AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

NATURA NATURANS: A CONCEPT OF A NATURE

FOR REPRESENTATION

by
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submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters of Arts
to the Department of Philosophy
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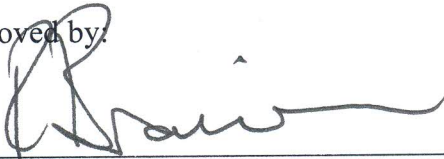at the American University of Beirut

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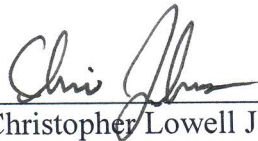

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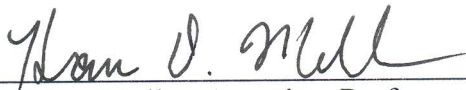
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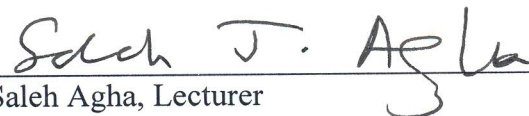
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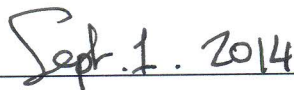
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Omar Rabih Talhuok   for   Master of Arts
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Title: Natura Naturans: The Concept of a Nature for Representation

The following thesis project proceeds from an analysis of the concept 'conceptual representation' and attempts to make explicit the ontological category implicit in it. I will attempt to show in what sense an attempt to develop an ontology of 'conceptual representation' is in fact an attempt at refining the single category of 'functioning-representings'. This investigation will draw on the so-called 'act-content' model of representation; most of the thesis will be dedicated to analyzing the two fundamental metaphors in that model in an attempt to draw out the implications of their use.

In Chapter II, I will analyze the "in" metaphor and will attempt to uncover certain necessary ontological relations that are implicit in the use of that metaphor. I will claim that the use of "in" is indicative of an asymmetric ontological relation between acts and contents (or, what I will call representings and representeds respectively). I will attempt to explicate this asymmetry as best I can using the concept 'actuality', and argue for the sense in which 'actual representings' are more primary than 'actual representeds'.

In Chapter III, I will analyze the "of" metaphor and will argue that it fulfills a very particular epistemic function. That function will be explicated in terms of functional role and functional classification, both of which are concepts found in the works of Wilfrid Sellars. I will argue that functional classification allows us to draw a distinction between functional kinds and natural items in such a way that that very distinction suggests the concept of a functioning-natural-item (i.e. natural items with functional properties).

The fourth will attempt to both reconcile certain claims made in the first two chapters (claims that seem incommensurable), and second suggest one way of benefitting from that reconciliation. The central point of the third chapter will be that 'conceptual representation' commits one to the *single* ontological category of a 'functioning-representing' – this suggests that Naturalizing 'conceptual representation' does not commit one to a dualism of 'conceptual structure' and 'Natural structure'.

PREFACE

"The ideal aim of philosophizing is to become *reflectively* at home in the full complexity of the multi-dimensional conceptual system in terms of which we suffer, think, and act. I say 'reflectively', because there is a sense in which, by the sheer fact of leading an unexamined, but conventionally satisfied life, we are at home in this complexity. It is not until we have eaten the apple with which the serpent philosopher tempts us, that we begin to stumble on the familiar and to feel the haunting sense of alienation which is treasured by each new generation as its unique possession. This alienation, this gap between oneself and one's world, can only be resolved by eating the apple to the core; for after the first bite there is no return to innocence. There are many anodynes, but only one cure. We may philosophize well or ill, but we must philosophize."

(Sellars, *Structure of Knowledge*)

"'How do you know that what you are enjoying is a genuine glimpse of the world?'… If someone insists on asking that, on some particular occasion, an appropriate response might start like this: 'I know why you think that question is particularly pressing, but it is not.'"

(McDowell, *Mind and World*)

It seems that the impetus with which Wilfrid Sellars (in the above quotation) is driven to proclaim the practical necessity of philosophizing stems from a fundamental distinction which is, perhaps initially, as non-controversial as it is mundane. The distinction is that between a knower, that suffers, thinks, and acts, and a world in the face of which that knower stumbles and struggles to establish its supremacy or submit to extinction. One of the most articulated and sophisticated accounts of this distinction can be found in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in the form of a disjunction between empirical and theoretical Man; i.e. Man in his capacity as an empirical object governed by scientific laws on the one hand, and Man in his capacity as a being endowed with the power of judgement on the other. According to the former, Man belongs to a *lawfully determined* world that furnishes him with a body that is as much a product of that world as is the hunger he feels when left stranded on an island - indeed, it is this determined world that is the site of chemical, geological, astronomical, and micro-physical laws and processes that produced the island on which he is stranded in the first place. According to the latter capacity, Man is

identified as a rational being that is not only able to conceive of himself as such a being, but is also able to conceive of himself in *contrast* to a determined empirical world. As a rational being, Man is characterized as capable of following rules, making judgements, and as endowed with a particular kind of rational autonomy that stands in stark contrast to the determinacy of the empirical world. Since it is this latter capacity of Man that is definitively identified as the locus of knowledge as such (i.e. as the site of judgements, concepts, reasoning, argument,…etc), it is only in that capacity that Man is appropriately described as a knower. One is thus confronted with the equivalence of the distinction between a knower and a world on one hand, and that between a rationally autonomous agent and a determined empirical world on the other.

Perhaps one of the most fundamental features of the so called 'linguistic turn' in the history of philosophy has been to demonstrate that the traditional categories that characterize rationality (such as, for example, judgement, inference, and concept) are *linguistic* categories as opposed to categories of thought - i.e. they are features of a complex intersubjective public phenomenon as opposed to constitutive features of individual subjects. Following the linguistic turn then, the above Kantian characterization of Man in his capacity as a rational being and, as such, as a *knower,* was subsumed by the subsequent characterization of Man as a member of a linguistic community. This philosophical project was evidently not without its challenges, however, and this is the crucial point, one finds it includes reproduced and repurposed versions of the original Kantian disjunction. Thus, for example, one finds such a version phrased in terms of language (and normativity) on one hand, and the (scientific) world on the other - or, alternatively, in terms of the Space of Reasons and the Realm of Causes (or realm of law). John McDowell identifies a similar version in *Mind and World* (esp. Ch. IV) between normative concepts (pertaining to persons qua rational beings) and scientific concepts (pertaining to

scientific objects) - his most basic point being that concepts pertaining to rationality operate with a certain conception of autonomy that is qualitatively different from the kinds of concepts pertaining to scientific laws. Bluntly put, certain facts about ourselves qua knowers and our corresponding conceptual schemes are *not* scientific facts.

No sooner had Kant bifurcated Man, that is, no sooner had the rationally autonomous knower been set in opposition to a determined empirical world, that the rigorous challenge to fuse them once again took center stage. Indeed, the demand for a resolution of this Kantian disjunction seems to resonate in the formulation of several philosophical perplexities: e.g. the mind/body problem - what precisely is the relation between the neurobiological processes of the brain and the conceptual/logical features known to us by virtue of being minded (that is to say, *rational*)? To use the title of a lecture by McDowell as a suggestive question, *Can Cognitive Science Determine Epistemology?* Another example is the (evidently related) difficulty in attempting to reconcile the space of reasons with the realm of causes - can the space of reasons (as co-constitutive of rationality) be consequent upon a causal realm? Can reasons be caused? Or, rather, can causes be disguised reasons?

Now, traditionally, the distinction between a knower and a world has led to the formulation of the particularly important concept 'representation' (an account of which was also given by Kant himself). Very generally, 'representation' is a concept that applies to a knower in so far as it is the knower himself that manages to represent the world as being a certain way (whether or not the world is actually as represented). Indeed, 'representation' seems to be the operative characteristic of a knower in so far as he is set in contrast to a certain world - that is, as a rational agent, a knower is a rational *representer*. In attempting to reconcile the above disjunctions (e.g. language/world and mind/body), that is, in attempting to give accounts of the

particular relations that hold between the two terms, it is my contention that such accounts are essentially attempting to account for a world that *includes* representation. The fundamental framework is thus one that can explain the sense in which representation does not stand in contrast to a world but is, in some sense, a part of the world. In the following essay, I will *not* attempt to reconcile a particular *given* account of the world (e.g. say, a scientific world) with a certain account of representation; instead, I will attempt to stipulate the necessary ontological commitments of representation as such. In doing so, I hope to further arrive at a minimal conception of a world that can accommodate representation in principle. As opposed to asking whether or not a particular concept of a world can accommodate representation, I propose asking the following question: is there a particular account of a world that is already implicit in the concept representation? Does the concept representation have implicit ontological commitments which would set restrictions on the requisite concept of a world of which it is to be a part? By attempting to answer these questions, I hope to have developed some strategy in light of which (if successful) I might offer alternative solutions to the traditional disjunctions.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

SM: *Science and Metaphysics,* Wilfrid Sellars

KPT: *Kant and Pre-Kantian Themes*, Wilfrid Sellars

MW: *Mind and World*, John McDowell

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The following essay is dedicated to a close analysis of the concept 'representation' in order to better understand any implicit ontological commitments requisite for such a concept. Although 'representation' typically operates in both epistemic and ontological registers, i.e. that certain theories of knowledge are typically accompanied by certain ontological commitments, I will attempt to isolate the minimal ontological commitments that are, in principle, necessary for any accompanying epistemology of representation. As a programmatic contrast, I take an 'epistemology of representation' to refer to any theory which *begins* with the minimal distinction between a knowing mind/subject and a known world/objects (however which it ends). Typically, such accounts bear the burden of confronting such concepts as truth, justification, concept, judgement, and language that - at least since Kant - have become crucial ingredients of any theory of knowledge. For this essay, I intend to side-step these issues (if only to confront them at a later stage) and attempt to construct an ontology adequate to them.

Perhaps the most glaring assumption of this essay is that representation is indeed the appropriate concept in dealing with knowledge and, thus, that an ontology of representation is needed at all. This may be put by saying that the following essay will not attempt to prove *that* representation is an adequate concept but, instead, will argue for certain ontological implications of that concept. Of course, my sincere hope is that, in having demonstrated the efficacy of the concept in dealing with certain philosophical situations, I will have also suggested its merit for justification. One might say, along with Wittgenstein, that I am allowing myself to be mesmerized by a particular picture which, however, I hope to argue is not *merely* a picture and my choice of this concept not merely aesthetic.

Since this essay is essentially working with insights and strategies found in the work of Wilfrid Sellars, there are certain methodological assumptions that must be made explicit before proceeding:

A. Conceptual Representation

In tackling representation, I have assumed a fundamental (Kantian) distinction between conceptual and non-conceptual representation. I will not be commenting on (or drawing) this distinction myself, although its fundamental structure can be found (I think most compellingly) in Sellars's *Science and Metaphysics* (Chapter I) and *Empiricism and Philosophy of Mind*. I mention this only to emphasize that the following essay is concerned only with *conceptual* representation, although, as Sellars himself suggests in Chapter 6 of SM, certain insights into conceptual representation can be extrapolated to suit the needs of non-conceptual representation. This makes the concept of 'experience' difficult to situate in this essay precisely because it seems to be the sort of concept that (arguably) subsumes both conceptual and non-conceptual elements - it will thus be helpful to the reader to avoid processing examples including everyday phenomenal objects as examples of conceptual representation. It will also be helpful to construe 'conceptual representation' in this essay as denoting an *apparatus* independently of what this apparatus stands in contrast to. That is to say, conceptual representation is being taken in isolation from the (or a) world towards which it is directed - if the argument in this essay is sound, this approach will allow us to construct the ontology of conceptual representation without reference to a more general ontology. I.e. this method will allow us to construct the minimal concept of a world (Nature) which is to contain representation without having to fit representation into an already formed concept of a world. It is a transcendental method in so far

as the ultimate question to be asked is the following: what must the world (Nature) be like for it to contain representation? Or, alternatively, what must being-in-itself be like for there to be being-for-representation[1]? Hopefully, the precise sense of these claims will be spelled out throughout the entirety of the essay. Temporarily however, the model of conceptual representation which I will be using to make my arguments leads us to the second assumption of the essay.

B. Act-Content Model

I am assuming that a useful model for my purposes is the act-content model - this is an assumption in the sense that I will not be assessing the credibility of the model *as a model of representation*. I will directly engage with this model without questioning its internal consistency and/or credibility - while maintaining the consistency and credibility of my engagement therewith. I will be operating with two key metaphors associated with acts and contents: namely the 'in' metaphor (e.g. contents are in acts) and the 'of' metaphor (e.g. acts are of their contents). Much of this essay is dedicated to a close examination of what these metaphors are literally saying. In Chapter I, I will suggest that the 'in' metaphor is used in place of an intricate ontology from which one can deduce an ineliminable ontological feature of representation. In Chapter II, I will suggest that the 'of' metaphor has a very particular epistemic function which, in Chapter III, I will attempt to reconcile with the ontological insights in Chapter I. In committing to this model however, I want to make it clear that I am committing only to a generic model from which spring particular refinements. To assimilate the concepts 'act' and 'content' to a generic model of

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[1] By being-in-itself I understand that domain of being that *does not* depend for its being on being represented - by being-for-representation, I understand that domain of being that *does* depend for its being on being represented. This distinction will be further addressed and elaborated on throughout the paper.

representation is to isolate the common (and thus the most general) features of 'acts' and 'contents' from their more particular variations in different accounts of representation. The particular variations I have in mind are the following:

1. From Act to Representing

The particular account of 'act' from which I want to abstract is that which construes 'act' as equivalent to 'intentional act' and, more specifically, '*someone's* intentional act'. What I want to draw specific attention to in this account is the underlying agent-intending-act rubric that somehow manages to supplement the term 'act' with a fortiori ontological and epistemic baggage. It seems that these supplements are consequent on drawing a further distinction within the concept of an 'act' between 'that-which-is-acting' and the 'acting itself' so to speak. In applying these distinctions to 'representation', this particular rubric would, for example, only qualify a situation as a credible 'case of representation' if there is an (implicit or explicit) intentional subject of the representing activity, thus generating epistemic and ontological queries regarding the relationships between the two. What I want to suggest thus far is that, though this rubric might in the last analysis be the correct one, it is, at this current juncture in the essay, too 'rich' (and thus too specialized). For the more generic account of representation that I intend to construct, the part of the rubric that I intend to commit myself to is the *representing activity* (as opposed to the subject of that activity). Thus, the suggestion here may be put as follows: in using the act-content model *as a model of representation*, it seems that one need only commit to a *representing activity* that *may* be analyzed in terms of intentions, minds, and/or AI systems, though is not *essentially reducible* to any *one* of these terms. In this sense then, I initially want to construct the concept of a 'representing' by abstracting from the particular instances of 'acts' in

4

more specialized epistemic and ontological contexts. Thus, contrary to the position that does *not* commit to this abstraction, both 'Tom represented unicorns yesterday as part of a thought experiment' *and* 'this nervous system is representing an environment' are genuine cases of representational *acts,* that is, cases of a *representing activity*.

2. From Content to Represented

Similarly, one can subject the term 'content' to a similar abstraction. Thus, to make a long story short, the particular rubric from which I want to abstract is the Idea-content. According to that rubric, 'content' only derivatively stands in relation to an 'act' - i.e. it is *primarily* as an independent Idea and only *secondarily* as a content. In so far as we are only concerned with representation, we must construct an account of 'content' *only in so far as it operates in a representational context* - the implication being that committing to a representational account of 'content' does not commit one to the *existence* (or lack thereof) of Ideas in any straightforward sense. One can put this by saying that the concept of a 'content' as it operates within a model of representation *may* be analyzed in terms of (Platonic) Ideas and/or (Cartesian) ideas, though, again, it is not *essentially reducible* to any *one* of these terms. Thus, in committing to the act-content model *as a model of representation*, it seems that one need only commit to (what may be termed) the *represented content*. According to the above example then, both 'unicorns' and 'environment' are instances of a *represented content*[2].

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[2] I would like to make a further distinction to help clarify what I mean by the concept 'represented'. The distinction concerns a peculiar ambiguity in the concept itself: it may refer to either 'that thing to which my representations correspond' or 'my representations themselves'. Historically, philosophers like Descartes have dealt with this ambiguity by drawing the distinction between 'formal' and 'objective' reality: thus, that 'thing to which my representations correspond' has formal reality while my representations have objective reality. As Sellars mentions in his lectures on Kant (KPT, p.12), this

Now, with the above concepts of a 'representing activity' (from here on 'representing') and a 'represented content' (from here on 'represented'), we have arrived at what may be termed the *representational core* of the act-content model; *how* this core is ontologically or epistemically realized depends on further refinements particular to different projects . Of course, thus far, we have at best given incomplete accounts of representings and representeds - both Chapters I and II will be dedicated to giving some such complete accounts.

C. Language and Conceptual Representation

One last assumption worth mentioning is the Sellarsian commitment to the relation between language and conceptual representation. Very briefly, the primary understanding of the term 'conceptual' is as it applies to language - the latter generally understood as a public intersubjective domain of practice which is the primary locus of knowledge. Thus, in addressing *conceptual* representation, I am effectively addressing *linguistic-conceptual representation* - the implication is that all concepts that apply to conceptual schemes (judgement, knowledge, concepts,…) are primarily concepts that apply to language. In the context of this essay, to describe something *as conceptual* is thus to describe it as a language[3].

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distinction also concerns the distinction between 'immanent' and 'transcendent' objects: immanent objects have objective reality while transcendent objects have formal reality.

By 'represented' I do *not* mean represented *qua transcendent object*; since the concept 'represented' is constructed (or derived) from the concept 'content', by deploying it in this argument, I intend to use it to mean *immanent object of a representing* - precisely explicating these points will be part of the purpose of this essay.

[3] The methodological assumption that qualifies this statement is the following: I am assuming that, in constructing theories of conceptual representation (e.g. theories to explain the sense which thinking is conceptual), we must, in the *first* instance, model such theories on our accounts of linguistic representation. That is, in the order of knowing, the sense in which language is a form of conceptual representation is more primary than the sense in which other forms of non-linguistic representation are conceptual. Thus, restricting the domain of the conceptual to that of the linguistic is a methodological restriction that serves only to limit the scope of this essay.

We are now in a position to begin the argument. In Chapter I, I will argue that the 'in' metaphor employed in the act-content model of representation suggests that there is a fundamental ontological asymmetry inherent in the relation between representings and representeds. This asymmetry will thus allow us to formulate a concrete sense in which representings are more ontologically primary than representeds. In Chapter II, I will argue that the 'of' metaphor is used to epistemically classify a representing by ascribing to it a functional role within a language. The notion of functional role will stand in contrast to the notion of a 'natural item' which is a term used to more adequately capture the material nature of representings (as opposed to a particular use they might be put to in some language). In Chapter III however, I will further argue that the concept of (epistemic) functional classification implies the concept of functional *classifiability*. This will lead us to revise the concept of 'natural item' such that it includes not only material constitution but also functional properties. Finally, towards the end of Chapter III, I will conclude that the minimal concept of a Nature that is to include representation is one that includes functioning-representings as an ontological category - as opposed to including the two separate categories 'representings' and 'representeds'. That is, I will argue that an ontology of representation requires only a single ontological category formally captured in the term 'functioning-representings'.

CHAPTER II: "IN" ONTOLOGY

A. Introduction

In this chapter, I want to investigate the rudimentary ontological structure of the representing/represented dichotomy. As a first estimate, it seems instructive to take our lead from the kind of ontological claims one can make using the act-content model of representation. In *Kant and Pre-Kantian Themes*, Sellars finds a manner of speaking that is particular to the act-content model which is further reasserted by a literal construal of the term 'content'. "Well, you might say, when you think of Pegasus, there isn't a real Pegasus, but obviously I'm not thinking of nothing; so there must be a Pegasus *somewhere*." (KPT, p.12) That is, 'contents' are so called precisely because they are *"in"* acts - they are the *contents* of an act-container. It is this "in" relation that Sellars wants to call attention to. It is fairly clear however, that no philosopher has taken this locution to mean that acts are *literally* the kinds of things that have a contained inside and that contents are *literally* the kinds of things that fit in act-containers. Neither acts nor contents are spatial in this sense. Thus Sellars is quick to note that this is essentially a *metaphorical* manner of speaking. Getting to what is *literally* being said will be the goal of the rest of this chapter.

B. "In" Metaphor

I want to suggest that 'contents are "in" acts' or, to get straight to the point, that 'representeds are "in" representings' asserts a particular kind of ontological implication between the two terms. That is, to put the implication in more literal terms, *that there is* a represented implies *that there is* a representing ('in which it is'). Of course, to get to the heart of the matter is to fully analyze the kind of work that the 'implication' is doing. It will be helpful to introduce the

notion of something being 'actual' to mean something 'being the case'; of course both these concepts are ambiguous in their own way and defining one in terms of the other simply begs the question. For the sake of this argument however, I will have to rely on the reader's intuitive grasp of these ambiguities to turn my argument into what I hope is a positive contribution to (as opposed to a lengthy commentary on) the concept of representation[4]. Let us then consider the ways in which one may introduce what is actual into the above implication - thus, one may decide to say: *that there is an actual* represented implies *that there is an actual* representing. Clearly this formulation is inadequate, for the curious 'implication' is still doing a lot of mysterious work. Moreover, this use of actual does not seem to capture a particularly useful ontological feature of representings/eds since it is being applied equally uninformatively to both terms. To cut straight to a suggestive formulation, consider the following: that which is represented is only *actualized* by an *actual representing of it.* Note that it does *not* assert that representeds *as such exist because representings exist[5].* What it *does* assert is that the *actuality* of representeds is being defined *in terms of the actuality of representings;* i.e. what it means for a 'represented' to be an *actual* represented is for it to be the kind of thing whose actuality depends on the actuality of another kind of thing (i.e. representings). To put it in a counterfactual, had there not been an *actual* representing, there would not have been an *actual* represented. To translate this back into our original metaphor: if you do not have an *actual representing* 'in'

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[4] For a schematic explication of the affinities between 'actual', 'being the case', 'truth', and 'judgement', refer to KTE. 'Intentional' contexts usually make use of a notion of actuality similar to the one I have in mind; namely, a thought that is currently being thought could be called an *actual* thought – alternatively, and unthought thought will be roughly equated with a *potential* thought. As such, an *actual* thought is a thought that *is occurring to someone,* so to speak; as opposed to a thought that *could* occur to someone.

[5] It is important to note that this essay is not concerned with existential claims as such; i.e. although there is an intimate and intricate relationship between the two, I am *not* equating the concept of being with the concept of actuality. For the sake of brevity, what is 'actual' is so called within some domain of being. In light of the above footnote, 'actualize' has the following sense: when an unthought thought is *thought,* it is by virtue of the *thinking* that it becomes a thought thought (i.e. it becomes an *actual* thought).

which you can 'put' the *actual represented*, then what you have 'in your hand' is not *really* an

<u>*actual*</u> represented - this does not mean that you therefore are '*not holding on to anything'*, but

only that what you *are* holding on to is *not something actual.* How does this relate to the original

question concerning the kind of job that ontological version of the implication is doing? Well, we

have put our fingers on a precise formulation of that job: again, it is to tie the actualities of two

items together *asymmetrically* thus privileging representings over representeds.

Before drawing more robust conclusions from these considerations, I would like to

address two related ambiguities: (i) does using the term 'actualized' in the above statement

suggest that representeds were 'someway' else 'before' becoming actual? And, (ii), even if the

ontological explication of the "in" relation is correct (i.e. that a represented is in fact actualized

only by an actual representing of it), how might one justify the fact that there *still* cannot be a

representing without represented (e.g. an act without a content) - even metaphorically, don't all

acts have 'insides'?

(i)   As a preliminary comment, there is a philosophically interesting temporal dimension to

the first purported ambiguity. This is implied by the use of words like 'before' and 'becoming'

and by the intuitive relationship between what is 'actual' and what *is here and now* (e.g. what

was not actual *has now become* actual). For the case of this argument, I will not be able to do this

temporal dimension justice and so will have to leave it lurking in the background. There is also

another dimension that I will have to leave unattended if only because of its ties with (temporal)

eternity, namely the dimension of the divine. Two separate assumptions are entailed by working

with a finite representing as opposed to a divine representing: (a) that there is no eternal

representing that has a God's eye view of the past, present, and future and, (b) that to each actual

representing corresponds a single (finitely complex or simple) actual represented. I am thus

10

taking the following statement to be true: a finite actual representing cannot *simultaneously* actualize all *possible* representeds. Thus, in keeping our eternal and divine eyes closed, what kind of concept corresponds to the non-actual? Well, we have already found the kind of philosophical job it needs to accomplish by spelling out the above assumptions; namely, it has to be an ontological equivalent of the concept 'possible' in 'all possible representeds'. I am going to introduce the term 'potential' as precisely this ontological equivalent - what is not actual is to be construed on the model of being *potentially actual*. It is important to note here that the concept 'potential', as we have so constructed it, contains an internal conceptual reference to the concept 'actual', thus ruling out the possibility of 'unactualizable potential' items. What *is* potentially could *in principle become actual*. To answer to the first ambiguity then, I hope it now seems clearer that I am indeed suggesting that something 'being *potentially'* is to be identified with something that 'is not yet actual', i.e. something that has 'not become actual' and is, in *this* sense, not actual. To completely bring this dichotomy to the surface of the argument, let us quickly rehearse the relevant points with the concept 'potential' in mind.

So far, we have been working with four main (ontological) concepts: representings, representeds, actual, and potential. In investigating the sense of 'ontologically implies', we have concluded that this implication is in fact a relation between two actualities to the effect that one actuality (that of representeds) is being identified in terms of another (that of representings). How then does 'potential' factor in to this conceptual scheme? In short, it factors in in the same way that 'actual' does; that is, in the same way that we have been investigating the relations between actual representings and actual representeds, we now have to investigate the relations between potential representings and potential representeds. Of course, most of the work has already been done since the logical core of the 'potential' is the 'actual'; so, on the one hand,

'potential represents' are the various represents that *could* be actualized by actual

representings and, on the other hand, 'potential representings' are the various representings that

could actualize potential represents. We can thus say that there are two modes of being which

are philosophically intertwined in an account of representation: being qua actual and being qua

potential. It is crucial to note that *neither* denotes an ontologically sufficient account of what

representation *is*; that is, if this argument holds so far, then it demonstrates why and in what

sense *both* actualities *and* potentialities *must* factor into an ontological account of representation

- the *being* of representation must be cashed out using *both actual and potential terms*. Now, to

make a purely terminological point, the domain of potential represents (or, equivalently, un-

actualized represents) is what may be labeled as the domain of <u>representables</u> - to relapse into

our metaphorical mindset, representables are the kinds of things that *could* be "*in*" acts. Given

these tools, we can now formulate our ontological interpretation of the metaphorical "in" relation

more accurately as follows:

represents are "in" representings ≡ representables, that *are qua potentials,* are *actualized* by

<div style="margin-left: 40%;">

actual representings which are, in turn, tokens of

representings *qua potentials*.

</div>

(ii)   The second ambiguity concerns my silence about the fact that, even if represents

ontologically imply representings as per the above, it is nevertheless a truth that there cannot be

an actual representing *without there also being an actual represented*. Doesn't this truth

undermine the asymmetry that, I have argued, is established by the "in" metaphor? Seeing why it

does *not* is crucial for understanding the first robust ontological conclusion that can be gleaned from the analysis so far.

The key to the solution is in the term 'actualized'. While it is correct to claim that there cannot be an actual represented without there also being an actual representing *and* that there cannot be an actual representing without there also being an actual represented, it is not directly evident why the assertion that representeds *actualize* representings seems, at least intuitively, incorrect. Are the first two claims consistent with this intuition? On one hand it seems that one *does* need to correlate the actualities of two items but, on the other hand, representings seem to have some kind of ontological independence. One can see this more clearly if we translate the problem into act-content terms: though one can have *neither* an actual content-less act *nor* an actual act-less content, it seems correct to say that acts actualize certain contents and incorrect to say that contents actualize certain acts. The way to reconcile these propositions is to notice that they are not mutually exclusive - and the fact that they are not so leads us to the heart of the matter. For, although the actualities of representings and representeds are indeed correlated, the above analysis of the "in" metaphor suggests something beyond a mere symmetric correlation - indeed we have positively suggested that there is an asymmetric implication at work.

To illustrate the solution using an example, consider the following: saying that thunder and lightning are always correlated, in that

(1) whenever there is thunder there is lightning

and

(2) whenever there is lightning there is thunder,

is *different from* (and *consistent with*) saying that

(3) lightning actualizes thunder

13

and that

(4) what actualizes lightning is not thunder.

For the case of representation, the counterparts of these four points are the following:

(1') Whenever there is an actual representing there also is an actual represented

(2') Whenever there is an actual represented there is also an actual representing

(3') What actualizes a represented is a representing

(4') *What actualizes a representing is not a represented*

Claims (1') and (2') *symmetrically correlate* two actualities, whereas claim (3') identifies the

necessary ontological condition of an *actual* represented as an *actual* representing in such a way

as to make room for claim (4') which, in turn, itself leaves the ontological condition(s) of *actual*

representings suggestively open. The argument that, I think, formally captures this feature of

representation is only briefly mentioned by Sellars in passing (both in SM and KTE): if there is a

represented, then it follows that it is the content of some representing; this representing then

remains unrepresented since it is the condition of something's being a represented; this

representing itself *may* be represented, but only by becoming the content of yet *another*

representing which is itself unrepresented; again, this 'new' unrepresented representing *may* be

represented, but only by becoming the content of *yet another representing which is itself*

unrepresented… ad infinitum. It is crucial to note that this argument is *not* pointing at a

problematic infinite regress, instead it is uncovering a transcendental condition that is at the very

heart of representation. What the argument establishes is that, *at the very least*, an ontology of

representation necessarily contains an implicit reference to *an account of unrepresented*

*representings (i.e. representings-in-themselves[6]) that a*re *themselves the conditions of the*

becoming actual of representeds. I want to claim that the fact that this is so in Sellars's argument

is accounted for by the *asymmetric ontological implication in our account - i.e.* in the fact that

the conditions of the becoming actual of representeds are actual representings *and not vice versa.*

It thus seems to me that this is precisely how one should interpret Sellars's argument. For, from

our asymmetric implication, the further point that can be made is that, *by virtue of being these*

very conditions, representings themselves do not depend for their being on being actually

represented - this *asymmetric* ontological relation is precisely what the term *'actualized'* is meant

to capture (i.e. a relation that is not merely correlational). If these conclusions are accurate, then

they merit the further conclusion that *whatever* representings *do* ontologically depend on for

becoming actual is not itself something represented. To put the conclusion more forcefully,

representings do not themselves depend on being actually represented since they are the very

condition of something's being actually represented. Now, according to the above definition of

being-in-itself, it seems that we are forced to draw the further conclusion that actual

representings must be situated in the domain of being-in-itself and appropriately named

representings-in-themselves (or, alternatively, unrepresented representings) - which matches

Sellars's conclusion.

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[6] Recall the working definition of being-in-itself from the introduction: a domain of being that is logically independent of being-for-representation - i.e. a domain of being that does not depend for its being on being represented. It is crucial to note that in delineating a respective domain of being by virtue of particular relations between the 'actualities' of two items, I am in fact drawing on the larger implications that the concept 'actuality' has on the corresponding concept of being. That is, in drawing out the asymmetry in terms of actuality, the concepts of being-in-itself and being-for-representation serve as the corresponding domains in which one draws these relations of actuality. In a representational context, for a representing to be in-itself is equivalent to the fact that its corresponding concept of actuality is more primary than that of a represented (which is in the domain of being-for-representation). In this sense then, the relationship between the two domains of being is being spelled out *in terms of the actualities of the corresponding items that occupy them.* As mentioned in the above footnote, more can be said concerning the relationship between being and actuality, however, for the sake of this thesis, they will be bracketed.

This then is our first robust ontological conclusion: in investigating the ontology of representation, we have come across a set of items (representings) that *must* have a transcendentally real status[7] and, in this sense, are appropriately situated in the domain of being-in-itself (again, defined as a domain of being that does not depend for its being on being represented). Not having constructed *some* epistemic account of representation, this rudimentary ontology tells us very little about *what* representings are and only mentions *that* they have to *be* irrespective of whether or not they are represented. Thus the transcendental argument so far has the form: *if* there is 'representation', *then* the representing activity must be anchored in being-in-itself - it is an argument for a Transcendental Realist since it derives a condition that *must be real if there is to be representation at all*. As an interpretive point, it seems that this is one of the reasons why Sellars takes the Kantian in-itself to be an indispensable *ontological* feature of the Kantian system (and of the transcendental method in general) and not merely an (arguably) 'illegitimate' epistemically negative postulate - that is, if 'representation' is our key concept, and if we are to construe being-for-representation (i.e. a Kantian for-us) as that domain of being that must be represented in order for it to *be*, then, according to our arguments, implicit in an account of being-for-representation, *is an account of being-in-itself qua condition of actuality of being-for-representation*. To put it bluntly, if 'representation' generates illusory (or second-grade) contents/objects, then the *minimal* condition for this occurrence is *that this generative process itself must be real in the strictest sense (i.e. in-itself)*. To borrow the title of one of Sellars's lecture series, Kant *is engaged in constructing a Metaphysics of Epistemology*[8] - a metaphysics

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[7] I.e. exist whether or not they are represented. Since this entire investigation is from the vantage point of representation, the operative concept of what is 'real' is precisely the Kantian concept of that which is 'transcendentally real' - as opposed to 'empirically real' or real qua represented (i.e. for-us).
[8] In his *Cassirer Lecture Notes*, Sellars concludes as follows:

of the in-itself that, contrary to common belief, he seems to know a lot about. Of course, this is

not to say that the concept of 'being-in-itself' does not have *any* epistemic significance, but only

to say that whatever its significance is, it cannot *only* be epistemic - much less can it be *only*

negatively epistemic. That is, we know *that* there is an in-itself and that it must be such that it

accounts for the being of the domain of being-for-representation. I will elaborate more fully on

these kinds of conclusions in the last chapter of this essay.

C. Some Elaborations

Before moving on to the next chapter, I would like to address a particular lacuna in the

ontological framework so far that is, perhaps, best noticed by asking the following question: how

do these ontological implications apply to potential representings and potential representeds? As

this question clearly indicates, the above account has formulated ontological asymmetries in

terms of actualities and has refrained from systematically extending the conclusions to the

domain of the potential - which is, arguably, the 'larger' domain. I am going to provide an

answer that adheres to the scope of this paper in general and to the conclusions made so far -

these conclusions will take on more robust formulations once the appropriate epistemic points (in

Chapter II) have been settled.

"… in the sense that his [Kant's] Transcendental Idealism, which includes a theory of the in itself, is a feature of his Transcendental Metaphysics, he is a Transcendental Realist." (CLN)

So far along in the argument, we can qualify Sellars's statement by claiming (along with Sellars himself in a passing sentence in *Science and Metaphysics*) that, in the Kantian system, we *must* conceive of the cognitive transcendental machinery and its operations to be *transcendentally real* - i.e. to be the conditions of appearances without themselves being 'mere' appearances. So, for example, on this interpretation, acts of synthesis are items-in-themselves since they do not depend for their being on being represented; they are transcendentally real conditions of appearances qua represented. This is undoubtedly a controversial interpretation of Kantian philosophy - I am only making this point in passing to highlight the kinds of repercussions the argument in this essay might have on Kantian scholarship.

As constructed above, the concept 'potential' contains an internal reference to the 'actual' in the sense that what is *potentially* is to be construed on the model of being potentially *actual*. Further, in the case of representings and representeds, the conditions of the becoming-actual of either items has been traced back to the domain of the in-itself: 'something' in-itself actualizes representings-in-themselves which, in turn, actualize representables. Given these two points, it seems that one particular conclusion forces itself on us: *any* account of the domain of potentialities (in the case of representation) must, *in some sense,* have its conditions of actuality in being-in-itself. To phrase this more aggressively, the transcendental condition of an item (qua potential) is the *real* (i.e. *transcendentally real*) condition of its becoming actual. That is, if the conditions of its becoming actual are not given in being-in-itself, then it cannot be qua potential. Before moving to the implications this conclusion has for representings and representeds separately, I would first like to defend it in two separate ways: first by seeing how it follows from what has come before it, and second by the *reductio ad absurdum* of its negation.

If the above arguments are sound, the first way seems fairly straightforward. Representables (qua potential items) are actualized by an actual representing with the implication (discussed above) that this actual representing itself belongs in the domain of the in-itself. In this sense then, the condition of actuality of representables is something that does not itself depend for its being on being represented (i.e. is not itself a representable). Now, since actual representings belong to the domain of the in-itself, the conditions of actuality of potential representings must themselves be given in that domain (i.e. the domain of the in-itself). Thus, if these remarks are correct, we can make the further terminological point and claim that the account of the being-potential of both representings and representeds is a *transcendentally real account* in the sense that their *being-potential is parasitic on their real conditions of becoming*

actual - conditions which are determined independently of whether or not they are represented.

To phrase this conclusion more intuitively, the basic idea is the following: whatever representings and representeds *could be* is determined by the way in which they could be *real* - i.e. is determined by the reality of which they are to become a part; a reality which is otherwise independently 'there'.

Alternatively, if one wants to negate the above conclusion, i.e. if one wants to maintain that the conditions of actuality of representation (qua potential) are *not* determined by the domain of the in-itself but are instead themselves dependent for their being on being represented, then one is also engaged in a thoroughly contradictory *ontology* of representation. For, in this case, what is in fact being asserted is that the *conditions* of the becoming-actual of representings are themselves *ontologically dependent on representings* - i.e. that representation is self-actualizing or, in less theological terms, that the product is the condition of the production of the product itself. This is *precisely* what representation *cannot* be if it is to be representation at all - to affirm this position would be violate the basic ontological relations that make representation what it is. This is the contradiction[9].

How does this conclusion apply to representings and representables separately? Very briefly, for the former case, since, as per the above, actual representings are already in the domain of being-in-itself, an account of potential representings is an account of the various ways in which a representing can be actual (i.e. the various 'kinds' of representings) - an account

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[9] If one wants to affirm this contradiction, then it is not clear in what capacity one is still giving an account of representation - *especially* if an account of representation is meant to generate a distinction between representations (i.e. representeds) and being-in-itself. Since affirming this contradiction contradicts the very assumption of my argument (i.e. the assumption *that* there is representation [in *some* sense of 'is' and 'representation']), I am forced to set it aside and work despite of the alternatives such a contradiction might generate. By 'affirming the contradiction' I mean an account that takes this contradiction to be an indication that 'representation' as such is a mistaken category.

which would thus depend on the more general account of the categorial structure of the in-itself (i.e. the ultimate structure of reality will determine what kinds of representings are really possible). For example, if the in-itself has a *physical* structure, then the various kinds of representings would correspond to the various *physically possible* kinds of representings (whatever those would be). As for representables, the conclusion that forces itself on us seems to be the following: an account of representables (i.e. potential representeds) is one that must be restricted only by the fact that they their conditions of actuality are representings. Note that the former conclusion is more demanding in that, to give an account of what representings are, one must also give an account of what reality is - this is not the case for the latter conclusion. Also notice that that fact is somewhat comforting since, if the coming section is sound, the domain of being-for-representation is that domain in which we enjoy our notoriously perplexing human being.

CHAPTER III: "OF" EPISTEMOLOGY

A. Introduction

The above sections were concerned with making explicit the ontological commitments that are implicit in the metaphoric use of the "in" locution. It was argued that saying "representeds are 'in' representings" contains an appeal to certain concepts that appear to be crucial (indeed, necessary) for an ontological account of representation. It was further argued that with these concepts, it is possible to accurately define a positive sense in which being-for-representation is a 'secondary mode of being' whose conditions of actuality have to be given in being-in-itself. This had two distinct implications for representings and representables: in the former case, representings *must* be in-themselves in that (a) their conditions of actuality are transcendentally real and (b) they are the conditions of actuality of representables (i.e. of the domain of being-for-representation), while, in the latter case, representables cannot be so called unless they have a derivative ontological status that situates their conditions of actuality in something in-itself (i.e. representings-in-themselves). In this sense then, it is possible to appreciate the 'double' ontological life of "representation". That is, 'representation' does not unambiguously refer to one mode of being; by committing to a conception of representation, one is committing oneself to a conception of representings qua being-in-itself, representables qua being-for-representation, and to the *relation between the two*[10].

The analysis in the previous section was prompted by the use of a particular metaphor that seemed to be engaged in a troubling amount of implicit philosophical work. Its primary

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[10] Of course, *how* representings and representeds are related depends on the respective analyses given. In the concluding section of this essay, it will hopefully become apparent that talk of 'relation' is ultimately a misleading gesture that attempts to pry apart a single kind of process into metaphysically distinct categories.

function was to distill a cloud of ontology into an ill-formed drop. Seeing that the analysis was, to some degree, fruitful, is there still another such metaphor from which we can get new bearings? Consulting the act-content model, there indeed is such a metaphor that runs hand in hand with the one previously considered: contents are not only "in" acts, they are *also* what these very acts are "of". Thus, we not only have the formula: "represented 'in' representing" but also, "representing 'of' represented". Interestingly, both these metaphors are used to define *two co-implicative relations*; i.e. it is not *because* contents are "in" acts that they are also what these acts are "of" (nor vice versa). In our terminology, this may be put as follows: representeds satisfy two *equally basic* relations to representings - they are "in" representings *and* they are what these representings are "of". Before beginning the analysis, a comment needs to be made regarding an unfortunate tendency that both these metaphors encourage. That is, by placing an "in" or an "of" in between 'representings' and 'representeds', one might be tempted to construe both these terms as being on par as 'things' or 'objects' - that is, it is tempting to construe the 'in's and 'of's as names of relations that obtain between two entities, objects, or things. It is crucial to keep in mind that, given the validity of the above section, this cannot be the case since 'representings' and 'representeds' belong to two different domains of being and, in that sense, are not (and cannot be) 'entities', 'objects', or 'things' *in the same sense*. To use an Aristotelean turn of phrase, 'being' applies homonymously to 'representings' and 'representeds'; for convenience, I will use the term 'item' to refer to something irrespective of its ontological or epistemic status - as a 'neutral' name. Thus, although what has been said in the previous section is indeed concerned with the ontology of representation (by invoking such terms as 'actual', 'conditions of actuality', and 'potential'), representings and representeds qua items are not said to be actual (or potential) in the same sense. I make this point simply to undermine the claim that the triad

'representings', 'representeds', and the relation between the two items can *only* be parsed as two different *things, objects, or entities standing in some real (or metaphysical) relation R* - while this *might* be true, the following section will suggest a strategy to show why it is not an *exclusive* option. For, to look ahead, if Sellars's account of the epistemic role of "of" is to situate a 'representing' in a linguistic (epistemic) network by classifying it as being of a certain kind then, clearly, classification schemes and functional roles need not be (*strictly*) related to the items they apply to as two things, objects, or entities standing in some real (or metaphysical) relation R (i.e. a commitment to classification as such is not a metaphysical commitment).

B. "Of" Metaphor

Keeping the above in mind, let us then begin the analysis of the following formulation of the key metaphor:

(0) representing is of represented

where 'representing' and 'represented' stand for an actual representing and an actual represented respectively, as per the argument in the above section. Given that the only restriction on our analysis so far is the ontological account in the above section, it is in principle possible to suggest any represented-item provided that, in doing so, we ascribe to it that particular ontology. It will be helpful and efficient to use an example (i.e. and example of an 'immanent object') that Sellars himself usually uses when attempting to excise the confidence in any straightforward (or Platonic) account of abstract entities from his readers:

(1) (representing) is of 'and'.

Before suggesting the relevant points to be made, it is interesting to note that, in using this particular formulation (as opposed to "… is of conjunction", for example), the temptation to

construe the represented item as an 'entity/object' (an *abstract* entity/object') is somewhat

alleviated. Notice that if this temptation persists, then what is effectively persisting is a

temptation to construe the represented item in (1) as the name of a *transcendentally real item*

(and-ness/conjunction-in-itself so to speak) that would revoke its status as a represented item *in*

our sense. I will set aside this account and refer the reader to Sellars's *Abstract Entities* and

Grammar and Existence: a Preface to Ontology for a critical account of the ontological status of

abstract entities. Also, and in the meantime, notice that according to the above section such a

temptation might indeed be justified in the case of (unrepresented) representings - that is, the

representing-item in (1) *does seem to be a name of a transcendentally real item.*

The first point to note about (1) is that the entire statement following '(representing)' is in

English and, indeed, that it *must* be in *some* language[11]. Further, in this case at least, the language

of the statement is the same as the language that the 'represented' item is in. All this tells us so

far is that, as a statement, (1) is properly situated in an 'English language' context, so to speak,

where both the speaker and the listener have some rudimentary knowledge of English. The

perhaps obvious (but undoubtedly significant) point here is that for one to say what a

representing is *of* is for one to *already* speak *some* language and belong to *some* linguistic

community (whether hypothetical/virtual - e.g. Robinson Crusoe - or actual - e.g. Zarathustra at

the marketplace). By attempting to give an account of what the "of-ness" of a representing

consists in, we must give such an account *as language-mongers.* Already then, there is a tangible

but generic (and perhaps arbitrary) sense in which an account of representation is essentially

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[11] As a reminder, I am taking it for granted that language, in this context, is by definition an
intersubjective and public practice and, further, that any 'private' accounts of language are derivative
from a public account.

something that is constructed from within a language using its (*in principle*) intersubjective tools. We thus might render (1) more perspicuously as

(1') (representing) is of 'and' in English.

The second point to note is that the 'and' does not appear in the sentence in the way that it usually does (i.e. as a word used to link two sentences or words together). Instead, it appears as a *mentioned* term as if, by placing it in this context, one is reminding the listener of (or alerting him to) the *use* of 'and' and not actually using it himself. This point is crucial and it is not a rephrasing of the first point - for, while in the first point, we were situated within some language or other, this second point attempts to make explicit a *particular context* that is implicitly granted by the structure of the sentence. This context is one that not only generally presumes the speaker's (and the listener's) familiarity with the language being used (English in this case), but also more accurately presumes familiarity with the functioning of the word 'and' in English. These points can more readily be seen if, as a *third* point, we consider that, given that the 'and' is not being used but, instead, *its use is being mentioned*, *the statement does not mention any particular use of 'and'*. To see this, one need only notice that the sense of statement (1') is preserved if it is replaced with

(1'') (representing) is of *an* (or *some*) 'and' in English.

Thus formulated, it is clear that the referent of 'and' in the original sentence (1') is not *one* instance of "and" but, in principle, *all instances* and, more explicitly, *all possible instances past, present, and future*. To make this point as clearly as possible, consider the following analogy (persistently drawn by Sellars and Wittgenstein) with a game of chess: in the same way that the word 'pawn' (in Chess-language) does not refer to a *particular instance* of a pawn but is instead identical in sense to *'a pawn'* or *'some pawn'* (and in that sense *refers to all pawns*), the word

'and' in (1') equally refers to *all the 'and's of the English language* - it does not identify a particular context in which the word is being used in a particular way. To get to the heart of the analogy, notice that the word 'pawn', in referring to *all pawns*, is not itself a *name* of some object, but is instead a *kind* term. Now, of course, in asking what a pawn in chess *is* (i.e. in our context, what the 'pawn-kind' is), our answer should be that "it is a piece that can move in so-and-so ways but not in so-and-so ways" - *i.e. the pawn-kind simply is the set of rules governing the use of individual pawns in a game of chess*. Notice that the formulation of our answer to the question "what is a pawn in chess?" does not place any restrictions on the *particular material* of the item that moves according to the rules governing the movement of pawns. One might put this by saying that 'pawn' is not *simply* a kind term but a *functional-kind term* in that it classifies items *by abstracting from their particular material constitution*. For, to call something 'a pawn' is to classify a certain *item* (wooden items, metal items, copper items, car-items, people-items…etc) *as being a pawn* - i.e. as being a token of the pawn-kind. That is, it classifies the *patterns* of items *as being pawn-kind movements - i.e. as being governed by the rules that govern the movements of pawns in chess.* It is imperative to keep in mind that the rules that determine *how* pawns are to be used (i.e. those that govern the movements of pawns) may be, *in principle, realized by, any item*: one can play chess with little wooden pieces as well as with babies, cyborgs, and philosophers given that they *move in the right ways*. One can even play an entire game of chess 'in one's head' provided that the rules are followed. These rules determine the *patterns* that material items (usually 'natural objects') are allowed to exhibit *if they are to participate as individual pieces (e.g. pawns) in a chess-game*. Notice that these rules do not make use of temporal predicates and are, in this sense, a-temporal; i.e. the rules governing the

26

use of pawns apply to *any* chess player irrespective of *when* the game is played *past, present, or future*.

Before relating this to our 'and' example, it is crucial to note, perhaps as a commentary on the analogy itself, that it is a potentially dangerous oversimplification of the case at hand: even though, in a philosophical frame of mind, we may have an ideal ('static') cross-section of some language, the capacity of a natural language (like English) to organically change and develop over a period of time seems to be an indispensable feature of natural language. That is, the particular rules of use of some word - 'and' in this context - need be neither explicit nor definitive; as an example, consider the rules of use of the word 'justice'.

To make explicit use of the analogy in our example, the point is that being '*an and*' or '*some and*' is equivalent to being a token governed by certain rules of use. If this interpretation is adequate, then the function of 'and' in statement (1') is not to be an 'and'-token, but *to be the 'and'-kind.* Further, and in keeping to our chess analogy, being an 'and'-kind simply *is being the set of rules governing the use of certain 'and'-tokens.* Two important concepts are consequent on this kind of analysis: (a) functional classification in terms of functional role and (b) the individual items, 'natural objects', that are so classified - I will get to concept (b) towards the end of this section.

C. Functional Classification and Functional Role

As was mentioned in the chess analogy, 'and'-kind classifies items, natural objects, *as* 'and'-tokens according to their formal (i.e. functional) properties as opposed to their 'material

27

constitution'[12]. It was also mentioned that these formal properties are expressed by the rules of use of some word - and *this is the key concept*. For, to teach someone certain rules of use of some word - 'and' - is to teach someone to deploy certain sets of patterns of natural objects that would correctly count, by other language users, as a 'using of that word'. So, for example, it is to teach someone to utter "Dr. Lecter is a cannibal *and* a gentleman" and to avoid uttering "Dr. Lecter is and a cannibal a gentleman"; it is to teach someone that it is correct to move from "If Dr. Lecter is a gentleman then he is also a cannibal" and "Dr. Lecter is a gentleman" to "Therefore, Dr. Lecter is a cannibal". One may put this by saying that to treat 'and' (*qua natural object*) *as a word* is to treat it as a functional-kind-token[13] in an intricate system of natural objects involved in certain patterns - *patterns that are formally expressed by certain rules of use (and misuse) of words*. Of course, to treat some natural object as a word (or, indeed, *as part of a language*) is not simply a matter of good sentence structure - "You might say, 'Well, when you come across this shape in the desert, it is a word but only in an extended sense.' That is, it has the same shape as a word, and perhaps there is a beast out here who blows and is communicating by means of the wind. Perhaps the clouds might one days form the phrase, 'City, get out of the city!' It might be that Yahweh is angry; get out of the city. For a while, you might say that it is an interesting wind that blew and, after a time, you might begin to get nervous, and you might get out of the city: *that would be treating it as a word*. Otherwise, it is just a word by analogy and extension. In the

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[12] By invoking the concept of 'material constitution', I do not mean to invoke particular ontological restrictions on the constitution of tokens. Explicating the function of this concept is the purpose of the upcoming point (b). For the moment, let us consider the intuitive (yet, as it stands, problematic) assertion that the 'material constitution' of linguistic tokens is simply their natural properties as natural objects in the natural world (i.e. size, color, shape, temporal sequence,...). For example, the '*and*' as literally a physical (digital? empirical?) spatial sequence of slightly slanted blue inscriptions with certain sizes and shapes.

[13] By 'functional-kind-token' I mean an item whose patterns are appropriately classified as being of some functional kind. For example, an individual wooden pawn on a chessboard is some such item: it is the patterns of the wooden-items are appropriately classified as pawn-moves.

primary sense, a word is something that exists in a context such that it is functioning

linguistically as a means of expressing an idea."[14] (*Metaphysics of Epistemology,* p.236-7,

emphasis added) This kind of account would undoubtedly require a more thorough explication

with respect to certain classical issues in the philosophy of language for which there is not

enough room; I can refer the reader to Sellars's SRLG and MFC. The larger point here for

representation, however, is that an account of functional kinds (i.e. functional classification) is an

account of classification in terms of the rules of a public and intersubjective language in terms of

which, as Sellars says in another context, we "suffer, think, and act." (Sellars, *Structure of*

Knowledge) We may, following Sellars, use the following notation

•and•

to refer to the functional kind of the word in between the dot-quotes. Thus, to say that some

natural object is an •and•-kind is to say that it is involved in certain patterns that are expressed by

the rules of use of the word *and* - i.e. it is to classify that object as an •and•-token, as *an (or*

some) •and•. Similar to the chess analogy, the '•and•' notation allows us to talk about rules of

use that do not include temporal predicates; i.e. it is the particular rules of use of the word *and*

that allows for it to operate in temporal discourse and, in that sense, the rules are formulated in a

de-tensed (a-temporal) manner. Basically, the same rules apply to speakers and natural objects

irrespective of *when* they are. This is the sense in which the 'and' in statement (1') refers, not

only to *all* instances of 'and', but to *all possible instances past, present, and future*. Given this

notation, we may thus re-write (1') as

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[14] For Sellars, there are essentially three kinds of patterns that natural items must be involved in such that
they are classifiable as linguistic tokens - i.e. as tokens of a functional kind: language-entry/world-
language transitions (cases of perception statements, e.g. "this is a round and blue solid"), language-
language transitions (inferences, e.g. p and q is true iff both p is true and q is true), and language-
exit/language-world transitions (e.g. from saying "I will raise my left hand and my right leg" to actually
raising one's left hand and right leg).

(1''') (representing) is of the •and•-kind (in L)

To get more of a grip on the concept of functional classification and functional kind, it will useful to briefly consider examples from Sellars' account of meaning. Let us consider the following statement:

(3) 'et' (in French) means 'and' (in English).

Without going through Sellars's argument itself, let us attempt to apply our already formed concepts to this context. According to our strategy then, this statement is not restricted to an individual instance of 'et' nor 'and' but, in principle, refers to all instances of 'et' and to all instances of 'and'. That is, to say (3) is to say that

(3') 'et's (in French) *are* 'and's (in English)

and, further, that

(3'') the •et•-kind *is* the •and•-kind.

By moving from the quoted 'and' and 'et' to the dot-quoted •and• and •et•, it is imperative to note that the scope of the statement is no longer restricted to the English or French languages, although, of course, it must be restricted to language *as such*. For, to move from the individual instances of 'and' (in English) and 'et' (in French) to the rules governing the use of certain patterns of natural objects is to move from one particular language to a meta-language where it becomes possible to compare rules across languages *in terms of patterns*[15]. Thus, although 'and's and 'et's do indeed belong in different languages, one can still claim that the rules governing

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[15] A more thorough account of linguistic functioning would undoubtedly have to ultimately treat language as a phenomenon richer than mere inscribing - for example, one would have to incorporate the complex behavior of speaker of that language into ones account of patterns. For some such account, see Sellars's SRLG.

their uses are similar[16] in that both sets of rules generate *similar patterns of natural objects (i.e. patterns of 'and' and 'et' inscriptions).* One might put this by re-writing (3'') as

(4) both 'et's and 'and's are •and•-tokens; i.e. both are •and•s or, alternatively, both are •et•s.

Again, notice that the •and• is a functional kind *that may be realized in any language;* its job is to classify certain *patterns of natural objects - i.e. by abstracting from the material constitution of the particular natural objects involved* (e.g. 'et's, 'و's, 'y's, 'και's are all •and•s in French, Arabic, Spanish, and Greek respectively, irrespective of the differences in shape, color, phonetic character, or size). It is important to emphasize once more that, for natural languages, functional kinds are *not* static - *rules do evolve over time.* That is, the relationship between patterns of natural objects and functional kinds is not unidirectional: although words do have rules that direct one to their correct use, it is also the case that words develop new rules in the course of their use (e.g. 'google' as a verb).

So far, we have offered an analysis of the '(represented)' variable in the scheme "(representing) is of (represented)" and have drawn two essential conclusions: (a') claims about representeds (i.e. what representings are "of") are essentially the kinds of claims that are internal to some language, (a'') the '(represented)' variable is not the name of an object but the name of a linguistic functional kind that (a''') classifies patterns of natural objects. We can thus reconstruct the original scheme (0) with the more perspicuous

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[16] Of course, there needs to be an account of 'similarity': what is it that determines that two uses are sufficiently similar? See Sellars's SRLG and Seibt's chapter on translation in PP, Synoptic Study of Wilfrid Sellars.

(0') (representing) is of the •represented•-kind (in L)

Thus, notice that a theoretical account of the domain of representeds (i.e. representables) is essentially subsumed by a theoretical account of the domain of linguistic items (e.g. words, propositions, judgements, inferences,…etc). Of course, since I have taken language as the primary locus of conceptual representation as such, it is no surprise that I will also find that a theory of language includes, and, indeed, is necessary for a theory of representables (as what representings are "of"). In fact, given the above analysis, representeds *are linguistic functional kinds* and, further, a theory of such linguistic kinds is *ipso facto* a theory of representeds[17]. One might go so far as to say that the distinction between represented-items and linguistic-items is *not a distinction in kind* and is, perhaps, *not a distinction at all but an identity*. For, according to our account, not only does *saying* (in L) what a representing is *of* already implicate one in normative linguistic space, it also uniquely implicates one in a space of functional classification at the *meta-linguistic*[18] level as was shown above. Both these implications are the site of epistemic reflection and knowledge as such - that is, it is not only the case that we must belong to some linguistic community in order to make certain claims and suggest certain justifications for these claims, it is *also* the case that classifying natural objects *as tokens of meta-linguistic functions* is classifying these objects *epistemically* (i.e. identifying the ways in which they relate

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[17] Keeping in mind that the 'represented', in the context of this essay, is playing the role of the content of an act, it is crucial to note that equating representeds with linguistic functional kinds is *not* tantamount to the claim that all one can represent are functional kinds. For, clearly, one wants to be able to think of ones pets without having to constantly think of the pet-functional-kind. The difference is a subtle one between the following: (1) all representings are of functional-kinds (which, if taken in the intuitive sense, is clearly false) and, (2) all one can *say* about his (or some) representing is said *in terms of functional kinds*. It is this latter claim that is implied by equating representeds with linguistic functional kinds *not the former*. To talk of representeds in *this* sense is to consider them as taking part in a certain context of classification. Further explicating this claim will lead us ever deeper into Sellars's system since it is precisely this fact that is central to his theory of picturing - see SM Ch. 5.

[18] I.e. the level at which it is possible to talk about the *rules of use* of certain words as opposed to simply using the words themselves.

to our conceptual-linguistic structure in terms of which we represent ourselves and our world). In the original formulation of the metaphor then, it turns out that the 'represented' variable carries the weight of most (if not *all*) of the epistemic content of the formulation, for, if our analysis is accurate, it analytically implies a conceptual-linguistic structure of which it is irremediably a part.

What then, if any, is the epistemic function of the '(representing)' variable? and, indeed, what of the "of" metaphor? The key strategy at this point will be to chart a conceptual path between the two crucial examples that we have used in our analysis; i.e. a path from sentences with the form

(0') (representing) is of the •represented•-kind,

e.g.

(1''') (representing) is of the •and•-kind (in L),

to those of the form

(5) _____ (in L1) means - - - - - - (in L2),

e.g.

(3) 'et' (in French) means 'and' (in English).

As per the above, we have claimed that the function of sentences of form (5) is to identify two functional kinds that are manifested in similar patterns of materially distinct natural objects (i.e. temporarily as inscriptions). That is, again, to assert (3) is to assert

(4) both 'et's and 'and's are •and•-tokens; i.e. both are •and•s or, alternatively, both are •et•s

where 'et's and 'and's are construed as distinct natural objects with certain material properties.

Now, consider the following formulation

(6) (representing) means 'and' (in English).

With the same tools we have been using to move from (3) to (4), we can claim that (6) in fact asserts

(6') both '(representings)'s and 'and's are •and•-tokens (i.e. are •and•s) ;

to isolate the absolutely essential part, we can claim

(6'') '(representing)'s are •and•s.

Notice that the function of this statement is to *functionally classify* '(representing)'s *(qua natural objects) as tokens of the •and•-(functional)-kind*. Also notice that the structure of (6'') is

x's are K's. I want to suggest, along with Sellars (SM ch.3, 6), that, in the same way that one can

move from

x's are K's

to

x is a K

to the contrived expression

a Kx ,

one can move from (6'') to

(7) (representing) is an •and•

and, finally, to the contrived expression

(7') an •and•-(representing).

It is important to see that (6'') and (7') are indeed equivalent: both classify a representing-item as a token of some *functional kind*. If these considerations are compelling, then we are in a position to suggest a function for the "of" metaphor: namely, it is a quoting device used to classify the representing in terms of the represented. That is, to say what a representing is "of" is to classify it as an •represented•-(representing) - i.e. classify it as a token *of a functional kind*. Basically, to *metaphorically* assert that

(representing) is of 'and' (in English)

is to *literally* assert that the patterns that the '(representing)' (qua natural item[19]) is involved in are patterns that are appropriately classified as •and•-kind-patterns and, thus, the '(representing)' as an •and•-(representing) (i.e. an •and•-token). Recall that •and•-kind-patterns are expressed by the rules of use of the 'and' word in English. To give a possibly helpful example, according to our analysis,

this I or he or it (the thing) is thinking of dogs

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[19] 'Object' would not apply in this case since a representing (like a thinking) is not an object in any helpful or informative sense. This issue will shortly be addressed; meanwhile, 'item' here, as above, is meant as a 'neutral' term.

is not asserting a relation - call it "of-ness" - between a thinking activity and an intentional object 'dog', but is instead classifying the thinking *as a token of the •dog•-kind* which, for example, is sometimes followed by thinkings of the •four-legged•-kind and of the •Fido•-kind so to speak. Again, the function of the "of" metaphor is to indicate that the statement is one in which a representing item is classified *in terms of the represented item (i.e. in terms of that which comes directly after the "of")* - it isolates the latter part of the sentence that follows (i.e. the represented-item) *as a functional-kind term that classifies the representing-item as a token of that functional-kind.*

D. Functional Classification and Natural Items

Now, we have covered too much ground using a dangerously ambiguous concept that has now become at the heart of the analysis - i.e. 'natural and/or material object/item'. This concept suggested itself in two distinct situations: first, in contrast to point (a) above as 'the items involved in the patterns that functional-kind terms classify' (i.e. 'inscriptions') and, second, has proven itself to be of further use in our analysis of the function of the "of" metaphor as it pertains to both representings and representeds. Since the "… of represented" locution classifies representings qua *natural items*, confronting this concept is unavoidable. Luckily, only the following needs to be said for the argument of this essay to hold its ground: namely, representings are only *negatively identified* as *functionally classifiable items* whose actual constitution is left open. In the context of the operative metaphor of this section, making this negative claim is tantamount to making the following positive one: *to say what a representing is "of" does not make any claim as to what that representing is (qua natural item).* However, it is incredibly important to note that this does not preclude the (compelling) fact that *saying what*

36

representings are might include saying what they are "of". That is, giving an ontological

account of representings might (or indeed *must*) involve classifying certain instances as being

token-representings of certain type-kinds. If this claim is adequate to the situation, then whatever

'natural items' *are* (i.e. what items one might include in their ontology - macro-objects, micro-

objects, macro-processes, micro-processes…etc) is merely gestured to by our account as a

necessary theoretical outgrowth. That is, and this is the speculative topic of the upcoming

section, to give an epistemic account of representation is to implicate oneself in a parallel

ontological project that is non-trivially concerned with giving an account of what *natural items*

are and, thus, an account of the Nature of which they are a part.

Thus far, we have suggested an analysis of the schematic metaphor 'representing is of

represented'. We have concluded that to say what a representing is "of" is to classify that

representing as being a certain represented-kind thus situating it in a certain epistemic

environment. In doing so, we have given a concrete account of what a represented-kind is

(namely, a functional-kind) and have shown that it leads us to a concept of an 'item-to-be-

functionally-classified' (i.e. a natural item - originally considered as empirical/material

inscriptions). We also found that the concept of a natural-item extends to representings in so far

as they also are items which are characterized merely negatively as functionally classifiable

items. How then are we to conceive of the synthesis between the ontological points discussed in

Chapter 1 and the broadly epistemic points in this chapter? That is, how are we to reconcile the

ontological primacy of representings (as the conditions of actuality of representeds) with the

epistemic function of representeds? *Can* there be such a synthesis?

CHAPTER IV: SYNTHESIZING NATURE

A. Introduction

We have thus far drawn several conclusions that have been schematically grouped into two categories mimicking the dichotomy in our original metaphors - we have shown the senses in which both the "in" and "of" metaphors carry implicit ontological and epistemic commitments respectively. The challenge of this chapter is to precisely (yet speculatively) articulate a further set of conclusions that is consequent on an attempt to synthesize those already drawn in chapters I and II - and, further, to draw the relevant systematic conclusions that point to further avenues of research.

Let us (first) rehearse some of our essential findings in Chapters I & II so as to (second) draw the more systematic consequences more perspicuously. In the name of representeds, we had said that the actuality of a represented item is defined in terms of the actuality of a representing-item in such a way as to make the condition (in some sense of that word) of an actual represented-item a corresponding actual representing. We had also said that, since representables constitute the domain of being-for-representation (by definition), it follows that the condition of actuality of being-for-representation is being-in-itself qua representings (in particular) and qua the domain of the in-itself (in general - i.e. as that domain in which representings enjoy their being). This conclusion was prompted by noticing a particular asymmetric ontological relation between representings and representeds; this was seen to be an analytic property of the representing/ed dichotomy. It was also said (without much qualification) that, since representings and representeds are properly situated in two different domains of being, then they cannot be said to be 'actual' nor said to be 'things' in the same sense - this was prompted by an attempt to forgo a certain picture that attempts to reify "of-ness" as a

metaphysical relation that obtains between two things, representing-things and represented-things. We are now in a position to give this last point some qualification.

By the end of Chapter II, we had said that representeds are linguistic functional kinds in that they classify corresponding representings by functionally situating them in a relevant epistemic-linguistic context. We had also said that, since representeds carry the epistemic weight they do, a theory of representeds is indeed a theory of language (i.e. natural languages) and linguistic functioning (i.e. meta-languages in terms of functional kinds) - of course, the operative concept of a 'language' in this context is qua locus of communication and construction of socio-cultural practices[20]. Furthermore, we had seen that representings were vacuously classified as *natural* and *epistemically classifiable* items thus emphasizing their projective theoretical status.

Now, how might these points offer us a way to provide the cash for the above concessions? Let us first consider the case of representeds; the question that immediately suggests itself is the following: in what sense could a linguistic-functional kind be actual? First and foremost, it is important to emphasize that, as was mentioned and argued for in the first chapter, the actuality of represented items is to be defined in terms of the actuality of representings - it is crucial that this element factors into any suggestion as to what the role of 'actual' (as it pertains to representeds) is. For this is indeed one of the features of representeds *by definition*. Let us once again take our operative '•and•' example from Chapter II - what does it mean to be an actual '•and•'? Our answer *cannot* be along the following lines: to be an actual •and• is to be an 'abstract functional kind' - for, in that case, we have defined a mode of being that runs contrary to the ontological considerations formulated in Chapter I. That is, we have

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[20] I only mention this point because Sellars himself suggests that, although this is an adequate concept of a 'language', it is generally insufficient in that it is not what is most primary. For this point, see Sellars's LTC).

isolated the actuality of functional kinds and divorced it from any corresponding representing. Let us then take a closer look at our example; we have said that one of the most essential features of the following formulation

representing is of the •and•

is that it serves to epistemically classify a representing-item by situating it in *some* epistemic-linguistic context or other - one in which the •and•-item is operating. We have also noted that this implies that, in situating the representing-item in such a context, one is claiming (or mentioning, proposing,…) that the representing-item in question has a certain role to play in that context - in this case, it functions like the word 'and' does in English, it is an •and•representing. The crucial point here is that the '•and•' in the above statement functions the way it does precisely because it is *situated in some epistemic-linguistic context*. What does it then mean to say that the above '•and•' is an *actual* '•and•'? Given this kind of analysis, it seems that being an *actual* •and• simply *is having a certain function in some particular language* - it is to have a role within a *certain community of speakers*. More precisely, being an actual •and• is tantamount to being a meta-language item that is manifested in *some language of a community of speakers*. Notice that this account preserves the essential intuition behind the ontology of representeds; namely, in claiming that an actual represented is one that is *manifested* in *some* language, one identifies the condition of actuality of that represented with its *functioning within some linguistic community* - what this does is that it makes some linguistic community *the condition of actuality of the represented-item.* This account also preserves the intuition that whatever representings are

of is *something that is already in one's (*or in *some*) *conceptual scheme* - that is, it would not

make much sense to claim that

representing is of Δ°°

or, for example,

I am thinking of Δ°°

where the 'Δ°°' is of *no* conceptual relevance whatsoever - i.e. that 'Δ°°' does not belong to (or

does not *translate into*) *any* conceptual scheme. To be an *actual* represented is thus to be a

functional-kind item that operates *in some (at least one) linguistic (conceptual) scheme*[21]. Now,

clearly, *this* sense of actuality does not apply to the linguistic community itself; being the

condition of actuality of representeds and, by that token (as in Chapter I), operating in a different

'mode of being', the actuality of representeds is being defined in terms of that of the linguistic

community - which thus cannot be actual in the same sense. Indeed, an account of the actuality

of linguistic communities is demanded by and implicit in an account of the actuality of

representeds. Now, given that the above concessions identify the actuality of representeds with

their function within a certain linguistic community, then, by parity of reasoning, it is this *actual*

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[21] Also notice that, the corresponding account of potential representeds is *not* an account of 'un-used'
representeds, i.e. representeds that have no role in any conceptual scheme, (for, as we have seen above,
that kind of account would violate the basic ontological tenets of representeds), but is instead an account
of *possible uses* (or possible linguistic functions/roles). To take this point further and tie it to another kind
of project, an account of potential representeds is a transcendental account of language qua use, or, as
Sellars refers to it, is *transcendental linguistics*. For, to determine possible uses is to delineate *possible
linguistic roles* which, in turn, is to have a complete formal account of what it means to be a language
with linguistic roles (i.e. the formal conditions of a language in terms of use/role/function).

linguistic community that is to be identified with *actual representings qua condition of actuality of representeds*. Further, it is not *merely* the linguistic community that is to play the role of actual representings, but, by the considerations in the second chapter, it is that very community *qua epistemically classifiable natural items.* We can thus see the equivalence that crops up between the representing/ed distinction and that between a certain language and its respective community of speakers: the ontology of linguistic communities (as composed of a certain set of individuals) *is a community of representings qua epistemically classifiable natural items;* while the ontology of language *is that of representeds whose condition of actuality are representings as construed above*. We can thus see that the sense in which representeds are 'actual' is very different from the sense in which representings are 'actual' *while maintaining that the actuality of one item is built into that of the other.*

B. Bifurcated Nature

Now, despite everything that has been said, it seems that the account presented has one major vitiating fault line that will reunite the line of thought with certain themes discussed in the preface. We can imagine one making the following points: despite everything that has been said, it is nonetheless still tempting (and perhaps justified) to construe the difference between representings and representeds as an irreducible dualism that, if left to its own, plagues the entire project. Thus, although representings and representeds are not equally *as things* (objects, entities,…) nor equally actual, it still seems to be the case that the dualism between representings and representeds *does* define a dualism in being. Although (one might continue saying) the conclusions of the second chapter do relieve the temptation to construe representeds as *things* (or, in our formulations, as names of things), *it nonetheless does not relieve one of the temptation*

to construe the functional kinds which we have been mentioning (and, of course, the languages of which they are a part) as belonging to a different domain of being than that of representings - indeed, they belong to that realm of being that defines the properly normative being of human beings. One might even say that the argument in Chapter II in fact offers a clearer articulation of the dualism posited in Chapter I by offering a clearer account of the basic entities of the two domains - representings qua natural items and represented qua linguistic(-functional) items. Indeed, this kind of dualism has a precedent in Sellars's terminology between (the space of) Reasons and (the realm of) Causes. As with most (if not all) dualisms, it seems that we are left with irreconcilable parts, with which some might be contented. It seems that we are left with a Nature bifurcated into linguistic-represented items that operate according to the kinds of principles that govern the items of that realm (inference rules, concept construction, poetic license,…) on one hand, and representing-items qua natural items that operate according to the kinds of principles that govern the natural realm.

As with most dualisms, a speculative correlation or synthesis of both poles becomes increasingly difficult (and problematic) the more one gets acquainted with the inner workings of the dualism itself. One can get a sense of this tension in our context by realizing the difficulty of the following question: if the ontology of language is a represented-ontology and that of the community of speakers a representing-ontology, are the realms that both these ontologies identify equiprimordial (i.e. mutually irreducible yet ontologically compatible)? *Can* one *explain* the emergence of language (space of reasons) *from* nature - or perhaps vice versa? In terms of the first chapter, can one reconcile the fundamental ontological asymmetry with an allegedly irreconcilable dualism?

For the rest of this chapter, I want to attempt to argue that, although there *is* some such dualism, it is but a temporary dualism that, as it were, points towards a future speculative monism - i.e. it is a dualism that necessitates a particular monistic account or, equivalently, that the dualism itself is unsustainable by virtue of its own resources. The main strategy of the argument will be to mobilize two central conclusions from each of the above chapters: (a) the asymmetry in the ontology developed in Chapter I and (b) Chapter II's positing of representings as *epistemically classifiable natural items in some natural realm*. The fundamental idea of that monism will be a suggestive reformulated concept of 'natural items' (and so also of the concept 'nature').

Before making the argument, consider the consequences of maintaining the radical irreconcilability of the dualism: we are left with the odd (but not for that reason unacceptable) conclusion that, by virtue of belonging to a domain of being that is not being-in-itself, language simply is *not natural - i.e.* that language stands only in *contrast* to a nature that *could not* have been its progenitor. In terms of certain themes discussed in the preface, we find ourselves in a stuation similar to the Kantian disjunction between empirical Man and rational Man. For, the counterpart of the dualism in the Kantian picture implies the impossibility of giving an account of the emergence (or the production) of knowers from the empirical world. That is to say, no amount of determinate empirical processes could ever culminate in a rationally autonomous Man - rational Man is never *literally born*. Now, it is crucial to note that, although we have, in our account, managed to recreate the space of reasons and, consequently, the 'space of language', we have done so in contrast *only to nature* (conceived as being-in-itself) *and natural-items* (conceived as epistemically classifiable natural items) — *i.e.* what stands in contrast to language is *not* the causally determinate empirical world prevalent in the preface. If we maintain a dualism

however, we are nonetheless left with fundamentally the same consequence of a bifurcated

ontology that renders all questions posed in the preface unsolvable. Of course, this is a recurrent

feature of ontological dualisms in general that the history of philosophy has done well to stay

away from. The preferable reaction to the suspect dualism might thus be, along John

McDowell's line, to take the irreconcilability as a positive thesis for (or insight into) the requisite

concept of a speculative monism. That is, given this irreconcilability, we must construct a *new*

concept - call it Nature - such that it subsumes both representings-in-themselves qua natural

items *and* represented-items qua belonging to the domain of being-for-representation. 'Nature'

thus subsumes two modes of being by suggesting a novel paradigmatic mode in which both

being-in-itself and being-for-representation are somehow equiprimordial - i.e. neither mode is

reducible to the other although they are not for that reason ontologically incompatible. Both

domains would be *N*atural though, of course, only in so far as they are mutually irreducible.

Indeed, as McDowell says, this is a '…naturalism of second nature' (MW, 91) - i.e. a unified

*N*aturalism of *N*ature that houses a difference of a 'first' kind from a 'second' kind. Now, the

motivations behind McDowell's project are not those that are at work in this essay. For

McDowell's naturalism is meant to reconcile two sets of concepts: those that delineate the realm

of scientific objects and their lawful interconnections on one hand, and those that delineate the

realm of human normative behavior in particular relation to the concept of spontaneity (MW,

esp. Lectures IV and V). Although I have situated McDowell's *strategy* using terms developed

throughout this essay, the sets of problems that McDowell is concerned with (in *Mind and*

World) are *not* those at work in our argument - I might thus say that, although this paper cannot

be taken as a critique of McDowell's work, I believe it is possible to extract a critique of his

strategy for constructing a new concept of Nature. For while I do share his conviction that a new

concept of Nature is required to resolve certain kinds of dualisms (technically epitomized in terms of reasons/causes, mind/world, freedom/necessity, language/nature, or being-for-representation/being-in-itself), I disagree as to how to go about constructing this concept.

Indeed, in interpreting the philosophical datum as an *in principle* irreconcilable dualism, the above 'McDowellian' strategy offers an ingenious attempt at constructing a form of monism, though it is not without its puzzles. Having made my allegiances with respect to it clear, I would like to suggest two fundamental mistakes that it commits using the concepts we have been dealing with throughout this essay: (1) it assumes that the fundamental dualism in question (representings/representeds) is *symmetric* in a way that allows for both of its terms to be *equiprimordial* - i.e. mutually irreducible yet ontologically compatible. Further, by assuming (1), it lends itself to the further assumption that (2) it is possible to give a complete account of representeds (and the domain of being-for-representation) on its own terms; i.e. an account of being-for-representation *independently* of being-in-itself - what might be termed "being-for-representation-*itself*"[22].

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[22] "We get this threat of supernaturalism if we interpret the claim that the space of reasons is *sui generis* as a refusal to naturalize the requirements of reason. But what becomes available at the time of the modern scientific revolution is a clear-cut understanding of the realm of law, and we can refuse to equate that with a new clarity *about nature*. This makes room for us to insist that spontaneity is *sui generis*, in comparison with the realm of law, without falling into the supernaturalism of rampant platonism. To reassure ourselves that our responsiveness to reasons is not supernatural, we should dwell on the thought that it is our lives that are shaped by spontaneity… Exercises of spontaneity belong to our mode of living. And our mode of living is our way of actualizing ourselves as animals. So we can rephrase the thought by saying: exercises of spontaneity belong to our way of actualizing ourselves as animals. This removes the need to try to see ourselves as peculiarly bifurcated, with a foothold in the animal kingdom and a mysterious separate involvement in an extra-natural world of rational connections." (MW, 78)
In the above quote, it seems that McDowell's suggestion is to give equal ontological credence to rational connections and spontaneity on one hand, and the realm of law on the other. That is to say, spontaneity is not a by-product of the realm of law, however it is not for that reason ontologically incompatible with the realm of law if they both can be 'natural' in the same sense. The implicit suggestion here, as elsewhere in MW, is to revise the concept of nature such that it includes both rational connections and scientifically lawful connections.

(1)   This assumption has two parts: first, the sense in which an irreconcilable dualism is a symmetric dualism, and second, the sense in which a symmetric dualism leads to the conclusion that both poles of the dualism are equiprimordial.

Let us assume that the dualism is indeed irreconcilable - that is, representings and representeds do genuinely operate into two mutually exclusive domains of being: being-in-itself for the former and being-for-representation for the latter. Thus, being the mutually exclusive domains that they are, the operative mediative concept between the two domains is 'correlation', in the sense that the relation between the actuality of representings and that of representeds is best reproduced by the following scheme:

whenever there is an actual representing then there also is an actual represented

and

whenever there is an actual represented then there also is an actual representing.

As in Chapter I, we have seen that there is indeed such a dimension to representation. Further, the conjunction in the scheme guarantees the required notion of symmetry which can thus be expressed as a mutual correlation between actual representings and actual representeds. We might also deduce the requisite sense of equiprimordiality; namely, one cannot define a sense of 'ontological primacy' precisely because the two domains operate with *mutually exclusive* ontologies that *preclude* intermediate *asymmetric* relations - indeed, one can do little else besides *symmetrically correlate* the two. They are thus mutually irreducible in the sense that their relationship is strictly (symmetrically) correlational, and yet ontologically compatible precisely because there can be no requisite concept of ontological primacy. Though this may sound like an exotic option, one need only consider its correlate given our distinction between linguistic-items (and language in general) and natural-items (and nature in general) to make it sound more

intuitively plausible: the conceptual relations afforded to us by linguistic practices are constructed and determined only by these practices themselves - language and linguistic history are determined only by linguistic practices and human *cultural* evolution; one need not and indeed *cannot* appeal to nature and natural history (qua non-linguistic domains) to account for linguistic-conceptual relations and linguistic practices. In a word, linguistic history is *not* natural history. One may *correlate* linguistic history with natural history as, for example, one would correlate the advent of human brains with that of linguistic practices and conceptual relations - but this is nonetheless a mere correlation without no sense of *ontological primacy*. One domain cannot 'cause', 'produce', 'ground', or 'dictate' the other at risk of violating the entire picture. It is crucial to note that this framework *is operating within the boundaries of this particular interpretation of the dualism just outlined.*

(2)   In light of the equiprimordiality in (1), it is thus further possible to insist that one can give a complete account of either modes of being completely independently of the other. Though two complete accounts of both modes of being would be the ideal tools with which to construct the ideal *correlative* theory, it nonetheless remains the case that an account of either domain of being is exhausted only by an account of the items (representings and representeds) that constitute them respectively. For example, the consequence would be the familiar claim that one can have a complete account of linguistic-items and linguistic practice *without having an account of natural-items and nature -* this strategy is made familiar with the recent history of formalism and pragmatism in the philosophy of language (as examples, consider Frege's *Begriffschrift* and later Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*). In the context of our human-brain/language example, the consequent claim would be that linguistic practices and (linguistic-)conceptual relations are the way they are *irrespective of whether or not they are correlated with the*

evolution of the human brain and brain-kind activity - and, vice versa, the evolution of human brains and brain-kind activity is the way it is irrespective of whether or not it is correlated with linguistic practices and conceptual relations.

In spelling out assumptions (1) and (2), I hope it is clear that the moves that have been made stand in stark contrast to those I have been making throughout this this essay. To get straight to the relevant points, I will tackle the assumptions consecutively and then draw the relevant implications for a new concept of Nature (and Natural items).

The central mistake of the first assumption (1) is that it conceives of the relation between representings and representeds (and thus their respective domains of being) in terms of a s*ymmetric correlation.* We have seen from Chapter I that, although there *is* a correlative dimension to representation, it is to be annexed to a fundamentally *asymmetric ontology* that identifies representings as the conditions of actuality of representeds. This move cannot be underestimated, for to speak of a fundamental asymmetry in the ontology is to void, not only the claim to *mere* symmetric correlation, but also to the equiprimodiality of the terms of the distinction. It is thus *not* the case that representeds (and the domain of being-for-representation) is ontologically isolated (and merely correlated) with that of representings (and being-in-itself). Rather, as we have seen, the ontology of representeds is secondary only to that of representings and is not detachable from it but, indeed, *presupposes it*. In contrast to the kind of dualism one is faced with between natural history (i.e. history of being-in-itself) and linguistic history (i.e. history of being-for-representation), we find that the philosophical situation is somewhat altered: natural history has become the more ontologically primary pole of the dualism, an implication of which is the (now *new*) fact that *one cannot define and account for linguistic history independently of natural history.* This takes us to the criticism of the intimately related second

assumption (2) which, in its most provocative formulation, would be the following: one *cannot*

have a complete account of language (and linguistic-conceptual relations) in terms that would

isolate language from nature thus treating it as a self-sufficient domain of being (i.e. formalized

accounts of linguistic practices along, e.g. Fregean and/or Wittgenstinian lines*,* are not - and *in*

principle cannot be - complete accounts of language*)*. For, as we have shown, any such account

would have a host of implicit commitments as to natural-items (and thus to nature) - a *complete*

account of linguistic-functional kinds (and of language as such) is one that *includes* an account

representings qua epistemically classifiable natural-items (and, indeed, an account of the nature

of which they are a part). The point is not that such formalizing accounts are *impossible*, but only

that they remain *incomplete* pending an account of natural items (and nature) - a *complete*

account of language is an account of linguistic activity *in* some world *not despite* some world.

Having made these points then, what is the essential difference between the McDowellian

strategy and our strategy in constructing a new concept of Nature? Indeed, what is our strategy?

What kind of monism does our analysis suggest?

C. Natura Naturans

Note that what I had conceded to in light of the above McDowellian strategy is that a new

concept of Nature is necessary - the essential difference however, is the way in which this new

concept is necessitated by the dualism, and thus the way in which the concept is to be

constructed. As was mentioned, the heart of the McDowellian strategy was to take the

irreconcilability of the dualism as an insight according to which we should proceed with our

conceptual constructions. However, if we take the above criticisms into account, a very different

picture begins to emerge. For, in our case, an isolated account of representeds (and the domain of

being-for-representation) *cannot factor into our account of Nature precisely because there can be no such account* - it would be at best a temporary abstraction. I thus want to suggest the following strategy for constructing our new concept of Nature[23]: by Chapter II, we had said that saying

representing is of the •and•

is equivalent to classifying the representing as an •and•representing. The fundamental feature one should notice is that, *whether or not* one classifies the representing *as* an *'•and•'* representing*, the representing itself must have functional-natural properties if it is to be <u>epistemically classifiable</u> as an '•and•' representing at all*. That is, if representings are to be qualified as *epistemically classifiable natural-items*, and if this is to be cached out in a functional account of 'epistemic classification', then we must conceive of representings *themselves as epistemically functioning natural items*. By making this move, we are conceiving of the 'epistemic functioning' of representings as continuous with the fact that they are natural-items - indeed, it is the concept of a *functioning-representing-in-itself* that becomes the cornerstone of our new concept of a Natural-item and thus of a Nature that is to include representation. In this light, it is the concept of 'epistemic classification' and its corresponding concept of 'representeds' that presuppose the concept of 'functioning-representings-in-themselves' precisely in so far as that latter concept is ontologically primary. For, again, to classify representings epistemically (i.e. for one to use 'represented' as we have been using it throughout this essay) one needs to concede to representings a Nature which makes such classifications *Naturally possible.* It is the concept of epistemic functioning in Nature (being-in-itself) which accounts for the very possibility of epistemic classification in the domain of being-for-representation. Indeed, epistemic functioning

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[23] A strategy which points to avenues of research beyond this essay.

must be construed as a *kind of Natural functioning*. If this suggestion can hold its ground, one

can get a concrete sense in which language cannot be in Nature as pure formalism (or as pure

pragmatism; i.e. as an otherwise independent domain of 'being-for-representation'), but instead

must be identified as a *kind of Natural activity* (with the speculative ontological category of

'functioning-representing') *whose fact accounts for the possibility of (incomplete) pure*

formalized accounts. It is the *ontologically primary fact that* functioning-representings are

Natural that accounts for the possibility of the secondary fact that formal theories of representeds

are possible - *not vice versa*. It is thus our account of Nature and Natural-items (i.e. functioning-

representings) that has to *explain* the possibility of providing an (incomplete) formal theory of

representeds - the former is *not* something that has to be *reconciled with the latter (as an equally*

ontologically primary) fact. Thus, e.g., it is the fact that the community of speakers qua

community of Natural-items (i.e. communities of functioning-representings) that is ontologically

primary and presupposed by the fact that they speak a certain language. In so far as it is precisely

this *functioning* (i.e. this *kind of activity*) that is the corner-stone of our new concept of Nature,

then we are adequately conceiving of Nature qua *Natura Naturans* (i.e. Naturing-Nature) – that

is, it is Nature in its capacity as an activity. It is only once we are able to conceive of Nature qua

functioning activity (i.e. 'in its Naturing', so to speak) that we are able to conceive of an ontology

of conceptual representation. The ontology *implicit in conceptual representation is that of a*

Naturing-Nature, i.e. it is a Nature constituted of functioning-representings. Again, already

implicit in the concept 'conceptual representation' is the concept of some (Naturing) Nature and,

as such, does *not* require the construction of a 'second Nature' in order to account for its

conceptual character. The McDowellian strategy thus essentially fails in so far as it recognizes

the need for the construction of a *new* Nature (i.e. a second Nature) that highlights the

ontological symmetry between representings and representeds. There is only *one* Nature implicit in conceptual representation, the categorical of which does not require a distinction between a 'first' and a 'second' Nature. This is the 'anti-McDowellian' monism we were on the hunt for precisely because linguistic practices and conceptual relations (formally construed) are ontologically constrained by a Nature which they presuppose - i.e. precisely because there is no need for a 'second Nature'.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

In addressing representation, it seems that there is a concrete sense in which the original dualism with which we were prompted (i.e. that between representings and representeds) is in fact, and in principle, amenable to a monism of a new kind of Natural-item (i.e. functioning-representings). This is a monism in the sense that we have found a more fundamental ontological unit that accounts for the possibility of the dualism itself; i.e. that accounts for the possibility of treating representings and representeds separately *though always incompletely*. For it is not until we have constructed the concept of a functioning-representing that we are able to account for the fundamental ontological asymmetry in our account of representation. In this sense then, the concept of epistemic classification, which is a concept whose only application is within an already formed epistemic context (i.e. within a domain of representeds), *must* have a ontological precursor identified by the concept epistemic *classifiability* which, as such, cannot operate within an epistemic context but is necessitated by the very possibility of epistemic contexts. To make this claim is to commit to the further claim with which I want to conclude this essay: if epistemic contexts (i.e. domain of representeds, as e.g., the domain of language) are *neither* ontologically primary *nor* ontologically isolated, then ontology is not a general account of the structure of the world *as opposed to that of representation*, but *a general account of the structure of the world that includes representation*. In more provocative terms, not only must an ontological project account for 'things' (broadly construed) but must also account for *epistemic contexts*, namely, *for the very possibility of doing ontology (and, indeed, for the actual doing of ontology)*. There cannot be a genuine ontological discontinuity between the domain of the represented and that of the representing or, indeed, between being-in-itself (the domain of which representings are a

part) and being-for-representation (the domain of which representeds are a part); again, *both* domains must be conceived as stemming from a monism of functioning-representings.

Now, it is crucial to note that the arguments I have been making are not calling for a straightforward integration of language (and conceptual representation) into the world such that the world has a conceptual structure mimicked by our own (i.e. that, e.g. logical implication, judgements, analytic conceptual relations,…etc are features of the world), but, instead, that if we conceive of the world qua *Nature*, then we must conceive of conceptual structures as constructed by (i.e. consequent on) a world. That is, our conceptual schemes (as we conceive them formally) have the particular structure they do *by virtue of being a product of Nature* - i.e. *not* by virtue of being part of an eternal order of pure pragmatics or formal logic. Conceptual structure/schemes *are 'formalizable'*, yet this does *not* imply that they are somehow ontologically *original* (i.e. that they cannot have a non-conceptual ontological antecedent). Of course, this is a highly speculative position whose tenets must be reformulated, refined, and strengthened. However, if the arguments I have made here point at least towards a strategy for doing so, then it seems that a metaphysics of representation in terms of functioning-representings is urgently called for. Indeed, it seems to be called for by any purely formal theory of language - for the simple commitment to language and linguistic representation is a commitment to *some* speculative metaphysics of the nature thereof[24].

My hope is that the questions posed in the preface have at least been modified in the following way: in order to situate the knower within a world, the only requisite ontological category that is capable of such an integration is the category of a functioning-representing. That

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[24] One such example of a speculative metaphysics is the process philosophy that Johanna Seibt has constructed using Sellars's philosophical resources; see *Properties as Processes* and *How To Naturalize Sensory Consciousness and Intentionality Within A Process Monism With Normativity Gradient.*

is, for example, in order to situate the space of reasons within Nature, one must be able to maintain that (a) the space of reasons is a product of Nature (and is thus not ontologically irreducible - contra McDowell), and (b) that the concept of a Nature that produces the space of reasons cannot be purely causally conceived. For, although the concept of a functioning-representing might, in the last analysis, have causal properties, it cannot *only* have causal properties precisely because epistemic functioning is not strictly causally constrained. Reasons *cannot* be products of a causal order, however they are not for that reason irreducible and constitutive of Nature. Of course, giving a more precise account of the complete repercussions these arguments have had on the types of disjunctions in the preface requires a further examination into the concept of a functioning-representing - however, if these arguments hold, this essay has at least demonstrated the fact that only a single category is essentially required in order to Naturalize conceptual representation in its full rational complexity.

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