The Role of Languagings in Sellars' Theory of Experience

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Abstract. The picturing capacity of languagings is arguably a commitment central to Sellars' account of intentionality. I reconstruct its transcendental role in three steps: First, I trace the Kantian background of Sellars' thesis that 'picturing qua languagings' adopts a point of view outside of the series of actual and possible representations and the sequence of conceptual frameworks. Then, I discuss how languagings serve as fulcrum for the very idea of gradually improving epistemic practices on the whole. Finally, I show the plurality of articulations that the functions of languagings receive in their cognitive, computational, ecological, and social roles to be not only compatible but integrated and enriched by explicating their picturing capacity.

0. Introduction

Throughout his philosophical career, Wilfrid Sellars developed the concept of a *world-story* as a key component of his epistemology (NAO V §§ 43, 59-69, 89, Olen 2016, 44, 158). The adaptive value of successful world-stories is explained by the dynamic between their components and by the advantages they afford in coping with the environment. Every conceptual system embodies a world-story.[1] Sellars calls what accounts for the *selection* of one world-story over another the *Janus-faced nature* of *languagings* produced in a given conceptual structure (NAO V §§63-64, SM V §§49, 57). In this paper, I show how Sellars' account helps to critically reflect on the epistemological underpinnings evolutionary claims about languagings presuppose.[2]

According to Sellars, *languagings* have a Janus-face by being amenable to two perspectives (NAO V §64): a familiar *semantic point of view*, and an *engineering point of view*, which considers them 'from

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[1] Olen (2016: 44): «[A]any pragmatic depiction of an empirically meaningful language must contain what [Sellars] calls 'a world' (i.e., a set of designata stipulated by both explicit definitions and material constraints on the formation of expressions) and a 'world-story' (referents and their logical relations)». Cobley (2019: 701) finds a related idea in Sebeok (1979: 59 ff.) stressing that «the fundamental role of the central nervous system is precisely to provide the creature with a local map simulating its position in the environment, to enable it to sort out, among other vital intelligence, the images of biologically and/or socially important organisms, viz., to distinguish prey from predator. This is surely best accomplished by an arrangement of such images into a distinctive feature matrix, or in terms of 'likeness tempered with difference'».

[2] This paper develops materials from chapter 5 'Transcendental Phenomenalism' of *Intentionality in Sellars: A Transcendental Account of Finite Knowledge*, 1st edition by Luz Christopher Seiberth, Copyright (Routledge, 2022) by Imprint and is reproduced here by permission of the Taylor & Francis Group.

the outside', as complex matter of factual natural-linguistic objects. The *semantic* dimension of languagings, particularly their capacity to be characterised in functional, evolutionary terms, has been attractive to naturalistic approaches in the philosophy of language and biology, in the cognitive sciences and predictive processes frameworks as well as in the pragmatist tradition. While many scholars have discussed picturing (Millikan 2005, 2012; Rosenberg 2007; Gladziejewski 2017; Huebner 2018), and a few have correctly recognised that picturing is not a semantic concept (Seibt 1990, 2003, 2018; Price 2013; Sachs 2019), they have not focused on the importance of the fact that picturing is a transcendental concept. This involves abstracting from the content side of languagings, considering them as natural-linguistic objects. The thesis of picturing is that these natural linguistic objects stand in a matter-of-factual, or *isomorphic,* relation to objects in their vicinity.

Assessing the capacity of languagings to form complex *matter of factual* pictures of the objects they are evoked by has been the single most contested aspect of Sellars scholarship over the last forty years (deVries 2012a, 2016, 2019; Sicha 2014; Haag 2016; O'Shea 2015; Seiberth 2022). Accounting for the *picturing capacity of languagings* involves articulating commitments central to Sellars' account of scientific progress and his transcendental account of intentionality.[3]

I proceed as follows: (1) After introducing the framework and context of Sellars' stance on languagings, (2) I briefly reconstruct the Kantian background to Sellars' thesis that languagings are causally isomorphic to the objects they are evoked by. And I explore in how far this allows adopting a point of view outside of the series of actual and possible representations and the sequence of conceptual frameworks. (3) To that end I explore the nature of the concomitant idea of immanence by giving it a Kantian (3.1) and a Sellarsian (3.2) reading. In light of this, (4) I show how languagings serve as fulcrum for the very idea of gradually improving epistemic practices on the whole, i.e. of their evolution. Finally, in section (5), I defend the claim that the plurality of articulations that the functions of languagings receives in their cognitive, computational, ecological, bio-linguistic, and social roles are not only compatible but integrated and enriched by explicating their capacity to *picture* the 'objects' of their environments.

1. The Sellarsian stance on languagings

Sellars is a philosopher of metaphysics, mind, language and perception alike. His substantial concerns in introducing the concept of languagings in his work can be seen as serving a purpose in what is probably best described as his *metaphysics of intentionality*. This sets his invocation of 'languagings' apart from linguistic, cognitive evolutionary, developmental and biosemiotic approaches. To be sure, this does not mean Sellars would not also address issues raised in these fields. In fact, Sellars' account of a 'picturing capacity' of languagings should come to these disciplines as a welcome vindication of their special status.[4] However, there's quite a lot to be said about the arcane and elusive nature of the concept of languagings and the special status attributed to them.

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[3] O'Shea's (2007: 158) captures the status of 'picturing' with regard to its presuppositional role as follows: «Sellars' account of picturing and of empirical truth as correspondence represented a searching if sketchy attempt to argue that the normative aspects of meaning, reference, and truth are not reducible to, yet presuppose for their possibility, various specific underlying causal patterns and representational mappings […]. It is the latter mappings which systematically relate cognitive and linguistic systems to the world which they thereby succeed in being *about* – even though *aboutness* itself is not a further mysterious relation to the world. Investigation of these modes of cognitive representation has since become the cooperative business not only of philosophers of mind, epistemologists, and philosophers of language, but of linguists, cognitive psychologists, and neuroscientists as well. Central to Sellars' philosophical quest was the attempt to envision the overall conceptual space in which those sorts of detailed epistemological and scientific investigations might be seen to make sense». I take my position to diverge from deVries' 2012b reconstruction of the epistemological optimism inherent in Sellars' scientific realism (Cf. sections 4-5 below).

[4] Favareau & Kull (2015: 23-24) for instance maintain that at its basis semiosis «requires the participation of a more fundamental sign process», a view Kravchenko (in this issue) shares when claiming that «signs have a biological nature».

The following remarks are intended to bring core features of the Sellarsian stance on languagings into purview.

Languagings in overt and covert forms

The scope of Sellars' views of how thinking, judging, perceiving and speaking belong together is cashed out in the thesis that acts of adult human intuiting (e.g., perceiving an object to be red) as well as judgments (to the effect *that* something is the case) are sub-species of languagings (cf. LTC; akin to the variety Cowley 2019 surveys). Sellars argues, our explanatory access to thoughts and our attempts at understanding thinking and perceiving rests on analogically construing them as covert forms of overt episodes of speech. Naturally, one would object, thinking and perceiving are quite different.

Which is to say, thinking on one understanding clearly is unlike overt utterances. But then thinking (whether overt or covert) is also unlike perceiving (whether overt or covert). In both cases the wider genus is that of 'conceptual thinkings', which has two species, (1) 'outer' (overt 'thinking-out-loud') or 'inner', both of which come in three main varieties: (2) as perceivings, inferrings, or intendings (perceiving-out-loud, willing-out-loud, etc.). A third distinction (3) concerns the 'perceptual taking-to-be F' ('this-blue-book'), as opposed to a judgment ('this-blue-book is by Sellars'). The 'taking' and the full judging in this case are both thinkings, which can be overt or covert. Sellars maintains that when it comes to the order of how we explain thought, we start by considering linguistic episodes and construe thoughts and judgments as counterparts of overt acts of speaking (cf. EPM, CSCA 1961 April 3, §5-7, BBK §§35, 54-58).[5]

So languagings come in three flavours. (1) As explicit statements, or overt utterances, (2) as covert acts of intuiting or perceiving, acts understood as proto-judgements, and then (3) as covert, fully fledged acts of judgements, or judgings that occur as tokenings in the language of the mind. If the concept of 'languaging' is broadly enough construed, it ranges across the dimensions of judging and perceiving, albeit in a covert manner, and across the dimension of locution, in overt acts of speaking.

The import of the standpoint of transcendental reflexion

Now it is one thing to formally distinguish acts of judging, perceiving, and speaking. It is another to reflect on their respective capacity to refer to objects and components of the environment. What is distinctive of Sellars' perspective on the referential dimension of languagingsis that he rejects an epistemological direct realism (EPM, SM I and II).[6] Expressed as negative thesis, Sellars holds that neither our perceptual faculties alone, nor our current use of reason and theory-building in scientific practices discloses reality to us as it is *in itself*. Instead, Sellars holds that our perceptions are directly about external reality, and to the degree that a given conceptual scheme is 'adequate', it represents reality 'as it is in itself'. Our common sense framework categorially misrepresents reality in various ways (regarding sensible qualities in particular – which leads Sellars to endorse 'Kant's phenomenalism' for the domain of 'appearances'), but when we get things right,

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[5] Seen this way, Sellars' complex conception of a 'thought' is larger than usually construed. With the nominalistic leanings in view that back his process ontological commitments developed in FMPP III, a thought realised as a sub-process of the central nervous system has a causal beginning and a causal end. Such that sometimes a thought ends at the tip of our tongue, sometimes in an overt statement. Cf. CSCA 1962 March 11, Ad 15 ff.

[6] One way of cashing out this view is to see it as a 'critical direct realism', of a representationalist variety. The 'direct' comes from the intentional/conceptual content: my perception is directly about this chair (thanks to its constitutent concept), not about any 'intermediary' that falls short of that. But while many people don't think one can be a representationalist and a direct realist, one can read Kant as an empirical direct realist about perception of physical objects in space. And functionalists about conceptual representation can be direct (intentional) realists, too. (Thanks to Jim O'Shea for helpful conversations and comments on this issue).

we represent reality 'in itself'. The problematic addressed in the negative thesis concerns the fundamental epistemological situation we are in as humans, scientists and theoreticians. When Sellars in the mid 1960s aligns himself with a Kantian outlook, he seems to endorse a view on which everything in space and time as Kant-Newton saw them is, critically viewed, nothing over and above appearances.

Two problems: Metaphysical Agnosticism and the Non-Relationality of Intentionality

Siding with Kant in this characterisation of our fundamental epistemological situation comes with two problems. The *first* problematic is best expressed as an agnosticism about the knowability of the real, or *things in themselves*. Stated as a thesis it holds: Since we are always only to do with our own representations of how things are, we never get to grasp things as they are independently of us. A direct realism is naïve where it seeks to afford us ontological cash by holding we could ever step outside the realm of *how* we represent things to ourselves, while disregarding the fact that actually such a conception entails holding that one can look at both relata of an epistemological situation, an object and our judgment of it. Here Sellars invests a lot of work to revive the Kantian insight that to perceive objects *as* objects is to always already have qualified the components of one's epistemic states. The entitlement to the claim, however, that the content of a perceptual episode has a being that is epistemologically accessible to us and metaphysically speaking exists independently of us, is what is under discussion (KTE §43). Sellars' critical perspective then, Kantian in nature, methodologically reflects on the epistemological presuppositions that condition our metaphysical entitlement to take referential relations to yield objective knowledge about matters of fact.

This leads Sellars to a form of epistemological and critical metaphysical humility. The awkward situation is this, speaking from the standpoint of a presuppositional analysis adopted by a method of transcendental reflexion: We cannot ever leave the realm of represented contents. Construing the situation this way, sidesteps the pitfall of assuming that 'looking', or 'appearing' is to be analysed in relational terms (cf. BBK §§45-48, EPM). The act of taking myself to successfully refer to a thing out there in the world (e.g., in calling it a rabbit), on this modest construal is nothing over and above an act in which I relate two contents. Contents, that is, which I happen to represent to myself in a suitable manner. A perceptual content and a judgment content. (The structural similarity alluded to here does not entail lumping the intentionality of thought and the pseudo-intentionality of sense-impressions together, as Sellars is anxious to stress, cf. PHM VI, in SPR, p.93, and n2). But then the content perceived *as* independently of me is in fact a dependent content. Since it is already shaped by the language I speak, the forms of judgement I bring to bear on it and the forms of intuition I place it in, the very idea of its independence is threatened.

The *second* problematic can then be introduced as a consequence of this first line of thought, since it makes sense to ask how one is to understand the relevant notion of 'aboutness' inherent in the idea of acts of judging, perceiving and speaking in referring to their intentional objects. Sellars is known for proposing a non-relational view of intentionality (Haag 2007b; McDowell 2009: 44-65; Macbeth 2010: 204 ff.; deVries 2005: 36-30, 2019: 239-246). It is prominent in his analysis of metalinguistic statements, especially meaning-statements. With regard to Sellars' explanatory method in his philosophy of language and abstract entities (AE, MFC, GE, NS), it makes sense to read him as starting with a metalinguistic analysis of aboutness, and as addressing the question of where to find a place for relationality only by and by — which is to underline that Sellars does not reject the very idea of a relational conception of intentionality entirely, far from it. In fact, the demonstrative components in gestures, demonstrative expressions and statements serve just that end. But with regard to the order of explanation, the non-relational view of the intentionality of semantic and mental contents leads him to propose an account of meaning as functional classification (cf. MFC, NI and SM III). So Sellars considered stance on the reference and aboutness of acts of judging, perceiving and speaking takes the shape of a metalinguistic account of meaning-

statements. On this view, meaning statements are *non-relational* in that their real job is to classify (and group) components of statements according to their (e.g., semantic or pragmatic) functions. A metalinguistic statement such as 'Apfel' means *apple*, while usually read in a relational fashion, does not relate word and object (BBK §§45-49, NI). Instead, it has the function to characterise and thereby classify item A as playing a similar role to item B, while really having the job of implicitly highlighting functional roles ranging across languages, here German and English (cf. SM III, NAO IV).

Axes of Aboutness and the role of Demonstratives

But if the 'aboutness' inherent in the very idea of 'meaning something' is to be analysed in a classificatory manner, because meaning statements only connect the functional roles of represented contents, the non-relationality implied by this frame of analysis threatens to keep us epistemic agents enclosed horizontally in the domain of representations or appearances only. The very idea of moving only horizontally is, of course, a metaphor, invoked here to express the core commitment of the non-relationality thesis about intentionality.[7] To mean something, on this view, is to have content, to signify a representation. This means moving *horizontally* from one content to the next, for as long as we have no independent grounds for taking our 'meaning' to refer us outside, *vertically,* to extra- or non-linguistic objects.

Where we metalinguistically use 'meaning talk' we don't refer to objects, we implicitly refer to functions. So much so that the problematic deriving from this metalinguistic, functional analysis of 'aboutness' necessitates asking: Where in Sellars' non-relational view of aboutness is there space for a relational conception of intentional reference? A first answer, perhaps unsurprisingly, is this: As a presupposition the very idea of relationality lies in the demonstrative components of judgments, perceptual acts, statements and gestures — in short, in *covert* and *overt* languagings produced when confronting the world (NAO V §§36-37).

And while demonstratives thereby serve the epistemological function of providing for a tie between a content and the referential target of an expression, hence, its intentional object, it is also clear that at this point this object and its status is nothing over and above a theoretical explanandum. For conceptual content not to spin in the void, it needs to be constrained by that which it purports to be about. To assume that content simply reveals itself to us means falling prey to the Myth of the Given in one of its many guises (cf. EPM, FMPP I, O'Shea 2021). When Sellars characterises his own position as a Kantian phenomenalism, he therefore makes a framework statement that rejects a naïve direct realism that innocuously assumes the framework of physical objects to lend us ontological insight into the nature of things outside of our representations of them.[8]

As I want to argue, this line of thought has to be expanded to also encompass and qualify Sellars' elaborate defense of scientific realism. For no matter how successful the scientific enterprise with its postulational methods and introduction of theoretical entities might be, what Sellars does not put forward is a simple substitution thesis:

> Indeed, there are sound methodological reasons for not teaching ourselves to respond to perceptual situations in terms of constructs in the language of theoretical physics. For while this could, in principle, be done, the scientific quest is not yet over. (PHM 97)

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[7] The metaphor of horizontal versus vertical ways of looking at representations appears e.g. in Rorty (1961: 219), is taken up Price (2013: 46, 106 and 188), and a working concept also in Macbeth (2010). Importantly, Sellars cashes out verticality not in terms of reference, but, in part, through language-entry and language-exit transitions.

[8] Cf. «To say that there are no such things as the physical objects of the perceptible world is, of course, to make a point *about* the framework of physical objects, not *in* it» (PHM 97).

Sellars' Scientific realism then does not come in the form of an epistemological theory according to which the success and instruments of the scientific image of man ushers in an epistemological direct realism that would disclose the world of *things* as they are *in themselves* to us (SM V §§91-92). To capture this negative thesis, I suggest calling it a *transcendental phenomenalism.*[9]

Bringing out this feature and clarifying the systematic vantage point from which it is introduced, requires exercising some of the philosophical background Sellars speaks from. And similarly, it requires articulating the resulting philosophical stance towards being impinged by, perceiving and conceptualising nature and its objects. This is a position about our epistemological relation to the objects we encounter in the conceptual structure we live by. It is not a thesis about the nature of these objects.[10] It is a thesis about the transcendental ideality of the objects of common sense, and as such is designed to be compatible with the method of a transcendental reflexion (NAO V §66). This entails that the negative results about what these objects are *not* can be supplemented by a positive account of how else we can conceive of them (cf. SM V §102).

Language in the Order of Being

Sellars takes the conception of 'picturing' from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1921), however, not without altering it in important regards by fusing it with Tolman's (1948) notion of 'cognitive maps' (SM ix, V §§8, 26, 56, 61; deVries 2019; Koons & Sachs *forthc.*). Where Wittgenstein defended a theory of representation in terms of a 'picture theory of the proposition', Sellars rejects its central claim: that it is facts that picture facts.[11] According to Sellars, it is objects that picture objects (NAO V §92).[12] More precisely, 'picturing' is a feature of basic matter-of-factual statements, when considered as tokens of utterances or inscriptions. The definitive claim is that such statements can themselves be viewed as 'natural-linguistic-objects' which on the basis of a complex method of projection have a picturing capacity, or, more tacitly put, as standing in a special relation to the objects by which they are brought about.[13]

So Sellars' transcendental reflexion is essential to his account of the intentionality of epistemic agents as well as of the languagings they engage in. The following interpretation is a reconstruction of three arguments supporting the claim that Sellars is committed to a transcendental phenomenalism with an underlying realism.

2. The argument from double nature

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[9] My disagreement with Haag (2007a) concerns the label he chooses, not its interpretive substance. On my reading, to call Sellars a *transcendental realist* is misleading. I prefer the label 'phenomenalism' as it highlights that for Sellars our epistemological situation never changes in the sense that we will come to perceive *things* as they are *in themselves*. Rather, manifest objects retain their status as being transcendentally ideal. Although I agree that there is a further sense in which Sellars' transformation of the Kantian concept of passivity imports a commitment to a realist presupposition. Thus, the term 'realism', in my usage, is reserved to characterise a transcendentally motivated consequence of the reflexion on the status of the concept of an object of experience: we are passive with regard to its impingements.

[10] Macbeth (2010: 204) nicely captures the constraints of this stance: «At the level of sense impressions we just do – mechanically, as it were – correctly picture how things really are. But such pictures are not true because sensing is not knowing, not an episode in the space of reasons. What is required for knowing is that we have concepts of such impressions (or concepts of whatever is the counterpart of such impressions in the final theory), and we can come to have such concepts, Sellars thinks, in virtue of our capacity to develop theories involving analogical concepts that will not only explain why ordinary perceptible objects obey the lawful generalities they do as far as they do, but also (because they are analogical) ground the idea that it is those very sense impressions that our talk is about».

[11] Cf. «The fundamental job of singular first-level matter-of-factual statements is to picture, and hence the fundamental job of referring expressions is to be correlated as simple linguistic objects by matter-of-factual relations with single non-linguistic objects». (SM V §26)

[12] Cf. «The correlation between objects and their linguistic pictures must not be confused with the pseudo-relations standing for and denoting». (SM V §36)

[13] Cf. «What is the basic job of empirical statements? The answer is, in essence, that of the Tractatus, i.e., to compete for places in a picture of how things are, in accordance with a complex manner of projection. Just how such a manner of projection is to be described is a difficult topic in its own right». (NI §29)

The aim of the first argument reconstructed in this section is to establish that the non-relationality view of meaning is compatible with an account of languagings that qualifies them in more than semantic, logical or formal regards. The core claim, that languagings have a double nature, a Janus-face, requires abstracting from their normative features and considering only their causal underside.

(1) Acts of perceiving, construed as covert languagings, belong in the context of epistemic, semantic and behavioural norms (NAO V §§85, 114, SM V §§10, 56).

(2) On account of epistemic, semantic and behavioural norms we individuate objects in the environment epistemically relevant to us (NAO V §69) and respond to them by producing languagings.

(3) As principles are reflected in uniformities of responses, linguistic utterances are systematically produced in uniformities of responses to objects impinging on us (TC 216/NAO V §95).

(4) By being reflected in uniform performances, every languaging not only has a logical, semantic and syntactic form, but as an utterance, also an empirical form (NAO V §64).

(5) The empirical form of objects allows them to be the causal ground of affections in us, and of our norm-governed linguistic responses (languagings) to them (NAO V §63).

(6) The empirical form of languagings stands in a determinate relation to the empirical form of those objects by which they are (transcendentally taken to be) evoked (NAO V §§59, 63-66).

(7) The determinate relation is a second order isomorphism in accordance with the method of projection entailed in the norms of the language, not a first order 'similarity' (BBK §§41, 52, NAO V §105, SM V §§58-59).

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(C) The double nature of languagings means they can be viewed semantically, and then they are about their contents (1-2). But when they are considered from an engineering standpoint (3-4), they are systematically isomorphic (5-6) to the objects by which they are brought about (7). The isomorphism is at once a result of linguistic activity and its transcendental precondition.

To get the right angle on how Sellars takes this isomorphism to support his version of phenomenalism, it is important to keep in mind that it is introduced as a theoretical notion on the basis of an abstraction: It is a matter of abstracting from the logical form, not a matter of reducing it to the empirical form. Sellars considers his non-relational account of intentionality to be central to the correct account of the place of consciousness in nature. However, as we have seen so far, the explication of the horizontal character of the functional classificatory activity has not given away anything about its place in nature. So how are we to understand this claim? And why does Sellars claim that non-relationality provides the decisive clue? To set the stage for the argument Sellars gives, we turn to a key passage in his essay on Kant's theory of experience (KTE 22-27) in which he elaborates his reading of what Kantian acts of judgment are and in what relations they stand to their contents. The passage prepares the ground for the argument that notwithstanding its non-relational character *conceptual activity* is part of nature:

> The logical form of a stating is clearly not the empirical configuration of the sentence it illustrates, though having an appropriate empirical configuration is a necessary condition of the stating's having the logical form it does, in the language to which it belongs. (KTE 22)

A matter-of-factual statement, e.g. the sentence that this pyramid over there is red, has a logical form. Once the statement comes into view as a languaging that itself is an *object in nature*, this passage makes a claim about two relata in *the real* and about the special relationship between them. The relata come into view when we distinguish two ways of viewing judgements and statements in which they are expressed. The first relatum consists in the familiar thought that judgements

have a special logical form, one that distinguishes them from other mental states such as 'believing that', perceiving or sensing. So when Sellars in this context speaks of 'form' he has the conceptual structure in mind which we can appeal to in characterising the judgment *as* of a special type. But what, we may ask, is the significance of the additional information that a judgment's logical form «is clearly not the empirical configuration» of the sentence to which it stands in an illustration relation? What is such an empirical configuration in the first place?

We can understand this disjunction by focusing on sentences. My subject-predicate judgment, considered as a vocal sequence, has an empirical configuration when I record my uttering the sentence 'Tom is tall'.[14] It also possesses these configurations as a mere utterance, for instance, by way of making the air quiver. The example of grooves on the record serves to elucidate what it takes to manifest an empirical configuration. As plastic grooves, they are just one material illustration of my languaging, or *overt* act of judging (cf. Trybulec 2019: 529). There may be countless others, one may write it down by hand, or use Morse code, etc. What matters is that there is some relationship between judging as a *conceptual* episode and its *empirical material* realisation. In the way the example is construed, it seems clear that the configuration of the vinyl depends on my prior act of stating the judgement into a microphone. But that is not how Sellars has it. He inverts the order of dependence and claims that

> having an appropriate empirical configuration is a necessary condition of the stating's having the logical form it does, in the language to which it belongs. (KTE 22, cf. BBK §32, 40-41)

It is in virtue of the fact that languagings happen in the world, that they necessarily have a causal underside[15], a «double nature».[16] Since Sellars is clearly not arguing that the vinyl exists prior to my utterance, what does he have in mind by arguing that the *empirical form* is a necessary condition of the *logical form*?

One way to approach this riddle is to consider how chess figures as material objects embody functional roles. If we construe a spoken language as an interrelated system of utterances (cf. NAO V §62), we can throw light on the sense in which the vocalisation stating «Tom is tall» is a necessary condition for the logical form of the judgment it realises (in the sense of 'making it actual'). The functional or conceptual role of interest to us when we investigate the meaning or aboutness of mental states, covert and overt languagings does not reside in the void, it has to also be materially 'actual'.[17]

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[14] In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein uses the gramophone as an illustrative example of picturing (4.014). Sellars extends the analogy in BBK, SM and NAO to elucidate the second order isomorphism between two 'physical systems' or 'relational structures' which this process involves (Cf. O'Shea 2007: Chapter 6). I thank Bill deVries for helpful comments and years of engaging conversations on this topic.

[15] In O'Shea's terminology, the fact that languagings need to be understood as rule-governed to play out their function does not prevent them from also having a causal shadow: «Linguistic and mental representations are always *Janus-faced* on Sellars' view, simultaneously backed up by norms and fronting the world; or, to switch metaphors, the causal-representational regularities are in a crucial respect the slaves of our rule-governed reasons, and it is essential to the resulting 'purely descriptive' pictures of the world that they are [...] the causal shadows of norms». (O'Shea 2010: 467)

[16] That this is true of 'acts of speaking out loud' may count as unproblematic. That it also extends to thought and other mental states, however, is probably more contentious, since it depends on a further exegetical thesis: The thesis that language *expresses* thought in Sellars' hands becomes the thesis that methodologically our understanding of the logical structure of thought depends on our grasp of the logical structure of utterances. Such that we depend on our knowledge of language to interpret silent episodes in which we take our interlocutors to carry on in an inner dialogue. Sellars argues in extenso for this reading in EPM, LTC, MFC and SM III. Cf. Related considerations capturing the relation between thought and language are given by Stekeler-Weithofer (2014: 28-31, 85-86), Kambartel & Stekeler-Weithofer (2005: 193 ff.), Barth (2010: chapters 1-3) and Kravchenko (in this issue).

[17] Favareau *et al.* (2015: fn14) highlight the importance of this point in maintaining that «sign behaviour of all sorts is grounded in situated, actually instantiated action at all points».

> The fact that conceptual 'pieces' or 'role-players' *must* have determinate *factual* character, even though we don't know what that character is, save in the most general way, is the hidden strength of the view that identifies mental acts with neurophysiological episodes. (NI §25)

In this sense, the empirical form, allowing a function to be realised or reflected in a uniformity of behaviour, sustains the logical form. And this line of thought helps to address the question how Sellars can fuse the *horizontal* dimension of interrelated linguistic functions that govern and inform linguistic activity with the *vertical* dimension. The solution lies in connecting the claim that logical form needs to be functionally realised in some way or another to the claim that the logical form of linguistic statements is embodied in the materially rich linguistic activities of language users.

In Sellars' meta-linguistic view of meaning the functional role of a term ranges across languages as follows: 'rouge', 'rot' and 'rosso' are all cases of the functional role expressed in the English language by the word *red*. This is captured by saying they all embody the function •rot• in their respective languages (cf. NAO IV, SM III-IV). Each language realises the functional role we can meta-linguistically characterise as the •rot• in its respective uniformity or pattern. In Sellars' characterisation, to possess knowledge of how to use empirical predicates is to espouse or endorse linguistic rules or principles (O'Shea 2007: 138 ff). Such a practical endorsement, implicit in one's use being characterisable in terms of such rules, is not a matter of conscious approval, it is a matter of growing up into a community of language users (LTC). And as a user of a language one's performances are always already shaped by the linguistic norms which sustain the interconnectedness of perception, inference and action in the community. It is against the backdrop consideration as to how the use of a language rests on an implicit endorsement of its constitutive principles that Sellars formulates what O'Shea (2007) has termed the norm-nature meta-principle:

> Espousal of principles is reflected in uniformities of performance. (TC 216)

Uniformities of linguistic behaviour make up the base-level, object-language performances conveying the meaning, e.g. that something is red. Accordingly Sellars writes:

> It should be borne in mind that linguistic episodes have not only logical powers but also, and necessarily, matter-of-factual characteristics, e.g., shape, size, color, internal structure, and that they exhibit empirical uniformities both among themselves and in relation to the environment in which they occur. (KTE §27)

So we can look at an act of judging *from within* by considering it only with regard to its abstract qualification of having a specific *logical* form. The sense in which a judgings' logical form is part of the world it is a judgment about, however, rests on the fact that languagings, *qua* being acts persons carry out in an interrelated system of linguistic behaviour, always have *determinate empirical configurations* or *empirical form*. With this we have a first shot at an explication of why Sellars makes this peculiar claim about the correlations between the two ways of characterising the forms of a judging, of covert languagings.

The *argument from the double nature of languagings* lends support to Sellars' transcendental attitude toward nature. It establishes how we can see thoughts and utterances as being part of nature. Thereby it cashes in the promissory note that the non-relational character of intentionality provides the key to the correct place of mind in nature (SM ix). The reason we can see them as part of nature lies in the fact that although we normally specify them horizontally with regard to their functions and thus non-relationally, we can also see how thoughts are materially realised in languagings. And thus, the argument goes, to exist thoughts and judgments need to be realised in uniform linguistic (albeit covert) performances, in patterns governed by epistemic norms which exhibit empirical form, independently of how we characterise them.

Can this double-nature treatment of intentionality be reconciled with Sellars' commitment to a

realism in his transcendental conception of nature? Speaking in metaphor, we can see the worry mounting that this argument alone does not afford us *intentional reference* in a *vertical* sense. We have not yet accommodated the thesis that our thoughts and utterances about the world are matter-of-factual. And that they need to be matter-of-factual is a requirement Sellars explicitly endorses:

> An essential requirement of the transmission of a language from generation to generation is that its mature users be able to identify both extra-linguistic items and the utterances that are correct responses to them. This mobilizes the familiar fact […] that, in addition to their logical powers, linguistic expressions have an empirical character as items in the world. We can ascertain, for example, that a person does in point of fact respond as he ought to red objects in sunlight by uttering or being disposed to utter 'this is red'. Again, we can ascertain that, other things being equal, he is not disposed to enlarge, as he ought not, utterances of 'it is raining' into 'it is raining and it is not raining'. (KTE §42)

We need to be able to identify 'extra-linguistic items' to evaluate the conceptual responses of our fellow speakers and perceivers. But if our conceptual responses are only meaningful horizontally, there is no such activity as directly identifying an item in nature. It is this sense in which the rejection of the Myth of the Given in EPM is still with us.

We can summarise the positive result of the double nature argument as follows. We seem to have found a way of placing conceptual activity *qua* its empirical form in nature without having to say what this nature is, ›save in the most general way‹, i.e. an item ›necessarily‹ has to have ›matter-of-factual characteristics, e.g. shape, size, colour, internal structure‹ (NI §25). So despite the double nature of judgings, possessing empirical and logical form, we face a subsequent question. A question which in a transformed sense presents the demand for an account of our intentional reference in a vertical sense: What is the relation of empirical acts of judging to matter-of-factual states of affairs?

3. The argument from immanence

The challenge we carry over from the *argument of double nature* is this: According to the double nature argument, we can see languagings as necessarily having an empirical form, but we are in no position to definitively establish what exactly this form is. To hold that one could assume a position outside the series of our conceptual episodes, in order to determine such a form, would be equivalent to claiming that one could avail oneself to a view from sideways on, i.e., from outside our conceptual structure. But that would be an inconsistent position, a fact of which Sellars is well aware (SM V §48).[18]

But why is it so difficult to have proper empirical knowledge about the causal underside of our languagings? To answer this question we are to follow a line of thinking that connects Sellars' non-relationality analysis of intentionality and Kant's analysis of our knowledge of objects of experience. The *argument from immanence* aim lends support a core commitment at the heart of Sellars' transcendental realism, which takes the form of a *criterion*: *Our conception of knowledge has to be construed such that our epistemic engagements with the world can be part of the world of which they purport to yield knowledge* (cf. KTE §41).

The difficulty for this argument lies in the fact that our epistemic access is barred from direct intentional reference, committing us to rejecting direct, i.e. 'vertical', intentional reference. However, as will come out, this does not lead to the vertical dimension being excised altogether. Ra-

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[18] Instead, it's an abstractive position, reflecting on the presuppositions of conceptual structures as such. And so the claim is not about that one can in fact position oneself outside of all conceptual structures. The claim is that all conceptual structures alike rest on presuppositions articulated in the following.

ther, it puts this dimension in its proper place within Sellars' account of intentionality.

Sellars largely agrees with Kant's analysis of nature as the content of a system of representables (KTE §1-5). Accordingly, the context of the argument from immanence is given by the related question of how the horizontal dimension of inferential significance can be squared with the vertical dimension of our passivity, i.e. the receptivity of our senses. We might add that verticality is not always passive, e.g. we name, look for, or build things. To address the question of the relation of our empirical judgements to matter-of-factual states of affairs appropriately, Sellars holds, requires taking up the argument from double nature and placing it in the context of the restrictions binding us to an immanent (meta-)perspective on the referential purport of our claims to knowledge.

The aim of the argument from immanence then has to be to demonstrate that the elements of an account of intentionality are part of the world which our intentionality purports to be about. An essential aspect of this argument is that this can be demonstrated without either confining the conception of intentional reference to Kantian appearances, or relapsing into the Myth of the epistemically Given. If we assemble the passages in which Sellars implicitly argues for an immanent conception of intentionality (BBK, TC, SM I-II, V-VI) and give this argument an explicit reconstruction, it takes the following shape:

(1) Receptivity entails that we respond to impingements from outside with modifications of our sensory and bodily states.

(2) In receptive acts of perceiving (i.e. covert languagings) we systematically mis-take the features of our sensory and bodily states to be features of the items (objects) affecting us.

(3) Covert and overt languagings are governed by (epistemic) semantic assertibility norms.

(4) When considered with regard to their materiality as resultant products, overt languagings have an empirical form which consists in uniform patterns of (linguistic) performances (e.g. acts of perceiving or uttering).

(5) In virtue of being reflected in uniformities of performances covert languagings and their overt expression in linguistic utterances, languagings proper, form natural-linguistic-objects.

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(C) How we perceptually intuit (1-2) objects *in* nature is structured by epistemic norms (3) and how we verbally respond is reflected in uniform patterns, in covert and overt languagings (4). Their occurrence constitutes an isomorphism *within* nature (5). The isomorphism between natural-linguistic-objects and objects co-varies with the semantic norms governing the conceptual structure.

Does Sellars succeed in showing that his transcendentally motivated phenomenalism cashes in the requirement on a transcendental linguistics (cf. KTE)? His delineation of the most fundamental features amounts to an account demonstrating that our claims to knowledge can be formulated from within, from an immanent position.[19]

The argument from immanence integrates intentionality in nature as conceived of by transcendental phenomenalism with an underlying realism. It applies the results from the argument of double nature to *acts of judgements*. So it specifies the double nature argument by explicating the role of matter-of-factual judgements (their janus-faced nature).

Just how central the concept of a judging is when interpreting Sellars' reconstruction of the Kantian Categories stands out from how categorial judgements come to be analysed as meta-classificatory acts of judging (cf. IKTE, SM and TTC; O'Shea *forthc.*). Now our task is more spe-

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[19] Christias (2015: 556-557) mobilises this point against Sachs' (2014) invocation of somatic intentionality. As Christias points out, Sachs sails past the transcendental setup of Sellars' overall argument, so I do not engage with his attempt to bring Merleau-Ponty's phenomenalism in conversation with Sellars'.

cific as we aim to understand the overall role of empirical judgements, judgings that something matter-of-factual is the case. In empirical acts of judging we articulate our conception of items in nature, so they serve to illustrate both their logical and their empirical form.[20]

> [It] must aim at clarifying the concepts of an empirical judging, of truth, of a state of affairs, and of what it is for a state of affairs to obtain or be actual. […] The central theme of the Analytic is that unless one is clear about what it is to judge, one is doomed to remain in the labyrinth of traditional metaphysics. On the other hand, to be clear about what it is to judge is to have Ariadne's thread in one's hand. (KTE §6-7)

Sellars follows this up with a remark about the relation between the pair of concepts, and sets the stage for explicating the conception of knowledge this entails.

> Now from the Kantian point of view, the above concepts pair up in an interesting way: judging with state of affairs, and truth with actuality. Indeed to say that they pair up is to understate the closeness of their relationships. For, Kant argues, in effect, that the pairs turn out, on close examination, to be identities. (KTE §8)

What licenses one to take the pairs to be identities? Addressing this claim, requires taking into account what structure Sellars thinks a framework needs to have that allows us to articulate and critically reflect the ontological commitments expressible by these concepts. In responding to the immanence criterion Sellars describes the bare essentials of an ontological framework, to which any theory of knowledge has to conform, as follows:

> Roughly, the form of empirical knowledge is: an I thinking (however schematically) the thought of a temporal system of states of affairs to which any actual state of affairs belongs. (I §9)

Such a system would need to also include the state of affairs of thinking this very thought. This general characterisation of the form of empirical knowledge serves as the starting point because downhill from here there are *two ways of looking at immanence,* a Kantian and a Sellarsian.

3.1 Kantian immanence

Just how Sellars interprets Kant's concept of something matter-of-factual, or more generally an empirical *content,* hinges on the question whether Kant's account of empirical content meets the aforementioned criterion: That our epistemic engagements with the world *are* part of the world of which they purport to yield knowledge. What sense of 'part of the world' do we arrive at with Sellars' Kant? A first clue is provided by a passage elaborating the relation between an empirical thought and its content:

> Kant, of course, grants that thought has 'content' as well as 'form' — but the content consists of concepts, for example empirical concepts — and these in their turn are 'functions'. When we think of a shape, e.g. of a triangle, our thought, needless to say is not triangular — it contains the concept of a triangle, itself a rule or function by which the mind can generate representations of triangles (A141, B180). (I §21 fn8)

In this passage Sellars applies his non-relational view of the intentionality of conceptual acts. He

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[20] Cf. «My argument is that, in the case of matter-of-factual statements (and, in the last analysis, the acts of thought to which they give expression), [their] role is that of constituting a projection in language users of the world in which they live». (NAO V §118)

applies it in explicating how he takes Kant to view the status of the concept of an empirical content. Note how radical Kant's position on this reading becomes: The *contents* of judgings about something matter-of-factual, a specific triangle for instance, consist of concepts (conceived of as rules). In Kant's sense, concepts serve as rules for generating representations, e.g. of triangles. Sellars finds his non-relational reading of intentionality and content is already present in Kant's conception of how we are to analyse empirical representations. That is, on this reading Kant already rejects a *relational* conception of the aboutness of judgings:

> If judgings qua conceptual acts have 'form', they also have 'content'. Of all the metaphors that philosophers have employed, this is one of the most dangerous, and few have used it without to some extent being taken in by it. The temptation is to think of the 'content' of an act as an entity that is 'contained' by it.
> But if the [logical] 'form' of a judging is the structure by virtue of which it is possessed of certain *generic* logical or epistemic powers, surely the content must be the character by virtue of which the act has *specific* modes of these generic logical or epistemic powers. (KTE §24)

Sellars' main premise is as follows: The conceptual content 'state of affairs' is 'that of which a judgment may be true'. And such content is derivative of the judgment's specific logical powers. We can read this as an affirmation of the horizontal nature of the aboutness of acts of judging. Form and content of an act of judging are a matter of a genus and species. The generic *logical power* of a judging consists in being a judging of a certain categorial type. Say a subject-predicate judgment. The specific mode qualifying this genus gives the judging token its epistemic significance, in case e.g. the judging concerns an individual substance and ascribes to it a specific predicate. It is in the frame of this analysis of what judgings are that Sellars reads Kant as providing an answer to the question of how empirical judgings are taken to *be about* something matter-of-factual. In other words, we can read him as discussing the question of how to understand the 'referential' power of judgements.

Against this backdrop we can see why Sellars highlights the metaphorical nature of the characterisation 'being the content of a judgment'. According to this Kantian analysis, the very idea of being a content is nothing over and above being a conceptual content with a specific logical significance or power. And it is this non-relational reading of 'judgment contents' that serves to explain the status «being an actual state of affairs».

> Thus, a judging that Tom is tall would, in its generic character, be a judging of the subject-predicate form. It is a judging that a certain substance has a certain attribute. (These two ways of putting it are equivalent.) If we focus our attention on the predicate we can characterize the judging more specifically as a judging that a certain substance has the attribute tall. Thus, just as to say that a judging is a judging that a certain substance has a certain attribute is to say that the judging is of a certain generic kind (i.e., has certain generic logical powers); so to say that a judging is a judging that a certain substance is tall is to classify the judging as one of the such and such is tall kind, i.e., to classify it in a way that ascribes to it the more specific conceptual powers distinctive of the concept of being tall. Indeed, for the judging to 'contain the concept of being tall' is nothing more nor less than for it to have these specific powers. (KTE §25)

For Sellars, this Kantian analysis of the contents of judgings amounts to an argument from immanence. In judging something to be out there, one is still doing nothing over and above making horizontal moves, i.e. one is functionally classifying contents as correctly or incorrectly asserted or judged. And one bases one's endorsement or rejection of such contents on the logical or epistemic significance one takes, we all take, these contents to possess.[21] Sellars writes:

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[21] A related project is carried out by Stekeler-Weithofer's (2014: 64-102), emphasising generic sentences and material-

Kant correctly concludes from the above that there is no such thing as comparing a judging with an actual state of affairs and finding the judging to be 'correct' or 'justified'. For, according to the above analysis, an 'actual state of affairs', since it has judgmental form, is simply a true species of judging, i.e., to use Peircean terminology, a judging-type that it would be (epistemically) correct to token. [in the fn:] Put in linguistic terms, an 'actual state of affairs' is a true species of stating, i.e., a stating-type that it would be epistemically correct to token. (KTE §26, fn 6)

From which Sellars concludes:

Thus 'comparing a judging with a state of affairs' could only be comparing a judging with another judging of the same specific kind, and this would no more be a verification than would checking one copy of today's Times by reading another. (KTE §26)

So Sellars finds a strong version of immanence in Kant. A related passage articulates the upshot of this Kantian line of thinking:

Kant's phenomenalism can be put, in first approximation, by saying that physical objects and events exist only 'in' certain actual and obtainable conceptual representings, the intuitive representings synthesized by the productive imagination in response to the impressions of sense. (SM II §46)

While endorsing Kant's argument about the status of our *conceptual responses*, Sellars wants to reject the idea that this is all we can say about the fundamental nature of our epistemic situation with regard to extra-linguistic items.

If there is no such thing as comparing a judgment with an actual state of affairs, because all one's conception of such a state really amounts to is just another judgeable content, then we do not have a determinate concept of how matters of fact are in themselves. This means, Kant's analysis of our epistemological situation entails not only a phenomenalism, but also an agnosticism about the ontological status of matter-of-factual items in nature.

From the analytic perspective of the transcendental philosopher tracing how we can explicate a conception of our knowledge that meets the immanence criterion, Kant's account invokes a constellation that implies a strong immanence, a conception of immanence that will turn out as too strong. We are so caught up in *our* concept of an object in nature that we never actually get to evaluate our concept-applications from outside:

Kant's agnosticism, however, if taken seriously — i.e., construed as the view that we have no determinate concepts of how things are in themselves — means that no conceptual response can be evaluated, in the above manner, as correct or incorrect. Rules of the form (*Ceteris paribus*) one ought to respond to φ items with conceptual acts of kind C. could never be rules in accordance with which people criticize conceptual responses; for, on his official view, the *esse* of any item to which any empirical predicate applies is already *to be a conceptual response, not* something that is responded to. To put it bluntly, only God could envisage the *ought-to-be's* in terms of which our conceptual responses are to be criticized. (KTE §43)

From this we can see why Sellars takes Kant's analysis to be consistent on the assumption that God plays the role of the final judge of our epistemic engagement.[22] In other words, while Sellars

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conceptual meta-rules for classifying contents.

[22] Sellars reads Kant as only committed to articulating the coherence of the concept of an object of knowledge. For Sellars this means: «It is […] obvious, on reflection, that Kant is not seeking to prove that there is empirical knowledge, but only to show that the concept is a coherent one and that it is such as to rule out the possibility that

(although with reservations, largely) agrees with Kant's analysis of our concept of an object of experience as underlying all the qualification outlined in the *Aesthetic* and *Analytic*, he does not agree with Kant's epistemological background setting. On Sellars' interpretation, Kant's agnosticism rests on a model according to which God's intellectual intuitions function as limiting concepts of our finite intuitions. What does this entail for our epistemological situation? The agnostic dimension in the Kantian account amounts to the following:

> [I]n our attempt to give an account of how our intuitive representings [judgings about matter of facts] might be *Erkenntnisse* without being literally true, we are limited to making use of such abstract concepts as *existence-in-itself*, *existence 'in' representings*, *receptivity*, *form of intuition*, *judgment*, etc. One might formulate it [Kant's position] as follows: Reality is such that finite minds non-arbitrarily, in accordance with their forms of receptivity, and their conceptual frameworks, represent *this-suches* [determinate individuals] and make judgments about them. Only God, however, knows how reality is. (SM II §50)

But to say what it means that God knows how reality is, we are bound to negatively extrapolate from our finite epistemological capacities to intuit and know things as they are and to attribute a pure and more efficient version of them to God.[23] Sellars in effect rejects this background model:

> Kant's account implies indeed that certain counterparts of our intuitive representations [i.e. covert languagings], namely God's intellectual intuitions, are literally true; but these literal truths can only be indirectly and abstractly represented by finite minds, and there is an impassible gulf between our *Erkenntnisse* and Divine Truth. (SM II §51)

In other words, Kant needs the *limiting concept* of God's intellectual intuitions as a contrast operating in the background of his delineation of the limitations that restrict our intuitions. From this we can see why Sellars reads Kant as putting forward an agnostic phenomenalism:

> For Kant, then, an act of intuiting a manifold is a thinking of a this-such in space and/or time. The this-such is something that exists 'in' the act. The problem with which Kant is dealing can be characterized [...] as that of whether individuals in space and/or time also have existence *per se*. Kant's answer [...] is that these intuited items exist *only* 'in' acts of intuition. That is, no items in space and/or time exists *per se*. He will nevertheless insist that some items which exist in acts of intuition are *actual*. This obviously requires a distinction between *actuality* and existence *per se*, which were conflated by his predecessors. (KTI §17)

In KTI Sellars gives a benevolent reading of the notion of actuality which Kant develops as the immanent way in which represented contents can be said to exist. From that angle it is clear that Sellars endorses at least one aspect of Kant's analysis of acts of intuiting. Intuitions, as conceived of in an everyday, common sensical setting, put us in touch only with *actual* contents. With regard to the status of objects of the Manifest Image, Sellars agrees with Kant (cf. but see Hicks 2020 for qualms). More importantly, however, Sellars disagrees with Kant's agnosticism concerning the knowability of the things in themselves (cf. SM V §102). The shape of the Kantian concep-

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there could be empirical knowledge not implicitly of the form 'such and such a state of affairs belongs to a coherent system of states of affairs of which my perceptual experiences are a part'» (KTE §11). Highlighting Kant's commitment to a strong version of immanence Sellars writes: «Kant is in a position to grant that empirical knowledge involves a uniformity of conceptual response to extra-conceptual items and even that extra-conceptual items conform to general laws, without granting that the character of the items to which we conceptually respond, or the laws to which God knows them to conform, are accessible to finite minds» (KTE §45).

[23] Limiting concepts are relative to our own case only by way of negation. Cf. Haag (2012: 994ff.) discussing four different types of limiting concepts Förster (2012) finds in Kant's resolving of the antinomies of the teleological power of judgment.

tion of empirical knowledge is an *immanent conception* only in the following sense. We are affected by the in itself, we even form our intuitions because of the passivity that is characteristic of our receptivity, and yet our world does not contain things in themselves. Sellars reconstructs Kant's reason as follows:

> Thus, while Kant undoubtedly thinks that there are features of the in-itself which are, in some sense, the counterparts of the plurality of physical appearances, he finds this notion empty in that, as he sees it, we can have no determinate conception of this plurality. All determinate conception, as far as human minds are concerned, involves spatio-temporal schematization, and, as we have seen, he regards the concepts of Space and Time as unambiguous in a way which entails that if Space and Time are transcendentally ideal, *anything* we determinately conceive of in spatial or temporal terms must be transcendentally ideal. (SM II §33)

God's intellectual intuitions are not subject to the spatio-temporal schematization of the Kantian categories, they are acts of the intellect. All our languagings covert and overt, however, are barred from reaching behind that barrier and for that reason the concept of a thing in itself remains empty. It cannot be given a determinate characterisation, only a transcendental identification within the scope of the chain of reasoning taking into account that our intuitive acts of representing are caused. With this we see that this is all strong immanence can do on the score of accounting for verticality. This is the meaning behind the restriction contained in the tongue-in-cheek remark (KTE §43) that «only God could envisage the epistemic norms of correctness in terms of which our conceptually articulated intuitive responses are to be criticized». The very thought, however, that God can have a determinate conception of how the *in itself* affects us implies a static conception of Divine Truth. It is static because it is definitive and ultimate, and, as we can say from a transcendental point of view, because it functions as a limiting concept generated in abstraction from our human fallibility. That is, there is the notion of an impassible gulf between our cognitions (Erkenntnisse) and Divine intuitions in the background of the way in which the Kantian account of our knowledge is strongly immanent.

Now, since Sellars does not think this is the last word on the question of how the structure of empirical knowledge can be given an immanent reading, we need to consider his argument from counterparts which opens up a path leading beyond Kant. Before we turn to an extended discussion of that argument, however, we first have to see what moderate immanence amounts to.

3.2 Sellarsian immanence

Sellars' *argument from immanence* rejects the static conception of Divine Truth in the background of Kant's unknowability thesis:

> If […] we replace the static concept of Divine Truth with a Peircean conception of truth as the 'ideal outcome of scientific inquiry,' the gulf between appearances and things-in-themselves, though a genuine one, can in principle be bridged. (SM II §51)

It is helpful to first sketch the overall strategy of this rejection. Carrying out this program entails replacing (a) the role of God in the overall picture as the super-perceiver with the *analogical concept-forming work* of the scientific community. And it also entails replacing (b) the concept of *intellectual intuitions* as the instrument for gaining knowledge about the *in itself* with *conceptual structures* generated by the sciences to determine the nature of counterpart objects. And finally it entails (c) considering statements made in these conceptual structures through the lens of the double nature argument as standing in increasingly more adequate isomorphic relations to the objects they are (horizontally conceived) *about*. These are causally as well as spontaneously evoked relations in

which languagings, in so far as they are considered as natural-linguistic-objects, picture the objects they are brought about by.[24]

Sellars' account of our immanent knowledge is best approached by addressing this replacement thesis stating: The static concept of Divine Truth can be replaced by a Peircean conception of truth as the ideal outcome of scientific inquiry. Our interpretive hypothesis leading the following discussion can be put this way: To perform this replacement in effect amounts to altering the underlying notion of our epistemic relation to the in itself. That is, Sellars needs to reject Kant's unknowability thesis about the in itself, and thereby to make room for alternative ways of schematisation.

Thus, the function of 'object-concepts' in theoretical sciences advancing the conceptual structure we live by is to be knowable, collectively controllable scientific objects. This entails slanting Kant's concept of the *in itself*. Methodologically speaking this is move of meta-conceptual engineering more so than a metaphysical claim. To construe the concept of an object of experience in this way means holding the empirical world and its objects do *not only* exist as the contents of our acts of representing it (SM V §101-102). On the basis of this shift, Sellars argues that the 'world' and its 'objects' exist also meaningfully *outside* of our acts of representing it. For this Sellars has to claim that they do so in ways which we can approach by way of analogically extending our current concepts to capture counterpart qualities we attribute them to have. So after all, there is a viable way of being a realist under *immanence constraints*. Rejecting the concept of Divine Truth entails a realism about the source of our representings. Accordingly, Sellars argues, not only God but our own scientific endeavours can account for the structure of our acts of intuiting:

> As I see it, in any case, a consistent scientific realist must hold that the world of everyday experience is a phenomenal world in the Kantian sense, existing only as the contents of actual and obtainable conceptual representings, the obtainability of which is explained not, as for Kant, by things in themselves known only to God, but by scientific objects about which, barring catastrophe, we shall know more and more as the years go by. (SM VI §61)

This includes the endorsement of a certain type of phenomenalism on Sellars' behalf (SM II §49, cf. section 4 below). He is careful not to claim that this *is* Kant's position (SM V §102). If we focus on what shape he gives to the knowability thesis we see that in this passage he states that (1) if we substitute the Kantian conception of the unknowable things in themselves with concepts of scientific object, we (2) can come to know gradually more about them. The form of argument for the concept of 'knowability' here is strictly transcendental. It is the concepts of the *theoretical* sciences in terms of which we are to articulate our understanding of the material nature of the objects we take to be knowable. To think something as knowable is to think it as an element in a realm for the constitution of which we sign as responsible.

This gives us the essentials of Sellars' version of the argument from immanence. Sellars aims to give an account of the structure of the kind of knowledge we, as epistemic agents in this world, can be said to obtain, on the basis of the claim that we are affected by things that we can take to be also legitimately part of the same world. This amounts to a transformation of the conception of our passivity. Now we can at least think ourselves as passive with regard to objects impinging on us, and about which we can come to know more as time moves on – not of a world of objects that is in any sense 'behind' our world, or transcendent to it.[25] The difficulty in understanding the

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[24] Cf. NAO V §§88-96 and especially §63: «That languagings are evoked (in contexts) by happenings of certain kinds is a causal fact which is nevertheless essential to their conceptual character».

[25] That is, although I agree with Stang (2016: 5) that the distinction is messy and unhelpful I think it makes sense to say that Sellars defends a «one world» reading with regard to the phainomena-nouomena distinction. Stang gives two reasons to be dissatisfied: «[1] because it is not a commitment of 'two object' readings that, for each appearance, there is one and only one thing in itself that appears as that object. The 'two object' interpreter ca hold that each appearance is the appearance of an indefinite plurality of things in themselves. [2] Nor is the other standard term,

specific build of Sellars' theoretical stance lies in the fact that he approves of one dimension of Kantian immanence. To put it in a short characterisation: Sellars endorses Kant's phenomenalism with regard to the ontological status of the objects of the Manifest Image, but he rejects Kant's account of their status from the standpoint of the Scientific Image. This is the meaning of the thesis stated in our introduction that Sellars endorses a transcendental phenomenalism but is also committed to a transcendentally motivated realism about the objects we come to conceptualise in new ways.

What exactly makes it a *transcendentally* demanded realism is the following line of thought: If nature, on Sellars' account, is not to be equated with the *in itself*, nor what common sense says it is, then nature needs to be conceived of as a content we can in fact develop and approximate *as* the content of the conceptual structures we generate in pursuing scientific inquiries (even though it is left open *which* sciences are included).

> The thesis I wish to defend, but not ascribe to Kant, though it is very much a 'phenomenalism' in the Kantian (rather than Berkeleyian) sense, is that although the world we conceptually represent in experience exists only in actual and obtainable representings of it, we can say, from a transcendental point of view, not only that existence-in-itself accounts for this obtainability by virtue of having a certain analogy with the world we represent but also that in principle we, rather than God alone, can provide the cash. (SM II §49)

This shows that Sellars' knowability thesis rests on the claim that *things in themselves* can be construed as in fact having a determinate structure we can aspire to eventually conceptualise. And more than that, the idea that they have structure already presupposes or makes use of a positive analogy with objects we have successfully conceptualised. That is what it means to say that *we* can provide 'the cash'. Our claims about matters of fact are not only subject to God's assessment. The idea that our claims are correctly semantically assertible raises the question: assertible by whom? (cf. SM V §48) In response, Sellars holds, we can formulate a dynamic conception of truth that accounts for conceptual changes inside and across conceptual frameworks. It would have to implement the role of analogical concept formation as substantial. Then our analogically formed conceptual structures could be generating new determinate explanations of the causal structures effecting conceptual responses to them.[26]

> [T]he use of analogy in theoretical science, unlike that in theology, generates new determinate concepts. It does not merely indirectly specify certain unknown attributes by an 'analogy of proportion.' [Instead, it specifies the positive role of analogical concept in theoretical science] One might put this by saying that the conceptual structures of theoretical science give us new ways of schematizing categories. (SM II §49)

With this we have glimpsed in what way Sellars wants our knowledge to be knowledge brought

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'one world' versus 'two world', helpful, either, for 'world' is a technical term in Kant's metaphysics and has a very specific meaning. [Thus, one] can coherently hold a 'non-identity' interpretation while denying that appearances in space and time constitute a 'world' at all». The main point of Sellars transcendental phenomenalism together with a transcendentally demanded realism is to amount to a position which takes the objects of common sense to be transcendentally speaking unreal with regard to the present conceptual framework, while maintaining that it is conceivable that in a later conceptual framework there are resources to cash in the requirements such that their reality can be accounted for, cf. SM V §§101-102; Willaschek (1998); Rosefeldt (2015); Christias (2015) and Matsui (2020).

[26] This may sound as if we have already taken care of the 'vertical' dimension. However, we are not finished just because we have a place for the analogical formation of concepts. The reason is that Sellars' aim is not that of accounting for the possibility of true statements in *one* given conceptual structure. Rather, he is interested in explaining the relation between (a) framework relative truth and a non-semantic notion of truth that ranges in grades across different conceptual structures. For that we need to consider the argument from counterparts and the viability of the resulting conception of truth qua picture.

about by and directed at objects which are in an encompassing way part of our horizon.[27] But while all of this is formulated in a promissory and optimistic way, what arguments can Sellars offer to evade the claim that we are confined to strong Kantian immanence? Just how does Sellars think we can get a foot in the door to escape that confinement?

Sellars parses the claim contained in the unknowability thesis namely, that only God would know which of our claims to knowledge would ever be correct, as the claim that we would be confined to an internalist fact-checking scenario according to which

> 'comparing a judging with a state of affairs' could only be comparing a judging with another judging of the same specific kind, and this would no more be a verification than would checking one copy of today's Times by reading another. (KTE §26)

To elucidate what is problematic about this sense of 'fact-checking' Sellars brings in the *argument from double nature*:

> In evaluating the significance of this point, it should be borne in mind that linguistic episodes have not only logical powers but also, and necessarily, matter-of-factual characteristics, e.g., shape, size, color, internal structure, and that they exhibit empirical uniformities both among themselves and in relation to the environment in which they occur.
> They can be compared as objects in nature with other objects in nature with respect to their matter-of-factual characteristics. I mention this, because the fact that we tend to think of conceptual acts as having only logical form, as lacking matter-of-factual characteristics, i.e., as, to use Moore's expression, diaphanous, makes it difficult to appreciate that the ultimate point of all the logical powers pertaining to conceptual activity in its epistemic orientation is to generate conceptual structures which as objects in nature stand in certain matter-of-factual relations to other objects in nature. (KTE §27)

And this in turn leads beyond the Kantian form of strong immanence, while also opening up the space for a conception of nature of which we, as thinking and perceiving agents, can be understood to be a part:

> The basic flaw in the Kantian system (as in that of Peirce) is in its inability to do justice to this fact. The insight that logical form belongs only to conceptual acts (i.e., belongs to 'thoughts' rather than to 'things') must be supplemented by the insight that 'thoughts' as well as 'things' must have empirical form if they are to mesh with each other in that way which is essential to empirical knowledge. I have developed this point in [TC/NAO V] and [SM V]. (KTE §27 fn 7)

The relevant thesis here is that it is due to their double nature, then, that conceptual elements too, covert and overt languagings, stand in a causal, isomorphic relation to the items or objects, to which they normally are only conceived to be semantically related. This adds a further element to Sellars' idea of why our knowledge about the world is modestly immanent. The general form of our knowledge-claims can be understood as conceptual activity realised in tokenings of languagings, say as utterances or inscriptions. And the argument there is that a conceptual structure, qua double nature, embodies not only knowledge of matter of fact but, by necessarily having an empirical form, is itself part of nature.

Sellarsian immanence then takes the following form: (1) judging-tokenings about empirical matters of fact (2) themselves can be construed to have empirical or matter-of-factual form and (3)

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[27] That this horizon includes unobservable entities poses no threat to the Sellarsian version of immanent knowledge as we can see from (1) his discussion of instrumentalism in SM V, SRI, SRT, and EPM and from (2) his rejection of reductive phenomenalism treating the conceptual framework of physical objects as *subordinate* to sense impression, cf. SM II §36 and PHM.

therefore stand in a matter-of-factual relation to one another. In the wording of NAO V we can reformulate this as the thesis that (1) acts of judgings concerning matters of empirical facts are languagings that themselves can be construed as (2) natural linguistic objects and (3) are systematically related to other objects in nature.

The conclusion Sellars is driving at can be stated as follows: *This matter-of-factual relation of picturing is a transcendental requirement on any language*. But it is also a conclusion worth driving at because it secures that a language that — in a sense to be explained — pictures the world, can legitimately be said to be part of this very world, thereby meeting the immanence criterion. However, to unfold the full range of functions the notion of picturing comes to play in Sellars transcendentally motivating a realism (about the causal origin of our perceptual responses) while endorsing a transcendental phenomenalism (about our epistemic access to the impingements on us generated by these structures), we need to take into consideration a further argument about the role of counterparts to the 'objects' we treat as real here and now.

4. The argument from counterparts

The aim of this argument is to create conceptual space for the idea that we can think *grades of truth* in the development of conceptual structures as a whole (cf. SM V §§54-102).

(1) The concepts we use in our present conceptual structure to individuate objects will have successor concepts in later conceptual structure. Successor concepts are derived from our concepts and analogically build on them (cf. 'gas' 50 BCE and 'gas' now).

(2) If later conceptual structures comprise counterpart concepts, they also comprise counterpart objects individuated on account of them. The objects they individuate are counterpart objects to the objects we individuate in our current conceptual structure.

(3) The non-conceptual component (demonstrative core) in the direct reference of intuitions (covert languagings) is invariant across conceptual structures, even though its conceptualisation changes according to the semantic norms of the respective conceptual structure,

(4) New concepts can be generated to account for the same, invariant impingements, new languagings be produced in response to the same causal input.

(5) If languagings in a later conceptual structure will have a logical form that is more conducive to our epistemic ends (allowing us to predict more successfully), on account of their double nature, this will be reflected in their empirical form.

(6) Insofar as they form a more adequate picture than languagings in earlier conceptual structures did, languagings produced by a later conceptual structure are more conducive to our epistemic ends qua empirical form.

(7) This makes possible the thought that different, later conceptual structures — when considered with regard to their *empirical* form — produce languagings that are more adequately isomorphic to the objects they are (from the viewpoint of their respective S-assertibility norms) about.

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(C) The isomorphism between objects and languagings of new conceptual structures (as a whole across time) makes possible the thought of *grades of matter-of-factual truth* in the sense of increasing *degrees of adequacy of empirical form* across the development of conceptual structures.

To give up on the agnostic idea that we can never say anything about the items causing us to have perceptions of determinate individuals in space and time, is to move to a position according to which we conceive of such items in terms of counterpart qualities. And to do that, in turn is to *analogically extend* the concepts we already possess and to systematically form new concepts (cf. SM I §§68-72). These would be counterpart concepts to the concepts we already know how to work with.

> If, *per impossibile*, Kant had developed the idea of the manifold of sense as characterized by analogical counterparts of the perceptible qualities and relations of physical things and events he could have given an explicit account of the ability of the impressions of receptivity to guide minds, endowed with the conceptual framework he takes us to have, to form the conceptual representations we do of individual physical objects and events in Space and Time.
> He could thus have argued that when on a certain occasion we come to have an intuitive conceptual representation that this green square adjoins that red square, we do so by virtue of having a complex of non-conceptual representations which, although non-spatial and without colour, have characteristics which are the counterparts of *square, red, green* and *adjoining*, and which make them such as to account for the fact that we have this conceptual representation rather than that of there being a purple pentagon above an orange ellipse. (SM I §78)

With the help of counterpart objects we are come to be in a position to account for systematic co-variances between representational episodes and their causes, without stipulating that we come to perceive the objects as they are in themselves. The dimension of the conceptual continues to play its constitutive role, a role it never loses in favour of a direct account of perception. In this regard Sellars remains a critic of the Myth of the Given.[28] He does even where he introduces the notion of later conceptual structures in which we can be taken to respond with different yet more adequate conceptualisations to the same stimuli we are subject to in our present conceptual structure.

Yet, the crucial thesis for Sellars' advancement of the Kantian frame holds that languagings generated by theoretical sciences are characterised by different degrees of pictorial adequacy. This, in turn, is not an epistemic first order claim about languagings in future conceptual structures but a claim about what is entailed in thinking the thought of an increase in epistemic success. In the next section we turn to an elaboration of what this transcendental line of thought amounts to, and to answering the question in what sense this allows for the thought of a non-semantic grading of truth qua picturing capacity of languagings.

5. The picturing capacity of languagings

The concept of picturing allows Sellars to articulate how the vertical dimension is built into our intentionality. Just how it can be conceived of as built into the horizontal dimension is the crux of the matter. In this regard, the picturing postulate resembles the point zero where the axes of the dimensions come to meet. If a languaging, as a natural linguistic object does its picturing work by being isomorphically related to an object in its vicinity, the burden seems to shift to the concept of an isomorphic relation. Sellars clarifies that he has *second order isomorphism* in mind here (TC 217-219). A first order isomorphism would hold between the sole of my shoes and the footprints I leave in the sand. But neither my *thought* about a red pyramid in front of me is red, nor is my overt languaging or *uttering* 'there is a red pyramid in front of me'. So the relation between these items in the real is a second order isomorphism. It is *second order* because it is a relation between relations which depends for its structure on the method of projection inherent to the conceptual scheme in which it is produced. As Sellars writes, alluding to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*:

> Picturing […] is […] a relation between two relational structures. (SM V §56)

It is central to Sellars' version of formulating an immanent theory of knowledge that this pictur-

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[28] Even in passages such as the following: «I agreed [in SM II] with Kant that the world of common sense is a 'phenomenal' world, but suggested that it is 'scientific objects,' rather than metaphysical unknowables, which are the true things-in-themselves». (SM V §79)

ing relation is non-semantic i.e. that it does not operate because it serves representational, or intentional relational purposes.[29] Rather, it serves as the causal underside of linguistic activity, of our conceptual activities which we are normally bound to interpret and read from within the intentional stance toward fellow interpreters and speakers (in Dennett's 1987 classic formulation). However, it takes the perspective of transcendental philosophy to see the transcendental function of the picturing dimension as contributing to the epistemic significance of language as a tool for generating knowledge (Cf. Rosenberg 1974: 101-109, 2007: 104-126; Sicha 2014; Cobley 2019: 701-5; Sachs & Koons *forthc.* for discussions of the mapping function of languagings).

The relevant claim is that picturing is not just non-semantic, rather, that it is the precondition of there being empirically contentful statements at all. In this sense, picturing constitutes the missing *vertical* transcendental prerequisite for the non-relational intentionality of a perceptual system as a whole. The transcendental significance of picturing finds expression in the claim that

> the ultimate point of all the logical powers pertaining to conceptual activity in its epistemic orientation is to generate conceptual structures which as objects in nature stand in certain matter-of-factual relations to other objects in nature. (KTE 27)

Which echoes and substantiates the dependency claim at the heart of the *double nature argument*:

> The logical form of a stating is clearly not the empirical configuration of the sentence it illustrates, though having an appropriate empirical configuration is a necessary condition of the stating's having the logical form it does, in the language to which it belongs. (KTE 22)

With this, the Sellarsian version of immanence meets the criterion that our knowledge about the world be a part of the world it claims to be knowledge of. Because knowledge claims themselves, realised as languagings, are natural-linguistic-objects *in* the very same nature they purport to yield knowledge of.[30] The difficulty here lies in the fact that we can look at knowledge claims from the intentional stance and from the engineering stance.[31] When we view knowledge claims as conceptually contentful, we put focus on their logical form. But the aboutness of conceptually articulated knowledge claims is a matter of their functional roles, not of their direct intentional reference

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[29] Although Sachs (2019) auspiciously maintains that an account of picturing needs to come from cognitive science, not from philosophy of language, he does not do nearly enough to entitle himself to the very idea of 'non-semantic representations'.

[30] One might suspect that Sellars needs to argue for the inverse claim to achieve his argumentative aim: i.e. that because knowledge is part of the world, we can see it to be knowledge. But it is the very point of the transcendental methodology that this cannot simply be assumed to be a fact. The situation here rather resembles a complex presupposition, one that the transcendental perspective of analysis helps to show: our language as a whole can be taken to yield knowledge only on the assumption that it comprises languagings that picture and that it thereby vertically is part of the world. This, however, is a world that the language users can only make horizontal claims about by moving inside the language. This is what Sellarsian immanence amounts to. We need the assumption that something like picturing has to be happening even though our non-relational meaning claims never take us outside the bounds of the conceptual structure we actually use.

[31] Cf. O'Shea (2007: 153): «The basic idea is that we are now to consider human languages themselves from the naturalistic 'engineering' standpoint, but as always with one eye on the conceptually irreducible normative standpoint of intentionality. [For …] although we know that 'linguistic objects [languagings] are subject to rules and principles — are fraught with 'ought' — we abstract from this knowledge in considering them as objects in the natural order', i.e. as […] *natural-linguistic–objects*» (TC 212).

On my reading, it is only by adopting the transcendental standpoint that we can usefully distinguish between engineering and intentional stances (cf. Seiberth 2022: Chapters 1 and 6). The cognitive sciences since the 1960s onwards have promoted using the concept of representation in deploying the engineering standpoint, in testing what can count as being systematically correlated. However, engineering *activity* itself can be regarded as a semantic operation, or as a non-semantic perspective. Only in is this latter abstractive perspective picturing can be grasped as *underlying* all semantic interpretations of matter of factual correlations, be they mapping, object tracking or self-locating. Thanks to an anonymous referee for helpful comments.

to empirical matters of fact. Regarding the latter, the idea of picturing plays its core role since Sellars claims that the correctness of assertions is to be defined in terms of the *non-semantic* adequacy of the underlying picturing relation, and not vice versa. Sellars is most explicit about this:

> I speak of the distinctive *functions* of first-level matter-of-factual discourse; for even within this level essential distinctions must be drawn if we are to grasp the difference between the *primary* concept of factual truth (truth as correct[32] picture), which makes intelligible all the other modes of factual truth, and the *generic* concept of truth as S-assertibility. (SM V §9)

According to this qualification, the picturing relation is basic and primary because it needs to be in place such that claims about the semantic assertibility of statements can be made. In other words, the concept of picturing comes to play the role of *factual* truth, enabling the horizontal dimension where truth is a matter of the semantic assertibility of statements.[33] Why is 'being true' also a matter-of-factual relation among objects in nature? It is a matter-of-factual relation in the sense that (a) conceptual items qua *empirical form* are *natural linguistic objects* standing in an isomorphic relation to (b) other objects in nature. For only when thoughts and utterances have empirical form can they 'mesh' with things (KTE 27). So the argument from immanence is based on an analysis of, but extends beyond Kant's conception of acts of judging.

Conclusion

And with this we have a reply to the dissatisfaction that Sellars' non-relational account of intentionality might not allow for *direct intentional reference*. In classificatory acts we qualify contents of matter-of-factual judgements with regard to their logical powers. And we are directly related to objects in nature by the fact that *languagings*, considered as natural linguistic objects are part of nature. Just what this relation, metaphysically speaking is, we have not yet developed, but *that* it holds is part and parcel of Sellars' transcendental perspective.[34] According to Sellars, wanting to be semantically related to something outside of such a conceptual uptake is wanting the world to

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[32] Notice how Sellars here speaks of «correct» picture, which I think is misleading. After all, he points out, that picturing is not a semantic but a matter-of-factual, causal relation between objects in the real (TC 215). That we tend to conceive of pictures *as* correct is matter of our scorekeeping stance, the normative eye with which we need to see things in their value and function. This, however, is a relational feature we bring to the theoretical object of concern, not an intrinsic feature it has independently of our perspective on it. In this sense, we can distinguish (a) the correctness involved in the normative perspective of judging a certain claim to be *correctly* made from (b) the adequacy a languaging or utterance of a claim has when considered in abstraction, with an engineering eye, as a natural linguistic object by isomorphically relating to an object. Cf. Sicha's (2014) criticism of Rosenberg (2007: 104 ff.). But these two will be systematically related to each other: if I say or think now, 'The dog here is on this mat', this will be both a correct 'entry' move and a 'correct picturing' of the world – insofar as my conceptual framework is adequate as far as picturing goes. The fact that we can only evaluate the latter through norm-governed empirical inquiry does not mean we cannot (fallibilistically) say that my sentence or thought, as far as I know, 'correctly pictures' the empirical situation, qua physical sentence, and qua whatever it is 'little thoughts are made of'. To qualify this: The 'correctness' of the naturalistic 'picturing-representational relation' will of course always be parasitic on the relevant norm-governednesses that have generated and sustained those causal relations, however (in)adequately. (Thanks to Jim O'Shea for helpful comments.)

[33] SM V §51 delineates that 'absolute sense of true' always only has the significance of 'true with regard to *our* conceptual structure'. This leaves a difference between 'semantically assertible truth' relative to older conceptual structures and the 'absolute sense of true' that we *now* embrace. cf. Christias (2015) on this point.

[34] Of course, the claim that this 'matter-of-factual relation' can be understood to become gradually *more adequate,* deserves further attention. A first response to this difficulty is to scrutinise what Sellars' claim comes down to holding that the relation in question is factual and as such always non-semantic. This point has been misunderstood, as deVries (2012a) shows for Reider (2012) but also by Rorty (1988), Millikan (2012), Rouse (2015), and Price (2013, 2015 and 2016). This is ever more pressing, considering how the issue continues to pose difficulties for interpretations of Sellars' conception of our evolving grasp of nature and the possibility of our reference to it. Cf. Seiberth (2022).

imprint itself, its categorial status on us. It is, in other words, one of the many variations of the Myth of the Given.

Does this imply that Sellars rests content with a horizontal version of intentionality? In a sense yes, since the argument from immanence obligates him to conceiving of intentionality in the *order of the conceptual* as a horizontal affair through and through. This is apparent in his endorsement of the transcendental ideality implied in Kant's analysis of intuitions (or language-entry moves as always already possessed of categorial structures i.e. cf. B143 and B165). Or as we can now say, in front of the terminology discussed above, as possessed of logical powers. But the transcendental analysis of how to give consciousness a place in nature does not stop there.[35] It does not stop there because Sellars is committed to an idea of nature that does not dissolve into our estimations of it. Instead, we fare better when we read Sellars' argument from immanence as a transcendental consideration leading him to the following conclusion: we can approach *nature* always only from within our conceptual scheme. And that this is so follows from the non-relational character of our mental states where they are conceptually content-full. With regard to their intentional directedness, all articulations of the content-fulness of our claims about the world amount to functional classifications in which we express our endorsements of actual contents as being of a certain kind. But that never takes us outside the realm of the conceptual, as one could say with an eye to Hegel.

And yet Sellars' conception of nature is larger than the one he finds in Kant. This becomes clear in the stance of a transcendental reflexion that considers the construction of a theory which itself can be said to be part of the world it is set to be about. It is one thing to find that our grasp of empirical contents is nothing over and above a conceptually articulated judging-content. It is another to grant that such acts, *qua* being acts of a person, needs to be also conceived of *such* that they be part of the world. And this is a line of thought, according to which our language (considered as a conceptual structure as a whole) stands to 'nature' then viewed as a system of representables, in *matter-of-factual relations*.[36] These are relations to which Sellars is committed on the basis of the following thought that brings the two arguments from double nature and from immanence on one track: If we make explicit that the argument from immanence is a specification of the argument from double nature applied to matter-of-factual judgements, then we are able to take matter-of-factual judgements to be *related to* something non-linguistic by being natural-linguistic objects picturing objects in nature.

And because such a matter-of-factual relation holds between the items pictured and the items doing the picturing, we can consider the items doing the picturing from the intentional stance point of view, thereby allowing us to make contentful claims about them. Sellars holds that our linguistic activity is reflected in causal uniformities, the structural features exhibited by the utterances we produce (NAO V). Their isomorphic relation is never epistemically accessible from within linguistic practices. Rather, it is external in the sense of being the manifestation of linguis-

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[35] To do this would imply resting content with the horizontal view in a way Rorty and Huw Price suggest we should (cf. Rorty 1972, 1997; Price 2011, 2013 and Price & Rorty 2010).

[36] For Sellars, this consideration is in no way restricted to the English language alone, as different languages can share one conceptual structure. In any two given languages a sign design can be interpreted to fulfil similar functional roles: «Thus, to characterize a statement in a foreign language, for example, French as true is, in effect, to treat this language as a 'dialect' of a language game which we play, i.e. to treat speakers of French as speakers of our language, as players of a common game. Since the term 'language' as it is ordinarily used refers to the specific linguistic materials (sign designs and surface grammar) which differentiate, e.g. French from German, we need another term for the common game which is played by users of such differing resources. I shall use the expression 'conceptual structure' to serve this purpose». (SM V §49)

To which Sellars adds in a footnote: «It should be borne in mind that 'conceptual structure' in this sense refers to [overt] language games. It does not refer to conceptual activity in the sense of 'inner episodes.' I am assuming, as before, that once the epistemic and ontological categories with which we are concerned have been clarified in their application to Rylean items the extension of this clarification to 'inner-episodes' poses no difficulty of principle». (SM V §49 fn21)

tic practices in manifest uniform patterns. We can never make *use* of this relation, say, to further epistemic ends. It is the causal shadow of our languagings. It is never directly available or given to us in unmediated semantic terms. To claim that it is only a transcendental requirement on our linguistic practices being efficacious is to claim that something like a picturing isomorphism has to be in place in order for our linguistic practices to advance, through time in a *multiscalarity of engagements* (Cobley 2019: 703).[37] Yet we cannot step outside, i.e. go sideways, to look at metaphysical profile of the picturing capacity of any single statement. But in doing cognitive science, are we not studying picturing capacities? — always parasitically on a framework of concepts and bio-functional norms, of course.

My argument pursued here has been that this specific role can only be explicated appropriately when a transcendental reflexion is seen as providing the frame. It is the frame for articulating how we are to understand the relation between our passivity and our spontaneity in the context of generating (scientific) knowledge. Picturing answers to the question of how our linguistic practices can be taken to be part of the world of which they produce knowledge. This is akin to asking Janus what he has on his mind, facing both ways. Because our linguistic practices crucially include language-entry and language-exit moves, and so produce knowledge in virtue of both causal-relational and normative-non-relational (i.e. mutually sustaining) patterns. According to Sellars, Janus' answers reflected in the three arguments given above entail that we only ever move horizontally in our scorekeeping activity, while transcendentally taking these moves to be embedded in the world, but in a way that never comes to be epistemologically transparent, i.e. disclosed to us *through* the picturing activity of languagings.

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[37] As such it is akin to reason's regulative ideal Kant sees as expressed in three *a priori* transcendental principles, i.e. like 'affinity' is required for thinking nature's complete systematic empirical unity. We can know that picturing correlations underly all epistemic activity, while acknowledging that their empirical articulation is a matter of determination in time, advanced by the sciences.

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AE   «Abstract Entities», in *Review of Metaphysics*, 16, 1963, pp. 627-71.
BBK   «Being and Being Known», in *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 1960, pp. 28-49.
CSCA «Correspondence between Wilfrid Sellars and Hector-Neri Castañeda», 1961-1962 (unpublished), available at http://ditext.com/sellars/corr.html.
EPM   «Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind», in *Minnesota Studies in The Philosophy of Science, Vol. I, The Foundations of Science and the Concepts of Psychology and Psychoanalysis*, H. Feigl and M. Scriven (eds.), University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1956, pp. 253-329.
FMPP «Foundations for a Metaphysics of Pure Process» (The Carus Lectures), in *The Monist*, 64, 1981, pp. 3-90.
GE   «Grammar and Existence: A Preface to Ontology», in *Mind*, 69 (1960), pp. 499-533.
I   «...this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks…», *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association* 44, 1972, 5-31.
IKTE   «The Role of Imagination in Kant's Theory of Experience», in *Categories: A Colloquium*, H.W. Johnstone Jr. (ed.), Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 1978, pp. 231-45.
KTE   «Some Remarks on Kant's Theory of Experience», in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 64, 1967, pp. 633-47.
KTI   «Kant's Transcendental Idealism», in *Collections of Philosophy*, 6, 1976, pp. 165-181.
LTC   «Language as Thought and as Communication», in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 29, 1969, pp. 506-27.
MEV   «Mental Events», in *Philosophical Studies*, 39, 1981, pp. 325-45.
MFC   «Meaning as Functional Classification», in *Synthese*, 27, 1974, pp. 417-37.
NAO   *Naturalism and Ontology*, The John Dewey Lectures for 1973-4, Ridgeview Publishing Co., Reseda, California, 1980.
NI   «Notes on Intentionality», in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 61, 1964, pp. 655-665.
NS   «Naming and Saying», in *Philosophy of Science*, 29, 1962, pp. 7–26.
PHM   «Phenomenalism», in *Intentionality, Minds and Perception*, edited by Hector-Neri Castañeda, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1967, pp. 215-274.
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SM   *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes* (The John Locke Lectures for 1965-66), Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1968.
SPR   *Science, Perception and Reality*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1963. Republished by Ridgeview Publishing Company, Atascadero, California, 1991.
SRI   «Scientific Realism or Irenic Instrumentalism: A Critique of Nagel and Feyerabend on

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SRT «Is Scientific Realism Tenable?», in *Proceedings of PSA*, 2, 1976, pp. 307-334.

TC «Truth and Correspondence», in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 59, 1962, pp. 29-56. Reprinted in SPR, pp. 197-224.

TTC «Towards a Theory of the Categories», in *Experience and Theory*, L. Foster & J.W. Swanson (eds.), University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst 1970, pp. 55-78.