

### *Meaning and Frameworks: Sellars on Ryle and Inner Episodes*

Although the myth of Jones makes its initial appearance in “Empiricism in the Philosophy of Mind”, Sellars re-addresses the semantical status of inner episodes in conjunction with both the myth of Jones and a “Ryle-inspired” take on the mental as found in *Science and Metaphysics*. This re-addressing takes the form of an attempt to reconstruct the conceptual framework of mental acts *via* the mythical Rylean community and its members’ singular dependence on overt speech to explain the behavior of their fellow neighbors. Sellars’s project here is an attempt to model inner episodes on overt speech in an effort to escape a *substantive* behavioristic psychology. One requirement for this account to succeed is that the framework of overt speech cannot contain within it implicit or explicit reference to inner episodes. That is, Sellars’s initially Rylean model of overt linguistic behavior cannot already contain references to the mental episodes it is supposed to introduce without begging the question. Sellars himself makes this point, yet one quickly finds him using what seems to be “strictly” mentalistic talk in his examples of “willing-out-loud” and “searching one’s memory out loud” prior to Jones’s theory of inner episodes. Such a move seems puzzling given the requirements and resources of the Rylean framework; it is difficult to see what role such talk would play without already assuming the occurrence of inner episodes.

The point of my paper is to draw out an internal tension between Sellars’s claims about what is required for his explanatory framework of conceptual episodes to be successful and his reliance on a Rylean framework that supposedly explains inner episodes without recourse to inner episodes themselves. Since Ryle’s account of minds rejects reliance on inner episodes to explain our ordinary usage of mentalistic terms and suggests that such terms are mere fictions, then it is difficult to see how Sellars’s Ryleans could have access to a *language* that is “rich enough to serve as a basis for the explicit introduction of the framework of conceptual episodes.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, the question to be addressed is: *Is Sellars’s Rylean language “rich enough” to be free of reference, implicit or otherwise, to the mental episodes it is supposed to explain?*

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<sup>1</sup> Sellars, Wilfrid (1967). *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes* (Atascadero, California: Ridgeview Publishing Company), 71.

My paper will answer this question in three stages: 1.) An analysis of Sellars's description of a Rylean language, 2.) Examining Ryle's account of volitions and intentions against Sellars's Ryleans, and 3.) Arguments for why Ryle and Sellars's approaches for dealing with inner episodes might not be "rich enough" to serve as a basis for the meaning of inner episodes. My concluding section will attempt to resolve this tension by suggesting that, if I am correct that Sellars's Rylean language is not "rich enough" to model certain inner episodes on, then one move open to a Sellarsian is to model the meaning of inner episodes on embodied movement. Although such a move is not suggested by Sellars it could provide a model for the functional shift of various overt speech predicates that Sellars is looking for while avoiding making reference to inner episodes or dismissing such episodes as mere fictions.

This solution differs from Sellars's reconstruction in that such functional changes in meaning would not originate from changing the role of predicates in overt speech, but in changing the role of predicates used to describe physical action<sup>2</sup> prior to the introduction of inner episodes. Although the resources available for this move could come from a Rylean language *per se*, it would not be available on the "thinking-out-loud" model that Sellars relies. The advantage of this change would be that one could explain the inherent physicalist language tied to inner episodes talk and help clarify the distinction between mental acts and actions that Sellars is concerned to avoid conflating.

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term "action" here without its obvious ties to *intentional* action - to do so would be to beg the question. By action I simply mean "movement."