

## Week 4 Notes

Outline:

1. Recap of our minimal, two-sorted deontic, bilateral pragmatic MV. Discursive practice in this minimal model consists of undertaking commitments to accept and reject, and challenging and defending entitlement to them, with participants' understanding of what is going on consisting in their practically keeping track of who is committed and entitled to what, as the conversation continues. Playing this role **entitles us to call them them *doxastic commitments***. I call this a 'minimal' model of discursive practice because I think that it describes the minimal structure of practices within which some performances are pragmatically intelligible as claimings and that is accordingly capable of conferring on the acts, attitudes, and linguistic expressions playing suitable roles in such practices semantically recognizable as possessing specifically *conceptual* contents. Practices that do not accord some performances the pragmatic significance of claimings are not discursive in the sense I am delineating.

Simple as it is, this stripped-down model of discursive practice shows how we can understand reason relations, in terms of the role they play in reasoning practices. **Defending** a claim is making other claims that collectively offer **reasons *for it*** (in the basic case, reasons to ***accept*** it). **Challenging** a claim is making other claims that collectively offer **reasons *against it*** (in the basic case, reasons to ***reject*** it). And implicit in these practices are **two kinds of reason relations**: those that determine what is a reason for what and those that determine what is a reason against what. These are **relations of *implication and incompatibility***. What stand in those relations are claimables: what can be asserted or denied, doxastically accepted or rejected. We may **think of those claimables as conceptually contentful just insofar as they stand to one another in relations of implication or consequence and incompatibility**. Those relations articulate the norms governing assessments of what claimables are reasons for and against which others, by determining which *claimings* provide reasons to accept and which provide reasons to reject other claimings.

Looking at the **bilateral normative pragmatics** of R&R, we see that it implicitly **depends on *two* normative statuses**. It classifies "positions" as "in-bounds" or "out-of-

bounds,” and focuses on the normativity of the latter. But the notion of a position already involves attitudes that are *normative* attitudes: *commitments* to accept or reject (the bilateral aspect).

Pragmatic consequence:  $\Gamma$  implies A iff any position that includes accepting all of  $\Gamma$  and rejecting A is normatively incoherent or “out of bounds”: one cannot be entitled to such a constellation of commitments.

There are subtleties to the sense in which **entitlements are more holistic than commitments**. *Some* commitments, the avowed ones, are atomistic. The consequential ones are holistic, but one need not know *everything* about what one is committed to in order to attribute them. But we focus equally on incompatibility and on implication (where R&R mostly just care about implication). By contrast, because two claimables can be incompatible, so commitment to one precludes entitlement to other, to attribute entitlement must rule out *all* incompatibles of *all* subsets of commitments.

## 2. Conceptual Roles:

Sellars argues that the important difference between *describing*, by applying concepts, and mere *labeling*, as nonconceptual classification, consists in the **situation of descriptions in** a space of implications. The suggestion I am pursuing is that we understand the conceptual contents of claimables in terms of their situation in, the role they play with respect to, **a space of reason relations: of implications, and incompatibilities**. Doing so promises progress on the way to a version of conceptual realism insofar as it contributes to **a non-psychological conception of the conceptual**: one that does not necessarily restrict it to the products of discursive practices. To fulfill that promise, we will have to show how the conception of relations of consequence and incompatibility that are introduced and understood to begin with in terms of their role in normatively governing discursive practices of asserting and denying, and challenging and defending the rational credentials of those acts and the doxastic attitudes and commitments they express, can be found to apply also on the side of the objective reality represented by those subjective activities of manipulating representings.

We will pursue a line of thought that **treats sentential conceptual roles, that is, propositions, claimables, acceptables/rejectables, assertibles/deniabiles, what is truth-evaluable, as identified and individuated by the role sentences (from the lexicon of the vocabulary) play with respect to the two kinds of reason relations**.

3. Truthmaker semantics (as the culmination so far of the Tarskian model-theoretic tradition). Metaphysics. Semantics. Then metaphysics of semantics: propositions in the world (wild).

Kit Fine's truth-maker semantics:

- A universe of states,
- Divided into possible and impossible states. (*Modal* structure)
- States can be fused with others to form new states as wholes, of which they are parts. (*Mereological* structure)
- A semantic interpretation function assigns declarative sentences to pairs of sets of states, understood as the truth-makers and falsity-makers (verifiers and falsifiers) of those sentences, subject to the condition of
- Exclusivity: every fusion of truth-makers of a sentence with any falsity-maker of that sentence is an impossible state.
- Consequence as Entailment:  $\Gamma$  entails  $A$  iff every verifier of all of  $\Gamma$  is a verifier of  $A$ .
- Consequence as Containment:  $A$  contains  $\Gamma$  iff every verifier of  $A$  includes as a part a verifier of all of  $\Gamma$  and every verifier of all of  $\Gamma$  is a part of a verifier of  $A$ .
- There are many more propositions (=df. pairs of sets of states satisfying Exclusivity) than can be expressed by the sentences of any particular language.

The most sophisticated and expressively powerful contemporary representational formal semantic framework is Kit Fine's truthmaker semantics. It begins with a metaphysical picture of what there is to be represented semantically. That universe consists of a structured collection of what he calls 'states.' The formal apparatus is as noncommittal as possible about what these consist in, but states are meant to include such ways things could be as Pittsburgh's being to the West of New York City and snow being white. The universe of states is thought of as having two sorts of structure: mereological and modal. On the *mereological* side, some states are to be understood as being *parts* of others. More formally, there is a *fusion* operation that maps any set of states into a whole comprising them. This defines the part-whole relation: state  $A$  is part of state  $B$  just in case  $B$  is the result of fusing  $A$  with some other states. On the *modal* side, the universe of states is partitioned into *possible* and *impossible* states.

**Mereologically and modally structured state spaces generalize the metaphysics of possible worlds in a number of important ways.** Possible worlds show up in this framework

as maximal possible states: possible states such that every other state is either a part of that state or incompatible with it, in the sense that fusing it with the world-state yields an *impossible* state. (Situation semantics had already shown the expressive advantages of building such wholes out of smaller parts, rather than getting the partial ones by analyzing whole worlds.) On the modal side, state spaces in general include multiple *impossible* states, where the possible worlds setting in effect has only one. On the mereological side, various structural conditions can be put on the fusion operation, for instance, requiring that all the states that contain any impossible state are themselves impossible—that is, that the result of fusing any state with an impossible state is always an impossible state. Like the existence of multiple impossible states, the capacity to consider different kinds of mereological structures is a major degree of freedom in the apparatus, enhancing the expressive power of the truth-maker framework.

This *metaphysical* specification of what is there to be represented is then married to a flexible and powerful representational *semantics*. An interpretation function assigns each declarative sentence to a pair of sets of states, thought of as the (exact) *truth*-makers and *falsity*-makers of that sentence. Rather than simply defining one of these sets in terms of the other, one can put various explicit structural constraints on the sets of verifiers and falsifiers that are assigned to declarative sentences as their semantic interpretants. **One might be tempted to require that they be disjoint:** no state is both a truth-maker and a falsity-maker of any sentence. Fine requires rather that **the fusion of any truth-maker with any false-maker of the same sentence must be an impossible state. He calls this condition *Exclusivity*. It entails the cognate, but usefully different, requirement that any states that are both truth-makers and false-makers of the same sentence be impossible states.** Some statements, say “All cows are made of glass,” and “This neutrino has a mass of 500 kilograms,” might have only impossible truth-makers—but they are not required to have the *same* impossible states as truth-makers. The combination of the mereological and modal fineness of grain of the underlying metaphysics and keeping separate books on the truth-makers and falsity-makers that semantically interpret sentences results in a hyperintensional theory of meaning, which makes many more distinctions than its possible-worlds predecessor.

To count as a semantics in the sense of an account of the *conceptual* contents sentences express, the truth-maker framework must permit the definition of reason relations of implication and incompatibility. Fine offers two principal ways one might define consequence (among other possibilities) and counts it a virtue of the system that there are such alternatives.

- He says that a set of sentences  $\Gamma$  *entails* a conclusion A in case **every verifier of all the premises in  $\Gamma$  is also a verifier of the conclusion A.**
- He says that A is a consequence of  $\Gamma$  in the sense of *containment* iff **every verifier of A includes as a part a verifier of all of  $\Gamma$  and every verifier of all of  $\Gamma$  is a part of a verifier of A.**

Corresponding definitions of incompatibility are not far to seek. My principal concern here is with **how best to understand reason relations in the truth-maker framework.** I shall return to that topic shortly, to criticize Fine's candidates, and to offer a suggestion as to how these definitions might be improved upon. First, let me revert briefly to the metaphysics, to make an observation about how it looks once we have used it to supply semantic interpretants for sentences.

For, as Fine observes and celebrates, the overall picture underwrites a striking realism about the propositional contents expressed by declarative sentences. Such contents are just pairs of sets of states that meet whatever structural conditions we impose on such pairs to make them eligible to serve as truth-makers and false-makers of sentences—paradigmatically, **Exclusivity, which requires that all fusions of elements of the first set with elements of the second set be impossible states.** He proposes to call any pair of sets of states meeting that condition a 'proposition', since it is eligible to serve as the interpretant of a sentence. But even in the metaphysically implausible case where there is only a countably infinite number of states, **there will be uncountably many pairs of sets of them meeting the minimal structural condition for propositionality—so, far more than any natural or formal language in the ordinary sense can have sentences to express.** And those worldly propositions stand to one another in relations consequence (for instance, entailment and containment in Fine's sense) and incompatibility, since those notions are defined in terms of the metaphysical mereological and modal properties of the paired sets of states.

4. The Hlobil isomorphism. (There is nothing else like this result because no-one ever put together a sufficiently determinate and tractable pragmatic MV.)

Key Suggestion:

Define Consequence as *Implication* in the truth-maker framework by analogy to Exclusivity.

Definition:  $\Gamma$  *implies* A iff every fusion of any truth-maker of all of  $\Gamma$  with any falsity-maker of A is an impossible state.

This definition of consequence uses both the modal and the mereological structure of TM.

Hlobil isomorphism of bilateral normative pragmatic definition of reason relations and truth-maker semantic definition:

- i) Pragmatic consequence:  $\Gamma$  implies A iff any position that includes accepting all of  $\Gamma$  and rejecting A is normatively incoherent or “out of bounds”: one cannot be entitled to such a constellation of commitments.
- ii) Semantic consequence:  $\Gamma$  implies A iff any fusion of a state that verifies all the members of  $\Gamma$  with a state that falsifies A is an impossible state.
- iii) Pragmatic incompatibility:  $\Gamma$  is incompatible with A  $\Leftrightarrow$  the position resulting from concomitant commitment to *accept* all of  $\Gamma$  and to *accept* A is normatively *incoherent* (“out of bounds”): a constellation of commitments to which one *cannot* be entitled.
- iv) Semantic incompatibility:  $\Gamma$  is incompatible with A  $\Leftrightarrow$  the state resulting from *fusion* of any *verifiers* of all the members of  $\Gamma$  with any *verifier* of A is an *impossible* state.

5. What we can do for Fine:

- a) The “right” definition of consequence. It uses both mereological and modal components. And it matches the proof-theoretic definition.
- b) Can do semantics for logics KF cannot—for instance, for paracomplete and paraconsistent trilogics K3 and LP, and their extensions to ST and TS. For, we can go substructural, and give TM semantics for nonmonotonic and nontransitive consequence relations. These results *within* the TM framework (using our TM-definition of consequence) show the value of this definition of consequence.
- c) But most important, we offer **a pragmatics for TM semantics**. That is, we can say, as Kit Fine does not even *try* to do, what practitioners need to *do* in order *thereby* to be taking or treating declarative sentences *as* having truth-makers and false-makers. Here discuss the distinction and relation between **purely formal semantics and genuinely philosophical semantics**. Formal semantics *stipulates* semantic associations of some expressions (e.g. declarative sentences) with semantic interpretants, and then shows how to extend that association systematically to include further expressions. Philosophical semantics tells a story about how the association of linguistic expressions with semantically relevant interpretants can be *instituted* by what practitioners *do*—the practices they engage in or the abilities they exercise.

6. Why this isomorphism matters:

The ATBUYO opening story of the history of conceptual realism.

[Insert ATBUYO Sections I and II here.]

## I. From Resemblance to Representation

The scientific revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries radically transformed our conception of the relation between appearance and reality. The new physics, pioneered by Galileo and Descartes and raised to a powerful systematic pinnacle by Newton, achieved its unprecedented explanatory successes by redescribing the natural world in a variety of mathematical vocabularies. This decisive advance in the scientific conception of reality was accompanied by a radical metamorphosis in the philosophical understanding of the relation between that reality and its appearance to the human subjects who had come to understand physical reality so much better by deploying those new vocabularies. A key element of early modern philosophers' response to the rise of the new science was to move from thinking of appearance in terms of its *resemblance to* reality to thinking of it in terms of its *representation of* reality.

The home of the appearance/reality distinction lies in specifically *perceptual* appearances. Veridical perceptual experience, in which things appear as they really are, is not only a necessary condition of empirical knowledge, but also its principal source. However, perceptual appearances also sometimes *mislead*, by diverging from reality: the circular coin looks elliptical, the distant tower is larger than it appears, the color of the cloth turns out not to be what in bad lighting it was taken to be. Since the Greeks, the idea had been that, at least when things go well, the way things appear to us *resembles* the way they really are, on the model of pictures and other replicas. Resemblance here can be understood as the sharing of some properties, as a realistic portrait might reproduce the shapes of facial features or the color of clothing. Where the picturing shapes and colors replicate the shapes and colors of what is pictured, reality appears as it is. Where they diverge, appearances can be misleading.

The rise of the new science exposes the inadequacy of the resemblance model of appearance. On **Copernicus**'s account, the reality behind the appearance of a stationary Earth and a revolving Sun is a rotating Earth and stationary Sun. Being at rest and being in motion are opposites, incompatible properties that don't have anything in common. Rotating and revolving (spinning and orbiting) are both kinds of circular motion, but quite different ones. The general lesson was that astronomical reality was nothing like its appearance to us. **Galileo**'s reading of what he calls the "book of nature, written in the language of mathematics" finds that the best way of getting a grip on the reality of motion is by manipulating geometrical appearances. For him a period of time shows up as the length of a line, and acceleration as the area of triangle. One could force the assimilation of temporal to spatial extension into the form of resemblance-as-shared-properties, but no such Procrustean maneuver will make the resemblance model sufficient, or even helpful in understanding the relations between the real acceleration of a falling body and its geometrical appearance as a triangle.

**Descartes** sees that making sense of mathematical appearances of physical phenomena requires a model more abstract than the traditional perception-inspired notion of resemblance. He crafts a concept of representation for this purpose. The paradigm of representational relations is to be found in his algebraic geometry. He thinks of material reality as the realm of extension, and takes it to *consist* of geometric properties—thus radicalizing Galileo by giving an ontological twist to his use of geometrical vocabulary. For Descartes, the real, physical, geometrical world of shapes and motions can best be represented by, most veridically appears as, discursive sequences of symbols, in the form of algebraic equations. The equations  $x^2+y^2=1$  and  $x=y$  do not at all *resemble*—are in no sense replicas of—the circle and line that they represent. But they make it possible to *reason about* those figures, for instance by computing the two points of intersection of that circle and that line.

But how is the looser, more abstract representational relation to be understood? Giving up the bonds of resemblance by allowing representings to be so radically dissimilar to what they represent opens up a new skeptical possibility: that reality is radically different from how it appears in representations of it—perhaps even our best ones. If representings and representeds don't need to share properties, what *does* connect them? Descartes didn't officially offer much of an account. **Mental states and episodes, he thought, are *intrinsically* representational. It**

is their nature to be “*tanquam rem,*” as if of things—as it is the nature of physical things to be extended, in the sense of geometrically describable as having a shape, and size, and state of motion or rest.

It was **Spinoza** (whose first book was on Descartes) who figured out the concept of representation that was implicit in the motivating paradigm of analytic geometry. The key is that, as he puts it, “**the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.**”<sup>1</sup> Equations can represent geometrical figures because the whole *system* of equations is isomorphic to the whole *system* of figures—with, for instance, simultaneous solutions of equations corresponding to intersections of lines. That is why algebraically manipulating equations is intelligible as reasoning *about* geometrical figures. Given the global isomorphism—the “order and connection” of linear strings of symbols that is the same as the “order and connection” of extended plane figures—the equation ‘ $x^2+y^2=1$ ’ can play the same functional role in the world of equations that the circle it thereby counts as representing plays in the world of geometrical figures.

According to this story, the resemblance model was not wrong to take the sharing of properties to be essential to the *of*-ness invoked by talk of appearances *of* material reality. **Its mistake, the source of its expressive limitations, was to restrict attention to local properties, conceived atomistically:** properties elements of picturings and of what is pictured could have regardless of what properties *other*, systematically related elements had. **The wider scope of the new representational model is due to the holistic character of its appeal to global isomorphisms,** which make visible *functional* correlations between items in the two systems, which might have quite different atomistic material properties. The new, more abstract and expressively powerful representational model of the intentional nexus between appearance and reality develops the older, more concrete resemblance model by shifting attention to the larger relational structures whose individual elements can be understood to play the functional roles of representing and represented in virtue of the global isomorphism of those structures. **Representings and representeds are still understood to share properties—but properties of a new, functional kind, intelligible only globally, and so holistically, in terms of relations to other representings or representeds.** This shift from atomistic to holistic conceptions of

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics* II, Prop 7.

contentfulness was enthusiastically seconded by **Leibniz**, who required each monad to represent its whole universe in order to represent any of it, and whose monadological vision **added the even more holistic idea that *any difference anywhere in the representationally related relational structures requires some difference everywhere.***

## II. Phenomenalism about Conceptual Appearances

This metaconceptual sea-change from understanding the appearance/reality distinction in terms of the atomistic model of *resemblance* to using the more holistic model of *representation* introduced by Descartes is the first big episode that I need to have on the table in order to introduce my topic. The second is **Kant's further step away from the original perceptual paradigm to focus on specifically *conceptual* appearances**. Descartes's new notion of representation was sufficiently capacious to encompass both concepts and percepts, thoughts and sensations. His successors, rationalists and empiricists alike, had tried out the strategy of treating these two kinds of representation as extremes of a spectrum. Though they developed different understandings of the common dimension along which different sorts of representings are arrayed—rationalists as a matter of clarity and distinctness at the conceptual end and confusion at the perceptual end, empiricists as a matter of concreteness and vivacity at the perceptual end and abstractness at the conceptual end—both schools saw thoughts and sensations as tied together by a variety of intermediate cases that make up the unifying spectrum of which they are extremes.

For Kant, this quantitative scaling approach is an unsatisfactory framework in which to analyze **the qualitatively different sorts of contribution to empirical knowledge made by representations of the two kinds: perceptual and conceptual**. Those differences in function are sufficiently stark, he thinks, to justify treating them as the products of wholly distinct cognitive faculties. Kant's bold strategy is to understand the functional division of labor between those faculties hylomorphically, with sensibility contributing empirical *content* and the understanding contributing the intelligible conceptual *form* of empirical cognitions. He accordingly faces a new question: What does it mean to say that in the representings that are the appearance of represented reality, empirical content shows up in specifically *conceptual* form?

To address this question adequately, Kant needed to rethink the wider realm of discursive activities in general, within which concepts play their distinctive functional role. It includes both

**the application of concepts in judgments, and the use of judgments in reasoning.** Here he could help himself to the logical tradition. The Scholastics, seconded by the **Port Royale logicians**, envisaged a methodological hierarchy relating these components. Its most basic level is a **doctrine of concepts**, particular and general. On top of that is built a **doctrine of judgments**, classified according to the kind of concepts they deploy. And on top of that is constructed a **doctrine of inferences**, codified in the form of syllogisms, classified according to the kinds of judgments that serve as their premises and conclusions.

In order to adapt and extend this structure to address not only traditional *general* logic, but also what he called “*transcendental*” logic, which is tasked with understanding the specifically *representational* dimension of concept-use, in the light of the holistic lessons Spinoza and Leibniz taught about the importance of the systematic “order and connection of ideas” to understanding representation, Kant needed to turn that logical tradition on its head. Wilfrid Sellars said about this crucial move:

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

In fact, Kant recruits the structural elements of the traditional, atomistic, bottom-up account in the service of a holistic, functional, top-down account of discursiveness. Concepts, he says, are ‘functions of judgment.’ They must be understood in terms of the role they play in activities of judging. Judgments, not concepts, are the minimal unit of discursive awareness: what, following Leibniz, he calls ‘apperception’. Judgments are indeed, as the tradition had it, applications of concepts. But we are to understand applying concepts in terms of an antecedent understanding of what judging is, not the other way around.

At the center of Kant’s revolutionary reconceptualization of the discursive is his new account of the activity of judging. He understands judging as taking up a distinctive kind of normative stance: undertaking a responsibility, committing oneself. He further understands the normative status taken on in judging as a *task* responsibility: a commitment to *do* something, to

engage in specific kinds of activities. Concepts are then to be made intelligible as rules for determining *what* one is taking responsibility for or committing oneself to by making the judgments that are the application of those concepts. What one becomes responsible for doing in making a judgment is integrating it into a constellation of doxastic commitments that has a distinctive kind of unity: a rational systematic unity. One obligation undertaken in endorsing a new claim is securing the coherence of one's commitments by extruding rationally incompatible ones from the ensemble. Another is to expand the system by acknowledging the consequences of one's judgments, and by identifying other judgments that justify one's commitments by providing reasons for them. Constellations of commitments governed by the critical, ampliative, and justificatory rational task responsibilities have the unity Kant sees as distinctive of **apperception**, that is, discursive, specifically *conceptual*, awareness: *sapience*, not merely sentience.

His generic term for the rational, norm-governed discursive activities that confer conceptual form is 'synthesis.' In the first instance, *what* is synthesized is a constellation of commitments having the distinctive kind of *rational* unity characteristic of apperception. **The conceptual contents of judgments, the most basic kind of conceptual representation, are their potentials for being integrated into wholes having that sort of synthetic unity.** Rational synthetic activity results, Kant tells us, in the *transcendental* unity of apperception. It is a transcendental unity in the sense studied by transcendental logic: a unity that makes intelligible the *representational* dimension of judgment and discursive understanding generally. The challenge is to derive an account of the relations between representing appearances and represented realities from such a top-down, holistic, functional account of the activities and processes that structure the rational, norm-governed, conceptual "order and connection of ideas."

By elaborating in this way the underlying idea of conceptual form as conferred by role in reasoning, Kant crafted a powerful new conception of the conceptual. It includes an original account of what any subject (looking ahead, we could think of computers) must be able to *do* to count as thinking in the sense of applying *concepts*, that is to count as aware in a way that essentially involves discursive understanding. This is **apperception, being appeared to, in a distinctively conceptual sense of appearance.** These ideas were of the utmost significance for subsequent German Idealism, and later, American Pragmatism, starting with Peirce. And my

main topic for the rest of this talk is how they can be developed and deployed to address issues we still wrestle with today. But already in the form to which Kant brought them, a disadvantage becomes visible of tying conceptual form so closely to the reasoning activities of apperceiving subjects.

For however successful or promising a construal of conceptual form in terms of role in reasoning might be as an account of **the conceptual form of appearances, it seems in principle restricted to accounting for conceptual representings**. It is not clear, on this account, what it could even *mean* for the reality that appearance represents *also* to have or to be in conceptual form. How could conceptual form in this sense be the “order and connection” that is shared by the systems of *representings* and the system of *representeds* on the Descartes-inspired Spinozist holistic construal of representation? On the face of it, things in the objective world do not play functional roles in rational practices of acknowledging how some judgments provide reasons for and against others. Understanding the conceptual form of judgments or judgeable contents to consist in the functional role they play in such norm-governed rational activities restricts conceptual form to the appearance side of the appearance/reality distinction. We can characterize any view that restricts conceptual articulation to the realm of appearance ‘conceptual phenomenalism.’ By contrast, we can use ‘conceptual realism’ to describe accounts of conceptual structure that discern it on both ends of the relations between discursive representings and what they represent. In these terms, Kant is a conceptual phenomenalist.

Of course, Kant fully understands and enthusiastically embraces this conclusion. It is the core of his transcendental idealism. **Since conceptual form is for him exclusively the product of the rational activities of the faculty of the Understanding, it follows that it is restricted to our representings. It can characterize the reality the representings that constitute discursive appearance represent, only as represented, that is, only as it exists *in and according to* those representings—not, as a matter of deep principle, how what is represented is in *itself*, that is, apart from its relation to representings of it.** As I put the point a bit earlier, on the Kantian conception of the conceptual we do not even understand what it would mean for reality as it is apart from our representing activities to be in conceptual shape. That is why the world as we conceptually represent it in our judgments and beliefs cannot be understood to be transcendently real. It must be thought of as only ideal transcendently and

real only empirically—that is, as being what we take it to be only *in* our representings of it. Conceptual phenomenalism in the form of transcendental idealism is entailed by the conjunction of Spinoza’s holistic functional account of the form shared by veridical systems of representings and what they represent with Kant’s account of the conceptual form of discursive representings in terms of the role they play in the reasoning of representers.

With this claim I have arrived at the principal question. That is how we may understand conceptually realistic views, which reject the restriction of conceptual form to the realm of appearance, in the sense of the products of our rational, representational activity. Since I introduced the issue by offering a pedigree for Kant’s conceptual phenomenalism that begins with large-scale features of the appearance/reality distinction, it is worth **noting that in the broadest terms, along this dimension Kant turns Plato on his head. For Plato contrasted a reality that is intelligible just in virtue of its conceptual form, to its sensible, nonconceptual appearance, whose resemblance to that intelligible reality is hard enough to grasp that it requires heavy-duty philosophizing to make visible.** Both Kant’s picture of conceptual appearance and nonconceptual reality and Plato’s complementary picture of conceptual reality and nonconceptual appearance **stand in opposition to views I am calling ‘conceptually realist’, which attribute conceptual articulation both to reality and to its appearance to concept users**—both to what discursive activity represents and to conceptual representings of it.<sup>2</sup>

Kant’s picture of cognitive faculties as conceptualizing the nonconceptual world, rendering it intelligible to or graspable by concept-using subjects builds a strong kind of skepticism into the ground floor of his semantics. In the opening paragraph of the Introduction to his *Phenomenology*, Hegel complains about this

strict line of demarcation separating knowledge and the absolute. For if knowledge is the instrument to take hold of the absolute essence, one is immediately reminded that the application of an instrument to a thing does not leave the thing as it is, but brings about a shaping and alteration of it. Or, if knowledge is not an instrument for our activity, but a more or less passive medium through which the light of truth reaches us, then again we do not receive

---

<sup>2</sup> This comparison is suggested by some remarks in Ryan Simonelli’s “Sellars’s Two Worlds” in *Reading Kant with Sellars*, ed. M. Ranee and L. C. Seiberth. Routledge. Forthcoming.

this truth as it is in itself, but as it is in and through this medium. In both cases we employ a means which immediately brings about the opposite of its own end....

The original perceptual version of the appearance/reality distinction made sense both of veridical appearances, where things appear as they really are, and mistaken appearances, where how things appear is not how they really are. Does understanding appearances as conceptual representings really preclude us from taking some of them to be veridical?

John McDowell's masterwork *Mind and World* can be understood as botanizing various pathologies that result from rejecting conceptual realism: for taking it that, as he puts it, the realm of the conceptual has an "outer boundary" marking the cleavage of mind from world. In order to be entitled to take the reality we think and talk about as *rationally* and not merely *causally* constraining our representings of it, he argues, we must understand that world, and not just our minds, as already in conceptual form. The challenge such a view raises is to say how one must understand the conceptual in order to make good on this aspiration.

Kant explicitly recoils from one strategy for reconciling conceptual realism with a restriction of the conceptual to representings. That is the view that represented reality consists entirely of representings—that the world is thinkable because it consists of thinkings. He rejects both what he calls the "subjective idealism" of Berkeley, with its single divine world-thinker as the source of representable representings and Leibniz's monadological plenum of represented representers. If we agree with Kant in spurning these extravagant approaches, must we also renounce conceptual realism and agree with him in settling for conceptual phenomenalism in the form of some sort of transcendental idealism?

The conceptual phenomenalist threat and the corresponding conceptual realist aspiration is perhaps best expressed by the chorus in Wallace Stevens' poem "The Blue Guitar":

They said                    "You have a blue guitar,  
                                      You do not play things as they are."  
  
The man replied:            "Things as they are  
                                      Are changed upon the blue guitar."

And they said then: “But play you must, a tune beyond us, yet ourselves,  
A tune upon the blue guitar, of things *exactly* as they are.”

Our proof-theory-inspired two-sorted deontic bilateral pragmatic metavocabulary, and the link Ulf forges between it and a suitably tweaked version of Kit Fine’s representational, model-theoretic truthmaker semantic metavocabulary offers a concrete way of working out a conceptual realism that centers of reason relations. It develops two ideas that lead to Kant’s conceptual phenomenalism: namely the Spinozist *holist* account of how thinking in terms of representation improves upon thinking in terms of resemblance in understanding the relations between appearance and reality and Kant’s *functionalist* construal of conceptual form as conferred by role in reasoning.

7. The isomorphism is at the level of *reason relations*.

This is very different from a parallel at the level even of sentences (statements/facts), or particulars (objects) and singular terms, with properties-and-relations with (complex) predicates. Perhaps our isomorphism can, at least in some cases, be derived *from below*, from one of these two levels. But we can *define* it at *this* level. We explore the idea that this is the *fundamental* level, of a *top-down* order of explication/explanation.

But we will go on to define *conceptual roles*—to begin with, for sentences.

They, too, have analogues on both sides of the pragmatic/semantic, deontic/alethic divides: rational forms, things that can both *be* and be *taken* to be true or false.

This is top/down explication/explanation, from reason relations to conceptual roles w/res to such relations—in a kind of *functionalist*, or at least *relationist* way.

In Weeks 10 and 11 we will explore going further in the top-down direction by dissecting conceptual roles corresponding to singular terms and complex predicates.

This is another reason that comparable results have not been forthcoming: reason relations are the right level to see the relation between pragmatic and representational semantic MVs.

The most neutral way I know to put the point is that the relationship between facts and attitudes of taking-true can best be articulated (stronger: can only be understood) in the context of the relationship between what really follows or excludes and what it is to *take* things to follow and exclude.

**This is all just applying the Spinoza point: the relations among representings and representeds must be understood top-down, in terms of the *relations* among representings and *relations* among representeds.**

8. This is *bimodal conceptual realism*, relating *alethic* modal semantic MV to *deontic* modal pragmatic MV.

Grice in *Aspects of Reason*, his only posthumously published Oxford Locke lectures.

9. Tell the Sellars story, with the slogan: “The language of modality is a transposed language of norms.” His epiphany with Carnap, leading him (but not, at least in the same way, Carnap) to a metalinguistic approach to modal vocabulary, as codifying norms of reasoning. (Implications must have ranges of subjunctive robustness.) What he was after is that endorsing patterns of implication/incompatibility is what one is *doing* when one “makes first-hand use” of alethic modal vocabulary. But he had no theoretical apparatus to investigate or clarify such a relation between what is *said* in one vocabulary, about what is *done* in another vocabulary, which lets one *say* something still different. But we do. The combination of the deontically two-sorted, bilateral pragmatic MV and the Hlobil isomorphism to TM semantic specifications of reason relations gives us just the expressive tools we need to address this relationship.

Mention Amy Thomasson in this connection, as having a metalinguistic expressivist view about alethic modality. There is a worthwhile compare-and-contrast of our conceptual realism and her views to be done.

[Also: make MEMRTA available as background?].

10. We can now say in deontic terms what it is that one needs to *do*, in order thereby to be taking or treating an implication as having the status that makes an alethic modal statement true.

11. t

Can start by saying how important it is to understand something we have not at all understood: the relations between what is expressed in *pragmatic* MVs and what is expressed in *semantic* MVs.

This is the problem that Sellars never solved, in his metalinguistic account of universals and propositions, and in his incipient metalinguistic account of alethic modalities.

Might use example of indexicals here: in a clear sense, one can specify their use in nonindexical terms, even though Perry examples show us that we can't *say*, in nonindexical terms what we can say in indexical terms.

Do not start with the historical story about conceptual realism that I use to introduce the Hlobil isomorphism in ATBUYO.

Do tell that story, but *after* introducing TM semantics and demonstrating the isomorphism.

Emphasize that a principal reason that no-one has ever demonstrated any result like this is that no-one has had a sufficiently expressively powerful *pragmatic* MV.

So second half of meeting is discussion of bimodal conceptual realism at the level of reason relations and (so) conceptual contents or "rational forms."

Under rubric of consequences of bimodal conceptual realism, separate discussions of

A) bimodality of deontic/alethic.

Include here Paul Grice's posthumous Locke Lectures: *Aspects of Reason*.

B) rational forms. We can now define rational forms in a recognizably Aristotelian sense, updated post-Spinoza and post-Kant, as (I claim) Hegel does.

Stress that the *bimodal* character, connecting what is expressed in a *deontic* normative pragmatic MV and what is expressed in an *alethic* modal representational semantic MV

“Brandom’s inferential concept of rationality; for such a model, “[...] to be rational is to be a producer and consumer of reasons: things that can play the role of both premises and conclusions of inferences. **So long as one can assert and infer, one is rational**” (TMD, 2002, p. 6).” Somewhere I should talk about this *constitutive* non-comparative sense of ‘rational’, by contrast to the sort of essentially *comparative* assessment that rational choice theory is aiming for optimality w/res to. (compare: Kant on rationality as a status and comparative rationality, e.g. on practical matters, how much of one’s doing is heteronomous and how much is autonomous. Robin Dillon).

From *BSD6*:

The basic idea is that normative vocabulary makes explicit important features of what knowing and acting subjects *do* when they deploy a vocabulary, when they *use* expressions so as to *say* something. And modal vocabulary makes explicit important correlative features both of what is *said* and of the objective world that is talked *about*. Put another way, normative and modal vocabulary, each in its own way, articulate discursive commitments. But normative vocabulary addresses in the first instance *acts* of committing oneself, whereas modal vocabulary addresses in the first instance the *contents* one thereby commits oneself to—not in the sense of what other *doings* committing oneself to a claim commits one to, but in the sense of how one has committed oneself to the world being, how one has represented it as being. If there is anything to this idea, then thinking about complex, pragmatically mediated resultant semantic relations between normative and modal vocabularies is a way of thinking analytically both about discursive intentionality (the kind that involves distinctively *semantic* relations), and about the relation between what one who engages in a discursive practice *does* and what she *says about* the objective things she thereby represents or talks about.

Ftnt 4, p. 182:

Put somewhat more carefully, I explore here an intimate sort of connection between (some) deontic modalities and (some) alethic modalities. Only ‘some’ in the first case, because (for instance) *moral* normativity can also be put in deontic terms, and I am only addressing the *conceptual* variety of normativity: norms governing the application of concepts. And only ‘some’ in the second case because the alethic modalities (necessities and possibilities) I am discussing are not, or are not restricted to, metaphysical necessities in the Kripkean sense. They include those involved in laws of nature supporting counterfactuals that may not be metaphysically, but only physically, necessary. And they include other conceptual necessities

such as those involving the incompatibility of color and shape properties that are harder to pin down. (I take it that it is a *geometrical*, rather than a *physical* fact that being rectangular and being circular are incompatible properties of plane figures. And it is not clear how to characterize the incompatibility of *red* and *green*.) The kind of alethic modality (because the kind of modal incompatibility) I am after cuts across a lot of the usual categorizations, because it is in play wherever material inferences have a range of counterfactual robustness. Any such range corresponds to a judgment as to what is and what is not *possible*, in the sense that matters for the kind of *semantic contents* I am concerned to think about vocabulary as expressing.

End of section 2 of *BSD6*:

The next question, then, is how the sort of directedness at objects via feedback engagement with them that is characteristic of *practical* intentionality, turns into something intelligible as *representation* of those objects when the process of practical engagement takes the form of deontic updating structured by material *inferential* and *incompatibility* relations, that is, when it becomes *discursive* intentionality. Answering that question is beginning to work out the pragmatist's order of semantic explanation. Telling that story requires saying how, within the discursive realm, representational 'of'-intentionality is related to expressive 'that'-intentionality, that is, how what one is talking *of* or *about* (representing) is related to what one *says*, of or about those things. And doing that will enable us to get clearer about the nature of the intimate relation between what it is about our practice of *saying* that is made explicit by *normative* vocabulary and what it is about what is *said* that is made explicit by *modal* vocabulary—which is my suggestion as to how to pursue the pragmatist explanatory aspiration: by describing a complex, resultant meaning–use relation between these vocabularies that offers yet a further way (beyond those considered in Lectures 4 and 5) of filling in and following out Sellars' dark but suggestive remark that “the language of modality is a ‘transposed’ language of norms.”

I have urged that an essential element of the propositional contentfulness expressed by declarative sentences and attributed by 'that'-clauses in ascriptions of intentional states using vocabulary such as 'claims that' and 'believes that' consists in those contents standing in material inferential and incompatibility relations to one another. And these are the very relations that normatively govern the discursive updating process I have lined up with Kant's notion of synthesizing a transcendental unity of apperception. But what, we may ask, makes the unity in question deserve to be called *transcendental*, in a sense that invokes representation of objects?

The answer lies in the way in which acknowledging material inferential

and incompatibility relations essentially involves representing objects as having properties (perhaps complex relational ones) that stand in corresponding relations to one another. In drawing inferences and ‘repelling’ incompatibilities, one is taking oneself to stand in representational relations to objects that one is talking *about*. A commitment to *A*’s being a dog does *not* entail a commitment to *B*’s being a mammal. But it *does* entail a commitment to *A*’s being a mammal. Drawing the inference from a dog-judgment to a mammal-judgment *is* taking it that the two judgments represent one and the same object. Again, the judgment that *A* is a dog is not incompatible with the judgment that *B* is a fox. It *is* incompatible with the judgment that *A* is a fox. Taking a dog-judgment to be incompatible with a fox-judgment *is* taking them to refer to or represent an object, the *one* object to which incompatible properties are being attributed by the two claims.

**BB: Is there any way of using this idea at the sentential level, arguing that both incompatibility and implication relations implicitly involve sameness of topic (or *something*) between premise and conclusions?**

appeal to two different senses of ‘incompatibility’, which turn out to be related in a surprising and revealing way. One is an objective *modal* sense: a matter of what states of affairs and properties of *objects* actually are incompatible with what others, in the world as it is independent of the attitudes of the knowing-and-acting subjects of practical, feedback-governed transactional engagements. If being made of pure copper is in this sense objectively incompatible with being an electrical insulator, then nothing can be both at the same time: it is *impossible* for one and the same object simultaneously to have both properties. That is a fact that holds regardless of how we use the *words* ‘copper’ and ‘insulator’—indeed, it was a fact before there were any deployers of vocabulary at all. When, in the previous lecture, I showed how the concept of incompatibility could be used as the basis of a formal semantics capturing important features of the meanings of linguistic expressions, both logical and non-logical, this is the sense of ‘incompatibility’ that that semantic metavocabulary employed. The other sense of ‘incompatible’ is *normative*, and concerns *commitments* on the part of knowing-and-acting *subjects*—the ones who engage in discursive practices and exercise discursive abilities. To say that two commitments (whether doxastic or practical) are incompatible in this sense is to say that one cannot be *entitled* to both, and so that if one finds oneself with such commitments, one is *obliged* to *do* something: to rectify or repair the incompatibility, by relinquishing or modifying at least one of those commitments (to enter into a process of updating, of rectification, of further synthesizing a rational

unity). What is incompatible with what in this sense is a matter of the practices and attitudes of the subjects of those commitments: the norms implicit in their behavior, what they in practice *take* or *treat* as incompatible in acknowledging and attributing the deontic statuses of commitment and entitlement.

The first point I want to emphasize is that these are clearly *different* notions of incompatibility. It is *impossible* for one and the same *object* to have incompatible *properties* at the same time. But it is merely *impermissible* for one and the same *subject* to have incompatible *commitments* at the same time. We *can* undertake such commitments. It is not impossible to do so. Indeed, we do it all the time—albeit usually involuntarily. When we do, the consequence is a change in *normative* status: we are not *entitled* to the incompatible commitments, and so are obliged to *do* something to rectify the situation. But we may not *actually* do what is in this normative sense demanded of us, or even practically be *able* to do it. We are discursively born into a state of sin, and, for all our conscientious efforts, are by and large doomed to live in such a state. If *p* and *q* are incompatible in the *alethic modal* sense, then it is necessary that not (*p* and *q*). But if *p* and *q* are incompatible in the *normative deontic* sense, then it is indeed required that one not be *committed* to (*p* and *q*), in the sense that one *ought* not to be, but it does not at all follow that one *cannot* be, or is *in fact* not so committed. The sort of looseness of fit between what is necessary or required in the deontic normative sense and what is possible or actual is not even intelligible in the alethic modal sense of ‘necessity’.

It is worth noticing that these two senses of ‘incompatible’ are interdefinable with the two poles of the intentional nexus: knowing and acting *subjects* and the *objects* towards which their cognitive and practical states are directed. For (suppressing for present purposes the relativity to times<sup>6</sup>) **FN:6** objects are individuated by the way they ‘repel’ incompatible properties. It is *not* impossible for *two different* objects to have incompatible properties—say, being copper and electrically insulating. What *is* impossible is for *one and the same* object to do so. Objects play the conceptual functional role of *units of account for alethic modal incompatibilities*. A single object just *is* what cannot have incompatible properties (at the same time). That is, it is an essential individuating feature of the metaphysical categorical sortal metaconcept object that objects have the metaproperty of *modally* repelling incompatibilities. And, in a parallel fashion, subjects too are individuated by the way they normatively ‘repel’ incompatible commitments. It is not impermissible for *two different* subjects to have incompatible commitments—say, for me to take the coin to be copper and you to take it be

an electrical insulator. What is impermissible is for *one and the same* subject to do so. Subjects play the conceptual functional role of *units of account for deontic normative incompatibilities*. That is, it is an essential individuating feature of the metaphysical categorical sortal metaconcept subject that subjects have the metaproperty of *normatively* repelling incompatibilities. A single subject just is what *ought* not to have incompatible commitments (at the same time).

These considerations show that although, as I have emphasized, the alethic and deontic senses of ‘incompatible’ are quite different, they are intimately related to one another. We are not faced with a term that is just ambiguous; the two uses of the word are not mere homonyms. Further, the relation between ‘incompatibility’ in the normative sense and ‘incompatibility’ in the modal sense is an expression of deep structural features of the nexus of intentionality: the nature of its *subjective* and *objective* poles and of the relation between them. What relates the two senses is a *process*, a practice, the exercise of an ability, a kind of practical *doing*: what discursive subjects are obliged to *do* when they find themselves acknowledging incompatible commitments—perhaps, as in the story about acid\*, some acquired inferentially and some noninferentially. *What* one is obliged to do is to *rectify* the incoherent commitments, by relinquishing one of the offending commitments, or, as in that example, modifying a mediating inferential commitment (and hence a concept). This updating is “repelling incompatibilities” in the normative sense. That objects “repel incompatibilities” in the modal sense is simply a fact: a *relational* fact metaphysically constitutive of objects as such. But subjects’ repelling of incompatibilities is a *process*, an *activity*, a *practice*, the exercise of an *ability*. It is something they actively *do*. That they are *obliged* to do it is a fact metaphysically constitutive of subjects as such.

Here is the key point. By doing that, **by engaging in the practice of rectifying commitments, subjects are at once *both* taking or treating the commitments involved as incompatible in the *normative* sense of obliging them to do something about that collision, and taking or treating two states of affairs regarding objects as incompatible in the *modal* sense that it is impossible for both to obtain.** These are, I repeat, quite different senses of ‘incompatible’. But in practically acknowledging an obligation to rectify or repair a set of commitments, one is doing something that can be specified not just by using one or the other, but, crucially, by using *both*. That it *can* be specified in both ways, both in normative terms and in modal terms, is what it is for the vocabulary whose use is being rectified to have semantic

intentional *content*, for its deployment to count as *representing objects* and *saying of them that they are objectively thus-and-so*, for it to be the kind of *process* that establishes representational *relations*.

**BB: I could use the example of the relation between asserting and facts, where asserting is (purported, not necessarily successful) fact-stating. There can be facts without assertings, but to understand what a fact is, you need to talk about assertings.**

**(Elementary school teacher: a sentence is the expression of a whole thought.)**

**Could mention that similar relations hold between statements of *laws*, codifying subjunctively robust reasoning, and the laws themselves, on the one hand, and between *using* singular terms and particulars.**

Key point is:

What you have to *do* thereby to be *taking* two properties to be alethically incompatible is to *treat commitments* to them as deontically incompatible: one cannot be entitled to both commitments.

This is the final point to make about the intimate relationship between the deontic and alethic modal vocabularies: they relate in that the deontic says (lets us say) what you have to *do* in order thereby to be *taking it that* an alethic relation holds. It is the appropriate *pragmatic* MV to specify the doings that are endorsements of what is made explicit by alethic modal vocabulary. Note that it is important for this point that alethic modal vocabulary need *not* be thought of as a *metavocabulary* here. It doesn't matter whether the object language has alethic modal vocabulary in it, since what is being defined is what it is to take the relations that are made explicit by alethic modal vocabulary to hold in the base (object) vocabulary.

Deontic vocabulary such as 'commitment', 'entitlement', and 'precludes', centrally deployed in our pragmatic MV, lets one say what one must do in order thereby (by doing that) to count as taking it that two states of affairs are not compossible (noncompossible) or that one necessitates the other (alethic modal incompatibility and consequence).

From our point of view, one part of where the tradition goes wrong is in treating obligation/permission as the fundamental deontic modalities, and mapping them directly onto necessity/possibility. Using the pragmatics-inspired commitment/entitlement pair opens up new possibilities. One such is defining incompatibility of p and q as commitment to p precluding entitlement to q. Parallel would be obligation to p precluding permission to q. Perhaps the formal expressive powers are actually equivalent here. Then what matters is the use of commitment/entitlement in a pragmatic MV.

Functionalism point, from "Inferentialism Seminar Notes 24-7-3" [to go where in the course?]

**In discussion of vocabularies: syntactic vs semantic theories of theories, understanding them as sets of sentences vs, sets of models. (Wallace) We are pursuing a third alternative:**

**theories (as vocabularies) are sentences (so, like syntactic) but as standing to one another in reason relations (so, like semantic). I claim that the principal task of models is to determine reason relations.** (And implication-space semantics will give us minimal models that do this and only if.). After all, it is not just that what one does with models is compute implications and incompatibilities. For further, *that* one does that with the models is what makes providing them a *semantics*: everything else is just a sparkling representation theorem. Cf. How Tarski show that his mapping of quantifiers onto topological closure operators is a *semantics*. This all matters for introducing vocabularies. To do that I have a) my Quine-Rorty approach, and now add b) **third way between syntactic and semantic theories of theories**. Reservation: One would think that no-one ever thought theories were uninterpreted sentences, in the sense of mere sign-design types. But they did! “Uninterpreted theories” were indeed a thing, and folks worried about how to “connect them to the world.”