

Introduction

Introduction to Wilfrid Sellars: Notre Dame Lectures 1969-1986

“A flower in the crannied wall,” Sellars describes these Lectures while plucking his philosophy out of the crannies, roots and all.¹ “One of the basic tasks that philosophy has to do is to raise questions,” he remarks, “to open up conceptual possibilities...philosophers should not regard themselves as merely owls of Minerva who come back in the night after the day is done. They should also be “heralds of the dawn” who create the categories in terms of which science is rejuvenated.” In this, the Notre Dame Lectures do not disappoint. As a measure of the fruition of the monumental changes Sellars envisions and his hope of a reunification of science and philosophy, the lectures stand alone. From the pointed critiques of Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle and Wittgenstein, to the playful scolding of Carnap, Bergman, Firth, Chisholm and Quine, Sellars encourages philosophers to take up the challenge of giving direction to the future of the cognitive sciences.

Time and the world order provide a recurring theme for the lectures. Yet they unfold into the nature of time itself, events, facts, existence, conceptual change and meaning—all of which play a critical role. The Notre Dame Lectures even illustrate Sellars’ exasperation with himself because he was slow to recognize the ineluctable development of his own theory of events, facts, and time.

1 See “What Really Exists 1969” in the lecture transcripts (available online, keyword search ‘Sellars Notre Dame Lectures’). The lecture titles assigned by the Notre Dame Archives at the Hesburgh Library have been retained except where combination seemed appropriate.

Often funny and relentlessly metaphysical, the Notre Dame Lectures aim at Sellars' favorite targets: *Relationalism* and *Givenness*.² But like a master craftsman determined to clean out the toolshed, he is equally determined not to throw anything out. If an idea served but can serve no longer, perhaps it's time to understand why it worked as well as it did for so long? So, disappointment will likely greet those looking for a new system to replace the old system: for Sellars, getting there is definitely the fun. If anything, what strikes us as remarkable about these Lectures is the display of Sellars' ability to cut right to the heart of an issue. "Turn him to any cause of policy, The Gordian knot of it he will unloose," and once cut, he is on to another. At times, the Notre Dame Lecture's playful common sense overshadows the fact that they provide a cross-section of Sellars' views during a time of energetic development. Since the lectures include portions of published papers, they present a priceless opportunity to see the lectures with embellishments by the author. The running commentary, supplemented by shrewd questions from an historically proficient and insightful audience³ provides subtle clues to Sellars' thinking on the future of a variety of core topics. Although the tapes were at times virtually unintelligible and, of course, contained no diagrams, the transcription is reasonably accurate and adequately indexed for those with paleographic aspirations. Sellars habitually made up words—in the Platonic sense—harnessing existing terms for his own device and this presented an additional challenge. Regrettably some tapes in this long series were unavailable but perhaps one day they will be transcribed. With the notable exception of contributions by RWS (Sellars' father), McMullin and the anonymous participants in the

2 Relationalism contrasts with Inferentialism (see, Robert Brandom's *Articulating Reasons*). Inferentialism is difficult. Couched in one metaphor or another (which WS playfully characterizes as "zapping," "grasping," "24 Karat"), common sense clings to the Aristotelian's Relationalistic legacy: knowing is the mind's becoming "like" the object. Phenomenology is epistemology. This "natural similarity" defined intentionality for so long, an alternative to which Inferentialistic theories can appeal has yet to take root. Sellars, standing at the threshold of Inferentialism, rejects the givenness upon which the edifice of Relationalism stands but wants to rehabilitate phenomenology—not toss it aside. This creates a metaphysical tension, seen throughout the lectures, between Sellars' dot-quote analysis and his phenomenology.

3 Ernan McMullin and Cornelius Delaney, for example.

Q&A, most of the available tracks are included. The transition from track to track is included for reference purposes.

It was Sellars' habit to develop his views in the course of ongoing presentations to graduate students and graduate faculty and to give them a debut at Notre Dame. My own work with Sellars overlapped many of the lectures that appear here. Sellars' running commentary on published papers provides insights that would otherwise have been lost.

Events

Of a certainty, there are no events or facts. The evolution of Sellars' theory of events serves as the keystone of this introduction. It isn't that time, facts and events provided an unusual challenge to Sellars. It is rather more like Kant, who saw that once all the other problems were solved, the nature of time and space flowed from the solutions. In these lectures, while he acknowledges the evolution of his views from the writing of *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, the treatment of events is the only case where he acknowledges an earlier mistake.

Wilfrid Sellars [hereafter 'WS'] begins "Time and the World Order" by recalling his discovery that the 'problem of time' was rivaled by only the 'mind-body problem' in the degree to which it immediately tangled him in all the major concerns of philosophy. As we read *TWO*, our exegetical task becomes doubly difficult because, while he sees the argument in "Time and the World Order" as commencing with familiar puzzles about truth and time, from our perspective, the context has receded into the history of philosophy.⁴ The essay begins by addressing C. D. Broad's attempt to respond to McTaggart's work on the unreality of time. And naturally, like any period piece, it begins right in the middle of their story: WS examines Broad's response to McTaggart almost *ad seriatim* as these responses appear in portions of the *Examination of*

⁴ The abbreviations for Sellars' works are standard and appear in James O'Shea's *Wilfrid Sellars* (Polity, 2007), Willem deVries *Wilfrid Sellars* (Ithaca, 2005) and any edition of Sellars' works published by Ridgeview Press.

McTaggart's Philosophy volumes I and II.⁵ As a result, it makes *TWO* a work to be avoided by those without a sense of history. Some of the dialectic appears to come “out of the blue” for anyone unfamiliar with the contemporary texture of their debate. Sellars frequently characterized time in ways that were common during those exchanges but which often leave a contemporary audience with a sense that they have missed an important ingredient in a recipe. Since it is not necessary for us to start from scratch, our progress will not be slowed by a need to reconstruct the analytical machinery from the earlier period.

As WS admits, during the course of the Notre Dame Lectures, *TWO* incorporates a mistaken theory of events. His remarkable apology for the error acknowledges the significance of the mistake: a metaphysical mistake about the ultimate nature of reality. The far-reaching changes that his new theory of events bring about were never carried out. However he does provide enough suggestions on how to proceed so that we are able to do some of the renovation ourselves.

It will be necessary to presuppose a basic familiarity with the use of dot-quoting (*figure 1*) as a means for tackling thorny ontological issues. A “dot-quote primer” is provided in an appendix to the transcript of the Notre Dame Lectures for those unfamiliar with the machinery WS puts in place.⁶

Historically, familiarity with Carnap, Wittgenstein and a modest appreciation of the history of philosophy suffice to bring out the effect of the dot-quotes. With a minimal amount of violence to our historical integrity, the effect can be brought out as follows. Speaking from the 1st person, phenomenological point of view, we have concepts pertaining to things (1st intentions), concepts pertaining to concepts of things (2nd intentions) and so on up the semantic ladder. ‘Concepts’ are misnamed because, being nothing more than

5 Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy by C. D. Broad, volume I and II, (Oxford University Press, 1933).

6 Recent studies by James R. O'shea, *Wilfrid Sellars: Naturalism with a Normative Turn* (Polity, 2007), and Willem A. DeVries, *Wilfrid Sellars* (McGill-Queen's, 2005) give all the essentials. *In the Space of Reasons: Selected Essays of Wilfrid Sellars* (HUP, 2007) by K. Scharp and Robert Brandom provide key texts while Brandom's *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays in the Metaphysics of Intentionality* (HUP, 2002) puts them in context.

varieties of conceiv-ings, there is nothing *static* or atomistic about them: each is resolved into, as the peripatetic scholastics would say, a role or “office” which *constitutes* what it is to know the very thing to which the concept pertains. It is knowledge classically construed as the mind becoming like the object—knowledge at its best, what it is *like* to be a knower. But the feature of Sellars’ account that would have the peripatetics hurling themselves out of windows is

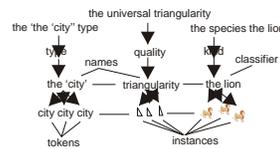


Figure 1. Here “type,” “quality,” “kind” are on par as are the trio “the ‘city’,” “triangularity,” “the lion” and descending to the world, as are the trio made of the three cities, the three triangles and the three lions. First, imagine replacing the single quotes with dot-quotes, then, “triangularity” would be treated like “the ‘city’” on the left but would be playing the *classical* conceptual role played by the kind term, ‘the lion’ on the right. Hence, “triangularity” is a disguised “the triangular” functioning like lionkind but we call it a quality. Climbing the semantical ladder another rung, yields thoughts of the ‘•the•city••’ which merely reflects the classical distinction between “being triangular” one step down, and “being triangularity” up a step. The scholastics reserve this third level for “logical universals” or “metaphysical universals” and treat “concepts” as dynamic roles or “offices” forming the cognitive economy.

his insistence that the interesting features of thought are beyond the reach of introspection, intuition, self-consciousness, self-*anything* really. Those items of which we can be immediately aware are leftovers from the Pleistocene—chunks of colored stuff—and *even that* his contemporaries got wrong. Thus, when one thinks about the semantic functioning of “thoughts” or “words” and the way their “office” is constituted by the “privileges and duties” that make up the office (the “web” that makes them what they are), one needs an entirely new metaphor. As we move up the semantics ladder, introspection is a worthless, empty metaphor yet it is up the semantic ladder, into the breach of the “inferential web,” so to speak, where all the interesting things are happening.

As his metaphor for “concepts,” Sellars uses the metaphor of Chess and Tess (Texas-chess) but the pieces of any formal game will serve; even Battleships firing Guns in Conway’s Game of Life works as a healthy intuition pump. The idea is to wean oneself away from the Relationalism—relational theories of meaning, reference,

denotation, standing for, exemplifying etc.—and change to a diet of incredibly complex semantic relations, that is, the syntactic activity that brings about the semantic activity. Sellars' view is easy to understand but difficult to internalize: introspection and reflection, however mentally challenged, seems so good and served so well that it is a shame to see them go. As a point of reference, *Figure I* will serve to illustrate how Sellars' dot-quotes "relate" to ordinary quotes. A rough idea of how they work serves the immediate purpose because WS provides a considerable amount of commentary in the course of the Notre Dame Lectures.

Introducing Events

The best way to introduce the story of Sellars' change of heart on events, is to relate how my own puzzles about the theory of events came about. While studying WS' analysis of meaning, a question developed that couldn't be resolved, the more I thought about it, the more confused I got. During a discussions, I asked him the following question, "the theory of events presented in *TWO* complements the discussion of meaning that occurs in, for example, *Truth and Correspondence*, because in both, events are objects "in the world"—basic derivative objects in the one and linguistic events in the other—but in your later work, for example, *MCP*,⁷ events are not in the world.

WS's immediate response will have to wait because unless one knows the relevant background it is impossible to get his joking reply. Instead, it's necessary to spell out the conflict between the later theory of events and the analysis of meaning before giving WS's solution to the problem. We can begin by looking at the theory of meaning and linguistic events. This will allow us to abstract away from the philosophy of time—to which we will return after finishing with the problem regarding events.

The first point is methodological and concerns a preferred strategy that WS uses to great effect—due to his singular genius for striking right at the heart of a problem. WS comments that Reichenbach gives us a procedure for going from statements about

⁷ I will use 'MCP' for "Metaphysics and the Concept of a Person" instead of the standard, 'MP'.

events to statements about things: a procedure found in the “Introduction” to Reichenbach’s *Elements of Symbolic Logic*.⁸ What WS appears to mean is Reichenbach’s method of “rational reconstruction” (following Carnap) for regimenting language. We can see the method of rational reconstruction playing a part when we realize that WS’s application of the notion of meaning is not to speech or thought as currently conceived. Our current concept of thought already contains the resources that Sellars is trying to explain so he rationally reconstructs our current model of speech and thought into one that is not in use. In the reconstructed version, thought is construed as the level of overt, meaningful linguistic expression which is mere event and not action (i.e., not underwritten by inner thought episodes). The rational reconstruction puts aside our current explanation of speech in terms of thought. According to Sellars, the reconstructed version does not presupposes the concept of thought. Thus, the reconstructed application of the concepts of meaning are not to the notion of speech as currently conceived. The rational reconstruction is motivated by a “myth” that allows us to see the plausibility of an “evolutionary” scenario in which it was reasonable to adopt our current model of thought.⁹ The subsequent reconstruction of our model of speech occurs at the end of his myth about conceptual development.

Armed with appropriate warnings about methodology and his proposal to use overly simplified models, it is apparent that in the late 50’s, Sellars thought of events as objects in the world *in a narrow* sense that includes Socrates, Caesar, and Cassio but not triangularity—which is in the world *in a broad* sense.¹⁰

Names, he notes, connote criteria and name the objects which satisfy these criteria. We have distinguished between two radically different kinds of object which we may illustrate, respectively, by Socrates and by Roundness. Roughly the distinction is between

8 *TWO*, 542. The actual application of Reichenbach’s method occurs in section 48, where Reichenbach describes what he thinks of as a means for regimenting conversational language.

9 Lecture notes from one of WS’s lectures on the “myth,” the Myth of Jones follows this introduction.

10 See the lecture “Language and Meaning 1969” for his use of models.

those objects which are concepts and those which are not. Non-conceptual objects can be further subdivided.

26. Non-conceptual objects can be roughly divided into *basic* and *derivative*. Derivative objects can be informally characterized as those which are referred to by noun expressions that can be eliminated by contextual definition. In this sense events are derivative objects in the physical-thing framework. Statements about the events in which physical things participate can be reduced to statements in which all the non-predicative expressions refer to physical things.' In the framework of kinetic theory, as classically presented, the basic objects (granted that we *can* speak of theoretical objects) would be individual molecules.¹¹

In terms of the developing treatment of abstract entities from "Grammar and Existence: A Preface to Ontology" in 1960 through "Abstract Entities" in 1963, Sellars position above can be put by contrasting two ways of *being in the world*:

(a) an item is in the world in the *narrow sense* when it does not involve linguistic norms and roles (*it is not* "dot-quoted")

(b) an item is in the world in the *broad sense* which does involve linguistic norms and roles (*it is*¹² "dot-quoted") from the standpoint of a fellow participant.

On this view, Sellars circa 1957, would say

Circularity and triangularity are in the world in the broad sense

but,

Caesar's crossing and Cassio's loving are in the world in the narrow sense.

Sellars continues:

Actually, the relation between an episode expressions and tensed statements which are about *things* rather than *episodes*

¹¹ LT (*The Language of Theories*), 1961, paragraph 26.

¹² WS comments on the care with which "in the world" should be handled, TTC (*Towards a Theory of the Categories*), 65. Here the formal category, state of affairs, has the material category, event subsumed under it.

[events] is quite simple, and has been formulated with reasonable clarity by more than one philosopher.¹³

The “philosopher” is Reichenbach whose “transformations” Sellars finds illuminating and therefore, are worth pausing to consider.

Reichenbach

It serves the interest of completeness to take a passing glance at Reichenbach’s event analysis although nothing crucial hinges on it. Some of what Reichenbach presupposes, WS flatly rejects but WS refers to it anyway so it’s worth a look.

The distinction between events and things, according to Reichenbach, plays a role in daily life. An inauguration, an assassination, a marriage are events, not things; language contains event-expressions which are often descriptions, not proper names. For example,

the inauguration of Kennedy took place in Washington,

or

the assassination of Kennedy followed the Bay of Pigs invasion.

The first contains a two-term relation between an event and a thing, the second, a relation between two events. It is often possible to eliminate event-expressions, as in the first sentence above, which can be stated in equivalent form

Kennedy was inaugurated in Washington

In the second, Reichenbach thinks that the equivalent statement must contain a time. As a result, although the event-expressions can be eliminated, new event arguments in the symbols for time, ‘ t_2 ’ and ‘ t_1 ’ cannot be eliminated and time points are, events (“classes of simultaneous events” as he refers to them):

Kennedy was assassinated at t_1 and the Bay of Pigs was invaded at t_2 .

¹³ TWO, 542.

Indeed, time sequence can be formulated only as relations between events.

Using the term ‘situation’ to refer to the object corresponding to a proposition, by describing a situation in a proposition composed of a function and argument, the situation splits into argument-object and predicate-object (i.e., property or attribute). As seen above, a situation can be split in two ways.

Thus, a sentence that is about “things” (‘Kennedy was inaugurated’) can be transformed into a sentence about events, an E-sentence (‘Kennedy’s inauguration took place’) by means of the following. Suppose the ‘*’ stands for a meta-linguistic function taking thing-sentences into event predicates. So, ‘is the inauguration of Kennedy’ is the value of the function for the argument ‘Kennedy is inaugurated.’ The event term ‘the inauguration of Kennedy’ is a definite description that is symbolized using the ‘ ϵ ’ and where ‘ v_i ’ denotes the event:

$$(\epsilon v)[f(\textit{Kennedy is inaugurated})]*(v)$$

To symbolize ‘the inauguration of Kennedy took place’ we have:

$$(\exists x)(x = (\epsilon v)[f(x)]*(v))$$

using ‘ $f(x_1)$ ’ to stand for the thing-sentence and the brackets to indicate the scope of the asterisk ‘*’. The procedure is completely general. According to Reichenbach, references to events can be replaced by references to things (and *vice versa*): The general transformation rule (§48) is

$$f(x_1) \quad g(v_1)$$

where ‘ v_1 ’ denotes the event, and ‘ g ’ the event property. The unusual ‘ ϵ ’ (not reproduced here) indicates that the connective involved might include P-implications (see §60). The transformation for ‘ $f(x_1)$ ’ and ‘ $g(v_1)$ ’ is *wholistic* in the sense that *wholes* are equivalent to each other without a direct correspondence between the parts.

By the equivalence, an event and its property can be defined in terms of a thing and its property; the examples above illustrate the two ways of splitting a situation; these he calls, *thing-splitting* and *event-splitting*. Switching to the metalanguage, we can show that

an event-argument and its predicate can be defined as a function of a thing-argument and its predicate.

Let ' $f(x_1)$ ' mean 'Kennedy is inaugurated', ' g ' is the predicate 'inauguration of Kennedy', that is a function of both the predicate 'is inaugurated' and the argument 'Kennedy'. Reichenbach uses an asterisk for the indicator of the transition to event-splitting and writes the function ' g ' (from the transformation rule above) in the form ' $[f(x_1)]^*$ '. Thus, the expression ' $g(v_1)$ ' can be replaced by ' $[f(x_1)]^*(v_1)$ '. The argument ' v_1 ' is the name of the event that has the property ' $[f(x_1)]^*$ ' and has a value given the predicate 'is inaugurated' and the argument 'Kennedy'. Since descriptions are used to denote events using the function ' $[f(x_1)]^*$ '; the event-argument sign ' v_1 ' can be written in a form prevalent in conversational language, according to Reichenbach, namely,

the inauguration of Kennedy took place

or,

$$(v)[f(x_1)]^*(v)$$

Similarly, in a case of thing-splitting, we might have the following

The destruction of Carthage made Rome the ruler of the Mediterranean.

Let x_1 = Carthage, d = be destroyed, y_1 =Rome, z_1 = Mediterranean, r = ruler, m = make and,

$$v_1 = (v)[d(x_1)]^*(v)$$

$$u_1 = (u)r(u, z_1)$$

To express event-splitting we have,

$$m(v_1, y_1, u_1).$$

Ontology: Sellars 1957

Returning to the discussion of events of the late 50's, WS gives a simplified version of Reichenbach's transformations in dealing with the statements with which *TWO* began, namely,

- (1) S was i_1
- (2) S is i_2 now
- (3) S will be i_3

which he modifies¹⁴ for the purposes of discussing episodes to be

- (1) S became i_1
- (2) S is becoming i_2 (now)
- (3) S will become i_3

for which we have an equivalence schema that serves to show "how the language of 'episodes' or 'events' is related to a simple tensed statement"¹⁵ with which *TWO* began. Namely,

- (1) S became i_1 S's becoming i_1 took place
- (2) S is becoming i_2 (now) S's becoming i_2 is taking place
- (3) S will become i_3 S's becoming i_3 will take place

The episode expressions on the right are "derivative from the tensed statements to the effect that S is (or was or will be) i ; in accordance with" the schema above.¹⁶ The equivalence schema serves as one of the contextual definitions (referred to earlier) that allow us to eliminate event-expressions. In general, on the first reconstruction for the language of events, reference to event expressions can be eliminated by contextual definitions, thus,

¹⁴ Taking advantage of Reichenbach's idea of "event-splitting."

¹⁵ *TWO*, 541.

¹⁶ *TWO*, 542.

Caesar's crossing the Rubicon took place

is reduced to

Caesar crossed the Rubicon

that eliminates the reference to an event via the expression, 'Caesar's crossing,' in favor of a tensed statement about a changing thing, namely, Caesar. Thus, we have a general recipe, a *transformation schema*, for replacing event statements in favor of the statements involving changing things:

	is taking place	Vs
S's V-ing	took place	Ved
	will take place	Will V

As a result,

we note that there are two kinds of *singular term* which can be derived from tensed statements of the kind represented on the right-hand side of [the above]: that-clauses, thus

- (a) that S will become *i*,
- and episode-expressions, thus,
- (b) S's becoming *i*.¹⁷

"Singular terms" as in (a) "are a special kind of statement-mentioning device and are metalinguistic in character." Sellars notes

This being so, we can appreciate the truth contained in the idea that episodes are more basic than facts; *for episode-expressions, unlike that-clauses, are in the object language*.¹⁸

However, we are cautioned against supposing that episodes are the entities of which the world is '*made up*,'

for although it is correct to say that episode-expressions 'refer to extralinguistic entities'—indeed, to *episodes*—the above account tells us that episodes are *derivative* entities and rest on referring expressions which occur in tensed statements about things.¹⁹

17 TWO, 542.

18 TWO, 542.

19 TWO, 542.

In an effort to drive this point home, WS warns against thinking that causal relations obtain between events.²⁰ Since episode expressions occur in the object language and in P-implications (physical implications) like the singular terms in

The litmus paper's being put in acid (physically) implied its turning red

this wrongly gives the impression that physical implication is a relation *in re* between events. In fact, episode-expressions are grounded in tensed statements about things which “must be *that*-ed (in effect, quoted) to serves as the subject of statements to the effect that something physically implies something else.”²¹ WS cautions us against an overzealous reliance on the existence of events:

We must now remind ourselves that although we have permitted ourselves to speak above without qualification of a framework of events, these events have a derivative status in the sense that singular terms referring to events are contextually introduced in terms of sentences involving singular terms referring to things. And we must remind ourselves that in the framework of things it is *things* which come to be and cease to be, and that the event which is the coming to be or the ceasing to be of a thing itself neither comes to be nor ceases to be but (like all events) simply takes place. On the other hand, all metricizings in the framework of things is a matter of the locating of *events*, including the events which are the coming to be and ceasing to be of things.²²

Once again, we see that events (in the simplified model of the thing framework) are introduced through contextual definitions but that ultimately, events are the coming to be or ceasing to be of things, the *onset* of changes, as it were.

20 Here he is explicitly parting company with Reichenbach's analysis.

21 TWO, 543.

22 TWO, 572. Since the concepts of “event” and “fact” are not framework neutral, to get a sense of the thing-kind framework, recall, that for the Parmenideans, Being is the ultimate subject, one, homogeneous and indivisible. Outside of Being there is nothing that serves as a principle of individuation, multiplication and distinction. Aristotle—speaker for the thing-kind framework—admits the absoluteness, unity, infinity and immutability of Being but denies its homogeneity by introducing actuality/potentiality (motion). Denying that Being is a univocal concept, Aristotle uses motion to introduce distinctions which are, ultimately, merely reverberations in Parmenides ultimate absolute. Nothing can be outside this ultimate unity.

Events: Sellars 1934

Sellars often pointed out that one cannot put everything in jeopardy all at once, after all, we have to stand *somewhere*. Still, it should be obvious that although the precise texture of the notion of an episode is key, he relegates it to a footnote

The term 'episode' will be used, for the time being, in a broad sense in which no distinction is drawn among episodes, events, states, etc. These distinctions will be subsequently drawn to a degree of precision which suffices for the purposes of this paper.²³

The "degree of precision" is in evidence later,

To begin with, something must be said about the status of the very term 'episode.' That it is a common noun, and that "There are episodes" has the same general form as "There are lions," is clear. But more than this we can say that 'episode,' like 'property' and 'relation,' is a 'category word'; and to say this is to say that like the latter pair it is the counterpart *in the material mode of a logical pigeonhole for a certain class of expressions in our language*. Thus,

(77) E is an episode

tells us no more about E than is exhibited by

(78) E is taking place or has taken place or will take place

and serves to indicate that the singular term represented by 'E' is the sort of term which belongs in this type of context. Thus, to say that there are episodes is, in effect, to say that *something* either is taking place, has taken place, or will take place: And as saying this it is equivalent to (though it does not have the same sense as) a statement to the effect that something is either present, past, or future.²⁴

For anyone keeping score, it ought to feel as if the usage of 'episode' hovers just at the *edge* of the light as well as on the edge of being (inconsistently) in the world in the *narrow sense* and in the world in the *broad sense*. For, on the one hand, WS writes,

This being so, we can appreciate the truth contained in the idea that episodes are more basic than facts; for episode-expressions, unlike that-clauses, are in the object language.²⁵

But, on the other, remarks,

²³ TWO, 535.

²⁴ TWO, 547.

²⁵ TWO, 542.

But first a terminological remark is in order. It will undoubtedly have been noticed that in the preceding sections the term 'episode' has, with a minimum of warning, been stretched to cover items which would not ordinarily be so designated. Thus, we would not ordinarily say that the statement 'The soup is salty' reports an episode, even though it does report something that "comes to pass." Thus, we distinguish, for example, between 'episodes' and 'states.' It is no easy task to botanize the various kinds of temporal statement, or to find a plausible term for the broader category to which both episodes ('the salting of the soup') and states ('the being salty of the soup') belong. Perhaps they might be lumped together under 'outcome.' For the time being, however, I shall avoid any discussion of states, and limit myself to episodes proper.²⁶

"Well," one is inclined to ask, "are they or aren't they?"

Sellars 1934, in his thesis provides some clues:

...it seems wise to define an event as a selected portion of the behavior of a physical system. It is an implication of this definition that an event may be complex both in the sense that more than one existent is concerned, and in the sense that a complex change is involved. An event is not an *ontological unit* or *quantum* of being... Thus we speak of (the event of) the apple's rotting, and, in the case mentioned above, of (the event of) the automobile accident. Such usage is entirely legitimate. However, the important fact is that the behavior of the apple is no more a self-existent entity than its structure. Thus the ontological situation meant when an event is referred to consists of changing physical continuants... It is this capacity of the human mind to perceive and experience change, that renders possible the type of reference to things involved in the concept of an event. Ontologically there are no events. However in a sense there are events, just as, to use an analogy there are structures or forms, for the human mind is able to discriminate aspects of reality, while at the same time recognizing the categorial features of existence. We refer a behavior to things just as we refer a spatial structure to things, and just as in the latter case we speak of the squareness of the peg, so we speak of the death of Queen Anne.

According to the Physical Realist that Sellars defends, change is in-the-world in a narrow sense. But, as WS notes in another context,

²⁶ TWO, 541.

For the term ‘episode’ is elastic enough to cover a great deal of territory. If anything which occurs or takes place is to count as an episode, then whenever an object changes from having one disposition to another, the change is an episode.²⁷

What more can be said?²⁸

Meaning: Sellars 1962

Rather than concocting a direct answer, let’s examine another context in which ‘episode’ or ‘event’ plays a central role: the theory of meaning. An excursion into the core theory of meaning develops insight into WS’s position on events better than others. The Notre Dame Lectures contain enough introductions to the mechanics of the theory of meaning to suit most appetites, so a minimal level of familiarity will be assumed.²⁹ It was previously noted that WS’s model of language contains crucial simplifying assumptions in the manner of Carnap and Reichenbach but also other central assumptions occur:

²⁷ SRTT (*Some Reflections on Thoughts and Things*), 108.

²⁸ See Chrucky’s account of the WS’s images, Andrew Chrucky, Fordham Dissertation, 1990, Chapter 2-4, see www.ditext.com/chrucky/chru-0.html, provides a eminently accessible account of the Manifest and Scientific Images and how they fit into the Sellarsian scheme. One can disagree with much of what Chrucky has to say and still regard it as an interesting way of looking at WS’s project. When Chrucky argues that events in the narrow sense belong to both the Manifest Image and the Scientific Image, he parts company with Sellars. Perhaps it would help to point out that over the years, I heard WS invent and populate countless versions of the Images: they were creations of the ongoing dialectic, to be used in order to gain the higher ground which, when done, meant that the Images served but could serve no longer. It was often like that. Once, when I was giving a version of what I thought he was saying in TTC (*Towards a Theory of the Categories*), by “If there is knowledge of spatiotemporal objects, then these objects conform to general truths satisfying such and such conditions” is, as a whole, an analytic statement belonging to transcendental philosophy,” he said, chuckling, “yes, that’s all there, perhaps like the oak is in the acorn!” “Right,” I replied, “but your acorns have acorns inside of them.” One of the great benefits of the Notre Dame lectures is that we get to see how this dialectic unfolds while pieces of the lectures appear and reappear in various other works, polished and remastered. Except for his apology over the mis-steps by “Sellars 1957” in the theory of events, I don’t remember any other case of philosophical contrition.

²⁹ The appendix “A Dot-Quote Primer” provides a detailed summary of the machinery if one should find necessary more precision.

It must not be forgotten that *the semantical characterization of overt verbal episodes is the primary use of semantical terms, and that overt linguistic events as semantically characterized are the model for the inner episodes introduced by the theory.*³⁰

Again, recall that WS works with a “myth” if you will, a rationally reconstructed notion of thought and linguistic episodes so here he emphasizes the parasitic character of *thought*: it is parasitic upon *linguaging*. But, he also claims that the linguistic *episodes* themselves *in their primary sense* as bearers of meaning are not to be confused with *inscriptions* or *utterances* which are the *product* of linguaging. The point that the events are the bearers of meaning is often repeated:

It is often said that it is people rather than utterances which mean. But utterances are people uttering; the claim in question is true only in the trivial sense in which certain movements are a waltz only in so far as a person moving in certain ways is a person waltzing.³¹

Episode expressions that pick out the verbal behavior of language users are in the object language:

The familiar saw that words have meaning only because people mean things by them is harmless if it tells us that words have no meaning in abstraction from their involvement in the verbal behavior of language users.³²

Words are meaningful because they comprise verbal activity, verbal episodes. Inscriptions or utterances—objects that are not events—have meaning only in the derivative sense, in the sense that they are parasitic upon the episodes that give them life. The mere inscriptions or the words, abstracted from the linguistic episodes are objects but not events. They cannot have meaning in the primary sense. “But why?” we might ask, “why is that sense that they have meaning dependent on something more primary?”

Truth and Correspondence (1962) gives the most comprehensive account of the theory of meaning during the period and WS continues to refer to the explanation there all the way to the end of the Notre Dame Lectures.

30 EPM (*Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*), 188.

31 FD (*Fatalism and Determinism*), 151, 1966.

32 LTC (*Language as Thought and Communication*), 523, 1969.

Relationalism

The Notre Dame Lectures could not contain a more sustained attack on a philosophical position than the attack on *Relationalism*. And of course, the engine of *Relationalism* is the “means rubric” construed on the familiar relational model. “Relations, relations, relations!” Sellars says, striking the podium, “I want to get rid of all of them! All of them!” Indeed. The purge begins with the “means rubric.”

Sellars offers a reconstruction of the “means rubric” that has since become part of the philosophical landscape. WS attacks the keystone of *Relationalism*: namely, that meaning statements of the form

S (in L) means *p*

that is, the *means rubric*, are relational statements that assert a relation between linguistic and nonlinguistic items. For WS, both the terms in the meaning relation must have meaning and therefore must both belong to the linguistic order. Meaning statements, he argues, are specialized theoretical devices that function to say that one linguistic entity is a counterpart of another or, as he frequently puts it, that two words, sentences, or linguistic items have the same use or role.

Sometimes referred to as the “network theory of meaning,” it invokes the metaphor of words as meaning what they do because of their complete role in the “cognitive economy,” the complete actualization of transactions and exchanges—the web—in which a term is caught—on analogy with the way that the rules of a game, say Chess, constitute each “piece” by “virtue of the patterns they make” when produced in a “chessing-around” frame of mind.³³

33 SM (*Science and Metaphysics*), 76.

However this should not leave us with the impression that there is a similarity between

‘Rot’ (in German) means *red*

and

‘rot’ and ‘red’ have the same use.

Aside from the fact that the second mentions the word ‘red’ but the former does not, the differences Sellars focuses upon rest on his view that the former presupposes that the speaker knows how to use the word ‘red’. In using the means rubric, one is being asked to rehearse their use of the word ‘red’, so the theme is one of *meaning as translation*: if one wants to know what ‘Rot’ means, sit down, brew a cup of coffee and rehearse the use of ‘red’ in English if we want to understand how to use ‘Rot’. “The translation use of ‘mean’ gives expression to the fact that the same linguistic role can be played by different expressions.”³⁴

To explore the difference between the context of the means rubric and ordinary translation statements, Sellars introduces his notion of dot-quotes to represent a special form of quotation and argues that meaning statements can be regarded as if they embody this special form of quotation which is an extension of the historical conventions that developed into ordinary quotation. While ordinary quotes form expressions that have an intra-linguistic use, dot-quoted expressions have an inter-linguistic use as well. Furthermore, dot-quoted expressions are more general than ordinary quoted expressions because they pick out similarities of role, and ignore the empirical differences between the expressions which play the role in different languages.

Thus,

‘Rot’ (in German) means *red*

is analyzed as a phrase which actually involves a specialized form of quotation,

‘Rot’ (in German) means •red•.

³⁴ LT (*The Language of Theories*), 110.

Sellars takes the second to be a way of saying

‘Rot’s (in German) *are* •red•s

so he takes the “means rubric” to be a specialized form of a copula the chief advantage of which comes when we realize that dot-quoting functions as a perspicuous replacement for the nominalization *redness*:

we get an interpretation of abstract singular terms which is a powerful tool for dealing with problems in the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mind. For to make this move is to construe ‘stands for’ as a specialized form of the copula ‘to be’, the surface features of which (a) indicate that the subject matter is linguistic rather than, for example, military or religious; (b) make possible such contrasts as those between ‘stands for’, ‘connotes’, ‘denotes’, ‘refers to’ and ‘names’...³⁵

In TC, WS develops the idea that learning to use words requires learning the many-layered rules of a language and, as a result, exhibiting the uniformities in linguistic behavior brought about through those rules.³⁶ The network of roles, that is, the network which constitutes the meaning of the terms in a language bring it about that language pictures the world, the central and essential function of language,

the *sine qua non* of all others, is to enable us to picture the world in which we live.³⁷

While the shifting, dynamic uniformities that constitute the picturing are brought about by the normative structure we characterize as the web of meanings, picturing itself is a matter-of-factual relation between systems of items that are in-the-world in the *narrow sense* in a way that does not involve norms:

³⁵ SM (*Science and Metaphysics*), 81.

³⁶ Levels of language mirror movements up and down the semantic ladder. WS uses his contemporaries’ inability to know where they are on the ladder to great effect. To his ears, their pronouncements must have sounded like a beginning philosophy student confusing use and mention.

³⁷ TC (*Truth and Correspondence*), 46.

If picturing is to be a relation between objects in the natural order, this means that the linguistic objects in question must belong to the natural order. And this means that we must be considering them in terms of empirical properties and matter-of-factual relations, though these may, indeed must, be very complex, involving all kinds of constant conjunctions or uniformities pertaining to the language user and his environment. Specifically, although we may, indeed must, know that these linguistic objects are subject to rules and principles—are fraught with “ought”—we abstract from this knowledge in considering them as objects in the natural order.³⁸

The distinction involving linguistic objects in the natural order, that is, objects *in the world* in the *narrow* sense that does not involve norms, contrasts with linguistic objects that are *in the world* in the *broad* sense—the dot-quoted counterparts—which involve the conception of norms and standards.

The notoriously Janus-faced dot-quoted expressions cannot be viewed in isolation because, although as natural linguistic objects, they are treated as if discrete items in the world in the *narrow* sense, like any other functionally characterized object, it is an illusion borne of the “abstraction” mentioned: a prolate spheroid that happens to be an American or Canadian football makes an abysmal Soccer ball. Similarly, the items that constitute a world-map cannot be broken-off and regarded independently. In other words, one must not lose sight of the fact that the dot-quoted expressions giving rise to the natural linguistic objects are *in the world* in the *broad* sense. As Sellars notes in a related context, while natural linguistic objects are in the world in the narrow sense, the corresponding dot-quoted expressions,

are “in the world” only *in that broad sense* in which the ‘world’ includes linguistic norms and roles viewed (thus in translating) from the standpoint of a fellow participant.³⁹

³⁸ TC, 44.

³⁹ NS (*Naming and Saying*), 7, 1962, italics PA.

Thus, when WS remarks that “the only objects in the world are particulars,” by that, he means, *in the world* in the *narrow sense* that excludes linguistic norms and roles.⁴⁰ In a sense, there *really are no* linguistic objects in a broad sense—in the sense that they are entities of which the world is ‘made up’—to steal a phrase from *TWO*. The distinction between the ways items can be in the world presupposes the distinction between the normative and the non-normative so the world includes only linguistic objects in their empirical, descriptive or matter-of-factual terms.⁴¹

While the terms in the means rubric are both in the world in the broad sense because they involve the conception of norms and standards, “picturing is a complex matter-of-factual relation.”⁴²

Picturing...is a relation, indeed, a relation between two relational structures. And pictures, like maps, can be more or less adequate. The adequacy concerns the ‘method of projection’.⁴³

The “relational structure” is spatial in, as it were, a *coarse sense* which we’ll consider later. The crucial point is that the natural linguistic objects underpinning meaning itself are in the world in a *narrow sense*:

A statement to the effect that a linguistic item pictures a nonlinguistic item by virtue of the semantical uniformities characteristic of a certain conceptual structure is, in an important sense, an object language statement, for even though it mentions linguistic objects, it treats them as items in the order of causes and effects, i.e. *in rerum natura*, and speaks directly of their functioning in this order in a way which is to be sharply contrasted with the metalinguistic statements of logical semantics, in which the key role is played by abstract singular terms.⁴⁴

40 NS , 11, Indeed, NS can be taken as an attempt to make clear the two sense of being in the world.

41 WS often exhibits a Kantian playfulness when dealing with the semantic and syntactic ladders. Once, during an argument over one of the Pittsburgh Pirates being overpaid, I said that it doesn’t really matter because debts aren’t in the world in the narrow sense, to which WS replied, “Sure they are, I pay debts with dollar bills [as he pulled one out of his pocket and waved it in my face] and this dollar bill is in the world!”

42 SM (*Science and Metaphysics*), 136, 1966.

43 SM, 135.

44 SM, 137.

The Strategy is clear (ignoring the exaggerated appeal to ‘the order of causes’): WS drives home the point that the traditional construal of the means rubric ignores the distinction between meaning and picturing, the distinction between forms of reality—being in the world in the *broad* and the *narrow* sense—and confuses the uniformities brought about by norms and standards with the norms and standards themselves.

Events: Sellars 1957

Suppose now that we take the 1957 analysis of meaning and turn it on the statement made earlier about the “familiar saw” that words mean because of their involvement in verbal behavior, that is, we turn it on the theory of events? In particular the event,

Jones says ‘fa’.

Linguistic events, episodes of uttering or inscribing have meaning in the primary sense—they are in the world in the narrow sense. Of course, linguistic events taken in the full-blooded normative sense that constitutes roles are not in the world in the narrow sense. But, *linguistic events insofar as they constitute the complex matter-of-factual picturing relation as natural linguistic objects are in the world in the narrow sense.* We are reminded of the topic in TC:

My topic, therefore, can be given a provisional formulation as follows: Is there a sense of ‘correspond’, other than that explicated by semantic theory, in which empirical truths correspond to objects or events in the world?⁴⁵

Ultimately, although *TC* vacillates between the correlate of the product of the *inscribings* of the perfect inscriber, namely, the inscriptions, and the *inscribings* themselves as linguistic events, the inscriptions are involved in a merely secondary or accidental sense.

Earlier, WS provided an account of what it means to say that events are derivative objects and therefore, talk about events can be eliminated by means of Reichenbachian transformations (contextual definitions) in favor of talk about changing things. How do the transformations work on a linguistic event? For example,

45 *TC (Truth and Correspondence)*, 30.

Jones says 'fa'.

Recall that WS introduced a transformation schema:

	+ is taking place		Vs
S's V-ing	* took place	≡	Ved
	. will take place		Will V

The transformation schema, however, *does not apply* to the following episode expression:

Jones saying that fa

which would reduce to,

Jones says that fa

because it is not one of the appropriate forms:

	+ is taking place
...	* took place
	. will take place

These forms will reduce, for example,

Jones saying that fa took place

to

Jones said that fa

but will go no further.

Since events are *derivative objects*, the expectation would be that statements about the linguistic event of *Jones saying that fa* are eliminable in favor of statements about Jones which, given the underlying ontology, seems bizarre.

The theory of meaning exacerbates the problem because in addition to people *linguaging*, linguistic *events*, as we have just seen, occur in the picturing relation

... pictures 0₁

yet not only does the linguistic event of Jones saying 'fa' *fail* to fit the recipe for elimination via contextual transformations, it contains an element that is, as WS says in the lectures, *that-ed*. While

Reichenbach's transformations will take us from an *event-argument* to a *thing-argument*, the transformation itself is a *wholistic transformation* which, for our purposes, means that *that-ed* item is ineliminable.⁴⁶ To this point, the theory provides no recipe for transforming empirical descriptive expressions referring to events into expressions for language-users.

Indeed, one searches in vain for a way of handling,

...is an event

because, for *Sellars 1957*, there is no need for an *Abstract Entities*-type treatment, events *are* in the object language, after all. What, then, are we to make of

Jones' V-ing is an event,

which, as a derivative object, is supposed to be reducible to a statement that mentions only Jones? Reichenbach's transforms weren't designed to deal with categorizing statements. But where do we turn, then, when we leave the necessary abstraction of *inscriptions* and look for cash in terms *inscribings* and *utterings*?

The upshot is that the recipe for treating linguistic events, presented in *WS 1957*, does not work in the picturing relation. As a result, the transformations, the contextual definitions, in short, all the *machinery* associated with statements that have meaning in the *primary sense* which are also events does not cohere with the treatment of picturing. It is as if Sellars, having been hypnotized by the treatment of the derivative objects—inscriptions and utterances, for example—focused on what he himself regarded as an abstraction. The corresponding linguistic events, which, as the primary bearers of meaning should have been the primary target of the discussion, remain unanalyzable by the available transformations.

⁴⁶ Reichenbach, §48, p. 269.

Events Redux: Sellars 1969

By the late 60s, WS had grown increasingly dissatisfied with the 1957 analysis of events—a dissatisfaction that first finds expression in *MCP*.⁴⁷ That it bothered him is evident in these lectures when, many years later, he still regards the early treatment of events as a significant mistake. By the early 70s, there were questions about the ontology of events.⁴⁸ As a result of WS's dissatisfaction, the ontology of events is brought in line with the treatment of abstract entities generally. Still, WS proved to be fairly coquettish about the way the 1957 treatment of meaning should be reformulated now that he had taken the primary bearers of meaning *out* of the world in the narrow sense.⁴⁹ Since it seemed to me that the reformulation of the event analysis and the theory of meaning were on a collision course, it led to some fairly persistent badgering. My exasperation amused WS but one day, he pointed out the general direction that a solution would take. The story goes like this.

In Sellars 1957, events are in the world in the *narrow* sense,
 Caesar's crossing the Rubicon

is another way of saying,

⁴⁷ *Metaphysics and the Concept of a Person*, see footnote 6, p. 230.

⁴⁸ Jack Norman was working on events, WS refers to his work much later in *FMPP* (*Foundations for a Metaphysics of Pure Process*, 7, p. 64) yet Jack's treatment meshes with the 1957 analysis. Jack worked with Barry Hamilton on the ontology of events, Hamilton got me interested. To say that I was completely baffled by the direction of WS's thinking at the time would be an understatement. With Hamilton leading the way, He and I worked through Sellars' theory of meaning and tried to unravel its relationship to the event analysis. Although Barry could put the problem into a sentence, it was difficult for me to get WS to respond: the path always seemed to be protected by challenges that WS wanted met before I could frame the problem. Note that Chrucky's event2 is not exactly what WS has in mind for "event" in the Peircean ideal framework in which events are processes. For one thing, Broad's phenomenological approach to deriving events2 does not work for WS. WS uses Pritchard's strategy—as he mentions in the lectures—we easily mistake certain experiences for events. Indeed, part of the problem with the relativistic interpretation of time and events rests on just this sort of confusion. The ontology Broad wants is completely wrong as it brings events and time into the ground floor. Similarly, WS introduces events in the fine-grained sense as part of our regulative ideal—not as Chrucky implies, as part of the thing-kind framework.

⁴⁹ In addition, linguistic events started to play a more prominent role as he pushed the VB model of mental events.

Caesar crossed the Rubicon.

Thus, characterizations of events, as derivative objects, can be replaced by statements mentioning only the “changing things” participating in those events. *Linguistic* events, on the other hand, considered in matter-of-factual terms and standing in complex matter-of-factual relations to objects in the world so as to constitute a dynamic picture are objects in the world. If the former gives us “events” in the Pickwickian sense, surely the latter gives us events in the Cheshire cat sense.

Sellars 1969, in confronting these issues, puts events in the world in the *broad* sense and tells us that the pair above involve “truth.”

Thus the next thing to note is that the concept of truth is the head of a family of what might be called alethic concepts: exemplification, existence, standing in (a relation), (an event’s) taking place, (a state of affairs) obtaining, being in (a state), and many others.⁵⁰

Thus,

There clearly are such things as events; and the events in which a person participates do constitute a series. But if we look at one such event, say, the event of Caesar crossing the Rubicon it becomes apparent that what can be said by referring to the event in which Caesar participated can also be put without such reference. Thus, instead of saying,

the event of Caesar crossing the Rubicon took place

we can simply say,

Caesar crossed the Rubicon.

Indeed, it is clear that in ordinary discourse event-talk is in some sense derivative from substance-talk.⁵¹

⁵⁰ NAO (*Naturalism and Ontology*), 100.

⁵¹ MCP (*Metaphysics and the Concept of a Person*), 226; AAE (*Actions and Events*), 53.

While WS wants to hold the line on the “derivative” status of event-talk, the concept of “derivative” undergoes a metamorphosis:

28. Turning now to the ontological implications of the above analysis, the next point to be noticed and stressed is that according to it events are not objects, save in that very broad sense in which anything that can be talked about is an object. Thus the only objects proper involved in Socrates’ running are Socrates himself... talk about events is a way of talking about things changing. Thus there are no events in addition to changing things and persons.

73. In other words we must take into account the fact that according to that analysis, ‘running’ as an event sortal is a metalinguistic nominalization of ‘to run’, as ‘being red’ is a metalinguistic nominalization of ‘is red’... while, of course, there are events, there really are no events, for events are not basic items—atoms—in the furniture of the manifest image. This claim was supported by two lines of thought: (a) we can always retreat from statements which involve event locutions, and which ostensibly make a commitment to a domain of events as objects in the world, thus

A running by Socrates took place
to statements which do not, thus
Socrates ran.

(b) Since (a), by itself, is compatible with the claim that it is events, rather than things, which are primary, the dominant consideration was, according to our analysis, that event locutions belong one step up the semantic ladder and refer to linguistic or conceptual items, rather than to items in the world.⁵²

As he puts it in the lecture “Perspectives 1986,” lecture II,
So what we have then is the sentence
Socrates runs
and we also have the event sentence
a running by Socrates took place.
The latter is what I want to focus attention on because what you can say in a simple subject predicate

⁵² FMPP (*Foundations for a Metaphysics of Pure Process*), II.

sentence like ‘Socrates runs’, we can also say by means of the locution,

a running by Socrates took place.

Now ‘taking place’, it should be clear, is a cousin of ‘exemplifies’. The last time I was characterizing *exemplification* as equivalent to “true of,” for example

a exemplifies triangularity

is a higher order semantical statement to the effect that a certain abstract entity namely triangularity, is true of **a**. I called ‘exemplifies’ an alethic expression, referring to the word ‘true’ and what I want to suggest now is that when we say that

a running by Socrates took place

what we are really doing is saying

that he runs is/was/will be true of Socrates.

Thus ‘taking place’ is an alethic expression.

The earlier transformation schema from *TWO* is replaced:

The generic form of events, sentences, and, hence, of action sentences is:

+took place

S’s V-ing *is taking place

. will take place

I have proposed that this generic form be reconstructed as:

+was true

That *S Vs* *is true

. will be true⁵³

Thus, for Sellars 1969,

Socrates’ running too place

has, the form

That Socrates runs was true

which is perspicuously analyzed as

The •Socrates runs• was true

and tells us that statements of that type were once correctly assertible. The transformation of event-talk turns out to be a special case of the truth move.

⁵³ AAE (*Actions and Events*), 60.

Events, for Sellars 1957 conflated a metalinguistic statement with the statement that it is about. While in the earlier theory it was *events* in the world in the *narrow* sense that were derivative objects and dependent on substances, it is now event-talk that gives us derivative sortal expressions applying to items that are in the world in the *broad* sense. Indeed, events are a species of proposition. Yet, propositions are a type of linguistic event! As WS remarks,

The proposition that-p...would rather be an event-
or action-type which ‘involves’, in a manner by no
means easy to analyze, the proposition that-p...⁵⁴

And, according to the theory of meaning, the primary use of dot-quoted expressions is the classification of linguistic events:

Thus what we are really classifying are linguistic
activities...when all the proper moves have been
made,

Jones said that snow is white
becomes

Jones •snow is white•ed.⁵⁵

We can form contrived verbs that serve as the basis for the propositional expressions:

Thus, in

Jones says that it is raining
the “it is raining” is being used to form the name of a
linguistic type of which, if the statement is true,
some Jonesean verbal behavior is a token. Other-
wise put, some Jonesean verbal behavior is an •it is
raining•.⁵⁶

So,

to •it rains•

will be the available verb that applies to items that are in the world in a *broad* sense.

The *problem* is that picturing requires objects in the world in the *narrow* sense so linguistic events could not enter into the picturing relation *except* when considered in matter-of-factual terms (as natural linguistic objects). The exception works for Sellars 1957

⁵⁴ AAE, 10.

⁵⁵ MP (*Metaphysics and the Concept of a Person*), 237.

⁵⁶ PP (*Philosophical Perspectives*), 287.

because events could be so construed. But it doesn't work for Sellars 1969.

The event

Caesar crossing the Rubicon

is analyzed by the dot-quoted expression,

the •Caesar crossed the Rubicon•

which is to be understood in terms of the linguistic role and governing norms of the phrase that is illustrated. Events have been moved *up* the ladder *away* from picturing and, if we were to take the approach given above from the lecture *Perspectives 1986 Lecture II*, the expressions involve “a higher order semantical statement to the effect that certain abstract entities namely [an event], is true of [Caesar].” Events are no longer in the world in the *narrow* sense *nor* are they “derivative objects.” Indeed, they are not “objects” at all except in the sense in which they are treated as “formal universals” or used “in second intention.”⁵⁷

The Truth Move

Although Sellars provides clues as to the resolution of the tension between the 1957 treatment of events and the 1969 treatment, the basic insight is contained in the “truth move” as he calls it in the lecture “Conceptual Change 1969” and also in the lecture “What Really Exists 1969.”⁵⁸ WS comments,

38. How does ‘that-fa’ function in ‘Jones says that-fa’ (where ‘says’ is used in the sense of ‘thinks-out-loud’)? To answer this question, we must ask a prior question:

How does “ ‘fa’ ” function in “Jones says ‘fa’”?

The answer is that “ ‘fa’ ” functions as an adverbial modifier of the verb ‘says.’ Language can be written, spoken, gesticulated, etc., and ‘says’ serves to pin down the modality of a languaging to utterance. If speech were the only modality, or if we abstract from a difference of modality, we could replace

⁵⁷ I have discussed this in the appendix “A dot-quote primer.”

⁵⁸ The systematic treatment alluded to in AAE (*Actions and Events*), 63 and CC (*Conceptual Change*), 25, was merely on the horizon. The phrase ‘truth move’ also occurs in the discussions with Rosenberg.

Jones says 'fa'

by

Jones 'fa's,

i.e., use the expression-cum-quotes as a verb.

Roughly, to 'fa' would be first to 'f' and then to 'a.'

39. It is because there is a range of verbal activities involving the uttering of 'fa', e.g., asserting, repeating, etc., that we give it the status of an adverb and hence, in effect, require that even in the case of sheer thinking-out-loud there be a verb which it modifies.⁵⁹

Consider, then, the linguistic event of

Jones' •Snow is white•*ing*

that pictures the snow. To do this job is must be an object in the world, and, under the analysis, the expression becomes,

the •Jones •Snow is white•s•

Compare,

that x Vs is true of Jones

which reduces to

•Jones •Snow is white•s•s

referring to sentences consisting of the contrived verbs that we constructed earlier.

Or, making the alethic character clear,⁶⁰

(The event of) Jones V-ing took place

has, in the first place, the form

That Jones Vs was true

and, made more fully explicit, has the form

The •Jones Vs• was true.

and carries us, via the truth move, to

•Jones •Vs•s• •snow is white•s/Vs⁶¹

⁵⁹ NAO (*Naturalism and Ontology*), VI, 38.

⁶⁰ MCP, 229.

⁶¹ Sellars-Rosenberg, 300.

“Which tells us, in first approximation,” WS says, “that expressions consisting of a •V•s appropriately concatenated with an •Jones• are true⁶² and, by Wittgenstein’s insight, the expression applies to

•Jones•s

having a certain character. “I am indeed committed to the following,” WS writes, “•a•s [•Jones•s] are STs...” but “not *mere* STs but PROPSs.”⁶³ Granted, WS goes on to say, the instances of •Jones•V•s•s are object, they are “not objects which, considered as a linguistic role players, are *mere* singular terms.”⁶⁴ But, since

•Jones•s are singular terms,

the material mode equivalent of which is

Jones is an object

indeed, a basic object, then the analysis reveals the sense in which

(The event of) Jones •snow is white•ing

is *Jones* (as a language user). Linguistic events are language users and, in the primary sense, it is *persons* (the ultimate objects so to speak, the particulars named by BSTs) as language users that picture the world:

the primary mode of being of “expressions” is people speaking... Thus what we are really classifying are linguistic activities.⁶⁵

Thus, for Sellars 1969, for reasons similar to those given for the existence of states of affairs,

There really are events

is true but, in the final analysis,

There *really are* no events in the world (in the narrow sense)

⁶² CC, 87.

⁶³ Sellars-Rosenberg Correspondence, 301, they are ATPROPSs according, 312.

⁶⁴ Sellars-Rosenberg, 301. Compare SM, 105.

⁶⁵ MP, 237; CC, 24; MFC, 429; NO, 75§48; Rosenberg-Sellars, 316.

which is the material mode formulation of the realization that the singular terms which ostensibly name events turn out, in the formal mode, to be *metalinguistic* predicates.⁶⁶

“On the revised theory of events,” I asked WS, “if linguistic events aren’t in the world in the narrow sense, how can they picture?” He replied, “Events don’t picture, people do!”

And that is the end of the story with which we began. Whereas triangularity is an easy move up the semantic ladder because it arrives at the familiar form of *being triangular*, there’s no *run-ity*, *run-ness* or *run-hood* that stands above *run* so, instead, we lean on *running* that manages to disguise its metalinguistic or conceptualistic pedigree. If we aren’t on our guard, events tend to escape into the world in the narrow sense.

Time

Time is in trouble. Of course, there really is no time but it is not merely that. For, just as Sellars 1969 revisited events, the treatment of time in Sellars 1957 must be revisited. As one can anticipate, Sellars 1957 takes *time* to be derivative as he construed events to be.⁶⁷ While he rejects the view that concepts pertaining to time are explicitly definable in terms of relations between events (and, therefore, not derivative entities in his technical sense), he defends the notion that time is the counterpart of empirically ascertainable relationships between events. WS poses the problem,

“But,” it will be said, “even granting that something like the position you have been sketching can stand the gaff, you have not yet shown how metrical relations between empirically ascertainable episodes can be derivative from nonrelational tem-

⁶⁶ Rosenberg-Sellars, 318.

⁶⁷ TWO, 551.

poral facts concerning things. For, as you yourself have insisted, if things are the only basic individuals, then all relational temporal facts pertaining to episodes must rest on nonrelational temporal facts pertaining to things.”⁶⁸

WS’s first view is consistent with this early treatment of time because events are in the world in a narrow sense. So what happens when, as Sellars 1969 avers, there aren’t even any episodes in the world in the narrow sense upon which to hang temporal facts? What of time then?

Changing Things: Sellars 1949

An issue has been waiting in the wings since the start: why isn’t talk about “changing things” smuggling in the concept of an event? For the historically sensitive philosopher, the answer to that question is bound up with a peripatetic slogan famously ridiculed by Descartes: *motus est actus entis in potentia, quatenus est in potentia*.⁶⁹ And often finds expression in WS’ claim that mental “acts” are not “actions” (events).⁷⁰

The treatment of events in *TWO* takes place within the explanatory framework of *kinds of things*. A good idea of what WS has in mind emerges in *APM*.⁷¹:

It is especially significant to the historian of philosophy that the thing-nature framework, though historically prior to and more “natural” than the event-law framework which was to dominate science from the seventeenth century on, could be correctly analyzed only by a philosopher who has a clear conception of a law of nature...the language of things and properties, states and circumstances, where it is appropriate, sums up what we know.⁷²

⁶⁸ *TWO*, 552

⁶⁹ Motion is the act of being in potency, inasmuch as this is in potency.

⁷⁰ In case one wonders why WS worries so little about determinism, the answer is rooted in his rational reconstruction of talk about “mental events” which, once defanged, become “actualities” which “take place” but aren’t events. And, of course, for him, since there are no events in the narrow sense, a determinism that rests on relations between particulars can’t get off the ground.

⁷¹ *APM* (Aristotelian Philosophies of Mind), 1949; reprinted in *KPKT* (*Kant and Pre-Kantian Themes: Lectures by Wilfrid Sellars*), (Ridgeview, 2002).

⁷² *APM*, n 22 .4.

Now, he notes, that although the elaboration of concepts within the thing-nature framework may be roughly hewn common sense, it is an *explanatory* framework:

It follows from what we have been saying that concepts of *kinds of things* are the ways in which common sense crystallizes its experience of the world, and that this crystallization contains the common-sense grasp of natural laws, crude and incomplete though this grasp may be. To the philosopher it is an interesting and important fact that common sense thus formulates its understanding of the *world order* in terms of a framework which, when correctly analyzed, is seen to be logically more complicated than that of a functional correlation of events...I conclude, then, that the concept of the nature of a thing, in so far as it is a coherent one, can be analyzed in terms of the concept of dovetailing set of dispositional properties which specify both the states by which it has responded to its historical circumstances, and the states by which it *would* have responded to other circumstances.⁷³

How then, do the dispositions get called into play? WS remarks,

Process must not only *depend on*, it must also somehow be *derived from* factors which are intrinsically immune from change or becoming... Now, things or substances change; but it does not even make sense (except metaphorically) to say that the natures or forms of things change. Thus, change is impossible unless there is more to things than their forms.

In the thing-nature framework the specific correlation of states and circumstances, the ontological fruitfulness, the overflow, arises from the powers, the potentialities of things which are the “more” to which WS refers.⁷⁴

⁷³ APM 22 .

⁷⁴ WS acknowledges his indebtedness to C.D. Broad’s discussion of dispositional properties and the concept of the nature of a thing in *An Examination of McTaggart’s Philosophy* (1933), Vol I. pp. 142-151, 264-278. See also chap. X of his *The Mind Its Place in Nature*.

Motion in the thing-nature framework is defined by elements common to all categories of being. There are two such elements: *potency* and *act*. As the Aristotelian—the progenitor of the thing-nature framework—sees it, motion is not a purely passive potency; for there can be rest in what is simply possibility. A house, prior to being built, can remain indefinitely in the state of mere possibility. Motion is not perfect act, either; for once the house is built it remains in permanent act and all the motion has ceased. Motion, then, is not purely a potency nor purely an act, and yet we can define it only through potency and act. Hence it must necessarily be an admixture of act and potency, it must participate both in act and in potency.⁷⁵ As Aquinas summarizes it:

We must realize, then, that something may be in act only, something may be in potency only, and something may be midway between pure potency and perfect act. What is only in potency is not yet being moved; what is already in perfect act is not being moved but has already been moved.⁷⁶

Hence a thing that is being moved is something that is in between pure potency and act, something that is partly in potency and partly in act.

The slogan, which Descartes scorns, rests on the explanatory machinery peculiar to the thing-kind framework of common sense—a framework dominated by the biological metaphors of growth and decay (“metaphors” to us). *Changing things* are things in motion. Things move because of the dovetailing set of dispositional properties.⁷⁷ *Actualities* are not acts or events, WS is fond of accusing historically challenged determinists of confusing “mental actualities” with “mental events.” Our concept of an event is *not framework neutral* and does not have a place in the basic thing-kind framework.

⁷⁵ I am borrowing from DeRegnon’s legendary discussion here.

⁷⁶ Physics, III, lesson 2.

⁷⁷ Actuality and potentiality are not non-explained explainers but the trip down that rabbit-hole can just as easily be found in C.D. Broad who, by the way, warns against using motion in the manner we have but goes on to use it anyway. Suarez, in particular, was famous for his attempt to drill down from actuality and potentiality to something more basic—but that is a discussion for another occasion.

The discussion of time begins with statements about changing things:

It is time, therefore, that we faced the fact that if we are going to take *things* as our only primitive logical individuals, we must find a *nonrelational* way of talking about *changing things* by the use of tensed verbs which provides a logical basis for statements about topological and metrical *relations* between events when it is translated into the derived framework of episodes and events which we have been concerned to analyze.⁷⁸

It helps to draw a distinction between talk about ‘event’ in a *course-grained* sense and ‘event’ in a *fine-grained* sense. In the Sellars of *TWO*, the distinction between the Manifest Image and the Scientific Image had not yet crystallized. As a result, it is easy to confuse cases which would later be split neatly between the two. A problem exacerbated by the fact that many of the interesting cases involve the failure to distinguish between cases in which one is moving on from an image and cases in which one is abandoning an image.⁷⁹ If one reads the referenced sections of C.D. Broad *through* Sellarsian eyes tuned to the character and differences between conceptual frameworks, one comes up with a reasonable approximation of what WS has in mind by ‘event’ in the *course-grained* sense of the thing-kind framework. The general distinction between a course-grained explanatory framework and the “fine-grained” explanatory framework persists throughout WS’ works.⁸⁰

However, where C.D. Broad finds *facts* and *events* as ultimate ontological categories,⁸¹ WS takes seriously the idea of an *event* as *motion* in the classical sense described above and therefore talk about events is often replaced by talk about actuality and potentiality. The concept of an event, we might say, evolves with WS’ theory of events and moves from being a member of the “motion” family (where it is “in the world” in the narrow sense as a changing

⁷⁸ *TWO*, 551.

⁷⁹ When I was pestering WS about this question, the answer came in the form of *CC* (*Conceptual Change*).

⁸⁰ 2 *MFC* (*Meaning as Functional Classification*), 418; *NO*, 64; *SM*, 53; *OAFP* (*On Accepting First Principles*), 309, for example.

⁸¹ C.D. Broad, especially, 151.

thing) to being a member of a conceptual category of items “in the world” in the broad sense until its final transposition into the ultimate regulative (Peircean) scientific framework as *pure process*. Not, mind you, the *processes* of C.D. Broad unless Broad has first been squeezed through the Manifest Image *cum* Scientific image repertoire of categorial distinctions.⁸²

The emerging Aristotelian thing-kind framework that includes events (as changing things) in a merely *coarse-grained* sense cannot even support determinism—it would be incoherent.⁸³ The actuality-potentiality distinction, by which Aristotle eloquently solved the Heraclitean problem of change, underwrites event-talk.

Time: Sellars 1957

Returning now to the problem of time—now that we have some idea of the *coarse-grained* (and framework relative) concept of an event—what is the status of time in the common sense world? Since it is a question that WS sets out to answer in *TWO*, one expects an answer to be forthcoming.⁸⁴ Since Time is bound up with events, one would expect that as with events, Time finds a place in the common sense world in a coarse-grained sense:

What is of somewhat greater interest, however, is that our analysis throws light on the sense in which ‘there are’ temporal relations at all. For while there clearly are temporal relations between events, the latter (we have argued) have a derivative status in the sense that statements about events are, in principle, translatable into statements about changeable things. If we put this somewhat misleadingly by saying that ‘ultimately’ or ‘in the last analysis’ there are no such things as events, we must also say that

⁸² A difference which should be apparent when reading, say, C.D. Broad, 142.

⁸³ Sellars would argue that the concept of an event required for determinism doesn’t arrive on the scene until after the Cartesians. If one invokes a relation between particulars to ground determinism, WS argues against the idea at length in his treatment of Spinoza, see KPT (*Kant and Pre-Kantian Themes*) for his discussion. For a discussion of episodes as actualities, see, for example, Sellars-Aune Correspondence; *SM (Science and Metaphysics)*, 31, 70-71, 156-157; *FD (Fatalism and Determinism)*, 153; *ME (The Metaphysics of Epistemology)*, 3; *MP (Metaphysics and the Concept of a Person)* §45.

⁸⁴ *TWO*, 527.

*'ultimately' or 'in the last analysis' there are no such things as temporal relations.*⁸⁵

Events: Sellars 1969

But, we must ask, “By dragging events, in the *narrow sense*, out of the world by the scruff of their metaphysical necks, and putting them in the world in the broad sense, haven't we done the same to time? After all, if events aren't objects, there is nothing for there to be temporal relations between.” Given the discussion above, we can feel comfortable with the ontological implications:

Turning now to the ontological implications of the above analysis, the next point to be noticed and stressed is that according to it events are not objects, save in that very broad sense in which anything that can be talked about is an object. Thus the only objects proper involved in Socrates' running are Socrates himself, and such other unproblematic objects as sand and gravel.⁸⁶

And, indeed, on the new theory of events, although events aren't objects in the world in the narrow sense, we have a means of talking about them:

With a qualification to be considered in the next section, talk about *events* is a way of talking about things changing. Thus there are no events *in addition* to changing things and persons.

And since this is so, it would seem that temporal relations must follow their relatives up the metaphysical ladder and out of the world in the narrow sense. Indeed, WS follows up with the remark:

Another, but closely related, ontological point:
*There are no temporal relations.*⁸⁷

Nor, for that matter are there instants,

⁸⁵ *TWO*, 550.

⁸⁶ FMPP (*Foundations for a Metaphysics of Pure Process*), II, 28.

⁸⁷ FMPP, II, 30.

Instantaneous C#ings are to be construed not as building blocks in the world, but rather as *entia rationis* [linguistic/conceptualistic entities] tailored to fit the *entia rationis* which are instants.⁸⁸

Later we will have to consider how WS incorporates Prichard's reasons for challenging the view that time, events or motion can be profitably characterized as perceivables. For now, let's continue with the present line of thought. Although the words WS uses differ slightly, the idea remains the same: events are in the world in the broad sense—the notion of *entia rationis* allows him to touch bases with the *philosophia perennis* in a way that he finds essential. But, whereas in Sellars 1957, the temporal relations were not in the world in the narrow sense because there were no events in the narrow sense, Sellars 1969 takes a different strategy: C#ings don't *really* have duration because there aren't any in the requisite sense and there are no temporal relations because, aside from the fact that their ostensible *relata* are gone, temporal expressions are not *relational*. In *FMPP*, they are “connectives” which is as it should be: on the later view of events, events are sentences, not singular terms: the material mode

that S Vs is an event

is analyzed by

the •S Vs• is an event sentence (EPROP),

connectives, as WS goes on to point out, are needed to “connect” them. Although,

The•the •S Vs•• is a ST,

and, thus, an object, in the material mode, it is not an item that can stand in temporal “relations,” it is a kind.

WS was, at the time, unable to give an adequate formalization of event-talk, so he never discusses further the “connectives” in the appropriate sense except to point out some of the logic required of them:

In the passage referred to in [*TWO* and *NO*], note 5 above, I characterized the above expressions as ‘temporal connectives’ to emphasize that like the logical connectives they are not relation words. I now think it better to construe them as adverbs, and

⁸⁸ *FMPP*, II, 120.

await an adequate theory of adverbial modifiers for further illumination.⁸⁹

So what are we to make of the earlier claim,

I have argued elsewhere that tense—in that broad sense which includes both tensed verbs and such indicator words as ‘now’—is an irreducible feature of temporal discourse. In other words, the temporal aspects of the world cannot be captured by discourse from which all ‘tensedness’ has been eliminated. I shall not reargue this thesis which, after all, is widely held, on the present occasion. I shall simply take it to be an essential part of the larger story I am trying to tell.

Earlier, we came to grips with the sense in which events are *in the world* in the *broad* sense and, in our discussion of motion in the thing-kind framework, we have pointed out a sense in which “events” are in a coarse-grained way, in the world in a narrow sense (as changing things). Can we do the same for time? Sellars remarks,

...there is the idea that time has the status of a quasi-theoretical entity the ultimate particulars of which are moments. According to the latter interpretation, metrical relationships between periods and moments of time would be ‘idealized’ counterparts of empirically ascertainable metrical relationships between episodes pertaining to everyday ...things.⁹⁰

In the lectures, WS addresses the sense in which time is introduced as a metrical framework rather than as part of the content of the world. So, how then, is time bound up with “statements concerning empirically ascertainable metrical relations between episodes [in the coarse-sense] pertaining to things of everyday life?”⁹¹

89 *FMPP*, II, 34. Although WS refers to Jack Norman’s work, Jack continued along the lines of Reichenbach who regarded events as in the world in the narrow sense.

90 *TWO*, 551.

91 *TWO*, 551.

The use of tensed statements is a basic feature of the thing-kind framework and, even if one could pry it loose from the framework of time,

tensed discourse with these [temporal] connectives,
but without the framework of time, would constitute
a most primitive picture of the world.⁹²

WS argues for the ineliminability of tensed discourse and the ultimate incoherence of those who argue for “timeless facts” the detensed language of which constitutes the neutral foundation for these more basic items.⁹³

Leaving aside the dismantling of proponents of a basic detensed language (contained in the text), it isn’t difficult to see what WS has in mind by the claim,

This makes it doubly important to see that episode-expressions are grounded in tensed statements about things, where these statements, since they are not singular terms, must be *that*-ed (in effect, quoted) to serve as the subject of statements to the effect that something physically implies something else.⁹⁴

And indeed, on the theory of events for Sellars 1969, recall that in the analysis of events, events are propositions, and so, are a subcategory of PROP, e.g., EPROP.⁹⁵

Jones putting the litmus paper in acid is an event,
not an object

which is analyzed in the material mode as

That Jones put the litmus paper in acid is an event,
not an object

and becomes, in formal mode,

⁹² *TWO*, 552.

⁹³ *TWO*, 531-532. The “irreducible element of tensed discourse about things which is at the heart of our world picture,” 577. That there is a place for the detensed language is shown by Sicha in his *Mathematics*.

⁹⁴ *TWO*, 543.

⁹⁵ Exploiting the terminology of the Sellars-Rosenberg correspondence, January 16, 1973.

The •*Jones put the litmus paper in acid*• is an EPROP, not a ST.⁹⁶

Coincidentally, on the fine-grained analysis in the later theory of events, as WS says in *TWO*, ‘The •*Jones put the litmus paper in acid*•’ is not a singular term once it has been suitably “*that-ed*” and causal statements are metalinguistic in character.

Turning to time in the coarse-grained sense, WS offers the following,

The temptation to think of the continuum of events topologically conceived apart from specific metrics as the basic reality which includes these metrics as specific patterns of topological relationship is a mislocation of the fact that metrical discourse about events is rooted in premetrical tensed discourse in which we talk about doing this or that while (before, after) other things do this or that in our immediate practical environment.⁹⁷

Leaving aside the issue of events in the broad sense that constitute the topologically ordered continuum, let’s examine how they might be said to be “rooted in premetrical tensed discourse.”

Time Again

What we’ve got so far creates a tension between Time as a relation between events which are *not* in the world in the narrow sense—in which case there *really are* no temporal relations—and Time as a relation between events in the broad sense—in which case there are temporal relations. And we need to point to WS’s view about features of the Manifest Image that help make sense of these claims. In other words, we need to see what he is getting at when he remarks above, “temporal aspects of the world cannot be captured by discourse from which all ‘tensedness’ has been eliminated.”

⁹⁶ If events are propositions, then the expression which translates ‘event’ into the formal mode must stand for a species of sentence. Here we are coining the phrase ‘E-sentence’ for that species of sentence.

⁹⁷ *TWO*, 573. For the Kantian, time and space are the mediums by (through) which we encounter things doing this or that, here or there.

It isn't necessary to go far because the relevant distinctions can be found in *Science and Metaphysics*:

Let me begin by drawing familiar distinctions. In the first place, between: (a) what I shall call, for reasons which will shortly emerge, 'fine-grained' or 'theoretical' Space... (b) Contrasting with this there is what I shall call 'coarse-grained' or empirical Space. It, too, is an infinite individual, but it is an individual the elements of which are *possibilities*—roughly, possible relations of perceptible material things.⁹⁸

...Coarse-grained (or empirical) Space *consists of* possible relations of coarse-grained material things to one another. Here, the relation of 'occupying a place' is a special case of that interesting kind of relation which is 'realizing a possibility'.⁹⁹

WS makes a great deal out of the fact that Kant's confusion about the status of coarse-grained space was reflected in both his ontology about space and his ontology about time—a point that will turn out to be crucial later on. But, for now, it suffices to explore the coarse-grained or *empirical* space¹⁰⁰ that finds its way into our everyday, manifest-framework-physics. For certainly, coarse grained *empirical space* must be in the world in the *narrow* sense otherwise "picturing" wouldn't exist nor would the Jumblies be able to say anything.¹⁰¹

C.D. Broad's discussion of McTaggart provides the context within which WS' discussion of time and the world order takes place. Since the account itself takes place within the phenomenology of time, it is possible to mine it for insight without getting lost in Broad's distinctions: pressing issues of his day have been exchanged for problems of our own. Aside from that, Broad presupposes the ontology of facts and events which we don't want to

98 *SM (Science and Metaphysics)*, 53, 'crude geometrical' concepts in *ME (The Metaphysics of Epistemology)*, 204.

99 *SM*, 54.

100 Again, the actuality-possibility relationship of the thing-kind framework hovers in the background.

101 Sellars uses Edward Lears' fictional "Jumblese," the language of the Jumblies to illustrate his theory of predication, see the lecture "Perspectives 1986," lecture II.

presuppose.¹⁰² Thus, much of what he has to say needs to be transposed to a different key.

Coarse-Grained Time and Space

For the Kantian, Time and Space are the mediums by which we experience thing-kinds.¹⁰³ Yet, how is that possible if there is no time? A clue to the answer lies in WS's acceptance of his reconstruction of the Kantian approach according to which time, *somehow*, in some way, lives in our experience of the world order.¹⁰⁴ For our purposes, this will give us useful metaphors for talking about time.

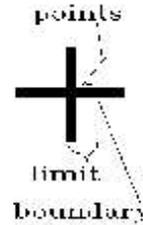
The *somehow* presence of Time at the common sense level, as WS regards it, appears in tensed English in the form of Tense (5) and aspect: a change unfolds in a way (*aspect*) and "takes place" yesterday, tomorrow or now (*tense*). In this respect, "tense" bears a resemblance to the spatial "place" by locating change relative to a viewpoint (either the speaker moment or a reference event relative to the speaker) and "aspect" resembles the way possible relations of material things are distributed throughout the change (the way things might be "manys" or "ones"): the "shape" of a change, so to speak. The precision of the *ordering* in a change, like that in space, can be refined to an extent that depends on only the limits of one's metaphysical microscope—adverbs (yesterday), complex noun phrases (*Stardate -314063.34746888274*, *3rd house on the left un-*

¹⁰² For a sustained attack on the concept of "fact" see *ME*.

¹⁰³ I will paraphrase some of the Steven's Pinker's Google lecture on his own work. To me, his Kantian sentiments and joy with the function of verbs make his views easy to reconstruct as suitably Sellarsian and I do so in what follows. Although Pinker puts events and time in the world, it is done in such a way that it can be made to illuminate WS's simple model about coarse-grained time and events (the world order) without too much violence to either. Since WS doesn't use a linguistic analysis in *TWO*, it makes the relevant distinctions harder to follow and this is where Pinker's approach shines.

¹⁰⁴ With the significant modification that objects are represented in space and time—but more of this later, see also *KPKT (Kant and Pre-Kantian Themes: Lectures by Wilfrid Sellars)*, chapters 16-17.

der the overpass). In our coarse-grained empirical space, it is enough that change is determinable relative to a “viewpoint.” It need not be fixed like a digital clock as long as the general flow—“coming abouts” in time decanted into the flow things—is observed (*there-then, here-now*), the coarse-grained measure of change (empirical time) doesn’t wait for precision, and ignores absolute detail (although by piling on descriptions, it can generate detail like *it was there-then at 42.19N 122.51W elev. 5304’ at Stardate -314063.34746888274*).¹⁰⁵ It is aspect and not tense that often plays a key role in illustrating empirical time much in the way that shape plays a key role for navigating empirical space. It often appears in WS’s (and Broad’s) examples as an open-ended present progressive (*crossing*) or closed-ended complete motion (*ran*) while the “instantaneous” or “momentaneous” punctate verbs (*kick, smack*) typically give way to the explicit appearance of ‘now’. The ‘now’ as a crude metrical concept, works like the notion of a point-boundary on a simplified empiricist’s account of a bounded line. For example, in a black cross drawn on a white page, one line is limited at the juncture by the horizontal line; they intersect at the point, the limit.¹⁰⁶



The point here [see *figure* at the juncture of the cross] can be thought of as the limit of the boundary and it coincides, as it were, with the limit of the white. There is a limit there. We actually experience the white as limiting the black and the black as limiting the white: the experiencing of a limit. By ‘point’ is not meant something like a dot that has extensity; the point is the intersection of the lines which are boundaries: they would be limits. One vertical line is limited at the juncture by the horizontal line; they intersect at a point.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ WS doesn’t discuss cases that use a reference time, the perfect tenses, “The CEO of GM will have been fired by then,” “The CEO of Morgan Stanley had earned a billion dollar bonus by the crash of 2008” so let’s omit it.

¹⁰⁶ *ME*, 205.

¹⁰⁷ *ME*, 205.

Space carries time along with it: if the coarse-grained notion of a line is treated as the end or boundary of a one-dimensional ribbon (in which, linguistically speaking, the other features are ignored), then “*cut the end off the fishing line leader,*” makes perfectly good sense. “Time stuff,” then, when treated as a thing-kind taking up residence in coarse-grained space, develops similar “boundaries” as when one is asked “*to begin their lecture when Jones is finished.*” For the participant in the manifest world, time is parasitic in the sense that tense and aspect treat stuff and things in the thing-kind framework as stretching along dimensions with a certain shape (aspect) and somehow relative to the operant viewpoint (tense). Locations in coarse-grained time, like locations in coarse-grained space while simplified (near/far), stretch nebulously and indefinitely backward and ineluctably forward from me, the speaker, or form part of the present scenery with adverbs keeping an inventory of the salient details (yesterday, a long long time ago).

Granting with Sellars¹⁰⁸, that *somehow* at the level of common sense, time is encoded in tense and aspect, tense works, in a *premetrical* framework, like prepositions and other spatial terms to locate relative to a viewpoint while aspect provides a “shape” for changes and that the “happenings in time are packaged like the flow of matter”¹⁰⁹, we have a reasonably comfortable picture of the way that the manifest image account of *coarse-grained time* and *coarse-grained space* as in the world in the *narrow sense* are embedded in the language of common sense.

108 Steven Pinker provides commentary on verbs from which one can extrapolate ontological considerations. The subtlety with which time-talk merges with thing-talk can be seen in Thucydides famous commentary on historiography, Bk 1.22: “...as many as wish to look at the truth of what happened (*ta genomena*), and things will happen (*ta mellonta*) once more that are likely to be of such a kind given human nature.” Note that *ta genomena* and *ta mellonta* come to mean simply “the past” and “the future” but “persons” are the initial ultimate subjects while other things are treated as truncated persons, peoples’ “doings” and “plannings.”

109 See Steven Pinker’s Google lecture on the “Stuff of Thought” because it is not possible to do justice to his suggestive account.

Absolute Becoming

From this it follows that C.D. Broad's notion of "goings-on," "happenings" and the like, his *processes*, Sellars chooses not pry loose from thing-kinds.¹¹⁰ Indeed, while Sellars finds a place for processes, Broad's *absolute processes* do not belong to phenomenological reduction taking place within the Manifest Image. If anything for WS, Broad's absolute processes represent the core of the *change* of conceptual frameworks as we move *away* from the Manifest Image. One can see that while Sellars 1957 locates events in the world in the narrow sense, C.D. Broad's flavor of *event* is not part of Sellars' basic furniture of the world. WS is clear about the *derivative* status of events even if he has yet to come up with the means for articulating "...is an event" in a way that works for both the Manifest and Scientific framework. In the later theory, once events move one step up the semantic ladder, their treatment falls under the approach taken to conceptual change in general.

"Absolute Becoming" which Broad must treat as a non-explained explainer, WS treats gingerly in *TWO*¹¹¹ because, as he thought at the time, it is one of the fundamental forms of event expressions in the thing-framework where events are in the world in the narrow sense:

While things are referred to by names, the fundamental form of event expressions in the thing framework is indicated by the following:

'S's being ,

'S's becoming ,

'S's V-ing (or being V-ed)' (where 'V' represents an appropriate verb).

Both 'S' and 'S's being V' are singular terms, but their statuses within this category are radically different. We have already had quite a bit to say about the 'existence' of events and, indeed, of past, present, and future events within the framework of

110 C.D. Broad, I, 142ff.

111 *TWO*, 567, C. D. Broad, 277.

things. It is time we said something about the ‘existence’ of things themselves.¹¹²

Thus, he remarks, these existence statements about things are “irreducibly tensed as statements about the qualitative and relational vicissitudes of things.” Putting,

(135) S { is, was, will be }¹¹³

in parallel terms that make explicit the existential claim, gives us

(135) S { exists, existed, will exist }¹¹⁴

The question, “What is the analysis given to these existence statements?” is answered, in part, in the monumental *GE (Grammar and Existence: A Preface to Ontology)*.

In the pivotal *GE* (1958), the examination is directed against the then current dogmatic reading of existential claims: that, for example,

S is a man

is to be understood as,

$(\exists K)$ S is a K

which gives the appearance of a commitment to the existence of entities of a higher order. Interestingly, WS notes,

Even if we could take it as established that to quantify over adjective, common noun, and statement-variables is not to assert the existence of qualities, kinds or propositions, we would sooner or later have to face the fact that ordinary language does involve the use of the singular terms and the common nouns which raise the specter of Platonism—and, indeed, that we do make the existence statements which the Platonist hails as the substance of his position. For we do make such statements as ‘There is a quality (thus triangularity) which . . .’ ‘There is a class (thus, dog-kind—or the class of white things) which. . .’, and ‘There is a

112 TWO, 561.

113 TWO, 561.

114 TWO, 561.

proposition (thus, that Caesar crossed the Rubicon) which . . .'. These statements, genuinely existential in character, make forthright ontological commitments. Or are these commitments, perhaps, less forthright than they seem? Can they, perhaps, be 'reduced' to statements which make no reference, explicit or implicit, to ontological categories ?¹¹⁵

To put it somewhat differently,

that Caesar crossed the Rubicon is a proposition
is the material mode, or categorial counterpart of the formal mode,
that Caesar crossed the Rubicon is a sentence
which WS suggests leads the way to extricating ourselves from Plato's beard:

That existential quantification over predicate or sentential variables does not assert the existence of abstract entities. I then suggested that if the only contexts involving abstract singular terms of the forms f-ness, K-kind and that-p which could not be reformulated in terms of expressions of the forms 'x is f, x is a K', and 'p' were categorizing statements such as 'f-ness is a quality', 'K-kind is a class', 'p is a proposition', then we might well hope to relieve platonistic anxieties by the use of syntactical therapy.¹¹⁶

Aside from the general treatment of categorial statements such as

$(\exists K) S \text{ is a } K$

as

S is something,

GE brings us no closer to an account of

...is an event

and it seems clear that the status of events continues to elude because there is a reluctance to press the point. What would account for the hesitation?

An answer, of sorts, suggests itself by following the treatment of existence statements in *TWO*.

Once we realize that 'existence' is not to be confused with 'existential' quantification, we are in a

115 *GE*, 519.

116 *GE*, 533.

position to note that whereas such radically different existence statements as

(147) Eisenhower exists

and

(152) Triangularity exists,

not to mention

(153) Lions exist

and

(154) Numbers exist,

have in common the general form

(155) $(\exists x) x$ satisfies the criteria for being called (an) N,

there is a radical difference between the first and second member of each pair, a difference which concerns the nature of the criteria. And once we reflect on these differences we note that whatever may ultimately be true of (152) and (154), the existence statements concerning Eisenhower and lions essentially involve a relation to the person making the statement. For to say that Eisenhower exists is to imply that he belongs to a system (world) which includes us as knowers (i.e., language users). In other words, such statements as that Eisenhower exists have an intimate logical connection with statements which give expression to their own location in the framework to which belongs the referent of the statement (in this case Eisenhower), i.e., token-reflexive statements. And the token-reflexive statements in question are those which formulate the nexus of observation and inference in terms of which the claim that there is something which satisfies the criteria for being called Dwight D. Eisenhower would be justified.¹¹⁷

WS is doing more than deplatonizing syntactic therapy, he suggests that existence statements reveal something about the character of our companions in this world, but what sort of thing would that be?

¹¹⁷ *TWO*, 564. Sicha gives a comprehensive account of the move that WS makes with respect to existential quantification, *A Metaphysics of Elementary Mathematics*, 102ff., 143ff.

We gain some insight into the features of our observational framework that are being revealed:

Again,

(159) There are future things

is to be understood as a derived statement which rests on

(160) S is future $\cdot \equiv \cdot$ 'S will exist' is true

and, hence, on

(161) S will exist.

Here we find a crucial difference between things and events (in the thing framework), for, as we saw,

(95) There are future episodes

does not rest on

(162) E will exist

but rather on

(163) E will take place

which is equivalent to a statement of the form

(164) S will V.¹¹⁸

We take “‘There are episodes’” to be equivalent to ‘Something is taking place, or has taken place or will take place.’

In other words, as already mentioned, events (of the first theory) have a derivative status in the sense that singular terms referring to events are contextually introduced in terms of sentences involving singular terms referring to things.¹¹⁹ From which it follows that the “coming to be and passing away” in the thing framework does not mean the coming to be or passing away of *events* (as Broad or Reichenbach saw it) because although events *take place*, events are contextually introduced, not named, although they are not, in Sellars 1957, *linguistic entities*, neither are they primary existents.¹²⁰ Broad’s puzzle ‘How can temporal relations obtain between an item which exists and one which doesn’t exist if $aRb \supset (\exists x)(\exists y) xRy?$,’ (i.e., in the Manifest Image, the relata must exist), does not arise unless one confuses existence statements with existential quantification and ‘...exists’ with ‘...takes place’.¹²¹

118 TWO, 566.

119 TWO, 572.

120 TWO, 594.

121 Sicha has an extended discussion of this point in the Mathematics.

The family of concepts (earlier, later, past, present, future, now, then and so on) which make up the framework of ordinary temporal discourse rests on an irreducibly perspectival structure.¹²² But time as a measure of events is a measure of things, the foundation of temporal discourse is rooted in premetrical tensed discourse and nonrelational temporal connectives of talk about things or persons doing this or that while, before, after, other things or persons doing this or that in our perspectively immediate environment, the relevant ur-concepts pertaining to the temporal:¹²³

it seems to me to be perfectly clear that the basic individuals of this universe of discourse are things and persons—in short the ‘substances’ of classical philosophy.¹²⁴

Happenings in time come prepared like the continual flow of substance-stuff that gets chopped into segments and relabeled in the flow of experience as ‘events’. The irreducibly perspectival character exerts its influence in the relatively few segments into which the happenings in time are packaged. Leaving aside aspect—how happenings begin, unfold and end—our tensed language locates relative to a viewpoint in fairly coarse terms that are sensitive to direction (*before, after*) ignore absolutes (much like the spatial near/far from me or from a reference point) and collect globs of change with the imprecise signposts of temporal adverbs (*now, yesterday, while*) and the tracking concepts (*before and after, at the same time*).

Time as expressed in the *premetrical* grammatical machinery of language is easily run together with the metricization of a precise topological system of relations but the latter is a *reaxiomatization* of the framework of changing-things-in-temporal-discourse. To be premetrical means that missing is time as a continuous, precisely measurable economy. Relative to the ‘now’ of speaking, changes without duration (*hit, jump, swat, kick, knock, coldcock*) are as precise as necessary for our “being in the world” in the specious present, but the present in this sense, for those uncorrupted by philosophy, is often no more than the duration of the stable state be-

122 TWO, 593.

123 TWO, 573, *FMPP* (*Foundations for a Metaphysics of Pure Process*), II, §142.

124 TWO, 594.

fore the brain shakes itself off the present bias by moving on to the “What’s new?” stage:

It is often said that we must avoid ‘spatializing’ time. Statements to this effect are invariably confused, for in so far as they imply that we should not think of time in metrical terms they are actually a contradiction. But they do contain insights which account for their vitality. These are the insights that changing things are not to be identified with their histories, that time as a measure of events is also a measure of things, and that the foundation of temporal discourse is the use of tensed verbs and nonrelational temporal connectives.¹²⁵

Although not explicitly recognized as such, *aspect* plays a key role in the absorption of the temporal into the premetrical grammatical machinery of the rationally reconstructed tensed language of *TWO*. For, not only does it appear throughout the *corpus* in the form of examples cast in the present progressive (*crossing the Rubicon*, *S’s V-ing*), but it also bears the weight of the keystone concept of the *perspectival*.¹²⁶ As we have seen, the two gatekeepers of the temporal in WS’ regimented thing-nature framework are tense and aspect. Where language employs *tense* to encode the “location” of a happening, so to speak, in time (*Caesar crossed, crosses, will cross the Rubicon*), *aspect* encodes the perspectival features of our encounter with the world, its structure as point-of-viewish.¹²⁷ To make the Kantian point, knowability essentially invokes a perspectival relationship between the person seeing and the object encountered¹²⁸ and this relation is encoded in grammar as aspect. A person can *take a swing* in their instantaneous present, or *jog over the field*, which is continuous or atelic, and they can *slide into home* which, for many (the “it’s not how you play the game, it’s whether you win or lose” crowd), is the “end-point” of the whole enterprise. Importantly, aspect implicitly expresses *the*

¹²⁵ *TWO*, 574.

¹²⁶ For example, in *IKTE* (*The Role of Imagination in Kant’s Theory of Experience*), Paragraph 25; *KTI* (*Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*), paragraph 49; *TTC* (*Towards a Theory of Categories*), 51; and throughout *TWO*.

¹²⁷ See *IKTE*, paragraph 25; *KTI*, 49.

¹²⁸ We are leaving aside inferential dimension at this point, *TTC*, paragraph 51.

point of view taken on a changing thing (from its Latin roots, *aspicere*). How many monolingual English speakers have been overwhelmed in learning a foreign language that uses different verb forms if one is watching a developing, ongoing change from the inside (so, *He was crossing the Rubicon*) or, as complete from the outside as in *he crossed the Rubicon*? Perhaps tense and aspect are independent: *S becomes* can happen a long time ago, today or sooner or later (tense) no matter what our point of view (aspect). Aspect encodes one's viewpoint on something coming-about. In ordinary discourse, it does duty for the philosophers' "now."

The characterizing of a happening *from a certain point of view* divides into "states" and "episodes."¹²⁹ The latter are either telic or atelic (*crossing the Potomac* vs *rowing around*). And, from our point of view, episodes can be durative (*jogging*) or momentaneous (*punching the time card*). When the view is from the inside, *here-now before my eyes*, as it were, the imperfective aspect appears as the present progressive, the progressive aspect (*the Decider is deciding*) in contrast to the *completed* or *perfect* aspect (*the Decider has/had decided*) when the view is from the outside, *there-then before my eyes*, so to speak, the primary picture of the world in the framework of things is a *tensed* picture of which *aspect* is an irreducible part. Indeed, together, they constitute time and the world order:¹³⁰

The existence of the world as well as of the 'events' which make it up is irreducibly perspectival. The structure of the world as a temporal structure is irreducibly perspectival—though not, as we have seen, 'subjective' in any pejorative sense.¹³¹

The theory of events of Sellars 1957, is not antithetical to the spatial character of extruded substance-stuff in the wake of the reality of a person's utterances which include *this*, *here* and *now*: one must be comfortable with "cutting of the end," "moving the meeting time forward" (meaning "backward") or extending "too far

129 On several occasion, WS directs us toward an analysis of states.

130 *TWO*, 591.

131 *TWO*, 593, 594.

over the boundary” and, of course, the ineluctable flow of time-stuff.

However, events as non-propositional singular terms did not accommodate the intuition that they are to be located in the fabric of connectives which operate on sentences.

In any case, there is no doubt that spatial relations, the media of outer sense, are central to the picturing relation. Is it not also the case that in *some* sense, the use of tensed language rests on the existence of the medium of time in outer sense? We are reminded of Renatus¹³² who locates space and time, in some sense, among the characteristics of receptivity as such—which is what, WS notes, should be meant by the forms of sensibility.¹³³ Indeed, that there are such characteristics in the world in the *narrow* sense (as features of complex nonconceptual representations) underwrites the ability to have conceptual representations to guide minds.

These characteristics, and the τ -dimension in particular (as we shall shortly see), give WS’ an answer to Kant’s awkward problem of accounting for objective succession: as Weldon notes, the problem of producing “a cerebral occurrence which can make possible any discrimination between a succession of apprehension and an apprehension of succession.”¹³⁴ Or, as WS puts it,

In the case of Time a careful Renatus would distinguish between,
a conceptual representation of a bang following a whiz
and,
a conceptual representation of a bang following a conceptual representation of a whiz...

A Renatus who has pondered the way in which our conceptual representations of the spatial structure of physical states of affairs are guided by ‘counterpart’ features of our sense impressions will be led to speculate concerning what it is about our nonconceptual representings which guides the un-

¹³² *KSU (Kant’s Views on Sensibility and Understanding)*, 486.

¹³³ *KSU*, 490.

¹³⁴ T.D.Weldon, *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason* (Oxford, 1944), 265. See also Prichard’s account of the error in trying to resolve a succession of sounds into what we take to be successive sounds, 48.

derstanding in its representation of temporal relations.¹³⁵

For WS, it is possible to capture the respect (that which guides) in which a sequence of impressions becomes an impression of a succession by introducing a highly theoretical concept: the n -dimension.¹³⁶ The n -dimension is itself 2-dimensional, *in some sense*, as WS represents it. His disagreement with C. D. Broad on the nature of the temporal arises from the fact that Broad's treatment is unapologetically phenomenological¹³⁷ and not, I think, because he thinks the t -dimension must be impoverished (with fewer dimensions).¹³⁸

While the n -dimension is not part of the thing-framework, it does help one understand why WS held onto the view of how the primary picture of the world order reflected in the thing-framework is irreducibly tensed and therefore, temporal in the coarse-grained premetrical sense. Let us consider it.

The phenomenological account of time that Broad offers, once appropriated by WS, tends to straddle the interface between the coarse-grained premetrical Manifest Image and Scientific Image while Broad regards the account as rigorously phenomenological. In other words, WS would deny Broad the fruits of his phenomenological analysis and argue that, if anything, it constituted an attempt to *move on* from the Manifest Image. Thus, Sellars would reject what for Broad, was a ground floor distinction, namely that

Spatial extension and the occurrence of spatial relations *presuppose* temporal duration and a certain determinate form of temporal relation.¹³⁹

For WS, not only is time not in the world in the narrow sense (as it is for Broad) but it is, as we have seen, nonrelational.

135 *SM*, 231.

136 *FMPP*, II, ¶133-137 contains the explanation for Weldon's problem.

137 "A Reply to My Critics," in *The Philosophy of C.D. Broad*, (Tudor, NY, 1959), p. 772.

138 While struggling with the notion of persistence, in response to my question, "how does a C#-ing have dimension?," WS responded, "sound fills a room doesn't it?"

139 Reply, 269.

With respect to the specious present, Broad mistakenly supposes, notes WS, that the ordering in the temporal dimension must be one which “involves an introspectable (sensory or quasi-sensory) feature.”¹⁴⁰ Naturally, of course, Broad’s approach is through-and-through phenomenological so WS’s point must be granted. And, as much as one might want to cheer for Broad’s eloquent defense of his critique in the *Examination*, WS’s parsimonious account may work given that it is embedded in the complex relationship between frameworks and very powerful ontological considerations.¹⁴¹ I say “may” work simply because WS did not have the time to elaborate on the Carus’s lectures claim that

In addition to continuing through the period t_1 t_2 at the zero point, the C#ing is continued in another manner. Metaphorically it moves to the right in the -dimension.¹⁴²

The weight upon the use of “metaphorically” here can be seen from the fact that it is the explication of the phenomenology of this very notion that leads Broad to his 3-dimensional representation of time. Could it be open for Renatus to argue that within the coarse-grained premetrical discourse of changing things, our tensed discourse provides the seeds for something like what Broad regards as presentness? As far as concerns the counterpart of the Specious Present in the Scientific Image, its length appears to be dependent on temporal intervals that recur in studies of visual timing.¹⁴³ This complexity may have as its Manifest counterpart the aspect which makes our experience of the world irreducibly perspectival (*swung when it was crossing the outside corner*). It is the perspectival idiosyncrasies of speakers and thinkers, which, in relation to different points of view, have the perspectival (‘subjective’) characteristics of pastness, presentness, and futurity that find a home in tensed discourse.¹⁴⁴

140 FMPP, II, §146.

141 Vol. II, Part I, of the examination (281-288) and his Reply, 772.

142 FMPP, II, §133.

143 For example, I’ve mentioned the 3-second rule that averages the brain’s switching of a task and asking, metaphorically speaking, “What’s new?”

144 Why, after all, is it the “World Order”? Because the primary picture of the structure of the world is irreducibly tensed and perspectival where time, in the coarse-grained sense as a measure of events in the coarse-grained sense, is

As characterized before, the premetrically temporal comes in coarse packages of indefinite time gobs. The speaker's *now* orders the time-gobs relative to it by even more open-ended way-points: *before-and-after*, *at-the-same-time*, *this-while-that*. Unlike the way-points on your GPS, however, these show no evidence of a continuous, respectably measurable commodity. A discrete happening (*cross the street*) contrasts with a non-discrete or continuous one (*strolling around the park*) with frayed edges instead of perfect endpoints (*come over after the end of your walk*). The analogue would be like talking about space simplistically (*near to me*, *far from me*) rather than in terms of sophisticated metrical concepts.

Thus it appears that the reconstructed Specious Present, not only yields Weldon's sequence of representings as a representation of a sequence but also must account for whatever Broad has in mind by his "presentness." WS complaint against Broad lies in the phenomenological characterization of "degrees of presentness" but might there not be a deeper insight here that accounts for WS's own use of "metaphorically-to-the-right"? It is not hard to be persuaded that Broad brings in the *intensive* magnitudes of presentness as an antidote for the *extensive* characterization of changing things.

Perhaps there is *something* about the intrinsically point of viewishness of our egocentric imposition on the world order that would account for the coarse-grained premetrical urgency of what is "metaphorically moving to the right" in the -dimension? From our point of view, we carve happenings in the world at the joints (whimsically, it's stuff that can slip away, *we're running out of time*) but no tenses exist for a greater precision than the three-way locations: three amorphous regions defined relative to our perspectival *ego*. We have (1) the specious present that exists as the fundamental unit within which premetrical temporal distinctions are *irrelevant* relative to the occasion of speaking. Swirling behind our present location, we have (2) the past stretching backward indefinitely and we have (3) the future that goes from now until the Hitchhiker's *Restaurant at the End of the Universe*. Our irreducibly

also a measure of things. The premetrical temporal connectives or adverbials (while, before, after) involve statements about things. It is the allure of the perspectival that may have lulled Kant into the view that Time was the medium for inner sense and, therefore, of only inner representings.

perspectival experience is embedded in the tense and aspect of our tensed discourse about the world. Although not as robust as the qualitative dimension sought by Broad, it suggests that *somehow* there is a coarse-grained, non-conceptual counterpart of what we come to feel is the moving image of eternity even if, beyond this, there is little we can say within the resources of the Manifest Image. In the coarse-grained sense, Time is change, but in the fine-grained sense it is, as WS says in echoing Aristotle, the measure of change:

I want to suggest that time is the real number series,
the series of real numbers as correlated with certain
measuring procedures.¹⁴⁵

Phenomenology of Mind

In addition to the ontology of events, the phenomenology of mind makes a surprising appearance in several Lectures. One immediately wonders, “what is it doing there?” After all, one of the more remarkable features of WS’s phenomenology has to be that he does not think that the real mysteries of the mind yield to phenomenological analysis. Indeed, was it not this attitude that influenced Rorty and the Churchlands? “But,” someone immediately

¹⁴⁵ See “Perspectives 1986,” Lecture III. For an account of number in a manner congenial to WS’ project, see Jeffrey Sicha’ admirably clear account in *A Metaphysics of Elementary Mathematics*, (U. Mass Press, 1974). It is clear that WS used Sicha’s approach as a resource for parts of his formalism and, for this reason, Sicha’s text fills lacunae in the Sellarsian dialectic, see Sicha’s “Reconstruction of the Natural Numbers,” p. 141, in his *Metaphysics of Mathematics*.

responds, “doesn’t that mean that there is no such thing as introspection, self-awareness, indeed, consciousness!? But why, then, do people persist in having such responses?” Like Kant’s “thing in-itself,” for WS, one can actually say a *great deal* about “introspectibles” but the results definitely won’t meet the expectations of good ol’ fashioned common sense. After all, a new explanation that doesn’t tell a story about why the old one worked as well as it did isn’t acceptable to WS so he is going to have a story to tell.

Like the wealth of Tantulus, the fruits of our mental participation are *essentially* out of reach, that is to say, they are categorially out of reach:

34. It is a most significant fact, as I have pointed out elsewhere, that the classification of thoughts, construed as classical mental episodes, permits of no such easy retreat to a non-functional level. Roughly, our classification of thoughts, construed as episodes which belong to a framework which explains the kaleidoscopic shifts of sayings and propensities to say, is almost purely functional. We have only the foggiest notion at what kinds of episodes, nonfunctionally described, perform the relevant functions, though philosophers of a scientific orientation are prepared to characterize them generically as neurophysiological. As a result, philosophers unaware of this alternative strategy have the illusion of an ultimacy of the conceptual functioning of thoughts which is responsible for continuing philosophical puzzles about how mental acts are to be fitted into a naturalistic picture of the world.¹⁴⁶

The implicit defanging of an introspective approach to analysis is delivered with kid-gloves but consigning centuries of surveying the mental landscape to the “foggiest notion,” cannot be construed as faint praise. As he remarks in the Carus Lectures,

To put it bluntly, the fruits of painstaking theory construction in the psychology and neuro-physiology of sense perception cannot be anticipated by screwing up one’s mental eye (the eye of the child

¹⁴⁶ AAE (*Actions and Events*), 189.

within us) and “seeing” the very manner-of-sensing-ness of a volume of red.¹⁴⁷

Doubtless, WS’s position is not meant to warm the hearts of those who have the “eye-as-a-camera” viewpoint or the “mind-as-the-mirror-of-nature” approach to time and the world order. In WS’ hilarious attack on all flavors of *Relationalism* in the Notre Dame Lectures, he undermines every support that gives aid and comfort to those who would “survey” the furniture of the mind.¹⁴⁸ *ME* consists, in large measure, of an equally sustained attack on every canonical variety of apprehension under virtually every descriptive metaphor that has been mobilized to capture this immaculate conception of the mind.

For those whose theological persuasion demands “events,” “time” and “causality” to be in-the-world in the narrow sense, the preceding discussion of this triune world order has them running for the door. WS’s apparent assault on our “access” to our own mental states offers them all the more reason to flee.¹⁴⁹

To see how WS develops the “story” pertaining to phenomenological analysis (previously mentioned), H. A. Prichard provides a good place to start. WS *extends* Prichard’s view to states of the self and, as he did with RWS (Roy Wood Sellars), WS regards his own view that sensations are theoretical items as an alternative to Prichard’s “enlightened” form of introspection if you will. Prichard simply does not go far enough.

In the Notre Dame Lectures, WS remarks that Prichard responded to charges that, somewhere along his metaphysical journey, he has lost the world!

It goes without saying that the last thing to do is to minimize the difficulty. If there is any sphere in which we seem exempt from the possibility of error it is [inner and outer] perception. How can we, it is natural to ask, make a mistake as to what we see or

¹⁴⁷ *FMPP (Foundations for a Metaphysics of Pure Process)*, I, 82, p. 19.

¹⁴⁸ See the lecture “Language and Meaning 1969.”

¹⁴⁹ Sicha’s patient elaboration of the difference between what we see and what we see “of” something in *KTM (Kant’s Transcendental Metaphysics)* as well as a similar account by WS in *ME* is not likely to assuage anybody’s fears. However, it does offer a glimpse into WS’s view without it being clouded by the fears of those who have a desperate need for the real of today to exert its presence.

feel or hear? And how is it possible to do so not merely sometimes but normally, if not always?¹⁵⁰

The tongue-in-cheek tone notwithstanding, Prichard takes seriously the task of talking his audience out of their difficulties. He puts his finger on the breaking-point:

The [traditional] analysis, it seems to me, is quite mistaken, since it resolves the having or experiencing a sensation or, as I would rather say, the perceiving it, into a particular way of knowing it, which, so far as I can see, it is not.¹⁵¹

That the attempt to drive a metaphysical wedge between “apprehending” or “getting-at” what is sensed and the mere having an impression, sensory state and so on, occupies center stage in *ME* is hardly worth repeating. Prichard thinks

what is ordinarily called perception consists in *taking*, i.e., really *mistaking*, something that we see or feel for something else;¹⁵²

a point which WS sympathetically relates during the course of the Notre Dame Lectures. Although Prichard expresses the hope that we could work ourselves out of this habitual mistaking, he notes with mock seriousness, that no matter how hard we try, the sun will always appear to rise and to set. Furthermore, he finds the target of such metaphysical therapy remarkably elusive in the case of touch:

I confess that I cannot get farther than saying that when, for example, that occurs which we should ordinarily call my feeling a hard, smooth, and lumpy oblong-shaped with my hand, I am taking certain extended feelings of a kind with which everyone is familiar for a hard, smooth, lumpy oblong body. It looks, no doubt, as if on the general view it ought to be possible to say more than this.¹⁵³

For Prichard, the moral of the story for which he has been arguing is, like WS argues in *ME*, that what we call seeing or feeling a body

150 See the lecture “Perceiving and Perception 1973” and Prichard’s *Knowledge and Perception*, (Oxford, 1950) from lectures and essays during 1927-1938, p.62.

151 Prichard, 63.

152 Prichard, 52.

153 Prichard, 64.

consists in mistaking something for a body—a position that common sense resists because,

first, the almost universal tendency to take it for granted, without serious consideration, that perception in its various forms is a particular way of knowing something, with the consequent implication that no mistake is possible as to the character of what we really see or feel; and, second, the reluctance to admit that colors and feelings of touch, though dependent on us as percipients, are extended.¹⁵⁴

Now WS, of course, wants to replace the entire edifice of “apprehension” or 24-Karat access to the facts but, unlike the case of fine-grained space and time which he doesn’t find in the world, phenomenological reduction bears fruit. That is, as he puts it in the Notre Dame Lectures, the conceptual analysis that drills down, roughly, to the proper sensibles, yields *something* that lies at the non-conceptual core of experience. The fact that our phenomenological resources have reached the end of their explanatory tether, as Prichard sees, does not erase the fact that there is *something, somehow* present in our phenomenological confrontation with the world.¹⁵⁵ WS spends a considerable amount of time in *ME* dismantling Prichard’s type of *sensa*, so he obviously doesn’t accept Prichard’s commitment to “objects” and all that this involves. On the other hand, as he points out during the Lectures, the “new new materialists” whether they know it or not, court *idealism* with their rejection of secondary qualities. To these idealistic tendencies, WS responds that as a *Scientific Realist*, he is committed to the existence of color and, therefore, since the current categorial structure of Cognitive Science cannot accommodate the successor of color, the philosophical task is to engage in the conversation with scientists necessary to bring about a structure that can.

So, although Prichard hits a wall (“I confess that I cannot get farther...”), WS finds merit in the approach provided that one bears in mind the fact that sensory states are *introduced* as *explanatory*

¹⁵⁴ Prichard, 68.

¹⁵⁵ Could we extend those resources? No. But, we can move on to a different conceptual framework that would give us access to that of which we were earlier only dimly aware. The idea of augmenting the Manifest Image to accomplish the same thing is a trap, a snare of givenness.

items in the Manifest Image—a position that had not occurred to Prichard (or Sellars' father, RWS for that matter).

Just what the successor of color will be requires, as Sicha explains in his introduction to *KTM (Kant's Transcendental Metaphysics: Sellars' Cassirer Lectures and Other Essays)*, the exploration of the current stage of the Manifest Image in an effort to articulate the character of the projection of this framework (the relevant framework features) into the Scientific Image. In case one would be wondering, "What is the current stage of the Manifest Image?" An anecdote provides the answer: Jay Rosenberg once said, in response to a question about identifying what framework one is in, "if you ask a kid, "what's water," she says, "H₂O." But, if you ask her, "what's milk?" she says, "white stuff that comes from a cow."

Consciousness

One final theme in the Lectures should be emphasized. WS's frequent comments about the nature of consciousness are likely to go unnoticed. Even when dealing with the issue of consciousness, *ex professo*, as for example, in the analysis of pain or in the Carus lectures, after plowing through such a work, the student is likely to ask, "What does *this* have to do with consciousness!?" Indeed. After all, in the kind of hard-nosed variant of Prichard's take on introspection that WS develops, what goes for outer sense, must go for inner sense. Worse yet, the *fons et origo* of the myth of the given has to be inner sense—if Givenness isn't rooted out at its source, he'll never be rid of it. Once again, as in the case of color, and like Kant's thing-in-itself, a great deal can be said about the nature of consciousness even if inner-sense too, is based on a *mis*-taking.

In the lecture “Commemoration 1970,” WS remarks on the two common uses of the word ‘consciousness’.¹⁵⁶ First, consider a specific question, “What Is Sensory Consciousness?”

On the one hand, ‘consciousness’ is a generic term for the qualitative character *itself* of various kinds of perceptual experience. The qualitative character, i.e., the contentual character, is the qualitative dimension of the existential content of a physical system.¹⁵⁷ Although the Notre Dame Lectures bring out the fact that this view more closely approximates that of RWS, we can let it stand for the moment.

When we believe in ourselves to be in an irritable mood, the irritation which confronts this belief is an element of the very irritability believed (as would sensing redly in the color case). In this sense, we participate in what is believed in.¹⁵⁸ What we participate in is part of that qualitative dimension of the content of our being. Consciousness as underlying our “beliefs in” forms the contentual aspect of our direct confrontation with the world, our participation in it—we have beliefs about it (second level beliefs) but from the outside, so to speak. Rather, it is the subject of our perceptual belief which, because it is a state of the self, is part ourselves responded to as a *somehow something* present.¹⁵⁹

On the other hand, when we go on to talk *about* our sensations and beliefs being in consciousness, we use the term “consciousness” in a very different sense, a sense which pertains, not to first level belief but to second order (or higher) belief.¹⁶⁰ Consciousness in this second sense does not pertain to perceptual experience and does not, then, pertain to what we see *of* objects (i.e., consciousness as the material mode of what we see of an object). Of course, what some find so abiding in Sellars is that,

Concepts pertaining to mental acts are functional
and leave open the question of their qualitative or
contentual character. (This lack of specific

¹⁵⁶ This lecture is later incorporated into *DKMB (The Double-Knowledge Approach to the Mind-Body Problem)*.

¹⁵⁷ *DKMB*, 18.

¹⁵⁸ *DKMB*, 10. As subject, it is what is taken, what underlies what is “believed in.”

¹⁵⁹ “Believe in” is a highly technical concept for WS, see the lecture “*Scientific Reason and Perception 1977*.”

¹⁶⁰ It is in the latter sense that Dennett, for example, used it.

contentual aspect is what makes us want to think of mental acts as “diaphanous.”¹⁶¹

Thus, beyond generic characterizations of the functional character, it is difficult to say anything about consciousness in the second sense—even by Prichard’s somewhat relaxed standards.

Sellarsian Phenomenology

At this point in the discussion, we stand at the threshold of WS’s phenomenological approach. Yet, in his papers for professional philosophers, “phenomenology” is noticeable by its absence. As in *ME* and *PKT*, it plays a far greater role in the Notre Dame Lectures once one knows what to look for. To this end, it is worthwhile retracing WS’s steps to the lectures by echoing the *informal* approach taken in *ME* and *PKT*.

What one sees something as is what is packed into the subject term of the experience. It is whatever is not in question. When we see something, we “straight off *mistake* it for something else” according to Prichard, and it is this sort of “immediacy” that WS emphasizes by invoking Cook Wilson’s notion of “thinking without question”¹⁶² when a novel circumstance makes us erupt with a spontaneous blurting-out-loud (*Dang! [I missed] The bus!*). The “believing in” is a special kind of occurrent believing—thinking without question. The rest, what might be called into question, belongs in the predicate. We can isolate what we take for granted, what is not up for grabs and we separate that from what we can go on to ask about it or how it seems to us.

We want to take seriously the idea that the difference between what is taken for granted and not up for grabs, i.e., what is believed in, the subject term of our thinking, is not the same as what we believe about it, i.e., the way it *seems*: *believing-as* (in the case of believing in) must be distinguished from seeming.

The subject of a perceptual belief, what is *believed in*, is given by a complex demonstrative, for example, *this grayish black smooth pavement* with the jagged facing edge. The complex subject is the first order of a perceptual experience. A perceptual experi-

¹⁶¹ *MCP*, 248.

¹⁶² Prichard, 97.

ence in which there is an actual quality of grayish black, i.e., it is not merely believed in. As WS might put it using RWS's terminology, the actuality involved constitutes our existential confrontation with the world, however, it does not constitute the very *somehow* presence participated in—that is non-conceptual.

When we feel a pain, the direct response involves an existential confrontation of the evoking by that which evokes, whereas what we believe about it, normally does not.¹⁶³ What we perceive of an object—the believed in—the demonstrative, consists of qualitative features of the image model that are present as 'believed that' in the predicate.¹⁶⁴

The categorial features of occurrent qualities change as we switch conceptual frames. According to Sellars, the task of philosophy is to say what conceptual structures could evolve. We don't have adequate categories for the mind-body problem and we do not have a theory that postulates a different categorial structure. In the Cartesian recategorization, the *pinkness* of physical objects became the "pinkness" of sensation not by being a different quality but by being the same content in a different categorial form.¹⁶⁵ The historical controversy over the status of secondary qualities is a series of attempts to recategorize the proper-sensible features of experience.¹⁶⁶ What does it now mean to say we see the very pinkness of the pink ice cube? It is to say that something, somehow cubical and pink in physical space is present other than as merely believed in (first order) or as believed that (second order).¹⁶⁷ As Prichard contends,

...the moral...is that these difficulties cannot be removed by anything short of allowing that what we call seeing or feeling a body consists in genuinely mistaking certain *sensa* for a body...our reluctance to allow this [is due to assuming] that perception in its various forms is a particular way of knowing something...and second, the reluctance to admit

¹⁶³ Carus, 281.

¹⁶⁴ Carus, 38.

¹⁶⁵ Carus, 73

¹⁶⁶ Carus, 47

¹⁶⁷ SSROP, 8.

that colours and feelings of touch, though dependent on us as percipients, are extended.¹⁶⁸

Of course, WS's extended analysis includes the characteristics that objects embedded in a perspectival world *must* have—Sicha's analysis in *KTM* attempts to adumbrate what they are. Simply put, the pink is something actual which is somehow a portion of pink stuff, somehow the sort of item which is suited to be part of the content of a physical object but it is not, in point of fact, a portion of physical stuff.¹⁶⁹

On occasion, WS would say that Kant's great insight was to see that perceptual intuition had the form

[A] is Φ

where [A] was the sheer receptive core of the experience (and, therefore, non-conceptual). In terms of the discussion in *ME*, this would involve the idea that in the case of the evoking of a spontaneous belief

this-cubical-chunk-of-pink₁₃₂ is Φ ¹⁷⁰

the complex demonstrative subject forms a unique togetherness with [A]. It would be open to the Evolutionary Naturalist like RWS to argue that whatever ur-concepts are invoked by the subject must have been the by-product of the plasticity of the perceptual system embedded in a hostile environment. But WS was more interested in cases like bodies which move in our egocentrically perspectival world-view which could not be reduced without remainder through ingenious phenomenological reduction and, therefore, remained tables, chairs, and boats going down stream. While the remnants of adaptive changes brought about in the Pleistocene are significant, for one of a Kantian persuasion who thinks of vision as a construction project, *watching the elevators move*, despite saccadic suppression, transaccadic memory, and the rest of evolutionary toolbox, is an observation that is a real work of art. It's a long way from the big city denizen's *watch out for red lights* to George of the Jungle's insula screaming '*red things are ripe and edible*'. WS tries to be sensitive to both:

¹⁶⁸ Prichard, 68.

¹⁶⁹ Carus, 91.

¹⁷⁰ ME, 125ff.

The difficult thing about this theory is that it holds that we have a natural tendency to make a *radical mistake*. To experience sensation and to take those sensations, as it were, to be features of external material objects. That is the most convenient way nature could think of to get us to discriminate between objects. After all, this mistake is a useful mistake because we would be experiencing objects in terms of qualities which discriminate between them: some are green, some are red, some are here, some are there, some are circular, some are rectangular. Does it matter that in the course of discriminating between objects, we are making this basic mistake of taking (from a philosophical, not physical, point of view) our perceptions to be actual constituents of the world out there? As I said, there is no reason to suppose that this is impossible. Let us be very careful here. I said there is a radical mistake involved and that was taking the sensation to be attached to a material object. But there's a sort of aura of truth in here because we also believe that there is a blue book in a certain place. And that is true. So this is a mixture between a radical mistake and a humdrum truth; our beliefs would be a curious mixture of an exciting, surprising mistake and a humdrum truth.¹⁷¹

WS's treatment of the phenomenology of mind—consciousness in the two senses adumbrated—resembles Kant's treatment of the *ding an sich* in that it turns out that a great deal can be said about such an intrinsically inaccessible item. Nonetheless, what can be said isn't likely to give aid and comfort to WS's opponents: givenness has been around a long time and isn't like to go quietly into that good night.

WS's public relations problem arises because of his summary rejection of "introspection," "intuition," "consciousness," "immediate introspection" etc., as a 24-Karat awareness of reality, that is, as revealing *anything* that would be a useful starting point for belief

¹⁷¹ *ME*, 38.

but, interestingly, it does not follow that “experience at its very inception” (to use Santayana’s phrase) consists of sensations vacantly stared at by an untutored mind!¹⁷² So WS grants that phenomenology can take us all the way to the somehow-presence *of*. He grants that the ripening accumulations from evolution during the pleistocene emerged, through the plasticity of the brain, as the “unique togetherness” that is ultimately responsible for the “of-ness” of thought.¹⁷³

Now might it not be the case that this mental state here has both the character of being a sense impression of a cube of pink and also the character, whatever it is, by virtue of which it intends this cube the pink? It would be, in terms which I will be exploring later on, a kind of natural, unlearned way which matures and a reference, an intending occurs...but rather the sense impression is, as I put it, the very vehicle of the intending. (*Lecture II, Perceiving and Perception 1973*)

Cognitive Science is in the business of figuring out the “material aspect” of the “sensuous dialectic” that evolved—philosophy suggests the appropriate categories.

172 See Sellars’ remark on Santayana in the lecture “Scientific Reason and Perception 1977.”

173 In Unamuno’s useful metaphor.