

Two Cultures, Two Philosophical Tasks, Two Tables:
Distinctions or Dualisms?

- 1) We are at the halfway point in the course, having done two of our four segments.
- 2) So far we have approached *philosophical naturalism* (the generic term I have been using), in the form of *scientific naturalism*, by looking at some candidate sorts of *relations* between base and target vocabularies or kinds of facts.
 - a) I have claimed that these are equivalent formulations, in that anything we can say in the vocabulary of vocabularies we can say in the vocabulary of facts, and vice versa. They are formal and material mode ways of approaching *one* set of issues. Physical facts just are what can be stated in the vocabulary of physics.
 - b) We start from classical Carnap-Nagel *reductionism*, whose paradigm is universal (that is, addressing *all* subject-matters) high-church unity-of-science *physicalism*. It makes claims on two broad fronts: *definability* of target terms by base terms, and *derivability* of the laws statable in the target vocabulary from those statable in the base vocabulary. (I'll talk about these later also under the headings of *ontology* and *ideology*. And, more speculatively, ask whether they should in some sense be lined up with *description* and *explanation*.)
 - c) We followed the movement, driven by the Many Levels and Multiple Realizability arguments, to *weaken* these requirements. The weakest such position puts on the side of *definability* a claim of *global supervenience* of the target on the base vocabulary, in the sense that there cannot be two possible worlds alike in all the facts statable in the base vocabulary, but differing in the facts statable in the target vocabulary. And it puts *nothing* on the side of *derivability*.
 - d) We have seen a recoil from this nadir, driven by arguments to the effect that mere global supervenience is too weak to give us a form of naturalism worth having. It may well be *true*, but it is not *interesting*. The two principal arguments here were the possibility of *supervenient ectoplasm*, and of minimal, say, physical differences—the slight displacement of one distant particle—making vast psychological differences (the one world being ours and the other totally unminded).
 - e) Kim is an early proponent of a more reductionist view. We saw that Horgan opts for a *local* supervenience claim together with some sort of reducibility. And Jackson gives us on the side of *derivability* his “entry or location by entailment” thesis: the target facts must be *entailed* by the base facts.
- 3) We are now beginning to consider four varieties of philosophical naturalism:
 - a) *Scientific* naturalism;
 - b) *Descriptive* naturalism;
 - c) *Expanded nature* naturalism;
 - d) *Pragmatic* naturalism;

We saw examples of the first two in Jackson: *scientific* naturalism in the form of the claimed analytic entailment of the *psychological* facts by the *physical* facts, in his first

three chapters, and *descriptive* naturalism in the form of the claimed analytic entailment of the *normative moral* facts by the *descriptive* facts, in his last two chapters. We are shaping up to consider the other two sorts, in the final quarter of the course. They are *not* traditional varieties, but something new on the contemporary scene, the excuse for the recent DeCaro and Macarthur book *Naturalism in Question*. One of the principal exponents of expanded nature naturalism is of course John McDowell, in *Mind and World*. Pragmatic naturalism is put forward by Huw Price (he calls it “naturalism of the subject” by contrast to “naturalism of the object”) and Bjorn Ramberg, and praised by Rorty in the essays by those three we will read. And it is put into a larger conceptual context in my Locke lectures, which we will not read. (These two kinds of philosophical naturalism are often thought of as varieties of *non-naturalism* by their opponents, typically themselves scientific naturalists.)

- 4) Where we are going with this is to Sellars's important and difficult essay “Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities”, written immediately after EPM, and published in 1957 (2 years before PSIM).
 - a) It discusses the relations between *description* and *explanation*, and hence the distinction, which it claims lines up with that one, between *descriptive* and *modal* vocabulary. Sellars's view there is that *modal* vocabulary is *not* a species of *descriptive* vocabulary. Its function is *not* to say how things are, to describe the world—even, perhaps especially, when stating a law of nature. Rather, its function is to make explicit *explanatory* relations among descriptive concepts, in virtue of which, at least in part, they have the content they do.
 - b) Description and explanation are linked in the *scientia mensura*, whose preamble says “*in the dimension of describing and explaining*, science is the measure of all things...”. These two come as an indissoluble package. But they are *not* the same discursive function, and each has its distinctive vocabulary.
 - c) But Sellars *also* distinguishes description—actually, the whole dimension of description-and-explanation—from something like *evaluation*, from a *normative* dimension.
 - d) And he holds two crucial views about that normative dimension (cf. his Kantianism):
 - i) It is *essential* to the *intentional* articulation of *sapience*. The Kantian *normative/factual* distinction should replace the Cartesian *mental/physical* distinction in thinking about the place of persons in the scientific world. And
 - ii) The *normative* realm does *not* fall under the aegis or within the scope of his scientific naturalism. It is all-but-explicitly *excluded*, by the preamble, from the scope of the *scientia mensura*.
 - e) There seems to be a substantial *tension* between these views, and it is not clear that his overall view is, as a result, internally consistent. At the least, it contains considerations that pull in different directions, and need to be reconciled.
 - f) Q: Does the peculiarity of his scientific naturalism, that it is a naturalism of *ontology*, but not *ideology*, of *referential identification*, via functional realizers, under the heading of *definability*, without *anything* under the heading of *derivability*, offer any prospects of resolving that tension? [A: I don't see how.]

5) Everything we read in the course is written within the past 15 years—except the two Sellars essays in this segment. I want a number of things from Sellars:

- a) Large frame of issue of naturalism.
- b) The *scientia mensura* forges an important bond between descriptive and scientific naturalism, within Sellars's way of framing the issues.
- c) He has a distinctive sort of naturalism in ontology without ideology, putting a kind of token-token identity on the side of *definability*, without anything on the side of *derivability*. (We see the same sort of picture in Davidson's anomalous monism, more than a decade later.) I think this position raises deep questions about the relations between thinking of the world as a **world of objects**—for instance, as Lewis and contemporary analytic metaphysics does, as the mereological sum of some collection of *basic* objects—on the one hand, and as a **world of facts**—as everything that is the case, as Wittgenstein does in the *Tractatus*—on the other hand. And I think consideration of the relations between *description* and *explanation* that Sellars discusses in CDCM raises questions about the ultimate intelligibility of the naturalistic ontology-without-ideology fallback position.
- d) There is a large, I think unresolved, tension in Sellars's position that comes to the fore precisely in the vicinity of his naturalism, when we press its details.
- e) The issue of the status of *modality* raised in CDCM goes to the heart of the our understanding of the conceptual apparatus in which, after the three modal revolutions (Kripke's in modal *logic*, the rise of modal *intensional semantics*, and Kripke's in *NN*) we address issues of naturalism.

6) I'm going to frame my discussion in four parts:

- a) The two images or frameworks Sellars distinguishes;
- b) The two sorts of philosophical projects Sellars identifies;
- c) His particular version of scientific naturalism;
- d) The tension within Sellars philosophy—leading to the division between right-wing and left-wing Sellarsians—produced by his combining his endorsement of *scientific* naturalism (“within the dimension of describing and explaining”) with a rejection of *descriptive* naturalism about norms and (therefore) intentionality.

7) Some of the distinctions in play:

- a) Between two conceptual frameworks: the *manifest* image and the *scientific* image.
- b) Between two sorts of philosophical project: *perennial* philosophy, which articulates the manifest image (cf. Austin on *mistakes* vs. *accidents*, or Anscombe on intention), and *synoptic* philosophy, which tries to reconcile the two frameworks. In terms of those two ‘images’ or frameworks, he describes two sorts of philosophical project:
 - i. Philosophy *perennis*, which articulates the manifest image from within.
 - ii. Synoptic philosophy, which aims to integrate the two images. *One* form of this (see (c) below), is scientific naturalism. (The question of how it relates to *descriptive* naturalism is both the source of the divide

between right- and left-wing Sellarsians, and indicative of what is perhaps the fundamental tension in Sellars's own philosophy.)

Eventually I will have two large questions for WS:

- Can one really be a scientific naturalist about *ontology* without being a scientific naturalist about *ideology*?
- Can one really be a *scientific* naturalist without being a *descriptive* naturalist?
- c) Between three possible strategies for synoptic philosophy:
 - i. The primacy of the scientific image: "In the dimension of describing and explaining the world, science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not." [EPM §42]
 - ii. The primacy of the manifest image: "The manifest image is, subject of course to continual empirical and categorical refinements, the measure of what there really is." [PSIM, beginning of Section VI] "reality is the world of the manifest image, and ...all the postulated entities of the scientific image are 'symbolic tools' which function (something like the distance-measuring devices which are rolled around on maps) to help us find our way around in the world, but do not themselves describe actual objects and processes. On this view, the theoretical counterparts of *all* features of the manifest image would be *equally* unreal, and that philosophical conception of man-of-the-world would be correct which endorsed the manifest image and located the scientific image within it as a conceptual tool used by manifest man in his capacity as a scientist. [PSIM, end of Section V.] Sellars apparently thinks that anyone who endorses the primacy of the manifest image must reject the idea that the theoretical posits of the natural sciences are real objects, and hence be an instrumentalist. But why?
 - iii. They are both equally valid: "The first, which like a child says 'both', is ruled out by a principle I am not defending in this chapter." [PSIM beginning of Section VI] There is a real issue about this assumption of competition. It is based at least on what he calls "science's claim to explanatory completeness." This is an issue that "expanded nature naturalists" such as McDowell resolve differently. And Sellars's own conclusion (see the passages from the very end of PSIM quoted on the handout) would seem in fact to be a version of the 'both.'
- d) Between description and explanation—more important in CDCM.

- e) Between description and evaluation, the factual and the normative. See the passages on the handout.

8) Distinctions and dualisms:

- a) Distinctions are good; they are an essential aspect of the form of thought (discursive rationality) itself. Dualisms are bad. They are “the little rift[s] within the lute, that bye and bye shall make the music mute, and, ever widening, slowly silence all.”
- b) Q: What is the difference between a distinction and a dualism?
- c) A: A dualism is what a distinction becomes when it is drawn in such terms that essential relations between the distinguished elements become unintelligible. For example, Descartes’ dualism of minds and bodies is not objectionable because the idea of two distinct sorts of fundamental substance is unintelligible, but because it was postulated to make sense of what was distinctive about human knowledge and agency. But in fact, it rendered unintelligible precisely the sort of causal commerce between minds and bodies characteristic of perception and action.
- d) It has always been a characteristic mistake of *romanticism* to assume that distinctions always are or inevitably engender dualisms, and then to attack reason on the grounds that the currency in which it traffics consists of distinctions. Think of the Schiller lines from the “Ode to Joy” that so impressed Beethoven: “Deine Zauber binden wieder was die Mode streng geteilt.” If it takes *magic* to get the two sides back together, you’ve gone too far.
- e) The whole point of scientific naturalism is that it is a strategy for reconciling the two images, so as to *avoid* turning the *distinction* between the two conceptual frameworks into a *dualism*.

9) The crucial distinction between the manifest and the scientific images is drawn in several ways. One large question is whether and how these ways of drawing a distinction line up with one another.

- a) At base, it seems to be the distinction between the concepts and claims of common sense (what Jackson and others call “folk theories”—but as we’ll see, from Sellars’s point of view, it is a serious mistake to call this collection of concepts and views a ‘theory’ of any kind) and the concepts and claims of the various organized sciences, both natural and social. (Though a distinction will be made within the social sciences, that puts, for instance, physical anthropology on one side, and cultural anthropology on the other.) In EPM he talks of the “commonsense framework” instead of the manifest image.
- b) Another way of drawing what he insists is the same distinction is between a framework whose most basic concept is that of person, and a framework whose most basic concepts are microscopic entities postulated to explain the behavior of non-sentient, non-sapient observables. (As applied to humans, this is the personal-level/sub-personal-level distinction.)
- c) Perhaps his favorite official way of drawing the distinction is between *correlational* and *postulational* explanatory methodologies. Here the key view of his in the background is that the distinction between *observable* and *theoretical* (postulated) objects is *methodological* or *epistemological*, not *ontological*. They are not different *kinds* of things. They are just things that are epistemically accessible to

us in different ways. In particular, theoretical objects are those we can (at least for now) *only* become entitled to claims about *inferentially*. Observables are what we can *also* come to know about *non-inferentially*, through direct (in the sense of non-inferential) observation: by exercising reliable differential responsive dispositions to respond to things by applying concepts.

d) I think—though WS does not say so—that we can think of this distinction in terms of the distinction between intentional explanation by *reasons* and explanation by *causes*. This will require restriction to a particular way of thinking about causes: that characteristic of non-sentient, non-sapient things. (For intentional explanations are also—as McDowell reminds us in *Mind and World*—in a different and distinctive sense, causal explanations.) This distinction underlies the principal opposition structuring “Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities”: that between the view championed by Mr. C and that championed by Mr. E.

e)

10) Is it true that the manifest image does not employ explanations in terms of the postulation of theoretical entities? (It is a separate question whether the perennial philosophy does. I take it that *it* does, in the form of perennial *metaphysics*, to be distinguished from the metaphysics of scientific naturalism.)

- a) Traditional explanations even within what Sellars calls the “original” version of the manifest image, the *fully* anthropomorphized picture, unobserved items in the form of *gods were* postulated to explain various things. But:
 - i) These were not postulated as *unobservables*, but merely as *unobserved*. They were thought of as the kind of thing that one *could* perfectly well observe, if one were just in the right place at the right time. They were not methodologically available only by means of *inference*.
 - ii) And that is to say that what was postulated was not a new *kind* or *category* of thing. They, too, were persons. The human/divine distinction is a distinction *within* the category of persons. Explanations by appeal to gods and heroes were *intentional* explanations, of the kind appropriate to sapient persons.
- b) Q: Is there something about the framework of *persons* that *precludes* the postulation of *unobservables*? It seems that on Sellars’s own view, the answer is ‘No’. Jones did just that.
- c) Another example would be the extension of the category of *intentional state* to include *unconscious* intentional states: beliefs, desires, and intentions that we are *not* able reliably to *avow*, but which nonetheless make some behavior intelligible when postulated as only inferentially available. One *might* argue that this, like the gods, is an *intracategorial extension*, *not* the postulation of a new *kind* of entity. This *does* look like a postulational extension of the framework of persons. And this move is quite independent of the more materialist, scientific elements of Freud (e.g. the hydraulic model of recatheted libido).
- d) But in his discussion of varieties of behaviorism, he does seem to take *postulation* as pathognomonic for belonging to the scientific framework. Yet *conceptual thoughts* are thought of in *functional* terms—which is postulational *philosophical* behaviorism rather than correlational instrumentalist behaviorism—and *also* as features of the manifest image. [Look here at the passages at the bottom of the first page of the handout.]

e) It seems that rather than the framework of persons-reasons-propositions, centered on intentional explanation and hermeneutic interpretation, being *impervious* to *postulational* techniques—its simply not admitting *theories*, or the introduction of new *theoretical categories* of things and properties—the contrast is with the scientific commitment to explanations *from below*, from *sub*-personal items. The underlying question seems to be whether persons-reasons-propositions are recalcitrant, not to theorizing *tout court*, but to *explanation from below*, by appeal to the behavior that items exhibit already in their *sub*- or *pre*-personal capacities.

11) Some questions about this meta-philosophical view of what philosophy consists in:

- a) Metaphilosophy is only *very rarely* *philosophically* interesting—though it can be *sociologically* interesting. My impression is that most mature philosophers avoid it in favor of just getting on with the job. Young ones starting out have little choice but to worry some about what it is, exactly, that they are getting into. And as philosophers near retirement from active work, they are often seized by the same sort of retrospective impulse that takes hold of aged neuroscientists, labor leaders, and so on, to try to say what it was all about. But Sellars is raising some issues of real importance.
- b) On it as studying “how things, in the largest sense of the term, hang together, in the largest sense of the term.” Can distinguish *experts* who know a great deal about an area, *scholars*, who know everything known about the area (and so can make negative existential judgments about it)—cf. Dreben: “garbage is garbage, but the history of garbage is scholarship,”—*researchers*, who are pushing back the frontiers of knowledge in an area, and *intellectuals*, who think about how the whole culture (not just the high culture) hangs together. Sellars’s view is *not* just that philosophers are *researchers* who have to be *intellectuals*. That much is probably equally true of, say, sociologists and cultural and political theorists. The integration/unification characteristic of philosophy as scientific naturalism is a unification of *subject matter*, that can be accomplished neither from within the manifest image nor from within the scientific one. (Cognitive science will not be able to do without philosophers—as well as psychologists, linguists, computer scientists, and so on—because the criteria of adequacy for its having been *intentional states* that got reconstructed/identified are set by the explicitations and articulations of the perennial philosophy.)
- c) We can ask how well Sellars’s dyadic botanization of species of the genus *philosophy* characterizes philosophy. How well does his partition hold up, both as to its commitment to the *exclusiveness* and to the *exhaustiveness* of the two sorts? And here we can ask for three periods:
 - i) from Descartes through the nineteenth century,
 - ii) the first half of the twentieth century, up to Sellars’s own time,
 - iii) now.
- d) The division between the manifest and the scientific images is supposed to be both *exhaustive* (there are no other images or frameworks at this level) and *exclusive* (concepts belong either to the one framework or the other, not to both). The division between perennial and synoptic philosophy is almost certainly not exclusive (Kant, for instance, practices both) and is probably not in fact (however Sellars meant it) exhaustive.

12) Sellars makes it part of the *definition* of the manifest image or commonsense framework that *it* does not engage in *postulational explanation*. With some qualifications (postulation of unconscious beliefs, desires, and intentions?), that may be true. It does not follow, and it is surely not true, that the perennial philosophy that devotes itself to articulating and developing that framework does not postulate theoretical entities in order to articulate and understand that framework.

- a) Plato's and Aristotle's *forms* are just such entities, at the dawn of perennial philosophy, and Thompson's and Roedl's Aristotelean-cum-Fregean logical forms in our own day are too. Philosophers such as Descartes and Kant, who were greatly concerned to integrate the scientific and manifest images, *did* make postulational moves: Descartes' notion of representation (more abstract and holistic than traditional notions of resemblance) and Kant's *noumenal realm* and his *normative* notion of freedom are cardinal examples of such *metaphysical theories*.
- b) In this sense, the categories of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* and the use of the conceptual apparatus of possible worlds (which are items paradigmatically only inferentially available) are paradigms of *metaphysical postulation*, within perennial philosophy.
- c) What makes them *metaphysical* is precisely that they are *not* philosophical theories in the service of the *scientific* enterprise, but in the service of the project of perennial or synoptic philosophy. Jackson, of course, uses the term otherwise, as specific to the scientific naturalist version of the synoptic undertaking. And contemporary analytic metaphysics seems to involve considerations drawn from both sorts of philosophical enterprise. (Is it confused, or just synthetic?)
- d) Wittgenstein's (and McDowell's) theoretical *quietism* (to use Crispin Wright's phrase) is what results from taking it that perennial philosophy should play by the same non-postulational rules as does the manifest image, which it articulates.
- e) Perhaps tellingly, perhaps only confusingly, Wittgenstein sometimes (more often, I think, in the earlier Blue and Brown Books than in *PI*) puts his point in terms of *description* and *explanation*. Philosophers should only *describe* what we do—how the manifest image actually works. They should not attempt to ape the scientist by attempting to *explain* what is going on. Note that the distinction here is between description and explanation, not between description (and explanation) on the one hand, and *evaluation* on the other, which is what is at issue in descriptive naturalism. The relation between these questions is one of the topics explored in CDCM. On Sellars's view there, description and explanation go hand in hand, and are in principle inseparable. He is committed, then, either to LW's being *wrong*, or to his thinking of some particular kind of explanation, not of explanation in general. Is it theoretical explanation by postulation that is what LW is (rightly?) excluding?
 - i) One way of responding to Wittgenstein's hostility to theorizing in philosophy is to see him as simply rejecting the philosophical project of scientific naturalism.
 - ii) Another is to see him as taking the good point that scientific explanations *as such* provide a different *kind* of intelligibility from either the intentional explanations of the manifest image, couched as they are in terms of persons,

reasons, and propositions, or from the explications of them offered by philosophy in its guise as perennial philosophy, and overgeneralizing and overextending it, to forbid the introduction of theoretical concepts in articulating and explicating features of the manifest image. The countervailing thought would be that not all theorizing must be scientific, particularly if one's model of the sciences is drawn from the *natural* sciences.

f) I think Sellars's partition holds up pretty well as an account of some aspects of the sociological and ideological landscape in contemporary philosophy. The polarizing figure is the later Wittgenstein. [Cf. the apocryphal-but-not-misleading Rutgers story.] What is polarizing is precisely the rejection of the scientific naturalist project, in favor of some version of perennial philosophy. Davidson is put into the same box as Wittgenstein (though people who do that are thinking more of his late than of his earlier work). The division between 'hard' and 'soft' philosophy of mind turns precisely on the naturalizing assumptions of the former and antipathies of the latter.

g) Continental philosophy, however, in the wake of Heidegger, Husserl, and Derrida (Foucault is an interesting case here: a postulational theorist, but perhaps only a pragmatic naturalist), is clearly anti-naturalistic and pursuing perennial philosophy. Within the synoptic project, its characteristic commitment is to the primacy of the manifest image. From their point of view, Anglophone philosophy is committed root-and-branch to the project of scientific naturalism.

h) So:

- i. Late-Wittgensteinian philosophical quietism is what you get if you both reject the synoptic project in favor of the perennial one, and furthermore restrict the concepts and methods allowable in pursuing that project to those available *within* the manifest image one is articulating ("merely describing").
- ii. Classical continental philosophy is what you get if you both pursue perennial philosophy and on the synoptic side endorse the primacy of the manifest image.

i) [Hegel]: There is another divide here, which does not line up so well with Sellars's scheme, however, at least insofar as the division into perennial and synoptic philosophical projects is envisaged as exhaustive. For we can tell a somewhat different story, in the same spirit, and at the same level of generality and abstraction, as Sellars's story about the fully anthropomorphized *original* version of the manifest image, and its evolution of more thing-like categories by exploitation of the notion of *habits*, followed by the development of what is *in some sense* a rival framework: the scientific one. In this alternate story, we see that if we set our sights high enough, only two really big things have ever happened in human history. One is the transition from groups of hunter-gatherers to traditional civilization, via organized agriculture making possible the explosive division of labor. The other is the transition from traditional to modern societies (in some important respects, still under way). The Scientific Revolution and its crafting of the scientific image of the world was an integral and essential element of the rising tide of modernity, and science has arguably been the most

spectacularly successful social institution of the last 300 years. But it is not all there was to the titanic transformation from traditional to modern not only in our *understanding* of our selves and our world, but also in the selves and, in important ways, of the world of which it is an understanding. The question of how the various elements of that transformation, cognitive, practical, social, political, and institutional hang together—for instance, which aspects necessarily went together and which were merely contingently associated—is hugely important for understanding ourselves. The opposition between the manifest image and the scientific image picks up only some aspects of the opposition between traditional and modern selves and societies. While philosophers from Descartes to Kant are properly understood as concerned about understanding the relations between the two sorts of conceptual structures, beginning with Hegel, other philosophers have been concerned with the broader question, of which that one is an aspect. Indeed, another way of understanding the different paths taken by Anglophone and Continental philosophy after Hegel is precisely in that Anglophone philosophy did *not* embrace the larger problematic, while Continental philosophers *did*. Now it may be that the Anglophone tradition seized on a better division of labor than did their Continental colleagues. After all, the social sciences born in the German universities of the nineteenth century, above all political theory, history, and sociology, founded by giants like Max Weber, all greatly influenced by Hegel, took as their principal and paradigmatic topic the advent of modernity. [Indeed, Weber's distinction between traditional and rational forms of *authority* as the master-concept we need to understand what holds together the various manifestations of modernity in contrast to traditional forms of life is a paradigm of explanation by *postulational theorizing*. And it addresses one of the two principal dimensions along which I would argue perennial philosophy articulates the manifest image: the normative. (The other is the inferential.) See (h) below.] Perhaps we should understand that as just the proper spinning off of specialized disciplines from philosophy that had taken place only 200 years or so earlier with the natural sciences, and take it that philosophers should no more be worrying about the relation between the traditional and the modern than they should be worrying about how many hidden spatial dimensions string theory should best postulate. But it could be that part of the “synoptic vision” of persons in the world as the sciences have discovered it to be, which Sellars tells us it is a principal task of philosophy to achieve, should be not only integrating the manifest image of persons, reasons, and propositional attitudes with the image of us as natural beings and our natural world being developed by natural sciences, but also integrating it with the image of us as social, political, institutional, cultural beings in a social, political, institutional, and cultural world being developed by the social sciences—in large part inspired by the challenge of understanding the transformation of all those things from traditional to modern forms. The manifest image, as Sellars delineates it (and the point here is not to take issue with that delineation), is innocent of any such contrast and distinction between the traditional and the modern. Are Sellars's own philosophical aspirations sufficiently comprehensive and synoptic?

j) In an essay called “Reason, Expression, and the Philosophic Enterprise” (which I’ll post on the website for this week), I argue for a two-pronged characterization of the perennial philosophic enterprise. Its conclusion is:

One of philosophy’s defining obligations is to supply and deploy an expressive toolbox, filled with concepts that help us make explicit various aspects of *rationality* and *normativity* in general. **The topic of philosophy is normativity in all its guises, and inference in all its forms.** And its task is an *expressive, explicative* one. So it is the job of practitioners of the various philosophical subfields to design and produce specialized expressive tools, and to hone and shape them with use. At the most general level, *inferential* connections are made explicit by *conditionals*, and their *normative* force is made explicit by *deontic* vocabulary. Different branches of philosophy can be distinguished by the different sorts of inference and normativity they address and explicate, the various special senses of “if...then____,” or of ‘ought’ for which they care. Thus philosophers of science, for instance, develop and deploy conditionals codifying causal, functional, teleological, and other explanatory inferential relations, value theorists sharpen our appreciation of the significance of the differences in the endorsements expressed by prudential, legal, ethical, and aesthetic ‘ought’s, and so on.

Sellars substantive views:

13) Scientific realism: Sellars does not talk about ‘scientific naturalism.’ His term is “scientific *realism*.” But he uses that term for what I take to be three quite distinct views:

- The enterprise of integrating the two images or conceptual frameworks. I’ll call this “the synoptic philosophical enterprise.”
- The view expressed by the *scientia mensura*, about the ontological sovereignty of the scientific over the commonsense image. I’ll call this “scientific naturalism.”
- The view, opposed to *instrumentalism*, that theoretically postulated entities are only *methodologically*, and not *ontologically*, distinct from observable ones, so that theories can be literally true, and when they are, the objects they postulate are real. I’ll call this “scientific realism.”

It sometimes seems that he thinks that it is “scientific realism” in this third sense that justifies the *scientia mensura*, scientific naturalism (without descriptive naturalism) and hence justifies the claim that the form the synoptic enterprise must take is that of scientific naturalism. (I have in mind here the passage already quoted above: “reality is the world of the manifest image, and ...all the postulated entities of the scientific image are ‘symbolic tools’ which function (something like the distance-measuring devices which are rolled around on maps) to help us find our way around in the world, but do not themselves describe actual objects and processes. On this view, the theoretical counterparts of *all* features of the manifest image would be *equally* unreal, and that philosophical conception of man-of-the-world would be correct which endorsed the manifest image and located the scientific image within it as a conceptual tool used by manifest man in his capacity as a scientist. [PSIM, end of Section V.] Here Sellars seems to argue that scientific realism in sense (c)—something almost

everyone (van Fraassen is a lonely, heroic exception) would now endorse—entails the denial of the primacy of the manifest image, and hence (given the argument he says he relies on but won't present here, against the “child who says ‘both’” view) for scientific naturalism, sense (b).

14) Sellars is concerned to say how both *sapience* and *sentience* can be integrated into the scientific picture.

- a) On the side of *sapience*, he more or less takes it for granted that a *functionalist* account of intentional states will be found that allows *neurophysiological* states to *realize* the functional roles defining such states. He does not consider the possibility that such states are *essentially vehicleless*—that there may be *nothing* that stands to them as sign-designs stand to sentential expressions of propositions, that *they* can *only* be picked out in terms of their propositional contents. I think he would see such a claim as an aspect of the perennial philosophy, internal to the manifest image, but would insist that it cannot in the end be right.
- b) It is *sentience* that he thinks presents the biggest problem. In this he anticipates and agrees with “consciousness theorists” such as Nagel, Chalmers (Jackson's star student), and Galen Strawson. And he does so for the reasons Nagel will later introduce (in “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?”): other reductive identifications claim to find the real causes of phenomenal appearances. The phenomenal appearances themselves are not in principle subject to *that* sort of explaining away. In keeping with my announced policy in this course, I'm not going to discuss this aspect. (In fact, this is not just my policy for the course. I hope in general that this problem will go away if we ignore it.)
- c) Also on the side of sentience is his infamous cluster of arguments and concerns epitomized by pink ice-cubes. Sellars view apparently is that the *homogeneity* of color *at all scales* (not just in our sensations, but in colored objects) is such a deep, defining structural feature of this manifest image concept that naturalizing it in the scientific image is *impossible* in a granular, particle-based, quantum-physical picture of the world. This leads him to conclude that the scientific naturalist project can only be brought off by *changing physics* (!). He envisages a successor physics, here thought of as perhaps field-based, that will give up on the granularity of the current picture. In later years he devoted a lot of effort (and his Carus lectures) to suggesting a *process-based* conceptual scheme that might do the trick. I regard this as just loony (however interesting on other grounds process-based ontologies might be). Why shouldn't the scientific naturalist just treat these features of our color concepts (if, indeed, they *are* features of our color concepts) as *mistakes*, the way animistic conceptions of the wind and the sea turned out to be? My only conjecture is that Sellars thought there was something special, something deep and un-get-over-able, about certain kinds of *structural* features of concepts. Another place where this issue comes up is in the discussion of *picturing* (in “Truth and Picturing”, and in *Science and Metaphysics*), where the last, ultimate constraint on what can picture what is provided by the adicity of relations. *Never* will an n-place relation picture an m-place one. The ideology or conception can be wrong about what it is about in any other way, but not this one. But why not? *Lots* of things we informally thought of as two-place relations have turned out to involve covert reference to further parameters, to be relativized to

other things of which we were unaware. What is special about *this* feature of our conceptions?

15) Right-wing and left-wing Sellarsians (e.g. Millikan, Rosenberg, Churchland, vs.

Rorty, McDowell, and me. [Stalingrad crack.]

The two index passages are these:

a) From EPM §42, the *scientia mensura* passage:

“[I]n the dimension of describing and explaining the world, science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not.”

b) From EPM §36, the *space of reasons* passage:

“The essential point is that in characterizing an episode or state as that of *knowing*, we are not giving an empirical **description** of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says.”

- The first asserts a kind of *scientific* naturalism.
- The second rejects a kind of *descriptive* naturalism.
- And the first links these, by saying asserting scientific naturalism *only* about what one can be a descriptive naturalist about.
- There is a latent tension between these, at least in the context of some other collateral commitments.

16) On the *scientia mensura* passage:

- a) The preamble “in the dimension of describing and explaining the world” is absolutely crucial. Sellars is *not* endorsing *descriptive* naturalism here. (Indeed, the *space of reasons* passage *might* be incompatible with such a naturalism.) In fact, Sellars will insist in CDCM that, though description and explanation are two sides of one coin, the expressions that make explanatory (inferential) relations explicit, the alethic modal expressions used to formulate laws and causal statements, are *not* *descriptive* vocabulary. Their job is *not* to describe things. So he is not a *descriptive* naturalist in Jackson’s restricted sense even about modality, never mind normativity—though for *very* different reasons.
- b) He *is* restricting the unique authority of science to the dimension of describing-and-explaining.
- c) Notice that he says science is the measure of what is *that* it is, and of what is not *that* it is not, *not* that science is the measure of what is *what* it is, and of what is not *what* it is not. I interpret this as indicating that he is making a (token-token identity) *ontological* claim, on the side of *definability*, *not* an *ideological* claim about concepts, properties, or facts, on the side of *derivability*. Everything there is is a thing of the kind science tells us about; that is all the things there are. But there are (might be) *facts* that are *not* couched in, derivable from, or entailed by the facts stated in the vocabulary of science: the vocabulary that is sovereign over description-and-explanation. On this reading, Sellars’s view would belong in a box with that Davidson propounds, a decade later, in “Mental Events”, under the rubric of “anomalous monism”. This is where the issue about how to understand the relation between thinking of the world as a world of *objects* and thinking of it as a world of *facts* (*about* objects) comes in. This issue is different from, but

related in important ways to, the difference between the conceptual framework of model theory and the conceptual framework of possible worlds.

- d) This view of Sellars's might be why *nominalism* about universals is so important to Sellars. Talk apparently of universals (universals-talk, about abstract particulars such as "whiteness") is to be explained in terms of a particular kind of *distributive singular term*: the kind dot-quotes form. The use of these is in turn explained in terms of *conceptual roles* expression-types can play. Universals-talk is covertly metalinguistic, a distinctive way of *describing*, by *classifying* the inferential roles of expressions. There is nothing *in the world* picked out or referred to by terms such as "whiteness", "wisdom", and so on. The property expressed by "...is white" is not a thing, it is not part of the furniture of the world.
- e) To assert the sovereignty of 'science' over the dimension of description-and-explanation is not, of course, to say that there is no description-and-explanation in the manifest image. But where it *clashes* with the description-and-explanation in the scientific image, the latter is the final authority. But now if science is sovereign over *explanation* and *description*, doesn't that include not just the *ontology* but the *ideology*? That is, aren't the descriptive and explanatory *concepts* of science *also* sovereign? Is the descriptive-and-explanatory the whole realm of *facts*?
- f) The issue here is the relation between thinking of the world as a collection of *things*, as Lewis does (the 'basic' things, and all their mereological sums), and thinking of it as a collection of *facts*, as Wittgenstein does in the *Tractatus* ("everything that is the case").
- g) So: Is it really coherent to be a scientific naturalist on the *ontological* side but not on the *ideological* side, where all the terms used in *descriptions* (and explanations) are located?

17) On the *space of reasons* passage:

- a) Q: Does he mean to be contrasting *empirical* describing, descriptions, or descriptive vocabulary from a *wider* class of speech acts or expressions, into which characterizing an episode as one of knowing *does* fall? A: If so, it is the *same* class that he picks out here in terms of "empirical" descriptions that he is talking about science having sovereign authority over in the *scientia mensura* passage. He does *not* use 'description' so broadly that what normative assessments count as descriptions. But that is compatible with allowing that in calling something a knowing one is *in some sense* describing it. One is, after all, *classifying* it. But one is classifying it with respect to *norms* and *proprieties*, to what is *proper*. One is classifying it in a way that makes essential reference to *normative assessments* of it. Now, such assessment are not simply *irrelevant* even to ordinary empirical descriptions and classifications. But this passage marks Sellars's insistence that the *way* normative assessments are relevant to classifications of something as a state or episode of *knowing* is significantly *different* from the way such assessments are relevant to classifications of something as *red* or as *having a mass greater than one kilogram*.
- b) The classical JTB account tells us that a state or episode of *knowing* is a state or episode of *believing* that is both *true* and *justified*. Which of these elements is it

that is responsible for characterizing (or classifying) something as a knowing *not* being *describing* it in the sense appropriate to empirical description?

- c) The fact that what one *is* doing in calling something a knowing is placing it in the “logical space of...justifying and being able to justify what one says,” might lead one to think that it is the *justification* condition that matters here. There is a sense in which that is right, and a sense in which it is not.
- d) I claim that it is *not* that in calling something a *knowing* one is not describing it, while in calling something a *believing* one is, where the difference is that a distinctive kind of assessment is involved in calling it *true* or *justified*. Belief itself is already not a descriptive concept, in the narrow sense Sellars is employing. For whether or not a belief in fact is justified (and so, in case it is also *true*, qualifies as *knowledge*), as a *belief* it is *essentially*, and not just accidentally, the sort of thing for which the question of *justification* can arise. In calling something a belief or a believing, one is characterizing it as something for which the issue of justification *arises*. Beliefs are justification-evaluables (and truth-evaluables). Liability to that sort of assessment is essential to the classification one is making in calling them ‘beliefs’. So it is not that the belief in question *is* true and *justified*—that it is a proper *knowing*—but that it *can* be that underlies the distinction Sellars is enforcing in the *space of reasons* passage.
- e) What Sellars is endorsing here is what he recognizes as a *Kantian* form of explanation: what distinguishes knowing and acting from the behavior of merely natural creatures is that claims or judgments and acts or intentions are things that we are in a distinctive sense *responsible* for. They express *commitments* of ours. As *endorsements*, they are exercises of a special kind of *authority*.

18) The source of the tension in Sellars is that:

- a) He is *not a descriptive* naturalist. That sort of naturalism commits the “naturalistic fallacy.” This is what the left-wingers seize on. The *normative* is *not* reducible to the *natural* in the sense of the *descriptive*. The Kantian normative turn is decisive for him.
- b) And he, like Wittgenstein, sees that the framework of *intentionality* (sapience, etc.) is at base a *normative* framework.
- c) So the *psychological* is *not* just another level of *description*. That would be to commit the naturalistic fallacy.
- d) And *scientific* naturalism the *scientia mensura* tells us, is about the sovereignty of ‘science’ over “the dimension of describing and explaining”.
- e) But he *is a scientific* naturalist, about *sapience* as well as sentience, at least for the case of “conceptual thoughts”.
- f) So: it seems that Sellars cannot be a scientific naturalist about the items in the manifest image without being a *descriptive* naturalist about the normative, which, as the left-wing Sellarsians point out, he is not.
- g) The threat that the Kantian revolution just replaces one (Cartesian) dualism with another is the threat that the two images, one normatively articulated, the other sovereign over descriptions, cannot be integrated or reconciled. Sellars’s scientific naturalism is committed to doing just that. But *how* does he do it, specifically for the *normative*? The answer is in the final passages on the handout.

19) Passages from the Handout:

PSIM (last sentence of Section IV):

I shall, therefore, provisionally assume that although behaviouristics and neurophysiology remain distinctive sciences, the correlational content of behaviouristics points to a structure of postulated processes and principles which telescope together with those of neurophysiological theory, with all the consequences which this entails. On this assumption, if we trace out these consequences, the scientific image of man turns out to be that of a complex physical system.

PSIM (Section VI):

Thus our concept of ‘what thoughts are’ might, like our concept of what a castling is in chess, be abstract in the sense that it does not concern itself with the *intrinsic* character of thoughts, *save as items which can occur in patterns of relationships which are analogous to the way in which sentences are related to one another and to the contexts in which they are used*.

Now if thoughts are items which are conceived in terms of the roles they play, then there is no barrier *in principle* to the identification of conceptual thinking with neurophysiological process.

20) Passages about the need to *add* some version of the intentional framework to the scientific one (from handout):*PSIM* (end of essay) [bolding added]:

There would remain the task of showing that categories pertaining to man as a *person* who finds himself confronted by standards (ethical, logical, etc.) which often conflict with his desires and impulses, and to which he may or may not conform, can be reconciled with the idea that man is what science says he is.

At first sight there would seem to be only one way of recapturing the specifically human within the framework of the scientific image. The categories of the person might be reconstructed without loss in terms of the fundamental concepts of the scientific image in a way analogous to that in which the concepts of biochemistry are (in principle) reconstructed in terms of sub-atomic physics...

[I]t can, I believe, be conclusively shown that such a reconstruction is *in principle* impossible, the impossibility in question being a strictly logical one...

To say that a certain person desired to do A, thought it his duty to do B but was forced to do C, **is not to describe him as one might describe a scientific specimen**. One does, indeed, describe him, but one does something more. And it is this something more which is the irreducible core of the framework of persons.

In what does this something more consist?...To think of a featherless biped as a person is to think of it as a being with which one is bound up in a network of rights and duties. From this point of view, the irreducibility of the personal is the irreducibility of the ‘ought’ to the ‘is’...

[T]o recognize a featherless biped or dolphin or Martian as a person requires that one think thoughts of the form, 'We (one) shall do (or abstain from doing) actions of kind A in circumstances of kind C', To think thoughts of this kind is not to *classify* or *explain*, but to *rehearse an intention*.

Thus the conceptual framework of persons is the framework in which we think of one another as sharing the community intentions which provide the ambience of principles and standards (above all, those which make meaningful discourse and rationality itself possible) within which we live our own individual lives. A person can almost be defined as a being that has intentions. **Thus the conceptual framework of persons is not something that needs to be reconciled with the scientific image, but rather something to be joined to it.** Thus, to complete the scientific image we need to enrich it *not* with more **ways of saying what is the case**, but with the language of community and individual intentions, so that by construing the actions we intend to do and the circumstances in which we intend to do them in scientific terms, we *directly* relate the world as conceived by scientific theory to our purposes, and make it *our* world and no longer an alien appendage to the world in which we do our living.

21) Writing as he was, in the prehistory of the development of our ideas about functionalism, Sellars was not in a position to avail himself of the apparatus of Ramsifying theories to specify functional roles. So he could not use that way of making explicit his strategy for reconciling the three elements of his apparently inconsistent triad:

- a) The *scientia mensura*, privileging science ontologically over all other vocabularies within the dimension of describing and explaining.
- b) The doctrine of the *space of reasons* passage, which tells us that the concepts we use in the manifest image (the commonsense conceptual framework) to characterize intentional states and ascribe propositional attitudes are *not* descriptive(-explanatory), but *normative*.
- c) The claim that scientific naturalism [he usually says "scientific *realism*", but see above] is committed to there being (natural) scientific successor-concepts to concepts pertaining to "conceptual thought".

It seems that in the context of (a), (b) entails that scientific naturalism does not apply to intentional concepts, hence not to the reasons and propositional attitudes portion of the manifest image, hence not to persons either. Yet (c) seems to say that it does.

But what corresponds in the scientific image to the *normative* character of intentional concepts? Now the essay ends with his saying that the intentional framework cannot be reduced to the scientific framework, precisely because of the irreducibility of 'ought' to 'is'. But the *conceptual* connections among the *episodes* that are *thoughts*, no less than those among the longer term intentional *states* that are *beliefs*, *desires*, and *intentions*, are essential to their being the thoughts they are. So how is *this* reduction supposed to go?

My conjecture is that Sellars thinks we can Ramsify on the normative *connections* (of being a reason for) on which the conceptual (intentional) contents of thoughts depend, and then find *realizers* of the resulting functional system in which what realizes the *normative* relations among conceptually contentful episodes is *causal regularities*, expressible not now by *deontic* modal, that is, *normative*, vocabulary, but by *alethic* modal vocabulary. Lawlike *nomological* connections are what in the scientific

framework as applied to *thoughts realize* the functional roles played by *normative* connections in the commonsense framework of persons, reasons, and propositional attitudes.

Insofar as that is right, Sellars is the precursor of contemporary naturalistic programs in semantics, as pursued for instance by Millikan (as one would perhaps expect, since she was his—last—doctoral student at Yale) and Fodor.

22) Q: But if a broadly functionalist strategy works for “conceptual thoughts”, why not for intentional states generally?

A: Here is the best answer I can come up with:

- a) Some philosophers—Fodor is an index example—think that there must be a “language of thought.” That means, *inter alia*, that there must be something related to “mental representations” (for Fodor, including both thoughts and beliefs) as marks on a page are related to the propositional contents they express. There must, for *every* sort of propositionally or conceptually contentful item, be something that serves as the *bearer*, the *vehicle*, of that content. This will be something that *has* or *expresses* the content. Because it does, it can be specified in *semantic* or *intentional* terms, that is, in terms of its content. But—and this is the decisive point in the current context—it is always something that *also* has a *non-semantic*, *non-intentional* characterization, just as what Sellars calls a ‘sign design’, or what Wittgenstein means when he talks about a sign-post considered just a piece of wood.
- b) The best reason for thinking this is that it resolves what Haugeland calls “the paradox of mechanical rationality”: that on the one hand no system can be rational without paying attention to meanings, and that on the other hand, no physical system responds differentially to anything but *physical* causes, and physics says nothing about *meanings*. For there can be various sort of *isomorphism* between non-semantically characterizable features of the *vehicles* of thought and the contents or meanings they bear or express. Then all the causal relations can hold between the vehicles, and it will be *as if* the meanings they correspond to affected what happens. For Fodor, this is “the only straw floating” as an account of how physical systems could think. It is, not coincidentally, how computers work.
- c) Some philosophers—Davidson is an index example, McDowell another (and the point has been pursued most single-mindedly by Lynn Rudder-Baker)—deny that states such as belief, desire, and intention *have* any such *individual* bearers or vehicles. They are states of the whole *person* (the central concept, recall, of the manifest image). They are *vehicleless*, in that there need be (the weaker position) or even *can* in principle be (the stronger position) nothing that stands to each belief, say, as the sentential sign designs stand to each sentence. Put otherwise, intentional states need (weak) or can (stronger) have no *non-intentional* specifications. Any such specification is *not* a specification of a *belief that p*—neither in general, nor in any particular case. (For this reason, for instance, McDowell strenuously resists talk of belief-*types* and belief-*tokens*. The type/token distinction applies to non-semantically characterizable *vehicles* of semantic content.)
- d) Sellars *might* think that *thoughts*, a kind of *episode*, *do* have bearers, and that *beliefs*, a kind of *state*, *do not*. If he thought that, that would be a reason to think

that functionalism about thoughts would permit us to find neurophysiological realizers that were the *vehicles* of the content of “conceptual thoughts”, while intentional states such as belief, desire, and intention *have* no such realizing bearers at a sub-personal level.

- e) That would at least offer some explanation of what motivates treating the two cases so differently: thoughts as falling under the aegis of his endorsement of scientific naturalism (about what is merely described-and-explained), and beliefs as falling under the aegis of his rejection of descriptive naturalism (for norms of the sort that articulate intentional states that are propositional attitudes).