

Hegel and Sellars' 'Myth of Jones': Can Sellars have more in common with Hegel than Rorty and Brandom suggest?

Paul Redding

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One characteristic shared by G. W. F. Hegel and Wilfrid Sellars is that both left behind follower-interpreters portrayed as aligned along a 'right-to-left' continuum, but one might be skeptical that there could be anything more substantive in common between them. Is not the German's *absolute idealism* the antithesis of the American's uncompromisingly *scientific realism*? Nevertheless, Sellars hinted at connections between his work and the philosophy of Hegel and a number of his followers have taken that hint seriously. From the Sellarsian side, the feature of his realism that leans him towards idealism is the combination of his critique of Cartesian and empiricist conceptions of the mind and the irreducible role given to social norms, especially those of linguistic communication, within an otherwise scientific realist ontology.¹ From the Hegelian side, recent interpreters who take Hegel's idealism as free of any commitment to cosmic minds and the like, and who stress Hegel's rejection of the very idea of some 'Platonic realm' that transcends the concrete spatio-temporal world, nudge Hegel in the direction of Sellarsian naturalism and realism.

In this chapter I explore some features shared by Sellars and Hegel in an area where philosophies of mind and language intersect, arguing for a contrary account to that put forward *in their names* by Richard Rorty and Robert Brandom—two Sellarsians perhaps most associated with the Sellars–Hegel parallel. In particular, I examine Sellars' thesis of *psychological nominalism*, which informs his account of human mindedness found in the closing sections of *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, the myth concerning the radical linguistic innovator 'Jones'. According to psychological nominalism, 'all awareness of *sorts, resemblances, facts*, etc., in short, all awareness of abstract entities—indeed, all awareness even of particulars—is a linguistic affair' (Sellars 1997, §29, p. 63). While Brandom, following Rorty and Dennett, interprets this as a form of psychological *anti-realism*, I argue that Sellars' own account is compatible with the kind of psychological *realism* found in Hegel.

Psychological nominalism plays an important role in Sellars' critique of the 'myth of the given', which is commonly compared to Hegel's critique of the stance of 'sense-certainty' at the outset of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel 1977, ch. 1). As with Hegel's critique, the 'givens' targeted by Sellars are purported particular entities (traditional 'sense impressions' or Russellian 'sense-data', for example) thought by

¹ According to Robert Brandom, it was Richard Rorty who distinguished right-wing from left-wing Sellarsians on the basis of their leaning towards the normative or the naturalist dimensions of Sellars' position (Brandom 2015: 31).

empiricists to be immediately ‘given’ in experience.² For empiricists, the mere experience of such entities is thought to be sufficient for the subject’s *knowledge* of them, and *this* knowledge is then thought of as *the basis* upon which *all* further knowledge is to be built. But any attempt to account for how knowledge as a whole can be derived from these particular instances of knowledge must assume that such givens are *repeatable*—that is, within the stream of experience a subject is able to have and recognize ‘givens’ of the same *kind* and differentiate them from givens of a *different* kind. For example, repeatedly having impressions or sense-data will lead to sorting *these ones* as red, *those* as blue, and so on.

Against this common approach, psychological nominalism holds that the mental capacities assumed by empiricists are not primitive but presuppose the capacity for language. The *learning* of language could not then presuppose such psychological capacities, and the ‘myth of Jones’ is introduced to give us a sense of how a type of language could be learned in which ‘inner episodes’, including *impressions*, come to be ascribed to speakers *without* those speakers having a *prior knowledge* of such episodes. As we will see, Sellars’ mythical Jones had extended the linguistic resources of his community—a community of ‘neo-Ryleans’. As the name suggests, these neo-Ryleans had basically behavioristic attitudes towards others and themselves. More specifically, they had the linguistic resources to describe themselves in behavioral terms, but had *no* way of talking about such behavior as expressive of or resulting from ‘inner episodes’ such as those *we* might think of as *thoughts about* or *awarenesses of* worldly things or states of affairs. Jones’ linguistic innovations are described as resulting in individuals subsequently coming to describe others and, as a consequence of this, coming to describe *themselves*, as having such mental lives with such ‘inner episodes’. But this then raises difficult and controversial questions, both *interpretative* and *substantive*. Are we to think that with the capacity to *describe* themselves and others *as* having mental lives, the neo-Ryleans thereby come to actually *have* such lives?

To answer ‘yes’ here is to endorse a type of psychological realism, albeit a type that is compatible with Sellars’ psychological nominalism. Hegel, I suggest, with his ‘recognitive’ account of consciousness and self-consciousness (Redding 2008), should be understood a psychological realist of this kind, and I would argue, so should Sellars.³ In contrast, Rorty was, we will see, a clear critic of psychological realism, and had argued early in his career against the idea that there was anything such as the ‘intentional content’ or ‘phenomenal character’ of mental states that played the role of a distinctive ‘mark of the mental’. For Rorty, I suggest, there *could* be no further point to be made about the consequences of Jones’ linguistic revolution:

² For a concise account see deVries 2005, 98–103.

³ I leave out a third alternative here: that having the inner lives we have is a characteristic possessed independent of the development of language. This is the thesis of original intentionality as conceived by Roderick Chisholm. On Sellars’ dispute with Chisholm see O’Shea 2008, 87–8.

we remain ‘neo-Ryleans’ with the added capacity to talk about others and ourselves as having ‘inner lives’.

While Brandom is not as explicit here, I suggest the same holds for him as well. For example Rorty endorses Daniel Dennett’s theory of the ‘intentional stance’ (Rorty 1979, 236n), according to which the attribution of intentional states to others, such as beliefs and desires, is merely a strategy adopted to make their behavior more predictable. We treat others *as if* they had such states to simplify our dealings with them. Brandom also endorses Dennett’s ‘stance stance’ towards intentionality (Brandom 1994: 55–62), arguing that ‘the community members’ practical attitudes institute normative statuses and confer intentional content on them’ (Brandom 1994: 61). It would seem that there can be really nothing more to the *having* of inner lives than being *treated* by others as having them—being the bearers of ‘normative statuses’ conferred by others. But Sellars seems to have been reluctant to abandon many of the traditional marks of mindedness, including the phenomenal dimensions of consciousness, that are happily shed in the psychologically antirealist ‘stance stance’. In relation to the mind’s *phenomenal states*, for example, such a reluctance is neatly captured in a claim about *qualia* that Dennett attributes to Sellars and includes as an epigram in his *Consciousness Explained*: ‘But Dan, qualia are what make life worth living!’ (Dennett 1993: 383):

Here I want to explore an interpretation of Sellars’ psychological nominalism that is compatible with a psychological realist stance towards the intentional and phenomenal characteristics of consciousness: one stating that we properly come to have inner, psychological lives as a consequence of having adopted the linguistically enabled intentional stance—mental lives that have a degree of independence from what others *ascribe*. As Rorty provides the clearest expression of a psychological *anti-realist* interpretation, I will start with him, and then turn to the Rortian aspects of Brandom’s way of construing Sellars. After this, I offer a reading of Sellars’ myth of Jones that is compatible with psychological realism, drawing on parallels between Sellars and Hegel.

1. A Rortian World of Augmented Neo-Ryleans

Rorty’s initial professional training had not been as an analytic philosopher: rather, as a graduate student in the 1950s his main influence seems to have been Alfred North Whitehead’s speculative philosophy. By the early 1960s, however, he was taking the ‘linguistic turn’ of analytic philosophy seriously after discovering the work of Sellars in particular.⁴ Rorty was soon to become identified as the proponent of a radical ‘eliminative materialist’ philosophy of mind, that he had seen as grounded in Sellars’ work.⁵ His starting point was behavioristic: a subject’s ‘mental states’ were to be

⁴ For us, a crucial paper is ‘The Subjective Principle and the Linguistic Turn’ from 1963, contrasting Whitehead and Sellars. Rorty 2014, ch. 4.

⁵ See especially the essays making up chapters 6, 8 and 10 of Rorty 2014.

understood in terms of their dispositions to act, including dispositions to *utter sentences*. While the *meaningfulness* of such sentences had to be accounted for, this was to be conceived *not* because they expressed inner ‘thoughts’, but because they were subject to further linguistic acts, those of metalinguistic interpretation conceived as an interpreter’s translation of the subject’s utterance into their own language.

Rorty’s radically eliminative materialist consequences for the mental were then drawn from this metalinguistic analysis of verbal behavior. While typically materialists had been challenged to explain various features that were taken to be fundamental to the mind—the ‘what it is like’ of phenomenal consciousness, or the ‘aboutness’ of intentional states, for example—Rorty argued that there was no distinctive ‘mark of the mental’ that had to be accounted for. By the time of his 1979 *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, the mind had simply become an ‘invention’ that we could do without.⁶

Echoes of Rorty’s radical psychological antirealism can be discerned, I suggest, in Robert Brandom’s so-called two-ply account of perception, which he attributes to Sellars (Brandom 2002). The two ‘plies’ to which Brandom refers concern broadly the *linguistic behavior* in which we talk about the world, and the particular bodily dispositions understood as underlying and recruited by such behavior. In relation to the ‘upper ply’, Brandom applies his Sellars-based ‘inferentialist’ approach to the semantic contents of assertions. Like Rorty, Brandom argues that we shouldn’t think of the meaning of an asserted sentence as contributed to by the intentional contents of the speaker’s mental state: the sentence’s meaning is wholly determined by the *inferential relations* that it bears to the contents of other utterances, for example, those that would be given as *reasons* when the assertion is challenged by others. What remains of the traditional empiricist contribution of experience can be accounted for at the level of the ‘lower ply’ in terms of ‘reliable differential responsive dispositions’ underlying our linguistic responses to the environment and that are ‘characterizable in a naturalistic physicalistic vocabulary’ (Brandom 2002: 350).

These *reliable differential responsive dispositions* (RDRDs) that underlie empirical judgments are not restricted to cognitive, or even *animate*, beings—an appropriately trained parrot, for example, might reliably distinguish red from blue things by appropriate squawks, and even an iron bolt can be said to ‘discriminate’ between wet and dry environments by rusting or not rusting (Brandom 2002: 349–50). What distinguishes *sapient* beings is the response that unfolds on the upper *normatively* conceived ply, and that supplies *the other* part of the relevant justification. Rather than simply make noises reliably associated with features of the environment, we produce *assertions* with those noises, that is, place utterances into a normative ‘space’ of inferences or reasons by entitling others to ask for *reasons why* they should accept and act on them, should they have doubts. Thus given the proper working of the RDRDs at the lower ply, *all* contributions to the properly semantic

⁶ Thus the opening chapters are entitled ‘The Invention of the Mind’ and ‘Persons without Minds’.

content of assertions will now derive from the normative *inferential relations* within which the utterances stand within this logical space.

On this account, inferential relations are not only necessary for the semantic contentfulness of our utterances, they are also *sufficient*, and so what has thus dropped out from consideration is any idea of a contribution to the semantic contents of our words from any independently conceived *cognitive states* of the speaker—mental states that can be said to have some sort of ‘content’ that is non-reductively derived from what others properly attribute to the speaker on the basis of what he or she *says*. There is no place here for the subject’s reporting on ‘givens’ of sensory experience, and no need for it, the separation of the two plies thus mark a radical dualism between the *sentience* of experience and the *sapience* of cognition (i.e., conceptual understanding). Brandom disavows the use of the term ‘experience’: it is not, he says, one of his words (Brandom 2000: 205, n. 7). This is a feature of Brandom’s account warmly applauded by Rorty (2007: 9-11).

With this Brandom opposes a number of commonplace assumptions such as the assumption that when we *speak* we express *thoughts* and *experiences* that, in some sense, exist independently of their particular expressions. Here I want to focus on one of Brandom’s counter-intuitive claims that pertains to perceptual experience—his own example of the particle physicist who, reporting on the events happening within a cloud chamber, is said to see or ‘observe’ sub-atomic particles such as mu-mesons.⁷ When reporting on the presence of mu-mesons in the process of observing events within an experimental cloud chamber, the physicist is, Brandom insists, ‘*directly* observing mu-mesons ... rather than indirectly, inferentially coming to a conclusion about mu-mesons on the basis of an *inference* ... from the presence of a vapor trail with a certain shape’ (Brandom 1994: 223–4). For Brandom, mu-mesons are observable because to *be* observable something has simply to be the subject of non-inferential reports (Brandom 2002: 363).

Many find Brandom’s account here counter-intuitive (e.g., Apel et al 2008), denying that sub-atomic particles can be *observed*. Indeed Sellars *himself* had expressed this latter view with an example involving the vapor trails of an overhead jet. There Sellars argued that in cases where an observer saw the vapor trails *only*, one could ascribe to that observer a type of *de dicto* “*seeing that*”—here, “*seeing that* the plane is overhead”, while it would not be correct to ascribe to them the *de re* seeing of *the plane itself* (Sellars 1989, 26).⁸ Among the intuitions to which critics of

⁷ Mu-mesons (or ‘muons’) are short-lived sub-atomic particles belonging to the genus ‘lepton’.

⁸ A so-called ‘*de re*’ content is a content of an intentional state thought of as directed to a particular, specific object or *res*. In contrast, a ‘*de dicto*’ content is the content of a mental state thought of as directed to a *proposition*, conceived on the model of a saying or ‘*dictum*’. For example, one often talks about perception in ‘*de re*’ or ‘objectual’ ways, as when one says one *saw Alice’s new car*, and talks about belief in ‘*de dicto*’ ways, as when one says that one *believes that the earth is heating dangerously*.

Brandom's position might appeal are those that avert to the *experience* of perceiving. For example, one might hold that it makes sense to ask of someone who had reported seeing or observing a jet overhead, 'What did it *look like*?' This is, surely, a question that can't be answered in the case of Sellars' unobserved jet or Brandom's *purportedly observed* mu-meson. It can be answered, however, with regard to the vapor trails in both cases.

To sharpen what is at stake here we might contrast Brandom's approach to perception with the seemingly more intuitive approach of Tyler Burge in his discussion of 'de re' intentional contents (Burge 2007: 44–81).⁹ Quine (1956) had argued that *de dicto* attitudes are basic, and that *de re* attitudes are somehow *derived* from them. A similar view is found in Rorty (2014, 99), and Brandom (1994, 502). This analysis fits with Brandom's claim that the physicist *sees the mu-meson*, because 'S sees *the mu-meson*' will be understood as derived from 'S sees *that a mu-meson is present*'. Burge rejects the Quinean analysis, however, arguing that for *perceptual* beliefs, '*de re* belief is in important ways more fundamental than the *de dicto* variety' (Burge 2007: 44). And given that Sellars believes that one can see (*de dicto*) *that a jet is overhead* without seeing *the jet*, it would seem that he too rejected the Quinean analysis.

2. Hegel on Perceptual and Reflective Judgments

How then do things stand with Hegel? Here Hegel is, I suggest, on the side of Burge and Sellars. In his account of judgment in Volume Two of *The Science of Logic*, Hegel distinguishes *judgments of determinate being* (*Urteile des Dasein*) from *judgments of reflection* (*Urteile der Reflexion*, Hegel 2010: 557 & 570). Hegel characterizes the distinction in terms of the different relation between subject and predicate in each: in judgments of *determinate being*, the predicate is said to *inhere* in the subject, while in judgments of *reflection* the subject is said to be *subsumed* by the predicate. Clearly the former are meant to be taken as judgments about specific objects immediately available to perception, and Hegel takes the predicate involved to refer to the specific *property-instance* in the way a *name* refers to *a single object*.¹⁰ In the example 'the rose is red', we are clearly meant to think of the subject term as referring to some *specific* rose, and the predicate to its particular *way* of being red.¹¹ In contrast, the predicate 'red' in the context of judgments of reflection is clearly an

⁹ In Burge's usage it is important that the 'res' is specific or definite and not simply particular. For example, to have a thought about 'the shortest spy' is not to have a properly *de re* thought if one doesn't know *who* the shortest spy is.

¹⁰ Thus the predicate here is said to instantiate the category of *singularity*, and the subject *universality*, Hegel here effectively reversing the subject–predicate relation.

¹¹ This is congruent with the *singularity* of the predicate.

‘abstract’ classifying one. In the reflective case, the predicate ‘subsumes’ the particular rose into a class of objects that would include post-boxes and London buses, of which ‘red’ can be truly *said*.

The relation between the two forms of predication clearly maps onto the subject matters of Chapters 2 and 3 of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Chapter One, ‘Sense-certainty’ had shown Hegel as a proto-Sellarsian critic of the modern ‘myth of the given’, the theory of epistemic acquaintance with *bare thises* of sense-certainty is seen to collapse under its own internal contradictions and gives rise to the model of *perception*, in which the original qualitative simples have become reconceived as contingent properties of publically perceptible individual instances of kinds—‘this suches’ (deVries 2008). The new ontological relation here is that of the *inherence* of property instances in substances modelled by *judgments of determinate being*, but this new model of perception will in turn similarly collapse, the process giving rise to a new cognitive attitude—‘the understanding’, explored in Chapter 3—an attitude that *posits*, rather than directly *perceives*, underlying *forces* involved in the production of any perceptual episode (Redding 2010–11). Clearly it is the *subsuming*, reflective judgment that models this ontology.

In both *phenomenological* and *logical* treatments, the succeeding position will be said to ‘*aufheben*’—negate but preserve—the position it succeeds, but this ‘*Aufhebung*’ will be reversed in the subsequent move, and this means that neither position can be simply reduced to or explained in terms of the other. For example, in Hegel’s *Logic* the *de dicto* judgments of reflection that succeed *de re* judgments of determinate being will themselves be *aufgehoben* by the succeeding form of judgment, the *judgment of necessity*. However, the first form of the judgment of necessity repeats the *de re* character of the earlier judgments of determinate being, with this *de re* character now manifest at a higher level. The ‘res’ of the judgment of necessity is no longer an individual thing, such as an individual rose, but the *genus* or *secondary substance*, such as the *kind* ‘rose’ or the ‘rose as such’ (Hegel 2010: 575–6).

In sum, while Hegel clearly is a critic of the modern ‘myth of the given’, in his account ‘the given’ undergoes a different fate to the one it undergoes in both Rorty and Brandom. It is not the case that the ascribed *de re* object of perception is unilaterally explained in terms of *de dicto* ascription. I have suggested that by his example of the jet and its vapor trail, Sellars also resists Brandom’s reductive account of *object* perception. Moreover, other aspects of Sellars’ work also seem to appeal to a mediated dualism between *de re* and *de dicto* accounts of intentionality. For example, in distinguishing the *manifest* and *scientific* pictures of the world (Sellars 1963), Sellars seems to construe the former as a view of the world made up of the type of objects typical of perception as commonly understood. As O’Shea puts it, the manifest world is a ‘world as conceived by common sense in terms of *manifest sense-perceptive properties* – the colors and shapes ... of ordinary persisting physical objects ... as opposed to the often strange and colorless scientifically postulated world of swarming microphysical atoms and subatomic particles that is *imperceptible to our*

unaided senses' (O'Shea 2007, 13).¹² Such a non-reductive attitude to object or 'de re' perception will become apparent in what Sellars presents as the perceptual theory of Jones in the 'Myth of Jones'.

3. Sellars on Thoughts, Impressions and their Modelling

Brandom's example of the 'observing' of mu-mesons seems to make the experiential dimension of observation redundant, but part of the motivation of the introduction of Sellars' 'myth of Jones' in the concluding parts of *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* seems precisely to address questions of the sorts of ways that similarities among *experiences* can lead to incorrect perceptual judgments. Thus, in section X, entitled 'Private Episodes: the Problem', the problem in question is described as that of explaining the similarity among three types of experience that can be ascribed to a subject:

- E1, the experiences 'of seeing that an object over there is red',
- E2, 'its looking to one that an object over there is red (when in point of fact it is not red)', and
- E3, 'its looking to one as though there were a red object over there (when in fact there is nothing over there at all)' (Sellars 1997 § 45, p. 85).

This was the sort of problem that the now discredited 'given' had been meant to address. For example, the sense-datum theorist would answer that the similarity was explained by the fact that in the three cases similar *sense-data* were perceived. Sellars' critique of the given, found in the first part of EPM, had been meant to show why that was an inadequate explanation. For *his* part Brandom will treat attributions like E2 and E3 merely *negatively*, as the type of expressions that simply indicate the *withholding* of the endorsement by the attributor of the content endorsed in the expression of E1. Such sentences can be thought of as descriptive of how things 'look' only in the sense of their functioning as non-inferential reports without significant experiential dimensions, as do reports about mu-mesons.¹³ But for *Sellars*, this alone does not seem to completely remove the philosophical problem. The problem of explaining the similarity among E1, E2 and E3 remains, and part of the myth of Jones is meant to provide an *alternative* explanation rather than show that there is nothing further *in need of* explanation.

¹² For Brandom's unhappiness with this distinction see Brandom 2015, Ch. 1, pt. II. In contrast, some *non-reductive* 'fusing' of the two images, more in line with Hegel's 'Aufhebung' is urged by 'centrist' Sellarsians such as O'Shea (2008).

¹³ This indeed leads Brandom to talk of the observability of *thoughts and sense-impressions* (Brandom 2015, 60).

Sellars thus now revisits possible explanatory alternatives to the idea of the given as a discovered ‘component’ contained within these three forms of experience. Earlier, he had broached the alternative possibility of treating ‘impressions or immediate experiences’ not as components found in experience as conceived in the myth of the given, but as ‘theoretical entities’—the kinds of *imperceptibles* belonging to the explanations employed in the ‘scientific image’. He had provisionally dismissed this alternative, but now returns to it, and the idea of impressions *qua* theoretical entities will be broached in the light of a related account of treating *thoughts* as theoretical entities. These will be parts of the story of Jones’ two-staged linguistic innovations, but introducing the story of Jones first requires two excursuses—first, a discussion of *thought* according to what Sellars calls the ‘classical tradition’ as well as its modern distortion, and next, his account of the role of *models* in theoretical explanation.

According to Sellars, in the ‘classical tradition’ stemming from Aristotle thoughts are conceived as a family of mental or ‘inner’ episodes that are different to both overt verbal behavior and what he calls ‘verbal imagery’, a type of internalized talking to oneself. Moreover, both overt verbal behavior and ‘verbal imagery’ owe their meaningfulness to the fact that they *express* thoughts. According to this tradition, as he describes it, while thoughts are introspectable in the sense that a thinker has some sort of privileged access to them, this is not to be thought of as some perceptual scrutiny of one’s own mental states. *That* type of picture is characteristic of the early modern period and results from a *distortion* of the classical account, in which the *thoughts* of the classical account are conflated with other types of ‘inner episodes’ such as sensations and impressions. To understand Sellars’ approach here we need to understand his account of the role of *models* in theoretical explanation more generally.

Sellars presents his distinctive view of the role of models in theoretical explanation as contrasting with positivistic accounts of the relations of theoretical and observational languages. His alternative, which he believes better captures the actual practices of science, involves the use of models that ‘describe a domain of familiar objects behaving in familiar ways such that we can now see how the phenomena to be explained would arise if they consisted of this sort of thing. The essential thing about a model is that it is accompanied, so to speak, by a commentary which qualifies or limits—but not precisely, nor in all respects—the analogy between the familiar objects and the entities which are being introduced by the theory’ (Sellars 1997 § 51, p. 96). Focusing on the role of models in theory, he thinks, in turn allows us to understand the continuity between scientific theory construction and everyday common-sensical forms of explanation, and this will be crucial for his telling of the myth of Jones. Once more I want to appeal to the work of Tyler Burge to help bring into focus an important feature of what, on Sellars’ account, is the position of the ‘classical tradition’.

Burge too discusses a classical or ‘traditional’ view of concepts and thoughts when discussing thoughts and their conceptual parts, a view that he traces back to

Aristotle (Burge 2007: 291–4). According to Burge, thoughts on this account are taken to be ‘intrinsically representational’ in that (1) their representational properties are used to explain the representational properties of the sentences used to express them, and (2) thoughts differ from the derivatively representational sentences that express them in that while linguistic entities have properties *other than* representational ones, thought has *only representational properties*. Thoughts so conceived would have *no* features allowing them to be identified and individuated *independently* of what they are about. However, such ‘transparent’ thoughts are just what we would expect were we, following Sellars, first, to model thoughts on sentences, and next, to provide a commentary stating that *only* representational features of the sentences are to be counted as relevant to the thoughts being modeled by those sentences.

Burge’s account clarifies why conflating thoughts and sensations produces a *distortion* of the classical view, as impressions, sensations and so forth, clearly *do* have non-representational properties, that is, properties that can be appealed to when discussing such episodes in abstraction from their representational function. Actual words, of course, have non-representational properties—the words ‘goat’ and ‘boat’ being phonetically similar in ways not reflected by similarities between goats and boats. Might not conscious mental contents be thought of as related in an analogous way? With this thought, we might now see how phenomenal similarities of this sort could be at issue when considering what is in common between the experiences involved in ‘seeing that’, ‘its looking that’ and ‘its looking as though’. This is because what is being alluded to here is something common to the three experiences *despite* the differences in *the semantic contents represented* in those experiences. This in turn sheds light on the ‘de re’ / ‘de dicto’ distinction.

If we think of holding a general belief as an attitude towards some entirely *de dicto* content, as in Hegel’s *judgments of reflection*, then we will think of this propositional content as itself possessing *no* intrinsic non-representational properties. Thought of in this way, a proposition is modelled on a sentence, but with the non-representational features of the sentences discounted. For example, the belief that *all London buses are red* abstracts away from the particular way *any actual* London bus exemplifies redness. It would indeed be a belief of which a red-green colour-blind person would be perfectly capable. But a different type of modelling would be involved in explaining what was similar and different among the experiences E1, E2 and E3. When I see that *that particular bus over there* is red, my experience is such that there is something similar in it to the experience in which *it looks to me that that* (actually pink) *bus over there is red* (because of a trick of the light) or the experience of *its looking to me as though there is a red bus over there* (because I’m hallucinating). Only a mental state with a *de re* content, and thus possessing phenomenal features, could account for our ability to make *this* set of comparisons.

4. Jones' Theory of Thoughts and Perceptual Thoughts

We will remember that Jones belongs to a 'neo-Rylean' linguistic community that has the linguistic resources for talking about the behavior of individuals but not about any states of mind that could be conceived as leading to or given expression by that behavior. They can say things like 'Dick is making a cup of coffee' but not things like 'Dick *wants* a cup of coffee'. The Neo-Ryleans thus lack the capacity for thought as given in the classical account, and the first phase of Jones' cultural revolution is going to enable them to acquire that capacity. In the myth, the linguistic resources of the neo-Ryleans are quite extensive and include the capacity for giving postulational accounts of worldly phenomena, and what Jones does is to extend such a postulational account to human behavior itself, and he does so by inventing a model. Precisely, *human speech itself* will be treated as a model for some 'inner episodes'—thoughts—that will be adduced as that which *explains* the behavior of others, including their *verbal behavior*. Jones thus introduces Dennett's 'stance, stance'. In the myth, Jones' theory catches on, and members of the community start talking about each other in this way, ascribing thoughts to their fellows in attempts to explain their actions. Moreover, in having learned to ascribe thoughts to others they soon learn to ascribe thoughts *to themselves*, and so come to not only think of themselves as *having* these inner episodes, but actually recognize them in themselves. Jones, for example, can move from uttering a sentence such as 'Dick is thinking that p' to uttering one such as 'I am thinking that p'.

We might now see how, at this new stage of cultural development, the neo-Ryleans have come to have something approximating the 'classical' view. As we will remember, in its undistorted form, the classical view has not been sullied with the conflation of thoughts with non-representational properties such as is found in impressions and so on. We might now think of this classical view as a consequence of Jones' use of the interpretative penumbra that must surround the use of a model. Jones can specify that thoughts are *like* verbal utterances in as much as they have representational properties,¹⁴ but that they are *unlike* verbal utterances in having no *non-representational* properties: 'Thus, while his theory talks of "inner speech", the commentary hastens to add that, of course, the episodes in question are not the wagging of a hidden tongue, nor are any sounds produced by this "inner speech"' (Sellars 1997, §57, p. 104).

Jones' theoretical-linguistic innovations do not stop here, however, and in the second phase of the revolution Jones now employs a second model with which to attribute to people another class of 'inner episodes'—the impressions, sensations and so on, which, on the unsullied classical view, had been kept distinct from thoughts. Whereas Jones had modeled thoughts on *verbal occurrences*, 'this time the model is

¹⁴ 'Thus, just as Jones has, like his fellows, been speaking of overt utterances as *meaning* this or that, or being *about* this or that, so he now speaks of these inner episodes as *meaning* this or that, or being *about* this or that.' (Sellars 1997 §57, p. 103).

the idea of a domain of “inner replicas” which, when brought about in standard conditions, share the perceptible characteristics of their physical source’. But Sellars insists on two things: what the theory introduces are *states of the perceiver*, not particulars; and ‘that the model is the occurrence “in” perceivers of *replicas*, not of *perceivings of replicas*’ (Sellars 1997, §61, p. 110).

Sellars’ account of this phase of the Jonesian revolution is complex, and his discussion here of ‘replicas’ as models is, admittedly, confusing. Indeed, he seems to prevaricate over exactly *what* plays the role of ‘model’ in this case. Models consist of ‘familiar objects behaving in familiar ways’ (Sellars 1997 §51, p. 96), but this hardly characterizes replicas conceived of as *in* perceivers. This general sense of ‘model’ is in line with what, in the context of the present discussion, Sellars goes on to call ‘model entities’, for which he gives as an example red and triangular wafers—clearly the sort of ‘familiar objects’ that make up models in the general sense. Nevertheless, Sellars explicitly calls *the replicas* themselves ‘entities of the model’. One might think that the ‘replicas’ qua models are *themselves* modeled on perceptible ‘familiar objects’ like wafers of determinate shape and color. The picture involved, then, seems to suggest a two-tiered relation of modeling: red triangular wafers providing models for their replicas, and the replicas in turn providing models for the theoretically posited ‘impressions’.¹⁵

Sellars’ insistence that the model is the ‘occurrence “in” perceivers of *replicas*, not of *perceivings of replicas*’ (Sellars 1997 §61, p. 110) suggests that ‘replica’ here *not* be thought of as having the type of representational significance that is carried by a notion like ‘picture’ or ‘image’, which are often thought of as *replicas*.¹⁶ For example, he notes that taking the model to be ‘*seeing a red and triangular replica ...* smuggles into the language of impressions the logic of the language of thoughts’, (Sellars 1997: § 61, p.100), suggesting the tendency to import the representational significance of the latter logic into that of the former, which is properly *non-representational*. In the case of thoughts, I earlier suggested that Sellars had been concerned with using the ‘commentary’ to discount all *non-representational* properties of the model entities—uttered sentences. Now I suggest that the *inverse* is the case for the modeling of *impressions*. In the modeling of impressions, *only* the *non-representational* properties of the model—what Sellars refers to as *intrinsic* properties—are relevant. In contrast to Brandom’s reading, this will leave a place for phenomenal experience in Sellars’ account of impressions. It will play a role analogous to that played by phenomenal experience in the perception of particularly qualified *things*.¹⁷ In perceptual thought, we should be left with something analogous

¹⁵ In the earlier case of *thoughts*, it is ‘inner speech’ that plays a role analogous to ‘replicas’ here.

¹⁶ In fact, this is just how Brandom seems to interpret Sellars in the corresponding sections of his ‘Study Guide’ to EPM. (Brandom 1997)

¹⁷ Perhaps Sellars’ deliberate *two-step* account of the model, from model entity to replica and from replica to impression is meant to capture the idea that there are two distinct sets of conditions, ‘commentaries’, defining which features of the model

to what had been *excluded* in Brandom's and Rorty's account of thoughts—some analogue to the *feel* of the wagging of the tongue and the *sound* of the 'inner words'.

This type of inverse symmetry between thoughts and impressions suggested here is, of course, familiar: it is analogous to the structure of Kant's original account of the *different logics* of concepts and intuitions. Of course Kant's idea of an empirical intuition might itself be taken as exemplifying the myth of the given,¹⁸ but with his insistence on the different logics of impressions and thoughts, Sellars seems to what to hold onto more of Kant's original distinction than is found in Brandom. As deVries (2005, ch. 8) and O'Shea (2008, chs. 4 & 5) stress, Sellars had clearly been committed to finding a *non-particularizing* successor notion to the mythical givens, and we have seen something of Hegel's way of addressing the same issue.

In Hegel, Kant's intuition–concept distinction had been transformed into a distinction between judgment forms characterized by two different conceptions of predication. One of these, we might say, provides for *de re* judgments rich in determinate phenomenal content, while the other provides for *de dicto* judgments rich in abstractly mediated classificatory relations. As in Kant's intuition–concept distinction, Hegel's different judgment forms are complementary and reciprocally dependent, but unlike Kant's distinction, Hegel does not *freeze* this distinction into a fixed dichotomy, but treats each judgment form as somehow able to be transformed or translated into the other in a series of '*Aufhebungen*'. I suggest that we bring this feature of Hegel's account to bear on Sellars' theory concerning the relation of one's attribution of perceptual thoughts *to others* on the one hand, and *to oneself*, on the other. Brandom and Rorty seem to see no real difference here; Sellars and Hegel, I suggest, see a crucial difference.

As we have seen, attributing thoughts to others works on the basis of a model in which thoughts are conceived as analogous to utterances. Here the *de dicto* mode of attribution captures this directly: what one attributes to others has the shape of the type of sentence that they would be likely to utter in making assertions. But this has to work in tandem with the attribution of distinctly *perceptual* thoughts in which impressions, with their different logic, are seen to have a role. For Alice to attribute to Brett *perceptual thoughts* about things that they can *both* perceive, she theorises a role for 'impressions' in a causal story leading to Brett's assertions. Theoretically, these impressions are to be organized according to isomorphisms that Alice bases on the properties of everyday objects of which she is directly aware. 'The *essential* feature of the analogy is that visual impressions stand to one another in a system of ways of resembling and differing which is structurally similar to the ways in which the colours and shapes of visible objects resemble and differ' (Sellars 1997 §61, p. 112). But when she comes to extend the attribution of 'impressions' *to herself* it seems odd to

are included or excluded as relevant. Sellars mentions using the commentary to discount that impressions are particular objects, like the replicas (and the model objects), but there is the other implicit commentary noted above, that any representational properties are also discounted.

¹⁸ Thus Russell had thought of his *sense-data* as similar to Kant's *intuitions*.

think that she would self-attribute them in just the way as she attributes them to Brett. This is because she has had to draw upon *her own* perception of everyday objects to model the type of isomorphically conceived impressions that she attributes to Brett. Why wouldn't she then attribute to herself impressions that 'share the perceptible characteristics of their physical source' in a more *direct way* that the isomorphism story—a way that conceived the state involved more on the model of a *replica* of the physical source than as a *sentence* about it?

It is here that Hegel's idea of the *de re* judgment of determinate existence looks helpful, as it has *both* features. It has the logic of a type of *sentence*, but it is a type of sentence whose subject-predicate structure is modeled on the familiar objects of the manifest world, objects understood as instances of kinds in which various non-essential properties 'inhere'. So while Alice will attribute perceptual thoughts to Brett within the framework of an overarching *de dicto* mode of attribution, in 'extending' the ascription of impressions to herself, might this not be done within a framework for which the *de re* mode of expression was taken as primary? But, on the Hegelian model this difference should not be considered rigid and fixed, because Alice has to be able to conceive of herself and Brett as having perceptual thoughts with *the same content*, and this is what Hegel's idea of the mutual translatability of *de re* and *de dicto* forms is meant to capture. We have learnt from Brandom how Alice can translate the *de dicto* content of Brett's perceptual thoughts into *de re* ones by some type of Quinean derivation, but on the reading suggested here, the translation of her own states should be seen as moving in the inverse direction. For *her* the relevant transformation will be a matter of going from an expression that captures her seeing *of* the wafer—say, that it is red and triangular—to one that expresses a judgment *that* the wafer is red and triangular. On this reading, we cannot discount the existence of *genuinely psychological de re* intentional states to which the *de re* attributions of others are, in some sense, *descriptive*—states, moreover, that have a distinctive *phenomenology*. But this is a form of psychological realism, I suggest, that is at variance with the 'stance stance' approach of Rorty and Brandom.

In Brandom's Rortarian telling of myth of Jones, Alice and Brett, like the rest of us who live downstream of Jones' revolution, are creatures who have learned to talk about themselves *as if* they have inner mental lives. On this more 'Hegelian' reading of Sellars offered here, that we have become creatures who talk about ourselves as having inner lives has actually brought it about that we have come to *have* such lives.¹⁹

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