

# Thought, Speech, and Consciousness

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**Sellars in a New Generation**

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- Physical objects are congeries of subatomic particles, so we're told. Indeed, physics tells us things even harder to fathom.
- But we initially come to know about things not in terms of physics, but as persisting, perceptible physical objects.
- In roughly that spirit, Aristotle distinguished how things are in themselves from how they're best known to us.

And Sellars adapted Aristotle's distinction in talking about sense impressions: "[V]isual impressions are prior in the order of being to concepts pertaining to physical color," but our concepts of physical colors "are prior in the order of knowing to concepts pertaining to visual impressions" (SRII, 57).

➤ I've argued elsewhere that adjustments to Sellars' treatment are needed for the case of sense impressions (2016). But he in effect draws the same distinction for intentionality, and I'll argue that here he is exactly right.

➤ In very rough summary, the intentionality of thinking is prior in the order of being, but the intentionality of speech acts is prior in the order of knowing.

➤ I'll first sketch how that works, using Jones's theory in "EPM." I'll then extract lessons from that about the Given that Sellars was set on dismantling. After applying all that to a few fashionable views about thought and speech, I'll close by saying something about thoughts' occurring consciously.

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➤ That's my plan; a few words about its significance. Sellars is not totally explicit about exactly what the Myth of the Given is, nor is it clear from his examples of it.

➤ I'll argue here that we can get a definitive account of by extrapolating from his earliest and most famous example: Jones's theorizing about intentional states.

➤ I won't be able here to consider all Sellars' remarks about the Myth of the Given. So this talk in effect a challenge that the account I'll argue for here does cover all his examples.  
And my account also shows how a number of current views Sellars would strongly reject are cases of the Myth of the Given.

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# OVERVIEW

- I. The Myth of Jones
- II. The Myth of the Given
- III. Thought, Speech, and Consciousness

## I. The Myth of Jones

- Isn't it obvious that thinking is prior to speaking? Speech acts express thoughts, and thinking often occurs without speech. By contrast, sincere speech never occurs without thought. Thought is what's basic. That's the received wisdom, and it's right.
- As Chisholm noted in his published correspondence with Sellars, "thoughts would be intentional even if there were no linguistic entities, ... [but] nothing would be intentional were it not for the fact that thoughts are intentional" (IM 533).

➤ Searle echoes Chisholm's remark: Meaning something by saying it cannot "stand on its own in the way that [one's] believing" something, for example, can (1983, 29).

➤ But then Searle goes significantly farther, urging that "the direction of logical analysis is to explain language in terms of [the] Intentionality [of the mental]" (5).

Logical analysis here is conceptual analysis: One cannot understand what speech is except by appeal to understanding what it is for mental states to have intentionality.

➤ More explicitly: "[S]peakers' meaning should be entirely definable in terms of ... forms of Intentionality that are not intrinsically linguistic" (160).

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➤ Sellars takes stark issue with this. If such definability held, how could we have ever come to think about thinking?  
And how could we explain the robust tie between thinking and speech in a way that isn't simply stipulative and uninformative?

➤ Many think these questions are misguided. We know about thinking and intentionality, they claim, by way of consciousness.  
And there are no questions to ask about consciousness. With consciousness reality coincides with appearance; there's nothing behind conscious presentation to explain. Consciousness is in that way foundational.

➤ That traditional view about consciousness, I'll argue, is at bottom the Myth of the Given.

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➤ But the traditional idea that the explanatory buck stops with consciousness is itself just stipulative. It is also wrong; there are real questions about consciousness.

Sellars' account, built on Jones's theorizing, exposes and remedies these defects.

➤ Jones's folk theorizing occurs in a context in which people talk, and describe speech acts in semantic terms. And they describe things using subjunctive conditionals.

(Indeed, it's arguable that even conditionals that look indicative have subjunctive content: Consider their ordinary-language negations.)

➤ But Jones is proto-scientifically curious: What explains the occurrence of speech acts? What are their systematic causes?

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➤ Jones also notes nonverbal behavior that people make sense of by saying something. I move in various ways; you ask what am I doing; I say I'm digging a ditch. That makes sense of my behavior—it tells you what I take myself to be doing.

➤ Jones wonders: How to explain all this?

➤ He posits occurrences internal to speakers that cause both speech acts and cases of nonverbal rational behavior— i.e., nonverbal behavior we can make sense of by saying something relevant.

➤ These posits have properties analogous to the semantic properties of speech acts, and each speech act is caused by a posit with corresponding properties.

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- Because they have properties analogous to speech acts, the posits are in that way modeled on speech acts. I won't worry today about modeling and analogy.
- But unlike speech acts, these posits don't have any acoustic properties. And though their semantics reflects that of speech acts, we shouldn't extrapolate and assume their syntax also does. It may well sometimes, as with 'and', 'or', and 'if' compounds; but it needn't subsententially.
- These posits are what we call intentional states—thoughts. But thoughts on Sellars' view aren't just theoretical posits: They're theoretical posits plus (to Castañeda, 11-14-61).
- What's the "plus"?

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- Sellars writes: "[I]t turns out—need it have?—that [Jones's contemporaries] can be trained to give reasonably reliable self-descriptions, using the language of the theory, without having to observe [their] overt behaviour" (EPM, §59).
- As Sellars puts it, thoughts are theoretical, but come to have a reporting role: They're states whose existence we establish theoretically, but to which we come to have first-person access.
- Sellars is not forthcoming about how first-person access works—nor about what "need it have?" amounts to. I'll fill out how such access has to work, as well as what the cryptic "need it have?" must amount to.

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- We describe our thoughts in terms of the speech acts we might use to express them. We say, "I think that ...," where '...' are words we see as expressing that thought.
- We have no other way to describe our own thoughts—or anybody's. Propositions aren't an alternative, since they're just abstract stand-ins for words and thoughts with the right content.
- On Jones's theory, thoughts are expressed by speech acts with corresponding semantic properties. So our describing our own thoughts—and those of others—by way of speech acts that would express them is exactly what the theory predicts. We're "using the language of the theory."

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- Those adept at applying Jones's theory in a third-person way can come, Sellars says, "to give ... reliable self-descriptions, using the language of the theory, without having to observe [their] overt behavior."
- On Jones's theory, speech acts express thoughts with corresponding content. So if one can report without observation one's thought that *p*, one will have a thought that one has that thought—a higher-order thought (HOT) in virtue of which one is aware of one's thought that *p*.
- And thoughts one is aware of oneself as having are conscious thoughts. Jones's theory enables a complete account built solely from intersubjective considerations.

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- Jones's theorizing explains the tie between speech and thinking, the intentionality of thinking, how we can come to think about thinking, and our first-person access to it.
- And it conforms in these ways to our folk-psychological views about thinking. These are powerful reasons to hold not only that Jones's theorizing is true, but also that it gives a convincing account of how our folk-psychological views about these things arose.
- As Sellars enjoins us in the last paragraph (§63) of "EPM," we can see the myth of Jones as a revealing and accurate account of how we came to think about intentional (and other mental) states as we do.

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- Indeed, the account delivers the very goods Chisholm insisted upon in writing that "thoughts would be intentional even if there were no linguistic entities, ... [but] nothing would be intentional were it not for the fact that thoughts are intentional." Since thoughts the causes of speech acts, if there were no thoughts, there would be no speech acts.
- What, then, is there to complain about in Sellars' account and the myth of Jones? Why doesn't it strike everybody as just too obvious and compelling to contest?
- We see the answer to that in Chisholm's discomfort, operative if often tacitly in the misgivings—even incredulity—of many.

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- Chisholm writes: "If the people of your myth were to give just a little bit of thought to the semantical statements they make, wouldn't they then see that these semantical statements entail statements about the thoughts of the people whose language is being discussed?" (IM 537).
- "Just a little bit of thought"!  
There's no need, on Chisholm's view, for any of this mythological theorizing—indeed, for any theorizing at all.
- Access to our thoughts, he holds, is Given. We know about them independently of anything else—theoretical or otherwise. There is nothing about thinking or its relation to speech that needs explaining.

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- As noted earlier, Searle echoes this. He goes from the inability of speech to "stand on its own in the way that believing" can to insist that "the direction of [conceptual] analysis is to explain language in terms of [the] Intentionality [of the mental]."
- The commonsense causal dependence of speech upon thought leads Searle and Chisholm to extrapolate to an entirely different claim of conceptual dependence.
- This extrapolation is plainly unfounded. We can typically describe effects and their properties without appeal to properties of their causes. Some non-question-begging reason is needed to think that things are otherwise for speech and thinking.

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- Folk theories typically come to function as background knowledge, taken for granted as obvious. So it can be tempting to see the deliverances of folk theorizing as Given.
- And then one might hold with Chisholm that "a little bit of thought" would show that semantic descriptions of speech acts entail statements about thoughts.  
After all, if we take Jones's theory as an auxiliary premise, semantic statements do entail statements about our thoughts!
- Chisholm—and very many others—feed the results of Jones's folk theorizing into the things we take for granted. And then, overlooking their folk-theoretical status, Chisholm and others take them as Given.

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- Moreover, seeing Jones's folk theorizing as background knowledge obscures things by making it seem inappropriate to ask whether the dependence of speech on thought is conceptual or merely causal.
- Sellars unpacks that background knowledge into Jones's folk theorizing, thereby making it clear that the dependence is causal, not conceptual.
- Indeed, if the dependence were conceptual in the way Chisholm, Searle and others envisage, there would be no informative way to explain what thoughts are—except by way of consciousness.  
And relying on consciousness in that way is to see thinking as simply Given.

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- Some accounts seek to explain thinking by appeal to ties thoughts have with what they are about or holist ties among thoughts, and some other theories by teleosemantic or interpretivist considerations.
- But even if such accounts were compatible with a conceptual priority of thought over speech, it's unclear why they would not apply equally to natural languages, independent of thought. So such accounts can't ensure conceptual priority.
- More important, they concern only what it is for thoughts to have content. So they leave untouched what thoughts are and how we could come to think about them—tacitly relying for that on consciousness.

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- Sellars' account provides all one could ask for and conforms with folk psychology. There's no room for complaint—except that it rests on theorizing, not the Given.
- Recall the distinction Sellars adapts between what something is in itself and what's better known to us. On Sellars' account, the semantic properties of speech are better known to us, but in themselves they depend on thinking.
- If first-person access to thinking and our ability to think about it were Given, thinking itself would be, as many still hold, better known to us. The myth of Jones—indeed any explanation of how we can think about thinking—would be idle.

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- Our ability to talk about thoughts is part of our background ways of describing things. So it's easy not to notice that it rests on a folk-theoretical positing of thoughts. And overlooking that precludes any explanation of thinking, forcing one to cast it as Given.
- A complete explanation of speech must, as adherents of the Given insist, appeal to thinking. Jones's folk-theoretical positing enables that—and indeed is introduced for just that explanatory goal.
- But even pre-Jones, we can describe and explain the semantic properties of speech acts without any appeal to thinking—though in a way still robust enough to enable Jones's positing of thoughts.

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- Sellars' favors a functionalist pre-Jones explanation of semantic properties, using language-game moves among speech acts, perception, and other behavior.
- But as already noted, we can adapt any account that assigns different contents to distinct thoughts so as to ascribe speaker's meaning to speech acts—with no appeal to the thoughts that cause those speech acts.
- And any of those accounts could explain speaker's meanings in a way that grounds a Jonesean positing of thoughts as causes of speech acts. All that's needed is that the account taxonomize speech acts in respect of speaker's meaning and explain the inferential ties that hold among them.

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- Being adept at applying Jones's theory in a third-person way leads one to be able "to give ... reliable self-descriptions, using the language of the theory, without having to observe [their] overt behavior"—and to have HOTs that one has various thoughts.
- That would happen because repeated application of the theory to oneself on third-person grounds leads to one's having a "reasonably reliable" HOT that one has the relevant first-order thought. (More in §3.)
- Sellars' coy "need it have"—much noted by readers of "EPM"—is simply his way of stressing that first-person access to one's thoughts is itself not Given. It must rest on Jones's theorizing.

## II. The Myth of the Given

- Much of this is familiar, though I've added and developed it a bit. What's pivotal on my sketch is whether our commonsense view of thinking is Given—as against being grounded in folk-theoretical reasoning.
- And that points to an account of what the Given itself is. Plainly it's something foundationalist. But that by itself doesn't capture what concerned Sellars. His Given is at bottom foundational not epistemologically, but in respect of mind. So a bit about epistemology vs. mind.

- Sellars famously says: “[I]n characterizing ... a state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that ... state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says” (EPM, §36; his emphasis).
- Knowing requires being in a position to know; hence reasons. That’s not so for thinking in general, nor meaningful speech. There’s no non-question-begging reason to apply what holds for knowing to thinking generally; knowing raises special factors.
- Sellars also writes that “linguistic objects are subject to rules and principles—are fraught with ‘ought’” (TC, 212). But we can cast such rules and principles without normativity.

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- Such rules, he holds, govern our speech. But how? Speech tends to conform to such rules, but not from a choice about whether to follow them. They’re dispositions that regulate speech, not things we should do.
- These dispositions arise because speaking in some ways works well discursively—in leading to where the speaker wants to get and avoiding undesirable reactions from others. Other ways of speaking work less well. We can cash out the rules that way.
- When things work well in those two ways, we might describe one as committed to what one says, and so as entitled to say it. But that adds nothing to describing things in terms of relevant constraints.

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- Such constraints take many different forms. Something one says can arrest one's train of speech, leading to unclarity about what to say next or some other form of cognitive dissonance. Or it may elicit negative or inappropriate reactions in others.
- Since these constraints are so varied, it's inviting, and can even be useful, to describe them in normative terms. But doing so just summarizes dispositions and disruptions that we can cash out wholly descriptively.
- Still, all that matters for present purposes is that whatever rules and principles do figure already are in place with speech, well before the Myth of the Given raises any issues in connection with thinking.

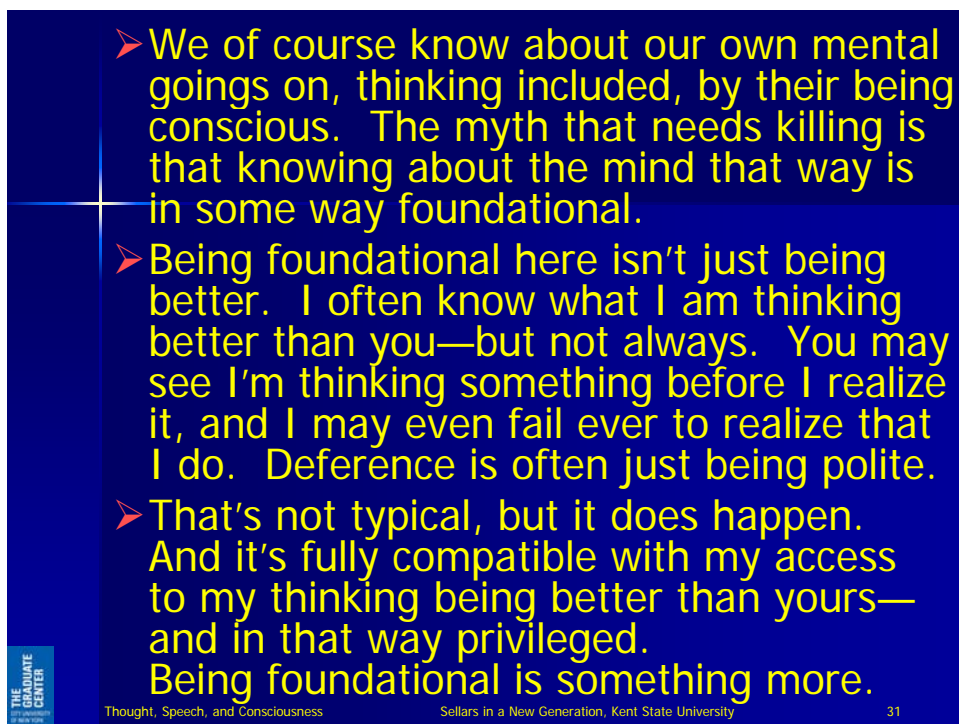
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- I've noted that many now (a different new generation—which needs Sellars!) think no question arises about how we understand what thinking is. We understand that by consciousness, and since consciousness is self-presenting, no further questions arise.
- Jones's theorizing undermines that picture. It gives a theory of intentionality, and uses that to build an account of consciousness.
- But what would it be for consciousness to be self-presenting—in a way that seems to obviate any need for such an account? Unless we understand that, we won't have a full grasp of what the Given is—of the Myth that Sellars develops his myth of Jones to kill.

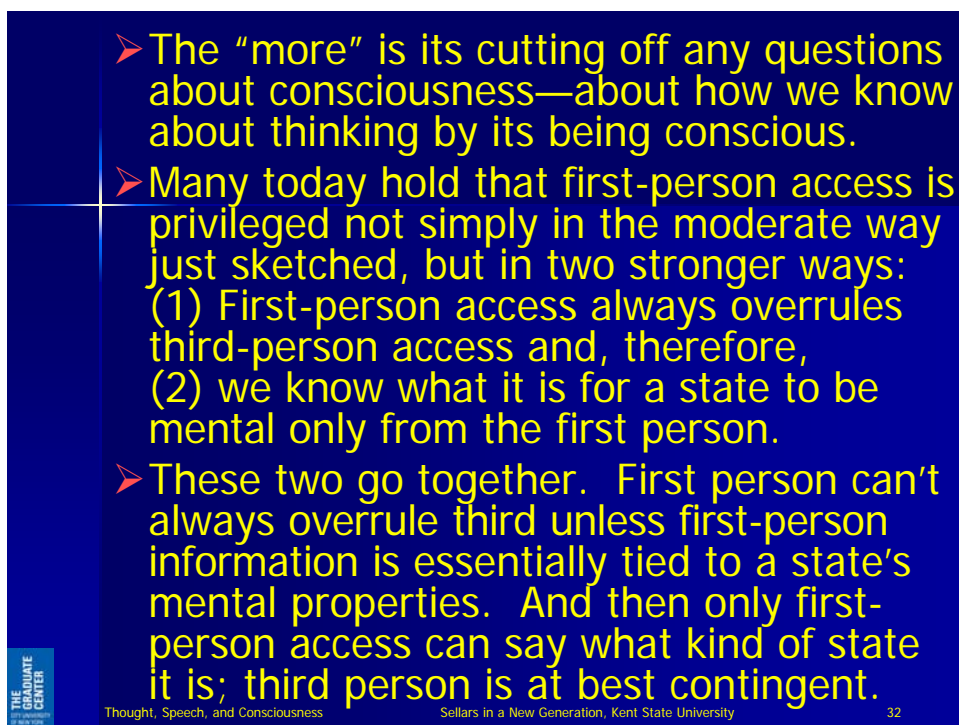
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- We of course know about our own mental goings on, thinking included, by their being conscious. The myth that needs killing is that knowing about the mind that way is in some way foundational.
- Being foundational here isn't just being better. I often know what I am thinking better than you—but not always. You may see I'm thinking something before I realize it, and I may even fail ever to realize that I do. Deference is often just being polite.
- That's not typical, but it does happen. And it's fully compatible with my access to my thinking being better than yours—and in that way privileged. Being foundational is something more.

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- The “more” is its cutting off any questions about consciousness—about how we know about thinking by its being conscious.
- Many today hold that first-person access is privileged not simply in the moderate way just sketched, but in two stronger ways:  
(1) First-person access always overrules third-person access and, therefore,  
(2) we know what it is for a state to be mental only from the first person.
- These two go together. First person can't always overrule third unless first-person information is essentially tied to a state's mental properties. And then only first-person access can say what kind of state it is; third person is at best contingent.

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- This is the Myth of the Given—that first-person access is in this way foundational.
- Recall: We have third-person access only because of causal ties. That's our only route to others' mental states. Does first-person access reveal anything about such ties? Are such ties essential to the nature of the states being accessed?
- If first-person access reveals causal ties, it could override third only if its causal ties were always more reliable in some way—or such access revealed other information that trumped all causal ties. The first possibility is unlikely; first-person access doesn't override third person because of superior causal ties.

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- Indeed, it might seem, at first glance, that consciousness reveals no causal ties at all. So first person could override third only if some other first-person information trumps third-person causal information.
- And that's first-person foundationalism: First-person access reveals each mental state one by one, independently of anything else—including causal ties. It bypasses all relational factors to reveal directly the mental nature of each state.
- This is evident, first-person foundationalists claim, simply by introspecting. Introspection and consciousness tell us about each state on its own, those theorists claim—not in relation to anything else.

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- This is the Myth of the Given—that first-person access is foundational. “EPM” aims to dismantle this by Jones’s folk theorizing, which accounts for first-person access solely on intersubjective considerations.
- That’s Sellars’ constructive route: showing we can take third-person access as basic and still do justice to the first person.
- But we can add an internal attack on the Myth as construed above, showing that it implies a defective view of first-person access, which Sellars’ approach avoids.
- A first shot: Third-person access relies on causal ties. So such ties are part of the nature of the states. If first-person access bypasses them, it is in that way defective.

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- But the first-person foundationalist will retort that the causal ties third-person access uses are just contingent properties of the states—often robust enough to rely on, but no part of the nature of the states.
- That looks like a standoff. But third-person access isn’t needed to see that causal ties are indeed part of the nature of thoughts.
- Content is essential to intentional states. And despite wide and deep disagreement about content, no theory casts content as independent of causation. Simplifying greatly, some theories fix the content of each state by causal ties to what it’s about and other theories by appeal to causal ties to other states, stimuli, and behavior.

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- First-person access must reveal intentional states in respect of their content. Since every account of content appeals to causal ties, such access must reveal intentional states in respect of their causal ties.
- In introspecting, we attend to being aware of ourselves as being in a particular state, and less to the nature of the state itself. Hence the superficial—and illusory—sense that first-person access doesn't represent the states in respect of their causal ties.
- But such ties are constitutive to a state's having content. So first-person access can't present any intentional states independently of those ties.

Consciousness must represent causal ties.

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- First-person foundationalism holds that first-person access is blind to causal ties, going directly to the state independently of any such ties or other relational properties.
- But first-person access presents intentional states at least partly in respect of causal ties. So first-person foundationalism implies a defective view of such access.
- Things are the same with qualitative mental states—sensations—for which it may seem even more compelling that consciousness presents them just in nonrelational terms.
- But a sensation of a particular shade of red will change how it subjectively appears if other sensations of closely related shades are introduced in reasonable proximity.

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- So first-person access must present the nature even of qualitative states in terms that are partly relational, perhaps wholly so.
- I registered at the outset misgivings about Sellars' treatment of sense impressions. Sellars holds that sense impressions—mental states with qualitative character—cannot occur without being conscious.
- I've argued elsewhere (2016) that he does so because he relocates colors and such qualities from physical reality to the mind, and does so because he holds that physical colors would have to be as we see them consciously. The unnoticed result is that the relocated mental qualities must also be as we are conscious of them.

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- And then consciousness is the arbiter of the nature of sense impressions. Here Sellars is a first-person foundationalist, permitting the Myth of the Given in this one case.
- Still, he also stresses that we individuate mental qualities by the similarities and differences among them. And so mental qualities are in that way relational. So, as I've argued in (2016), it's not hard to detach the first-person foundationalism from the rest of his view about sensations.
- Still, the first-person foundationalism about sensations likely underlies one of his best known claims: that there is no prelinguistic awareness, and that thinking otherwise is a form of the Myth of the Given.

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- If first-person access is the final arbiter about mental qualities, there's no reason take them as any type of awareness of anything else. They are just conscious states of mind, nothing more.
- Still, this conclusion is in uneasy tension with Sellars' insistence that the similarities and differences among mental qualities echo those among the perceptible properties we sense and perceive.
- It's natural to take a sense impression of a red triangle to represent a red, triangular physical object. And then it's unclear why having such a sense impression wouldn't, by itself, constitute a type of awareness independent of anything conceptual.

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- One reason may be Sellars' acceptance of the relocation story; there literally aren't on his view any physical colors, and so none to represent or be aware of.
- Another may be his tendency, despite recognizing that we individuate mental qualities by similarities and differences, to describe mental qualities atomistically, each independently of all others.
- And that's due to taking consciousness as the final arbiter about them. A relational aspect of mental qualities would provide a handle of the qualities that's independent of first-person access. A relational way of individuating precludes first-person foundationalism.

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➤ Either way, Sellars' claim that prelinguistic awareness rests on the Myth of the Given is likely an unfounded result of his first-person foundationalism about sensations.

➤ And first-person foundationalism is wrong about first-person access to mental states of whatever sort. Indeed, how could such access occur at all on that view?

On that picture it bypasses all causal and relational properties and directly reveals the nature of the states. How could it do that? On what picture of of mental states would that not be sheer magic?

➤ And Sellars' account of thoughts, if not of sensations, sidesteps all these internal difficulties in first-person foundationalism.

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➤ Sellars' account of the content of thinking is broadly functionalist, and Jones's theory relies on a functionalist account of the meaning of speech acts.

And first-person access to thoughts arises from applying Jones's theory to oneself, though without self-observation.

➤ Such self-application of Jones's theory enables first-person access to reveal the nature of accessed states in respect of their causal and other relational properties.

➤ So there is no disparity between the way first- and third-person access present the states. We avoid the threat that on first-person foundationalism the two types of access pertain to distinct types of state.

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- The myth of Jones doubly kills the Myth of the Given. It shows constructively that one can build from third- to first-person access, from the intersubjective to the conscious and introspectible.
  - And it reveals and avoids the defects of seeing first-person access as Given.
  - Still, the Myth of the Given—first-person foundationalism—persists, and underlies much of today's thinking about mind.
- So I turn now to several prominent views about thinking and its relation to speech which rely on or in some other way reflect first-person foundationalism: Gricean communicative intentions, atomism about content, and Searle's original intentionality.

### III. Thought, Speech, and Consciousness

- Sellars posits thoughts as states that tend to cause speech acts whose speaker's meaning matches the content of the thought and whose illocutionary force reflects that thought's mental attitude.  
So speaker's meaning is a matter of the intentional properties of the thoughts that the speech acts express.
- By contrast, on the now widely accepted Gricean account, speaker's meaning is a matter of communicative intentions, rather than the thoughts that speech acts express.

- But it's unclear why communication would be more basic to speaker's meaning than what thoughts are expressed. One can't communicate anything without expressing it, but expressing does occur without communication.
- The two accounts differ not only in what mental resources they appeal to, but also in their predictions. In speaking insincerely, I intend my utterance to get you to believe something that I do not believe.
- On the communicative-intention view, that intention gives my insincere utterance a straightforward speaker's meaning. The speaker's meaning is whatever I intend to get you to believe with my utterance.

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- Indeed, communicative intentions are indifferent to what the speaker believes, and so can't—by themselves—differentiate sincere speech from insincere utterances.
- In speaking insincerely, I don't believe the thing I intend you to believe. So there is no intentional state for my utterance to express. On an expressing view, insincere utterances have no speaker's meaning.
- In speaking insincerely, I merely pretend to express a thought—to be a person like me but with that thought. Insincere speech is like play acting (Austin, Frege)—akin to what Sellars called parroting speech (NI). Only an expressing account can distinguish sincere from insincere; so we should go with that.

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- But what matters here is that working back from expressing not only gets right which states are responsible for speaker's meaning—but also, and more important, yields by way of Jones's theory an account of what intentional states are generally.
- Working back from communication doesn't. Nothing about communication, by itself, so much as suggests what the nature of intentional states might be.
- And a full account must explain what the intentional states are. A communicative-intention account has nothing to rely on but consciousness. And since it lacks any further explanation, the account must take consciousness as foundational—as Given.

- Communicative intentions seldom occur consciously. That's not the point. On a communicative-intention account, there's nothing but the conscious cases to appeal to in explaining what intentions are.
- There are, as noted, other ways one might seek to explain content. But they could also explain speaker's meaning, obviating any need to appeal to communication.
- Construing speaker's meaning in terms of the expressing of intentional states explains the nature of the intentional states. Construing speaker's meaning by appeal to communicative intentions allows us no informative account of that, forcing us back onto first-person foundationalism.

- I've noted that Sellars favors functionalist accounts of both intentional content and speaker's meaning. But that's independent of the prior point—that only if we explain speaker's meaning by the expressing of thoughts can we have an informative account of what thoughts are.
- Functionalist accounts of content are holist, now largely out of favor due mainly to the Fodor-Lepore argument that holism can't accommodate sameness of token content.
- On holism, content is inferential potential. So if you have one belief more than me or gain one over time, none of your tokens will have the exact same content as any of mine, nor yours from one time to another.

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- But just as no two objects have the exact same size or shape, exact sameness of content isn't needed if it's so close as not to matter to thinking or communication.
- Functionalist holism accommodates ties with nonmental, nonlinguistic reality because of causal connections with stimuli and action—the language-entry and -departure moves of Sellars' "SRLG."
- Still, some insist that ties to nonmental and nonlinguistic reality at the holist periphery aren't enough—that reference unmediated by sense or inferential potential is needed: so-called direct reference.  
And here too there is a tie, again largely unnoticed, to first-person foundationalism.

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- Direct reference would be atomistic, each mental word referring to a particular thing. What's the appeal of that if the inferential net has robust ties to inputs and outputs? Those ties could do all the referential work.
- Direct reference, as Russell noted, is conceived on a model of being consciously aware of a single thing—at one stage of his thinking, solely demonstratively.
- The appeal of direct reference—since the descriptivism of a broadly functionalist account could do all the referential work—is that it echoes the apparent atomism of our conscious awareness of single things. The Myth of the Given inspires, though it doesn't strictly underlie, direct reference.

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- Independent reasons are of course offered for direct reference. But they all assume a rejection of content holism. Since there's no reason to think token contents aren't close enough on holism for all theoretical and practical purposes, we need some sound reason to reject holism.
- The way mental states are conscious seems superficially to present mental properties one by one, independent of all else.
- Reliance on the superficial sense that first-person access presents mental properties nonrelationally invites holding that holism can't explain word-world relations, and that we can't do so without positing an unexplained relation of direct reference.

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- Searle's notion of original intentionality ties together anti-holism with first-person foundationalism. The intentionality of each thought is intrinsic, as against the derived intentionality of speech acts.
- Intentionality is conferred on a speech act by an intention that the utterance have suitable "conditions of satisfaction" (1983, 27). It's not a Gricean communicative intention, rather an intention congenial to speaker's meaning as the expressing of a thought.
- But what matters here is that since the intentionality of each thought is intrinsic to that thought, original intentionality is atomistic. It's incompatible with any holist, functionalist theory of content.

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- Searle also holds that all intentional states are conscious. He occasionally does speak of unconscious intentional states as potentially conscious. But it turns out this means only that such states are "capable of causing subjective conscious thoughts" (1990, 588).
- They are intentional in a derivative way—they can cause states that are genuinely intentional. Like speech acts, we count them as intentional only as a courtesy, due to causal ties with real intentional states.
- Searle's reason for this is that no state is intentional unless it has aspectual shape—i.e., it represents things in a way that can violate extensional substitutivity.

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- And, he claims, only conscious intentional states can have aspectual shape, since aspect is tied to one's "point of view" (587).
- This is patently question begging. What captures a point of view is intentional content, not consciousness. Unconscious intentional states capture an individual's point of view—how things are for one—no less than conscious intentional states.
- Still, Searle is right that the intentionality of thoughts must indeed be conscious if intentionality is intrinsic to each thought, rather than a relational property.

If intentionality is intrinsic to thoughts, the way it is conscious is all there is to it—and also the only way to know about it.

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- So Searle's original intentionality is of a piece with first-person foundationalism—with the Myth of the Given.
- Searle does acknowledge the usefulness of "our prior knowledge of language as a heuristic device for explanatory purposes.... The direction of pedagogy is to explain [the] Intentionality [of the mental] in terms of language" (1983, 5).
- And it may be tempting to see acceptance of this explanatory priority of language as a recognition of the priority that Jones's folk theory accords the semantic characterization of speech acts in explaining what intentional states are.

But that would be to misread Searle's view.

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- Searle sees the explanatory priority of language to intentional states as a mere heuristic. “[S]peakers’ meaning,” he insists, must “be entirely definable in terms of ... forms of Intentionality that are not intrinsically linguistic” (160).
- Jones’s folk theory, by contrast, explains what it is for a state to be intentional by positing its role in causing speech acts.
- First-person foundationalism—the Myth of the Given—holds, with Searle, that we cannot taxonomize speech acts in semantic terms unless we first understand the intentionality of mental states.

The myth of Jones shows that this is not so. A semantic taxonomy can come first.

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- The first-person foundationalist insists that Jones’s posits are sham thoughts, states a zombie can be in. No state is intentional—or mental at all—unless it’s essentially conscious. Consciousness on that view is an unexplainable explainer—an explanatory unmoved mover. Hence a “hard problem.”
- So I’ll close with a few more words about a Sellarsian explanation of what it is for intentional states to be conscious.
- Jones’s contemporaries become habituated to applying the theory to themselves as well as to others, and so come to be able “to give ... reliable self-descriptions, using the language of the theory, without having to observe [their own] overt behavior.”

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- Each self-description expresses a HOT that one has some thought. But that thought won't be conscious unless one's awareness of it seems subjectively to be unmediated.
- That's why Sellars stresses that Jones's contemporaries come to self-report "without having to observe [their] overt behavior."
- But what gives rise to their HOTs—once they stop relying on self-observation? We don't rely on self-observation; what gives rise to our HOTs? Sellars' "need it have?" distracts us from asking this question.
- Habituation won't help; it's for observation-based applying of the theory. Do we then fail to explain consciousness—and so succumb to first-person foundationalism?

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- No. Having a thought that  $p$  disposes one to say that  $p$ . And being disposed simply to say that  $p$  can, with repeated self-reporting, come to dispose one also to have a HOT that one has a thought that  $p$ .
- One will thereby come to be aware of oneself as having that thought—in a way that subjectively seems unmediated.
- The myth of Jones provides the resources for a successful account of what it is for a state to be intentional—and what it is for an intentional state to be conscious. These resources rely solely on third-person, intersubjective factors, thereby dismantling first-person foundationalism—the Myth of the Given.

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Thank you for  
your attention

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