances in which it would be risky to make the claim that is its primary output. Perhaps the claim would be false; certainly it would not express knowledge. Subjects learn to inhibit inclinations to make claims in such circumstances. For instance subjects learn, in certain lighting conditions, to withhold the claims about colours that, if allowed free rein, their responsive dispositions would induce them to make. In such conditions "looks" statements serve as substitute outlets for the tendencies to make claims that the responsive dispositions embody. "Looks" statements *evince* responsive dispositions (of a specifically visual kind) whose primary output one is inhibiting.

If something appropriately conceivable as *sensory consciousness* figures in our acquisition of observational knowledge, Brandom thinks that is a mere detail about the mechanism by which the relevant responsive dispositions work in our case. There could perfectly well be responsive dispositions that issue in knowledge-expressing claims without mediation by sensory consciousness, at any rate sensory consciousness with a content matching that of the knowledge yielded by the dispositions. Perhaps there are. (This is how it is with the chicken-sexers of epistemological folklore.) And Brandom thinks

1. See his essay "The Centrality of Sellars's Two-Ply Account of Observation to the Arguments of 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind' ".

this possibility (or actuality, if that is what it is) lays bare the essential nature of observational knowledge. On this view, experience—a kind of shaping of sensory consciousness—is inessential to the epistemology of observational knowledge, and hence to the epistemology of empirical knowledge in general. If empiricism accords a special epistemological significance to experience, there is no room in this picture for empiricism, traditional or otherwise.

This is not the place to consider the prospects for this radical project of Brandom's, to dispense with experience in an account of empirical knowledge, and hence to leave no room for even a reformed empiricism. But given the question I have set out to address, I do need to consider Brandom's attempt to read the project into Sellars. I think this flies in the face of the plain sense of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind"—the whole essay, but to begin with Part III in particular.

5. In §16, where Sellars introduces the idea that experiences contain claims, he is not beginning to show us how to do without experience in our conception of empirical knowledge. On the contrary, he is beginning to *explain* experience, as a kind of inner episode that can figure in our understanding of empirical knowledge without entangling us in the Myth of the Given. Only beginning, because he needs the myth of Jones, to vindicate the very idea of inner episodes, and in particular the idea of inner episodes with intentional content, before he can claim to have completed the task.

In the doctrine Brandom thinks Sellars is trying to expound in Part III, claims figure only in the guise of overt linguistic performances—the primary outlet of responsive dispositions, what subjects evince an inhibited tendency towards when they say how things look to them. But Sellars uses the notion of claims in an avowedly promissory first shot at attributing intentional content *to experiences*, to be vindicated when Jones introduces concepts of inner episodes with intentional content on the model of overt linguistic performances with their semantical character. Claims figure in Brandom's picture only in the sense in which claims are Jones's *model*. What Sellars needs Jones to model on claims in the primary sense, to finish the task he begins on in Part III, is not on Brandom's scene at all.

Obviously looking forward to the myth of Jones, Sellars says, in §16, that justifying his promissory talk of experiences as containing propositional claims is "one of [his] major aims". When Jones starts work, his fellows already have the subjunctive conditional, hence the ability to speak of dispositions, and they can speak of overt linguistic behaviour with its semantical

character. (Sellars adds that to the original "Rylean" resources in §49, before Jones begins.) To fulfil the major aim Sellars acknowledges in §16, he needs to follow Jones in going decisively beyond those pre-Jonesian resources. Only after the first phase of Jones's conceptual innovation does Sellars in effect declare that he has discharged his promissory note (§60). Brandom offers to account for "looks" statements in terms of dispositions, which can be inhibited, to make claims in the primary sense, overt linguistic performances of a certain sort. But this apparatus is all available before Jones's innovation. In implying that his apparatus suffices for Sellars's aims in Part III, Brandom precludes himself from properly registering the promissory character Sellars stresses in his moves there.[2]

In §15, Sellars rejects the idea that a "looks" statement reports a minimal objective fact—objective in being "logically independent of the beliefs, the conceptual framework, of the perceiver", but minimal in being safer than a report of, say, the colour of an object in the perceiver's environment. He is certainly right to reject this; because of the sense in which these facts are supposed to be objective, this construal of "looks" statements is a version of the Myth of the Given.

But Brandom thinks "looks" statements, for Sellars, should not be reports at all—in particular not reports of experiences, since Sellars is supposed to be showing us how to do without experiences in our picture of empirical knowledge. Thus, purporting to capture a point Sellars should be trying to make in §15, Brandom writes (p. 139): "it is a mistake to treat [statements to the effect that it looks to one as if something is *F*] as reports at all—since they *evince* a disposition to call something *F*, but may not happily be thought of as *saying that* one has such a disposition." This general rejection of the idea that "looks" statements are reports does not fit what Sellars actually

2. In *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes*, Sellars allows for a version of "looks" statements in the pre-Jonesian language. He says (p. 159): "This locution ['*x* looks red to me'] must . . . be interpreted as having, roughly, the sense of '*x* causes me to be disposed to think-out-loud: Lo! This is red, or would cause me to have this disposition if it were not for such and such considerations.'" If one said that, one would be explicitly attributing a disposition to oneself, rather than evincing one, as in Brandom's picture. But what we have here is just a different way of exploiting the conceptual apparatus Brandom confines himself to. The passage brings out that the materials for Brandom's account of "looks" statements are available before Jones has done his work, and hence before Sellars has in hand the materials that he makes it clear he needs for *his* account of "looks" statements.

says, and Brandom tries to accommodate that by saying Sellars "wavers" on the point. But a glance at the text shows Sellars to be unwaveringly clear that "looks" statements *are* reports—not, certainly, of dispositions, the only candidate Brandom considers, but of *experiences*, and in particular of their intentional content. §15 ends like this:

> Let me begin by noting that there certainly seems to be something in the idea that the sentence "This looks green to me now" has a reporting role. Indeed it would seem to be essentially a report. But if so, *what* does it report, if not a minimal objective fact, and if what it reports is not to be analyzed in terms of sense data?

And a couple of pages later (in §16 bis), after he has introduced the two aspects he attributes to experiences, their intentionality and their sensory character, Sellars answers that question—he tells us what "looks" statements report:

> Thus, when I say "X looks green to me now" I am *reporting* the fact that my experience is, so to speak, intrinsically, *as an experience*, indistinguishable from a veridical one of seeing that x is green. Included in the report is the ascription to my experience of the claim 'x is green'; and the fact that I make this report rather than the simple report "X is green" indicates that certain considerations have operated to raise, so to speak in a higher court, the question 'to endorse or not to endorse'.

This is not wavering. It is a straightforward, indeed emphatic, statement of something Brandom thinks Sellars should be denying, that "looks" statements are reports: not (to repeat) of dispositions, but of the intentional (claim-containing) and, implicitly, the sensory character of experiences. When Sellars discharges the promissory note of §16, the culminating move (in §59) is precisely to provide for a *reporting* role for self-attributions of "thoughts", which include experiences *qua* characterizable as having intentional content.

If one goes no further than reporting one's experience as containing the claim that things are thus and so, one still has to determine whether to endorse that claim oneself. If one endorses it, one claims to see that things are thus and so (if the experience is a visual experience). If not, one restricts oneself to saying it looks to one as if things are thus and so. In a "looks" statement, that is, one withholds one's endorsement of the claim one reports one's experience as containing.

Now Brandom seizes on this withholding of endorsement, and exploits it in an explanation, which he attributes to Sellars, for the incorrigibility of "looks" statements. Brandom writes, on Sellars's behalf (p. 142): "Since asserting 'X looks *F*' is not undertaking a propositional commitment—but only expressing an overrideable disposition to do so—there is no issue as to whether or not that commitment (which one?) is correct."

But this reflects Brandom's failure to register the Sellarsian idea I have been documenting, the idea that when one says something of the form "X looks *F*" one reports the claim-containing character of one's experience. That one's experience contains a certain claim—in Brandom's schematic example, the claim that X is *F*—is an assertoric commitment one *is* undertaking when one says how things look to one, even though one withholds commitment to the claim one reports one's experience as containing. Brandom's question "Which one?" is meant to be only rhetorical, but it has an answer: commitment to the proposition that one's experience contains a certain claim. Brandom's explanation of the incorrigibility of "looks" statements is not Sellarsian at all. For an authentically Sellarsian account of first-person authority in saying how things look to one—"privileged access" to what one reports in such a performance—we have to wait until the culmination of the first phase of the myth of Jones; Sellars addresses the issue in §59.[3]

6. Commenting on §§19 and 20, Brandom remarks (p. 147): "These sections do not present Sellars's argument in a perspicuous, or even linear, fashion." This reflects the fact that what he thinks Sellars *should* be doing in Part III is expounding the "two-ply" picture of observational knowledge, in which observation reports are explained in terms of reliable differential responsive dispositions whose outputs are constituted as conceptually contentful by their position in an inferentially articulated practice.

3. In his enthusiasm for the explanatory power of the idea of withholding endorsement, Brandom is led into a clearly wrong characterization of Sellars's treatment of generic looks in §17. Brandom says (p. 145): "Sellars's account is in terms of scope of endorsement. One says that the plane figure looks 'many-sided' instead of '119-sided' just in case one is willing only to endorse (be held responsible for justifying) the more general claim." (For a similar statement, see *Making It Explicit*, p. 293.) But on Sellars's account, if one says a plane figure looks many-sided, one exactly does *not* endorse the claim that it is many-sided. Sellars's account of generic looks is not in terms of scope of endorsement, but in terms of what is up for endorsement. The claims that experiences contain, like claims in general, can be indeterminate in content.

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But it is questionable exegetical practice to insist that a text contains something one wants to find in it, even though that requires one to criticize its perspicuity. One should pause to wonder whether it does something else, perhaps with complete perspicuity.

And that is how things are here. In Part III, and in particular in §§19 and 20, Sellars is not unperspicuously presenting Brandom's "two-ply" picture. He is, quite perspicuously, giving a preliminary account of how the knowledge-yielding capacity of experience—even experience of something as simple as colour—presupposes knowledge of matters of fact other than those non-inferentially knowable by enjoying experiences of the kind in question. The presupposed knowledge is exactly not inferentially related to the knowledge that presupposes it; that is Sellars's point in Part VIII.

Brandom says "endorsement" is Sellars's term for the second element in the "two-ply" picture (p. 140). He thinks Sellars's talk of endorsement is directed at entitling him to talk of claims at all, by placing what he is only thereby permitted to conceive as conceptually contentful commitments in an inferentially organized deontic structure.

But Sellars introduces the idea that experiences contain claims without any hint that he feels obliged to concern himself—here—with the question what claims are. His initial account of "looks" statements is promissory because he needs Jones to extend the idea of claims from its primary application, which is to a certain sort of overt linguistic performance, before it can be used in attributing intentional content to inner episodes. For these purposes, the primary application is unproblematic. Sellars's talk of endorsement is not code for the idea of taking up what would otherwise be mere responses into a deontically structured practice, so that they can be understood to have conceptual content. "Endorsement" just means *endorsement*. Once we are working with the idea that experiences contain claims, it is routinely obvious that the subject of an experience faces the question whether to endorse the claim her experience contains. The idea that the outputs of some responsive dispositions are constituted as conceptually contentful by inferential articulation is not relevant to any point Sellars has occasion to make in this part of the essay.

Or, I believe, anywhere in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". I mentioned earlier that before he puts Jones to work, Sellars adds concepts of overt linguistic performances, with their conceptual content, to the

"Rylean" resources that are already in place (§49). He does that quickly and without fanfare. In this essay Sellars is not in the business of giving an "inferentialist" account of what it is for overt performances to have conceptual content at all, the thesis that is the second element in Brandom's "two-ply" picture. Not that he offers some other kind of account. His purposes here generate no need to concern himself with the question to which "inferentialism" is a response.

After his remark that Sellars's presentation in §§19 and 20 is not perspicuous, Brandom says "the argument is repeated in a more satisfactory form in [§§33–37]". He means that those sections, the central sections of Part VIII, give a better formulation of the "two-ply" picture. But this reflects the fact that he misreads those sections too.

Brandom thinks the point of §§33–37 is to expound the second element in the "two-ply" account, the idea that the outputs of the responsive dispositions that issue in observation reports are constituted as conceptually contentful by their position in an inferentially articulated practice. Against this background, he argues that those sections bring out a problem for Sellars's epistemological internalism.

Sellars holds that for a claim to express observational knowledge, two conditions must be met (§35, the two hurdles). First, the claim must issue from a capacity whose outputs are reliably correct. And second, the person who makes the claim must be aware that her pronouncements on such matters have that kind of authority. As Sellars notes, the idea of reliability can be explicated in terms of there being a good inference—what Brandom calls "the reliability inference"—from the person's making a claim (in the circumstances in which she makes it) to things being as she says they are.

Brandom thinks this puts Sellars's second condition in tension with the thesis that observational knowledge is non-inferential. He thinks the condition would imply that one arrives at an observation report by persuading oneself, via the "reliability inference", that things are as one would be saying they are if one indulged an inclination one finds in oneself to make a certain claim. That would imply that the knowledge expressed in the report is inferential. So Brandom concludes that we must reject the second condition if we are to hold on to Sellars's own thought that observational knowledge is not inferential. To be better Sellarsians than Sellars himself, we should insist that an observational knower can invoke her own reliability at

most *ex post facto*.[4] And it is a short step from there to claiming, as Brandom does, that there can be cases of observational knowledge in which the knower cannot invoke her own reliability even *ex post facto*. It is enough if someone else, a scorekeeper, can justify a belief as the conclusion of the "reliability inference", even if the believer herself cannot do that.[5]

But here Brandom misses what Sellars, in §32, signals as the central point of Part VIII: to bring into view the second dimension of dependence. One bit of knowledge can depend on another in this dimension without any threat to the thesis that it is non-inferential.

We have already considered the example of this that Sellars elaborates in Part III. (He refers back to Part III, in particular to §19, in §37.) Claims about the colours of things, made on the basis of experience, depend in the second dimension on knowledge about the effects of different kinds of illumination on colour appearances. I might support my entitlement to the claim that something is green by saying "This is a good light for telling what colour something is". The relevance of this to my observational authority about the thing's colour belongs in the second dimension, which is not to be spelled out in terms of inference. I do not cast what I say about the light as a premise in an inferential grounding for what I claim to know about the colour of the thing.

Similarly with Sellars's second hurdle. I might support my entitlement to the claim that something is green by invoking—not just *ex post facto*, but at the time—my reliability on such matters. I might say "I can tell a green thing when I see one (at least in this kind of light)". I must be aware of my reliability, to be able to cite it like this, in support of the authority of my claim. And here too, the support is in the second dimension, which Sellars carefully separates from the dimension in which one bit of knowledge provides inferential grounding for another.

It is true that the concept of reliability can be explicated in terms of the goodness of the "reliability inference". But that is irrelevant to the present point. To say that a claim depends for its authority, in the second dimension, on the subject's reliability (in a way that requires her to be aware of her reliability) is not to say that it depends in the first dimension, the inferential dimension, on her inclination to make it, via the "reliability inference".

4. For the idea of *ex post facto* inferential justifications of non-inferential beliefs, see "Insights and Blind Spots of Reliabilism", especially at pp. 103–4 and 211, n. 3.

5. See *Making It Explicit*, pp. 217–21. The idea is hinted at in the Study Guide; see pp. 157, 159.

In Brandom's treatment of Part III, taking Sellars to be concerned to expound the "two-ply" picture of observation knowledge led to a baseless accusation of lack of perspicuity. Here it leads him to miss, nearly completely, what Sellars signals as the central point he wants to make in Part VIII.

With his fixation on the "two-ply" picture, Brandom makes almost nothing of Sellars's point about the second dimension. He almost exclusively explains Sellars's moves in Part VIII in terms of a requirement for *understanding* the forms of words that are uttered in observation reports, that one be able to use them not only in making observation reports but also as premises and conclusions of inferences. There surely is such a requirement, but there is nothing to indicate that it is Sellars's concern here (or, as I have urged, anywhere else in this essay). Sellars's concern is with a requirement for claims to be expressive of observational knowledge, with the distinctive *authority* that that implies. Understanding what it is that one is claiming—in this case with that distinctive authority—is not what is in question. The point of Sellars's second hurdle is not to cite the "reliability inference" as part of the inferentially articulated structure in which forms of words must stand if they are to have conceptual content at all. Sellars's thesis is that *observational authority* depends on the subject's own reliability in the second dimension, and this dependence requires that the subject be aware of her own reliability. He invokes the "reliability inference" only as a gloss on the idea of reliability. (That it is a good gloss is obvious. This is not a first move in giving a contentious "inferentialist" account of conceptual content *überhaupt*.) The second hurdle stands in no tension with the thesis that observational knowledge is non-inferential.

At one place in the Study Guide (p. 162, expounding §38), Brandom—as it were in spite of himself—lets a glimpse of Sellars's real point emerge, when he says that observation reports "themselves rest (not inferentially but in the order of *understanding* and sometimes of justification) on other sorts of knowledge". But the stress on the order of understanding—by which Brandom means the inferential structure that forms of words must belong to if they are to be conceptually contentful at all—is, as I have been urging, irrelevant to Sellars's point. Sellars's case against traditional empiricism relates entirely to the order of justification, the order of responses to the Kantian question "*Quid iuris?*". His point is that observational knowledge *always* (not sometimes) rests in the order of justification—in the non-inferential second dimension—on other sorts of knowledge. That is why it is not foundational in the sense envisaged by traditional empiricism.

I have put this in the terms Brandom uses. But we could express Sellars's central point in Part VIII by saying that this talk of *the* order of justification is misleading. One way of placing an episode or state in the space of reasons—as Sellars says we do when we classify it as an episode or state of knowing (§36)—is to give grounds for accepting that its content is true, premises from which there is a sufficiently good inference to the truth of what the putative knower claims or would claim. Sellars's point in introducing the second dimension is that there is another way of responding to the question "*Quid iuris?*", in which what one says in response relates quite differently to the claim whose candidacy to be recognized as knowledgeable is under discussion. In a response of this second kind, one does not offer grounds for endorsing a claim that purports to express knowledge. What one addresses, in the first instance, is not the truth of the particular thing the subject says but her authority, in the circumstances, to say something—anything—of the relevant sort: for example her authority, in the prevailing illumination, to make a claim about something's colour. Of course if we accept that she is in a position to speak with authority on the matters in question, that supplies us with material that could serve in an inferential grounding for the particular thing she says, using the fact that she says it, plus the consideration we have accepted as bearing on her authority in saying things of the relevant kind, as premises. But the consideration that bears on her authority is directly relevant to whether the claim she makes is knowledgeable, not by way of its capacity to figure in an inferential grounding for the claim, an argument to its truth. We convince ourselves that it is true on the ground that her saying it is expressive of knowledge; its truth does not figure in our route to the conviction that she is a knower.[6]

I have been insisting that Sellars's aim in introducing the second dimension is *epistemological*. The second dimension pertains to what is required for claims to have the authority that belongs to expressions of knowledge. But

6. In the context in which Sellars identifies the space of reasons as the space in which one places episodes or states when one classifies them as episodes or states of knowing, he describes it as the space "of justifying and being able to justify what one says" (§36). What I have said about the second dimension implies that this description is not completely felicitous. A second-dimension response to the question "*Quid iuris?*" justifies *what one says* only indirectly. Its direct aim is to characterize one's right to speak with authority on the topic one speaks on. It does that independently of what, in particular, one says.

the point is not epistemological in a way that excludes *semantical* significance. Concepts of, say, colour—in their usual form, as opposed to the versions of them that might be available to the congenitally blind—can be employed in claims (or judgments) with the distinctive authority that attaches to observation reports, and that fact is partly constitutive of the kind of content the concepts have.

But this semantical significance is quite distinct from the "inferentialism" that is the second element of Brandom's "two-ply" account. The point does not concern an inferential dependence between *claimables*, constituted as such only by there being inferential relations between them, as in Brandom's picture. It concerns a non-inferential dependence thanks to which certain *claimings* can have the authority of observational knowledge. As I said, there is a semantical aspect to this, because the forms of words uttered in these claimings would not have the distinctive kind of conceptual content they do if they were not able to figure in claimings with that distinctive authority. But this is not a first step into "inferentialism". The relevant dependence is, as I have followed Sellars in insisting, not inferential. And anyway, since the dependence is exemplified only by observation reports, not by claims in general, the semantical thought here is not, as in Brandom's "inferentialism", one about conceptual contentfulness *überhaupt*.

7. As I said at the beginning, when Brandom argues that Sellars's aim is to dismantle empiricism, he considers and dismisses a passage that might seem to point in a different direction. I promised to come back to this.

The passage is §6, where Sellars embarrasses classical sense-datum theorists with commitment to an inconsistent triad, of which one element is the thesis that "the ability to know facts of the form *x is* ϕ is acquired". One could avoid the inconsistency by giving up that thesis. But against that option Sellars says it would "do violence to the predominantly nominalistic proclivities of the empiricist tradition". As Brandom acknowledges, the thesis that the ability to have classificatory knowledge is acquired is part of the "psychological nominalism" Sellars is going to espouse in his own voice (see §§ 29, 30, 31). So it is tempting to suppose we are intended to recognize a convergence with that Sellarsian doctrine when, spelling out the nominalistic proclivities of the empiricist tradition, he says:

> [M]ost empirically minded philosophers are strongly inclined to think that all classificatory consciousness, all knowledge *that something is thus-and-so*,

> or, in logicians' jargon, all subsumption of particulars under universals, involves learning, concept formation, even the use of symbols.

But Brandom insists that Sellars is not indicating any sympathy with the empiricist tradition. Brandom implies (p. 169) that Part VI deals with some nominalistic proclivities, distinctive to the empiricist tradition, in which Sellars himself does not indulge, even though Sellars agrees with the empiricists that the ability to have classificatory knowledge is acquired.

There are two things that are unsatisfactory about this.

First, Part VI does not depict the classical empiricists as having their thinking shaped by nominalistic proclivities not indulged in by Sellars. Sellars's point about the classical empiricists is that they take themselves to have a problem of universals only in connection with *determinable* repeatables. Where *determinate* repeatables are concerned, they proceed as if the ability to know facts of the form *x is* ϕ is a concomitant of mere sentience, not something that needs to be acquired. That is, the classical empiricists are only imperfectly faithful to the nominalism Sellars ascribes to their tradition in §6. As far as this goes, the nominalistic proclivities Sellars ascribes to the empiricist tradition can perfectly well be the nominalistic proclivities he is going to espouse for himself.

Second, on Brandom's account the argument Sellars deploys, to exclude that option for avoiding the inconsistent triad, is purely *ad hominem*. And this does not fit comfortably with the importance the argument has in the structure of the essay.

The nominalistic proclivities of the empiricist tradition are essential for justifying what Sellars says at the beginning of §7:

> It certainly begins to look as though the classical concept of a sense datum were a mongrel resulting from a crossbreeding of two ideas:
>
> (1) The idea that there are certain inner episodes—e.g. sensations of red or of C#—which can occur to human beings (and brutes) without any prior process of learning or concept formation; and without which it would *in some sense* be impossible to *see*, for example, that the facing surface of a physical object is red and triangular, or *hear* that a certain physical sound is C#.
>
> (2) The idea that there are certain inner episodes which are the noninferential knowings that certain items are, for instance, red or C#; and that these episodes are the necessary conditions of empirical knowledge as providing the evidence for all other empirical propositions.

Why must these two kinds of episodes be distinguished? Those described under (1) do not require a prior process of learning or concept formation. But those described under (2), non-inferential knowings that . . . , do. And why should we accept that they do? The only ground so far on offer is that this is implied by the nominalism Sellars attributes to the empiricist tradition. His own nominalism, which Brandom says is different, has not yet been explicitly introduced.

Sellars repeats this diagnosis of classical sense-datum theory at the beginning of Part III, in §10. And there he goes on as follows:

> A reasonable next step would be to examine these two ideas and determine how that which survives criticism in each is properly to be combined with the other. Clearly we would have to come to grips with the idea of *inner episodes*, for this is common to both.

This sets the agenda for the rest of the essay. In §16 and §16 bis Sellars begins to explain experience as involving episodes of the two kinds conflated into a mongrel by classical sense-datum theory. And that continues to be his project until the end. The myth of Jones serves the purpose of coming to grips with the idea of inner episodes—episodes of those two kinds in particular.

Now it would be a structural weakness if this agenda-setting move were motivated by an argument that is purely *ad hominem*, an argument that should seem cogent only to adherents of the empiricist tradition, supposedly not including Sellars himself. The structure of the essay looks stronger if the argument in §6 is meant to be already, as formulated there, convincing to right-thinking people. It is true that the argument is explicitly directed *ad hominem*. It points out that a certain escape from the inconsistent triad is unavailable to classical sense-datum theorists, who belong to the empiricist tradition if anyone does. But the argument's role in motivating what becomes the programme for the rest of the essay recommends that we not understand it as exclusively *ad hominem*. We should take Sellars to be intending to exploit the convergence between the nominalism of §6 and his own nominalism, so as to indicate that he himself belongs to the empiricist tradition.

That fits with understanding "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" as aiming to recall empiricism to its better wisdom, in an argument that hinges on its nominalistic proclivities. As Part VI points out, the canonical empiricists lapse from the nominalism of their tradition in their picture of our dealings with determinate observable qualities. To avoid the Myth of the

Given in the form it takes in traditional empiricism, what we need is an empiricism that keeps faith with the nominalism only imperfectly conformed to by traditional empiricism. And that is just what Sellars provides.

8. So far I have argued exclusively from the text of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". I shall end with a piece of evidence from elsewhere.

At one point in "Imperatives, Intentions, and the Logic of 'Ought' ",[7] Sellars considers a Jonesian account of intentions, in which "shall" thoughts are conceived as inner episodes modelled on certain overt utterances. He introduces the idea like this (p. 195):

> There is a consideration pertaining to intentions and their expression which, though not strictly a part of the argument of this paper, indicates how it might fit into the broader framework of an empiricist philosophy of mind.

And in an endnote he says (p. 217):

> For an elaboration of such a framework, see my "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,". . . .

Here Sellars is explicit that "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" puts forward an empiricist philosophy of mind. He is talking about the Jonesian approach to the mental in general, rather than the epistemological and transcendental implications of the way "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" deals with perceptual experience in particular. But it is clear that the label "empiricist" is—to put it mildly—not one he is keen to disown. And it is natural to extend this to his discussion of experience itself.

This passage encourages me in answering my question in the way I have been urging. Why does "empiricism" figure in the title of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind"? Because a major purpose of the essay is to propound an empiricism free from the defects of traditional empiricism.

7. Thanks to Joshua Stuchlik for drawing my attention to this passage.

ESSAY 13

Sellars's Thomism

1. Wilfrid Sellars was an important systematic philosopher, not a historian of philosophy. But his own thinking was pervasively shaped by his broad and profound study of the great tradition in philosophy. And in many places he found it natural to expound his own thinking by way of discussing his predecessors. The most obvious example is his book *Science and Metaphysics*, which is subtitled, in a way that captures its character well, *Variations on Kantian Themes*. But there are many smaller-scale exploitations of the mighty dead in Sellars's systematic writings: invocations of, for instance, Leibniz, the British empiricists, and Wittgenstein. In this essay I am going to consider a case of this use of history to expound his own thinking that is perhaps surprising in the light of the kind of philosophy Sellars went in for. I am going to consider a paper called "Being and Being Known", in which Sellars explains and recommends a central feature of his own thinking by commending, but also taking issue with, something he finds in Aquinas. Aquinas will come into view here only through Sellars, so I shall be engaging in the history of philosophy only at one remove (unless considering Sellars already counts as engaging in the history of philosophy). My interest in the topic comes from trying to understand Sellars himself rather than his historical foil. But by the end I shall be in a position to say something general about the kind of history of philosophy that Sellars is doing in this work.[1]

2. One of Sellars's central doctrines is that the intentionality—the aboutness—of episodes of thought should be modelled on, understood as an extension from, our understanding of the way linguistic performances are meaningful.

1. This essay was given as a Charles McCracken Lecture in the history of philosophy at Michigan State University.

It may help to bring out the flavour of this conception if I mention P. T. Geach's presentation of the same fundamental idea, in the guise of an account of judging, which Geach discusses as a paradigmatic mental act. Geach works with an idiom he finds in more than one place in the Old Testament. He focuses on an example from the Psalms: "The fool hath said in his heart: there is no God."[2] (The passage is of course familiar from Hobbes's *Leviathan*, where the same fool says in his heart: there is no such thing as Justice.)[3] What the psalm tells us, differently put, is that the fool has judged that there is no God. The fool has not expressed his judgment overtly, so as to let others know of it. Perhaps we can count saying things, literally, as judging out loud, but we are told that the fool's saying is kept in his heart. However, the psalm's idiom clearly models the inner, non-overt performance that the fool goes in for on an outer, overt performance of saying out loud, not in one's heart, "There is no God", or words to that effect, perhaps in a different language—the description works just as well in English as it did in Hebrew.

The suggestion is not that what it is to think a thought is to have words sounding in one's mind's ear, so to speak, or to be rehearsing in the imagination a performance in which one would be speaking the words out loud. No doubt thinking sometimes involves verbal imagery, but the suggestion is not that this always happens when one thinks. The proposal is not about the phenomenology of thought episodes. In fact it is not a recommendation of any conception, phenomenological or otherwise, of what thought episodes, considered in themselves, in abstraction from their content, might be. What the proposal concerns is how to understand, precisely, the *content* of thought episodes, their directedness at external reality. The proposal is that we should start with an understanding of how overt speech has its bearing on its subject matter, and use that understanding as a basis on which to form a parallel conception of how thinking has its bearing on a reality external to thinking. That is, we should take it that the very idea of judging that such-and-such is the case—a paradigmatic example of episodic thought—is formed by analogy with the idea of saying that such-and-such is the case. The very idea of judging embodies a kind of metaphor.

3. Now it is well known that Thomism includes a version of what Sellars calls "the doctrine of the mental word" ("Being and Being Known", p. 43).

2. Psalms, xiv.1; see Geach, *Mental Acts*.

3. *Leviathan*, Part I, chapter 15: p. 203 in the Macpherson edition.

In Thomistic parlance, to have, say, the concept of being a man—to have the capacity to engage in intellectual acts in which, for instance, something is thought of as being a man—is to have one's intellect in first act, or first actuality, with respect to the mental word ·man·; that is, to have that mental word in one's intellectual repertoire. This first actuality is one step above the mere potentiality to acquire the concept, but it is obviously still in its way a potentiality. But when one actually engages in an intellectual act in which one thinks of something as being a man, one's intellect is in second act, or second actuality, with respect to the mental word ·man·. The difference between first actuality and second actuality is the difference between having the capacity to use the word and actually using it.

I have been paraphrasing Sellars's sketch of this Thomistic way of talking. It will not have been apparent to the ear that Sellars uses dot quotes to cite the mental word that serves as an example in his exposition. In Sellars's usual way of employing the dot-quote convention, any expression, in any language, that has—nearly enough—the same role in the language it belongs to as the word "man" has in English is a ·man·. As the construction with the indefinite article indicates, "·man·" is like "lion" in being a classificatory term, a term for things that belong to a kind. The instances of the kind, each of which is a ·man·, are words, and they belong to the kind by virtue of their having matching roles—nearly enough—in the languages they belong to. So for instance "Mensch", in German, is a ·man·, and so is "homme", in French. Of course "man" in English is itself a ·man·. We need "nearly enough" in the account of what it is for something to be a ·man· for the obvious reason that the roles of words in different languages cannot be expected to match perfectly.

Now as I said, in his exposition of Thomism, Sellars equates the dot-quoted expression with the mental word. Thereby he indicates two things. First, the mental word he is talking about is (to put the point by using the dot-quoted expression in his more usual way) *a* ·man·; it has—nearly enough—the same role in the mental language as the English word "man" has in English. Second, it is not to be identified with a word of any particular ordinary language. We might say the identity of the mental word is exhausted by the fact that it is a ·man·, whereas in the case of an ordinary example of something that is a ·man·, it is also true of it that it is a particular word in a particular language, say "homme" or "Mensch".

Brushing past these complications, and putting the Thomistic doctrine without the scholastic-Aristotelian apparatus of grades of actuality, we can

say that what it comes to is that intellectual episodes, for instance acts of judgment, are conceived as exercises of competence with mental words.

So far, this sounds like an anticipation of Sellars's own account, and that is surely why Sellars is interested in the Thomistic doctrine at all. However, in Sellars's reading the Thomistic version of the doctrine of the mental word lacks a feature that is essential to his own version. In Sellars's own version, the analogy between non-overt acts of the intellect and overt linguistic performances is essential for explaining the idea that thought has content. That was what I stressed when I set out the Geach-Sellars proposal. But according to Thomism as Sellars reads it, "the nature of a mental word can be understood independently of this analogy" (p. 44). On Sellars's interpretation, when Aquinas depicts intellectual acts as inner uses of mental words, he is giving expression to an understanding of how intellectual acts relate to their subject matter that does not turn on an analogy with the way overt linguistic performances relate to their subject matter.

This is on the face of it a somewhat surprising reading. It seems obvious that any idea of a mental word would need to involve an analogy with the idea of a word of the ordinary kind, a word one might use or encounter in speech or writing. It will take some explaining to bring out how Sellars understands the Thomistic doctrine so that the analogy that the idea of mental words certainly does carry on its surface is nevertheless not the crucial thing about the idea, as it is in Sellars's own story.

4. What we have seen so far of the Thomistic conception of intellectual acts, as Sellars understands it, is that in an intellectual episode in which the concept of being a man is involved, the intellect is in second actuality with respect to a mental word that corresponds to our word "man".

There is a complication that I shall mention only to set it aside. No doubt in any such episode the intellect must be in second actuality with respect to other mental words as well. These other actualizations must be combined with the actualization we have singled out, the actualization with respect to the word ·man·, in a way that mirrors the logical syntax of a perspicuous expression of a whole thought. When we focus on uses of the one mental word, we exploit a way of talking all at once about a whole set of possible intellectual acts, all those that involve the concept of being a man. The members of the set differ in what other concepts they involve. Sellars notes the fact that a full picture of the mental word needs an analogue to syntax

(p. 43), but there is no need for him, or us, to go into it. It makes no difference to his argument about Thomism.

The first new point that we do need to take account of, in order to work towards an understanding of Sellars's treatment of Thomism, is this. In Aquinas, as Sellars reads him, the picture as we have it so far, according to which intellectual acts involving the concept of being a man are inner uses of the mental equivalent of our word "man", is another way of formulating a standard scholastic-Aristotelian conception of acts of the intellect. This standard scholastic-Aristotelian conception exploits apparatus that also figures in a characterization of the realm of being. We can illustrate the application to the realm of being by saying that *what it is to be a man*, for instance, is a form, and when suitable matter is informed by that form, the result is a man. That is the hylomorphic, or matter-form, conception of substances. And now the application to the intellect goes like this. For an intellect to be in first act with respect to the mental word ·man·, to have that word in its repertoire, is for that same form—what it is to be a man—to inform the intellect, not of course in the way in which it informs matter so as to constitute actual men, but in a way suitable to this different informing that it can also do. And for an intellect to be in second act with respect to the mental word ·man·, for an intellect to be actually engaged in an intellectual performance involving the concept of being a man, is for that same form—what it is to be a man—to inform the intellect, again not of course in the way in which it informs matter so as to constitute actual men, but in yet another suitable way.

These are both cases of *isomorphism* between the intellect and the extra-intellectual realities it can think about. Isomorphism is sameness of form, and that is exactly what there is between the intellect and the things it thinks about, according to this way of talking. The same form informs both matter and, in suitable different ways, the intellect. To have the concept of being a man is for one's intellect to be informed, in the appropriate way, by the same form that informs actual men. And to exercise the concept of being a man is for one's intellect to be informed, in a different appropriate way, by the same form that informs actual men. So both an intellect that can think of men and an intellect that is actually thinking of men are, in their different ways, isomorphic with actual men, in a sense that precisely fits the etymology of the word "isomorphic" (an equivalent might be "equiform").

Sellars introduces the general idea of Aristotelian isomorphism, as it is exploited by Thomism, in connection with the first of the two isomorphisms I

have just described, the isomorphism between the intellect as capable of thinking about men, on the one hand, and actual men, on the other (p. 44). But it is the second isomorphism, the isomorphism between the intellect as actually thinking about men, on the one hand, and actual men, on the other, that really matters for his argument, and that is the one I shall concentrate on.

This Aristotelian isomorphism between intellectual acts and extra-intellectual actualities is an isomorphism of the knower with the known at the intellectual level. That is one of the ways in which Sellars describes it (p. 41). He also considers an isomorphism of the knower with the known at the level of sense, but I shall ignore this.[4]

Now Sellars agrees with Thomism that there is an isomorphism between the intellect and the real. But in Sellars's view the Thomistic conception of the isomorphism between the intellect and the real is "oversimplified" (p. 41). I think understanding this assessment is the key to seeing why Sellars thinks Thomism cannot exploit, as he can, the analogical character of the idea of the mental word in order to cast light on the intentionality of thought.

5. To explain this, I need to say a bit about Sellars's own conception of the isomorphism between the intellect and the real. This requires venturing into a region of Sellars's thought that tends to daunt even his most ardent devotees, but I think its general lines are not too difficult to make out.

An isomorphism between the intellect and the real would be a *relation* between the intellect and the real. Or perhaps we should say that describing such an isomorphism would be a compendious way of capturing a system of relations between particular intellectual acts and the real. Now in Sellars's own view, as I have said, there is indeed such an isomorphism; there are indeed relations, of the structural sort that the word "isomorphism" suggests, between intellectual episodes and items in the real order. He describes these relations by saying that intellectual episodes *picture* the world, or parts of it.

Picturing relations are relevant to the significance of intellectual words, the intentionality of intellectual episodes. But Sellars thinks it is crucially

4. Sellars's main purpose in talking about the isomorphism at the level of sense is to affirm his view that there is no intentionality in sensory events. (See especially "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind".) It is unclear to me whether it is fair for him to interpret Thomism as needing to be corrected on this point. But I shall not try to make anything of this part of Sellars's discussion.

important not to conflate the significance of ordinary words or the intentionality of intellectual episodes, the significance of mental words, with their standing in picturing relations to things in the real order. Picturing relations are, as I stressed, *relations*, between items that are linguistic, whether literally or in the metaphorical sense in which intellectual episodes are linguistic, on the one hand, and things that belong to the real order, the extra-linguistic order, on the other. And Sellars insists that the significance of linguistic items, literally or in the extended sense in which talk of the significance of linguistic items is a way of capturing the "aboutness" of inner episodes, does not consist in their standing in relations to things in the real order. In *Science and Metaphysics* (p. ix) he goes so far as to describe "the non-relational character of 'meaning' and 'aboutness' " as "the key to a correct understanding of the place of mind in nature". Since picturing is relational, this amounts to saying that the key to a correct understanding of the place of mind in nature is that we must not conflate significance or intentionality with picturing.

6. It will be easiest to grasp what Sellars is driving at here if we work with the base case, from which we are supposed to proceed by analogy in order to understand the intentionality of intellectual episodes. The base case is the significance of bits of language ordinarily so called. If we can understand the base case, we can exploit the Geach-Sellars conception of acts of the intellect in order to extend our understanding to the significance of mental words, the intentionality of intellectual episodes.

A statement that captures the significance of a bit of language, say a word, must deal with the word *qua* possessor of significance. So it must deal with the word in its guise as an element in the norm-governed practice of speaking meaningfully in the language the word belongs to. That is what, in Sellars's view, excludes the idea that meaning consists in relations to elements in extra-linguistic reality. According to Sellars, a statement of significance about, say, a word would have to capture a match between the norm-governed role of the word, in the language it belongs to, and the nearly enough corresponding norm-governed role of some other word, in a language that anyone to whom the statement is addressed can be presupposed to understand. Statements of significance relate items in the linguistic order or the order of signification, not to items in the real order, but to other items in the linguistic order or the order of signification. For instance, Sellars offers the following as exemplifying a suitable form for statements of

significance, properly understood: " 'Mensch' (in German) has the same use as *your* word 'man' ".[5]

When, by contrast, we speak of linguistic episodes as standing in picturing relations to things in the real order, we abstract from the fact that the bits of language that figure in them are governed by the norms that form the frame within which those bits of language would stand revealed as significant. In considering picturing relations between language and the world, we conceive linguistic episodes as happenings in the norm-free realm of nature—as vocalizations or inscribings, possessing their natural causes and effects, but not conceived in terms of the significance of the words that figure in them. Sellars calls linguistic objects, conceived in this abstracting way, "natural-linguistic objects".[6]

Natural-linguistic objects as such are of course related in various ways to objects that are not linguistic at all, for instance men. For instance, a situation involving a man might cause a vocalization that includes an utterance of the word "man". That would be a one-off relation. But we can also consider relations that hold in general between natural-linguistic objects of certain types and extra-linguistic situations of certain types. Vocalizations that include utterances of the word "man" on the part of a certain set of speakers—those who are competent in the use of English—are involved in complex regular connections, uniformities that could be stated in *ceteris paribus* generalizations, with situations in which men figure. These uniformities reflect the norms that govern the use of the word, conceived as equipped with its significance, by way of a fact Sellars expresses by saying that "espousal of principles"—that is, allegiance to norms—"is reflected in uniformities of performance".[7] But in statements of these uniformities the utterances would figure as natural-linguistic objects, abstracted from those norms and so abstracted from the fact that the word "man" has the signifi-

5. "Being and Being Known", p. 55. The statement is explicitly addressed to someone who has the word "man" in her repertoire. This is to avoid a problem that applies to the most obvious way of aligning items in the linguistic order in respect of their use, which would be a statement on the lines of " 'Mensch' in German has the same use as the English word 'man' ". The problem is that because the word "man" is only mentioned in this statement, someone could understand the statement without thereby being enabled to grasp the significance that it would be intended to explain—so it cannot be right to suppose that it actually *states* the significance of the German word.

6. See "Truth and 'Correspondence' ", p. 212.

7. "Truth and 'Correspondence' ", p. 216.

cance it has. Though they reflect the norms that govern the practice of using the word with its significance, the regularities themselves are matter-of-factual regularities in the realm of nature, on a level with (though surely more complicated than) the regularities that link, for instance, flashes of lightning with claps of thunder.

I have been talking about matter-of-factual regularities that connect utterances of the word "man" with situations involving men. But the idea is quite general. Uniformities of performance of this kind hold throughout a language. They combine to constitute a systematic structural correspondence between performances in the language considered as natural-linguistic objects, on the one hand, and situations in extra-linguistic reality, on the other. This is the isomorphism Sellars thinks there is between language and extra-linguistic reality. This is what generates picturing relations between linguistic performances, considered as elements in the realm of nature, and configurations of extra-linguistic objects.

I have so far focused on one of the two ways in which Sellars thinks picturing relations are connected with significance: picturing relations are generated by matter-of-factual regularities, regularities in the realm of nature, that reflect the fact that the natural-linguistic objects that figure in picturing relations are produced by speakers who are engaged in the norm-governed practice of speaking significantly in a language. So the norms that underlie significance are reflected in the matter-of-factual relations that constitute the fact that language pictures extra-linguistic reality.

There is another connection between picturing and significance, in the opposite direction: Sellars holds that the isomorphism that generates picturing relations between linguistic episodes and situations in the extra-linguistic world is a necessary condition for bits of language to have meaning at all.[8] As I explained, statements of the significance of words, according to Sellars, do not relate the words whose significance they capture to things in the extra-linguistic order. But if something is to be recognizable as capturing the significance of a word, it would have to be able to help make sense of how linguistic performances in which the word occurs are determinately directed at their extra-linguistic subject matter. And it would be unintelligible how a statement that does no more than align one element

8. See "Being and Being Known", p. 50. The claim is made there (§31) in terms of the intentionality of the intellect, but Sellars goes on to spell it out—as the Geach-Sellars thought allows—in terms of the significance of language in the ordinary sense.

in the order of signification with another element in the order of signification, without so much as mentioning things in extra-linguistic reality, could do that if there were not a relatedness to elements in the extra-linguistic order at some point in the complete story about language. So in Sellars's view such relatedness, though it must be distinguished from what it is for words to have the significance they do, needs to be acknowledged as a necessary condition for words to have their significance.

7. Bits of language figure in this Sellarsian account in two different guises. In statements of significance bits of language figure as elements in the norm-governed practice of making sense, and hence as elements in the order of signification, related only to other elements in the order of signification. In statements of picturing bits of language figure as elements in natural-linguistic occurrences, and hence as elements in the real order, not in the order of signification, related by picturing relations to other elements in the real order.

This structure carries over, by way of the Geach-Sellars analogy, to intellectual episodes. Considered as cases of intentionality or aboutness, intellectual episodes are analogous to linguistic performances considered as meaningful. They are elements in the order of signification in the extended sense that is underwritten by the Geach-Sellars analogy. Statements that deal with them as cases of intentionality or aboutness, like statements of the significance of ordinary words, relate them only to other elements in the order of signification. But just as the significance of bits of language, in the ordinary sense, reflects and requires picturing relations between linguistic performances considered in a way that abstracts from their significance, as elements in the real order, and other elements in the real order, so with intellectual episodes. Their intentionality or aboutness reflects and requires picturing relations to the real order on the part of things that are in fact intellectual episodes, but considered in another guise that abstracts from their character as possessing intentionality or aboutness—considered as occurrences in the realm of nature. This is the analogue to conceiving speech acts, which are in fact meaningful, in abstraction from their meaningfulness, as natural-linguistic objects.

So intellectual episodes figure in the complete Sellarsian account of them in two guises, just as linguistic performances in the ordinary sense do. First, intellectual episodes are available to introspection in their guise as elements in the order of signification, in the extended sense of "signification"

exploited by the Geach-Sellars analogy. They figure in consciousness under specifications that need to be understood in terms of the analogy with uses of words in the ordinary sense.[9] But when we speak of what are in fact intellectual episodes as relata of the picturing relations they must bear to elements in the real order, if they are to be capturable by those analogical specifications, they figure, as Sellars puts it, *"in propria persona"* ("Being and Being Known", p. 58), as themselves elements in the real order.

This raises the question (p. 59): "What sort of thing is the intellect as belonging to the real order?" And Sellars responds by suggesting that the intellect, as belonging to the real order, is the central nervous system. It is "cerebral patterns and dispositions" that "picture the world". His idea is that what figure in consciousness under analogical specifications, as intellectual episodes with their intentionality, are, considered in themselves, as they must be if they are to be considered in the guise in which they figure in relations of picturing, neurophysiologically specifiable goings-on.

8. We are now in a position, at last, to understand why Sellars thinks that for Thomism the nature of the mental word must be conceived as intelligible independently of the analogy with words in the ordinary sense.

If we describe intellectual acts involving the concept of being a man as isomorphic, in their special way, with actual men, we describe them as standing in a certain *relation* to actual men. By Sellars's lights, that means that, although Thomism offers a description in terms of the Aristotelian isomorphism between intellectual acts and extra-mental actualities as characterizing intellectual acts *qua* bearers of intentionality, it is really suited to characterize them only *qua* picturing the real order. As I said, Sellars holds that intentionality does not consist in relations to the real order, and picturing does. Describing certain intellectual acts as isomorphic to actual men is describing them in terms of a way in which they are related to the real order. So in Sellars's view Thomism conflates intentionality with picturing. It offers something that could only describe intellectual acts in their guise as

9. Sellars ("Being and Being Known", p. 48) reads Descartes as holding that "the reflexive awareness of a mental act" is "an adequate (i.e. among other things non-analogical) grasp of the act as being of a certain determinate kind of species". So he represents his conception, according to which intellectual acts are available to introspection under analogical specifications, as requiring him to take issue with Descartes. (See also pp. 58–9.) I do not know what Sellars's ground is for his claim that the Cartesian idea of an adequate understanding excludes an analogical character.

subjects of picturing relations, as if it could serve as an account of their intentionality.

And if describing intellectual acts in terms of how the intellect is informed, in its own special way, by the forms that also inform material substances is really suited to represent intellectual acts only as relata of picturing relations, that mode of representation of intellectual acts would have to be such that, if correct, it would capture what they are, not in the order of signification, but in the real order. It would have to be such as to capture what intellectual acts are *in propria persona*.

For Thomism, then, describing intellectual acts in terms of the Aristotelian isomorphism would supposedly capture what they are *qua* bearers of intentionality. But these descriptions would have to purport to characterize intellectual acts as they are in themselves, in the real order, since it is as what they are in the real order, not as what they are in the order of signification, that intellectual acts figure in the picturing relations that are all that the Aristotelian isomorphism can really encompass. Putting this together: for Thomism, the intentionality of intellectual acts can be revealed by descriptions of them as isomorphic with elements in the real order, and those descriptions purport to display intellectual acts as what they are in themselves.

Now suppose that is how someone sees things. For such a person, it will be only a second best if we can also characterize the intentionality of intellectual episodes in a merely analogical way. How could it be essential to resort to an analogical characterization, if we have at our disposal descriptions that display the intentionality of intellectual episodes precisely by capturing their intrinsic nature—what they are in the real order? So according to this way of thinking, the analogy with the significance of ordinary bits of language cannot be essential to explaining the intentionality of intellectual episodes. Describing intellectual episodes as employments of mental words certainly exploits an analogy, but that style of description of intellectual episodes can only be secondary. The description in terms of the Aristotelian isomorphism says how things literally are when the metaphor of mental words is appropriate. It explains the force of the metaphor, and the metaphor can drop out as inessential.

In Sellars's own account intentionality can be understood only by analogical extension from an independent understanding of the significance of ordinary words. But in Sellars's reading of Thomism understanding is transmitted in the other direction. What the analogical talk of mental words

amounts to is supposedly independently intelligible, since the Aristotelian isomorphism yields a characterization of what intellectual acts are *in propria persona*. And then we can explain what it is for ordinary words to be meaningful in terms of this understanding of what it is for mental words to be meaningful. This is the reverse of the order of explanation envisaged in the Geach-Sellars conception.

9. This reading of Thomism is controlled by Sellars's doctrine that anything whose character is capturable in terms of *relations* in which it stands to elements in the real order cannot be, in the guise in which it figures when it is described in those terms, an element in the order of signification. Things that belong to the order of signification—words considered as meaningful, to focus on the primary case—have their identity as elements in the order of signification constituted by their position in the norm-governed practice of speaking a language. And Sellars thinks it follows that statements that capture what words are in the order of signification cannot do so by relating them to things in the real order. Statements of significance can work only by aligning words as elements in the order of signification with other elements in the order of signification, with sufficiently closely matching positions in the norm-governed practice of speaking a language, perhaps a different language. That is the ground on which Sellars thinks he can accuse Thomism of conflating intentionality, position in the order of signification in the extended sense, with picturing. That is why Sellars thinks Thomism offers, as if it could display intellectual episodes in their guise as possessors of intentionality, a form of description that could really capture them only in their guise as elements in the real order, standing in picturing relations to other elements in the real order.

But this basis for Sellars's reading of Thomism seems simply wrong. Consider this statement: the English word "man", or (better) the English expression ". . . is a man" (or its various syntactic transformations: ". . . are men" and so forth), is related to men in that it is true of them. Or this: the English word "snow" is related to snow in that the result of concatenating it with ". . . is white" is true if and only if snow is white. I have formulated these examples so as to emphasize that they state relations between linguistic expressions and extra-linguistic realities: between ". . . is a man" and men, between "snow" and snow. This should be impossible by Sellars's lights, because the statements deal with the linguistic expressions they are about in their guise as meaningful, as caught up in the norm-governed practice of

speaking significantly in English—not merely in their guise as delineating acoustic or inscriptional features of occurrences that are in fact linguistic, though seeing them in merely acoustic or inscriptional terms abstracts from that fact. The statements deal with the expressions they are about as elements in the order of signification, not as natural-linguistic objects—the only guise in which Sellars's thinking allows for relations between linguistic items and elements in the real order. It is a blind spot on Sellars's part that he does not contemplate the evident possibility of statements that both deal with expressions as meaningful and relate the expressions to things in the real order.

The Thomistic style of description depicts intellectual episodes that involve the concept of being a man as related, by Aristotelian isomorphism, to actual men. This is the ground on which Sellars thinks the Thomistic conception of intellectual episodes can really only be a competitor with his conception of what intellectual episodes are in their guise as elements of the real order, goings-on in the central nervous system. But this is undermined when we note Sellars's blind spot. It is certainly true that the Thomistic form of description describes intellectual episodes in terms of relations to elements in the real order. But it does not follow, as Sellars thinks, that descriptions in the Thomistic style cannot depict the acts as possessors of intentionality, elements in the order of signification in the extended sense—any more than it follows, from the fact that the statement I gave about "snow" relates it to snow, that the statement cannot deal with "snow" as an element in the order of signification.

When Thomism describes intellectual episodes in which, say, something is thought of as a man in terms of the intellect's being informed, in a special way, by the form that, when it informs suitable parcels of matter, constitutes actual men, that need not be taken as purporting to *explain* the fact that "man" figures in a specification of the intentional content of the episodes, by giving an account of what they are, considered in themselves, that is supposed to be autonomously intelligible. Talk of the intellect's being informed, in its special way, by the form that informs actual men need be no more than another wording for the idea of intentional content in whose specification "man" would figure. It need not be construed as purporting to capture in literal terms what is captured only metaphorically by talk of employment of mental words. Once we clear away the result of Sellars's blind spot, we can see things the other way around. The analogical specification of intellectual episodes, in terms of employment of mental words, is the best explanation there could be for the special mode of informing that is invoked

when we speak of the intellect as informed by the forms that also constitute material actualities. What it is for the intellect to be informed, in the relevant way, by the form that, in a different way, informs actual men is for the intellect to be employing the mental word ·man·. So Sellars is wrong to think Thomism necessarily stands in opposition to the Geach-Sellars proposal for how to understand intentionality.

As I said, Sellars thinks acknowledging that intentionality is non-relational is the key to understanding the place of mind in nature. In a correct account of the place of mind in nature, on his view, intellectual acts, considered as elements in the real order, are goings-on in the central nervous system. Here Sellars's conviction that what things are as elements in the order of signification cannot be captured by describing them in terms of relations to extra-mental actualities helps to make it look compulsory to place the mind in nature, in the sense of identifying intellectual episodes with something we can find in the world as it comes into view in the pursuit of the natural sciences. In their guise as denizens of the natural world the episodes *can* be related to extra-mental actualities. And if intentionality is non-relational, there must surely be some guise in which its possessors are related to extra-mental actualities, even if it is not their guise as possessors of intentionality. Otherwise we risk making it a mystery what possessors of intentionality have to do with the extra-mental actualities that they are, as we say, directed towards.

But if significance does not have to be non-relational, intentionality does not either. The Thomistic style of specification of intellectual episodes, which relates them by an Aristotelian isomorphism to material actualities, can legitimately be taken to fit the episodes in their guise as possessors of intentionality. As I suggested, the mode in which the intellect is said to be informed can be explained in terms of the avowedly analogical idea of employing mental words. There is no need for a different level of specification, supposedly capturing the episodes as what they are in the real order, in which guise alone they can be seen as related to extra-mental actualities. They are already seen as related to extra-mental actualities in their guise as possessors of intentionality.

And now it begins to look like a mere scientistic prejudice, not something dictated by a correct conception of meaning and aboutness, to suppose that what are in fact intellectual episodes, possessors of intentionality, must be in view, though in a different guise, when the world is viewed through the conceptual apparatus of the natural sciences, so as to be able to be described as standing in picturing relations to other elements in the

world so viewed. If one assumes something on those lines, the conceptual apparatus of neurophysiology certainly looks like the likeliest candidate for capturing intellectual episodes in this supposedly necessary further guise. But if the general assumption is unwarranted, that is beside the point.[10]

10. It is sometimes suggested that a genuinely historical approach to past philosophers would stand in contrast with the practice of, for instance, Jonathan Bennett. Bennett describes his practice as studying old texts "in the spirit of a colleague, an antagonist, a student, a teacher". He quotes H. P. Grice saying: "I treat those who are great but dead as if they were great but living, as persons who have something to say to us *now*."[11]

It is hard to draw a sharp contrast between Bennett's approach and a more antiquarian stance. For one thing, however keen we are to stress the pastness of past philosophers, we cannot cleanly separate a concern with what they had to say from a willingness to treat them as interlocutors in a conversation, in which the living parties had better be at least open to the possibility that they might have something to learn from the dead. And on the other side, a responsible concern with what the dead may have to say to us now, as Grice puts it, cannot allow us to forget differences between the milieu from which a dead philosopher as it were addresses us and the milieu from which we aim to understand him.

Now the spirit in which Sellars approaches Aquinas is approximately the spirit Bennett expresses. Sellars treats Aquinas as a colleague and as an antagonist. And as I have suggested, something on these lines seems, nearly enough, inevitable if we are to be genuinely concerned to say, necessarily in our own terms, what a past philosopher had to say.[12]

But as I have explained it, Sellars's treatment of Aquinas neatly exemplifies a standing risk posed by such an approach to a historical figure, and I shall end with a remark about that.

As I said, Sellars's reading of Aquinas is shaped by a doctrine of his own, that meaning and intentionality are non-relational. We cannot avoid reading

10. Much more would need to be said about this in a fuller treatment of Sellars. For helpful remarks on what I am depicting as a scientistic prejudice, see several of the papers in Jennifer Hornsby, *Simple Mindedness*.

11. *Learning from Six Philosophers*, p. 1.

12. For an extensive defence of this kind of approach to the history of philosophy, see Part One of Robert B. Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead*.

in the light of our own convictions if we are to bring past philosophers into a conversation with ourselves. But if we allow the dialogue to be shaped by a doctrine that reflects a blind spot on our part, the result will be a distortion—except, perhaps, if the blind spot is shared between us and our target.

It is surely obvious that we risk going astray in the attempt to understand others if we go astray in the philosophical assumptions that we bring to the exercise. But I think something more specific, and more interesting, than that is exemplified in Sellars's reading of Aquinas.

What I have described as a blind spot is not a mere oversight on Sellars's part. I think it reflects Sellars's attempt to combine two insights: first, that meaning and intentionality come into view only in a context that is normatively organized, and, second, that reality as it is contemplated by the sciences of nature is norm-free. The trouble is that Sellars thinks the norm-free reality disclosed by the natural sciences is the only location for genuine relations to actualities. That is what leads to the idea that placing the mind in nature requires abstracting from aboutness.

Now Aquinas, writing before the rise of modern science, is immune to the attractions of that norm-free conception of nature. And we should not be too quick to regard this as wholly a deficiency in his thinking. (Of course in all kinds of ways it is a deficiency.) There is a live possibility that, at least in one respect, Thomistic philosophy of mind is superior to Sellarsian philosophy of mind, just because Aquinas lacks the distinctively modern conception of nature that underlies Sellars's thinking. Sellars allows his philosophy to be shaped by a conception that is characteristic of his own time, and so misses an opportunity to learn something from the past.

ESSAY 14

Avoiding the Myth of the Given

1. What is the Myth of the Given?

Wilfrid Sellars, who is responsible for the label, notoriously neglects to explain in general terms what he means by it. As he remarks, the idea of givenness for knowledge, givenness to a knowing subject, can be innocuous.[1] So how does it become pernicious? Here is a suggestion: Givenness in the sense of the Myth would be an availability for cognition to subjects whose getting what is supposedly Given to them does not draw on capacities required for the sort of cognition in question.

If that is what Givenness would be, it is straightforward that it must be mythical. Having something Given to one would be being given something for knowledge without needing to have capacities that would be necessary for one to be able to get to know it. And that is incoherent.

So how can the Myth be a pitfall? Well, one could fall into it if one did not realize that knowledge of some kind requires certain capacities. And we can see how that might be a real risk, in the context in which Sellars mostly discusses the Myth, by considering a Sellarsian dictum about knowledge.

Sellars says attributions of knowledge place episodes or states "in the logical space of reasons".[2] He identifies the logical space of reasons as the space "of justifying and being able to justify what one says". Sellars means to exclude an externalistic view of epistemic satisfactoriness, a view according to which one can be entitled to a belief without being in a position to know what entitles one to it. Knowing things, as Sellars means his dictum, must draw on capacities that belong to reason, conceived as a faculty whose exercises include vindicating one's entitlement to say things. Such a faculty acquires its

1. "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §1.
2. "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §36.

first actuality, its elevation above mere potentiality, when one learns to talk. There must be a potential for self-consciousness in its operations.

Now consider how this applies to perceptual knowledge. Perceptual knowledge involves sensibility: that is, a capacity for differential responsiveness to features of the environment, made possible by properly functioning sensory systems. But sensibility does not belong to reason. We share it with non-rational animals. According to Sellars's dictum, the rational faculty that distinguishes us from non-rational animals must also be operative in our being perceptually given things to know.

This brings into view a way to fall into the Myth of the Given. Sellars's dictum implies that it is a form of the Myth to think sensibility by itself, without any involvement of capacities that belong to our rationality, can make things available for our cognition. That coincides with a basic doctrine of Kant.

Note that I say "for *our* cognition". It can be tempting to object to Sellars's dictum on the ground that it denies knowledge to non-rational animals. It is perfectly natural—the objection goes—to talk of knowledge when we say how the sensibility of non-rational animals enables them to deal competently with their environments. But there is no need to read Sellars, or Kant, as denying that. We can accept it but still take Sellars's dictum, and the associated rejection of the Myth, to express an insight. Sellars's dictum characterizes knowledge of a distinctive sort, attributable only to rational animals. The Myth, in the version I have introduced, is the idea that sensibility by itself could make things available for the sort of cognition that draws on the subject's rational powers.

2. A knowledgeable perceptual judgment has its rational intelligibility, amounting in this case to epistemic entitlement, in the light of the subject's experience. She judges that things are thus and so because her experience reveals to her that things are thus and so: for instance, she sees that things are thus and so. The intelligibility displayed by such an explanation belongs to a kind that is also exemplified when a subject judges that things are thus and so because her experience merely seems to reveal to her that things are thus and so. These uses of "because" introduce explanations that show rationality in operation. In the kind of case I began with, rationality enables knowledgeable judgments. In the other kind of case, reason leads its possessor astray, or at best enables her to make a judgment that merely happens to be true.

In Kant, the higher faculty that distinguishes us from non-rational animals figures in experience in the guise of the understanding, the faculty of concepts. So to follow Kant's way of avoiding the Myth of the Given in this context, we must suppose capacities that belong to that faculty—conceptual capacities—are in play in the way experience makes knowledge available to us.

For the moment, we can take this introduction of the idea of conceptual capacities quite abstractly. All we need to know so far is that they must be capacities that belong to a faculty of reason. I shall try to be more specific later.

I have invoked the idea of judgments that are rationally intelligible in the light of experience, in the best case to the extent of being revealed as knowledgeable. There is an interpretation of this idea that I need to reject.

The idea is not just that experience yields items—experiences—to which judgments are rational responses. That would be consistent with supposing that rational capacities are operative only in responses to experiences, not in experiences themselves. On this view the involvement of rational capacities would be entirely downstream from experiences.

But that would not do justice to the role of experience in our acquisition of knowledge. As I noted, even for Sellars there is nothing wrong with saying things are given to us for knowledge. The idea of givenness becomes mythical—becomes the idea of Givenness—only if we fail to impose the necessary requirements on getting what is given. And it is in experiencing itself that we have things perceptually given to us for knowledge. Avoiding the Myth requires capacities that belong to reason to be operative in experiencing itself, not just in judgments in which we respond to experience.

3. How should we elaborate this picture? I used to assume that to conceive experiences as actualizations of conceptual capacities, we would need to credit experiences with *propositional* content, the sort of content judgments have. And I used to assume that the content of an experience would need to include *everything* the experience enables its subject to know non-inferentially. But both these assumptions now strike me as wrong.

4. Let me start with the second. We can question it even if, for the moment, we go on assuming experiences have propositional content.

Suppose I have a bird in plain view, and that puts me in a position to know non-inferentially that it is a cardinal. It is not that I infer that what I see is a cardinal from the way it looks, as when I identify a bird's species by

comparing what I see with a photograph in a field guide. I can immediately recognize cardinals if the viewing conditions are good enough.

Charles Travis has forced me to think about such cases, and in abandoning my old assumption I am partly coming around to a view he has urged on me.[3]

On my old assumption, since my experience puts me in a position to know non-inferentially that what I see is a cardinal, its content would have to include a proposition in which the concept of a cardinal figures: perhaps one expressible, on the occasion, by saying "That's a cardinal". But what seems right is this: my experience makes the bird visually present to me, and my recognitional capacity enables me to know non-inferentially that what I see is a cardinal. Even if we go on assuming my experience has content, there is no need to suppose that the concept under which my recognitional capacity enables me to bring what I see figures in that content.

Consider an experience had, in matching circumstances, by someone who cannot immediately identify what she sees as a cardinal. Perhaps she does not even have the concept of a cardinal. Her experience might be just like mine in how it makes the bird visually present to her. It is true that in an obvious sense things look different to me and to her. To me what I see looks like (looks to be) a cardinal, and to her it does not. But that is just to say that my experience inclines me, and her similar experience does not incline her, to say it is a cardinal. There is no ground here for insisting that the concept of a cardinal must figure in the content of my experience itself.

It would be right to say I am unlike this other person in that I see that the bird is a cardinal; my experience reveals to me that it is a cardinal. But that is no problem for what I am proposing. Such locutions—"I see that . . .", "My experience reveals to me that . . ."—accept, in their "that . . ." clauses, specifications of things one's experience puts one in a position to know non-inferentially.[4] That can include knowledge that experience makes available by bringing something into view for someone who has a suitable recognitional capacity. And as I have urged, content whose figuring in such knowledge is owed to the recognitional capacity need not be part of the content of the experience itself.

3. Thanks to Travis for much helpful discussion.

4. These locutions can even be understood in such a way that inferential credentials are not ruled out for the knowledge in question. Consider, for instance, "I see that the mailman has not yet come today".

5. Should we conclude that conceptual capacities are not operative in having objects visually present to one, but only in what one makes of what one anyway sees? Should we drop the very idea that perceptual experiences had by rational animals have conceptual content?

That would be too drastic. Nothing in what I have said about recognitional capacities dislodges the argument that on pain of the Myth of the Given, capacities that belong to the higher cognitive faculty must be operative in experience. In giving one things to know, experience must draw on conceptual capacities. Some concepts that figure in knowledge afforded by an experience can be excluded from the content of the experience itself, in the way I have illustrated with the concept of a cardinal, but not all can.

A natural stopping point, for visual experiences, would be proper sensibles of sight and common sensibles accessible to sight. We should conceive experience as drawing on conceptual capacities associated with concepts of proper and common sensibles.

So should we suppose my experience when I see a cardinal has propositional content involving proper and common sensibles? That would preserve the other of those two assumptions I used to make. But I think this assumption is wrong too. What we need is an idea of content that is not propositional but intuitional, in what I take to be a Kantian sense.

"Intuition" is the standard English translation of Kant's "*Anschauung*". The etymology of "intuition" fits Kant's notion, and Kant uses a cognate expression when he writes in Latin. But we need to forget much of the philosophical resonance of the English word. An *Anschauung* is a having in view. (As is usual in philosophy, Kant treats visual experiences as exemplary.)

Kant says: "The same function which gives unity to the various representations *in a judgment* also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations *in an intuition*; and this unity, in its most general expression, we entitle the pure concept of the understanding."[5] The capacity whose exercise in judging accounts for the unity of the content of judgments—propositional unity—also accounts for a corresponding unity in the content of intuitions. Sellars gives a helpful illustration: the propositional unity in a judgment expressible by "This is a cube" corresponds to an intuitional unity expressible by "this cube".[6] The demonstrative phrase might partly capture the content of an intuition in which one is visually presented with a cube. (I shall return to this.)

5. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A79/B104–5.

6. *Science and Metaphysics*, p. 5.

Propositional unity comes in various forms. Kant takes a classification of forms of judgment, and thus of forms of propositional unity, from the logic of his day, and works to describe a corresponding form of intuitional unity for each. But the idea that forms of intuitional unity correspond to forms of propositional unity can be separated from the details of how Kant elaborates it. It is not obvious why Kant thinks the idea requires that to every form of propositional unity there must correspond a form of intuitional unity. And anyway we need not follow Kant in his inventory of forms of propositional unity.

Michael Thompson has identified a distinctive form of propositional unity for thought and talk about the living as such.[7] Thompson's primary point is about a form exemplified in saying what living things of certain kinds *do*, as in "Wolves hunt in packs" or "The lesser celandine blooms in spring". But Thompson's thought naturally extends to a form or forms exemplified in talk about what individual living things *are doing*, as in "Those wolves are hunting" or "This lesser celandine is coming into bloom".[8] And it would be in the spirit of Kant's conception to identify a corresponding form or corresponding forms of intuitional unity, one of which we might find in my visual experience of a cardinal. The concept of a bird, like the concept of a cardinal, need not be part of the content of the experience; the same considerations would apply. But perhaps we can say it is given to me in such an experience, not something I know by bringing a conceptual capacity to bear on what I anyway see, that what I see is an animal—not because "animal" expresses part of the content unified in the experience in accordance with a certain form of intuitional unity, but because "animal" captures the intuition's categorial form, the distinctive kind of unity it has.

The common sensibles accessible to sight are modes of space occupancy: shape, size, position, movement or its absence. In an intuition unified by a form capturable by "animal", we might recognize content, under the head of modes of space occupancy, that could not figure in intuitions of inanimate objects. We might think of common sensibles accessible to sight as including, for instance, postures such as perching and modes of locomotion such as hopping or flying.

7. See "The Representation of Life".

8. A form or forms: perhaps we should distinguish an animal version from a non-animal version. A special case of the animal version would be a form for talk of intentional action, which is the topic of G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention*.

We can avoid such issues by concentrating, as Sellars often does, on visual presentness of things like coloured cubes. But even with this restricted focus, there is still a complication. If there can be visual intuitions whose content is partly specifiable by, say, "that cube", intuitions in which something's being cubic is visually given to one, then the higher cognitive faculty needs to be in our picture not just to account for the unity with which certain content figures in such an intuition, but also, in the guise of the productive imagination, to provide for part of the content itself—supplying, as it were, the rest of the cube, behind the facing surfaces. Sellars often uses the example of a pink ice cube, and one reason is presumably that it allows him not to bother with this complication, because he envisages his ice cube as translucent, so that its back can be actually in view.[9]

6. So far, conceptual capacities are on the scene only as the kind of capacities that must be in play in experience if we are to avoid the Myth: capacities that belong to rationality in a demanding sense. But I undertook to try to be more specific.

If the idea of the conceptual singles out a kind of content, it seems right to focus on the content of judgments, since judging is the paradigmatic exercise of theoretical rationality.

We can think of judgments as inner analogues to assertions. That makes it natural to count judging as a *discursive* activity, even though the idea of discourse has its primary application to overt performances.[10] In an assertion one makes something discursively explicit. And the idea of making things explicit extends without strain to judging. We can say that one makes what one judges explicit to oneself.

I said we should centre our idea of the conceptual on the content of judgments. But now that I have introduced the idea of the discursive, I can put the point like this: we should centre our idea of the conceptual on the content of discursive activity.

Now intuiting is not discursive, even in the extended sense in which judging is. Discursive content is articulated. Intuitional content is not.

9. See Willem A. deVries, *Wilfrid Sellars*, p. 305, n. 18.

10. Perhaps it is already metaphorical even in that application. See Stephen Engstrom, "Sensibility and Understanding", for some remarks on how the discursive understanding can be conceived as running about, which is what the etymology of the term indicates that it should mean.

Part of the point is that there are typically aspects of the content of an intuition that the subject has no means of making discursively explicit. Visual intuitions typically present one with visible characteristics of objects that one is not equipped to attribute to the objects by making appropriate predications in claims or judgments. To make such an aspect of the content of an intuition into the content associated with a capacity that is discursive in the primary sense, one would need to carve it out, as it were, from the categorially unified but as yet unarticulated content of the intuition by determining it to be the meaning of a linguistic expression, which one thereby sets up as a means for making that content explicit. (This might be a matter of coining an adjective. Or the expression might be one like "having that shade of colour".) Perhaps one can bypass language and directly equip oneself with a counterpart capacity that is discursive in the sense in which judging is discursive. There would be the same need to isolate an aspect of the content of the intuition, by determining it to be the content associated with a capacity to make predications in judgments.

And articulating goes beyond intuiting even if we restrict ourselves to aspects of intuitional content that are associated with discursive capacities one already has.

In discursive dealings with content, one puts significances together. This is particularly clear with discursive performances in the primary sense, whose content is the significance of a combination of meaningful expressions. But even though judging need not be conceived as an act spread out in time, like making a claim, its being discursive involves a counterpart to the way one puts significances together in meaningful speech.

I mean this to be consistent with rejecting, as we should, the idea that the contents one puts together in discursive activity are self-standing building-blocks, separately thinkable elements in the contents of claims or judgments. One can think the significance of, say, a predicative expression only in the context of a thought in which that content occurs predicatively. But we can acknowledge that and still say that in discursive activity one puts contents together, in a way that can be modelled on stringing meaningful expressions together in discourse literally so called.

That is not how it is with intuitional content. The unity of intuitional content is *given*, not a result of our putting significances together. Even if discursive exploitation of some content given in an intuition does not require one to acquire a new discursive capacity, one needs to carve out that content from the intuition's unarticulated content before one can put it to-

gether with other bits of content in discursive activity. Intuiting does not do this carving out for one.

If intuitional content is not discursive, why go on insisting it is conceptual? Because every aspect of the content of an intuition is present in a form in which it is already suitable to be the content associated with a discursive capacity, if it is not—at least not yet—actually so associated. That is part of the force of saying, with Kant, that what gives unity to intuitions is the same function that gives unity to judgments. If a subject does not already have a discursive capacity associated with some aspect of the content of an intuition of hers, all she needs to do, to acquire such a discursive capacity, is to isolate that aspect by equipping herself with a means to make that content—that very content—explicit in speech or judgment. The content of an intuition is such that its subject can analyse it into significances for discursive capacities, whether or not this requires introducing new discursive capacities to be associated with those significances. Whether by way of introducing new discursive capacities or not, the subject of an intuition is in a position to put aspects of its content, the very content that is already there in the intuition, together in discursive performances.

I said that the unity of intuitional content is *given*. Kant sometimes implies a different picture. He says, for instance, that "all combination, be we conscious of it or not, . . . is an act of the understanding *(Verstandeshandlung)*" (B130). In its context, this remark implies that we actively put content together in intuitions no less than in judgments (though with intuitions the activity has to be unconscious). And that goes badly with my claim that intuitional content is not discursive. But Kant does not need to hold that the unity of intuitional content is not given. What he really wants to insist is that it is not Given: that it is not provided by sensibility alone. In intuiting, capacities that belong to the higher cognitive faculty are in play. The unity of intuitional content reflects an operation of the same unifying function that is operative in the unity of judgments, in that case actively exercised. That is why it is right to say the content unified in intuitions is of the same kind as the content unified in judgments: that is, conceptual content. We could not have intuitions, with their specific forms of unity, if we could not make judgments, with their corresponding forms of unity. We can even say that the unity-providing function is essentially a faculty for discursive activity, a power to judge. But its operation in providing for the unity of intuitions is not itself a case of discursive activity.

Not that it is a case of prediscursive activity, at least if that means that intuiting is a more primitive forerunner of judging. The two kinds of unity that Kant says are provided by the same function, the unity of intuitions and the unity of judgments, are on a level with one another.

7. In a visual intuition, an object is visually present to a subject with those of its features that are visible to the subject from her vantage point. It is through the presence of those features that the object is present. How else could an object be visually present to one?

The concept of an object here is formal. In Kant's terms, a category, a pure concept of the understanding, is a concept of an object in general. A formal concept of, as we can naturally say, a kind of object is explained by specifying a form of categorial unity, a form of the kind of unity that characterizes intuitions. Perhaps, as I suggested, following Thompson, "animal" can be understood as expressing such a concept.

On the account I have been giving, having an object present to one in an intuition is an actualization of capacities that are conceptual, in a sense that belongs with Kant's thesis that what accounts for the unity with which the associated content figures in the intuition is the same function that provides for the unity of judgments. I have urged that even though the unity-providing function is a faculty for discursive activity, it is not in discursive activity that these capacities are operative in intuitions. With much of the content of an ordinary visual intuition, the capacities that are in play in one's having it as part of the content of one's intuition are not even susceptible of discursive exercise. One can make use of content's being given in an intuition to acquire a new discursive capacity, but with much of the content of an ordinary intuition, one never does that. (Think of the finely discriminable shapes and shades of colour that visual experience presents to one.) Nevertheless an intuition's content is all conceptual, in this sense: it is in the intuition in a form in which one *could* make it, that very content, figure in discursive activity. That would be to exploit a potential for discursive activity that is already there in the capacities actualized in having an intuition with that content.[11]

In an intuition, an object is present to one whether or not one exploits this potential for discursive activity. Kant says the "I think" of apperception

11. Intuitional content that is not brought to discursive activity is easily forgotten. This does not tell at all against saying it is conceptual content, in the sense I have tried to explain. See Sean Dorrance Kelly, "Demonstrative Concepts and Experience".

must be able to accompany all *Vorstellungen* that are mine, in a sense that is related to the idea of operations of the function that gives unity both to judgments and to intuitions (B131). An object is present to a subject in an intuition whether or not the "I think" accompanies any of the intuition's content. But any of the content of an intuition must be able to be accompanied by the "I think". And for the "I think" to accompany some of the content of an intuition, say a visual intuition, of mine is for me to *judge* that I am visually confronted by an object with such-and-such features. Since the intuition makes the object visually present to me through those features, such a judgment would be knowledgeable.

We now have in view two ways in which intuitions enable knowledgeable judgments.

One is the way I have just described. A potential for discursive activity is already there in an intuition's having its content. And one can exploit some of that potential in a knowledgeable judgment that redeploys some of the content of the intuition. In the kind of case that first opens up this possibility, one adds a reference to the first person. When the "I think" accompanies some content provided in an intuition, that yields a knowledgeable judgment that I am confronted by an object with such-and-such features. But being in a position to make such a judgment is being in a position to judge that there is an object with such-and-such features at such-and-such a location. One need not explicitly refer to oneself in a judgment whose status as knowledgeable depends on its being a discursive exploitation of some of the content of an intuition.

The other way intuitions make knowledge possible is the way I illustrated with my knowledge that a bird I see is a cardinal. Here a knowledgeable judgment enabled by an intuition has content that goes beyond the content of the intuition. The intuition makes something perceptually present to the subject, and the subject recognizes that thing as an instance of a kind. Or as an individual; it seems reasonable to find a corresponding structure in a case in which an experience enables one to know non-inferentially who it is that one is perceptually presented with.

8. Travis urges that experiences do not represent things as so.[12] If experiences are intuitions, he is strictly correct. Anything that represents things as

12. See "The Silence of the Senses".

so has propositional content, and I have been spelling out a conception of intuitions on which they do not have propositional content. But though Travis is right about the letter of the thesis that experiences represent things as so, he is wrong about the spirit, as we can see by considering the first of those two ways in which intuitions enable judgments that are knowledgeable. Though they are not discursive, intuitions have content of a sort that embodies an immediate potential for exploiting that same content in knowledgeable judgments. Intuitions immediately reveal things to be the way they would be judged to be in those judgments.

When Sellars introduces the conceptual character he attributes to experiences, he describes experiences as "so to speak, making" claims or "containing" claims.[13] If experiences are intuitions, that is similarly wrong in the letter but right in spirit. Intuitions do not have the sort of content claims have. But intuitions immediately reveal things to be as they would be claimed to be in claims that would be no more than a discursive exploitation of some of the content of the intuitions.

When Travis says experiences do not represent things as so, he does not mean that experiences are intuitions in the sense I have been explaining. He says experience is not a case of intentionality, and I think it is fair to understand him as denying that conceptual capacities are in play in experience at all. Visual experiences bring our surroundings into view; that should be common ground. Travis's idea is that the way experience makes knowledge available can be understood, across the board, on the model of how an experience might enable me to know that what I see is a cardinal. In Travis's picture conceptual capacities are in play only in our making what we can of what visual experiences anyway bring into view for us, independently of any operation of our conceptual capacities.[14] In Travis's picture, having things in view does not draw on conceptual capacities. And if it does not draw on conceptual capacities, having things in view must be provided for by sensibility alone.

The trouble with this is that it is a form of the Myth of the Given. We do not fall into the Myth just by supposing that features of our surroundings are given to us in visual experience. But in Travis's picture that givenness becomes a case of Givenness.

13. "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", §16.

14. "In making out, or trying to, what it is that we confront": "The Silence of the Senses", p. 65.

Travis thinks the idea that experiences have content conflicts with the idea that experience directly brings our surroundings into view. He is not alone in this.[15] Wanting, as is reasonable, to keep the idea that experience directly brings our surroundings into view, he is led to deny that experiences have content. But there is no conflict. Intuitions as I have explained them directly bring objects into view through bringing their perceptible properties into view. Intuitions do that precisely by having the kind of content they have.

If intuitions make knowledge available to us, merely seeming intuitions merely seem to make knowledge available to us. It is often thought that when people urge that experiences have content, they are responding to a felt need to accommodate the fact that experience can mislead us.[16] But the proper ground for crediting experiences with content is that we must avoid the Myth of the Given. Making room for misleading experiences is a routine by-product.

9. Donald Davidson claims that "nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief".[17] His point is to deny that beliefs can be displayed as rational in the light of episodes or states in sensory consciousness—unless that means they can be displayed as rational in the light of *beliefs about* episodes or states in sensory consciousness. That would put the potential rational relevance to beliefs of episodes or states in sensory consciousness on a level with the potential rational relevance to beliefs of anything at all that one might have beliefs about.

In previous work, I took it that Davidson's slogan reflects an insight: that conceptual capacities must be in play not only in rationally forming beliefs or making judgments, but also in having the rational entitlements one exploits in doing that. But I urged that the insight, so understood, permits judgments to be displayed as rational in the light of experiences themselves, not just in the light of beliefs about experiences, since we can understand experiences as actualizations of conceptual capacities.[18]

Trying to spell out this possibility, which I found missing from Davidson's picture, I made one of the assumptions I have here renounced: that if experiences are actualizations of conceptual capacities, they must have propositional content. That gave Davidson an opening for a telling response.

15. See, e.g., Bill Brewer, "Perception and Content".
16. See Brewer, "Perception and Content".
17. "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge", p. 141.
18. See, e.g., *Mind and World*.

Davidson argued that if by "experience" we mean something with propositional content, it can only be a case of taking things to be so, distinctive in being caused by the impact of the environment on our sensory apparatus. But of course his picture includes such things. So I was wrong, he claimed, to suppose there is anything missing from his picture.[19]

I want to insist, against Davidson, that experiencing is not taking things to be so. As Travis urges, our visual experiences bring our surroundings into view. Some of what we are thereby entitled to take to be so, in judgments that would be rational given what is visually present to us, we do take to be so. But even when we detach belief-acquisition from explicitly judging things to be so, as we should, we would exaggerate the extent of the doxastic activity experience prompts in us if we were to suppose we acquire all the beliefs we would be entitled to by what we have in view.

So I agree with Travis that visual experiences just bring our surroundings into view, thereby entitling us to take certain things to be so, but leaving it a further question what, if anything, we do take to be so. But as I have argued, Travis's version of that thought falls into the Myth of the Given. And if we avoid the Myth by conceiving experiences as actualizations of conceptual capacities, while retaining the assumption that that requires crediting experiences with propositional content, Davidson's point seems well taken. If experiences have propositional content, it is hard to deny that experiencing is taking things to be so, rather than what I want: a different kind of thing that entitles us to take things to be so.

If experience comprises intuitions, there is a way between these positions. Intuitions bring our surroundings into view, but not in an operation of mere sensibility, so we avoid Travis's form of the Myth of the Given. But the conceptual content that allows us to avoid the Myth is intuitional, not propositional, so experiencing is not taking things to be so. In bringing our surroundings into view, experiences entitle us to take things to be so; whether we do is a further question.

As I said, there are two ways in which experience, conceived as comprising intuitions, entitles us to moves with discursive content. It entitles us to judgments that would exploit some of the content of an intuition, and it

19. For a particularly clear expression, see "Reply to John McDowell". Berkeley colleagues of Davidson's have weighed in in a similar vein. See Barry Stroud, "Sense-Experience and the Grounding of Thought", and Hannah Ginsborg, "Reasons for Belief". For a similar view, independent of Davidson, see Kathrin Glüer, "On Perceiving That".

figures in our entitlement to judgments that would go beyond that content in ways that reflect capacities to recognize things made present to one in an intuition. But as I have insisted, in intuiting itself we do not deal discursively with content.

I mentioned Sellars's proposal that the content of an intuition might be captured, in part, by a form of words like "this red cube". Content so expressed would be fragmentary discursive content. It might be part of the content of a judgment warranted in the second of those two ways, where what one judges includes, over and above content contained in the intuition itself, concepts whose figuring in the judgment reflects recognitional capacities brought to bear on something the intuition makes present to one. Thus, a bit of discourse that begins "This red cube . . ." might go on ". . . is the one I saw yesterday".

I think this indicates that Sellars's proposal is useful only up to a point. It might seem to imply that intuitional content is essentially fragmentary discursive content. But intuitional content is not discursive content at all. Having something in view, say a red cube, can be complete in itself. Having something in view can enable a demonstrative expression, or an analogue in judgment, that one might use in making explicit something one takes to be so, but the potential need not be actualized.

10. Davidson's slogan as it stands restricts the way beliefs can be displayed as rational to exploitations of *inferential* structures. It implies that giving a reason for holding a belief is depicting the content of the belief as the conclusion of an inference with the content of another belief as a premise.

I proposed to modify Davidson's slogan by saying that not only beliefs but also experiences can be reasons for belief. And according to my old assumption experiences have the same kind of content as beliefs. So it was understandable that I should be taken to be recommending an inferential, or at least quasi-inferential, conception of the way experience entitles us to perceptual beliefs.[20]

That was not what I intended. I did not mean to imply that experience yields premises for inferences whose conclusions are the contents of perceptual beliefs. On the contrary, I think experience directly reveals things to be as they are believed to be in perceptual beliefs, or at least seems to do that. But it is hard to make that cohere with supposing experiences have the

20. See Crispin Wright, "Human Nature?".

same kind of content as beliefs. That is just a way of registering how persuasive Davidson's "Nothing is missing" response is, so long as we do not question the assumption that conceptual content for experiences would have to be propositional.

Taking experience to comprise intuitions, in the sense I have explained, removes this problem. It should not even seem that the way intuitions entitle us to beliefs involves an inferential structure. If an object is present to one through the presence to one of some of its properties, in an intuition in which concepts of those properties exemplify a unity that constitutes the content of a formal concept of an object, one is thereby entitled to judge that one is confronted by an object with those properties. The entitlement derives from the presence to one of the object itself, not from a premise for an inference, at one's disposal by being the content of one's experience.

On the interpretation I offered at the beginning, Sellars's view of the Given as a pitfall to be avoided, in thinking about experience, is an application of his thought that knowledge, as enjoyed by rational animals, draws on our distinctively rational capacities. I have just explained how that does not imply that the warrant for a perceptual judgment is quasi-inferential.[21]

Finding such an implication is of a piece with thinking Sellars's Kantian understanding of what knowledge is for rational animals over-intellectualizes our epistemic life.[22] This needs discussion, but I shall end by briefly arguing that it is the very reverse of the truth.

An intellectualistic conception of the human intellect regards it as something distinct from our animal nature. The best antidote is to see capacities of reason as operative even in our unreflective perceptual awareness.

It is utterly wrong to think Sellars's conception implies that all of our epistemic life is actively led by us, in the bright light of reason. That rational capacities are pervasively in play in human epistemic life is reflected in the fact that any of it *can* be accompanied by the "I think" of explicit self-consciousness. But even though all of our epistemic life is able to be accompanied by the "I think", in much of it we unreflectively go with the flow.

I said that all of our epistemic life can be accompanied by the "I think". Subpersonal occurrences in our cognitive machinery are not a counter-example

21. For the idea that Sellars's rejection of the Given amounts to the thesis that the warrant for perceptual judgments is inferential or quasi-inferential, see Daniel Bonevac, "Sellars vs. the Given".

22. See Tyler Burge, "Perceptual Entitlement".

to this claim. They are not, in the relevant sense, part of our epistemic life. No doubt knowledge of how our cognitive machinery works is essential for a full understanding of how it can be that our epistemic capacities are as they are. But having a standing in the space of reasons—for instance, being in a position to see that things are thus and so—is not a sub-personal matter. It is true that the sub-personal machinery that enables us to have such standings operates outside the reach of our apperception. And there are, unsurprisingly, similarities between our sub-personal cognitive machinery and the cognitive machinery of non-rational animals. But that does not threaten the idea that rational animals are special in having epistemic standings to which it is essential that they are available to apperception.

What makes Sellars's internalistic conception appropriate for our perceptual knowledge is not that in perception we engage in rational activity on the lines of reasoning—something that might be regarded as separate from our animal nature, specifically, for present purposes, our sentient nature. That *would* be over-intellectualizing our perceptual knowledge. But the reason why internalism is correct about our perceptual knowledge is that rational capacities, and hence availability to apperception, permeate our experience itself, including the experience we act on unreflectively in our ordinary coping with our surroundings. Such is the form that animal engagement with the perceptible environment takes in the case of rational animals.

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Credits

Essay 1: Originally published in *Journal of Philosophy* 95 (1998): 431–450.
Essay 2: Originally published in *Journal of Philosophy* 95 (1998): 451–470.
Essay 3: Originally published in *Journal of Philosophy* 95 (1998): 471–491.
Essay 4: Forthcoming in *International Yearbook of German Idealism* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter).
Essay 5: Originally published in *International Yearbook of German Idealism* 3 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 21–37.
Essay 6: Originally published in *Philosophical Topics* 33, no. 2 (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008).
Essay 7: Originally published in Günter Abel, ed., *Kreativität* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2006), 1065–1079.
Essay 8: Originally published in *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 47/48 (2003): 1–16.
Essay 9: Originally published in German translation in Wolfgang Welsch and Klaus Vieweg, eds., *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes—Ein kooperativer Kommentar zu einem Schlüsselwerk der Moderne* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008).
Essay 10: Originally published in *European Journal of Philosophy* 15 (2007): 395–410. By permission of Wiley-Blackwell.
Essay 11: Originally published in *Crítica* 30 (1998): 29–48.
Essays 12 and 13: First published in this volume.
Essay 14: Originally published in Jakob Lindgaard, ed., *John McDowell: Experience, Norm, and Nature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).

Index