

September 25, 2019

## Opening and SRLG Recap for Week 5

Plan:

1. Opening on rhetorical strategies
2. Recap: Sellars' astonishing midcentury vision of analytic philosophy: the new form of neo-Kantianism, picking up where Carnap and C.I. Lewis left off. (Both are anthologized in *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* (1949))
3. Recap: SRLG and Wittgenstein  
Cf. claim that a suitably pragmatist empiricism must learn lessons from rationalism—lessons, namely, about the importance of *rules* and other non-descriptive locutions. This is an appreciation of Kant's insight into the normative character of discursiveness or intentionality: sapience as *conceptually* articulated *rationality*, as opposed to mere sentience.
4. Inference and Meaning  
Then move on into IM, as picking up and developing *one* strand of thought in SRLG: the significance of language-language transitions.  
Three dimensions of *rationalism vs. empiricism* here:
  - i) Cf. claim above that a suitably pragmatist empiricism must learn lessons from rationalism—lessons, namely, about the importance of *rules* and other non-descriptive locutions.
  - ii) This is another *rationalist* strain, dividing into inferentialism/representationalism (including holism/atomism) as rationalist/empiricist principle of division and distinction (identity and individuation).
  - iii) A third dimension of empiricism/rationalism is atomism/holism.

1. Opening:

A smart person can find in each philosophical position an **error** or flaw.

It requires a genuine philosophical imagination to find in each a **truth**, a lesson, a discovery.

The very best philosophers will find a **principle** behind the different mixtures of truth and error in the various philosophical views. This is Hegelian recollective philosophical wisdom.

Three narrative strategies.

- a) One structure of a story—the paradigmatic **journalistic** narrative strategy—is:
  - “Tell ‘em what you’re going to tell ‘em.”
  - “Tell ‘em.”

- “Tell ‘em what you told ‘em.”

b) One gets a sense that Sellars does not hew to this line from his remark “A philosophical argument is a **Dedekind cut** between a series of ‘As I *shall* show’s and a series of ‘As I *have* shown’s.”

His way is based on the classic **analytic, puzzle** narrative strategy:

- Set out a puzzle.

The ideal is to presuppose as little as possible in the way of knowledge of prior history or literature on the topic.

- Clarify the constraints on a solution (criteria of adequacy, pitfalls to be avoided...).
- Specify the conceptual resources (distinctions, entailments...).
- Offer your solution, deploying those resources..
- Show how it satisfies the criteria of adequacy and avoids the pitfalls specified earlier.

c) Indeed, neither the journalistic way nor exactly the analytic puzzle way is Sellars’s narrative strategy.

He usually begins dialectically, proceeding rather according to the narrative strategy of a classic **mystery story**, where at the end the detective gathers all the suspects together, rehearses the clues and blunders, reconstructs his own thought processes, including where he went wrong, and ends with a triumphant reveal.

d) In a longer, book- or course-length story, with repeated chapters or episodes, these three phases should be preceded by a phase rehearsing and reminding the audience what the upshot is of what has gone before: a cumulative, recollective-reconstructive recapitulation of the ground covered already.

In the nature of things, as the work progresses, more and more of each episode is devoted to this recollective recapitulation.

In the case of a dissertation, my view is that when you get to the point that it takes you a whole chapter to do this bit, that means you’re done. Write that chapter. It is your conclusion.

This is the **Hegelian** narrative strategy. The sense in which you have reached the culmination of *this* line of thought is that you have achieved the structural condition he calls “Absolute Self-Consciousness.”

## 2. Recap I: Sellars’s Midcentury Vision of What Analytic Philosophy Could Be:

Sellars’s enemy (and, he thought, the “enemy of philosophy”) was psychologism, as an instance more broadly of “descriptivism.” On the other side, he saw “rationalism,” which encompassed idealism and platonism.

His vision is for a decidedly *Kantian* analytic philosophy. Its focus is on the notion of *rules*. What is special for him about the “new way of words,” what converted him from being a “rationalist realist,” to the side of logical empiricism, in the form of what he calls (LRB) “pragmatist empiricism,” is its combining naturalism with a non-descriptivist appreciation of another function, besides empirical description and explanation, linguistic expressions can have. That is stating *rules*. What is special about the new way of words is that the rules are thought of as expressed in a metalanguage. That is what the “new way of words” contributes. What makes it neo-Kantian, in Sellars’s understanding, is Carnap’s emphasis on *rules*, hence on the normativity of discursiveness.

What WS wants is a *via media* between reductive empiricism, which does not countenance norms/rules, abstracta, “real connections” formulated in alethic modal terms, and a rationalism that reifies them.

Both, he thinks share a common descriptivism.

From the point of view of the NWW, they both treat these potentially puzzling kinds of concepts as expressed in the object-language in which empirical description and explanation takes place. Reductive empiricism does not find them in the world. Inflationary rationalism does.

The *via media* afforded by the NWW in the form of a “pragmatist empiricism” sees these expressions as non-descriptive. It does so by seeing them as having their proper place in a metalanguage. What one does in such a pragmatic metalanguage is formulate rules (codifying norms) governing the use of expressions of the object language. That, according to Sellars, is the proper way to understand all of: the normative language of rule-statements (“correct”...), modal vocabulary (“I shall be interpreting the statement that all As are necessarily Bs as formulating a rule for the use of the expressions ‘A’ and ‘B’...”), and abstract-object talk of qualities and propositions (which Carnap had shown how to understand metalinguistically).

Here are the key passages from PPE:

§1: **The attempt to draw a clear distinction between philosophy and the empirical sciences** can almost be taken as the defining trait of the analytic movement in contemporary philosophical thought.

Characteristic, then, of analytic philosophy has been the rejection of what it terms **psychologism**,

The analytic movement in philosophy has gradually moved towards the conclusion that the defining characteristic of philosophical concepts is that they are **formal** concepts relating to the formation and transformation **rules** of symbol structures called languages. **Philosophy**, in other words, tends to be conceived of as the **formal theory of languages**.

§2 The analytic philosopher establishes his right to attack **psychologism** with respect to a given concept if he is able to show that it is capable of treatment as a concept the nature and function of which is constituted by its role in **rules** definitive of a broader or narrower set of calculi.

In this stage of the battle against psychologism, an apparently clear-cut distinction arose between *symbol-behavior* and *formal system*, a distinction sometimes summed up as that between *inference as fact* and *deducibility as norm*.

§7: **it is only if there is a pragmatics that is not an empirical science of sign-behavior, a pragmatics which is a branch of the formal theory of language, that the term is rescued for philosophy.** And it is only if there is such a new dimension of calculus structure, whether its analysis be called ‘Pure Pragmatics’ or ‘Pure Semantics’ that the **analytic philosopher** can hope to give a **nonpsychological** account of the key concepts of traditional **epistemology**.

§9: ...drawing a distinction between language *as behavior* (that is, as the subject matter of empirical psychology), and language behavior *to the extent that it conforms, and as conforming, to the criteria of language as norm*; or, in the terminology we shall adopt, between language behavior *qua* behavioral **fact**, and **language behavior *qua tokens of language as type***.

Passages from “Language, Rules, and Behavior” (1949)

I shall attempt to map a true *via media*... between **rationalistic a-priorism** and what... I shall call **"descriptivism,"** by which I understand the claim that all meaningful concepts and problems belong to the empirical or descriptive sciences, including the sciences of human behavior.

BB: Q: Who is ‘**Metaphysicus**’ (in IM and later essays such as CDCM)? He is a recurring character in Sellars’s dialectics.

A: He is the “rationalist realist” that WS says he himself was before defecting to the logical empiricist camp. He has failed to make the “metalinguistic turn” that Sellars identifies with the “new way of words.” He appreciates all the “rulish” stuff: norms, modally robust “real connections,” talk of universals and propositions. But instead of seeing these as to be understood in terms of *rules in a metalanguage*, he reifies them, understands these statements as made in an object language that he understands as consisting exclusively of descriptions or representations. He then typically needs a non-empirical faculty of intuition, or something like that, to explain our access to these non-empirical items.

From LRB:

[W]here the *regulist* speaks of statements which exhibit the rules of the language in which they are formulated, the *rationalist* speaks of intuition or self-evidence. The regulist goes from object-language up to meta-linguistic rule, whereas the rationalist goes from object-language down to extra-linguistic reality. The regulist explains the significance of the word "must," as it occurs in arguments, in terms of the syntactical rules of the language in which it occurs; the rationalist explains it in terms of a non-linguistic grasp of a necessary connection between features of reality.

From the Preface to *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* (1949):

The conception of philosophical analysis underlying our selections springs from two major traditions in recent thought, the Cambridge movement deriving from Moore and Russell, and the Logical Positivism of the Vienna Circle (Wittgenstein, Schlick, Carnap) together with the Scientific Empiricism of the Berlin group (led by Reichenbach). These, together with related developments in America stemming from Realism and Pragmatism, and the relatively independent contributions of the Polish logicians have increasingly merged to create an approach to philosophical problems which we frankly consider a decisive turn in the history of philosophy. [p. vi]

BB: This must have been written by Sellars. The reference to Realism, which is led by RWS, was of no interest to anyone else. And Feigl almost certainly wouldn’t have included pragmatism.

Interesting that Wittgenstein is mentioned first in the Vienna Circle. He barely attended, though he was vastly influential.

Tarski often attended VC meetings.

From Feigl's Introduction to *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* (1949):

Three disciplines are being developed to carry out this task of clarifying language and meaning. *Pragmatics* investigates the functions of language in its full biological, psychological, and sociological setting. Here language in its relation to behavior is the primary object of study. By two successive steps of abstraction the disciplines of *semantics* and *syntax* are arrived at. Semantics analyzes the meaning of terms and expressions. Its studies center about the relation of designation and the concept of truth. While pragmatics is interested predominantly in the expression and appeal function of language, [BB: ?] semantics explores the symbolic or representational aspect of language. Syntax, finally, ignores even the meaning-relation and studies exclusively the connections of linguistic signs with each other. It systematizes the purely formal, structural rules for the formation of sentences and the transformation rules of logical derivation. [p. 7]

### 3. Recap II: SRLG and LW:

- a) I read WS in SRLG as arguing that we must find a way between the **Scylla of regularism** and the **Charybdis of regulism**. WS doesn't use the first term, and uses the second differently than I do. He calls "regulism" any view that does not collapse into **descriptivism** (or dispositionalism).
- b) LW does this too, in the first 200 or so sections of PI. But he is also concerned there, as WS is largely not in SRLG, to argue that invocation of **Cartesian** self-intimating episodes (Goodmanian "erlebs") also won't help. Sellars leaves that argument for elsewhere: his critique of the Myth of the Given (MoG).
- c) Both invoke the notions of "**rules**" and, here, "**games**" to emphasize the essentially normative character of discursive practice. That is what they both take to go missing in descriptivist (including psychologistic) or dispositionalist analyses. Sellars hears and means "rules" in Kant's sense. (For **Kant**, **laws** are a species of rules: rules that are "objectively valid" [gültig, from "gelten" to be worth].) Wittgenstein seems innocent of this Kantian antecedent.
- d) Both LW and WS also see that a **regress of rules** threatens if we insist that behind every propriety of practice there lies an explicit rule or principle.
  - **Sellars** emphasizes that **grasp of a rule** or principle presupposes **mastery of the concepts** in terms of which it is expressed. But what we want to explain is the norms that articulate mastery of a concept.

- LW emphasizes that **applying a rule is itself something that can be done correctly or incorrectly** (i.e. is subject to normative assessment). If *that* norm, too, is to be understood in terms of grasp of a rule, then a vicious regress looms. No account of discursive understanding (grasp of a concept) that takes this form can be successful. The key concept here is that of interpretation [Deutung]. LW defines an “interpretation” of a rule as a rule for applying it. Thus he sees the threat of a “regress of interpretation.”

e) LW concludes that there must be some other way of understanding a rule besides interpreting it. This is according with it or not according with it “in practice.” I want to say (partly looking over my shoulder at Heidegger in the first part of *Being and Time*, partly at American Pragmatism as articulated by Dewey) that the lesson is that **norms explicit in the form of rules or principles** are intelligible only against the background of **norms implicit in practices**. Even more generally, **explicit thematic propositional knowing-that** presupposes **implicit practical abilities or know-how**. To understand *that* he suggests we think about how we **train or teach** people our practices—how we bring outsiders in and make them practitioners, whether they are youngsters or foreigners. So if we are inclined to metaphysically puzzled about the implicit practical normative significance of a **sign-post**—to think of what there is to it in addition to its being “**just a piece of wood**” in virtue of which it has *meaning*, can be responded to (interpreted in practice, as we might want to say) *correctly* or *incorrectly* as a kind of numinous, spooky property that it has somehow been imbued with—he demystifies that by showing us that there is nothing mysterious about how folks learn to follow sign-posts. It is true that they always *could* be responded to differently. But we have been trained to respond properly, have caught onto the practice of doing so, and can “go on” even in new cases: signposts we have never seen before.

f) Sellars, too, appeals to **training**. (And remember that abstracting a common *selectional* structure from *learning* and evolution is of the essence of American Pragmatism as Peirce bequeaths it.) But his story is finer-grained than LW’s. He has a notion of “**rule-governedness**” that requires that for a practice involving a regularity of behavior (described dispositionally) to be rule-governed, **an explicit representation or expression of the rule must play a suitable causal role in bringing about the regularity** (reflected in our explanation of the aetiology of the regularity). More specifically, the regularity must be **subjunctively sensitive** to features of the *representation* of the rule. That is, it must be the case that *if* the representation of the rule *were* or *had been* different, the regularity *would be* or *would have been* different. This is so, he thinks, only if the rule would have been *understood* differently had the representation been different.

If we require that for the individual whose regular behavior is being explained, we embark on a regress. Their understanding cannot in turn be understood as rule-governed in this same sense.

But if we understand the representation of the rule and its understanding to be that of a *teacher*, rather than that of the *pupil* being trained, the regress vanishes.

Or, rather, it recedes socially and historically.

The explanation works as long as there is always already an up-and-running discursive practice. Another story will be needed about the advent of such practices, the transition from non-normative behavior to norm-governed behavior.

g) I see Sellars as putting in place a notion of **norm-governedness of performances**, which count as performances of a *practice* just insofar as they are governed by norms implicit in that practice.

A practice being *norm-governed*—of which, as both WS and LW would insist, being explicitly *rule*-governed is necessarily just a special case— involves two dimensions.

- First, the norm must set a **standard of assessment** of performances as correct or incorrect, appropriate or inappropriate, *according*, as we say, to that norm.

This is the **deontic normative** aspect of norm-governedness.

- Second, the performances to which the norm applies (those “governed” by it) must be **subjunctively sensitive** to the norm, in the sense that if it *were* or *had been* different, so would the performances.

This is the **alethic modal** aspect of norm-governedness.

#### 4. “Inference and Meaning” (1953)

Plan for IM discussion:

- Relation of material inferences (MI) to **logic**.
- Relation of MI to **meaning**. (Will eventually, in CDCM, distinguish *describing* from mere *labeling*—cf. traditional pre-Kantian *classifying* or *predicating*—by location in a “space of implications.”)
  - A specific form of normative functionalism about *conceptual* content or meaning. This is *holist*, building on his earlier notion that *conformation rules implicitly define descriptive predicates*.
  - Weak, strong, and hyperinferentialism.
  - Holism (vs. atomism) about conceptual content is an immediate consequence even of weak inferentialism. One cannot have just one concept.

(Another route to holism, from compositionality: Evans’s Generality Constraint.)
- Relation of MI to **subjunctive robustness** of inference/implication: what is expressed by subjunctive conditionals. WS uses importance of what is expressed by subjunctive conditionals to *argue for* semantic inferentialism.

I think this rhetorical strategy (a phrase I use to mean “argumentative strategy”) is confused. It would not work on Quine or other such anti-modality empiricists. It is

coming from the naturalism side of philosophy of science. Again, on wrong side of history. Acceptance of modality, with Kripke, David Lewis, etc., will happen in the context of the *denial* of the *fundamentality* of subjunctive conditionals to descriptive content, in the form of building account of possible worlds around modally insulated, modally intrinsic properties used to specify each possible world.

The key idea here is the idea that each world can be identified and individuated (and in that sense *fully specified*) in terms of properties the possession of which is settled by consulting that world alone. It is then in terms of worlds so identified-and-individuated that we specify the conceptually *derivative* properties that are modal in the sense that their possession or exhibition at *one* world *does* depend on what intrinsic properties are possessed by *other* related or “nearby” (“accessible”) worlds.

This is ***modal metaphysical foundationalism*** about the identity and individuation of properties (and relations).

WS is here (in this IM argument from essentiality of subjunctive robustness to at least weak inferentialism) *taking for granted* the denial of modal metaphysical foundationalism. Once again, right—but on the wrong side of immediately subsequent history.

This modal metaphysical foundationalism is an empiricist *atomism* (now about properties), as opposed to a rationalist *holism*.

- iv) [Transition to next week (on EPM): Relation of MI to **observation reports**. The argument will be, in effect, from inferentialism (including its holism) against givenness, MoG.]

1. The innovations here are downstream of, and filling in the details of, his take on the task of analytic philosophy.
2. The *normative pragmatic* picture of language as an essentially *rule-governed* practice or activity in the 1951 SRLG is principally aimed at making sense of the notion of norms implicit in a practice in terms of the idea of norms explicit in rules or principles. It offers an explicit theory, where Wittgenstein, moved by similar considerations (his “regress of interpretations”) does not, but in effect just invokes the idea of norms implicit in a practice. (Sign post.) The regress threatened because he is proposing to understand grasping a concept in terms of following a rule, but following a rule requires grasping a concept. In the background of that argument was an answer to the question: *which* rules is it one must follow to grasp a concept? For some, it includes rules governing language-entry moves. But for *all*, he wants to claim (and this will be the basis for his critique of the Myth of the Given), it *must* include language-language moves, which are *inferential* moves.

What he is doing in IM is focusing more finely on understanding the relation between inferential moves and conceptual content. The big obstacle here (compare: in SRLG the obstacle is the threat of a regress) is an entrenched dogma concerning the relation of *inference* to *logic*.

3. What he is developing is his idea that in addition to Carnapian formation and transformation rules, there are *conformation* rules, corresponding to Carnap’s “P-rules”, and that these “implicitly define” the empirical descriptive predicates of the language.

Note that WS will substantially alter the notion of transformation rule, and take Carnap to task for not appreciating the “rulishness” of derivability relations.

Logic looks very different when one gives up the idea that

*behind every propriety of inferential practice there is a logical principle.*

4. The big ideas here are:

- a) The gigantic, transformative move here is introducing the very idea of “material inference,” or, better:  
“**material propriety of inference**” or “**materially good implication.**”
- b) Re **meaning**: The idea that descriptive predicates are “implicitly defined” by the role they play in a normative structure articulated by material inferences.
- c) The transformed picture of **logic** that these two innovations lead to.
- d) The idea of material inference/implication as *essentially subjunctively robust*.

5. First we should focus on and Chisholm the idea of material inference.

- a) “**Material inference.**”

We can ask: what does the adjective “material” properly modify? It indicates that *matter* rather than *form* underwrites the inference. But that is a matter of what makes the inference *good*. So maybe what we want is:

- b) “Material **propriety** of inference.”

This is an advance. The contrast is with “formal, logical propriety of inference,” whose paradigm is *modus ponens*: the inference from  $p$  and  $p \rightarrow q$  to  $q$ .

So we might fill this in as

- c) “**Material** propriety of inference, by contrast to **formal logical** propriety of inference.”

Obviously a lot depends on how we understand this contrast between two sorts of good-making properties of inference: material and formal-logical.

And this depends on the conception of the fixed end of the distinction Sellars is introducing: *the formal-logical proprieties of inference*.

Sellars understands them as **articulating the content** of the concepts expressed by **logical** vocabulary. That is, he takes it that logical vocabulary means what it means (has the logical conceptual content that it does) because of the role it plays in logically good inferences. In this way, **he will treat logical concepts and their relations to logically good inferences as the model for his understanding of non-logical, empirical descriptive concepts and their relations to materially good inferences.**

This is a **normative functionalism** about the meanings of *logical* vocabulary.

And it is a **semantic inferentialism** about those **meanings**, that is, about logical concepts. For it takes the normative relations between sentences using logical vocabulary that articulate the functional role the playing of which confers conceptual content on that vocabulary to be specifically *inferential* relations. The idea is that it is by being normatively governed by *logical* proprieties of *inference* that vocabulary comes to possess *logical* conceptual content.

This view about the nature of the content expressed by logical vocabulary is already substantive and potentially controversial. Jaroslav Peregrin explores this view in logic, “logical inferentialism,” in relation to the broader “semantic inferentialism” that Sellars goes on to pioneer, in his fabulous recent book *Inferentialism: Why Rules Matter*. But there is a bias for

*proof theory* over *model theory* in this sort of logical inferentialism that takes role in inference to implicitly define logical vocabulary.

Sellars basically *takes for granted* these two views about **logical** vocabulary:

- a broader normative functionalism about the relation between the rule-governed *use* of logical expressions and their *conceptual content*, that is, about the relation between a *normative pragmatics* and *semantics* for logical expressions, and
- a more specific *semantic inferentialism* about the functional system that is, according to the normative functionalism, *semantogenic*, in the sense that it is playing a functional role in that kind of rule-governed system of practices that *confers* content on logical vocabulary. This is the idea that it is the normative *inferential* relations among claims formulated using logical vocabulary that confer their distinctive kind of content. These, he takes it, are what are expressed by Carnap's "transformation rules," once those rules are properly understood (which he argues later in IM, Carnap does not).

WS must think that a view like this about the meaning of logical expressions is implicit in Carnap. The L-rules implicitly define the logical vocabulary.

Thus when WS says in the "Autobiographical Sketch" that "already in his Oxford days he had the idea that the content of modal expressions was to be understood in terms of their **role in reasoning rather than their supposed origin in experience**" he is implicitly contrasting two models of **meaning**: a **rationalist** one and an **empiricist** one ("role in reasoning" vs. "origin in experience"). These are the two components of logical empiricism of the *Aufbau* type: experiences as bricks and logic as mortar. He, like Dummett later on, will take his model of meaning from logical expressions, not supposedly immediate experiences.

He will be a thorough-going *rationalist* in his semantics, arguing against givenness and MoG that even *observational* vocabulary should be understood in terms of its essentially inferential conceptual content.

In doing this, **he is taking logic—understood in a particular, functionalist way—as a semantic model, the model he uses in crafting his semantics for nonlogical expressions.**

This is another crucial dimension of the distinction and opposition between *logical* and *material* conceptual content: though material inference/implication must be *distinguished from* logical inference/implication, it is also *modeled on* the way logical relations *implicitly define* the conceptual contents expressed by logical vocabulary.

But we should not accept a paraphrase of that expression as

- d) "inferences that are good in virtue of (because of, as an expression or articulation of) the conceptual content of their nonlogical concepts, rather than their logical form."

Because there can be bad material inferences.

- e) "inferences whose goodness (Gültigkeit) depends on the conceptual content expressed by their nonlogical vocabulary, rather than depending upon their logical form."

But **should it be "inferences" or "implications"?** Harman, in arguing that "deductive inference is not a kind of inference" shows why we need to separate these things: inferential *practices* and *relations* of implication. The conclusion I draw from Harman is that we appeal to *relations of implication* to formulate *rules* governing *inference*. Inferential practices are part of

the *use* of logical and non-logical expressions, hence discussed in *pragmatics* and implicational relations are what articulate the conceptual contents expressions acquire in virtue of being used according to those pragmatic norms, and so belong to the *semantics*.

f) “**implications whose goodness depends on conceptual content** expressed by their nonlogical vocabulary, rather than their logical form.”

6. Sellars makes the huge, transformative move of **taking material** proprieties of inference, **materially good implications**, to be *independent of logical ones*.

Here we have the *logistical tradition* that sees *implicit grasp of logical principles behind every practice of good reasoning*.

**Montaigne** speaks for this tradition in seeing a dog chasing a rabbit down a forking path, sniffing one alternative and finding no scent immediately dashing off down the other, without checking there, as implicitly demonstrating his mastery of the **disjunctive syllogism**.

**Dennett** describes a predator who, seeing his prey running behind a hill, rushes around it to the other side as implicitly relying on *modus ponens*. [Look up his actual example.]

BB:

a) But none of them have views about *embedded* uses of logical vocabulary, tautologies and so on.

b) Does Montaigne think (it would be equally plausible) that the dog showed implicit grasp of the principle of noncontradiction because it did not *both* rush down path B and *not* rush down path B?

We have here a fundamental question about the relations between *logic* and *reasons*.

**Are all good reasons logically good reasons?** Behind every goodness of reasoning must we find *logical* goodness of reasoning? Well, not in *practical* reasoning. At most in theoretical.

But if not, **what is the relation between logic and good reasoning?** Sellars’s line of though suggests another way of understanding this, not intellectualism or platonism (*logical principle* behind every property of *rational practice*) but *logical expressivism*. Logic has an expressive rather than a constitutive job w/res to rational practice: *making explicit* properties of reasoning (inference, implication) practice—the norms implicit in or governing such practice—rather than accordance with logical rules *constituting* the goodness of such reasoning.

Russell (in *Portraits from Memory*, p. 39) recalled that Whitehead “said to me once: “You think the world is what it looks like in fine weather at noon day; I think it is what it seems like in the early morning when one first wakes from a deep sleep.” I thought his remark horrid, but could not see how to prove that my bias was any better than his. At last he showed me how to apply the techniques of mathematical logic to his vague and higgledy-piggledy world, and dress it up in Sunday clothes which the mathematician could view without being shocked. This technique which I learned from him delighted me, and I no longer demanded that the naked truth should be as good as the truth in its mathematical Sunday best.”

[Quoted by Alberto Coffa, p. 212-213 in *The Semantic Tradition from Kant to Carnap: To the Vienna Station*.]

7. The **Bolzano-Frege-Quine** (BFQ) method of **noting invariance under substitution** then gives us a *substitutional* way to understand implications that hold in virtue of their *form*.

8. But this notion of form requires us to distinguish the notion of form in general from the more specific notion of logical form. For we can hold fixed *any* vocabulary K—theological,

meteorological, nautical, culinary....vocabulary—and get a notion of implications that hold in virtue of their *K-form*.

9. To distinguish specifically *logical* form we need to **demarcate logical vocabulary**. This is one of the classical problems of the philosophy of logic.

10. The key thing is that this view (not explicit in Sellars, but going beyond what he says in IM) **turns the traditional view on its head**. Where logical propriety of inferential language-language moves was taken to be the only cognitively or conceptually relevant kind, on the material inference plus BFQ substitutional notion of form approach, material proprieties of inference (and so implication relations) are conceptually and explanatorily prior to logical proprieties of inference (and so implication relations).

11. So: what *makes* materially good inferences/implications good?

There is a subtle but important distinction that one must keep in mind here.

- a) From one point of view, within an up-and-running discursive enterprise, the answer is: the conceptual contents expressed by the nonlogical vocabulary.
- b) From another point of view, that of the philosopher of language wanting to explain what conceptual content *is*, we can say that conceptual content is conferred on nonlogical expressions by using them according to a particular set of rules, i.e. as governed by a particular set of inferential norms codifiable as material implication (and incompatibility) relations.

12. Material inferences and what is expressed by subjunctive conditionals.

It is essential that material inferences support subjunctive and counterfactual reasoning.

These inferences/implications are, as I will say, “subjunctively robust.”

13. Sellars does *not* add: and material inferences/implications are in general *not monotonic*. (But if one treats them as *logically good* inferences, one will be inclined to say that they are.

14. Next:

- a) Have talked about the relation of material inferences (MI) to **logic**.
- b) Relation of MI to **meaning**. (Will eventually, in CDCM, distinguish *describing* from mere *labeling*—cf. traditional pre-Kantian *classifying* or *predicating*—by location in a “space of implications.”)
  - A specific form of **normative functionalism about conceptual content** or meaning. This is *holist*, building on his earlier notion that *conformation rules implicitly define descriptive predicates*.
  - **Weak, strong, and hyperinferentialism**.
  - **Holism** (vs. atomism) about conceptual content is an immediate consequence even of weak inferentialism. One cannot have just one concept.

(Another route to holism, from compositionality: **Evans's Generality Constraint.**)

- c) Relation of MI to **subjunctive robustness** of inference/implication: what is expressed by subjunctive conditionals. WS uses importance of what is expressed by subjunctive conditionals to *argue for* semantic inferentialism.

I think this rhetorical strategy (a phrase I use to mean “argumentative strategy”) is confused. It would not work on Quine or other such anti-modality empiricists. It is coming from the naturalism side of philosophy of science. Again, on wrong side of history. Acceptance of modality, with Kripke, David Lewis, etc., will happen in the context of the *denial of the fundamentality* of subjunctive conditionals to descriptive content, in the form of building account of possible worlds around modally insulated, modally intrinsic properties used to specify each possible world.

The key idea here is the idea that each world can be identified and individuated (and in that sense *fully specified*) in terms of properties the possession of which is settled by consulting that world alone. **These properties are “extensional” in Quine’s sense, and are modally insulated.** It is then in terms of worlds so identified-and-individuated that we specify the conceptually *derivative* properties that are modal in the sense that their possession or exhibition at *one* world *does* depend on what intrinsic properties are possessed by *other* related or “nearby” (“accessible”) worlds.

This is **modal metaphysical foundationalism** about the identity and individuation of properties (and relations).

WS is here (in this IM argument from essentiality of subjunctive robustness to at least weak inferentialism) *taking for granted* the denial of modal metaphysical foundationalism. Once again, right—but on the wrong side of immediately subsequent history.

This modal metaphysical foundationalism is an empiricist *atomism* (now about properties), as opposed to a rationalist *holism*.

We’ll talk about **the subjunctive robustness of the material implications that articulate the contents expressed by all OED vocabulary** in a couple of weeks, when we read “Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities.”

- d) [Transition to next week (on EPM): Relation of MI to **observation reports**. The argument will be, in effect, from inferentialism (including its holism) against givenness, MoG.]