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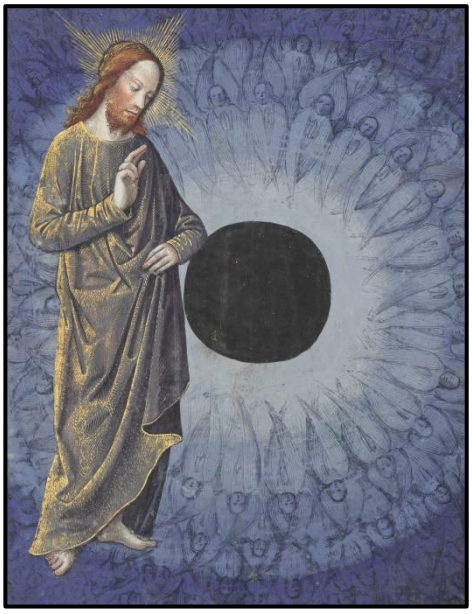
A Study of Objects and Subjects



James Matharu

New College and Faculty of Philosophy
University of Oxford

Thesis Submitted (with Major Corrections) for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Hilary Term
2022

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Note to the Examiners

Dear Prof. Moore and Dr. Burley,

Thank you again for being willing to examine (and re-examine) this thesis.

In revising the original I have kept the following comments in particular, from your examiners' report, in mind:

(1) [W]hile the thesis is extraordinarily ambitious… it is nevertheless **over-ambitious**. There is plenty in the thesis that could and should have awaited future development of these ideas in other contexts.

(2) Mr Matharu has some latitude in how he responds to the need that we have identified for major corrections to his thesis. But the most obvious and the most straightforward way to do so would be to jettison Chapters 9 and 10, thereby making room for **two new chapters**. One of these (the final one, obviously) would be the missing **concluding chapter**. The other, possibly but not necessarily the penultimate, chapter could be **one in which he compares and contrasts his project with that of other philosophers, most notably (or perhaps exclusively) phenomenologists such as Husserl**.

Concerning (1): I have cut the original Chapters 7-10. These dealt with (i) the second-person, (ii) the notion of a person, (iii) the idea of being multiple people or individuals simultaneously, (iv) animism, and (iv) 'picture-things'. I have substantively revised the remaining material of the original chapters to make it clearer, where I can.

Concerning (2): I have now added three new chapters (1, 2 and 3) plus a Concluding chapter, and re-structured the argument so that it has a more linear shape, proceeding in stages. The aim is simpler: to give an account of intentional objects that accommodates thought and experience of non-existents. Other issues about animism etc. are now excluded.

After studying Husserl (and then Augustine), I realized there was a problem with my original claim about objects of thought. I had spoken of objects as things that could be described in two ways, 'transparently' or 'opaquely'. But I now understood there were multiple ways of speaking here; and that I was in danger of obscuring their difference or, (worse), conflating them. There were different particulars one could speak of, not just one sort.

This led me to re-read Anscombe on intentional objects, and to suspect that I might differ more from her than I'd realized, too; but that I'd also neglected to appreciate the implications of her major insight concerning 'grammatical things'. Which led me in turn to a different notion of 'individual' than I'd had before.

Putting these two changes of mind together, I have now added a third image for thinking with to the Pit and the Forest, which is a Penumbra/Eclipse. This has altered how to talk about what qualifies as what and what 'is' what.

So, the new material is roughly as follows:

The new Chapter 1 gives attention to Plato, the Stoics, Aristotle and Augustine on intentionality. This allows me to articulate, in more detail, puzzles which need answering by the revised account I'm putting forward.

The new Chapter 2 is given chiefly to thinking with Augustine and Husserl. I give more time to the metaphysical implications of my account, which I now understand to align with Husserl's version of transcendental idealism.

The new Chapter 3 draws on these engagements to articulate more clearly a set of seven puzzles about intentionality (in §3.3) that I then structure Chapters 4 and 5 as responses to. Chapter 3 is mostly given to a close reading and interpretation of Anscombe in a way that allows me to carry through lessons gained from Aristotle, Augustine and Husserl.

This leads me to a new understanding of the contrast between transparent and opaque distinctions, and a category of particulars I call 'question-things' or, later, simply 'individuals'.

It's possible I am in disagreement with the historical Anscombe, so I am more careful to spell out where the difference might be. However, I don't have space to include a really detailed evaluation of alternative readings, given my purposes in the essay as a whole. A fuller book would include such further chapter on this, nonetheless.

The new Chapters 4 and 5 then give the 'core account'. These integrate material from various places in the original thesis. However, Chapter 5 is noticeably different from any of the original chapters in its focus on the idea of question-things/individuals. Throughout the essay I also give more time to thinking of how to articulate the idea of 'manifestation' in grammatical terms. The notion of question-things/individuals helps me to do this.

Chapter 6 is focused on the first-person, and the material here is practically unchanged from what it was in the original.

The Conclusion 'brings together' what I've tried to argue, and gives a small case-study of a puzzle about rainbows, to which I apply all the concepts developed in the main-text. This is to try and illustrate the account in action 'afresh'.

Finally, I want to thank you both for the rich feedback during the viva and in the examiners' report. If I had had more time, I would like to have integrated Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty into the revised version, but my thinking and writing didn't proceed as fast or as succinctly as it needed to for that. A further chapter on Meinongianism was researched and ready to be written, but there was no way I could include it without dramatically truncating the argument. So I have had to save that for a later version, too.

Very best wishes,
James Matharu

Abstract

This essay brings together insights from Edmund Husserl in the phenomenological tradition and from Elizabeth Anscombe in the 'ordinary language' philosophical tradition, to resolve a puzzle of how it is that we can think of non-existents.

This involves distinguishing two senses of 'to think of—', and arguing that each has a distinctive sort of object. Their distinction is conceptually related to our capacity to be fallible or infallible about things, and our status as subjects of thought, irreducible to any physical object, but not equivalent to a special non-physical substance. To be a subject of thought is to be presented in mind with things about which one's infallible. But the subject as such is not a 'thing'. It is that which is individuated by which objects are presented infallibly to it, rather than by a substance with whom these or other objects come into material contact.

An entity that doesn't exist is not simply 'nothing'. It has features determined either by what someone would say infallibly, granting honesty and correct use of terms, in answer to, "What are you thinking of?", or by reference to a text, like a fictional story. Both routes are a matter of sentences determining what it is correct or incorrect to say in answer to, "What is it?" questions, which therefore determine what descriptions of the thing (e.g. as a tree or something else) are true or false. Existent things are those entities facts about which are determined by what would be perceptually experienced infallibly given a certain position in the physical environment.

This implies, I argue, that the world in the broadest sense (to include both what is real and unreal) is inherently capable of being thought of. What is objectively the case isn't hidden from us, but given only through subjective experience. So there is nothing that is 'beyond' experience, even if many things exist about which we've not yet thought or which we cannot, given our perceptual apparatus, personally experience except as the objects of other beings' experience. This is consistent with Husserl's version of transcendental idealism.

The means by which I come to the conclusions I do involves a close reading of Anscombe's paper, "The Intentionality of Sensation". This involves distinguishing objects of thought that are things (real or unreal) from objects of thought that aren't 'things' in really any sense at all. I call these simply 'individuals as such'. They can only be individuated by reference to special types of question in which they count as 'given' by one's describing not them directly but things and objects which non-identical with one another and non-equivalent to the individual they 'are'.

This idea of individuals through questions is brought together with Husserl's methodological strategy of drawing 'brackets' round a certain attitude to the world, in order to reflect on the conditions of possibility for our taking such an attitude and having objective knowledge by way of it at all. That strategy and the notion of a 'pure' individual, together indicate a way of thinking about thoughts, thinkers and what is thought of that puts immersion into shared practices with language, particularly with questions, at the heart of philosophical method.

Introduction

What is it to think of something?

If to think of something is a causal relation between two things – the thing that thinks and the thing that's thought of – we might try answering this question in straightforward physical terms. "To think of a planet," we might say, "means something's having come into appropriate physical contact with the planet itself. For example, if it reflected light down a telescope into someone's eye, so that the astronomer got an 'idea' of the planet in her head. And then for this idea to 'pass around' as she physically interacts with astronomers and lay-folk.

"But what's an *idea*, then? How does light hitting one's retina get an *idea* in one's head? And how does it get 'passed around'?"

If an idea was made of light, or a bundle of nerves, then perhaps the light could 'effect' such a thing inside the brain or nervous system. Maybe, if a certain string of sounds coming out our mouths has a similar effect that the original light rays did, the first astronomer to know the planet could cause our brains to do much that the planet would cause us our brains to do itself.

"But we don't normally talk, day to day, of what ideas are 'made' of, do we? Ideas don't weigh anything and when you open up the skull, they're not inside for view. Thinking of something has to be more complicated than that."

Perhaps we could say, "An idea isn't itself a physical thing, of course. But to have an idea means behaving in appropriate relation to the thing of which it's an idea. And you need to have come into causal contact, directly or otherwise, with this thing if you're to conceive of it."

It's true that we ascribe each other thoughts of things on the basis of what we physically do. How people talk, react, and point to things in their environment. There's a 'look' people have when thinking of this or that. It can be incredibly specific. If someone's surrounded by books of artwork of Mickey Mouse and is scratching their head, sketching, rubbing out, sketching again what looks like Mickey Mouse on a paddle-steamer, they'll very likely look to you like they're thinking of Mickey Mouse. Moreover, of how to make a convincing Mickey in their sketchbook.

But Mickey Mouse isn't real. Yet we can think of him no problem. So surely to think of something is *not* equivalent to standing in causal relation to it?

That claim is the starting point of my answer to the question, "What is it to think of something?" It's a possibility built into in our everyday practice of ascribing thoughts that Mickey Mouse is something people can think of, along with unicorns, satyrs, and scientific postulates (like phlogiston) that, in the end, turn out not to exist.

In fact, how we actually talk, everyday, about things and thoughts, is not just the starting point of the essay. It's the 'litmus test' of my answer. If we ask, "What is it to think of something?", and this question makes sense, then there's already a practice in place for ascribing people thoughts

of things. We're not dreaming up such a practice from scratch. We can't just draw up any account of a practice consistent simply with beliefs we'd *prefer* to keep or endorse, and call that an account of thinking. The practice is already there. To ask, "What is it to think of something?" is to ask how this practice works and what makes the practice so much as possible. Any answer must comply with how this practice works, rather than undermine it from 'inside'.

This is unabashedly in the spirit of Ludwig Wittgenstein, who writes in *Philosophical Investigation*s,

> When philosophers use a word – "knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition", "name", and try to grasp the essence of the thing, once must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language in which is its original home?—
>
> What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. (PI, §116)

This might seem odd, though. Because it now looks like much of the work I'm inviting you to read will be me describing how we talk appropriately using terms like "think", "thoughts" and "things thought of" day to day. But if we're all *already* familiar with the practice – as we surely must be, if we're to even understand the question, "What is it to think of something?" right? – then don't we already know all there is to be said about *it*? And if, being such expert practitioners ourselves, we're yet unclear what it involves to think of something, then surely an adequate answer to the question must take us *beyond* describing how we talk appropriately to investigating something else? "To thoughts and thinkings *themselves*," we might suggest.

But before we run off down that road, consider another question: Who's asking, "What is it to think of something?" Who's actually puzzled here? I'm not speaking rhetorically; I'm not saying, "No one's puzzled after all! Job done before we started!" I'm asking you to think, *why* might someone be puzzled? In what context might we wonder, "How on earth is thinking possible? What must it involve?"

This essay's focused on a particular case of puzzlement. It emerges when we use the picture of a relation between two physical things – stood together in a single space – as a picture of what the thinking-act is. Because, as I'll try to show you, the fact that we do know *how* to ascribe each other thoughts, and are more than equipped to teach our children how to ascribe thoughts of this or that to other people (like ourselves), doesn't mean that we have an explicit awareness of all the skills involved. It's because we aren't fully aware of what we're capable of, of what we do, of what we 'know' – in short, because we lack sufficient self-knowledge – that we're tempted to try and think of thoughts and thinkers on the model of things they're not.

When we step into 'philosophy mode', we try and say something that we think was hidden behind the clutter of our ordinary, mundane concepts. Our ordinary talk is approached merely as a clue to what lies behind it, the 'thing itself'. We construct models and theories that seem to offer profound and new, shocking and intriguing visions of thought and the mind unconstrained the habits of our everyday speech about thoughts, but if these megaliths are – at their base – built on ripping a word (or several hundred woven together in practices of talking) out of its everyday home, they can hardly claim to be cast light on the original habitat:

> Where does our investigation get its importance from, since it seems only to destroy everything interesting, that is, all that is great and important? (As it were all the buildings, leaving behind

> only bits of stone and rubble). What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stood. (PI, §118)

That ground isn't a further theory. It's within our actual practices among each other, in concrete times and places, that our words mean what they do. We don't choose these meanings, we discover them by living a certain way. Likewise, if we are to find new ways of using words, this will not be through plucking meanings out of thin air. We will find them only through the slow, and often difficult, work of finding our feet in novel concrete situations, in which words begin to sound and stretch differently than older forms of living had allowed. In other words, meaning is *discovered*. It's hard won by finding ways to be in new environments. Trying to throw off the environments in which *meanings* have their home, reaching for fresh meanings 'of our choice', will only result in words without a leg (or rather a ground) to stand on:

> The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense and bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language. These bumps make us see the value of the discovery. (PI, §119)

The case of puzzlement I address in this essay arises from a thinking of *thinking* as a physical-causal relation. This, I argue, just doesn't make sense. But it'll take a lot of work to shake off the idea that it *ought* to, and that we can't understand what the capacity for thinking implies or presupposes without postulating physical or quasi-physical means by which the 'thinking relation' is achieved.

When I was a teenager at school, a teacher told our class, "Bees shouldn't be able to fly." This seemed weird. Bees are able to fly, obviously, so what could he mean in saying they shouldn't? It turned out he meant the following: There is a model of the mechanics of flight, according to which an object – if it's to fly – must have certain features. But bees, apparently, didn't have these features. So the people who came up with the theory were confused as to where they had gone wrong in constructing it. Which part of the model was mistaken? What model should be offered instead?

It's tempting to think that, if one model of thinking is wrong or misleading, then we need merely to determine a better model, in the same sort of way one works out a 'mechanics' for physical processes like flying. But I'm not even proposing like that either. My claim in this essay is not that we need a better *theory* of what thinking is, where theories are the kind of thing one tests and corroborates by empirical experiment. The essay's not an investigation into the mechanics of the brain or the body to understand where the 'thinking valves' or 'software' is, as though the notions of a 'thinking valve' or 'thinking software' were intrinsic to our practice of ascribing each other thoughts of things. Children know how to ascribe and evaluate thoughts, can determine who's thinking of what and in what way, can understand what it is to think without knowing anything about the brain as such.

We should really compare "What is it to think of something?" with a question like "What is it to fly?" We know what it is to fly, simply in having mastered the concept of flying. It's quite another question to ask, "What are the mechanics of those entities that have the physical capacity for flight (leaving aside the question of how, e.g. they learn to, if 'learn' they can)?" To answer that question about capacity, it's not sufficient to know what *flying* is; to know what

follows conceptually from the fact that something flies, or is a line of flight, and to know how to discriminate flying from non-flying. One has to investigate, instead, what causal processes are conducive to or inhibit a particular sort of entity's physical capacity for flight (leaving questions of motivation, ability to learn, etc. to the side).

We already know how to ascribe each other thoughts, and, for many kinds of subject matter, how to evaluate whether what we think of things is right or wrong. We're already masters of the concept <thought>. It's an extremely interesting (and very difficult) question, what can go wrong in the human brain or body that interferes with our capacity for thinking. But I am not asking here what the brain or body is like in anatomical detail for someone who can *think without difficulty* (no memory problems, inability to draw inferences, blindness to certain objects, etc.) I'm asking what perhaps looks, on the surface, like a very uninteresting and perhaps not very difficult question: What is our very concept of thought? If something is thought of, what does and doesn't make sense to infer from this?

But it turns out not to be very simple after all. Because it seems, through much of Western history at the least, that we could not help ourselves but try and think of questions about what our concepts are as being, rather, questions about how certain physical processes are enabled or constrained.

In the first two chapters we'll see how tempting it has been to treat the conceptual question, "What is it to think of something?" as though it were actually one of mechanics. As though there was a phenomenon hidden behind the surface of thinking people, like there's a phenomenon of brain activity hidden behind beneath the surface of one's skull. How tempting it has been to essentially to think of *ourselves* not as thinkers, thinking – with all that this implies, given what it is to correctly ascribe a thought, report to another what one's thinking, teach children how to think of this or that, to determine how something presents to a thinker in their thought (e.g. simply as the post-man or as the murderer he is) – but as Something Else, on the model of mere physical stuff.

The Something Else, on such models that arise, is a sort of thing *called* a "thinker" but which doesn't have the features we ascribe in everyday language to thinkers. The Something Else is really a sort of non-thinking substance that has a string come out and latch on to another substance, and this latching on is called the Something Else's "thinking" of this latched-onto substance. What is called 'thinking of something', when it comes to this Something Else, is really just a physical or quasi-physical interaction with another entity. This model leaves no room for the idea of thinking of a non-existent thing.

The task of this essay is to try and wean ourselves off from this model alone, to try and remind ourselves of facts about thinking as we use that term in everyday life which the model neglects or obscures. And it's all I can say, ahead of diving in to my arguments, that a sense of puzzlement about thought – the feeling that, really, there *must* be some sort of problem if we're going to say people can think of *non-existent things*, for example – is very hard to shake. Self-knowledge, for me at least, has proved itself slippery and elusive.

The 'pay-off' of this enterprise, though, is not simply to put into words our knowledge of what thinking is. Describing the task like that would be to miss its point. The *Self*-Knowledge we

arrive at 'flips' a deeply prevalent picture we have of reality and *our place in it*, on the widest possible scope of 'reality'. If thought of something is just a sort of physical relation between two things, then we thinkers are just 'bits' among other bits of the existent world. But what unfolds in the text ahead is the idea, propounded by Husserl (in the wake of Kant before him), that the mind is essentially tied up with world. There is nothing that is not essentially knowable to thought, whether what's to be known is existent or purely imaginary. Our own subjectivity is the very condition of our having objective knowledge of the world *as it is in itself*.

This isn't to claim that everything is "really just in our mind", then. A most basic grasp of the concept <existence> will tell us that what is 'just in the mind' is not really existent. What exists is what can have being as the thing (for instance) that it is even if no-one happens to be thinking about it. Again: the actual practices of talking about things, thoughts, mind, existence, non-existence, subjectivity, objectivity that any question about such topics must presuppose are those same practices which set the 'standards', as it were, for what it does and doesn't make sense to say about them. I'm not trying to conjure up my own standards out of thin air, and certainly not to fit my own agenda.

This leads me, inevitably, into questions of what it is simply to have anything in mind, whether that be merely in thought or also in perception. This would class the book as a 'study in the intentionality of mind', in the vocabulary of Western philosophers.

*

The structure of this essay is single, continuous exploration of what it is to think of something. This means, unfortunately, that the chapters build up on each other in order. I would like to have written a volume where the Reader could skip to whichever chapter they liked, and be able to make sense of what they find without reference to the whole. But my effort at this has failed. So, instead, I've tried to structure the argument so as to be accessible to someone with no philosophical background at all. If I've succeeded, you should be able to start at the beginning and work your way through to the end, and leave with a sense of the whole topic and (fingers crossed) a coherent take on it.

I introduce and develop some technical terms as I go, particularly around Chapters 4 and 5. These are always to draw into focus distinctions for which we don't have words, but to which – I believe – we are sensitive to in our everyday practices with words. Knowing ourselves better doesn't leave these everyday practices *merely* as they are, but – ideally – enriches them so as to speak to a broader, deeper range of concerns emerging from, and finding a ready home in, our concrete life with things, people, world and language. Nothing in our practices is lost, but more of it becomes explicit. Reflecting on ourselves, we 'grow', and this is reflected in the words we find to express ourselves *to* ourselves and one another. Again, we *discover* meanings as and through discovering new contexts in which to speak and make sense of things.

Before we start then: here's a brief overview of the essay's shape.

Chapter 1 introduces the model of thinkers and what they think of that causes us so much bother, I'll suggest; the picture according to which thinkers are just things among the things they think of. I call this 'the Pit'. The puzzle for this picture is how to accommodate non-existent

objects of thought. Looking back to some Ancient Western incarnations of this model – particularly to the Stoics and Plato – I begin laying a road out of this picture toward what I've been calling Self-Knowledge. I find promise in the work of Aristotle and St Augustine, who – in different ways – emphasise the significance of a first-personal perspective when trying to make sense of thought in connection to reality.

Each philosopher brings to bear their own 'pictures' of what we do when we 'take things' in mind. But these needn't be pernicious. To the contrary: pictures and models can be incredibly helpful. The danger is when we take a particular picture, helpful in one sort of context, as 'scripture', and begin denying the existence of any phenomena the picture doesn't tackle or illuminate. As Wittgenstein puts it, a picture is always in danger of holding us "captive" (PI, §115). Even a simile which we become too comfortable in hearing, in thinking with without a second thought, can produce a "false appearance":

> "But *this* isn't how it is!"—we say. "Yet *this* is how it has to *be*!" (PI, §112)

("But this isn't how bees fly!" "–Yet *this* is how things are *supposed* to fly!")

I look into the past of philosophy not to wag my finger at minds far brighter than mine, but to draw pictorial inspiration for recalling and re-envisioning our everyday practices with words.

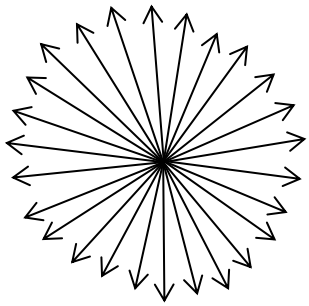
Chapter 2 presses further the idea that a first-person perspective helps make sense of non-existents being objective objects for cognition and experience. There is a kind of infallibility about one's own thought that can be expressed first-personally, and I suggest this capacity entails a realm of non-existent objects integral to all and every act of thought at all. In other words: that if there's a problem about non-existents for thought, it's a problem for thought as a whole! This line of thought arises from engaging St Augustine's modern 'successor', in a sense, Edmund Husserl.

It's here I begin pressing the question whether there are not different senses of 'object of thought' in our everyday practices. We seem, I argue, to be infallible precisely about this 'integral to all thought' realm of non-existents, while fallible about existent things. It seems that it's *insofar* as one has infallible thoughts of non-existents that one has fallible thoughts of the existent and objective world. In order to 'access' the things that exist, we must have 'access' to things that don't! Only, putting it in physical-spatial terms like this ("accessing") only raises the question, "But how do we get such access?" Whereas if we ask instead, "What can we *do* without fault or possibility of error?", this picture of access can be dropped as a helpful model of intentionality.

This raises the question whether the very word "object" in "object of thought" is potentially misleading. Objects, on one way of talking, are 'over there' while we're 'over here' and separate from them. Whence one temptation to talk about thought more generally using spatial terms. This is an issue raised made in the neglected work of Elizabeth Anscombe. So Chapter 3 is given chiefly to a close reading of her paper, "The Intentionality of Sensation". Anscombe has an incredibly sharp ear for uses of everyday words, and draws attention to the ways in which we learn the idea of an 'object of thought' through a particular practice with questions and answers. She draws an analogy between this practice, on my reading, and the ways in which children learn grammatical concepts like "the direct object of a sentence".

This is really a turning point in the essay. From Anscombe I develop the idea that some so-called "objects" aren't really things, entities, at all. The intricacies of how we actually use certain terms in everyday language suggests that some special particulars are really more like the vanishing point on a horizon, or the non-extensional intersection of multiple lines. The lines would represent the names or descriptions of various particulars that don't equate to the special particular itself. This special particular can be individuated only by *what it makes sense to say when asked a certain question*. It has no features of its own, like bees have wings, honey has viscosity, or hills have geographical location, that can be described without reference to a question.

In other words: There's no 'thing' to draw at the intersection of the lines. Rather, we can 'pivot' from the different particulars' descriptions we give in answer, attending not to these particulars in themselves but looking 'backward' to the question, and point at "that 'one' which all of these different things are". This 'one' is no more than "that 'one' which is given by all these different answers to this question". It doesn't collapse into the different *things* named by the different answers. From this 'one', rather, we can then pivot back again to think of and describe the many different things it 'is'. In the following image, such things lie at the ends of the arrows:



So: If asked, "What are you thinking of?", there's at least one everyday practice in which we can correctly reply by naming or describing different particulars. These are all distinct from each other. But insofar as we give any of these answers, we count as 'giving' one special sort of individual in answer to the question. On one such practice, this individual is what we can naturally call "an object of thought". Talking of thoughts and what they're of, I then argue, involves 'pivoting' between different uses of the phrases and names we give when asked, "What are you thinking of?", sometimes to refer to these special particulars, question-things, sometimes to plain 'things', and sometimes to individuals that are 'nestings' if you like of multiple question-things and normal entities.

This is a tricky thought to hold in mind. It further shifts our way of thinking about intentionality of mind from talk of 'things' separate from us to practices in language with questions and answers. It begins to seem not simply that we must attend to how we talk day to day in order to grasp the concept of <thought> and <objects of thought>. Deeper than that: intentionality is constituted in, arises in, our capacity to share in practices with words together.

Chapters 4-6 take this Anscombe-inspired concept of a 'question-thing', together with Husserl's insights, and use them to resolve in detail a sequence of puzzles collected through Chapters 1-3 about non-existents in thought. So the account in this essay may be called 'Husserlian-

Anscombian', even if there are divergences from what Husserl and Anscombe themselves would endorse. The sequence of puzzles include ones about how first-person infallibility connects to our obvious fallibility about the world we share; about how we can share the very same object of thought even though one of us is infallible about it while the other isn't; about how facts about non-existents come to 'be', how the things it makes sense to say they are acquire their features; about how a purely imaginary tree, for example, can be said correctly both to have a determinate number of leaves, and a totally indeterminate number at the same time; about how first-personal thought is connected at root to our capacity to ascribe things existence; about how the things we think of can be both independent of and, in another sense, dependent on our particular activities of thought, perception and experience; about what we ourselves, considered as subjects of thought, really 'are' (answer: like objects of thought as such, subjects of thought as such aren't actually 'things' at all.)

Finally, the Concluding chapter presents a short case-study of how the concepts I clarify and develop from these puzzles join up together in practice. This doubles as a summary of my claims in the essay as whole. So you could, if you like, read this ahead of Chapter 1 for a more detailed overview of what's concluded through Chapters 4-6. Chapter 1 begins from scratch, and doesn't presume familiarity even with this introduction.

1

Into the Pit

Things, Strings, and 'Objects of Thought'

In this chapter I'll introduce a puzzle about the intentionality of mind (of what it is, for example, to think of things). The puzzle concerns how we can think of non-existents.

§1.1 introduces a line of thinking according to which this really is a puzzle, which models thinker and thought of as though they were mutually independent physical things in a shared space. I call this the 'Pit' picture of intentionality. Something has gone wrong in this line of thinking, but it's not necessarily obvious how to disentangle ourselves from it. §§1.2-1.3 look back to Stoic and Platonic models of intentionality (of thought as arrows that 'hit' a target, and of the mind as wax that receives the impression of things in reality). This is to help get a better sense of what may have gone wrong in the line of reasoning, and why it nonetheless may be intuitive and attractive.

§1.4 turns to Aristotle for help in disentangling, who suggests a beautiful 'flip' of the wax model. This essay builds upon his re-invention of that picture to dissolve the puzzle of how we think of what's non-existent (and so not 'there' to leave a physical impression on our waxy minds). Rather than think of non-existents simply in terms of the 'things' they are (e.g. unicorns), we may think instead of what activities and behaviours in context mark a person as thinking of a unicorn.

§1.5 finds that the contrast between the two versions of the wax model brings out that Stoics, Plato, and the Pit picture reflect a kind of alienation from recognizing oneself as a *subject* rather than just an object. Even though first-personal concerns and thoughts are expressed in these pictures, they are in some sense 'repressed'. It's as though they try to approach thought in merely third-personal terms, but for reasons one could only give in first-personal terms. But this raises further puzzles, then, about what the first-person is and how first-personal thought relates, exactly, to individuating, knowing, and ascribing existence or non-existence to what one thinks of (§1.6)

§1.7-8 turn to an inheritor of Aristotle, St Augustine, and his struggle to grasp how the flow of his own thinking of things is connected to time: past, present and future. He tries to model time and temporal experience on a spatial picture, much as the Pit does experience in general. But the character of his reflections, which are *self-scrutinies* toward better self-knowledge, indicates further how attending to the subjectivity of thought may free us from the grip of Pit-ish, spatializing, self-erasing models of mind.

1.1 Stuck

Lucy's heard grown-ups talk of "peculiar objects at the dig".

"What are 'peculiar-objects'?" she asks.

"Weird things," they answer.

It makes sense to give her physical things as examples. The sorts you could unearth. "This spade's an object, distinct from that peculiar relic. The spade can dent the relic, the relic can chip the spade. But what the relic *is* we don't get. It's weird – *peculiar*."

Suppose you were to represent to Lucy the layout of the place; the positions of a burial mound and its contents. An obvious strategy is to draw shapes on paper; each shape standing for a different artefact, ditch, tree. If we want to show Lucy things in three dimensions – "How far down, and how far left, was the sword from the skull?" – we could swap flat shapes for things. Model the artefacts with those plastic balls, for instance, that you find in children's play pits. The 'pit' stands for the physical world, or a particular section. Each ball for an item within. I can pick up an apple and hold it at shoulder level ("This is the skull"), and with the other hand gesture to a hob near our feet ("That's the sword, from where you're standing if you're in the tent entrance, looking out.")

I'll call this approach 'the Pit' for short. The basic idea is to show things (or represent them) in their spatio-temporal relations.

By lights of the Pit, objects needn't cease being the individuals they are simply by being re-arranged in shared space (vs. being cut into segments, melted down, merged). Suppose this skull was above that sword, but now the sword's above the skull. Or suppose this apple was resting on that hob, but now the hob is balanced on top of the apple. None of these objects are any less themselves for that. They're 'merely' in new relations.

The Pit approach is useful for our aim with Lucy. It's so obvious, too, you might ask why I'd bother to recount it. The thing is, it's a little too obvious. So much so that it suggests itself without much thought, on our part, to a further role: to modelling thinkers in connection not with things as 'things', but as objects *of thought*. And this seems to lead us into trouble.

Suppose Lucy's told a story about some miser, King Dolt. She hears that "the sole object of King Dolt's thoughts was gold, and gold the only object of his love. So it was his gold, and not his children, that the King held close on his deathbed." She asks, "What's an object *of thought*?"

Are these different from physical objects *per se*? Like spades and relics? How should we answer her?

"—If, at noon, you're thinking of Nan, she counts as an object of your thought then. So we can call her 'an object of Lucy's thought at noon'."

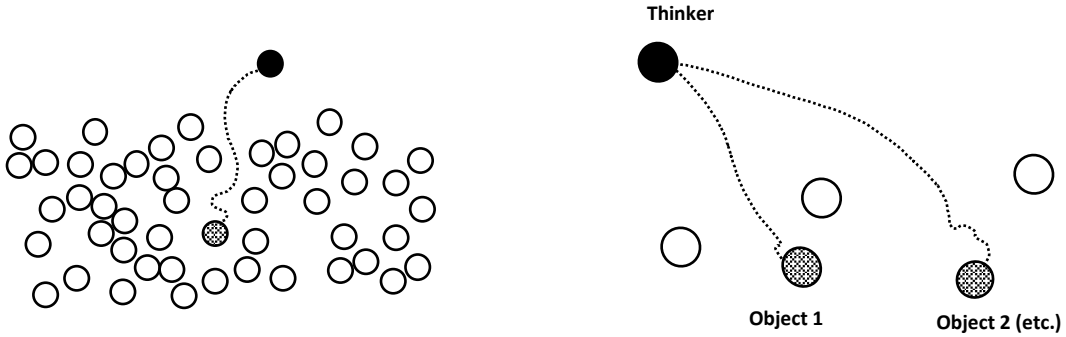
"So they're just like other objects? Or 'peculiar'?"

"Some are ordinary", we may want to say, "but not all". Not because some things lack spatiotemporal extension (some do – numbers, promises, laws of nature, propositions). Instead: because some objects of thought aren't real. King Dolt for instance.

The thinker, Lucy, is human. Humans have mass, weight, location. So suppose we model thinkers as things in the pit with what they think of. How, then, shall we picture their 'relations' of thinking to other objects of thought? What image comes 'naturally' to mind?

"Why not draw 'strings', thrown out like arms or fishing-lines, from thinkers to the things they think of?"

– Okay:



Lucy's thinking of the King doesn't impact where the King is. Nor his density, shape, age. The fishing-line, as it were, doesn't physically change the individual 'in itself'. Similarly, the apple didn't affect the hob's 'nature' by being in new relations to it. Lucy is the subject of a thought of Dolt; Dolt the object. "And Lucy and Dolt are surely no less themselves for that."

"But," a new voice complains, "King Dolt doesn't exist. So there's no King-thing for the Lucy-thing to fish-hook. No King to affect or be affected by Lucy physically in principle, let alone to think of. So, what can be meant by 'King Dolt has children', or 'King Dolt isn't real'? What looked like an object's proper name, 'King Dolt', really names nothing. What's being spoken of and claimed to have kids? Nothing, surely."

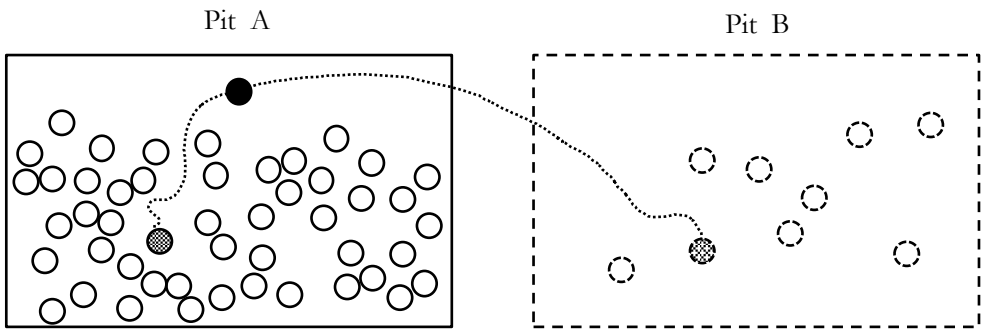
What's gone wrong here? There seems a pull toward self-contradiction. That Dolt is something we think of, but that, since Dolt's non-existent, there *is* no Dolt, and therefore *nothing* we think of.

Yet it makes sense to ask if an individual, X, (whom we don't realize is fictional) is real or not. "Is Sherlock Holmes an historical figure or just made-up?" – That's a coherent question. It's not nonsense to assert that Holmes really exists (merely a false claim); nor that he's fictional (a true one). To talk of a thing is not to presuppose its existence, for we can say it's a thing merely of imagination or fiction or hallucination. Why should it seem otherwise?

Perhaps the error was in supposing that, in order to stand as subject to object, two individuals must be spatiotemporally related.

"—But how could we deny that requirement *for Dolt*? Both the King and Lucy are said to be humans. Humans are physical things that can interact. Even if separated by time, earlier humans can have a causal effect on the lives and bodies of later ones."

"All right… What if we picture non-existents in a separate pit from the real folk that think of them? On this model, individuals can't interact across pits. Only one pit represents the Real World (Pit A). The other stands for a 'non-space', where all the non-real things are (Pit B)."



"—That's no use. It's their non-reality that's the problem. How can a real thing 'catch hold' of a non-real thing in thought? How does the fish hook *hook*? And what can it mean to say there are non-existent objects 'somewhere' in a non-space?"

"But don't we *create* non-existent things? When we make-up stories?"

"—People *say* we do, but they can't mean it literally. Or else they're confused. *Think*: You can't create or individuate 'nothings'. If Lucy can't shake hands with King Dolt, it's because he hasn't any. 'He' hasn't properties at all."

Two ideas there. First, that if so-called non-existent objects can be individuated from other objects, existent or otherwise, then they're hardly 'nothing'. But, second, if they don't exist, then they are nothing. "Therefore," concludes the objector, "if there can't be anything non-existent to individuate or name, we've a choice. Either (i) quit denying King Dolt's existence, or (ii) reject talk of non-existent individuals as nonsense. Clearly we should take option (ii)."

But non-existent things *are* thought of.

I'm not saying they exist just as my hand does, here. I'm saying: It's both a meaningful and true assertion that J.M. is thinking (as he writes this) of the man Holmes, who doesn't exist, and of whom J.M.'s thinking. That it's also meaningful and true to say: "We individuate Holmes from other non-existents like King Dolt, the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow, Mrs Coulter, the Faerie Queene, etc. ('Which were you thinking of just then?' '—That one with the golden monkey, in *His Dark Materials*.')" I'm not going to start this investigation by dismissing this statement as meaningless, or as false, just because it's inconvenient by light of a *picture* I feel attached to; a picture of the phenomenon – a practice in language, of ascribing thoughts – that's to be understood. That phenomenon's to be taken for granted, not thrown out! Pictures can help us to reckon with what we, ourselves, get up to in language, but they can also tempt us to ignore or deny aspects of what they're supposed to model.

The objection we're up against boils down to: "If the King isn't real, he's not really a thing. So how could we think of him, if he's not a thing, and not there, to be thought of?" – But this confuses what does not exist for what is not to be thought of. The Pit makes this confusion near inevitable, because it models thinking of something after a physical relation between two independent *things*. This model (a picture of physical things all collected in a single space) tempts certain how-questions to which we might then expect certain kinds of answer: "How do two independent things make contact with each other as subjects and objects?"; "How do two

independent things get connected in thought, as thinker and thought-of?"; "How can one be sure it's this thing one's thinking of, rather than another or nothing at all?"

"– Surely", (I'd then want to say), "by way of some *interaction* or *encounter* between things directly. One that's perceptible and can be verified." So we look about for what such interactions might be. How the thinker with their line (or magical sort of arm) takes aim and grabs hold of a something.

But there's the problem. Physical things create other physical things by taking and re-purposing physical stuff from the environment. Fictional objects, on this picture, look impossible. "What are they made of from the *author's* environment? Nothing. Yet they're supposedly 'out there' for authors' or readers' thoughts to latch on to..."

Either the author doesn't make the object but discovers it ("How?") or the author does create it ("How?") Neither option seems possible, but – thinking with, and according to the logic of, the Pit – one of them would have to be if we were able to talk of non-existents and fictional things. So it could seem like we face a dilemma. Like we have, after all, to abandon our way of speaking about thoughts and thinkers.

1.2 Breath-Cones, Soul-Grips, Arrows, and Wax

The imagery of fishing-lines or magical arms facilitating thought has echoes through the history of thought about thought. I'll explore some of these echoes here and in Chapter 2. Not to intervene in a scholarly debate about *Ancient* texts (for which I'm woefully unqualified).[1] Instead, to think 'with' their images and arguments toward a solution of our problem, which must be worked out in observing ourselves, using the language of thought and (non-)existence, directly.

The aim is really two-fold. First, to sensitize ourselves to Pit-ish tropes at work in various guises inherited by thinkers today (a tactic of resistance!) Second, to gather the seeds of alternative models from which to grow a useful 'imaginary' of our own. This will be a 'Forest' cornucopia, set to sprout in Chapter 5.

Ground-breaking work on the history of the concept of intentionality has been undertaken in recent years by Victor Caston, particularly on the Stoics' philosophy of mind, which will concern us here. Caston reminds us that, already in Homer, the image of sending one's thoughts like darts or even gods through space was animate; Longinus, similarly, appeals to the idea of a 'noetic-ray' from mind out into the cosmos and perhaps beyond to something like Pit-B:

> [For Homer] thought is like something winged [*Odyssey* 7.36], "darting" through the universe to far away places whenever the thinker calls them to mind, as swiftly as the goddess Hera flies [*Illiad* 15.80-83]. (Caston 1998:260)

[1] It's beyond the scope of this essay to ask how far these forebears are the roots of a temptation in our contemporary (and seemingly everyday) thought, rather than a symptom of a human thinking from a variety of traditions.

> [Longinus:] Not even the entire cosmos suffices for the reach of human reflection and thinking, since our thoughts frequently pass **beyond the boundaries of its periphery as well** (*On the Sublime* 35.3; cit. trans. Caston 1998:260)

And while I don't wish to assume Homer's image is a theory, exactly, it's not hard to see how it could generate one or several. "On such theories," Caston notes,

> we can think about objects which are absent from our immediate environment, **provided we are able to reach out and touch them with our thoughts**. (Caston 1998:260)

The Stoic theory of the *pneuma* is a striking case in point. The Stoics postulate a quite literal cord of gas in echo to our fishing-line. Spooling hot from out each eye-ball, such cords connect subjects of perception to bodies beyond. This *pneuma* (literally 'breath') is held to stretch

> towards the object [of imminent sight], becoming taut throughout its length; and by jabbing and piercing through the pupil, transmit this tension to the intervening air, shaping it into a cone with the object at the base. It is in virtue of this focused tensing of the air that information about the object [is] transmitted back to the eye and so to the governing faculty [of sight]. (Caston 2001:44)

Saint Augustine of Hippo will later tweak this theory, positing a now immaterial cord, a spiritual substance of the human soul, more hand-like than the Stoics', "slipping out into the world of [neighbouring] bodies, hanging around in the air, and in general poking around" (Caston 2001:44).

The reasoning behind all three versions seems intuitive: objects are over *there*, and we're over *here*. Thinking of an object is to stand in some relation to it, one thing (oneself) to another thing (itself). So some sort of bridging or connective device is necessary when we think of things not ourselves. Moreover, to have something 'in' thought is surely (we might think) to somehow take the thing 'inside' us too, so the bridging must also be a kind of conduit for the thing 'without' to – translate? copy? 'get'? – itself 'within'.

And in Plato, even, the image of darts succeeding or failing to 'make contact' with something Other, is present in the image of archers loosing arrows. In *Theaetetus* Socrates describes the error of mistaking something seen for something it's not. In this particular case, he has in mind when, squinting into the distance, we mistake a stranger for someone we know. The error here, he seems to think, is like pinning the wrong name-tag to the stranger's breast-pocket. One has a label already – a concept of one's friend, say, in mind – but 'applies' it to the wrong target. It's "like [with] people who put their shoes on the wrong feet," he says, or "like a bad archer" who "shoots wide of the mark and misses" (*Theaetetus* 193c-194b)[2]. (I imagine labels streaming out among a flock of arrow-feathers.)

This may seem a little less Pit-like. "At least we're not physically bridged to the target", one might think. But how do we acquire this label in the first-place? Successful contact on a previous occasion, he explains. And not simply the throwing of prior arrows – it's a direct one-to-one between our minds and things beyond it. So we're treated to a further image of physical-encounter, 'under-pinning' the others: of signet rings pressed into wax. An 'extension', in one sense, of the Pit.

[2] I use John McDowell's 1973 translation.

"[Let] me ask you to suppose, for the sake of argument," says Socrates,

> that there's an imprint-receiving piece of wax in our minds… And let's say it's the gift of Memory, the mother of the Muses; and that if there's anything we want to remember, among the things we see, hear… we hold it under the perceptions [and] imprint them on it, as if we were taking the impressions of signet rings. Whatever is imprinted, we remember and know, and as long as its image is present; but whatever is smudged out or proves unable to be printed, we've forgotten and don't know. (*Theaetetus* 191c-f)

These impressions are the 'labels' one can mis-match to things we meet. What these impressions are 'of', intentionally-speaking, are not just the acts of perception but the things grabbed hold of in those acts. Otherwise the impressions couldn't work like 'labels' for recognizing the same sorts of object, in different instantiations, grasped in later perceptions.

As the Pit is a space, so the Wax-Impression model can be read as mapping the surface and interior of some of that space's contents. Some things in the Pit, called "subjects of thought" impress themselves with things, then fold-up and retain those impressions inside while exposing a fresh exterior surface for impressions by more things in turn. One might re-imagine the subsequent arrows of Plato's other image, then, like rubber-plungers launched through air: each nozzle shaped to its originating bulls-eye.

So what's the story about *non*-existents on these 'Homeric' theories? How are they 'figured' as objects of thought? Surely the Stoics' *pneuma* (or Augustine's spiritual-ether) can't 'cone' or 'poke at' things not there? And how to take Plato's wax image in cases where the signet-rings 'aren't real'; when there's nothing to leave a trace, therefore nothing to 'fit' a mould to?

Now, Augustine will respond by blending a version of the Platonic wax and Stoic soul-grip models together. Non-existent objects of thought are akin to images, he says, constructed (as it were) from bits and pieces of moulds resulting from perception in memory.[3] In other words, real objects leave 'impressions' on the mind much like pictures (the signet-ring analogy). Then the immaterial soul-substance constructs fresh pictures from these of un-real things (centaurs, satyrs and the like) to which the soul then might reach and prod (in his language, '*intend*' – literally, 'throw itself') (see *De Genesi ad litteram* 11.10.17, 12.20.42-21.44; cf. Caston 2001:39).

But the difficulty of this model – at least, as it's crudely characterized like that – is this: when I think of a centaur, it's surely a *centaur* I think of, not an image (or 'impression') of one. Does he intend to deny this? Or is there a yet further story to be told about behaving 'as if' one's soul-stuff laid grip on a thing for thought?

The early Stoics, themselves, certainly speak of objects solely 'immanent' to thought (i.e. having no existence beyond it) ambiguously between things and images of things. Seneca tells how, according to them, "centaurs, giants, or anything else[,] having been **made up** by a false thought", such that each object "takes on an appearance, even though it does not have reality" (*Epistulae* 58.15; cf. Sextus Empiricus' *Adversus Mathematicos,* 9.49; cit. trans. Caston 2001:26-7). Does this mean that such objects are merely equal to appearances as of such things? Then the difficulty of conflating object with its images might re-emerge. Or is it truly the *objects* that are

[3] For an excellent recent study of this account, see Nawar 2021.

'made', and these "appear" strictly in the sense of presenting themselves to oneself in thought (i.e. they 'appear' just in the sense that one thinks of them)? In support of the second reading, Plutarch does tell us that, for the Stoics, there are "some **things** which are not"; i.e. some *things* which aren't real (*De communibus notitiis adversus Stoicos* 1073 d–e; cit. trans. Caston 1991:151)...

…But then, what sort of a 'thing' is an object that's not real?

1.3 Things, Their Concepts, and Their Kinds

The route of 'mere appearance, but not reality' to handle non-existents proves very tempting nonetheless. According to Diogenes Laertius, the Stoics Zeno and Cleanthes bring the language of mere appearance to the question of what a *concept* is, rather than simply a non-existent thing. But from the way Caston presents both thinkers, there seems to be some muddle on their part between concepts and things to which concepts apply. And again, I suspect a Pit-ish disposition is to blame. We'll focus here on Zeno.

Diogenes writes,

> A concept [according to Zeno and Cleanthes] is an **apparition of thinking**, which is neither something existent nor a qualified thing; but **it is as if** it were something existent and **as if** it were a qualified thing as for example an image of a horse occurs even when none is present. **(***Diogenes Laertius* 7.61; cit. trans. Caston 1999:169)

If we think a moment on what it makes sense to say of concepts, isn't this a bit odd? A concept is something you learn, isn't it? Yet you don't 'learn' horses, you learn *from* and *about* them. The concept of a horse surely hasn't legs, either – real or merely apparent. We acquire the concept <horse> in part by acquiring the ability to answer questions right about horses, in part by the ability to point out horses in fields (or on the telly); to retrieve the toy-horse as opposed to the toy-bear when asked to, etc. But these abilities aren't the horse (or a horse's). And when applying the concept <horse> to something, it does not necessarily seem to us that the something's existent as opposed to imaginary, does it? Recall 'watching' the horse *in the story* of the film *The Never-Ending Story*. Did you think you were watching a documentary? Finally, a non-existent centaur isn't a non-existent concept, so it seems not to solve the puzzle of non-existents. (Again, I think of a *centaur*, not <centaur>).

Why make this conflation of concept and the thing(s) it applies to? Well, perhaps Zeno doesn't mean what we do by 'concept', but a special sort of individual that doesn't figure in our theories of thought or understanding today. But as Diogenes goes on, it seems it really is concepts Zeno means to talk of, and in a way that muddles concepts and things with *kinds* in turn. Because what puzzles Zeno in the first instance it seems are really 'indeterminate objects' which he thinks we've in mind when speaking with sentences like these:

(1) Man has two legs and two arms.
(2) It is not the case that man is Greek.
(3) Unlike man, the horse has a mane and hooves.

Acquiring the concept <man>, we might say, involves learning the truth of claims like (1). But what is an 'indeterminate' object according to Zeno in such contexts? A 'generic' man, or 'generic' horse, explains Caston:

> To think of man generically—or as the Stoics also seem willing to say, of 'the generic man', is not to think of an average man so much as an arbitrary man: it is a way of focusing on all and only those characteristics that everyman has, in contrast with average features, such as having 2.5 children, which might not be possessed by any man. More precisely, anything that can truly be said of every individual man will also be true of the generic man, but anything that fails to hold of even one will not. (Caston 1999:188)

Hence claim (2): since some men are Greek, but not all, sentence (2) expresses simply the rejection of 'Man is Greek', rather than the affirmative claim that 'Man is (precisely) *not* Greek' (Caston 1999:188-9). On Caston's reconstruction, then, Zeno's concern is with objects of thought that may lack various features an existent particular must have. Every actual man has a determinate number of hairs, but no determinate number is ascribable to the *Generic* Man. These are special objects acquaintance with which is necessary to have concepts of things. Further, concepts, here, are *identified* with such peculiarly 'incomplete' objects:

> Much like Seneca's Stoics [concerned with centaurs and giants], Zeno is simply concerned with non-existent objects of thought…. Concepts are like Macbeth's dagger. There is something which Macbeth sees, but it is neither a genuine dagger nor anything existent; it is only as if it were an existent and as if it were a dagger. To be sure, it is has some connection with being a dagger and being, say, razor-sharp—otherwise Macbeth would not be tempted to think it was a dagger. But it cannot literally instantiate these qualities, since non-existent objects cannot literally cut or pierce or, more generally, possess causal powers. (Caston 1999:171-2)

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I'm a little dubious of this description of the dagger. Caston suggests it can't 'literally' instantiate razor-sharpness. But is Macbeth's vision then merely metaphorical? Surely it's a non-existent *razor-sharp dagger*, and quite literally so. And surely Macbeth's right to think it's a dagger, and only wrong to think it's real. Perhaps Caston means only to speak here for Zeno. But, setting those issues aside for now, do (1-3) really describe *objects* at all? This question's aimed squarely at Zeno himself.

Michael Thompson, for example, points out the roles played by such sentences in actual life. Imagine the naturalist David Attenborough narrating this in a wild-life documentary:

(4) The octopus has eight tentacles and an uncanny ability to squeeze itself through the tiniest gaps.

This isn't a remark about any particular octopus – not even a 'General' or 'Average' particular (to the extent such things make sense).[4] If the majority of actual octopuses were suddenly rendered non-squishy and less than six-tentacled by a freak ecological disaster, Attenborough's claim could still be true. What's either average for an octopus, or true of every octopus, is irrelevant. Instead,

[4] We might imagine up a particular octopus to *exhibit* the average or general features of its species (cartoon versions of such exemplars are a trope of children's books and zoo exhibits round the globe). But no such individuals are described when Attenborough says (4).

(4) expresses a truth on the basis of which organisms are judged defective or not as instances of the kind *Octopus* (Thompson 2008). If an actual octopus has seven tentacles only, then – granting the truth of (4) – something is amiss with this particular animal. This kind *Octopus* is articulated using such sentences as (4) – called by many philosophers today '**generics'**, though the theories of what generic sentences express are wide-ranging.[5]

On Thompson's account, one role they can play is in providing resources for evaluating instances of kinds *as* such, as we just did with Little Seven Legs. This is one ingredient in *one* 'neo-Aristotelian' account of good action, among others: to be a virtuous particular organism is to comply with one's life-form (or 'species'), such that a science of virtue makes essential reference to biological definitions.[6] But on this use generics don't describe particular instances themselves.

If Caston's reading is right, and embracing Thompson's claim about this kind-evaluative use of generics (without committing to any particular Aristotelianism beyond that), then Zeno seems to me not only to conflate objects of thought with concepts, but – at least in some contexts – both of these, in turn, with kinds. So that the *category* 'Man' becomes some sort of peculiar *man*, and to have a *concept* of <Man> becomes having such a peculiar *man* in mind.

Intriguingly, we're told that the later Stoic, Chrysippus, tried to counter Zeno (and, on my reading, correct for an error about kinds) as follows: The kind Man is not a *man*, he thinks, not a strange sort of non-existent object. Yet Chrysippus' own treatment of sentences like (1-4) seems to neglect the phenomenon of generic propositions, as used in species-/kind-based evaluations, in favour of 'if, then' claims. For instance, he understands a sentence like (1), "Man has two arms and two legs", as meaning, "If something is a man, then that something has two arms and two legs" (see Diogenes Laertius 7.70; Sextus Empiricus' *Adversus Mathematicos* 8.97; cf. Caston 1999:196-7). But on that interpretation (1) is clearly false. Its living counterexamples are every particular man with just one or no legs, just one or no arms.

There's a common thread through these 'Homeric' accounts, swift and inadequate though my descriptions are. Non-existent objects present for them a kind of paradox, to which the response "Perhaps they are really more like images of things than actual things" seems a live option worth considering. Something like the Pit lies at the root of their theorising on the matter. The word "something", applicable to an object of thought, a concept, or a kind, invites the idea that we're dealing with a 'thing'. But (so it's thought) this thing needs deflating in contexts where a concept is 'applied', or in which what the concept applies 'to', is *non-existent*. So – one then feels a pressure

[5] For a solid introduction and collection of theories, see Carlson and Pelletier 1995; for early accounts in the contemporary Analytic debate, see Carlson 1977, 1989 and Dahl 1975; for more recent accounts relating the phenomenon to fluid social stereotyping (vs. Thompson's natural kinds), see e.g. Leslie 2007, 2008; and for empirical studies of how we acquire the use of generics, and kind-concepts, in childhood, see Gelman 2003, 2010.

[6] For scholarly studies of Aristotelian biology and his treatment of kinds and kind-definitions, see especially Charles 2002, Gotthelf 2012, and Henry 2021. For a classic contemporary statement of 'species' oriented virtue ethics, often associated (to varying degrees of accuracy) with Thompson, see Foot 2001, discussed in detail by Hacker-Wright 2013. For salient critical responses to Foot and Thompson, see e.g. Lewens 2010, Milgram 2001, Fitzpatrick 2000, Andreou 2006 (and against the project of using Aristotelian cosmology, in ethics or otherwise, today, Williams 1995a,b, 1981, esp. chapter 2, and a recent reply in McPherson 2015.) For alternative virtue-ethical receptions of Aristotle to Foot's, see, e.g. Hursthouse 1999, 2012, and Chappell 2006, 2014.

to say – there isn't *really* a thing there after all, but only… an *appearance* of thought? Or perhaps only… an appearance as of a *thing*, in some sense or other of 'appearance'?

1.4 From Wax to Acts: Looking to Behaviour

Aristotle is sceptical of the 'reach out and grab it with your thought' idea, precisely because it can't handle non-existents. Grabbing hold of Pit-B things is (he would agree, against Longinus) impossible. In the *Physics* he goes further, in fact, and says that an unreal thing like the sphinx is actually "not anywhere at all", nor could it undergo or undertake any change, even as (we might say) it's evidently thought of:

> [T]he idea that existing things exist somewhere is universally accepted. I mean, **that which does not exist is nowhere**. Where, for example, is a goat-stag or a sphinx? (*Physics* 4.1, 208a30-31)

> [A]lthough something not pale or not good can still vary [in its states and actions] (since 'something not pale' might be a person), nonetheless something which just is not an individual thing cannot vary at all… by the same token, something which does not exist cannot be at rest [either]. [For] everything that undergoes variation is in some place or other, but **something non-existent is not in place, for then it would be somewhere**. (*Physics* 5.1, 225a25-33)[7]

Therefore, "a person," he says in *On Memory,*

> does not think of things which are large and far away by thought extending to that place, as some say vision does. For a person will think in a similar manner **even if they** [the things thought of] **do not exist** (*On Memory and Recollection* 2, 452b9-11; cit. trans. Caston 1998:260)

In other words, there is a baseline for counting as thinking of something, quite unaffected by whether what's thought of is real.

This openness to sameness accommodating existents *and* non-existents invites him, I think, to try using "object" in a way distinct from when we say, "How many objects (*'things'*) were found at the dig?" The latter talk presupposes the objects' existence in order to make sense. We have to be able to dig them up in the mud. But Aristotle's 'object of thought' does not.

It's in this context that he effectively re-purposes Plato's image of the wax. He flips it round. For while Plato begins from 'objects' *as* what we're causally related to, Aristotle starts instead from his new baseline: 'objects' as objects *of thought*, which in some sense count as *'things'* either causally related to us *or not*. If to think of something doesn't imply a physical relation between it *as a thing* and oneself *as a thing*, (the thought seems to run,) then thinking *per se* can't simply be equal to such a physical relation even in cases where what I think of, as a *thing*, does in fact causally relate to myself.

So notice, here, that an object of thought *as such* can be either an existent or a non-existent in the loose sense that it is 'had' by someone in a real act of thought or not, and so is not going to be equal to the thing it is, since the object of thought as such 'is' even if the thing it 'is' *'is' not*... But

[7] I use Robin Waterfield's 1996 translation.

I get ahead of myself. We'll return to this idea (and the weird language it seems to generate) in greater detail (and clarity!) soon.

For now, I want to focus on Aristotle's baseline. Because it seems that the question of what thinking involves one *in* may diverge from the question of whether it's 'really a thought' one has rather than just something that *looks* like a thought. This suggests a way out of the appeal to mere appearance that was attractive to our Homeric theorists.

If – let's imagine – I come to think of a particular sphinx by perceiving this sphinx in my doorway, my particular thought of her is conditional on my standing in that physical relation to her. It depends on my having my eyes opened, turned in her direction, etc. My recognizing the sphinx as she is, and my understanding our situation, involves me in acknowledging someone with whom I may have to speak, or else flee. If instead I fail to see her (my head stuck in a book), I may unwittingly enter a quite different situation: in which she passes silent, undetected, through a wardrobe in the next room. The difference between an existent and a non-existent for us wouldn't lie in the *mere thinking* of them, the reasoning might go. Instead, it would lie in what physical possibilities, among others, the thinking of them affords (therefore in what we think of them as being), and in what the (different) causal *conditions* for one's thinking of each are.

While Aristotle recognizes that perception differs from pure imagining, then, his account of thoughts *via* perception ought not, it seems, to conflate the thinking that is conditional on perception with those causal conditions, themselves, of the original perception. Not if the baseline of thinking is to be indifferent to the existence or non-existence of its objects of thought (or, more carefully, the non-existence or otherwise of the *things* which those objects of thought in some sense *are*…)

It's in the context of such a constraint, I think, that we might understand his shift of the metaphorical import of the wax-image from simply (i) 'The mind is causally related to its objects like wax to the signet rings' to (ii) 'The human being is *conceptually* related to objects much like wax's malleability is *conceptually* related to the capacity of things to leave impressions in it', without each object of thought having a causal effect on 'the wax' that's the human subject of thought. On this reading, the task for Aristotle is to understand the conceptual relation in common without reducing it to a remark on causation by the perceived object alone on the human subject. And he seems to do this by switching focus from the idea of physical contact to the (broader) idea of susceptibility to change within one's body.

Consider this passage from *De Anima* ('On the Soul'):

> perception is what is capable of receiving perceptible forms without matter, as wax receives the seal of a signet ring without the iron or gold. It acquires the golden or the metallic seal, but not insofar as it is gold or metal. In a similar way, perception is also in each case affected by what has the colour or taste or sound, but not insofar as each of these is said to **be** something, but rather insofar as each is **of** a certain quality, and corresponding to its proportion. (*De Anima* ii, c. 12: 424a17-24; trans. Shields 2016)

The shift here is from (i) wax simply as memory-record of perception to (ii) the process of a wax-impression taken as analogue to a human-being who comes to act a certain way. The person 'acquires' the quality of gold not in the sense that they turn gold! Rather, they 'acquire' a

perception of golden things. If they see what they see with understanding, furthermore, they acquire thought of the things' gold-ness, among other of their qualities.

On this account, in order for the person to perceive (and think of) this particular gold ring, something in that person's physical substance has to change. The process of physical change results in a physical alteration 'proportional' to the gold ring. It's in virtue of this proportional alteration that the person acts in a certain way. And acting this way is what *qualifies them* as perceiving, or thinking of, the gold ring not simply *as* gold, but potentially *as* of this or that amount of gold, of this or that shape, purity, and so on.

But what exactly is a 'proportional' physical alteration here?

The alteration is what he sometimes (misleadingly) calls an 'image' (*imago*) and later terms a '*phantasma'* (throughout *De Anima*, III). But it's not, I think, what we would today call a 'picture' of the sort you can look at in space or draw. Nor is it a 'phantasm' in the Modern sense of a spectral apparition (no ghoulies in Aristotle's theory of mind). Nor even equal, strictly speaking, to a mental-image before your mind's eye. If I perceptually-experience a real apple, Aristotle would say, my blood and flesh are in a certain state of agitation. (In contemporary terms we might claim instead "certain neurons are firing"). Loosely speaking, the pattern of agitation caused by the apple is, in some manner, 'remembered' by the body. Different causes can later 'trigger' this same pattern of agitation to repeat itself, with or without the presence of the original apple. And when this happens, the same apple – or, if the agitation is a sufficiently different, an imaginary apple, or simply the kind *Apple*, will come before one's mind.

A particular apple before one's mind needn't be real, then (whether or not it in particular was *ever* real). Because what it is to have this apple 'before one's mind' is not *equivalent* to looking at (or hearing, touching, smelling) an existent thing in the same space as oneself. Instead, it's what one counts as doing given how one's body is physically 'activated', as it were, and therefore given how one's now disposed to behave. For example, what does one do and say when asked what one's thinking of? If asked to point out an example of the kind of thing one thinks of, where will one gesture? "Acting like that," an Aristotelian *might* then say, "is a mark of what it is to think of (e.g.) that particular apple, or of the kind *Apple*".

This is an intriguing possibility. It suggests two 'angles' from which to think about intentionality. One is from 'outside'. If a person behaves a certain way, they'll qualify as thinking of Sophocles' sphinx in particular, for example. The non-existence of that sphinx is irrelevant. From the 'inside', a pattern of agitation – a phantasma – yields such a behaviour. Phantasmata are identified and characterized precisely in terms of what kinds of thinkings-of they yield (i.e. when thinkings-of are individuated by the sorts of objects they take.)

Certainly, many objects are first thought of through perception, establishing certain phantasmata in the subject for the first time by direct causal interaction with those objects themselves. But, as our learned friend Victor Caston neatly puts it *another* paper,

> what determines the content of a phantasma is not its causal antecedents, but the *causal power* it happens to have at a particular moment. So long as those powers remain the same as the powers

> of the stimulation that caused it, a phantasma will be about the kind of sensory object from which it ultimately arose. (Caston 1998:275)

This doesn't exclude the possibility of having objects in the absence of such interaction with them. The baseline in common is the thinking, which is manifest in the person's behaviour. The exact causal antecedents, to borrow Caston's phrase, don't matter so much as that the causal powers of phantasmata are activated to give us the behaviour.

It's for this very reason, though, that I think we should push against the notion that phantasmata are 'about' anything; i.e. that they have 'contents' at all. For consider visual representations like drawings and photographs. We look at drawings and, if we understand them, we can give correct descriptions of what they represent their subjects to be. We don't normally see the subject of the drawing for ourselves, though we can imagine it.[8] We look at photos and thereby count as seeing what is photographed, and must therefore stand in some spatio-temporal relation to that thing, which caused the photographic image. But the phantasma isn't looked at. Nor is it necessarily caused by what it yields in thought or experience. What it causes is only the *event* of an object's presentation. In having the object of thought, the thinker may 'represent' an existent thing as being what it's not. But that's something the *thinker* does – not the phantasma. Unlike a recording even (an MP3 file or cassette tape) it doesn't generate something we then perceive in a space. It simply *causes* an object to come to mind directly.

"But how can it *cause* an object to come to mind, if it stands in no physical relation to it..? And how can you 'qualify' as thinking of something without standing in some relation to it…?"

Now, as with the Stoics, I'm skipping over a vast terrain of details, caveats, textual scrutiny and exegetical divergences. But, as I said, I'm not addressing the Ancient thinkers quite as a scholar here. I'm drawing out possible images that may attract or dig their claws in one, and the implications of things we might want to say, in order to think with them later in resolving our puzzle 'ground up'. It's with this same attitude I'll turn to some of these thinkers' inheritors (whom *we* also inherit) beyond Antiquity.

But first, with that objecting voice back in action, let's reflect on where we've come so far.

1.5 Looking from Outside, (By) Looking from Within

I suggested we understand Aristotle's re-purposing of Plato's wax image as expressing this idea: The human being is *conceptually* related to objects like wax's malleability is *conceptually* related to the capacity of things to leave impressions in it.' By that I meant: in the flow of someone's life among things, events, and fellow creatures, a person is disposed to gain thoughts of various things. This disposition is realized by way of various causal relations she enters into. But it needn't be activated, in many cases, by causal-contact with the very things they're dispositions to think of.

[8] There are exceptions; e.g. a charcoal drawing of the piece of charcoal one's drawing with. Though in this case the charcoal seen needn't be in the same state as the charcoal's *depicted* as being.

In other words, the development of a thinker's mind and thinking-life is entirely situated in the material environment. A thinker is 'malleable' like wax. Wax and thinker are empowered to do certain things, given how they're shaped and 'impressed' upon. *But*: a thinker's powers to think of this or that particular aren't 'matched' one-to-one with particulars in the existent world. What causes a thinking of a sphinx needn't be any existent sphinx impressing itself on the thinker-as-wax.

To take Aristotle's new analogy further, then. Wax can be shaped and put together with string so as to slowly hollow-out by melting, in a way that the bees, the wick fibres alone, and the hands which shaped the wax into candles, can't. Likewise, the power to "acquire" a sphinx simply in the sense of to think of a sphinx is a power not had by non-thinkers. The actualisation of that power, like the slow hollowing-out, doesn't require there to be any sphinxes beyond or in absence of the thinking, any more than a burning candle requires there to be such slow hollowing-out beyond, or in absence of, the hollowing candle.

But – of course – this provokes further puzzlements. For the Pit again raises its head.

First: "If objects of thought as such are things that needn't exist in order to be thought of, nonetheless we often talk of them as if they're things existing somewhere. For example, the sphinx is *in the doorway*. What are we to make of this, if true? This seems to rely on the Pit-A/Pit-B distinction after all, placing certain 'places' in a sort of non-space. But the fact is, that didn't make sense. Doesn't Aristotle just *ignore* this fact?"

Second: "If Aristotle's right that we think of non-existents, how are we to know *which* non-existents we're thinking of? There seem two aspects to this puzzle.

"(i) If it's behaviour that qualifies us as having an existent apple in mind, for instance, then how are we to check that it's *this* sort of behaviour [– points at someone behaving –] which qualifies one as thinking of a *sphinx* at all? With thought of existents the thinker kind of 'proves' it's the apple they were thinking of, by being able to go pick it up. We see it, so 'confirm' it, for ourselves. But with non-existents…?

"And (ii), supposing we can tell that certain things are true of the non-existent object, like that it's a sphinx, not a satyr – how do we tell *which* particular non-existent sphinx it is? The set of non-existent things is surely vast, if not infinite. In Pit-B, every property, possible and impossible, will be in every possible and impossible combination with others. Won't there then be an infinite number of non-existent sphinxes sharing a certain set of traits in common (for instance, that it's standing in the doorway)? Even if there are various other features they have that distinguish them? Or are you really thinking of them all? How would you know if you were or not?" (cf. Quine 1948:23)

Third: 'It can't be true, really, that the sphinx is in the wardrobe. Because she physically can't be *in* the wardrobe, or even beside it. And if she's in an *imagined* wardrobe – well, there's no such thing *in* or *beside* which anything can be. I'll grant that I'm not lying when I say the sphinx is in there. But am I not really *pretending* to tell you something factual, and aren't you 'in' on the pretence with me? (cf. Kripke 2013, Evans 1982, Walton 1990). Then isn't my so-called 'thinking

of a sphinx' really just some activity, a set of behaviours, that makes it *look like* I'm thinking of a thing that's factually this or that?"

These objections switch us from an 'Aristotelian' external perspective – e.g. "Does Lucy, by her behaviour in context, qualify as thinking of an imaginary beast?" – to a 'Homeric' external perspective expressing the Pit: "How does Lucy tell what her mind's grabbing hold of 'out there' (in real or unreal space)? How are *we* supposed to tell, looking at Lucy? What's there to grab hold of, anyway?"

One might think there's a clash of models here. But I'll argue that the solution isn't so simple as to pick one and drop the other. Different models may help us to get clearer about different issues.

Take the first question, on how to make sense of non-existents 'being at places'. It's an obvious question to ask if one's thinking with the Pit. But it brings out a 'gap', in this context, between two ways of speaking. One way is speech without concern for whether something exists ("It's in the wardrobe" is all we need to know; it's just a fact among other facts). This way is accepted by the Aristotelian concerned simply with ascribing thoughts of things real and unreal. Another way is speech reflecting concern with what can causally affect *us*, in reality. This is where the Homeric thinker speaks from.

The nature of this contrast between the ways, though, isn't necessarily obvious. In fact the question positively expresses 'Homeric' insensitivity to it. For the Pit-ish philosopher seems to presuppose that the existence-indifferent way is somehow cancelled out, shown to be either false or nonsense, by the self-referential way their questioning stems from. It can't make sense of more than one use of words like "objects"; only one on which they can ask where they *themselves*, the philosophers, can go encounter the objects concerned.

Here's what I mean. In one obvious sense, the Pit gives a third-personal view-point onto objects and subjects of thought. They're all things in one space together. It doesn't *highlight* a first-personal perspective as relevant. Neither, in fact, does the 'phantasma' approach. It, too, still assumes an external and third-personal kind of perspective on the thinking-subject as a body, in space, behaving certain ways we can look at down our noses. Even when it discusses what's inside the bodies being observed. For the Aristotelian's story is about what causal processes qualify someone as having the status, "Thinker of—[insert name or kind of object]", and works backward from there to postulate physical alterations in the flesh. But when the Pitish externalism runs up against and clashes with the Aristotelian externalism, the gap between the two ways of talking brings out an 'internal' orientation effectively *hidden within* – indeed, a *condition of* –the former. The question "Can the thing causally affect *us*?" manifests not only a view from 'inside' a subject as a *physical thing*, but from inside *as* a subject of thought: the subject's own *first-personal* perspective.

Aristotle appears sensitive to this viewpoint as a matter of fact, even if it falls into the background when he discusses phantasmata as physical alterations with physical causal powers. It's a tricky idea to contemplate. His sphinx remark betrays this trickiness. He says, remember, that no sphinx is anywhere at all. But while the sphinx of Sophocles' play isn't anywhere we can

go, surely it has location relative to Oedipus? A location that is, in turn, an object of our thought through watching *Oedipus the King*?

Really, the speech-ways clash brings out a gap between what it makes sense to say third-personally about both existents and non-existents ("It's in the wardrobe", "It's on the hob"), and what it does and does not make sense to *infer* in first-personal terms about those same particulars ("…So it is/ is not in *our* wardrobe, that *we* can touch", "So it is/is not on the hob *I'm* cooking on." This is despite the fact that, taking up a Pit-ish perspective, it needn't occur to one to distinguish subjects as things from subjects 'as subjects'. For it was modelling subjects merely as *things* that made it seem like every physical thing must stand in a physical relation to every other physical thing, which includes what exists, and since it modelled all things as if they were physical things, this made it seem that every thing – *insofar* as it's a thing – must therefore exist.

Only… this now invites further questions. For example: What makes the first-person inferences valid or invalid? What does the answer to that mean for the difference between existent and non-existent objects, when their descriptions as things ('the sphinx in the wardrobe', 'the apple on the table') are third-personal? Are third-personal descriptions in some way *essentially* insensitive to (non)existence? And – if they are – might this mean that talk of things from 'outside' – i.e. as things in a space, for instance – is, of its nature, something licenced independently of what first-personal judgments can add on top to distinguish the real from unreal? So that things can be in various places, whether or not they're places *we* (first-person plural) could possibly visit?

1.6 First Person Infallibility?

One answer to the first question, "What makes the first-person inferences valid or invalid?", might be this: "It's purely third-personal truths about the particulars which are responsible." For instance, to say that, "The third-personal truth that the wardrobe doesn't stand in relation to J.M. is what makes it invalid for me to infer I'm in some relation to it."

But who is J.M.? And how do we determine whether *they* exist or not?

If it's true for me to answer, "J.M. is myself" or, speaking to you, "J.M. is *you*", it seems to follow J.M. exists. For, granting those answers' truth, you and me are surely real – how could I coherently doubt that? If I address myself to you, that only makes sense on my assumption that I'm addressing someone *in some relation to myself*. In other words, it expresses commitment to a certain first-personal judgment in turn (e.g. "This one can hear *me*.") It's not clear what it would mean, though, to say that I stand in a physical relation to *myself*.

"– But what are you then suggesting? That, if I don't characterize an object in first- or second-personal terms, I then leave it unspecified whether it's real or unreal? Wouldn't that then suggest an essential link between the concepts <me>/<myself> and <existence>..?"

(– "But the world doesn't depend on my thinking of it as this or that in order to be real! And you surely can't mean to say *that*?")

The suspicion voiced (and just reacted to by a pal, in brackets) is that to say something really exists may already be, in itself, to express that a certain kind of first-personal and true thought is

either had about it or is thinkable about it. A thought of the form, "I stand in certain relations to it". Which – the suspicion runs – is a thought *in*expressible in merely third-personal terms like, "J.M. stands in relation to it."

But this only raises further questions in turn: "What exactly *is* a first-personal thought?" And, inseparable from that, perhaps, "What sort of term is the first-personal 'I'?" Because if "I" is just another name, in my mouth, for the person J.M., then what precisely is the difference between my judging "J.M.'s thinking of a sphinx" and my judging "I'm thinking of a sphinx"? And (the objecting voices want to add) whether it's just a name or not, doesn't the idea force us into saying something ridiculous, like that the reality of things is dependent on *my* (or *your*, dear Reader)'s having the power, in particular, to think of them a certain way?

We'll be building up to an answer to these questions explicitly in Chapter 6. I won't be endorsing the 'ridiculous view'. But I'll be acknowledging a first-personal perspective in practically everything moving forward. For now, I want to re-frame the other objections to Aristotle from a first-personal view. Because this anticipates a thread of thought about thinking in an inheritor of the Homerics and of Aristotle, Augustine.

The second objection was a query concerned with identification, granting that there were non-existent objects. First, (i) how do we identify what kind of non-existent is thought of from behaviour? Second, (ii) if there are multiple particulars with perfectly similar characteristics, how do we tell which is thought of, or if it's all of them?

On the Pit-ish perspective (naïve to its own first-personal concerns), your behaviour while thinking is just a causal effect of your having 'grasped' an object with your mind. So it will seem that your behaviour is, at best, evidence of the sort of object you have, rather than 'part and parcel' of the thinking activity itself. In other words, the behaviour doesn't 'qualify' you as thinking of something. It's just that the behaviour is evidence that the thought occured or is still being had presently. We'd collectively learn what's good evidence for it being this or that object by studying the *causal relations* between people and kinds of object of thought. (I.e. "What kinds of behaviours tend to follow from perceptual encounters with apples…?")

But if we adopt a first-person perspective, this doesn't seem quite right. Because if I think of something, real or unreal, am I not *presented* with something directly? I want to say, "I can't help but *just know* what it is I think of. I am able to tell you what it is, and – unless you think I'm lying, or don't know the right words for what I'm experiencing – it doesn't make sense to doubt me. It doesn't make sense to say, 'You're wrong, because you are (or aren't) standing in this sort of causal-relationship to an object.'" – But if this is right, then how could it make sense to ask, "How do you really know it's a sphinx?" So mightn't this resolve question (i), "How do you know what kind of thing it is?"?

We might try a similar strategy on (ii), "How do you know which of the perfectly-similar sphinxes it is?" That question treats non-existents as if they're 'out there' somehow for one's mind to latch onto. But if an act of thinking-of-something is particular to a person, why should we assume that? Aristotle dismisses the fish-line/magic arm theory, remember. So a particular act may have its own particular object, characterized precisely *by whose act of thought it belongs to*. It presents, infallibly, as what one's thinking of. So there'd be no room for doubting whether it's

really someone *else's* imagined sphinx, even if the two sphinxes as *things* are perfectly alike. Because as an *object of thought*, mine is precisely originating in and dependent on my act of thought and no other's.

Perhaps you see (at least) two issues with these answers, though.

First: Yes, there's a practice of ascribing so-called 'thoughts' on which the person who's thinking can't be wrong on what they think of. But there's another practice on which they can. We can be wrong about existents: "I was convinced I was thinking of the same movie as you, but it turns out I wasn't." And we can even be wrong about imaginary things: "I was sure I was thinking of what Alun dreamt up, but I was reading someone else's letter; I don't know whose sphinx this is."

Second: Nonetheless, if we don't appeal to a 'soul-grip' or 'mind's arrow', then how exactly *do* we think of each other's imagined objects? We surely can share them in mind as it made sense for me to speak of Alun's (even accepting that Alun's non-existent!) How else could we converse on Sherlock Holmes, for example? And anyway, how could an object, which is a thing in some sense, be dependent on a particular thought? A thought and what the thought's about surely aren't one and the same, any more than either is identical with the *act* of thinking the thought! And the thing, a sphinx, surely isn't the thing it is because of what anyone's thinking of. It's a beast; a being; a substance.

So we've (yet) another question thrown into our mix: What is the conceptual connection, exactly, between these two further different practices of speaking, this time of thought-ascription; on one of which we can be wrong about what we think of and on the other of which we can't? Do these practices concern the same kinds of acts and objects, or is there some salient sense in which they're different 'things' altogether? A second try at answering (i-ii) by appeal to first-person infallibility had better work out those details.

And, alas, we're in a similar state of 'half-bakédness', I suspect, with respect to the third objection too.

The third objection was, "It can't be true there's a sphinx in the wardrobe, since there's no sphinx to refer to. So what's called 'Thinking of the sphinx in the wardrobe' would be to act as if one were engaged in an activity which really went by that description. Normally without letting anyone believe it's true. In other words, one's pretending to have a certain thought."

The initial response might be, "But I *just know* I'm thinking of a sphinx. If I was pretending, I would have to think about what behaviour would make it look like I was doing this or that (or decide with my play-mates, perhaps, what behaviour would count for the sake of the game), and then deliberately try to bring about that behaviour. But I don't have any plans, or intentions, of the sort. (And I *just know* that I don't.)"

"—But if we can be mistaken about what it is we think of, won't it be for others than ourselves to determine – by proper evidence – what we really intend to do? Why should we trust the word, honest though it might be, of the innocent non-philosopher, who simply talks in terms they were

raised to? People talk as if there are objects when there are none. Why not allow they could be wrong, and that their language means something else than they think it does?"

1.7 Augustine's Puzzle: How are Objects in Time?

We saw earlier that Augustine, in accounting for thought and experience of what's not before one's eyes, drew on Aristotle's idea that we've images put together from our past impressions of real particulars. We've seen how this needn't imply literal images but something more like the capacity for behaving in such a way that one qualifies as having a perceptual experience of something now (or always) non-existent. Augustine is particularly concerned, in the *Confessions*, with what sorts of object find their way into our memory and absorb us into thinking, feeling and behaving in certain ways. Ways that might, for instance, lead us further from the Christian God. So he as at pains in Book 11 of that work to get to grips with what memory is and how it bears upon what's presented to us now. It's to some of his remarks here I'd like to turn our attention.

We can sense Augustine's frustration when gripped by a spatial model of thinking; one remarkably close to the Pit, when reflecting on time: on its passage before and as he gives voice to sacred speech. He writes,

> Suppose I am about to recite a psalm which I know. Before I begin, my expectation is directed towards the whole. But when I have begun, the verses from it which I take into the past become the object of my memory. The life of this act of mine is stretched two ways into my memory because of the words I have already said and into my expectation of what I am about to say. (*Confessions* 11.38)[9]

As a part of the psalm passes his lips, he retains a memory of what's passed, central to recognizing where he is in the recitation, and what's still to come. What's 'real' of the psalm seems – on his reflection – to take no time at all. To happen in a 'flash'. Because the present moment must (he thinks) lack duration:

> If we can think of some bit of time which cannot be divided into even the smallest instantaneous moments, [and that is actual as opposed to non-existent,] that alone is what we can call 'present'. And this time flies so quickly from future into past that it is an interval with **no duration**. If it has duration, it is divisible into past and future. But **no present occupies space**. (*Confessions* 11.20)

("—But does it make sense to say of any time that it 'occupies space' as a hammer or a ruler does? Or does he mean only to draw an *analogy* between a passage of time and a spatial distance?")

By similar reasoning, no sooner is a syllable enunciated than it's in the past:

> What occurs in the psalm as a whole occurs in its particular pieces and its individual syllables. (*Confessions* 11.38)

[9] In citing the *Confessions* I'll use Henry Chadwick's 1992 translation.

And taking this to the same extreme, the psalm seems fractured further into 'instantaneous' slices. Each of no duration. Because every sounding of a syllable is *itself* a stretch of time, and at any given moment not the whole of it is actual in the present. Indeed,

> [t]he same is true of a longer action in which the psalm perhaps is a part. It is also valid of the entire life of a human individual. (*Confessions* 11.38)

But once either of these 'little pieces' images (syllable-bits or non-durational slices) gets a grip on oneself, it can seem like talk of the psalm as a complete entity must collapse. For what's real at one moment was not real ahead of it. Nor is it concrete once past – precisely, once it's *over*. Then what does it mean to say the psalm sung is whole, either in potential (where would that be? "In what place?") or in the present (how? "There's no space!") or in the past (when part or all of it is no longer 'is')?

> [H]ow does this future, which does not yet exist, **diminish or become consumed**? Or how does the past, which now has no being, **grow**[?] (*Confessions* 11.37)

Augustine models times on physical things. Which encourages peculiar descriptions of past, future, present. The future has a body and location before it passes 'through' the present or is 'depleted' ("diminished", "consumed"). The past is thought to grow only insofar as it has 'being' now. As though it's a concrete existent, like an old tree I take in at a glance. Yet the future isn't pre-formed ready for consumption at all. And is the past a stable prior? (Is a tree?)

We can start out talking of the psalm as one whole. But when observing ourselves bring about its recitation, we may be tempted to model recitation as a 'pouring out' of something pre-existent; a volume with spatial dimensions. But then, as we reflect on what the thing is that is 'being poured', 'it' seems rather to vaporize through our fingers. It can't pre-exist. So (it then seems) it's not a 'thing'. Not a whole in the process of actualizing. As Rowan Williams puts it vividly:

> From one point of view, you might say that it's like squeezing something from one container into another through a narrow aperture: the future, the next bit of the song, is passing through the present moment into the past. But that can't be quite right: the song is in my memory, in my past, already. What is slipping through the present moment is my continuing performance of a song I have once learned. But that can't be quite right either: the performance doesn't exist as a complete entity, there's nothing that exists ahead of me to move from the area in front of me to the area behind me. And what is going on when I can't remember the next line: is it 'there' or not? Yes, because I learned it once; no, because it is not sitting somewhere waiting to be inspected. (Williams 2016:1)

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Augustine's frustration, like Williams' in sympathy, has a distinctively first-personal source. In the bustle of life, we might say, I keep an 'eye' to two directions. First, to the past: to what *I've* been doing, to what *I* remember of the world and its kinds, to how *I'm* placed in multiple stories about it. Second, to the future: what is *this* about to happen with respect to *me*; what will follow if *I* carry on like so? Both are necessary to thinking 'on one's feet' in time. I understand what's approaching only by reference to my past encounters.

But talking in these visual terms (a swivelling eye) encourages the image of an already realized, complete terrain for looking over. The image as of a cartographer (or archaeologist) whom I am, surveying an entire forest, or objects all uncovered in an earthen pit, from different periods, of different ages, all unaffected by, existing ahead of, the torch-beam of my visual attention (the sweep and probe of my *pneuma*/noetic-ray). The sort of spatial picture given to us by the Pit. Then either this span of time-as-landscape is wholly present all at once to myself, or, not being all 'now', this 'Pit-ish' spatial model seems to fall apart. It gives way to another spatial picture of *fracture*. Every 'thing' cut up into instantaneous slices. At which point I lose a sense even of what wholes, beings-with-durations, there could have been 'in' time to begin with. Not fracture, after all, but *no-thingness*.

1.8 *My Thinking* in Time

Yet, *as* I am thinking through such thoughts and worries, what is the character of my experience? If we're allowing ourselves reference to how things seem to me, should we not set a space for *all* the appearances-to-me at our table?

If I pause to reflect on what is given in my thought, I find I am presented with more than time-slices of universe. I'm presented with wholes having durations, capacity for change. These include passages of time themselves. As Augustine remarks: Despite it *seeming* that nothing beyond the 'time-slice' of the present can "be", when one thinks about it a certain way (as above),

> [n]evertheless, Lord, we are **conscious of** intervals of time, and compare them with each other, and call some longer, others shorter. We also **measure** how much longer or shorter one period is than another, and answer that the one is twice or three times as much as the other, or that the two periods are equal. Moreover, we are measuring times which are past when **our perception is the basis of measurement**. (*Confessions* 11.21)

Our consciousness of things is the ineradicable basis of any discrimination between past, present and future. This same basis delivers us things of duration and interval by which the very *notion* of durations, longer and shorter in comparison, is acquired. Whether or not the things given to us in consciousness always exist, the activity of comparison can't be thrown out if the very question, "How is the past measurable if it's unreal?" is to be so much raised. It's a query about *the past, the present and the future*:

> But who can measure **the past** which does not **now** exist or the **future** which does **not yet** exist, unless perhaps someone dares to assert that he can measure what has no existence. At the moment when time is passing, it can be perceived and measured. But when it has passed and is not present, **it cannot be**. (*ibid.*)

*

"It cannot 'be' as in it cannot *exist*? Or it cannot 'be—' as in it can't *be perceived*?"

("—Tuh-MAY-toe, tuh-MAH-toe!") —From the perspective of one who thinks (and is that a perspective anyone could avoid?), one can't claim the objective existence of something *except on*

the basis of one's experience of this or that as being objectively real. What presents to you as the case informs what you judge to be the case. It's my consciousness of things as real, as being given to me in genuine perception as opposed to hallucination or dreaming, that makes it so much as possible for me to form views on what may or may not be real in fact.

Suppose we weren't capable of thinking of the same things. We might say, "Augustine's presented with something he calls the past, which just is as it presents to him. There's no gap between what appears to be and what really is the case." But the fact is, we do ascribe each other thoughts of things in a shared world. We correct each other about them. So there must be, in our practice, ways of telling whether someone thinks of the same thing we do. From what they say and do. Well, what are the ways we express our thinking of *the past* as opposed to ostriches or pains?

Another way of phrasing this question is in terms of how we teach each other the idea <the past>. We saw earlier how concepts aren't Generic Objects. One masters concepts by learning how to act in response to questions like, "What is a horse?", "Where is the horse?", and "Is *this* a horse?" Such mastery requires an ability to remember things, both on the student's part and the teacher's. So it requires things to have a history in time (i.e. not to be mere time-slices), else there's nothing to remember. Not just things like particular horses, but (in one sense of the word) *oneself*. Because if I am to remember how to do something, or recognize what was previously encountered, and act in light of this, I must be more than a time-slice. I must have duration *as a thinker*.

This idea is owed to Immanuel Kant in *Critique of Pure Reason*.[10] As Hilary Putnam puts it nicely:

> For Kant, **rational thought itself depends on the fact that I regard my thoughts, experiences, memories, and the like as all mine (the fact that I prefix the "I think" to all of them, not just at the time but also retrospectively.)** To illustrate Kant's point, imagine yourself going through a very simple form of reasoning, say "Boiling water hurts if you stick your finger in it; this is boiling water; so it will hurt if I stick my finger in this." If the "time- slice" of me that thought "Boiling water hurts if you stick your finger in it" was one person, person A, and the "time- slice" that thought the minor premise, "This is boiling water" is a different person, person B, and the person that thought the "conclusion," "It will hurt if I stick my finger in this" was yet a third person, person C, then that conclusion was not warranted; indeed, the sequence of thoughts was not an argument at all, since the thoughts were thoughts of different thinkers, none of whom had any reason to be bound by what the others thought or had thought[!] We are responsible for what we have thought and done in the past, responsible now, intellectually and practically, and **that is what makes us thinkers, rational agents in a world, at all**. (Putnam 2008:24-5)

If the reality of the past holds, as it must do for your very thinking to unfold in time (as Augustine's does *about* time as he composes the *Confessions*), and such that your thinking can be evaluated as either rational or not, then we seem committed to a past that isn't fictional. And to processes that can be started in the past and are being continued in the present, and *can* be continued in the future. A Pit-ish picture of time wreaks a similar havoc with clear thinking

[10] For a deep, stimulating discussion of Kant on the "I think" attached to all my thoughts, see Longuenesse 2017, particularly Chapter 2.

about what it is to be in time as it did for clear thinking about what it is to think of something – and the two 'havocs' appear closely entwined. Both express an insensitivity to oneself as thinker: the relevance of a first-personal perspective.

A capacity for thought in terms of past, present and future seems to be a precondition for the very activity of thinking and sharing a reference to a world with each other. Following Aristotle, the subjectivity of thought seems necessary for objective cognition.

With this thought in mind, I want us to return to Augustine's initial phrasing of his problem, and this time take the first-personal perspective much more seriously. Because, as we'll see, by ultimately doing this *himself*, Augustine offers a fresh perspective on non-existence with respect to thought; one absent in both the Homeric and Aristotelian pictures as we've encountered them so far.

2

Presence and Perspective

Objects by Way of Their Thinkers in Time

Chapter 2 continues thinking with Augustine, approaching intentionality of mind in terms of first-personal experience and the unfolding of such experience in time. This takes us through into thinking with one of Augustine's modern 'inheritors', we might say, Edmund Husserl.

§§2.1-2.2 argue that there seem to be two sorts of intentionality possible in a given act of thought or perception – i.e. two sorts of 'directedness towards' or 'grip on' a thing by the mind. One sort 'latches onto' things independent of our thinking, but the other sort grips things entirely depending on our thinking. The first seems to imply the second, though not vice versa.

In §2.3 I focus in on a third sort of 'intending' (one might say), described by Husserl in terms of 'horizons' of experience. There are different ways our objects of experience present to us, in a continual 'flow' of angles, perspectives on it, by reference to different memories, hopes, expectations, projects and fears. This flow sort of is, and sort of isn't, what's given to us within the thinking or perceiving itself. Because, as I argue in §§2.4-5, the thing presented in these ways doesn't reduce to all the things present within these presentations (let alone to the ways themselves). In this I make reference to Gottlob Frege's notion of the 'sense' ('Sinn') by which a referent presents to me, offering a different solution (perhaps) from his, to the question of what we learn and think of when told that "The Morning Star is actually the Evening Star".

How should we understand these sorts of directedness in conceptual relation to each other? How do we 'access' the world and its objects 'by way of' objects merely within our experience – doesn't this lock us 'inside' our minds? (Notice the spatial imagery causing friction again).

§§2.6-2.7 suggest that the subjectivity of thought is necessary for its objectivity. Following Husserl's claim, the world of existents is itself not independent of the capacity for thought and consciousness. It's inherently what can manifest in experience as what it is. Nothing is beyond the capacity for being known in experience; nothing is 'beyond' experience, even if many and most things happen not to be experienced or thought of individually yet.

§§2.8-2.9 zoom in on the idea of manifestation, which it's the task of Chapters 4-5 to elucidate more, and addresses an intriguing puzzle in Medieval Islamic philosophy: whether an individual can be first non-existent then existent. In one sense of 'individual', focused on things in spatial terms, I argue 'No'. But if thinking in terms of manifestation, this opens the door to a different approach both to how we understand the question and so to how we go about answering it: by attending to *ourselves* and how we talk and act together.

This digression on 'becoming existent' anticipates the strange idea that some individuals aren't actually 'things' at all that could be described in terms other than a special question to which they're given in answer. Self-alienation may hide this possibility of speech and meaning from us, even as the possibility is manifest in our everyday practices with language.

2.1 A Strange Doubling

If I think of a particular pineapple (real or otherwise), it presents to me as a 'whole' in one sense. Not a 'time-slice', but something that grew and ripened, distinct from other tangible things with their own unique histories.

Imagine holding a real pineapple up for young Lucy to see. In one hand we bring it forward to her attention. With the other we point out, one my one, various of its features by reference to its past ("This sticker shows what corporation owned the land it grew on"), its kind ("Here's where it gains its nutrients while still on the branch"), the past of its kind ("It's thought pineapples came to have leaves like this because…"), its present, ("It's fully ripe now, see this colour?"), its predicted future ("It'll go mouldy if we don't eat it soon, look..."), to projects we might share ("Would this patterning here make a good wall-paper design?"), or the articulation of experiences ("The taste of this is, in some way, how it feels to me when I see warm turquoise"); and so on.

There seem two sorts of 'intending'. First, bringing a whole to someone's attention: the particular pineapple. Second, bringing its features to their attention. This takes time. It can also involve thinking of the pineapple in quite different states than it is in perception. Lucy may be prompted to imagine it very mouldy from weeks of neglect into the future. Yet in doing so she still thinks of the fruit before her eyes.

A similar 'doubling' seems to hold when one thinks alone.

Recall the first Augustine quote:

> Suppose I am about to recite a psalm which I know. Before I begin, my expectation is directed towards the whole. But when I have begun, the verses from it which I take into the past become the object of my memory. The life of this act of mine is stretched two ways into my memory because of the words I have already said and into my expectation of what I am about to say. (*Confessions* 11.38)

What might he mean by the "life of this act of mine"? He could just mean the act of a recitation, which stretches moments back into the past and (sliding into the 'time is a ready-made landscape' trap), a fixed, imminent future. But he might also give expression to the stretch of thinking inextricable from making sense of its roles and qualities, turned over in his mind. He may also express a considered deliberation in action. Gathering his breath in order to place the right emphases on words. Adjusting where he sings from so as to hit the right note. The life of what's living, breathing, attending to different things is tied up in bringing forth a particular recitation of sacred speech. The bringing forth is Augustine's 'making himself' forward into time through unique instances of actions, simultaneously realizing wholes that *aren't* himself.

With both those readings in mind, and Lucy's pineapple too, we seem to find a complication of the early *pneuma*-tendril image Augustine adapts from the Stoics. His theory is that one grasps an object with one's soul. But from within the thinking, there seem to be (at least) two sorts of grasp, and two sorts of 'stretching' implied by, but not equal to, either. And we may want to 'grasp' these two sorts in terms that don't require any *literal* grasping, of course.

On intentional grasp. First, a grasp of a whole as what's being thought of. A psalm, a recitation, a pineapple. Second, a grasp of a *host* of things and processes, sometimes one by one, often in groups together, in our thinking *about* this thing we think of. Our thought is 'thrown' in two directions, and yet sort of 'in the same'. Because to think of something as a thing is already to think things about it, different features it has, connections to other things, possible futures and so on will flit to one's attention as one's thinking. A pairing of (i) what is thought of vs. (ii) what is, and is thought of in, our thinking in time *about* the thing thought of.

On stretch. First, the temporality of the thing (and more) thought of, itself. The temporal extension of the psalm's recitation, of the pineapple as grown fruit. Second, the stretch of one's own thinking in thinking of something. The thinking's forward course by reference to memories, and toward possibilities imaginable on the basis of these. A pairing of (i) the temporality of what's thought of and about and (ii) the temporality of the thinking, as activity of the thinker, itself.

Augustine is sensitive to these paired pairings. Here's the continuation (in bold) of another earlier quote:

> But how does this future, which does not yet exist, diminish or become consumed? Or how does the past, which has no being, grow, **unless there are processes in the mind which in this is the active agent? For the mind expects and attends and remembers, so that what it expects passes through what has its attention as it remembers**. (11.37)

The mind of a thinker 'makes' the thing thought of somehow fluid *in how it's presenting over time*.

We're tapping into an image Williams picked up on (the jelly through an aperture). But it's reconcilable with the reality of past time. The fluidity is this torrent of presentations of the same thing (a psalm's active recitation) from different points of view (physical, temporal and beyond) that are nonetheless views taken on *in the present* by the subject. Even as what the present *is* changes, of course. The expectation and memory makes real – manifests itself in – a dynamic shimmering of fresh significances and aspects.

2.2 Horizons and Protentions

These distinctions are taken up over a thousand years later by Edmund Husserl, who writes,

> The first person who sensed profoundly the enormous difficulties inherent in this analysis [both of consciousness of time and of consciousness *in* time], and who struggled with it almost to despair, was Augustine. Even today, anyone occupied with the problem of time must still study… the *Confessions* thoroughly (Husserl 1991 [1893-1917]:3)

One of the ways in which Husserl articulates these issues is to distinguish the existent thing perceived from how it's presented in the perceptual act. He speaks of the perceptual 'meaning' or 'sense' ("*Sinn*"), distinct from the existent itself:

> Perception, for instance, has [its] perceptual meaning, that is, the **perceived as such**. Similarly, the recollection, when it occurs, has as its own its **remembered as such** precisely as it is "meant" and "consciously known" in it; so again judging has as its own the **judged as such** ,pleasure **the pleasing as such**, and so forth… [In all these cases, there is a] "meaning" (*Sinn*) [which] lies "immanent" in the experience of perception, of judgment, of liking, and so forth, i.e., if we question in pure form this experience itself , as we find it there presented to us. (*Ideas I*, §88; trans. Gibson, 185)[11]

When we perceive an object in the world, we normally perceive it *as being* this or that. We're normally also presented with it as perceived rather than imagined or remembered. In cases of illusion, we can be falsely presented with something as veridically perceived.

This leads Husserl to distinguish what he calls the "quality" of an intentional act from its "matter". The act of perception has the quality precisely of a perception. This act-quality, or 'act-character', "stamps itself" upon the object as it meaningfully presents to us. The quality doesn't collapse into the object that meaningfully presents as perceived (say, the psalm heard as such, or the pineapple tasted as such). What is given in experience as the object perceived is the 'matter' (see *Logical Investigations Vol. II,* 121-2).

> [We may distinguish] between the general act-character, which stamps an act as merely presentative, judgmental, emotional, desiderative etc., and its 'content' which stamps it as presenting this, as judging that etc. etc. **(***Logical Investigations, Vol II*; trans. Findlay, 119)

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Now, suppose I see a dragon-fruit under odd lighting, and mistake it for a pineapple. What is the 'matter' of my perceptual act, here? I want to say that the dragon-fruit is an existent object of the act. But I also want to speak of an apparent pineapple as a pineapple, non-existent, that's apparent to me. For, in my perceptual *experience*, I'm presented with not a dragon-fruit but a pineapple. I might call this a 'purely presentational pineapple'. It's what we have a perceptual experience *of*, even if in doing so I count as perceiving-in-the-world what's *not* a pineapple. But in 'addition' to this presentation pineapple there is also that continual flow of meanings as we 'probe' the object, so to speak, with our attention.

Husserl embraces the idea of such flow and probing, referring to 'manifolds' of perception. A physical object has multiple sides it can be viewed from. As one turns it over, in time, different sides come to view. While they're not yet seen, one can expect certain features to become so. If one thinks of the object as a rolling-die, for example, one expects a certain number of faces, a continuity of surface texture, etc. And this expectation might be thwarted, so that what seemed a die now seems rather something else. This sense of expectation Husserl calls sometimes the 'surrounding horizon' of a perceived thing, and other times a 'continuous protention'. In this he

[11] All my citations to *Ideas I* will be to Gibson's translation unless otherwise stated.

echoes Augustine's imagery of being stretched into the expected future of one's intentional activity on a given whole:

> A thing [*Ding*: material thing] is **necessarily given in** mere "ways of appearing" [e.g. from one side or another], and necessarily there is thereby **a nucleus of "what is actually presented" surrounded in apprehension by a horizon** [*Horizont*] of nongenuine [*uneigentlich*] "cogivenness" and more or less vague indeterminacy. …The indeterminacy. . . points forward to possible manifolds of perception that, continuously merging with one another, close together into a unity of perception in which the continuously enduring thing in ever new series of adumbrations shows again and again new "sides" ["*Seiten*"]. (*Ideas I*, §44; cit. trans. Smith 2013: 275).

> Every subjective process has a process "horizon"… For example, there belongs to every external perception its reference from the "genuinely perceived" sides of the object of perception to the sides "also meant" – not yet perceived, but only anticipated and, at first, with a non-intuitional emptiness (as the sides that are "coming" now perceptually): a continuous ***protention***, which, with each phase of the perception, has a new **sense [*Sinn* =meaning]**… (*Cartesian Meditations* §19; trans. Cairns, 44)[12]

So, in perception we anticipate what will be presented in experience about what is in fact the dragon-fruit if we turn it over, look at it from below, and even if we pursue thoughts about it in reference to plans to make a *pineapple* upside-down cake or (shifting attention) to grow a *pineapple* tree from it. Whatever meanings come before the mind in time, about it, there is a sense (a 'feeling') we'll have of further thoughts or presentings to be had if only we 'press' at them, give them our attention:

> We can *ask any horizon what "lies in it",* we can *explicate* or unfold it, and "*uncover*" the potentialities of conscious life at a particular time. Precisely thereby do we uncover the *objective sense meant implicitly* in the actual cogito, though never with more than a certain degree of **foreshadowing**. **This sense… is never present to actual consciousness [*vorstelling*] as a finished datum; it becomes "clarified" only through explication of the given horizon and the new horizons continuously awakened… For example: the [rolling-]die leaves open a great variety of things pertaining to the unseen faces; yet it is already "construed" in advance as a die, in particular as coloured, rough, and the like, though each of these determinations always leaves further particulars open**…. As contrasted with mere clarification by means of anticipative "imaginings", there takes place, by means of an actually continuing perception, a fulfilling further determination (and perhaps determination as otherwise) – but with new horizons of openness. (*Cartesian Meditations*, §19; 44-45)

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Husserl evidently has in mind a horizon of the external object. In our imagined case, this would be the dragon fruit that, as it happens, is mistaken for a pineapple. But given that it is so mistaken, shouldn't we also speak of horizons of purely presentational objects too? That is, don't I expect certain 'sides' of the presentational pineapple to come into view if I walk around 'it' like so? And when they don't, doesn't that shake-up the *dragon-fruit's* appearance to me, so that new meanings (and hence, new presentational objects) enter the scene?

[12] Citations and page numbers for Cartesian Meditations will be to Cairns' 1960 translation .

As an external thing is perceived, it seems to me, the purely presentational thing is continually being constituted in thought and experience moment by moment. This affects what flows into the thinker's memory as she thinks. This is surely part and parcel of her being sensitive (or not!) to the possible futures of the existent thing and, if she wishes to focus on it alone, the purely presentational object as e.g. pineapple or psalm. So it entails a shifting sense of herself as subject connection to her own past and possible futures.

So in singing a psalm there seems a sense in which a purely presentational object and the flow of consciousness are not only co-created, but inseparable. To appeal to something Husserl says elsewhere, concerning tones in a piece of music:

> There is one, unique flow of consciousness in which both the unity of the tone [being played] in immanent time and the unity of the flow of consciousness itself become constituted at once. As shocking . . . as it may seem to say that the flow of consciousness constitutes its own unity, it is nonetheless the case that it does. (*Time*, §39; trans. cit. trans. Smith 2013:205)

Suppose that, as I'm singing, my voice suddenly cracks. The sounding wobbles and rasps along a line I'd not intended. For me the experiential horizon had been that of a purely presentational song-syllable still in process of being sung, smooth and straight. But now the experiential horizon becomes that of an excruciating din, riddled through with back-ward looking embarrassment as I realize how confidently I'd launched myself into it. Certainly, the external sounding was perceived as it happened. But there were at least two presentational soundings given to me, each laden with different significances, expectations and salient traces of memory.

It follows, I think, that there are not simply two but three senses in which to talk of 'the objects of my thought or experience'. First, there may be an existent object 'out there' which has its own temporality, of which I may think. There may even be a fictional object 'out there', in the sense that multiple people can read and learn about it from a book, and it has its own features in the story independently of what each of us might imagine. But in either such case, there's – second – the purely presentational thing, dependent on what I do as subject of thought. And this is given to us by way of something it sort of 'is', but sort of isn't too: third, a flowing, never finished or finalized 'manifold' of presentations.

2.3 One Intention Only?

"Are really you sure there are two '*things*', though, in addition to the 'flow'? Husserl himself doesn't talk of two things perceived, above. He talks of the existent perceived being *presented* a certain way. A way of being perceived is surely not a further thing 'perceived' in any sense. It's this external thing that has a 'horizon' in the subjective process of its recognition in mind. There's no other object distinct from this, for him. Right?"

Husserl does seem to think of it that way. Granted, he doesn't think that our intentional objects must *exist*. He says:

> It makes no essential difference to an object presented and given to consciousness whether it exists, or is fictitious, or is perhaps completely absurd (*Logical Investigations, Vol. II,* 99])

Nonetheless, insofar as there's an intentional object of genuine perception, this – he claims – is one and the same as the external object that counts as perceived in space. This strikes him as just obviously true:

> It need only be said to be acknowledged that the intentional object of a presentation is the same as its actual object, and on occasion as its external object, and that it is absurd to distinguish between them. **The transcendent object would not be the object of this presentation, if it was not its intentional object. This is plainly a merely analytic proposition**. The object of the presentation, of the 'intention', is and means what is presented, **the** intentional object. (*Logical Investigations*, Vol. II, 127)

The phrase "on occasion" could make it sound like Husserl allows for some intentional object one has to *sometimes* be other than the 'external' intentional object. But his next sentence clarifies: when there is an external object at stake, that object necessarily is the intentional one. The transcendent object (i.e. the object external to, independent of, and hence 'transcending' the subjective process that is a subject's perceiving it) is *the* intentional object. It is *the* object of presentation in, for instance, genuine perception.

On this way of speaking, there seems no room for talking of 'the pineapple' seen insofar as the dragon-fruit is seen. For the dragon-fruit is not a pineapple. Yet it strikes me as just obviously true that I can give a faultless description of a thing presented to me in a perceptual experience, without thereby giving a description (faultless or otherwise) of an external thing I might thereby count as perceiving. The merely presentational pineapple is indeed a thing with features, though not a real thing, and its features as a pineapple are indeed not those of any dragon-fruit. So there are two uses of "intentional object" to distinguish.

It seems strange to me that Husserl is so adamant on the matter. For consider this passage where he distinguishes an existent tree, independent of one's particular sight of it, and the meaning (*Sinn*) had in its perception:

> The *tree plain and simple*, the thing in nature, is as different as it can be from this *perceived tree as such*, which as perceptual meaning belongs to the perception, and that inseparably. The tree plain and simple can burn away, resolve itself into its chemical elements, and so forth. But the meaning – the meaning of *this* perception, something that belongs necessarily to its essence – cannot burn away; it has no chemical elements, no forces, no real properties (*Ideas I*, §89, 187).

It's certainly right that neither the *concept* <tree>, its application to the actual tree, nor – therefore – the significance of the tree to oneself *as a tree*, are things that can burn away or be reduced to 'their chemical elements'. They're not *physical things* of that sort. We can say the same of the appearing as of a tree, and so the appearance as of a tree. I take Husserl's 'meaning' to be the appearing/appearance as of—. But the very phrase "perceived tree as such" practically begs disambiguation. Because it's so easy to hear it either as "the *existent tree* as it is perceived" or "the *apparent* tree". We can mean different things by these phrases. A merely apparent tree can very well burn just as an actual tree can. So can an apparent tree, when the appearance is distinguished from the existent thing that manifests in the particular appearance.

We can mistake trees for people then realize our mistake. So that an apparent tree may not 'be' in mind for as long as the existent tree was perceived. It may have first been perceived as an

unnervingly tall figure in the shadows before appearing as a tree. With a change in appearance, a change in meaning, there is nonetheless now a purely presentational tree isn't there? From the first-personal perspective, there's something presented to me a tree – now taken to be real – that could be shown to be other than what I'm actually looking at by further experience as I investigate yet closer, to raise a torch-light, or whack 'the thing' with a stick.

Husserl isn't deaf to such ways of speaking. But he seems to think it implies something absurd if taken a certain way. Note that he uses the term "intentional object" here much like I would use "presentational object". Someone might propose, he says, that in

> experience the intention is given with its intentional object, which as such belongs inseparably to it, thus **lives really [*reell*] within it**. What the experience intends, presents, etc., is and remains with it, whether the corresponding "real object" [*wirkliche Objekt*] exists in reality or not, or has been annihilated in the interval, and so forth.
>
> But if we try in this way to separate the real object (in the case of outer perception the perceived thing of nature) from the intentional object, placing the latter as "immanent" to perception within experience as a real factor [*reell*], we are beset by the difficulty that now **two realities must confront each other**, whereas only one of these is present and possible. I perceive the thing, the object of nature, the tree there in the garden; **that and nothing else is the real object** of the perceiving "intention". (*Ideas I*, §90, 188-9)

What exactly is his thought here? He seems to think of the intentional object, as theorized by the position he's against, on the model of something 'contained' in the act. Such that – figuratively speaking – there's no room left for the existent object to be intended. We might picture a pneumatic tendril of soul-stuff already latched on to a purely presentational tree – indeed, inseparable from and part of it – and jabbing itself uselessly at a real one. It simply hasn't its hand free to grab the latter. To do so, it has to *let go* of the former. But it can't, because the presentational tree is an actual part of the soul-stuff. Yet, Husserl points out – quite rightly – that there's a perception of the existent tree itself. So he seems to infer – quite rightly too, I think – that there's no alternative tree in 'confrontation' for the role of perceptual object.

But to distinguish an intentional tree from a real tree (or, a purely presentational pineapple from an existent dragon-fruit) isn't to make a claim of confrontation at all. It's simply to allow that, insofar as one perceives an existent, there is something given to consciousness that may be more or less different in its presented features than the existent object one thereby qualifies as perceiving. The claim isn't that one doesn't really intend the existent tree or the existent dragon-fruit. It's that there are two kinds of 'intending' going on in perception; to suggest that the 'purely presentational' kind can't simply be shaken off from the 'real' kind. Because in normal cases of perceiving the real world, we are always fallible: we can be presented with things that aren't actually there.

So – to use Husserl's language – the 'surrounding horizon', as it unfurls in time, can cast up new meanings (hence new purely presentational objects) in conflict with prior ones. Even as one counts as scrutinizing a single, real thing in the environment.

2.4 "Sense" and Referents

Some readers of Husserl hear talk of 'sense' (*Sinn*) as strongly akin to his contemporary's, Gottlob Frege, in Frege's 1892 essay "On Sense and Reference" (Frege 1948).[13] This is a version of the claim that there's one intentional object but different ways in which it presents. And it's worth touching on for two reasons. First, because I think it exposes a Pit-ish temptation yet again. Second, because it brings out a puzzle of identification language we must add to our growing list of puzzles for resolving.

Frege himself is concerned with this following 'case' (I'll explain my use of scare quotes in a moment). The sentence "A=A" is what logicians call a tautology. It's logically impossible for this sentence to be wrong, if "A" refers to the same object on its two occasions in the sentence. (e.g. "The object A could hardly not be A, could it?") Tautologies are not informative. If I ask a child who Napoleon was and they reply, "Napoleon", they're only playing at giving new information. The sentence "A=B", on the other hand, is obviously not a tautology. It's informative to learn that A is B. "Yet surely," voices Frege, "'A=A' means, 'A *is* A'? Well, A *is* B. And the meaning of a name just is its referent, isn't it? The thing which is named. So 'A=B' should mean, 'A is B'. Right? But that in turn should mean, 'A is A'. It doesn't. So where did we go wrong?"

Frege's solution to it is to invoke – as it might seem – a new sort of object in the very broadest sense of "object". He calls this a referent's *Sinn* (sense); not a 'thing', but a *meaning*. This sense, or meaning, is not the referent itself after all, says Frege. Rather, when we refer to an object, it presents to us a certain way. It has a certain significance for us. And there are multiple ways it can present. The relation of referent to sense is of one to many. I might know the referent only under the guise of that sense associated with the name "A". So if you said to me, "A=B", I could (mistakenly) disagree: "No, A and B are totally different individuals."

To understand what this could mean, I think we must answer a further question. What *exactly* may we mean to *express* when saying something that can be 'codified' in the abstract formula "A=B"? The reason I doubt we can call this case a 'case' is that it leaves radically underdetermined what "A", "=" and "B" are standing in for from any particular case of particular conversation between the person who didn't know, and the person who tells them, that "A=B".

Suppose we take "=" to mean "is one and the same as". If I say, "Thing A is one and the same as thing B", I mean that "A and B are **numerically-identical**". That means there is just thing, here, which is called both 'A' and 'B'. Things A and B "are" numerically-identical if and only if everything true of A is true of B and vice versa. (So the plural-form "are", vs. the singular "is", is inherently misleading). I can pick out the one thing in language using any number of its true descriptions or names, including "A" and "B". On this reading, one's simply pointing out that A and B are two *names* of one entity.

[13] This is a reading of Husserl defended by the 'West Coast' School of Husserlians, which include Dagfinn Føllesdal, Izchack Miller, Hubert Dreyfus, David Woodruff Smith and Ronald McIntyre. For a recent critical discussion of different interpretations of Husserl on 'sense', including those of the West vs. East Coast schools, see Zahavi 2004.

If that's correct, then I am not learning of two objects, and I needn't even be learning something new about an object I already knew something of. An example is learning that "Samuel Langhorne Clemens" and "Mark Twain" are two names of a single American writer. This is informative in a way that "Mark Twain is the name of Mark Twain" is not. The Platonic image of arrows is apt here. We've one target, and two labels – *mere* labels, we might add – one should aim at it. And I needn't have known anything about this writer beforehand.

But the example Frege uses in his paper is very unlike this case. His example is learning that the Morning Star is the Evening Star.

As a quick reminder of history: the Morning Star was a star which early astronomers postulated as what they saw when they saw a certain point of light in the morning sky. The postulated star, as a star, was a body only visible in the morning. They also identified a point of light visible in the evening sky with a different postulated star, the Evening Star. This postulated star, in turn, was – as a star – only visible in the evening. It later transpired that the points of light in question were in fact the 'same' point of light, which was in fact the planet Venus reflecting the Sun's rays toward Earth.

So, Frege has in mind the contrast between statements like this: (a) "The Morning Star is the Morning Star" and (b) "The Morning Star is the Evening Star".

But then, if (b) is to be correct, it surely *can't* be a claim of numeric-identity between the postulated stars. Because different things are true of each. One is visible only in the morning, the other only in the evening. They aren't identical either *as* postulated objects (two postulations were made) or as stars (they have different trajectories through the heavens). Obviously I'm not describing existent things here, but non-existents. So it should seem even stranger to think these are identified in turn with an existent thing, Venus, putting aside the obvious further problem that Venus is a planet and both stars are *not*. So if we refer to the Morning Star as "A", and the Evening Star as "B", we'd need another term "C" to stand in for Venus. But there's no mention of Venus in (b).

So, what could (b) mean?

One claim it can be used to express is this: (b*) "There's something you count as thinking of insofar as you think either of the Morning Star or the Evening Star, and which is real whereas the Morning and Evening Stars are not." The claim, in our particular historical context, means to imply that false identifications have been made by the person to whom (b*) is told. That there is something they (let's say *we*) mistook sometimes for the Morning Star, sometimes for the Evening Star. When we thought of either star, we thought of what was visible as these two dots in the sky, and hence were thinking of Venus without realizing it. The claim doesn't explicitly name this something, nor tell us what it is. But neither does it numerically-identify it with either or both stars.

Of course, if you don't accept the premise that we can speak of *non-existent objects* at all (and Frege, by the way, did not), then this won't wash with you. Because the claim, (b*), is one *about* non-existents in connection with an existent, Venus. It's not a claim about the different names that are available for Venus. It's not a claim directly about language or labels at all. It's actually a

claim about what (*which*) mere postulated entities, as stars, have been mistakenly identified with a real planet. These postulates aren't mere 'ways of thinking of Venus'. They aren't *ways* at all, but distinct physical *bodies*: two stars, with their own distinct features.

If we must speak of 'ways of speaking of' or 'of thinking of', here, the ways in question must be elucidated *by reference to* these non-existent things that are not ways, and to (mistaken) ascriptions of numeric-identity and numeric-difference. For example: "You've been thinking of Venus in the wrong way, of it as being *these two stars*. So, in an equally good sense, you've been thinking of it in *two* wrong ways." The ways aren't the stars. To use Plato's own image again differently, the stars are those things the correct labels for which have been wrongly fired, *via* arrows, at a planet (so to speak).

This raises the further puzzle again, about what is involved, exactly, in counting as thinking of something external (or perceiving it), and judging it to be this or that, without knowing what it is one's thinking of, perceiving, judging to be this or that. For example, when previous astronomers thought Venus to be two stars, it wasn't that they'd profess their belief in the following terms: "We hold that Venus is two stars." For in an obvious sense, they believed no such thing! However, it's not a puzzle derived from my proposal just now about Venus and the stars; it's a puzzle anyone must confront when we allow for mistaken identifications. I'll propose an answer in Chapter 4, once further conceptual tools have been collected.

What's relevant right now is that should an Husserlian appeal to Frege's idea of 'sense' (Sinn), conceived as a 'way of being presented with something', in order to reject the idea that the perceived real dragon-fruit must be joined, in the set of 'things', with a perceptually experienced and quite distinct, unreal, pineapple, then – I am afraid – I don't see how the appeal's going to help. Because the dragon-fruit/pineapple case is clearly analogous not to the Mark Twain/Samuel Clemens case, but to the Morning Star/Evening Star/Venus case.

So I am sticking to my guns, and insist that when we perceive an external entity, the activity of perceiving may involve an intentional object quite distinct from that entity: one that's a different entity (a different physical *thing*) altogether. The temptation to model the latter as just a 'way of accessing' the one true intentional object is all too similar to swapping referents for an account of labels, with 'mere labels' attached to the wrong entity. That Platonic kind of image would be misleading.

2.5 Might Non-Existence Be *Essential* to Thought?

What's striking on the Augustinian-Husserlian perspective as received (and 'tweaked') above, is that the non-existent emerges a more deeply rooted aspect of intentionality than we might have expected.

First, let's grant that a purely presentational object is conditional on (though irreducible to) a particular subjective process of thought. Then the object doesn't seem equal to anything in the world existing ahead of and independently of one's thought. At most it would be a *manifestation*, we might say, of an existent to one's mind. In other words, something by which an existent

qualifies as known. Not merely the appearing of an existent, but an appearance of a distinct thing in itself that *manifests* the existent distinct from itself.

This thought connects us back to the idea of first-person infallibility, which rose at the end of Chapter 1. "How," we might ask, "could it make sense for someone to be *ignorant* of what, for them, is a purely presentational object? Even if we think of it as manifesting an existent to someone's mind, the manifestation as such is – well, *inherently* manifest. It's essentially present to one's thought. So there couldn't be anything of it in itself, surely, that is hidden from the thinker, right?"

If this thought is correct, could it be that it's just my *purely presentational* objects that I'm infallible about when I report what I'm thinking of? I.e. could it be that first-person infallibility applies to the purely presentational, whereas first-person *fallibility* applies to what qualify as manifested to us, accurately or inaccurately, by way of the presentational? If so, then the subjectivity of thought would itself be marked on every occasion by the intending of objects that don't exist…

Second, the 'horizon' of an object appears to involve a further intending of non-existents within the very process of having a purely presentational object of thought itself.

Here's what I mean. We have a sense of presentations to come that aren't yet had, and are certainly not 'pre-given' ready to jump out, like an actor who's simply been waiting in the wings. The presentational-object is essentially 'incomplete' here in a way that an existent thing isn't. Surely, an existent thing is incomplete in the sense that its history is always developing and not pre-given either. But the purely presentational pineapple as it stands on a purely-presentational table-top at the stroke of midnight hasn't all its features ready to be examined then in the way an existent does. Because the presentational pineapple only 'is' (in some sense yet to be clarified) a 'flow' of presentations creating itself as thinking is afoot. Again, the features aren't 'pre-given'. The horizon is a sense of what can be presented, but isn't.

So, even in thought's intending a purely presentational object, which I've suggested doesn't exist, there's a further intending of non-existent things. I'm articulating a twist on the earlier idea, then, that there are 'two sorts of intending' in any act of thought at all. On this variant, the two sorts are there quite apart from any transcendent object being in the equation. A third sort would be the intending of an existent added on top of, and in some sense (still unclarified) *in virtue of*, these two.

But now, when I say that the features of a non-existent thing aren't 'pre-given', what exactly do I mean to imply? "Hang on," one might think: "Don't we still have an impression of the following: a pineapple that has features already, independent of our thinking, though these features aren't presented? So aren't the features in fact already given after all, in some sense at least?"

"—Yes," I might want to reply, "in that we've a sense of features 'ready' for presentation, which aren't yet actually presented. But they're not 'out there' ahead of our thinking. Nor are they presented *somewhere else*. That wouldn't make sense! Rather, we anticipate being able to describe features of the pineapple, psalm, etc. This horizon concerns ourselves as subjects, as much as it does the relevant object(s)."

"But," I'd then want to respond, "this has my head spinning. Because there just are features nonetheless presented *as* ready in the wings. The pineapple which is purely present to me just does present as having features I *can* attend to, which are there already as features of the fruit, even if I don't happen to be attending to them now. How am I to make sense of that as possible? We surely don't want to claim that we're mistaken in ascribing features, do we? They're presented to me!"

"Well, not presented *yet*…"

"…But presented as *ready to be so*, in some bewildering sense. That's my worry. How are the features both not presented, but presented as ready to be presented, and therefore presented as present in the object, yet presented as not yet presented to me, even while the presentational object can't but – so we thought – be 'fully present' to the thinker? We seem to have talk of pineapples that *aren't* pineapples we can be wrong about, but which are present *as* 'pineapples with features we *can* be wrong about' (for we're presented with 'pineapples of the sort growing on real trees', aren't we?)"

How should my alter-ego reply to that?

"And saying that they're not pineapples of the sort we can, as it so happens, touch or pick doesn't seem to help," I want to go on. "First, because even if that were true, it doesn't make sense of this apparent contradiction I just described about having and not having features, or of being both all present and not all present to mind. Second, because – after all – in the case of perceptual illusion (the dragon-fruit/pineapple scenario), I *am* in fact *presented*, though not perceiving a *real* pineapple accurately, precisely with this: a pineapple that *I* can indeed pick and eat! And you surely can't mean to claim I'm wrong that that's my *experience*? Not unless you abandon common sense and the idea that I'm infallible about what's present to me, accurate or inaccurate though the presentation may be about the real world."

We're confronted here with fresh difficulties about what it is to 'intend objects with one's mind' *at all*. First, problems of non-existents in thought seem to have wormed their way into the entire phenomenon of intentionality. Because we still haven't clarified what it actually is to think of something that isn't real in a way that dissolves our puzzlement about how non-existents are things. Second, and maybe worse than that, we now have what appear to be contradictory properties ascribed to various "things" that sort of are and sort of aren't each other. And that's not even touching on the weird 'sort of identity' gestured at as between a purely presentational thing and a presentational 'flow'.

So, while articulating intentionality in terms of presentations and horizons may have illuminated something about thinking in connection with time and subjectivity, embracing these concepts alone hasn't provided us a fully workable alternative approach to the Pit: an approach by which to make sense of our own talk of thought of things, both existent *and* non-existent. The shift to a first-personal perspective, more broadly, was helpful in pushing back against the Pit-ish objection to thought of non-existents. But this very perspective has now opened a further can of worms. First-personal perspective still appears as part *of* the puzzle, not sufficient alone for solving it.

2.6 Evidence, Marks, Actualities, and Brackets

Nonetheless, Husserl's emphasis on the subjective dimension of thought unlocks a radical idea. It's one that's been waiting in the wings since our thinking with Aristotle. That subjectivity is not inimical to objectivity, but is instead its *necessary condition*.

On one hand there seem intentional objects conditional on the particular thoughts of individuals. Even when (contrary, it seems, to Husserl) those individuals think of objects *independent* of their particular thoughts. On the other hand, the independent objects can't be thought of except through particular thoughts. So, though they're independent of your or my thinking of them, in an obvious sense, they are *essentially* capable of being thought of in general.

Here's what I mean. We can never step outside our own thinking. And objects of the external world present to us in our thinking. There is no object we can know or postulate except on condition of its being thinkable by us. So it's in the 'nature' of these objects (to use an incredibly loaded term) to be thinkable. To be capable of manifestation to subjects. As Husserl puts it:

> the transcendent must needs be **experienceable** (*Ideas I*, §48, 92)
>
> If there are worlds or real things at all, the empirical motivations which constitute them **must be able to reach into my experience, and that of every single Ego**…. Things no doubt exist and worlds of things which cannot be definitely set out in any human experience, but that has its purely factual grounds in the factual limits of this experience. (*Ideas I*, §48, 93)

*

This doesn't mean that these transcendent objects depend on this or that particular subject to be real. Nor does it imply that they aren't really real but just 'in our minds'. Nor does it even imply that the objects are dependent on anybody's thought to be real. Rather that objects are dependent as such on the capacity for thought. The object has the potential to be manifest to a given subject. And, if we take the ideas of Aristotle, Augustine, Husserl on board, this manifestation does not seem to *amount* to a causal interaction. It holds when certain abilities come to fruition in the subject herself.

If infallibility is a mark, as I've suggested, of purely presentational objects, and if purely presentational objects are implied by one's thought of objective ones, then infallibility isn't accidental to objective thought. It's implied by it. Again, this isn't to say that subjects are infallible about the objective objects. To the contrary. It's to say that a certain infallibility – an ability to describe things without the possibility of error, except through lying or a misuse of terms – is what *qualifies* a subject as thinking of something independent of their particular thought.

This idea of qualification came up when we read Aristotle. The idea there was that, in behaving a certain way, a person would count as thinking of (for instance) a particular apple. This wouldn't merely be evidence of a causal interaction with that apple. It would be a 'mark' of it. And it's crucial, now, to dwell on what I mean by this.

Remember how we thought about concepts in response to Zeno. I wrote then,

> We acquire the concept <horse> in part by acquiring the ability to answer questions right about horses, in part by the ability to point out horses in fields (or on the telly); to retrieve the toy-horse as opposed to the toy-bear when asked to, etc.

If the ability to answer questions, point out things, retrieve them, were merely evidence of having the concept <horse>, this would be to say there's no necessary relation between those acts and having the concept <horse>.

Do I *infer*, though, that the child understands what a horse is? Or do I *see* that she does? Well, maybe this question itself is ill-phrased, because it presupposes that inference is contrasted only with veridical perception. But the logic of 'marks' or 'criteria' is more interesting than that. Given what I know about the child, given what's presented to me as accurate memories about her and her upbringing, I am simply presented in perception with a child who's now mastered <horse> (or, since concepts have greater or lesser forms of complexity, a *version* of <horse>). "This," I may say, "is what it looks like for a child to know what horses are." I see the child in a new light when I understand that, by acting thus, she's thinking of this or doing that. But there are no new physical 'things' on the scene, like special machinery in the background that reveal her behaviour not to be caused by the creature she is, say, but by something totally different.[14]

In this case, I may be mistaken about what's real. It may turn out that some of my memories are wrong, or that – unbeknownst to me – she is simply picking out horses unprompted, but has a hidden ear-piece feeding her instructions (e.g. "Point to the biggest thing in that pile", "Go over to the one nearest to the yellow flowers"). But if my perception of a girl without any ear-piece, etc, is veridical, then I don't need to make a further inference to something I can't already see for myself. If she is behaving as she appears to, given her history, then she just is manifesting a set of capacities that is her grasping the concept of horses.

In other words: I am not inferring the existence of something else that I'd need to check for by bringing it before my eyes or other senses, as I am when I infer that fire, rather than a smoke machine, is the cause of the visible smoke; or that it's the living forest, rather than felled timber in a clearing, that's burning and hence causing the visible smoke.

So, when I say that behaviour is a mark of thought, for example, the claim is that certain behaviours in context are simply what it looks like to manifest thinking. The behaviour in context is all there is to perceive, in a sense. Nothing is 'hidden' behind or beside it that I need to infer, and must check for by additional direct perception, in order to *know* there's thinking afoot. If I simply understand the behaviour for the manifestation it is, then I perceive it for what it is.

This nonetheless allows one to be mistaken about what someone's thinking, or whether they're thinking at all, when one expects behaviour to continue a certain way that it does not. For example, when you are brought face to face with the appropriate behaviours in an apparent context, you will reasonably experience these as manifesting thought. But it may be that as the

[14] For a deep investigation of what is involved, precisely, in seeing the 'same thing' in a new light in cases like this, see Mulhall 1990 (cf. Mulhall 1999, Chapters 2-3).Note that my account in this essay is meant to be consistent with what Mulhall says in his (1990) about 'continuous aspect seeing'.

behaviours continue, they develop in a way 'defeating' the thought-ascription. They don't unfold in the way you expected them to. It reasonably seemed, given your perspective, that the person was thinking, and it turns out that they weren't. The behaviours which mark such thought were, up till now, indistinguishable from what you could see with your own eyes.

This connects to the broader point that empirical knowledge claims are claims you give reasons for judging true. If Lucy judges there are bones on the floor, she likely has reasons for thinking so. They may not be good reasons, all things considered. And even if they're good, the judgment may be false. But the reasons are rooted in experience. "It looked just like there were bones in the tunnel, when I first looked in," says Lucy. If her reasons are that someone else assured her of the fact, she may appeal (if 'appeal' she must) to experiences in justifying why she judges this someone reliable and trustworthy on the matter. (Etc.) It always makes sense to withdraw an empirical knowledge claim on the basis of new or further experience. "Then," Lucy might continue, "I looked more closely with a torch, and could only see mud. So I guess I was wrong, before, that there were bones."

To return, now, to the issue of infallibility and the capacity of external objects to be thought of.

First, infallibility concerning purely presentational objects would be a mark of certain external objects manifesting in mind. To use an idea from Aristotle on perception, such presentational objects may be a 'second actuality' of external things. On Anna Marmodoro's recent reading of Aristotle on perception, a physical object may, for example, have the power to be red (Marmodoro 2014: 127-133). Intriguingly, this power has not just two but three possible 'states'. It can be merely 'in potential', meaning that the object merely has the capacity to be red but isn't actually red. It can be in 'first actuality', which means it has indeed become red. But it can also be in 'second actuality', which is when it's actually perceived in its redness by a subject. (cf. *De Anima* 426a20-25).

We might borrow this idea of different states of 'power', and say that an object can have the power to have a certain quality, F, the second actuality of which is being manifest in experience. In first actuality as F, external objects exist and instantiate the quality F in the world. In second actuality they are F *and manifest themselves* to mind: they appear. I would then say it's in the nature of appearances that (all else being equal) they yield those subjects to whom they appear *the capacity for infallible speech of apparent objects*. Even if these objects dramatically diverge in their features from those external things they manifest. We might represent the directionality of manifestation, in the two stages of actuality, with a dotted arrow like this:

potentiality	**1st actuality**	**2nd actuality**	
Existent Thing *potentially F*	Existent Thing *being F*	Existent Thing *being F*	⇢ *Purely Presentational Object*
	Not intended	Intended	

A natural thought is that 2nd actuality requires that the Existent Thing present *as being F*; i.e. that the purely presentational object must have features in relevant alignment with the existent: as being F at least. It *might* then be suggested we distinguish a 'third' from 'second actuality' like so:

2nd actuality		**3rd actuality**	
Existent Thing *being F* - - - - - ->	*Purely Presentational Object*	Existent Thing *being F* - - - ->	*Purely Presentational Object*
Intended	**No constraint on features**	Intended	**Aligned features (e.g. as F)**

This raises the question whether an individual can be coherently thought of as 'in potential' *per se* – potentially in existence – and not merely potentially F. In §2.8 I'll argue it cannot. At least, not when thinking of individuals as equivalent to particular *things*...

Second, we are invited, once again, to distinguish two ideas: of objects as *things* from objects as *objects of thought*. Simply as a thing, second (and 'third') actualities aren't registered. One can neglect the conditions for a thing's manifestation to mind, and therefore neglect the idea that it's 'in the nature' of every object to be thinkable or "experienceable". Questions of veridicality don't arise.

As we said at the start of this essay, this is a perfectly good, natural way to think of *things*. Even as it misleadingly suggests their independence from mind at the deepest level. It's what Husserl calls taking a 'Natural Attitude' toward objects, distinct from what he names a 'Phenomenological' one. The latter concerns itself with what it is for objects to be given to mind at all. What must be true of reality (in the broadest, most permissive sense) for objective cognition to be so much as possible. In taking this attitude, we don't deny anything available to us on the Natural Attitude. Rather, we draw a circle, or 'brackets', around our practices exemplifying that attitude, and shift our focus to the very possibility of these practices and attitude. Everything within the brackets is left as it is from within the Natural view, but we see the 'whole' in a new light:

> In the reorientation of the *epoché* [the 'bracketing'] nothing is lost, none of the interests and ends of world-life, and thus also none of the ends of knowledge. But for all these things their essential subjective correlates are exhibited, and thus the full and true ontic meaning of **objective being, and thus of all objective truth**, is set forth. (Hua 6/179 [176]) p. 57)

2.7 Manifestation to Mind

On the manifestation account of perception suggested so far, it's not that there's an existent that is visible in itself which we're failing to see when we have visual impressions. It's not that we see the purely presentational pineapple instead of perceiving the dragon-fruit as it simply looks from

a certain angle. We see both. The latter is achieved insofar as the former is, in appropriate context; i.e. given where we stand in connection to an actual dragon-fruit, under what lighting, and given the resource of memories we arrive on the scene equipped with. The existent is precisely visible to us in multiple ways, according to who and what we encounter it as.[15]

As Husserl put it, the transcendent in itself is not somehow outside human experience, but "must be experienceable" (*Ideas I*, §48, 92). What it is for something to be visible furthermore *as* what a certain thing it is – say, as a dragon-fruit – is for it to manifest in the appropriate presentational objects, which will themselves be dragon-fruits (not pineapples). But we must also accept that how a dragon-fruit can *objectively look*, under certain conditions, *is like a pineapple*.

The idea is expressed neatly in another context by Amartya Sen, who contrasts it with a narrower (but perfectly good) notion of objectivity expressed by Thomas Nagel in *The View From Nowhere*. Nagel writes,

> A view or form of thought is more objective than another if it relies less on the specifics of the individual's makeup and position in the world, or on the character of the particular type of creature he is. (Nagel 1986:5)

Sen's alternative notion of objectivity concerns what will appear to all individuals of given makeup, *provided* they occupy a certain position in the world:

> What can be called 'positional objectivity' is about the objectivity of what can be observed from a specified position. We are concerned here with person-invariant but [also] **position-relative** observations and observability, illustrated by what we are able to see from a given position. The subject matter of an objective statement in the positional sense is something that can be ascertained by any normal person in a given observation position. As exemplified by the statements about the relative sizes of the sun and moon, what is observed can vary from position to position, but different people can conduct their respective observations from the same position and make much the same observations. (Sen 2009:157-8)

Given the right background assumptions, it will seem – looking up at a solar eclipse – that the Sun and Moon are the same size. This is an 'objective illusion': objective because it's person-invariant (it's not particular to this or perceiving subject), provided they meet the criteria for occupying the specified position. The position, then, needn't be 'merely geographical', but can be specified by reference to what one already knows or believes, to what concepts one's mastered, etc.

When we describe what a physical thing looks like, we are giving a description relative to a possible position, in Sen's sense of that term. So when we ask, "What does a dragon fruit *really* look like?", we aren't asking for a position-variant impression. Rather, we most likely want to learn those appearances by which it will seem to us that here's a dragon-fruit rather than any

[15] There's a way of using 'represent' in modern English which may invite confusion. We can say (quite correctly), "She represented the dragon-fruit as a pineapple", meaning simply that, e.g, in the context of her perceiving the dragon-fruit by way of perceptually experiencing a pineapple, she identified what she saw with a pineapple. Even though she didn't believe herself to be thinking of a dragon-fruit that it was a pineapple. But she is not 're-presenting' anything here in the sense of depicting a dragon-fruit or a pineapple, nor otherwise making a 'copy' of it; nor even in the sense of remembering something one way versus another (i.e. of being re-presented with something as if it were the existent she saw previously).

other sort of thing. We want to know a certain *subset* of the object's ways of manifesting. One or many on which will be taken for granted by a teacher when they are trying to teach a child the concept <dragon-fruit>.

The illusion is one manner in which the fruit can be perceptually manifest. There isn't a 'getting underneath' the objective illusion to a 'true appearance'. There's simply one's capacity to actualize a different manifestation of the thing, by moving (metaphorically or literally) to a different position.

It follows that the presentational objects given to us in a manifestation aren't *images of* the manifest existent. There's no possible copying of its features by looking at the existent as it is 'purified' of our subjective experiences (in which purely presentational objects are given). Again, we don't get 'underneath' or 'beyond' manifestations to the 'real' appearance. So there is no non-subjective viewpoint from which a representation could then be compared and contrasted with the 'pure existent' in itself for accuracy. This is contrary to the Pit-ish idea of objects that caused bother for Augustine, according to which an existent is entirely surveyable in all its qualities and features at once, the fact is that existents aren't so constrained. There are any number of ways in which an existent can appear as what it is, depending on what one's life history and physical orientation toward it enable one to notice.

The kind of open-endedness which characterizes the purely-presentational, as we think and perceive in time, is not fully 'extricable', therefore, from the existent. As the perceiver thinks and experiences, bringing to bear her particular memories and individual position, new personal experiences constitute themselves as manifestations of the existent. The existent's intentional history can't be peeled from what it is. The changing manifestations mark potentials of the thing itself to be manifest in multiple ways across times, places, cultures, persons. This aspect of being a thing will become a focus of Chapter 5.

With this in mind, the conceptual relation of existent to manifesting presentational object is of one to many. These numerically-distinct objects aren't just accidentally related to it as several existent objects may be accidentally physically related together in a pit. Rather, they are inseparable from the existent's potentialities and actualities of manifestation.

2.8 The Mu'tazilites' Puzzle: Can Individuals *Become* Real?

I want to pause for a minute and ask a question that might not seem, on its face directly relevant to our inquiry: "Does it make sense for an *individual* thing to exist only in potentiality, and *then* in actuality?"

I don't mean to ask whether a kind can be merely potentially instantiated and then actually instantiated. That is of course possible. Even when we use definite descriptions for some individual persons, like "The British Prime-Minister", we don't always mean to speak of those individuals when we ask questions about "The Prime-Minister". For example, if someone asked, "Is anyone the British Prime Minister anymore?" they aren't asking if Boris Johnson is himself but whether the office is presently filled. The question I'm posing, instead, is whether a *particular*

of some kind or other, an instantiation, a genuine individual, can itself be non-existent and then existent:

potentiality	**actuality**
Particular A *potentially existent*	Particular A *existent*

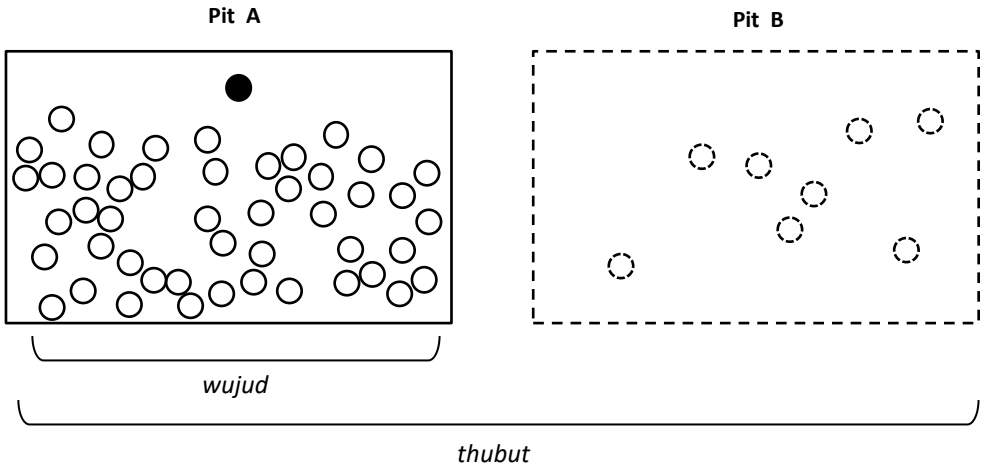
This seems to be a question which puzzled the Mu'tazilites, a school of Medieval Islamic philosophers originating in Basra in the 8th Century C.E. Their puzzle arises in a religious context. As Behnam Zolghadr frames it in a recent paper:

> According to some verses of the Qur'ān [16:42], God, in the process of creating an object, commands **a thing** by saying 'Be!', and then **the object** comes to be (*kun fa yakūn*). Thus, the object should have been real before being existent, because God is addressing it by commanding the object to become existent…. Therefore, some objects (*dawāt*) are real (*dābit*) without being existent. In other words, some objects do not exist. (Zolghadr 2021:306)

If Allah gives existence to a particular object (and not just instantiation to a kind, for example), that object must 'be' prior to receiving existence. In the Mu'tazalite terminology, the object (a particular 'something'; *shay'*) has a kind of being not entailing existence, called (*thubut*), before having true existence (*wujud*). The domain of *wujud* is encompassed by the domain of *thubut* (Benevich 2018:33).[16]

Does this account make sense?

At first blush this looks like an appeal to a Pit-A/Pit-B distinction. *Thubut* would apply to objects in both, while *wujud* only to objects in Pit-A:



But there's more to be said here. Because, on a more charitable reading, I'll ultimately suggest, their account stimulates a development of <manifestation> which may be resistant to that

[16] The difficulty of this passage is masked in some translations; e.g. Haleem 2004, in which Allah says, "When We will **something to happen**, all that We say is 'Be', and it is." (2016 [2004]:168).

difficulty, and which may have application in both religious and secular thought. According to this, a particular may have 'being' and then gain existence, but the particular would not be a 'thing' or 'kind'.

First, on the 'obvious' reading. The reasoning of one Mu'tazalite, Ibn al-Malāḥimī, certainly invites the Pit-ish objection that a non-existent can't be 'created'. The objection, recall, was that to create a thing requires taking stuff and forming it into something new, yet there's no stuff from which a non-existent's made, since it is 'nothing': therefore, nothing can be created that's unreal. Yet Ibn al-Malāḥimī writes,

> The one who has the capacity to create substance has it before [the substance] exists, whereas he cannot help but have a connection with what he is capable of [creating] (*taʿalluq bi-l-maqdūr).* **Therefore substance is an object (*dhātan*) before it exists** in order that the one who is capable [of creating it] could have a connection with it. (Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad*, 363, 14–23; trans. cit. Benevich 2018:34)

The object seems to be modelled as some kind of substance the craftsman relates to in order to render it real.

This chimes with the difficult image in Augustine *via* Williams, of a psalm having some being that's worked upon, 'squeezed' into real-ization, by an act of singing. As though the 'object' (*dhātan*) were in a quasi-spatial relation to the singer or – as it may be – to God. So we might take Ibn al-Malāḥimī to express a Pit-ish kind of thought (modelling objects after physical things in *our* space) while yet failing to appreciate the further inference from that, which the Pit-ish thinker rightly draws, that objects couldn't then be unreal:

> There has to be some relation (*iḍāfa mā*) between the subject and the object of capacity (*al-qādir wa-l-maqdūr*), in order that bringing into existence could occur. Yet, **relation can be only established between two objects** (*dhātayn*). By such a relation we mean **connection (*taʿalluq*).** (*Muʿtamad*, 371, 1–2.; trans. cit. Benevich 2018:34)

*

The Arabic noun *"taʿalluq"* (**تَعَلُّق**) comes from the verb *taʿallaqa* (**عَلَّقَ ـَت**). This can mean *to grip, to clutch, to hang-on to.* Which brings to mind the imagery of the Stoic *pneuma* and Augustine's *intentio*. Whether or not a purely 'intentional' relation is what Ibn al-Malāḥimī has in mind, suppose we focus on non-existent particulars and leave aside the difficulties around thinking of God as analogous to a Craftsman. Let's just grant that he is, in some workable sense. Could these particulars become real? That is, might His relation to them ahead of their reality be merely intentional? To keep the discussion simple, I'll focus on physical things.

A non-existent physical thing has features, if it's to be a *thing* at all. A prince, a pool, a pineapple. And if these individuals are to have the *kinds* of features they do, they must have a history if they are not paradoxical even in non-existence. A prince, in the most traditional sense, is the son of a monarch. He has to be born from royal parentage or initiated by adoption or decree into a royal family. Both routes involve physical processes, even the initiation. A pool is a body of water; the water must accumulate from somewhere. Likewise a pineapple is the sort of thing that grows

from a seed, and that seed came from an earlier plant (and so on). So, if a non-existent physical thing is the (non-paradoxical) thing it is, it has a history and origin as that particular.

But if this is correct, how should such origins be reconciled with their 'second' origins as real existents? There seem too many histories. The prince came into existence relative to his parents at a certain time. But he's supposed to come into existence relative to *us* at a later time. How could he do both?

One might try to responding, "Well, that's like any object of thought. If, at noon, I think of my grandmother, then at noon she (a 'thing') becomes my *object of thought*. She has a 'second origin' as such, consistent with her origin as a living being." But I'm concerned not with the prince's origin as an object of thought, but as the individual *thing* he is: a unique person who is, say, the son of a unique monarch.

If he exists relative to his parents as a non-paradoxical prince, nonetheless he becomes a paradoxical prince with respect to us because he comes into being 'wholesale' without anyone actual's having given birth to him while actual. Making his family and world real along with him won't fix the issue, as there will have been a time in our existent world before they were real, too, and after which they became existent 'whole-sale'. Moreover, we'd only be exacerbating a further problem, which is that we place these beings into relations with a world history that has 'no room' for them.

"Couldn't God just alter the past, and replace it with that of the (previously) non-existent world?" — But God would still be 'contradicting' His own history with respect to these objects of His thought. As such objects, they weren't existent with respect to Him. It would still be the case that the prince becomes paradoxical with respect to God, because he comes into being 'wholesale' without anyone actual's having given birth to him – i.e. without his coming into being – while actual. We must allow the distinction between non-existent and existent if we're to retain the starting premises of the Mu'tazilites' puzzle: in which Allah says to objects, "Be!", and they *become*.

One might suggest God simply shifts His attention from one to another parallel world. Each world would be equally existent (with respect to *Him*, presumably) as the other. But then his command, "Be!" seems remarkably weak. More like a report on where He's 'at', as it were, than His genuinely making something real that was not. Moreover, the distinction between a mere object of His thought and something He directly creates as real seems to vanish. If whatever physical things He thinks of have just as genuine a kind of existence as everything *we* can stand in relation to, then for Him there's no non-existent to make real anyway. And should He whisk an object out of one parallel world to another (supposing that were possible), this wouldn't make it newly *really* real but merely place it in fresh relations to ourselves.

2.9 Not a *Thing*, But Not (Only) a Nothing, Either

When we list off manifestations of an existent, we give descriptions of different particulars. The presentational objects. We can describe these presentational objects 'as such' or describe them as the *things* these objects are – in the next chapter I'll argue there's a big (numeric) difference

between the two. Either way, we gesture back from each to a common 'origin', what is manifest by each. The linguistic character of this is that when asked what each of the things manifests, we give the name of the existent (for instance).

It's this linguistic character I think gives us the key to a quite different approach to the Mu'tazalites' puzzle, and to the puzzle of what we're doing when we talk of non-existents. The two puzzles aren't just affiliated with each other in an interesting way, but are – contrary to how it might seem – two sides of a coin. A difficulty with recognizing our own life with our words about being and non-being and being— and not-being—.

When discussing Frege's case of the Morning Star and Evening Star, I said that insofar as a person may have thought of either or both, one may also have been thinking of Venus. Even though Venus wasn't one and the same as either star. But I noted that this was only one sort of case one could give where someone tells someone else something that can be codified as "A=B". Another kind of case is when we begin with a proper name and ask, "What is A?" This kind of question is the starting point for everything in the essay from this point.

My question right now is an odd one. It's less directly about things than about language: "If we ask, What is A?, and the answer now is 'something existent, B' but earlier was 'something particular but nothing existent', then what must be true of A in order to avoid the paradox problem?"

It must be that A has no history of its own as equal to a *thing*. "A", in other words, couldn't be the name simply of anything physical with a history. It can't be the name of B, either. Yet if the answer can be "Something physical and existent", A needs to 'be' something physical and existent. So the verb "to be", here, in "A=B" can't be used to express numeric-identity. But we don't mean to express that mistaken numeric-identification took place, either.

Now if we are in the grip of a Pit-ish (or 'Natural') attitude, we can feel that 'A' must denote some *thing* somehow. But if we characterize A in terms of what can be said and when, then we may avoid that temptation. We can say, " 'A' is what's given in answer to a question, "What was B before B existed?", without A's being the name of B or any other physical thing."

This suggests we might assume too much, sometimes, when we hear talk about 'what must be true of A'. Because often times when something is true or false about something, we can tell by going and checking the something itself (a physical thing), or by appealing to descriptions given of that something in itself by an authority on the matter. The something still seems like a 'thing', here, *because* there are truths concerning it. We might be led to think it is some *thing* quite distinct from B, that hasn't existence. A sort of physical thing that 'becomes' the existent-thing, B.

But it cannot simply be B before B had existence. 'A' must also be the name of something one can think of, if God (for instance) can individuate and address it. And B doesn't 'become' what it is out of any stuff, on pain of the difficulty voiced by the Pit-ish thinker at the start of Chapter 1. B was nothing before it became itself.

Does this give us a clue?

"You can't mean to say "A" names *nothing*, can you? Or 'nothingness', I should say. Surely A is something if B is, and if in some sense it is B."

If we think in terms of the language of asking questions and giving answers, rather than in terms of physical relations, then perhaps "A" can have a use as follows: It is what we say 'is' nothing *and* 'is' a physical, existent thing. I am not yet clarifying in positive terms what the word "is" is doing when we speak thus correctly. I'm not even assuming that it's simply one role it takes. But I am suggesting that rather than search in our memories or imaginations for any peculiar entities, things, that seem to meet this peculiar characterization, we look for *ways of speaking* that comply with its form.

We can think of this as a sort of riddle. We would have to find a practice with words in which it makes sense to *say* the following and to thereby *say* something true: "'A' is the name of something, and A has no history as a thing, and A is this physical existent, and A was not this physical existent, and A is not equal to a physical existent, and A is nothing."

Such a practice might be under our very noses. But because we don't normally think of it in terms of providing an answer *to the riddle*, and perhaps don't normally think about it at all but rather about the physical things which it concerns, then we might be flummoxed. That's the thing with riddles: they demand an imaginative leap. To see something in a whole new light.

Approaching non-existents in this linguistic way suggests the possibility of an answer rooted in auto-anthropology. And this suggestions casts light, we'll see, on the idea that an individual may be distinct from an 'entity' or 'thing'.

What are the conditions for its being *correct to say that* the manifestation is achieved? We might ask, similarly: What are the conditions for its being *correct to say that* the individual is manifest in existence? Truth and falsity (distinct from being and non-being) are what we ascribe to assertions, or (as contemporary philosophers sometimes call them) propositions. These are what we express using declarative sentences, like "The door is open" or "The sphinx is merely fictional." It's either true or false that the door is open, but the door *per se* – a thing, not a proposition – is neither true nor false. But I don't want to approach 'truth' head-on, by appealing to facts. I want to get clearer about what it means for there to be certain facts at all, by approaching such facts in terms of assertions and the conditions for assertions being correct to make (even if, as it turns out, they're false.)

Under what conditions is it correct to say the door is open? I'm not looking for the answer, "When the door is open!", which is appropriate if asked, "What are the truth-conditions?" I'm looking for something more immediate from the point of view of the subject: someone who has to determine, for themselves, what's the case. If the door is existent, we'd probably go take a look. Or we'd ask someone who had seen it themselves. But if the door is non-existent, no one can go take a look. Yet there must be correctness conditions for saying it's open if the sentence, "The sphinx stands in the open door" is to even be true or false as it occurs in a work of fiction, for example.

The correctness conditions, I'll argue below, are provided within practices of reporting what is said, what would be said, of making inferences based upon a knowledge of kinds (by appeal to generics) and/or of expressing first personal infallibility.

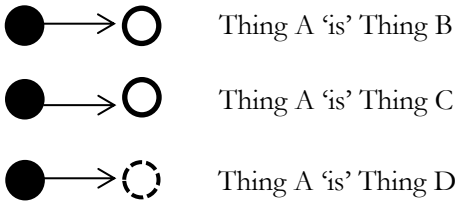
The argument develops that of Elizabeth Anscombe in her 1965 paper, "The Intentionality of Sensation". Her remarks on the concept of grammatical objects, like the direct objects of verbs, and how we teach the ideas of such things, brings us halfway toward an approach to solving such a riddle as the Mutazilites'. A direct object, she argues, is not a thing in any usual sense, nor equal to a word for one, but rather the term "direct object" plays a role in articulating a practice with words and questions.

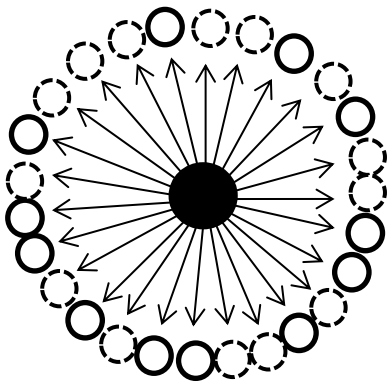
The practice of saying what a direct object is, I'll suggest, echoes the form outlined above: "What is A?" we ask, and we give certain descriptions and names in answer. But "A" – or, in this case, "the direct object" – doesn't denote a thing. To say "What A is" may be precisely to give descriptions of things that "are A" without being equivalent to or mistakenly identified with a thing called "A". "A" is something we utter in turning 'backward' from the description of particular things. The descriptions, in turn, are derived by attending to verbal utterances of infallible subjects or to 'texts' in the broad sense of 'bodies of speech' more generally.

Similarly, I will later argue, we can ask, "What is *this individual*?" in some contexts, and correctly give descriptions of various things, not equivalent to each other. We turn 'back' from these descriptions, in the context of the asking, toward uttering the name of the individual. But the individual *per se*, in some contexts, may not be a thing. It may not instantiate any kind of *entity*. So I distinguish in such cases between particular things, like a particular prince or dragon-fruit, and that individual which a particular thing like the dragon-fruit 'is' but isn't identical to.

On the face of it, stated like that, this looks absurd. Because it seems quite unnecessary to invoke a further individual beyond the prince or the dragon-fruit. But this is where the clarification of correctness conditions surrounding utterances for objects of thought, both real and unreal, emerges intricately connected with the project of understanding individuality.

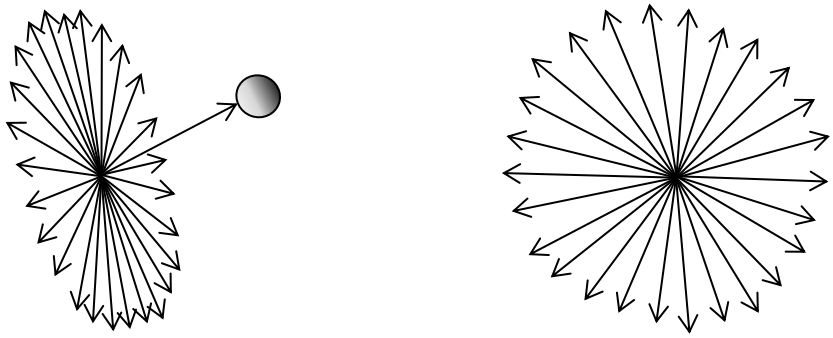
When we approach objects of thought in terms of what can be said correctly and when, we find a vast and fluid network of truths and truth-making practices. This will be pictured by the 'Forest' foreshadowed as an alternative model of thought and its objects in Chapter 1. This network accommodates every sort of "is" that may hold between numerically-distinct things and objects in the broadest sense of 'object'. Every particular thing or object has a 'penumbra' or 'halo' of "is-es" radiating from it, connecting it in language to the description of numerically-distinct others, both real and unreal:





The notion of the individual as a 'nothing, yet a something' which I articulate, and invoke as a path toward solving the riddle, is given by attending not to the things *per se*. Instead by attending to the penumbra.

I show how there is a practice of invoking individuality that works by turning 'back' from multiple different uses of "is". This individual invoked is not a particular thing at the centre of a penumbra. It is indicated by a certain radiance of "is-es". The thing at the centre of the radiance is not the individual in question. It is merely one of the things 'grasped' by the beam of light. So the individual that is nothing but something, and is and is not numerically-distinct existents and non-existents, may be figured as the central 'vanishing point' of the radial circle:



We might think of this as a 'Copernican-Adjacent' turn, rooted in Anscombe's remarks on grammar. It shifts from centring the tangible Moon (a given particular thing) to centring the Sun (a given individual which that thing and other things 'emanates' from). As the Moon/Thing slides away from the centre of our vision, we are suddenly confronted with the source of light. The objective illusion of the Moon as what is radiant is not 'lost', but displaced. Unpacking that analogy: the objective illusion of the particular *thing* as equivalent to the *individual* which it 'is' falls aside. We see instead the particular as caught in the rays of light. The Moon, seen from another side, dazzles in the Sun's reflection.

3

Double Descriptions

Transparency, Opacity, and Question-Things

Chapters 1-2 have played a 'gold-panning' function. Back and forth, side-to-side, comparing versions of the Pit and images of Resistance, until the merits of multiple models relative to different particular puzzles, starting peeking into view.

Chapters 3-6 will play more an alchemical role. We'll take the gold dust found and find them collectively transformed into something stranger. I'll put together four ideas treated separately so far: (i) that the object can be characterized in three ways, one in terms of who thinks of it, and the other independently of that, and a third in terms of a flow of ways of presentation; (ii) that characterizing an object in terms of thinkers can be done third-personally or first-personally; (iii) that the first-person *seems* connected with a special infallibility about one's thought, and with our capacity to ascribe something existence or non-existence; and (iv) the idea (only hazily articulated, still) that the object of thought is not the thing it 'is' (perhaps even is not equal to the individual it 'is' either).

§3.1-3.2 aim to make clearer a range of terms for the purpose of resolving the puzzles we're accruing. I formally separate a use of "things" to refer to entities that can be spoken of being what they are without reference to who thinks of what, and a use of "objects" for something else; what I'll later call a "question-thing". I argue there are contexts in which we, masters of everyday language of things and thoughts, can find it natural and meaningful to talk of "objects of thought" as being distinct, somehow, from the *things* they 'are'. I call descriptions of things as such 'transparencies', and descriptions of objects of thought as such 'opacities'. Using different names helps bring out features of our practices with words that we don't usually give names to.

§3.3 then lays out seven sorts of puzzle we've collected and need to resolve. §§3.4-3.8 aim to derive a further conceptual tool before tackling these puzzles head-on in Chapters 4-5. This tool is the notion of a 'question-thing'. This is derived from Elizabeth Anscombe's work on the intentionality of thought and perception. The second half of this chapter is then a close and critical reading of Anscombe's account of intentional objects by reference to 'grammatical objects' like the direct objects of sentences, indirect objects, subjects and verbs.

3.1 Transparencies and Opacities

In talking about Holmes so far I've considered him as a 'thing'. But what exactly do I mean by that term? Particular things, I'll say, are individual entities with particular features of their own, *independently of whether anyone's thinking of them*. They're also instances of different kinds. Many

things, in this sense, stand in space-time relations to other things, other instances of kinds. Animals, plants, artefacts, geographical entities like mountains or fjords. Things you can give proper names to and describe using physical (or, for instance, biological) language. Things which, if they are persons, can be described in terms of the roles they play in life or society more specifically. "Holmes is a human being and a private detective", "Morgana is an enchantress". And also less 'thingly' sorts of things – 'entities', if we may call them that, like numbers, acts, events, processes, ages, principles, and so on. Not physical concrete substances, but kinds of thing nonetheless.

Descriptions true of all such things, whether concrete or abstract, shouldn't be thrown out merely because the particular things in question are fictional – such as the falls where Holmes meets Moriarty. But there are ways of describing something which a given *thing* is other than by describing the *thing's* physical or abstract features, its roles in society, personal vices, and so on. One such way is to describe the 'something' *merely* as what So-and-So's thinking of or talking of. That is, to give a description of something as an *object of thought*. So, precisely *not* as independent of whether anyone thinks of it at all.

Some examples:

(1) What James thought of at midnight
(2) The thing I was describing to you in the fourth paragraph of this chapter
(3) That particular thing which Jess described to us yesterday, and which you've been trying to remember.

We wouldn't have to say anything about "what the *thing* is", as such; neither what kind of thing it is (a cat? A hat? A number?), nor what its proper name is, if it has any (Tibbles? 'The Square Root of 4'?) Instead, as in these cases, it could seem rather like looking at a Christmas present still packed in its wrapping paper. There's definitely "something" about which there are truths and falsities considered *as a thing*, but it seems I can talk about it and, in some sense, do things with it, without knowing or saying what these truths and falsities are. Some more examples, where we hear (4-6) in the mouths of other people:

(4) Whatever it is Lucy's thinking of, if it's making her laugh, then let her.
(5) I'm thinking of something and I want you to guess what it is.
(6) Something popped into my head earlier, an old memory.

Descriptions (1-6) give us no clue that the object of thought on each occasion may be Holmes, say, let alone a man or an organism; nor even a physical thing as opposed to something abstract, nor one as opposed to many different things. One could only infer that it's Holmes on the basis of more information; e.g. given (1), that J.M. was animatedly talking about Holmes at 12 am; or, given (2), that in the fourth paragraph of this chapter I'm describing Holmes; etc.

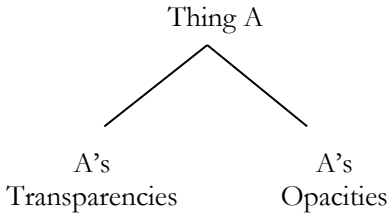
I'll call constructions like (1-6) '**opaque descriptions'**, or **opacities** for short. *Something* is being described, for sure. But if we want to say there is some *thing* described, it would be apt to clarify that it is spoken of only in terms of its apparent 'packaging', as it were, in a mental act or piece of referential language. A (very much figurative) sealed, opaque parcel of thought or speech.

Meanwhile, I'll say that **transparent descriptions,** or **transparencies** for short, are those kinds of descriptions of things *as such*, therefore excluded by opacities. When I give a transparent description of Holmes I am describing Holmes only *as a thing*, as an entity with his own features and qualities irrespective of who or what's thinking of him. Transparencies concern things *only as things*: entities characterized independently of whether anyone or anything's thinking of them. More examples again:

(1) He's a human being and private-detective
(2) (He's the) King on the Mound
(3) The skull in the box
(4) Peter Parker, Esq.

*

This may suggest the following picture: A simple dichotomy between two kinds of description pertaining to a given thing (call it Thing A):



However, notice something in how I've been talking. As I said, I am using the term "thing" in a narrow sense to mean entities, concrete or abstract, that are of some particular kind. Whereas I'm using "something" a bit differently: not to mean "some *thing*", necessarily, but more broadly to mean simply *what is, or can be*, thought or spoken of. So I would say, "Something is known to us as an object of so-and-so's thought, but we don't know what thing that something is." This gap between talk of something and of some *thing* (which it is) will become increasingly hard to avoid in what follows. It's this gap which will be the key, I think, to our puzzle about thoughts of non-existents. By the end of this chapter it will have undermined the picture shown above.

Now notice, secondly, that a full sentence or denoting phrase can mix together what I'm calling opacities and transparencies pertaining, as it seems, to one and the same *something*. We can just call these linguistic constructions '**mixed-opacities**'. For instance:

(5) The serpents Herakles thought of slithered through his memory.
(6) What she thought of had six legs and countless eyes.
(7) Far and above the most wicked deed you've told me of.

*

Mixed-opacities are perfectly ordinary constructions. We've no problem understanding them in everyday use. But when we step back from our practices with such sentences or fragments, and reflect on mixed-opacities as phenomena of language – i.e. with the scalpel-eye of a linguist or logician, say – we may start to assume things about our practice without giving the assumptions a

second thought; and these assumption may drive us back into a Pit-ish way of thinking about thought.

If someone says, "I'm thinking of something particular; it's a tree," it's entirely natural to assume that "something" is just another way of referring to a given "thing", or indeed a given "object of thought", taken simply as a *thing* that's thought of. So it would then be natural, in turn, to take my claim about mixed-opacities as meaning this:

> That sentence about the tree makes two claims about one and the same *thing*, this thing being *equal to* both a physical something – a tree – *and* a specific object of someone's thought. An object of thought is a further kind of *thing* that a given thing can qualify or count as; much as a person may qualify as a doctor. A particular doctor is equal to a particular person who has a certain training and licence, etc. Well, a particular object of thought is equal to a particular thing about which someone's thinking (i.e. a certain tree).

It's natural, I think, to hold that if (6) is a true statement, for instance, then the six-legged thing it denotes is numerically-identical with a thing called someone's object of thought; the someone whom (6) denotes with "she".

But a core-thesis of this essay is that there are two ways in which the thing and something we can call "the object of thought" are not a single *thing* merely with different names, nor even *two quite distinct things* (not two as a woman and the doctor she is are two, but neither two as a woman and her stethoscope are two); not in any straightforward sense. Rather that, in distinct ways, there are two kinds of description I can give, one of a physical thing with legs, another of an object of thought as such, and that giving these descriptions is to elucidate what a certain 'something' is. This 'something' is what I called in Chapter 2 an 'individual as *such*'.

3.2 Are Objects of Thought the *Things* They Are?

Back at the dig, young Lucy's still unclear about this whole 'object of thought' business. They're peculiar, sure, but so are a lot of things. "So…." she asks us, "They're *not* like things you'd find underground, then?"

If we reply again, "Well, some of them are," I really think we'd do Lucy a disservice. Because we'd risk letting on that to talk in terms of objects of thought is to talk merely in all the ways we do about the things they are; or, indeed, all the ways we speak about *things per se*. Mixed-opacity statements, as I said, encourage this kind of thinking; for instance, "What I'm thinking of *lies buried under that mound there*." It could seem from the surface grammar of that sentence like we ascribe the state of being-under-the-mound to the object of thought as such. But do objects of thought as such have *any* location? Could an object of thought *itself* be buried at all?

This may seem a very odd question. The term "object of thought" isn't a staple of our everyday language, after all, is it? It's really a technical term. My aim, therefore, is not to appeal to our common usage of the term to straightforwardly remind ourselves of what it means (or to appeal to the authority of philosophers!) My aim, in fact, is to investigate the possibility of *extending our*

shared language, yours and mine, here and now, to the particular end of solving the puzzle of how we think of non-existents.

So this is as much a practical inquiry as a theoretical one. I'm going to try out with you a use of words by placing ourselves in a particular sort of context. If we hold in mind that we can think of some *thing* 'as' ('in the role of') *what is thought of*, will we find ourselves speaking of 'it' in that role in *all* the same ways we speak of mere things? Or will we discover our language branching itself along two or more paths, in line perhaps with the split between transparencies and opacities, finding ourselves speaking of something else? And will we be making sense of each other speaking this way? Only in this process might we possibly learn how to hear the very question, "Can the object of thought itself be buried?" as making sense one way or another.

My personal conviction is that we, ordinary speakers of English (for example), who know how to ascribe each other thoughts of things, are already sensitive to such a branching. That it expresses itself in how we already ascribe one another thoughts of this or that – even if, as is clearly the case, we don't do so with the technical language of "transparencies", "opacities" and "objects of thought". But this very sensitivity, I believe, can be neatly and helpfully expressed, too, in how we take up and cultivate a use of the term "object of thought" together now. But you must be the test of that yourself. My convictions count for nothing. What counts is (the emergence of) a shared practice with words; the emergence of shared conceptions, a *shared* discovery.

As a first step in our practical investigation, I'd like to think with the ideas of 'location', 'size', 'weight', 'finitude', 'health' and 'vulnerability to change'. I want to see how we do or don't apply their concepts in talk of things as 'things' versus as 'what someone thinks of'.

First, thinking with 'location'. Suppose I asked: "If I think of a number, in what sense has my object of thought a location relative to something else?" We might respond by speaking of the number itself, saying that it stands 'between' two other numbers, running in an order ("1, 2, 3, 4…"). But suppose we concern ourselves with the temporal order in which we think of things. *As* what I think of, a number needn't stand between the numbers two and four, for instance, but may stand between a thought-of boat and a thought-of honey-pot. ("I thought first of the *Dawn Treader*, then the number three, then what Winnie the Pooh was holding").

But, if objects of thought *as such* here were equivalent to the things they are, this answer with the *Dawn Treader* and Winnie the Pooh wouldn't make literal sense. Numbers don't stand literally 'between', 'before' or 'after' physical artefacts – they're not that sort of thing. Nor are numbers as such *temporally* sequential, anyway. Yet I think we find room, in this context, to hear literal sense it makes to say that one *object of thought* came 'before' another, without it following that the *things* they are came one after the other temporally either. For we mean only that something was thought of before something else was. The boat thought of needn't have *existed* before the honey-pot did, for example. Furthermore, the ordering doesn't turn on or reflect the existence or non-existence of any of the things, including the boat and honey-pot.

I'm not simply distinguishing things and our *acts* of thinking of them. The acts have spatial locations, being actualized at this or that place. If I think of a honey-pot while sat in Edinburgh at 5 pm Greenwich Mean-Time, my act takes place in Edinburgh then. But my object of thought is not 'in Edinburgh' or 'taking place at Edinburgh', though it may be what it is (i.e. an object of

thought) while I am there. It's also unclear what I could mean in saying it's 'at' 5 pm or 'takes place at 5 pm', as though the object were an event. It would make sense rather to say, the object of thought *was had* at 5 pm, or to say simply of the thing which it is, "It was thought of at 5 pm".

So it seems that objects of thought *as such* don't have literal location. If they don't, then they can't be literally buried, even if some of the things we say they 'are' can be.

Let's try thinking now with 'size'. Suppose I think of the mountain Ben Nevis and of a mouse. As *things* one of these is bigger than the next. But as objects of thought, there's no scale of height or breadth by which to compare. "How did you fit *that* object of thought, precisely, into your mind?" "Ah but that one is so small, it's easy" – This way of speaking doesn't make sense except metaphorically (or as the wording of a joke (=funny nonsense)).

Similarly if we think with 'weight'. Suppose I think first of a boulder, then a feather. "Which is heaviest to think of?" has no literal answer, because it doesn't make literal sense. Having the object of thought doesn't imply making any physical exertion in connection with the thing that object is, heavy or not. Since something can be thought of whether the thing it is exists or not, this suggests that to think of something is not like standing or acting in any physical relation to a thing even when it *does* exist. But since a physical thing like Ben Nevis just does stand in physical relations, then it seems that the mountain as such is not *equivalent* to the object of thought which it 'is'.

(So what sort of 'is' is this "is"?)

This suggestion of non-equivalence, of numeric distinction, seems to me reinforced if we think in turn with 'sharing'. There is a sense in which one object of thought can be shared by many people. The *thing* it is can be thought of by many. But it is not shared, *as an object* of many thoughts, in the way one shares a thing *as a thing*, as when one shares a cake or lasagne, or artefacts like blankets or rooms. Not even if the thing it is *is* a dish of lasagne, or a blanket. For it wouldn't make sense – would it? – to ask how much of something is left for others to think of before no one can think of it anymore ("None left, sorry!"), or whose turn it was now, or who was physically better poised to 'make use' of the thing.

And one may or may not think *of a thing* at the same time as one thinks of the component parts from which the *thing* was constituted, or else of the fragments into which it (was) later decomposed, and you can also think of parts of the whole considered each in isolation, and think in turn of each of these in isolation from the others, one after the other at intervals over several days. But you can't have your cake whole *and* be eating parts, too.

Let's think now with the notion of 'finitude'. Objects of thought as such don't have the same finitude as a thing that can be broken, burnt, or swallowed by mould. Because while the flower I think of may be long gone, myself and others can yet think of it beyond its 'being out there' in the grass. There need no longer be the flower, but still the flower is 'active' in life as an object of my thought. It's not living on 'as' a flower, in one obvious sense. Yet it *is* living on 'as' a flower in another sense, for this object of thought just 'is' a living, blooming plant. There's no 'think-by' date on things we've encountered, even if all such organic *things* come to an end as such.

Moreover, we can think of the flower in its healthy-period, without our having had it as an object of thought *during* that healthy-period. So if there is a 'think-after' date on existent things, it is not constrained by the date on which we first encountered the thing either, face-to-face. But there are 'use-by' dates on actions with respect to the flower face-to-face *as thing*, such as plucking it, trampling it, or re-planting it, etc.

Finally, thinking in turn with 'health' and 'vulnerability to change'. I can think of an elm first healthy, bending supple in the wind, then diseased, or being burnt. Such states and processes don't seem to apply to the object of thought as such, but to the tree as thing. The object of thought that is *the tree which* was withering and diseased, for instance, was not and is not 'itself' withering or diseased at any time. It's just not that sort of thing. ("Not that sort of thing? Then objects of thought are a sort of thing after all!" – Yes and No, is my answer, as we'll shortly see). The tree 'lives' on in some sense 'as' an object of thought, but in that role as object of thought it doesn't wilt, flower, is not at risk of infection, etc. Although, it might be more or less healthy *for a person* to think of certain things rather than others; i.e. healthy or unhealthy to *have* in mind.

A further but related point. The tree might fade from mind, or continually bring to mind other things upsetting or disgusting to recall. (Consider that good advice, "Don't let them live rent free in your head!") But this capacity to fade, or dredge up associations, is a power not of the object of thought as a whole other thing of itself alone. It's a power of *the tree in its role as* object of thought. The tree simply as tree, as a *thing* out in the woods round my house, doesn't fade in and out with its fading in and out *as* object of thought. Nor does the tree *as thing* alone bring associations. But it's as a tree that the object of thought begets other objects as the things they are – dark woods, stagnant ponds, a pair of owl's eyes…

These thoughts suggest that when we move from talk of things *per se* to talk of what is thought of, we take up a different set of concerns. We shift to a conversational space where different sorts of questions are asked and answered, and different things make sense to say.

That much might seem obvious to you already. But then perhaps you appreciate my puzzle: How are we to reconcile the numeric-difference between things and objects of thought (different things are true of each) with their apparent *sameness* – for surely (don't we also want to say?) the thing just *is* the object of thought when someone thinks *of the thing*? In other words: How can the object of thought be one and the same as some thing, while different descriptions are true and false of each?

My response will be that in one sense 'they' are the same, but in another sense 'they' are not. That in the former sense we express something else than numeric-identity by "the same". My task must be to clarify that sense.

3.3 Seven Sorts of Doubling

Notice that we've been homing in, since Chapter 1, on seven sorts of 'doubling' and multiplicity.

First, there's the strange doubling of the 'thing' taken first merely as itself, independently of mind, and then the 'same thing' as somehow having distinct and conflicting abilities 'in' thought.

The tree merely as a thing doesn't bring associations to mind, but rather the tree in its role as what is thought of. A tree as a thing is fated to wither and fall, but that same tree in the role of what is thought of can retain its leafy health for as long as there are thinkers to think of it.

Second, the doubling of 'things', in some use of "things", in there being different truths pertaining to the object of thought merely as such (quite independently of what thing it happens to 'be'), and the thing which we say it 'is'. The object as such has no literal location in any environment, nor weight nor size, though the tree it is has all.

Third, the doubling of a thing in itself *as intentional object* – the thing-as-presented, to recall our discussions of Augustine and Husserl. There is the existent tree which may stand and grow quite independently of what anyone thinks of. But there is also the presentational tree by which that existent counts as thought of. And this presentational tree, while it may – as a tree – have stood long before we thought of it, nonetheless has 'existed' as a presentational *object* only so long as the thinking.

Fourth, the strange doubling discussed at the end of Chapter 1: the fluctuating which 'is' the object of thought that 'is' a thing that needn't exist but 'is' not fluctuating in the same way. Again, the tree as a thing is growing. It's alive. It draws water up, soaks energy from the sun, unfurls its foliage. But the fluctuating of presentations of that tree – from different spatial perspectives, relative to different projects and wishes, with reference to different memories and contemplated possible futures – is not the fluctuating of something literally rooted and dripping sap as the tree is.

Fifth, the especially troubling doubling of presentational truths, in what seemed like sure contradiction. The purely presentational pineapple, I suggested, has a Husserlian horizon of its own. There are features of the pineapple that I'm not presently presented with, but have a 'feeling' for, and can focus my mind onto, which will in turn 'expand' the horizon to suggest yet further features I'm not presented with. Yet I'm presented with a pineapple as having all the features it does already, not in wait for my exploration. Yet the pineapple, being presentational, was suggested to be something of whose features I can't be ignorant. Furthermore, in a case of illusion as here, and when I judge the pineapple real, it surely presents as a pineapple I can taste and touch. Yet if, as suggested, existence is attributed in terms of what stands in relation to oneself (recognized in a first-personal thought), then I'd seem to be wrong about the pineapple. So it seems that at least one of the above claims needs to be given up, or qualified.

Sixth – a doubling not previously mentioned, but which seems connected with the fifth just given. If I think of the presentational pineapple as having a determinate number of seeds, it seems right to say that what I think of has a determinate number. But I may not be presented with a determinate number. So it seems like it both does and doesn't have a determinate number, if a mark of presentational things is that I cannot be ignorant of their features. This doesn't seem to bear on whether the object of thought this thing *is* is indeterminate. (What would it even be to say the object *as such* has seeds, let alone a determinate or indeterminate number?) It won't do to say, either, that the pineapple as a thing is fantastical having two contradictory features (like a round-square does). Because I'm not presented in thought or perception with a fantastical pineapple. So we seem to have an odd doubling of determinacies…

Seventh, and more tentatively, the doubling and more of individuals in terms of the things they are. I've hinted at the idea that 'something' may 'be' a thing, and perhaps more than one thing, without being equal to that thing or things. That it may even 'be' multiple things that aren't equal to each other, as well as being a 'nothing' itself.

There are different uses of 'is' to account for in all of these doubling cases. It's the task of Chapters 4-6 to do this. To do so, I'll argue, one should reframe these cases in terms of our capacity to ask and answer different sorts of question. To understand why, and to lay the ground for a notion of 'individual' as neither a thing nor neither a (mere) nothing, I give the remainder of this chapter to a close reading of Elizabeth Anscombe's paper, "The Intentionality of Sensation: A Grammatical Feature".

3.4 Anscombe's Puzzle: What are Direct Objects?

By way of introduction to Anscombe's text, I want to think for a moment about objects of desire rather than objects of thought or perception. Anscombe makes the suggestion that, in order to understand what an object of thought is, we must recognize a certain feature of objects of desire. This is a feature the two 'sorts' of object share in common. So let's think a moment, ourselves, on what it makes sense (and doesn't make sense) to say about objects of desire as such.

If I say that "I'd like a cup of tea", the surface grammar can make it look like only *this or that* actual cup of tea will suffice. But usually when I say "a cup of tea", in this context, it's correctly understood that it's no particular one I want. One might be tempted to think like Zeno or early Aristotle here, and infer that I name a Generic Cup of Tea instead; an 'incomplete' sort of object of thought. But it's surely not a Generic Cup I want either, it's a concrete ("—and therefore surely a particular?") one!

What we might have overlooked is work which the phrase "I want a [something-something]" does for us in actual life. It specifies the kind of thing whose instantiation would satisfy my desire, even as it doesn't strictly *name* the kind in answer to what I want (for I don't desire the *kind*, *Cup of Tea!*) So, I'll have what I want when I've a given cup of tea, and this will be a real and particular (non-Generic) cup of tea. But it still won't have been *this* particular cup I wanted, despite the fact that it's this particular that 'meets' my wishes.

A helpful way to think of this is in terms of what it is to display a desire, to manifest it, in our behaviours. A person who wants an X will, all else being equal, go about looking until an X is found. Then, unless they desire 'another one', the search will stop. "I want an X" expresses the *kind* of search that would make sense for the person to undertake, and hence the *kind* of its goal. (Notice I'm not identifying the desire with the behaviours, here; only saying that there things it looks like to have a desire. Otherwise we couldn't ascribe each other desires on the basis of things we perceptibly do.)

At the start of her paper, Anscombe says there are two ways of using the term, "objects" we must distinguish. The 'modern' sense refers to particular things in our environment, presumably existent. But an older sense, she says, we're dealing with objects of—. For instance, objects of thought, perception, fear, hope, worship, and so forth. So she writes,

> Objects of desire, objects of thought, are not objects in one common modern sense, not individual things, such as the objects found in the accused man's pockets. (Anscombe 1981:3)

But does Anscombe mean they're not things *we* might find in a fellow man's pockets, or that they can't be individuated from each other? Or both?

To clarify the 'old' use of "object" she's interested in, she invokes our current everyday talk of objects of desire in particular:

> Suppose somebody says that the object of desire, or desired object, need not exist, and so there need not be any object which one desires. He is obviously switching from one use of the word 'object' [i.e. the old use] to another [, the new one]… Now to prevent confusion I will introduce the phrase 'intentional object' to mean 'object' in the older sense, which still occurs in 'object of desire' (Anscombe 1981:4)

This introduces a further ambiguity, though, since we've seen how objects of desire are often not particular *things* ("not individual things", Anscombe may say) even if they're particular as objects of desire ascribed. Rather, as here, they're often what we specify using an indefinite article plus a noun phrase (e.g. 'a cup of tea', 'a break from walking', 'a contented life'). Though, in specifying what we desire, an indefinite article might not always apply (e.g. 'I desire': '—safe working conditions', '—bodily autonomy'), and we might use verbs instead of nouns (e.g. '—to understand their viewpoint', '—to swim in the sea'). In such cases, the 'things desired' aren't things it makes sense to say exist or not. 'A cup of tea', 'safe conditions', and 'to swim' don't denote particular entities, real or unreal. Even though there's room to say that, when asked, "What does J.M. desire?", and one answers, "Safe working conditions", one is ascribing a particular *object of desire* as such.

Are Anscombian intentional objects of thought non-particulars in this sense that particular objects of desire can be non-particular things?

Alternatively, if Anscombe has in mind only those objects of desire that *are* particular things, then Anscombian intentional objects can be individuated as particular things, that may exist or not, perhaps. But this then raises the question whether intentional objects are individuated just in so far as the things they 'are' are individuated ("Which [individual] mince-pie is it you want/ are you thinking of, this one in the box or…?"), or whether they can also be individuated simply as intentional objects, in the way objects of thought – as I've cultivated the term with you so far – can be individuated merely as such.

So we must also ask: Would Anscombe even accept the sorts of doubling pertaining to thinking-of-things which we've distinguished in this chapter so far?

With these two questions, and two possible readings, in mind, let's examine the text.

First, this remark on identity:

> Consider the expression 'object of thought'. If I am thinking of Winston Churchill then **he** is the object of my thought. This is like 'What is the object of these people's worship?' Answer: 'The moon'. (Anscombe 1981:5)

In this case, my object of thought is the particular man, Churchill. So it looks like intentional objects can be things that can be individuated as *things*, at least. And some paragraphs later she seems to allow individuation of intentional objects merely as such too.

She begins elucidating her statement that intentional objects are a "sub-class of direct objects" (Anscombe 1981:6). By direct objects she means those 'things' (I use scare-quotes to leave the sense of "thing" as open as possible, for now) taken by the main verbs in sentences. The concept <direct object> is thus a grammatical one. So if I say, "Lucy looked into the tomb," and you asked me, "What's the direct object of that sentence?" the correct answer is to say, "The tomb".

So – my own thinking runs, reading Anscombe's words – it would *seem* to make sense to ask, "Which direct object are you referring to?" and to answer, "The one I specified using, 'the tomb', in answer to your question." That might allow for particular objects of thought as such even if there aren't particular things they are.

Second, this remark on teaching grammar; in particular, to distinguish the direct object of a sentence from the sentence's subject, verb, and any indirect objects:

> the [concept <direct object>] is learned somewhat as follows: the [grammar] teacher takes a sentence, say "John sent Mary a book" and says: "What did John send Mary?" Getting the answer, "A book" he says: "That's the direct object."

So far this may sound like the book can be understood as a particular thing, most likely made-up by the teacher for the sake of example, that 'is' the direct object of this sentence but can also be more, and is therefore not numerically-identical with the direct object. For surely the same book could be referred to again (and again) not only in *further* sentences, but in such ways that it becomes multiple indirect objects and grammatical subjects? Again, without becoming equivalent to any of them? For example:

> "John sent Mary the book. John had given the book a new cover. But then Mary dropped the book in some mud. She, naturally, gave the book a hot bath. Mary's dad tried hanging the book up to dry. But the book needed ironing to lie flat."

We've one (fictional) book here in the roles – it seems natural, to me, to say – of different particular 'grammatical things'. Which isn't to say that we've a direct object of a sentence as such, or the direct object of a verb like "to give" or even "to think" as such, in the roles of many different 'grammatical things'.

This seems possible to fit with a third remark too:

> There is a way of taking "The direct object is not a direct object" which makes this true; namely, by assimilating this sentence to "The direct object is not a girl" [i.e. in the sentence which the teacher uses]. (One could imagine explaining to a child: "The girl is not the direct object, but the *book* that John sent.") … [What] John is said to have sent Mary is a book, **and** what John is said to have sent Mary is a direct object; [**but**] these premises do not yield the conclusion that if John gave May a book, he gave her a direct object. (Anscombe 1981:7)

There are two ways of using 'is', here, it seems to me. We can say the book is the direct object, implying that in answer to the question, "What is the direct object of this sentence?" we should

reply, "A book". But the book as thing, of the kind one can send in the post, is not equivalent to a direct object. Direct objects are *not* that sort of thing.

This then raises the question: What sort of "thing" may we say a *direct object* is as such? Or, if this is already loading too many presuppositions into the asking: What may be *said* of the direct object as such, other than it can be 'of' a sentence?

Anscombe herself appears to ask, and offer and answer to, this explicitly.

3.5 Direct Objects Aren't (The) *Things* (Which They Are)

Anscombe writes,

> Now the [teacher's] question [of what the direct object in the example sentence is] does not really suppose, and the pupil, if he goes along with the teacher, does not take it, that any particular people, of whom the sentence is true, are in question, and so we may say that when the teaching is successful the question is understood as equivalent to "What does the sentence 'John sent Mary a book?" say John sent Mary?" The grammatical concept of a direct object is acquired by one who can answer any such question. (Anscombe 1981:6)

This may sound a little strange at first. The characters John and Mary are *particular* people, and the book a *particular* artefact (not concepts, kinds, or Zeno-ic Generic Johns and Marys), existent or otherwise. And there's no reason given upfront or explicitly within the text for thinking the sentence is false, let alone false *of* John, Mary or the book (as though they were correctly described elsewhere).

However, if Anscombe means simply that they're not real, then we *might* read her as saying that the student understands the following: that it needn't make sense to ask "Which book is this?" *and to try to answer by looking anywhere else than to the sentence itself*. That the (non-)existence of the book is irrelevant to the task at hand.

That is, the teacher's example sentence *may* be the only thing one consults to learn facts concerning the book. Then we could say, "The sentence leaves it undetermined what else is true of the book than that it's a book which John sent Mary. So, if asked, 'Is the book a novel or encyclopaedia?', we can only reply, 'There's no answer to that question' rather than '*I* don't happen to know, but I'm sure somebody does'." Though that's not relevant either. What matters is what plays the role of direct object in this particular sentence. That may be what's meant by Anscombe's re-phrasing the teacher's question to, "What does the *sentence* say…?"

She could also mean by that rephrasing something more specific, but consistent with the reading just suggested: that we have to use the *exact same words* which the sentence did. Meaning, in literal terms, that we give the same noun as that which, in the sentence, denotes the book itself – namely "the book" (and not "What John sent Mary" or "The thing sent to Mary by John", let alone "A copy of *The Hungry Caterpillar*").

Now, I'm not sure Anscombe does commit to that narrower use, because in the third remark quoted earlier she imagines the teacher saying, "The direct object is not the girl, but the book

John sent", as though this was informative for the child. "The girl" is presumably Mary, though the sentence doesn't use the term "the girl". But we can imagine both this more permissive, and the stricter 'same words only', practices being taught.

Here we come to what I think is Anscombe's greatest insight, and one that we must understand carefully. If our reading of her is right so far, then the direct object is not equivalent to a book, here, but neither is it equivalent to a piece of writing or to some words. Rather, a direct object is 'the sort of thing' (note my scare-quotes) that one counts as 'giving' *in answer to a question like the teacher's*. It has a character only articulable by reference to a practice of asking and answering questions about sentences.

This has implications beyond what we've encountered so far through the 'Homeric', 'Aristotelian' and Husserlian ideas, on what's happening when one has an object of thought as such. My focus in what follows is to bring these out, to clarify how the non-equivalence claim is true, while at the same time trying to understand where Anscombe and myself may diverge.

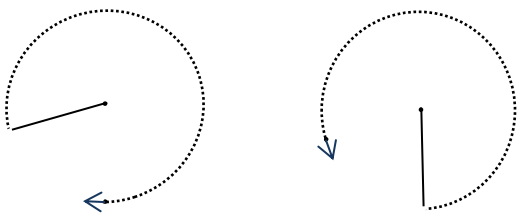
To begin, I think we can dissolve the puzzlement one might have felt when Anscombe talked about particularity (or lack thereof). Suppose, she says,

> that someone were to ask, "What is communicated to us by the phase that we get in a correct answer? Is the phrase being used or mentioned?" [The phrase being, "A book"] [In other words,] "Is the direct object a bit of language or rather what the bit of language stands for?" (1981:6)

She responds negatively to the idea that the answer should be, "It is *used* – namely, to refer to *a book*" (my phrasing), saying:

> It won't do to say that in this example the book **is** the direct object. For if we say that[, then] we can be asked, "Which book?"; but the sentence isn't being considered as true, and there is no answer to the question "Which book?" except "No book"; and yet without doubt the verb has a direct object, given by the answer "A book". So it must be wrong, and not just a matter of terminology, to say that the grammatical phrase "direct object" [as the teacher uses it in teaching <direct object<] stands for, not a bit of language [which it does not!], but rather what the bit of language stands for. (Anscombe 1981:7)

I don't think Anscombe need commit to there being no answer to "Which book?", however. What she might do instead is clarify that in a particular practice – the practice of giving a direct object – the meaningful question "Which book?" just doesn't arise. That it simply isn't relevant. Asking "Which book?" is to turn on the spot – to 'pivot', if you like – from one practice, which we might call 'grammatically-oriented' talk, into *another practice*, which we might call 'thing-oriented' or, in this case, 'narrative-oriented' talk ("What's happening in the story, who sent which thing to who?" etc.) One is always free to pivot in either direction, centred on the same phrase of the sentence; namely, "the book".



The grammatically-oriented practice is one where you register a sentence and either (i) utter a certain phrase or word *in* it, or – on a less strict version – (ii) utter a different phrase that *could* also be used to denote the thing denoted by the phrase/word in (i); i.e. as Anscombe's teacher does when passing from talk of 'Mary' to 'the girl'.

On this account, a direct object as such is not a thing on a par with physical things like books and trees. Nor is it simply a piece of text, a word, or a sound. We can only elucidate it by referring back to a practice of uttering phrases in the special context of a special kind of question. The direct object's not equal to a word or phrase, but is simply what we say "is given" by using a word or phrase a special way in answer to a question like the grammar-teachers. If we presuppose direct objects are kinds of thing in my own narrower sense, to be characterized independently of who's asking what and what the correct response is, we'll be tempted to think it must equate to (e.g.) the book or the phrase "the book", and it's not:

> though the [teacher's] question is answered (like many questions) by uttering a phrase – in this case "a book" – the phrase has a *special use* in answer to that question "What does the sentence say John gave?" It can name neither a piece of language, nor anything that piece of language names, nor indeed anything else. (Anscombe 1981:8)

*

"But if it's not a thing – neither a book, nor a word or phrase like 'the book' – then how can it make sense to individuate it? To talk of what it is and is not? If it's not a thing, then there's surely nothing to speak of!"

The lesson I take from Anscombe here – on the reading of Anscombe I've made – is more radical. It's that individuation and identity are much stranger than we might have guessed. Taking a Natural Attitude toward things, we may think of the practice of individuation generally as limited to the sort of practice involved when we look about at physical things in shared space with us. But there is such a practice as individuating direct objects of different sentences without any appeal to 'things', called direct objects as such, that exist independently of our practice of asking and answering certain grammatical questions. She doesn't dismiss talk of the identity of intentional objects, though touching on them only briefly:

> Questions about the identity of an intentional object, when this cannot be reduced to the identity of a *material* object [*see §3.8 below*] are obviously of some interest. How do we decide that two people or peoples worship or do not worship the same god? (Anscombe 1981:10)

And she says herself, a little later, that it's indeed a "fact that we can use the concept of identity in connection with intentional objects" (Anscombe 1981:11).

Here's my suggestion. The difference or identity between *direct objects* as such, I would say, is determined by what it makes sense to answer in connection to each, "What is the direct object here?" One direct object will 'be' the book that this particular sentence, (8), says John sent Mary. While another direct object, though it may 'be' the same book, is nonetheless not what sentence (8) says John sent Mary, but what another sentence (9) says Mary's Dad hung up to dry:

(8) John sent Mary a book.
(9) Mary's Dad hung up the book to dry.

3.6 Question-Things and Transparency

Now we may see how the two initial interpretations at the start of our reading of Anscombe might be both *sort* of right. First, that Anscombian intentional objects – if these are equivalent to direct-objects – could be non-particulars in the sort of way particular objects of desire can be non-particular things. Second, that Anscombian intentional objects could be be individuated as particular things which may exist or not.

First, even *if* "intentional objects" means simply "direct objects" of intentional verbs, then it's true that they aren't particular 'things' in the narrow use of "thing" I introduced earlier this chapter. The situation is more akin to how we speak of 'objects of desire' when the objects aren't specific, particular things. It's a matter, instead, of what should be uttered in response to a question; analogous to, "What does she desire?" "—A cup of tea". "A cup of tea" isn't used in this context to name a particular thing you can drink, a particular phrase, nor even a kind. Nonetheless, we can distinguish and individuate objects of thought as such, precisely by what sorts of phrases are correctly given in answer to, "What is this object of desire?"

So, second, *if* intentional objects again means simply direct objects, then there's a sense in which they're individuated, of course. This interesting kind of individuation turns on the very fact that we can pivot from speaking of the direct-object as such into speaking of a particular thing which the direct object might be. The first sort of practice isn't coherent unless the second is.

It follows that the 'is' invoked in "What is the direct object of this sentence?" wouldn't necessarily express the 'is' of a numeri-identification. It would instead express, in fact, the propriety of a kind of pivot from one way of *using the phrase* in a sentence (say, "the book") from talking in grammatical terms to talking in terms of what some artefact's features are ('how many pages is it? is it hard-back or paper-back?'). That is, a pivot into a different sort of description. Though, as I'll now suggest, we shouldn't assume it's a pivot from *opaque* description. Again, individuation by description is stranger perhaps than it seems.

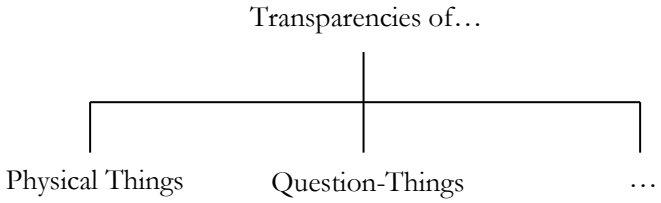
I can certainly think of a particular direct object, and so it can become an object of my thought. But the direct object as such is free of my particular act of thought, isn't it? The answer to, "What is the direct object of this sentence?" is fixed ahead of my thinking of it. Yet the direct object as such, as we've seen, is not equal to a *thing* in a crucial sense, that's out in space. Though we can say 'it' has location in a sentence, it doesn't have a literal location in the manner which the word or phrase which it 'is', nor the physical thing it may be (say, a book), does. Rather, the word which it 'is' has location among other words.

But then *is* Anscombe right to say that intentional objects as such are, themselves, direct objects? I'll answer, No. Before I argue this, though, I think we should step back and re-think the notions of transparency and opacity discussed at the start of this chapter. This reflection will give us the tools to answer properly, with an eye to its significance for this essay's larger project.

At the start of this chapter I said that transparencies concern things *only as things*: entities characterized independently of whether anyone or anything's thinking of them. But this covers both physical things and the strange 'things' called direct objects, indirect objects, grammatical subjects, etc. To mark their difference I suggest introducing a further term, **question-being**. This notion will bear directly, later, on elucidating the individual *per se* as a 'nothing'.

Something has merely question-being, I'll say, just in case it can't be correct described transparently except *as* what's given in answer to a question; e.g. "What is the direct object?" We can call such an object a **question-thing**. Meanwhile the transparencies of physical things, one might think, pertain to things that can be described as things independent of what questions they're given in answer to. For instance, a particular tree has its branches, its history as an organism, is healthy or withered, and has literal spatial location, independently of whether there are humans engaged in asking and answering questions. Whereas a direct object as such can't be described except as what's given in answer to a certain grammatical kind of question.

This reasoning would suggest the following picture:



Thinking with this picture, we can begin to understand a further proposal: that opacities may in turn be a subset of transparencies. That opacities may be a subset of descriptions proper to question-things.

Anscombe remarks that the following two sentences are "parallel" (Anscombe 1981:9):

(10) The direct object is what John sent.
(11) The intentional object is what X was thinking of.

This suggests the idea that intentional objects *as such* are question-things. That the idea of an intentional object *as such* is the idea of what is given in answer to questions like "What is Lucy thinking of?" or "What does Lucy see?" or "What does Lucy want?" The claim might be this: In answering the question, "What is the intentional object in this case?" one isn't actually naming or giving a description of a *non*-question-thing, like King Dolt the miser or the tomb in the hill. Nor is one referring to the name or descriptive phrase itself (bits of language). One's simply uttering a name or phrase, and thereby counting as 'giving' the intentional object. From which one can then pivot into the practice of using that name or phrase in a denotive role, even about some *entity* non-existent (like a fictional book, or an imaginary warlock).

Is this plausible? Why might someone think it's true?

Consider objects of desire. When asked, "What does J.M. want?", for example, I don't name a particular non-question-thing, like a particular cup of tea, when I answer, "A cup of tea". "Nonetheless," one might think, "I do more than I do when, looking at a sentence, I decompose it into grammatical parts. In the desire case, I surely inform the person asking of the kind of thing J.M. wants. As I said earlier, in answering the question I don't *name* the kind. I rather express it. But this is sufficient for the person asking to now know how to meet J.M.'s wishes, and pass the tea-pot nearer to him."

"—But aren't you, or the questioner, rather pivoting in this interaction between two uses of 'a cup of tea'? You give a phrase merely, and she further uses it to specify a kind?"

"—But isn't answering her question precisely *to* express the kind?", might go the reply. "If I didn't express the kind, would I really be answering the question? Think about how we actually speak. Suppose I replied to her, 'J.M. wants what is the object of my thought.' I may be saying something true. But I am surely not answering her question. 'I'm asking *what* he wants,' she can respond."

It's true that when the grammar-teacher teaches <direct object>, she isn't asking the child about the story told by a sentence. She's teaching the child how to decompose a sentence into parts. The sentence not as a set of words, but precisely as a *grammatical structure*. This activity may be hard to do if the child doesn't know the meaning of the word or phrase to be given in the exercise. For example, from "John sent Mary the Pentateuch". But he can probably still figure what to say correctly nonetheless ("'The Pentateuch', whatever the Pentateuch is"). This practical knowledge is what the teacher's teaching. In teaching <direct object>, she's not actually wanting to *learn what John sent Mary*. That is a question about the story; about John and Mary. She knows what John sent Mary already.

When we teach children how to answer, "What does So-and-So want?", we *aren't* teaching them to decompose grammatical structures as such. That's my view, at least. But when teaching the concept <*object of desire*>, we *are* teaching the idea of what is given in answer to the question, "What does So-and-So want?" When the teacher asks, "What is an object of desire?", the correct answer is both "What is wanted" and "What is given in answer to the question, 'What does So-and-So want?".

In teaching this concept, the teacher can appeal to particular cases. She isn't personally trying to find out what someone in particular wants, but is saying something like this: "If Lucy wants a chocolate biscuit, what is her object of desire?" The answer, "A chocolate biscuit", isn't given in order to tell the teacher what Lucy wants. It's given as a mark of understanding what kind of question characterizes objects of desire as such. These are 'things' characterized as what we give in answer to e.g. "What does Lucy want?"

So the claim I'm making is not that we answer, "What does Lucy want?" by attending to sentences and making grammatically-oriented remarks about them as such. We can oftentimes *see* what she wants, by how she behaves. Even if what she wants doesn't exist. For example, when she runs to the cookie jar eagerly where Dad put chocolate biscuits this morning, looks disappointed when it's empty, but lights up again when she sees a whole tin on the table (that we know she doesn't know is actually an old tin re-used to keep spices). The claim is rather that we

master the idea of an object of desire *as such* by knowing that it's what's given in answer to, "What does So and So want?" type questions. A child can know how to answer that type of question without having a developed concept of 'intentional objects' *per se* and the different kinds there are.

Likewise, it seems, the idea of an object of thought is not simply the idea of yet another non-question-thing on a par with apples, trowels, bones or rocks. It's the idea of what's given in answer to questions of the form, "What is So-and-So thinking of?" They, distinct from the physical things they may 'be', are question-things.

3.7 Question-Things, Direct Objects, and Opacity

Does it follow that opacities are *not* a contrast to transparencies, as it first seemed? That opacities are in fact transparencies proper to objects of *thought*?

Our examples of pure opacities for objects of thought included:

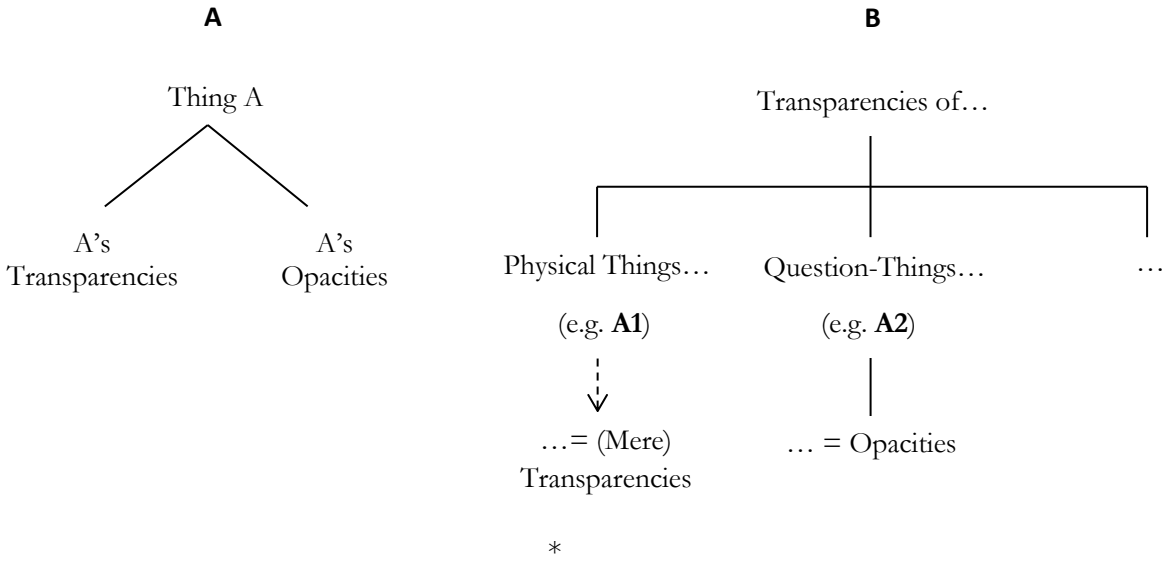
(1) What James thought of at midnight
(5) I'm thinking of something and I want you to guess what it is.
(6) Something popped into my head earlier, an old memory.

On the face of it these might seem too complex and informative a set of descriptions to be of a question-thing: something that can't be characterized apart from the practice of asking and answering a certain kind of question. But the complexity in each example only marks determinations of the relevant question-kind, "What is So-and-So thinking of?"

(1*) What did *James* think of *at midnight*?
(5*) What is it *I* am thinking of? (I want you to guess what it is)
(6*) What popped into my head *earlier, as an old memory*?

Question (1*) simply determines the person and time of thought. Question (6*) also determines what Husserl called the 'quality stamped' on the 'matter': the thing which was thought of presented as *remembered* (whether it was in fact remembered or not). What the thing itself was, whether remembered or only apparently so, is still not said, nor is it named as a thing. One is speaking in terms of what answers a question (in this case a 'What popped into my head?' question). Hence the opacity of sentence (6).

So it does seem that pure opacities for objects of thought are a subset of transparencies; namely, for question-things that are objects of thought. So I'd drop picture A for picture B below. 'Thing A' as I called it isn't a single 'thing' in fact. There are two distinct objects that 'are' each other only non-numerically. These are the non-question-thing, A1 (e.g. a book), and the question-thing (the object of thought as such), A2, which that book 'is'. Though all the descriptions are strictly speaking 'transparencies', I'll henceforward reserve the name "transparency" for when talking of non-opacities. For example, for descriptions of physical things merely in themselves as such:



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So, to our earlier question then: What does Anscombe mean by saying objects of thought, which she calls intentional objects of thought, are a sub-class of direct objects? Is she saying intentional objects are *equal to* the direct objects of sentences whose main verb is 'to think of—'? Or is she claiming something subtler, which talk of "sub-class" might obscure?

I'm inclined to hope for the second reading, because the first reading seems to me to give a wrong account of thoughts (or intentional acts more generally) and their objects. Because while it's certainly true that a non-existent book can be the direct object of a sentence like, "Mary thought of the book", in what sense is the *object of thought* which that book *is* 'the same' as the direct object of that sentence?

There are different things we could mean. We might mean, "The *book,* which the object of thought '*is',* 'is' also the direct object of the sentence", or we could mean, "The sentence presents an object of thought as being a book, by using 'a book' as the direct object of the verb 'to think of', here". But I don't think we'd mean to say, and certainly not by way of these utterances, that the direct object as such is *one and the same as* the object of thought that's the book. Because the direct object as such can be meaningfully said to be of this sentence alone, whereas the object of thought as such is not so constrained. When asked, "What did she think of?", I need not appeal to a sentence that says, "She thought of a book". Rather, by looking at what she does, I can see that she thinks of a book. I'm saying that "direct object" is not simply another name for a book, and neither is "a book", *when used to speak as of a book*, simply another name of the direct object.

The same object of thought can be denoted again, as we saw, such that it can 'be' multiple further direct objects, indirect objects, grammatical subjects, of multiple further sentences that are not *about* the direct object as such of any sentence at all. For example, if my object of thought is the book John sent Mary, and the sentences about it include the following again:

> "John sent Mary the book. John had given the book a new cover. But then Mary dropped the book in some mud. She, naturally, gave the book a hot bath. Mary's dad tried hanging the book up to dry. But the book needed ironing to lie flat."

From all these sentences I could tell you what someone's object of thought is – I could 'give you the intentional object' – even though there's no sentence written down or uttered before that she thinks of this or that. For example, I see her scanning the passage just quoted, in inverted commas, with her eyes, and I see her sketching out with a pencil different states the book was in as she imagines it for herself. First, a sketch of a brown paper package, tied up with string (no mention of that in the story, but it's the book that John sent which she's imagining things *of*). Second, a book covered with mud. Third, a book floating in a bathtub (etc.)

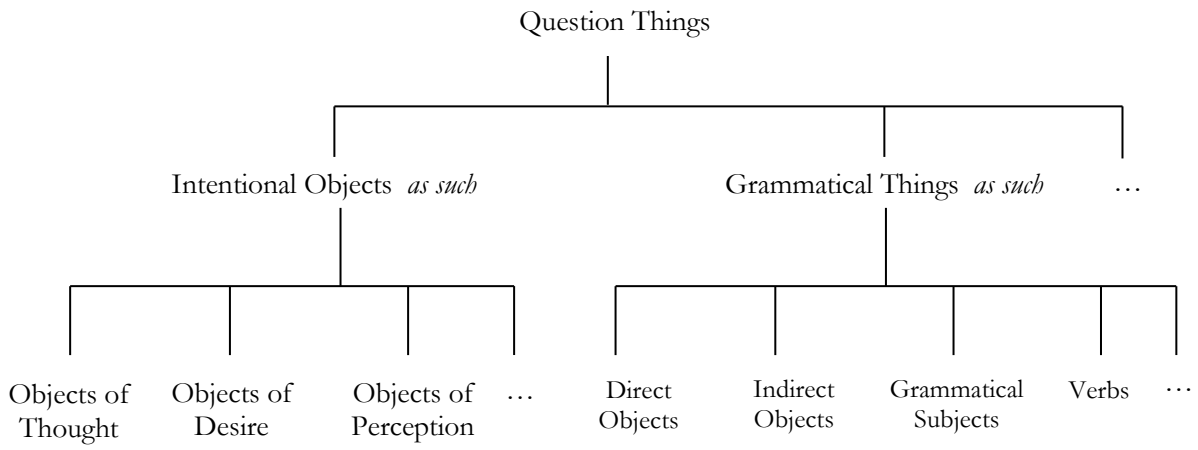
So to denote either the object of thought as such or the book as such will not be to denote the direct object of any sentence as such. Objects of thought aren't equal to the direct objects (or other grammatical things) they can be.

On a second reading, (which I prefer to adopt), Anscombe only means to draws a close analogy between the practice of 'giving the direct object' of a sentence, and giving the object of thought *as such*. Recognizing the analogy doesn't require us to say that what we can naturally call "the object of thought", once we reflect on our everyday practices of ascribing thoughts of things to each other, is equivalent to what is naturally called "the direct object of an intentional verb in a particular sentence". Anscombe may be alerting us to the kind of 'subset' structure I described above.

On this interpretation, when Anscombe says that intentional objects are a sub-class of direct objects, we allow ourselves some wiggle-room for how "are" is heard. We swap out 'are' as 'are numerically-identical to', for, instead, either (i) "…are what can be given using phrases that, in a non-grammatically oriented practice, are used in the sentence to denote an object of thought or the thing it is", or (ii) "… are 'things' only in a special sense, analogous to how direct objects as such are 'thing's only in a special sense."

This gives us the following image, C, to supplement B:

C



The only caution I'd give is this: Don't read C as barring every manner in which intentional objects can 'be' grammatical things and vice versa. For example, as when (12) and (13) is true. C is meant to be consistent with such cases.

(12) John thought of Mary's object of thought as such.
(13) J.M. thought of the direct object of (1) as such.

3.8 "Under a Description" and "Intentional" vs. "Material"

This reading makes one version of sense, too, of Anscombe's subsequent distinction between intentional objects of thought from 'material ones'. (I say "one version" to anticipate the next section, in which I hesitate to ascribe the Real Anscombe the view I'm articulating in my particular reading of her.)

This contrast is introduced partly in terms of a peculiar phrase, "a description under which". Here are two occasions of the phrase I want to focus on:

> *Indeterminate Height*
>
> I can think of a man without thinking of a man of any particular height; I cannot hit a man without hitting a man of some particular height, because there is no such thing as a man of no particular height. And the possibility of this indeterminacy makes it possible that when I am thinking of a particular man, **not every true description of him is one under which I am thinking of him**. (Anscombe 1981:6)

> *Aiming at a Stag*
>
> We must now ask: does any phrase that gives the direct object of an intentional verb in a sentence necessarily give an intentional object? No…. An intentional object is given by a word or phrase which gives *a description under which*.
>
> It will help if we consider shooting at, aiming. **A man aims at a stag; but the thing he took for a stag was his father**, and he shoots his father. A witness reports: "He aimed at his father." Now this is ambiguous. In the sense in which given situation as we have described it, this report is true, [yet] the phrase "his father" does not give an intentional object. (Anscombe 1981:9-10)

*

Remember our discussion of indeterminacy from §3.3. The pineapple I was presented with was not, in a crucial sense, a pineapple with an indeterminate number of seeds. Yet it *was* indeterminate in another sense, and one which didn't imply that this presentational object of thought or perception *as such* was indeterminate or had a number of seeds (determinate or otherwise).

Now let's suppose that I think of a particular existent man, of fully determinate height. But let's also suppose that I don't have a clue how tall he is. I'd put this as follows: I have a presentational object of thought that is a man, who is and is not of determinate height in the puzzling sense

above. By having this presentational object in the context that I do, I qualify as thinking of the existent man who has determinate height in a straightforward sense.

With this and the previous chapters in mind, and supposing we're to adopt the reading of Anscombe I've aligned myself with *philosophically* at least, then the most natural way for *me* to read *Indeterminate Height*, taken alone, is this:

> "Only some of the transparent descriptions true of my existent object of thought are 'doubled' as transparent descriptions true of my purely presentational object too. The transparency of the existent man, 'He is 6 foot tall', for example, doesn't double as a true transparency of the purely presentational man. The latter is merely "of determinate height", though there's no true transparency giving his determinate height."

On this reading, we aren't forced to say the existent man and the presentational man are numerically-identical. We're still permitted, nonetheless, to distinguish the man (the 'thing') from the object of thought he is. And this would allow us to distinguish two senses of "intention" or "intending", as I argued we should *contra* Husserl.

This version of Anscombe would then reserve "intentional object" for what I call "presentational object", and call existents that *thus* manifest to mind something else. I would then be reading Anscombe as suggesting we call existents in this context the "material objects" of thought. She writes,

> By ['] *material* objects[*'*] I do not mean what are now called "material objects" [in the sense of being made of tangible stuff] – tables, planets, lumps of butter and so on. To give a clear instance: a debt of five dollars is not a material object in this latter sense; but given that someone had [in fact] contracted such a debt, my thought "that debt of five dollars" would have as its material object something described and indicated by the phrase giving the intentional object of my thought. (Anscombe 1981:11)

The debt isn't a 'tangible' thing. But it would be real as opposed to 'merely intentional'. So the *Aiming at a Stag* scenario would then be one where, perceptually experiencing a stag, one counts as 'materially perceiving' one's father. It wasn't that one had simply hallucinated a stag, but mistook one's father for one. Hence one was aiming at one's father, though without realizing it.

3.9 The Real Anscombe?

In building this reading of Anscombe, I have tried to reconcile her text as far as possible with the arguments put forward in Chapters 1-2. It's this reading of her that I'll bring forward into development over the rest of the essay.

But it must be flagged: I'm not entirely convinced it's a correct representation of the Real Anscombe's actual thought or claims.

She says, remember, that if I think of Winston Churchill then he's my object of thought, and says that "object of thought" must be heard in the 'old way', as we hear "object of desire", such that the object needn't exist. She calls objects, on this use, intentional objects, and says

intentional objects are a sub-class of direct objects. But it strikes me that Winston Churchill, while an object of thought, needn't be equal to that 'thing' 'under whose description' I think of him. That is, the real man Churchill needn't be everything that the intentional object is or can be.

"Okay, so let's say Churchill is the material object. Then, on my version, I've a purely presentational object that either 'is' or 'is' not a 'version' of Churchill. This physical thing, which my presentational object 'is', can surely be individuated from both other non-existent things and existent things. I am not now talking of a direct object."

But Anscombe writes,

> When it is beyond question that the phrase giving the intentional object does describe and indicate a material object [as is the case with "that debt of five dollars"], then the question as to the identity of the intentional object **reduces to the question as to the identity of the material object**. Are we referring to the same debt? That is, perhaps, not too difficult to establish. But when either there is no real debt or it is very obscure whether there is, the case is altered. (Anscombe 1981:11)

I think the reduction claim is wrong. Recall the Morning Star/Evening Star/Venus case. The question as to the identity or non-identity between the Morning Star and Evening star doesn't reduce to the question of whether, insofar as one thinks of either star, one's thinking of Venus. Similarly, if we read a 'mere' intentional object as "purely presentational object", the question as to whether you and me are thinking of the same mere intentional object (e.g. Lucy's, when she thinks of Dolt, mistakenly, as being a mortal King rather than a Faerie one), does not reduce to the question of whether we both think of King Dolt.

It seems like Anscombe wants to say something similar to Husserl as he did in the case of perception. If one sees a real dragon-fruit, for example, (and one's visual impression is of a dragon-fruit, Anscombe would add,) the question as to the identity of "what one sees" is simply a question as to the identity of the existing dragon-fruit. Whereas I'd say it simply depends on whether one's asking about the existent or about the apparent dragon-fruit about which one's infallible except through dishonesty or misuse of terms.

(This King Dolt example also begs the question, of course, whether Anscombe would allow for analogues to material-objects that are *non-existent* yet not purely presentational, because not particular to just one person's intentional act. As is surely the case with things like Dolt, Carroll's Humpty-Dumpty, Tolkien's Ring to Rule Them All, and Pullman's Subtle Knife. Things we can surely be right or wrong about, and can share in thought together only by attending to a text.)

The exegetical question really boils down, therefore, to how we should hear "ontological status" in the following:

> The fact that we can use the concept of identity in connection with intentional objects should not lead us to think there is any sense in questions as to the kind of existence – the ontological status – of intentional objects as such. All such questions are nonsensical. Once more we can clear our heads by thinking of direct objects. The answer to "What is the direct object in 'John sent Mary a book'?" is "A book". This is the right answer as much when the sentence is false as when it is true, and also when it is only made up, as it is in this case, to illustrate a point. It is evident nonsense to ask about the mode of existence or ontological status of the direct object as

> such: or to ask what kind of a thing a book is, as it is thought of in answer to the question about the direct object. (Anscombe 1981:11)

We can ask what kind of a thing a book is, and what kind of a thing John sent Mary (a book). So we can pivot, as I said, between using a phrase simply to give a direct object and to refer to a (potentially non-existent) thing, a book. I full-heatedly agree that a direct-object is not a 'kind of thing' in the way a book or a piece of language is. Hence introducing the tem "question-thing" earlier.

But if it turned out Anscombe doesn't allow this pivoting at all, and insisted that an intentional object cannot 'be' (non-numerically) a book or piece of language either, then I'm unsure how to make sense of her own talk of illusory stags, merely made-up books, and so on. It would then seem she wants to avoid any talk about what *things* can be which are dependent on thoughts and thinkers, and speak rather as though the only practice of speaking we have is when we simply respond to, "What does this sentence say Mary saw?" Yet we can talk perfectly well of things as things without any concern at all for whether they're 'merely intentional' or not.

This 'confined' version of Anscombe is what I take Roger Teichmann to experience when he reads Anscombe, as he writes the following:

> intentional-object phrases can enter into identity-statements—as, 'That dark patch against the foliage is a hat'. But hasn't [Donald] Davidson, reversing Quine's quip, asserted: 'No identity without entity'? Must we not now ask seriously after the ontological status of these special entities, intentional objects? It is at this point that Anscombe's proposal that intentional objects are **nothing but a species of direct objects** saves us from much metaphysical heart-searching. [—Here Teichmann quotes the passage I just did above—] The point still holds where we have an identity-statement proper—as 'Santa Claus is the direct object of this sentence'. Again, we could decide to withhold the title 'identity-statement' from such a sentence, on the grounds that 'Santa Claus' is not a genuine singular term. But then Davidson's remark will be a fairly lame tautology. **Whatever we call 'That dark patch is a hat', it looks as if an enquiry into the ontological status of the dark patch, and of intentional objects generally, will be as silly as an enquiry into the ontological status of direct objects. … [T]he problems about what a direct-object phrase stood for were to be solved, in effect, by saying 'Nothing', and attending instead to the special use of such phrases. Something similar goes for intentional-object phrases**. (Teichmann 2008:136-7)

I don't think the problem *is* solved. Because it seems to me we are only shifting from one practice with the phrase, "The dark patch", in which we're concerned with a dark patch that may or may not exist (i.e. with a *thing*), to another practice where we ask, "What is the object of the verb in, "He saw a dark patch'?" (i.e. where we're not concerned with a thin 'proper', but only a question-thing; a grammatical-thing, more precisely).

Trying to re-phrase the last question as, instead, "What is the *object of sight* in, "He saw a dark patch?"' seems to me a bit mischievous. Because the natural way (for me) to understand the 're-phrase' is as equivalent to, "What is the object of the verb 'to see', in the sentence, "He saw a dark patch?" But we can also make use of the phrase "object of sight" to refer to the thing that is seen, real or not. Trying to squeeze out the latter use, as if the former shows us all there is to say

about what's seen that the seer themselves would attest to seeing, granting honesty and a correct use of terms, is what I find suspect.

This is all the more puzzling to me because, only pages earlier, Teichmann seems to grant that there's a quite different practice of speaking when asking, for instance, "What does the sentence say John sent Mary?":

> After all, the teacher's counter-response to the learner's 'A book' could have been, 'And what might that show about John?'—planting the discussion firmly in the domain of (imaginary or real) people, gifts, and books, rather than of words and phrases. The learner doesn't know where the dialogue is going—maybe he is actually being taught about the possibility of altruism—and when he says 'A book' in answer to the first question, he is already **using it in the special way** Anscombe is talking about. 'Direct object' simply labels that kind of use, in effect. (Teichmann 2008: 133)

If we are happy to accept that possibility, then how can we be happy to say that when hearing, "That dark patch is a hat", it is silly to inquire into the ontological status of the dark hat? Why should it not be that there's a very real dark patch; that *what makes, or composes, the dark patch* is precisely the father stood out of the light and blocking further light being reflected off foliage behind him? Why would we begin talking as if the claim "That dark patch is a hat" were a sentence to be asked only a grammatical question about, unless that very particular sort of question happened, among other possible questions, to be posed to us?

In a very recent paper on Anscombe's account (of the very few such studies in existence)[17], Clare Mac Cumhaill and Rachel Wiseman also write that, for Anscombe,

> an object of sight **is the direct object of the verb 'to see'**. As such, it ... is a grammatical category. To get a sense of what she has in mind here we can imagine our teacher giving a lesson to teach her class the meaning of the phrase 'object of sight'.
>
> *Teacher*: 'Mary sees a book.' What does the sentence say Mary saw?
>
> *Pupil*: A book.
>
> *Teacher*: That is the object of sight. (Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman 2021: 280)

It's certainly true that we can teach the concept, <object of the verb 'to see'>. But what should we draw from the fact that we can learn such a concept, by attending to sentences? We might come to appreciate, in line with Wittgenstein from the Introduction above, that to get clearer about the essence of what seeing is, we must acknowledge the particular home of the word "seeing" in a practice with words and people's behaviours. As the authors put it elegantly,

> the task for the philosopher of perception is not to describe the character of what we see, but to describe the character of our descriptions of what we see. That is, it is to describe the character of 'objects of sight'. (Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman 2021: 282)

[17] Besides Frey and Frey 2017, the chief two treatments I'm aware of are Robinson 1994 and Prior 1971. I address Prior briefly in the next chapter.

But my question is: Is that Anscombe's *only* lesson? The lesson that that ascriptions of seeing are practices of language? The authors make it seem that her lesson is really equal to the teacher's in the imagined scenario they add above (i.e. "What does the sentence say Mary saw?"). And they say,

> The teacher's lesson, if it is successful, gives them a grammatical term, 'object of sight', which enables them to talk about the linguistic mastery they already possess. They can now not only talk about what they see but talk about their talk about what they see. (Ibid., 281).

I don't deny this is important. It is. But I worry that sticking to this point alone threatens to encourage a conflation objects of sight (and of thought), and the things they 'are', as we use all these terms in actual ascriptions of seeings and thinkings to people, with the direct objects of those sentences by which the ascriptions are asserted. With the result that we reach conclusions composed like this:

> In learning that the sentence says that Mary saw something and forgetting **that 'object of sight' is a grammatical category**, [philosophers are tempted to] ask instead after what this **something is** that Mary saw, or what it is that she really saw. That is, they ask, 'What did Mary see?', and treat the answer as returning an object in the modern sense: **a worldly entity or an entity of some other kind**. Anscombe notes that this is bound to lead to philosophical confusion in cases of error, illusion or hallucination, where Mary's answer to the question 'What do you see?' does not describe any ***thing*** in her vicinity. (Ibid., 281)

This makes it sound as though the only option for a philosopher, if she is right-headed, is to understand that there is no *thing* to be spoken of, there is only a manner of speaking in answer to, "What is the object of sight?" But there *is* a thing to be individuated, when it comes to the intentional object of sight or thought, even while it is not an *existent* thing (and certainly not a 'magical' thing, if Mary's intentional object of sight was simply a book).

Now maybe Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman would agree with this. Maybe Teichmann too. But it's hard to tell whether the possibility is registered, by how Anscombe's presented. The former authors only allow talk of a 'thing' when describing existents that are seen:

> **The object of sight in the initial statement 'He sees a shadow moving in the trees' is 'a shadow moving in the trees'. This object is both the description** under which the hunter sees ('a shadow moving in the trees' is a description that he would give of what he sees) **and a true description of something that is there in the situation** and which might be seen by others (there is, indeed, a shadow moving in the trees**). Anscombe calls the first kind of object (one that gives the description under which what is seen is seen) an intentional object**, and it is with respect to these objects that the pattern found in descriptions under which what is done is done is replicated. In 'intentional object', 'object' is used in its old, grammatical, use. She calls the second kind of object a material object. The 'material object' is a true description of something there to be seen. So here, the intentional object, 'a shadow moving in the trees' is also a material object. (Mac Cumhaill and Wiseman 2021:284)

On this reading of Anscombe – which seems very plausible to me as an accurate historical reading – the object of sight is 'in some sense' a description-phrase, that can be used to describe something actual, but is not *used so* when we simply are 'giving the object of sight'. On such an

account, the intentional object of sight is neither a thing nor a piece of language referring to a thing.

But I'd say: When we ask what someone saw, and we answer by telling what was perceptually experienced, we *are* describing a *thing*. Just not a real thing. We are ready to individuate and speak about this thing as a thing.

As I argued above, if we equate what is called an object of sight with a 'grammatical thing', we lose track of the difference between the grammar, indeed, of talk about the *thing* seen intentionally, and the grammar of 'giving the direct object of the verb "to see"'. The two practices of talking go hand in hand.

So do I agree with the *Real* Anscombe, or don't I? I'm unsure. Perhaps I don't. But I must leave off debating further interpretations here, for sake of space. It's time we bring all the ideas and puzzles accrued so far together, finally – including the ideas drawn from my 'version' of Anscombe – and set a ladder up out of the Pit.

4

Out of the Pit

Objectivity, Relativity, and Determinations

This chapter presents a core set of conceptual distinctions, building on the arguments and readings so far. These distinctions are used to address five of the seven puzzles laid out in §3.3, under the title "Seven Sorts of Doubling". The remainder are of those seven – the ones concerned with fluctuation and individuals in detail – are addressed in Chapter 5.

§4.1 distinguishes five uses of the word "objective". The use I'm most concerned with concerns the idea of standards of correctness. The idea that, if one's to say something in a practice with words, there's such a thing as saying what can or should be said, and saying what can't or should not be said.

We'll be focusing in on the manner in which truths concerning non-existents are established, in such a way that what certain standards of correctness are created afresh by acts of infallible thought. I explicitly distinguish two sorts of thought we're sensitive to in everyday language but don't have names for. These are presentational thought (or thought$_1$) which is infallible, and objective thought (or thought$_2$) which is fallible. Objects of presentational thought are presentational only relative to a certain thinker, but 'objective' for others. This just means others can only think of the same object fallibly, not infallibly.

§§4.2-4.3 clarify how presentational thought determines standards of correctness about its own objects. Fallibility, I argue, depends on infallibility. But the inverse is also true. In order to be infallible in one's response to, "What are you thinking of?" one must be honest and use terms correctly. One counts as using terms correctly only if one's mastered the use in application to things that are objective objects relative to oneself. We teach children to think infallibly of different sorts of things by cultivating in them fallible, objective thoughts.

§4.4 clarifies the conceptual relations between the transparency/opacity distinction (from Chapter 3), the presentational/objective distinction, and the distinction between ascribing something existence or non-existence and not remarking on its existential status at all. This raises an earlier puzzle again about the connection between existence-ascription and first-personal thought, which is addressed in Chapter 6. I also distinguish two sorts of indeterminacy – again, listening closely to how we use words in everyday life. §4.5 then distinguishes non-existents into presentational things (about which someone is or was infallible) and the merely fictional (about which no one is ever infallible).

§4.6 turns with these distinctions in mind to objects of perception in particular, finding mostly parallel differences between 'presentational' and 'objective' senses of perceptual verbs like "to

see", "to hear", "to taste". It examines what follows from this for the conceptual relation of perceptual activity to causation. The intentionality of perception is not to be accounted for in causal terms.

Finally, §§4.7-8 step back and consider the implications of all this for the idea of a 'God's Eye View' which we were sceptical about in Chapter 2. My scepticism is as strong as before, but hopefully it'll be more intelligible to you by that point in the text! Solutions to five of the 'doubling' puzzles are then spelled out explicitly.

4.1 "Objectivity" and Standards of Correctness

In Chapter 2 we met two notions of objectivity: Thomas Nagel's position-invariant kind, and Amartya Sen's position-relative kind. Nagel's kind of objectivity was 'scalable'. To the same degree that a "view or form of thought" does not depend on the subject's being in a certain spatio-temporal or cultural position, that view or form is objective (Nagel 1986:5). Sen's version, concerning what's observable, wasn't 'scalable' in that sense. He wrote,

> The subject matter of an objective statement in the positional sense is something that can be ascertained by any normal person in a given observation position. (Sen 2009:157)

While one may adjust the parameters of a position relative to which something's observable, every objective position is, as such, position-relative. But 'observation' here did not imply that what are observed are existent things. It concerned appearances veridical and non-veridical. So an objective illusion, on Sen's version, was not a contradiction in terms.

This chapter takes both notions seriously. But it's concerned mostly with three further uses of "objective" it may help to distinguish.

First, a common use of "objective" applies not to views, forms of thought, or what's (merely) apparent relative to position, but to spatio-temporal things. Illusory objects, on this usage, aren't objective precisely *because* they aren't 'out there' independently of whether they're viewed or not.

But we can also say that certain claims are objectively true. This second usage floats, one might feel, 'between' the Nagel/Sen dichotomy. The idea of being 'objectively true' is simply the idea of being true. Something is the case or not. From one perspective this fits Nagel's bill. A judgment that Lucy is mortal is a form of thought. The judgment is true (or false) no matter who contemplates or makes it and in what spatial, temporal or cultural position. Though it's not scalable. On another perspective, the judgment is position-dependent. Only those equipped with certain concepts can have the form of thought that is judging Lucy to be mortal. There are also standards of correctness for evaluating the form. These standards pertain to human beings and what they would experience or undergo at given positions. To learn the form of thought, to exercise it, ascribe it, evaluate it, requires a particular training among others who are masters of the concepts involved.

This suggests a third use of "objective" too, arising when we think about evaluation. Where there is truth or falsity at stake, there are standards of correctness for judging something true or false. An act of thought is objective to the extent these standards apply. It doesn't matter if it's false vs.

true, only that it's one or the other. An act of thought is non-objective, in this sense, to the extent that it's neither true nor false. So non-objectivity is *not* synonymous here with 'false' or 'non-existent'. The judgment that Merlin the Wizard is a dormouse is objective because it is true *or* false, even though Merlin doesn't exist and though, as it happens, the judgment is false.

We can make sense of extending this usage to talk of intentional objects themselves (in the broad sense: not distinguishing yet between existent, merely-presentational, or fictional objects like Sherlock Holmes).[18] Again, objects are here thought of in terms of judgment-evaluation. An object is objective irrespective of existence, we may say, precisely if it's something about which one can be right or wrong. And insofar as one can be wrong about something, one can be ignorant about it.

When I use 'objective' from now on in the essay, I mean it in this third, evaluative-centred sense, unless I specify otherwise.

"But isn't *every* object objective in that sense? Is it a meaningful adjective?"

If there's first-person infallibility, then the first-personal subject can't be right, wrong or ignorant about the *things* their purely-presentational objects are. That is, they can't be right or wrong concerning ('mere') transparencies. The presentational *thing*, relative to them at the time, is not objective in the third sense described. This is to say that there's no standard of correctness for a first-personal claim, "I'm thinking of a snail", if one's concerned with what's presented rather than any existents, say, one counts as thinking of thereby, and if one grants that the speaker is honest and knows how to use terms like "snail" correctly.

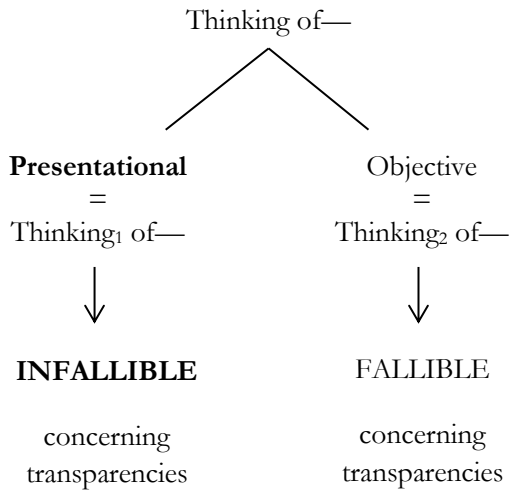
But that doesn't mean they can be wrong about the presentational-*objects* as such; about *opacities*. Because I might, for instance, think of a snail, yet fail to grasp that I'm J.M. So I would be ignorant of the opacity, "The presentational object of J.M.". I could even be wrong about it (if I positively think that it describes someone else's object of thought.)

I'll call thought that's infallible about the thing(s) thought of (vs. the objects of thought they are) **presentational thought**. I'll call the things which are its objects **presentational things**. I would like the word "object", distinct from "thing", to bring to mind intentional objects as such: a special class of question-things, in line with what we concluded from Anscombe.

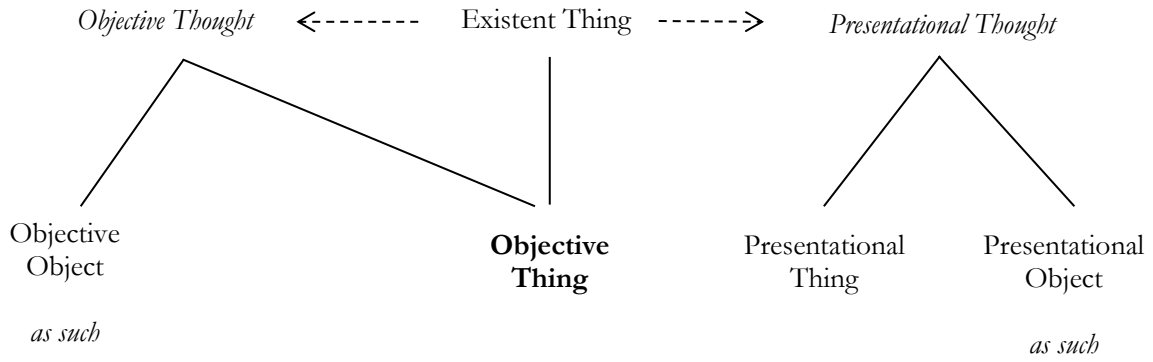
I'll mark out reference to presentational thinking more subtly where I can, using a little "$_1$". So, to presentationally think of a snail is to **think$_1$** of a snail. I'm doing this because I want you to notice the naturalness of these references to infallible thoughts as statements in everyday language. If reading this essay from the page, you can ideally skip saying the numbers 'aloud' in your mind.

A thing that's presentational relative to me is not so relative to others. And yet others can think of it. They can be right, wrong or ignorant concerning its very transparencies. So, relative to them, the thing is objective. I'll contrast presentational thought, here, with **objective thought**, and presentational things with **objective things**. I'll use a little "$_2$" to subtly mark objective thought. Existents are necessarily things we can be ignorant of. So they're never presentational for anyone. So this can be put as, "Existents can only be **thought$_2$** of, never thought$_1$ of."

[18] I distinguish between (i) non-existents *per se*, (ii) pure-presentational-, and (iii) fictional-objects below; see §--.



I'll draw dotted arrows again, as in Chapter 2, to show directions of manifestation when an existent is thought$_2$ of. These dotted arrows shouldn't be read as symbols of one thing's causally acting on another. (I'll go into this in more detail below – see §4.6). Forking lines mark out the thing and object of thought proper to each kind of thought. The existent thing and the objective thing are one and the same.

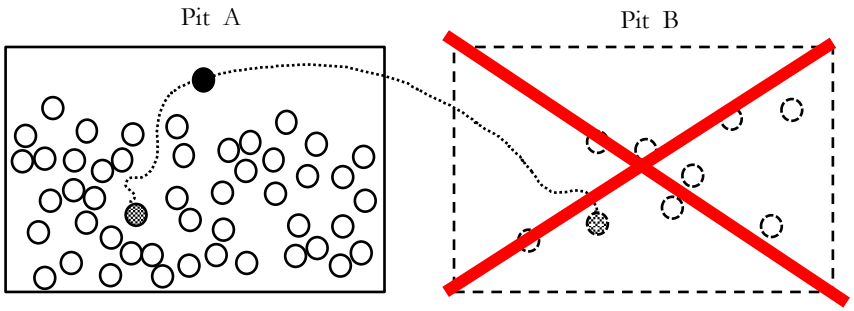


4.2 Fallibility Through Infallibility

What are the 'marks' of my being right or wrong about *your* presentational thing? Or, if they vary, where do the standards of correctness come from in general, for *my* judgments about *your* presentational thing? In other words: How is **objective thought** concerning a **presentational object** possible?

I can no more investigate it under a microscope or by asking it questions than you can. But I can ask questions of *you*. The fact that you're infallible is the condition of my fallible knowledge about it. What you can say infallibly about its transparencies establishes what it is correct for others to say about its transparencies.

I mean 'establishes' quite literally. If it would be infallible for you to say, "It's a white-lip snail," granting honesty and right use of terms, then it's correct for me to describe your presentational thing as a white-lip snail. But the thing I think of wasn't waiting in the wings as a thing, like something spectral in Pit-B that someone had yet to latch their mind onto.



The word 'thing' here indicates standards of correctness for identification and re-identification. It doesn't indicate a substance or entity we can grab hold of, that has its features independently of what we would say infallibly in answer to the question, "What are you thinking of?"

"—Doesn't this mean that the presentational *thing* itself, and not simply the presentational object it is, is no more than a question-thing? That it's not really a thing in a normal sense (though one magically non-existent), but is really more like what you count as giving by a phrase in answer to a kind of question? Isn't *that* the point we should take from Anscombe: that there's no purely intentional object that's this or that *sort of entity*?"

Perhaps that is what the Real Anscombe holds; I agree. And it's very close to what I hold. But the thought ultimately confuses two manners of speech. It infers from the fact that the thing's *truths* are a function of what I would say infallibly in answer to, "What are you thinking of?", that there's no thing of which these are truths. That won't work, and we don't need it to work.

I said that question-things can't be characterized except in terms of what can be given in answer to a special sort of question. But I can speak of the presentational thing in the same terms I would of an existent book or snail. The fact that such speech of the thing is elicited in answer to "What are you thinking of?" doesn't mean it's a question-thing. Otherwise any answering elicited by a kind of question would be the giving of a question-thing.

The implication we *should* draw is more startling. That talk of "non-existent particular things" – for the moment, of the presentational sort – is such talk the standards of correctness of which are continually being determined, in particular cases, by what would be said with honesty and correct use of terms in answer to questions, and not by what just anyone would judge true based on their own objective (fallible) experience of an object in shared space with themselves.

In other words: The facts about what are necessary for correct talk of presentational things and their identities and features, and of someone's infallibility with respect to them, don't annul the validity of such talk. The concept <identity> itself is stranger than we might have guessed.

What philosophical reflection on such facts *does* annul is a picture we may be tempted to draw for ourselves of what our own learning the transparencies of our or others' presentational things involves. The Pit-ish/Homeric vision of a magical access to an entity having features independently of our capacities for questions and answers. There is no gap between how one behaves or would behave in context, and what is correct (vs. neither correct nor incorrect) for others to say that one thinks$_1$ of. If the subject were merely 'reaching out' to something with a pneumatic tendril, for instance, then either there'd be no presentational thought *per se* because everyone would share infallibility, or else the subject would be just as fallible about it as everyone else.

Following Husserl's lead (despite the notable difference), I'm drawing 'brackets' around a practice of talking called "talk of things in themselves" – i.e. transparent description. Not to dismiss it. But precisely to focus on it in a larger light. To show there are different ways in which such talk is sustained, depending on whether an intentional object is existent or presentational. (I'll come to other ways of being non-existent shortly).

So Lucy's thinking$_1$, at tea-time, of a burial mound, establishes the truth of the objective thought, "At tea-time Lucy was thinking$_1$ of a burial mound." This means that, if Lucy later forgets what she thought$_1$ of, someone else can correctly remind her. The fact that she can forget also tells us that infallibility is not permanent. What once was a presentational thing relative to myself is almost certain to become objective relative to me instead. We don't spend all our time thinking$_1$ of one thing. We *think*$_2$ of very many things as we move through life. And a condition of our doing so is our *thinking*$_1$ of very many things.

To this extent, infallibility is a condition of fallibility. This is one dimension of the truth proposed in Chapter 2, relating to Husserl's idealism, that subjectivity is a condition of objective cognition.

4.3 Infallibility Through Fallibility

But it's important that we appreciate the inverse, too. That objective cognition, and so fallibility, is a condition of the capacity for infallibility.

How does the very capacity for infallibility arise? If it's not a magical connection to something external, it's marked by what's said in answer to, "What are you thinking of?" The question itself sets the context for what counts as presentational transparencies, as we saw. But only on condition of honesty, I said, and correct use of terms. But how do we tell that the terms are used right? "And how *can* there be a correct use of terms," one might ask, "when there are no correctness conditions for the subject herself about the presentational thing's transparencies?"

It won't do to say, "However we understand the words, these fix the transparencies objectively for us; it doesn't matter what the subject means by them." Because we do ascribe presentational things, along with their features, to one another. It's not that the subject doesn't think$_1$ of a snail until we hear her words, or on condition that someone would *take* her words in a way denoting a

snail. She thinks$_1$ of a snail, full stop. She applies the concept <snail>, even if there aren't correctness conditions for her doing so.

The solution is to recognize how we teach those behaviours which are marks of thought$_1$ at all.

The subject can only be ascribed the concept <snail> if, when she refers to existents, she demonstrates the concept's mastery. She has to be capable of using the words correctly in a context with correctness conditions. That is all I mean when I say she must have a correct grasp of terms. Correct use in purely presentational contexts is parasitic on correct use in objective ones.

In learning how to distinguish snails from non-snails as such correctly, she will of course have presentational thoughts insofar as she has objective ones of existent (or, as I'll soon clarify, purely objective) snails. She learns to think$_1$ of snails by thinking$_2$ of snails. This is how we train children to speak of the world we share in common. It's also how we train children, as a result, how to give descriptions for merely imagined objects that come to mind. Because to qualify as thinking$_1$ of a snail will simply be to have mastered <snail> and to answer honestly, "A snail" (for example) when asked, "What are you thinking of?" Merely imagined things are equivalent to presentational things, though often don't count as manifestations of any further existent things.

Here's another scenario to illustrate the whole process of ascribing presentational thought.

Back home, in their greenhouse, Lucy's brother Malc is gardening with their mum. He plucks a pink flower from a bed of violet ones, saying honestly "This is exactly the sort of violet the monkey is."

"—What monkey?"

"—The monkey I see at the sill." Malc points toward his bedroom window, but his mother can't see anything there. The boy, his parents believe, has been suffering strange hallucinations.

What is Malc's (supposedly non-existent) object of thought here? A pink monkey or a violet one? A monkey or something else, something usually pink or violet? It's possible Malc has done one of the following:

(a) simply mis-spoken (used the wrong terms in context);
(b) forgotten how to use the word "violet" (or "pink"), for example;
(c) undergone some change so that pink objects now look to him violet.

Whether it's (a), (b) or (c) would affect what it makes sense to claim he thinks of. We can check each option from how he behaves in context. Each option has its 'marks' in human action relative to a particular position.

Suppose (a) is true. If Malc's simply mis-spoken about the monkey's colour, he may correct himself. "I meant pink, obviously" he might say, or "Oops – picked the wrong flower!" We could wait a moment to see if he corrects himself like this, or maybe prompt him for more information: "You mean the monkey's *pink*, right?"

If Malc's used "monkey" correctly, and speaks honestly, we should ascribe him thought of a pink monkey. It doesn't make sense to say here "He doesn't know the monkey he thinks of is really

blue." But if he hasn't used "monkey" correctly, it could make sense to claim "He *thinks* he's thinking of a monkey, but probably he's thinking of a gorilla. He's mad about gorillas but keeps calling them monkeys." How he behaves in connection with monkeys, images of monkeys, his parents' talk of monkeys, and what (appealing to Sen's concept) *objectively look* like monkeys relative to a position, will show.

Suppose (b) is true. Malc's forgotten how to use "violet" and "pink". This could show up in his verbal descriptions when asked to name the colours 'of' different groups of things. We can check this by interacting with his environment. We could separate all the flowers into only-pink and only-violet piles while he's absent. Perhaps he'll continue with the error when he comes back into the greenhouse. Or perhaps he'll be uncertain what word to use when asked to name a flower's colour. (He may also correct himself explicitly – "I forget which is which, with 'pink' and 'violet'").

Only once Malc's showing colour-term mastery through his behaviours can we ask him, "What colour was the monkey?" and expect an informative response. And again: *if* he's honest and using "pink", "violet" and "monkey" right, his informative response can't be wrong. Not because he has magical access to a thing that we lack, but because there's no gap between what he says in context and what it is correct to say he thinks_1 of.

But now suppose (c) is true: that Malc's lost the ability to visually experience pink things as pink. This means he'd be unable to group different pink things together as pink, violet as violet, on sight when not told ahead which are which. We might ask him, then, to gather flowers into groups according to their colour, when the (all-pink and all-violet) ones are mixed. But alas! we find he can't get it right in good lighting conditions and a right state of mind. All else being equal, something's wrong with his colour-perception. Now it *does* make sense to judge, "He appeared to *think* he's thinking of a violet monkey, but actually it could be a pink one. No way of telling. I can't say confidently what he thinks he thinks, right now."

We can only correct Malc's "*This* flower is violet" given what colour we judge the actual flower to be (or not to be) ourselves, and given how he handles instructions involving words like "violet", other colour-terms, and gestures on our part in this environment with it. Our own judgment here must be objective (even if it's mistaken), as opposed to *merely* presentational. If he knows how to use the relevant animal-kind and colour terms correctly, and hasn't just misspoken, then there's no space for him to be wrong about having hallucinated a violet monkey.

Fallibility depends on infallibility, and infallibility depends on fallibility.

4.4 Relative Existence and Indeterminacies

Neither transparencies nor opacities guarantee a description of some intentional thing, whether that be a physical thing, question-thing, abstract thing,[19] an act, event, or what-have-you, as *real* or not. Even mixed-opacities may get us nowhere to answering, "Does this object of thought *exist*?" Recall the sentence from Chapter 3, "The serpents Herakles thought of slithered through his memory." We don't know from this whether Herakles is real, let alone whether his memory

[19] It's beyond the scope of this essay to inquire into abstract objects, though it makes sense to ask how similar is logic of their talk to that of question-things.

is of snakes only told about in a story or ones he encountered in his cot. Likewise for the thinker and the six-legged thing in, "What she thought of had six legs and countless eyes". These are not **existential sentences** – assertions as to whether a thing or an object of thought is real or not, such as,

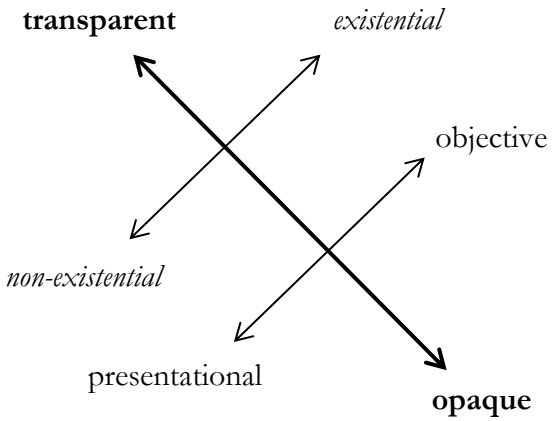
(1) Stonehenge exists.
(2) Tess of the D'Urbervilles isn't really real.
(3) What he thinks of is really out there, living its best life.

In other words, the contrast between transparent and opaque descriptions is *orthogonal* to that between existential and non-existential descriptions. The fact that a description is transparent vs. opaque, or comprises of a mixture, tells us nothing about whether the description is existential or not; and vice versa.

The contrast between transparent and opaque is also orthogonal, we've seen, to the presentational/objective distinction. Objective things 'are' objective objects, presentational things 'are' presentational objects.

But the contrast between presentational/objective and existential/non-existential is more complicated. We can't infer existence from objectivity. But we can infer objectivity from existence. If a thing is presentational, then even if it's objective relative to others, it can't exist. If a thing is objective relative to someone, it may yet be presentational for another, so it needn't exist. But if a thing exists, then it's necessarily objective and cannot be presentational.

So we may picture the presence and lack of orthogonal relations between the three distinction sets like this. An orthogonal of lines (a crossing) denotes the orthogonal of distinctions.



What do we mean, though, by 'existential' exactly? I've so far focused on the existence of things relative to us (first-person plural). But there are other uses of 'exists' and 'real'. And even the use I've taken needs unpacking, because it's not yet clear what the real difference is between existence relative to us and existence relative to an imaginary thing like Excalibur. If the first-person "I" and "we" just names *things*, then so-called 'non-existents' are just as real, on a fundamental level, as existents. We just happen to be these things over here, that can't reach

those things over there (Recall the idea of parallel world from our discussion of the Mu'tazilites' puzzle, Chapter 2).

Chapter 6 addresses the meaning of "I". It draws an inference from Anscombe's argument in "The First Person" that "I" doesn't denote a *thing*. Not even a question-thing. The inference is that existence relative to us is not merely relative existence between things but 'absolute' existence, expressing a function between the giving of objective descriptions and one's own infallibility. You can skip forward to its sections §6.2-6.4 now, if you like, as these don't presuppose the remaining concepts introduced in the present chapter or by Chapters 5.

But in this section I just focus briefly on "existence" as it applies concerning (i) intentional objects as such and (ii) to things that are both determinate and indeterminate in their transparencies, it may seem, like Anscombe's (non-fantastical) man of no particular height.

First, there's a difference between saying something "exists" *as a thing*, and saying it "exists" simply *as an object of thought*. Consider:

> *Storyteller*: When Cadoc drank from the pool, he knew what he needed to defeat the dragon. He'd had it the whole time! Can you guess what he thought of?
>
> *Child:* The pebble the old woman gave him?

The storyteller's tale is fiction. She and the child know that the pebble is fictional with respect to themselves. But does Cadoc have this pebble as his object of thought or not? There's a fact of the matter, which the storyteller knows. But when I claim, "Cadoc has an object of thought", I express only my judgment that Cadoc *is thinking of some particular*. Not that the particular exists 'relative to' Cadoc (like Holmes exists 'relative to' Watson) or whether he further exists in relation to us.

To prevent ambiguity, I'll use "**existence**" to mean such relative-existence, and – on the rare occasion where I need to – "**exists***" to mean simply being thought of. For example: "The Hound of the Baskervilles doesn't exist even in the Sherlock Holmes story. The dog's just a legend. But it exists* in the story and real life, in a mere technical sense that the characters, and indeed us, are thinking of it." Or, (another example): "Genes don't exist* in Middle-Earth, in the sense that no one in that world has a conception or thought of genes *as such*. But I see no reason, in that, to assume genes don't exist there. Did Tolkien say anything about that world's bio-chemistry? It has normal pigs and horses..."

Existence* just means manifestation in thought.

Second, on indeterminacy. To think$_1$ up an owl that doesn't exist, I needn't determine its precise number of feathers. ("Like, who does that?") So unless I judge what number it has, there's no honest answer I have to "How many feathers does it have?" But it doesn't follow that I've imagined a fantastical kind of owl. In fact, in the imaginary world of the owl, I'm now disclosing to you, it's just a normal owl of the sort you'd find in the New Forest. In that specific sense it must have a determinate number of feathers. This sort of claim has the appearance of a contradiction. But it's merely an appearance. Because the sentence utilizes two distinct uses of the word "determinate".

Here's a simple way of putting it: If you asked me, (i) "Does the owl have a determinate number of feathers?", my honest answer would be "Yes". And if you asked me, (ii) "What is the determinate number?", my honest answer would be, "I don't know".

So the two senses of "determinate" I'm distinguishing have to do with what true answers there are to which questions. Insofar as my answer to (i) is "Yes", the imagined owl has a **determinate$_1$** number of feathers. It has a **determinate$_2$** number, in this particular case with imaginary things, only if I determined the number itself; in which case, the owl would present to me as having *that particular number*. I couldn't be ignorant of it. Contrary to how it may have seemed when thinking about the presentational pineapple or man of 'no determinate height' in Chapters 2-3, there is no paradox or contradiction involved in these cases.

Another example: Lucy's Nan is thinking$_1$ up a plot for a murder mystery novel. Nan has determined, in the manuscript, that the Old Major gets poisoned in his library by one of his guests. However, she's not determined which guest does this yet. Maybe she'll decide that tonight after a walk. So there's a determinate$_1$ answer as to which guest kills him. If you asked Nan, "Is it determined who kills him?" her honest answer would be, "Yes." But there's no determinate$_2$ answer. That is simply to say: if you asked Nan, "Which guest kills him?" her honest answer would be, "I don't know (yet)."

And to connect this to a point about individuation. Suppose you and a friend each independently think$_1$ of a hydra with nine heads, leaving indeterminate$_1$ all other features. But one person's presentational object is not one and the same as (i.e. not numerically identical to) the other's. Because the other person can be mistaken about the transparent truths about yours, and you can be mistaken about transparent truths about theirs. But not vice versa, *qua* thinkers$_1$. So your friend's hydra is numerically distinct from your own. A lack of determinacy$_2$, then, is not a mark of the 'merely subjective' as opposed to the objective in my sense of that term. An objective object, that was presentational relative to someone for example, can have indeterminate$_2$ features.[20]

4.5 Fiction, Revision, and Objectivity

Fictional things can be indeterminate too. But to be fictional isn't equivalent to, nor does it even imply, being presentational. In fact, I'll argue that fictional things *can't* be presentational.[21]

In Tolkien's novels we learn some generics for hobbits:

> [Hobbits] are (or were) a little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded dwarves. Hobbits have no beards… [and they] wear no shoes, because their feet grow natural

[20] One might wish to infer that indeterminacy$_2$ is therefore a mark of non-existence. Anscombe can be read as inferring so. But I've not space to evaluate that inference here.

[21] Chapter 6 examines the caveat that I can think$_1$ of something infallibly as being fictional, and to that extent we can say, "The fictional thing is a presentational thing". But this doesn't undermine the claim that to be fictional is to be objective. It rather illustrates a 'jump' in "levels of description", which I articulate using an idea of 'hyper-opacity'.

> leathery soles and thick warm brown hair like the stuff on their heads (which is curly) (Tolkien, 2013 [1951]:12-13)

So if we learn that a particular hobbit has a beard, or naturally hairless feet, then while this hobbit may not suffer in the slightest, or be lacking as a person, *as a hobbit* something's amiss.

Suppose Tolkien forgets this in his sequel to *The Lord of the Rings*. He writes of a "perfectly normal" hobbit, Huw son of Samwise, who wears a soft brown beard. All else being equal, this fictional being is 'fantastical' in a very particular sense. He has qualities which are strictly contradictory by the lights of the story: (i) being a perfectly normal specimen of the kind hobbit, and (ii) being bearded.

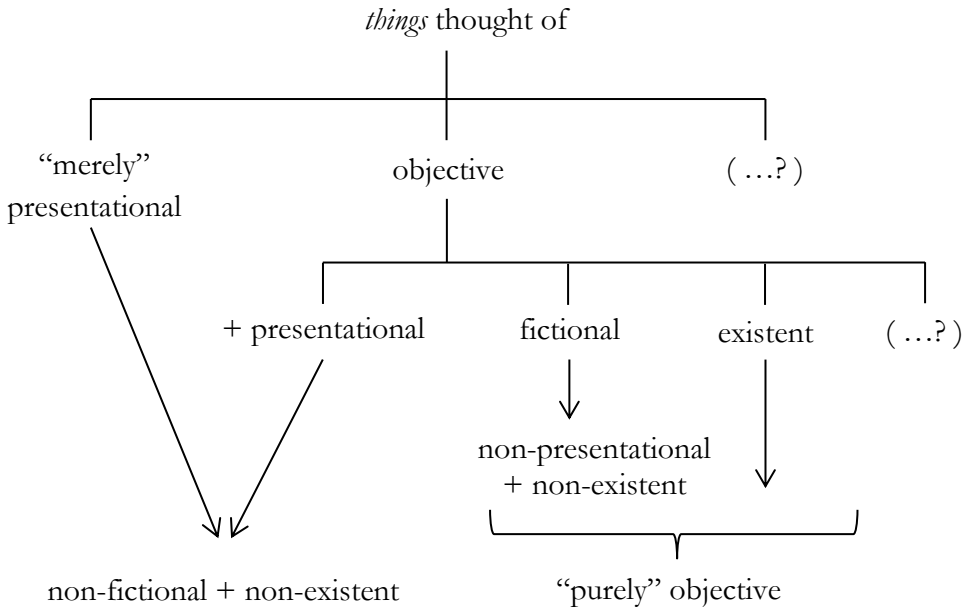
The issue isn't just that Huw's 'logically impossible'. Wizards *may* be logically impossible, but they're permitted in the Middle-Earth narrative. But having introduced the generics he has for hobbits, Tolkien could not then impose the son of Samwise as he is – as 'perfectly normal' – without rendering a contradiction within the novel's narrative. It is a contradiction by the rules set in place for his fictional world, not merely for rules to which we judge reality subject.

I don't claim there can't be strict-fantastical characters like Huw, then. On the contrary: an author can too easily fail to recognize certain facts about characters they create. Novelists, like thesis-writers, will tell you how careful one must be to scour out unintended clashes or unwanted implications in a work! So a fictional character is some thing about whose transparencies its creator can be less than fully aware of in every way. The creator can make mistakes about its transparencies beyond errors in terms. Therefore, fictional characters in novels are, even for their authors, strictly objects of thought$_2$. In this key sense, they're never presentational things. There's never anyone who is infallible regarding a fictional thing's transparencies.

"But if I make up a character in my head, that is surely a presentational thing?"

Yes. But it's not one and the same as what's constrained by one's utterance. So long as you speak honestly and use terms correctly, you can't be wrong about your presentational objects. But even when honest and using terms correctly, you can determine fictional objects to be one way or another though you don't realize it.

For instance: If I use "rabbit" in a story to talk of the hop-about, eats-carrots kind of rabbit, then it's on me to embrace or avoid talk of fantastical rabbits by what I *say* next in the story. If I want to go back and revise, this is a genuine revision, not a mere fix of expression: "Did I write that the rabbit *flew*? That wasn't my intention – let me change it to 'flopped', *because he's not meant to fly*." I may have various made-up rabbits present in thought$_1$ that inform how I characterize the rabbit of the story. I picture a rabbit escaping a gardener, try out variations and perspectives, and in this way find the words for an episode in my novel. But the novel isn't a *report* of my presentational things. The story is instead fashioned through (and 'as') the arrangement of words.



What happens, though, when an author revises a character? I don't mean simply adding determinacy$_2$ where there's been mere determinacy$_1$ before ("How old is Bilbo?" – "Haven't decided yet – okay, let's make him Eleventy-One"). Nor do I mean simply telling a different version of some tale. I mean changing the facts.

Tolkien did this with Gollum, who in the first edition of *The Hobbit* was a benign personality. This original Gollum had every intention of giving Bilbo his magic ring 'as a present' if Bilbo could defeat him at riddles. Realizing he couldn't find it, Gollum makes up for his broken promise by leading Bilbo, apologetically, free from the caves instead. But the Gollum we're familiar with has every inclination to double-cross Bilbo and eat him.

It makes perfect sense to say, "Gollum used to be an amiable character, but was changed to be sinister." But in a key sense they're not one and the same object. Transparently speaking they've different histories. Original Gollum had no ill will toward Bilbo; Revised Gollum had little else. They differ opaquely, too. Insofar as I describe Revised Gollum, appearing in the later version of *The Hobbit* and in *The Lord of the Rings*, I count as thinking$_2$ of him. But am I thereby thinking$_2$ of Original Gollum? It doesn't seem so. In fact, knowing their distinction, are they not precisely two things, whom I can think$_2$ of alternatively on different occasions?

The concept <revision> requires their difference. The original's author undertook a process whereby parts of a text were altered, but parts of the story told remained 'the same'. Revision is a practice external to the world of the story, and the 'is' between both Gollums should be understood in this practical light.

Picture Original Gollum as a braid of truths. The author's revision process is like this: duplicate the braid, tweak the copy. Since the truths are entangled with those of other objects in the story, this implies a copy of the story's other objects too. Tolkien doesn't want Gollum to have a different name, so he leaves that unadjusted. But if he pulls out the threads of Gollum's good-

will toward Bilbo, that has a net effect on the truths in the story. The copy-version of Bilbo is affected too: he was no longer helped out. The author then swaps the older versions for the new. Which means: the new become 'official'.

What connects the two Gollums is this process of copy and change. The new is an outcome of action round the old. Revision of fictional things isn't taking an intentional thing and re-working it directly, transparently, like one could a lump of metal. Revision, in fiction, is creating afresh with a previous thing as one's model, one's 'template'.

A similar story applies, I'll suggest, when we talk of some counterfactuals. Though this may seem odd to say. Suppose I said, "Had Lucy not gone into the tomb, the demon would be trapped even now." This is surely a claim about Lucy as she already is. So why invoke <revision>?

When we evaluate a claim about what an object would have done, or would have failed to do, we are making adjustments to a copy of that object and judging what it should make sense to expect it to do. This can't but involve appeal to generalities. It is a game of essentialism (at worst?) or statistical thinking (at least?)

Take a version of 'the demon in the tomb'. The fact Lucy and the demon are both fictional is irrelevant; the counterfactuals concern the transparent domain of their world and its determinacies$_1$. From the information we have, we put together an idea of how secure the demon's imprisonment is, of what the demon's capacities are in the circumstances. What does it make sense to expect, given this knowledge?

"What demon is this?"

– It's true I'd said nothing about any demon till a moment ago. So as a reader you're a bit stuck for evaluating the counterfactual. If I assert it, as an author, I can just make it true without explaining the mechanics of the case that make it so. I could leave the mechanics merely determinate$_1$. But the claim is: "If we remove Lucy's entering the tomb from the picture, there's nothing else on the basis of which we can reasonably judge, 'Ah, so the demon will be freed in this other way at the present time.'"

"How do we know this?"

– We're generalizing from what we've observed or read of in the past. Given an imprisonment like this one, and given who and what else is round about, the demon's going nowhere unless Lucy breaks the seal. Because no adult has that power against the spell. Or so we judge. These particular counterfactuals are empirical judgments even if they concern what are fictional objects. They're always defeasible in principle, if we learn more about individuals and kinds. We aren't infallible in our empirical counterfactual judgments, about existents or otherwise. We can find out things that make it reasonable, perhaps necessary, to alter or revise the generalities we accept as true.

So: We make a 'copy' of the thing in mind, tease out certain truths, possibly insert some new ones, and try to keep a track not only of what this logically implies, but what it's reasonable to expect will happen 'next.' The kind of thought involved here is like that in answering, "What's he going to do when he finds out there are no donuts left?" or "What will happen to the substance

when it gets to 80 degrees Celsius?" It's not to wait and see what happens. It's to reflect on what we expect the thing to do, given its history (statistical), or its nature (essential) – be that an essentialisation of the particular as such (e.g. "The Malcolm sort of thing to do") or merely with reference to kind-generics (e.g. "a substance with this kind of molecular structure reacts like this to that").

The modern *noir* thriller exploits this feature by feeding the reader hints, impressions, and facts strategically to get us reasonably expecting things, to reasonably make inferences, that the full-picture (if we had it) would make unreasonable. Counterfactuals require us to make 'revisions' to things, without thereby granting us the authority to swap the alternative version as the official one – whether that be the objective object given by a novel, or an existent in the real world. The demon wouldn't have gotten out without Lucy, we say. But the demon did in fact get out, through Lucy's doing.

4.6 Perception and Causation

I've so far focused on objects of thought, but many of our examples and arguments in Chapter 2 concerned perception.

Suppose Lucy has an impression of a red dot, moving slowly leftward, in her field of vision. Provided she's honest and knows how to use "red", "dot", "leftward" properly, she can't be wrong in her report of this. But she can be wrong about what she counts as seeing for real – if, indeed, she sees anything for real. What she sees 'infallibly' counts among the criteria for ascribing Lucy this or that, or indeed no, object of *fallible* sight. The criteria also include the direction in which she's looking, and what's in her environment, and what her eye-sight is like, etc.[22]

Seeing something infallibly isn't *equal to* merely seeing things, therefore. If I'm "merely seeing things", I qualify as seeing something infallibly. But I can see something infallibly without 'merely seeing things'. For my infallible impression can qualify me as seeing something real too.

If something is an object of infallible sight, I'll call it a **presentational object of sight**; or, an object of **sight$_1$**. Those things we see that are presentational for no-one are **objective objects of sight**; or, objects of **sight$_2$**. If I see$_1$ something, it follows that I think$_1$ of it too. But I can see$_2$ something without knowing I do. And I can see$_2$ something without thinking$_1$ of it.

The sight$_1$/sight$_2$ distinction is not perfectly analogous to the thought$_1$/thought$_2$ distinction.

First, when it comes to sharing an object of thought. If one simply thinks$_1$ of a thing, others can think$_2$ of it whether it exists or not. If Malc thinks$_1$ of a thing, others can think$_2$ of that very

[22] I use "criteria" here in a defeasible sense, consistent with my remarks on empirical experience and knowledge claims in Chapter 2. Given the presentational objects she presently has, Lucy is justified to judge that she sees something real that's red *even if*, all facts considered (more than she was aware of at the time), it turns out she sees nothing red and real after all. Insofar as Lucy has the red-dot impression in a certain context, she can count as seeing a real post-van, say. But if the context is changed, or her impression is different, she may count as seeing something else, or nothing, for real.

presentational object. But if one presentationally-sees a thing, like Malc $sees_1$ a monkey, others can't see the same thing fallibly or otherwise. And if you objectively-see a thing, others can see_2 the same thing fallibly too *only if* it exists relative to all of you. If it didn't exist relative to us (first-person plural), none of us could see_2 it. Objects *we* can see_2 are necessarily existent for *us*.

Second, on the relation of judgment to infallibility. If I judge myself to $think_2$ of a fox, it follows that I $think_1$ of a fox. But what you *judge* yourself to see_2 needn't be transparently like what you see_1. I can see_1 a face peering at me from a tree but be convinced that I'm not really seeing a face. I can see_1 a flurry of red dots but not judge that I'm seeing real red anythings in the air.

To expand, now, to other perceptual-modalities. Suppose I've an auditory impression of screeching noises and indistinct consonants. In 'hearing' these, I may qualify as 'hearing' someone's words that aren't screeched, but enunciated clearly. The screechy sound isn't what this person "really sounds like". It would be wrong or, at best, misleading to say, "They're making an awful screeching noise!" I just $\mathbf{hear}_1$ the awful noise, and thereby $\mathbf{hear}_2$ the person talking. Similarly, it's $determinate_2$ what substance I $\mathbf{taste}_2$. It'll depend on what I'm eating, drinking, smoking, coughing up, etc. But I may $taste_2$ it, during a cold, by way of $\mathbf{tasting}_1$ something $indeterminate_2$. "Ugh, I can't taste anything really." Likewise I may $\mathbf{smell}_1$ burning rubber without qualifying as $\mathbf{smelling}_2$ rubber burning, or indeed smelling a scent in the actual air that is like that of rubber burning. "What *is* that which I'm *actually* smelling? Or am I only hallucinating a smell?"

Importantly: I need not judge that I'm $hearing_2$ screeches, $tasting_2$ $indeterminate_2$ substances, or $smelling_2$ burning rubber, by $\mathbf{perceiving}_1$ those things I do. I can judge (rightly or wrongly) that I'm "merely" hearing, tasting, smelling things. As with seeing: to $perceive_1$ something is not equivalent to mistaking something for real and judging it to be $perceived_2$ by oneself (contrary to Travis 2004, 2015).

*

This has implications for the question, met in Aristotle, of whether perception is equal a causal relation to the thing perceived.

Suppose I'm in a submersible under sea. There's a blue-tooth device here with me, and another aboard a ship above-water. These are communicating. When the ship-device picks up sound-waves from my dog barking on deck, it sends different signals to my player-device. These cause it to produce different sound-waves. What I then hear, listening through my ear-phones, is Edith Piaf singing 'No Regrets'. I'm not $hearing_2$ my dog barking. I could merely infer that she's barking, from what I know about the causal connections between the two devices, the ear-phones, myself, and my dog. Even if my device played an old recording of her barks, which happened to sound just like her present ones, I still wouldn't $hear_2$ the latter. So, being an object of perception is not equivalent to being the cause of a perceptual experience.

One *could* say: "My $perceiving_2$ my dog implies that I stand in some causal relations to her. Because she must exist relative to me. That if I $perceive_2$ her as who she is, then she is among the causes of my $thinking_2$ of her just now." – That's one way of talking. But whether or not we talk

like that, the causal relations figure only *among* the criteria for my hearing$_2$ her; they don't exhaust them. Other crucial criteria include what substances or noises I perceive$_1$ and when.

So I want to make three points here about causation in connection to the presentational and the objective.

First, there is no cause between the *things* perceived$_2$ and perceived$_1$. The thing that I see$_2$ – e.g. that mountain there – causally affects my sense organs. But it does not bring about or affect the presentational *thing* that is my object of sight$_1$. Such causing or changing cannot be what qualifies the existent mountain as my object of sight$_2$. This is because whatever the thing seen$_1$ is – even if it's a mountain itself – it's a *presentational* thing. It doesn't exist with respect to oneself who has it. It does not share a space with the non-presentational and existent mountain. So the existent mountain as such cannot change, bring about, be *changed* by, or be *brought about* by, the thing as such that's presented.

Second, there is no cause between the presentational *object* as such and the objective *object* as such. The presentational object as such is not a physical sort of thing, not an entity in any space. Neither is the objective object as such; not even if it 'is' a thing, after all, that exists relative to the perceiving$_2$ thing. For this last claim only comes to: The individual that 'is' the objective object of perception is, among other 'things' (now in the loosest, and most misleading, sense), this existent mountain. The individual as such is not numerically-identical to the mountain. (I'll say more about this in the next chapter). Objects of perception and thought *as such* are only so-called "things", in the misleading sense, which one gives by giving descriptions in answer to certain sorts of question, like "What are you thinking of?" or "What does So and So hear?" So, the objective object of thought or perception as such can't change, or be changed by, the presentational object.

"But mightn't we at least say that one of the objects *brings about* the other? For example: In so far as one has a presentational one in the right context, wouldn't you claim this causes a certain existent thing (say, the mountain) to become an object of perception$_2$?"

This brings us, third, to the question whether there may be causation between the presentational object as such and the existent mountain. The difficulty for the proposal, here, is that the linguistic construction "causing to become" cannot apply, in the proposed case, in the same way it does in "The flame caused the kettle to become hot" or "Poor diet caused his bones to become brittle". In these cases the flame acts on another physical entity, a kettle, and the absence of right nutrition prevents bones maintaining themselves as they ought, with the result that they weaken. Both cases are of changes over time to an artefact or substance, by the presence or absence of other things in its space. But to gain qualification as an object of thought$_2$ or perception$_2$, an existent thing need not suffer change as a thing in the strict sense, whether artefact, substance or something else; and such changes won't suffice either. There is no process of alteration. Rather, there is simply qualification.

There is now a pivot to make from certain transparent descriptions of the mountain to opaque descriptions; and opaque descriptions are not, in one sense, strictly 'of' the mountain, but – I want to say – fold in among descriptions of a certain individual which the mountain 'is'. For the

object of perception$_2$ as such is not one and the same as the mountain, though they are in a crucial sense the same 'something', which we might call an individual…

All this being said, there *is* a sense in which presentational objects are 'caused' by existent things. Though this does not support the claim that to become an objective object of perception it is either necessary or sufficient for an individual to cause a presentational object. The *occurrence* of a presentation (i.e. the *event* of an activity) can be found causally dependent on the event of physical activities in the flesh. Taking a drug or suffering an electrical stimulation to part of the brain may cause one to perceive$_1$ or merely think$_1$ of this or that. Such facts are at the basis for research in cognitive neuroscience. We can study causes of cognitions by studying physical matter. But it doesn't imply powers of change on the presentational object as such, or on the thing it is. The activity of perception$_2$ is not equal to a causal process.

Rather: for a *presentation event* to occur for a human-being, as identified by another human-being, the first must not only stand in causal relations as a whole to things outside their body but suffer changes within and 'between' the body and the non-body. There's a necessary causal *condition* for an existent's being an objective object of perception, but this doesn't imply any causal relation between the objective object, the thing which that object is, and the presentational object (or the thing *it* is).

So: for a particular thing to cause another to come about, or to change, implies that the things are spatially related and are in, or have completed, a process of intrinsic or extrinsic alteration. The alteration could be simply of one object by another (the melting of butter by sunlight; intrinsic change of the butter). Either way, the process involves both: the sun is melting here (active sense) if and only if the butter is melting (passive sense). Extrinsic change would be one billiard ball's simply causing another to move. These kinds of processes are all described under transparency, versus opacity or hyper-opacity.

What is afforded, I have suggested, are new opaque descriptions of an individual already in existence *as things* (say, the mountain). This affordance does not take time to 'unfold' itself in quite the way a physical process does. It is immediate. Something either is or is not seen$_2$ in the sense I've used this term; there isn't a process of its status as 'seen' filling out from 'incomplete' to 'complete'. It's not like melting a pack of butter from frozen hard to runny mess, or building a treehouse plank by plank.

4.7 No 'God's Eye' View

"But how will we *know* there are causal relations, if not by falling back on perception$_1$? Causal relations have their appearances like everything else. An appearance can be veridical or not. But if we have to appeal to real causes to determine what we perceive, aren't we trapped in a circle? How do we determine real from merely apparent ones?"

We are in a circle. But not a vicious one. It only seems vicious if we think of empirical knowledge on the model of 'absolute knowledge'. The sort of knowledge you could 'prove' incontrovertibly. But as we saw in Chapter 2, that's not how empirical knowledge claims work. They aren't *absolute* knowledge claims. Empirical knowledge claims are always fallible.

As I intimated in the discussion of counterfactuals: you can't prove an empirical knowledge claim 'for certain'. It's not like a proof from axioms in maths or formal logic. We evaluate whether the right criteria hold through having various impressions, in the context of one's present beliefs, and grasping what one's *justified* in judging something real on their collective basis. One will have the impression of standing in certain causal relations to things, and of having certain impressions in turn. That's all one has to go on. If you're confident about some causal relations, taking them for granted will affect whether other impressions (say, of a dog's barking) strike you as veridical or not.

"But how will I know what perceptions$_1$ give me good reason to judge 'I'm perceiving$_2$ bones', say? Who decides what makes a reason good or bad?"

No one *decides* it.

"—But you know what I mean. With thought, there's no 'gap' between what I judge myself to think$_2$ of and what I *think$_1$* of. And if I'm presented in thought with King Dolt, and King Dolt's something I've been told about, then I'm thinking$_2$ of King Dolt. Even if I'm thinking something false of him transparently. But with perception, there *is* a gap. I might see$_1$ a bird, but not judge that I see$_2$ a bird. And I could be seeing$_2$ ridges in the stone and mud, but just in funny lighting, so that it seems to me there are bones. How, though, is it determined what I *should* judge I see$_2$, given what I see$_1$?"

On one way of hearing these questions, what's asked for is a 'God's Eye' view of object and subject: "If I count as thinking$_2$ of or perceiving$_2$ things in virtue of my presentational objects, there must be a view-point on which I can see what's really there in relation to me, without the intermediary presentational objects. But how can I achieve that?"

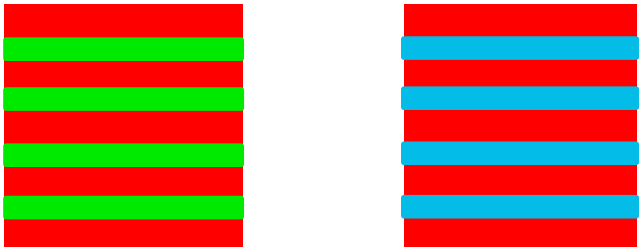
The thing is, though, that there's no such thing as perception$_2$ without perception$_1$. Just as there's no thought$_2$ without thought$_1$. It's part of the identity of an object that it has the transparencies and opacities it does at a given time. So there is no God's Eye perspective in *that* sense. In other words: If you're going to throw out talk of empirical knowledge, you can no longer help yourself to talk of presentational vs. objective-thoughts and -perceptions. Because there is always the possibility of going wrong about what it is we think$_2$ of or perceive$_2$.

But on a second way of hearing the questions, the speaker's wish is more humble. "All I want to know," they may clarify, "is what makes it the case that, given I see$_1$ *this*, and granting I see it in *this* context, it's reasonable for me to judge that I see$_2$ *that*." The question is how we acquire such knowledge. It's not whether one can 'really know, incontrovertibly', that one's seeing$_2$ this or that. The question stands rooted in a recognition of one's own, particular, subjectivity.

Anscombe poses this second question in the context of colour illusions, in her sequel essay to 'The Intentionality of Sensation', "The Subjectivity of Sensation":

> [Consider] two red squares traversed by stripes, which are green in one case while in the other they are blue [both printed in ink on paper]. The red here and the red there look different, more so by daylight than by artificial light, and more so when looked at obliquely. The red of the square traversed by green stripes looks almost or quite orange. But we say: nevertheless, the two **reds** are identical, as you will see if you cover up the traversing stripes or look along the length of

> the stripes. Of course, the red is all one pigment. [But] **why do we say the reds are the same**? Colour is not the same thing as pigment. So the identity of the **ink** is irrelevant. Our question is a phenomenological one. (Anscombe 1981:47)



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Pigment is something you can manipulate, wash away, concentrate, gather, manufacture. The colour(s) *of* pigments, as with the colours *of* things made of pigment, are not things washable, gatherable, manufacturable into reality. Rather, you can make a substance which is *of* a certain colour, or you can change its colour by doing things to *the substance*. Shades of yellow and orange aren't themselves substances like dried saffron, ochre, or cheese. Anscombe's asking: Why do we say that the reds are 'the same' when, looking at them, we experience two different reds – a more orangey red, and a cooler, darker one? She's not asking why we say the pigments, or the inks, are the same.

It's tempting to respond: "But the identity of the pigment surely does matter in this case. If talking about what colour shapes you see$_1$ when looking at these two figures, then Anscombe's correct: the pigment's irrelevant. But if you're asking, are the *pigment squares*, on this paper, the same, then that's different. It's not in our concept of a substance that its colour changes simply depending on what substance it is *next* to without any chemical or physical reaction produced. (For instance, if you expose copper to oxygen long enough.) There's a difference between the concept of a colour 'in itself', and the colour of a physical substance like saffron, pigment, copper, etc."

But even if the substances were different (ink-pigment and flower-petal), or even if one of the 'coloured objects' is not a substance at all (but rather a patch of coloured light thrown on flagstones) it would still make sense to say, "The *reds* are actually the same *as each other*". Why, Anscombe's asking, is this so?

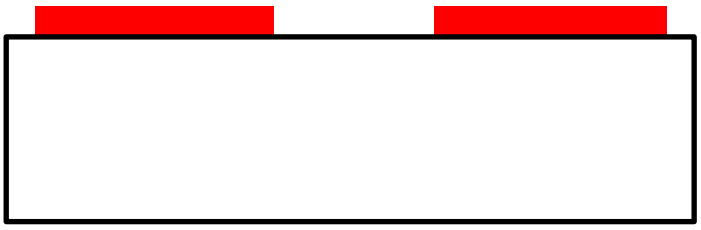
Her answer:

> I suggest **there isn't exactly a reason, a justification**. It is rather that our language just does go like that. Colours that keep on looking the same to the same eye, against the same backgrounds, and in the same light and orientation *are* the same. That is to say, we regard the colour that things are [for example] as not changed by **these** changes [i.e. changes of background or contiguous colour from blue to green or vice versa]. (Anscombe 1981:47)

*

It's crucial to understand this right, as one could easily get the wrong idea. Anscombe could heard as saying: we can choose at will what our concepts are; we can magic up categories by which to understand the world any which way. But that's not what she means. It's not just that we "just regard" the colour that things are (like pigment squares) as unchanged by "these changes" but could do otherwise. Instead, it's a fact of the matter that this particular colour is unchanged. Once we're engaged with the concept of colour, this simply follows. Whether we think of this or that colour as the same doesn't determine whether it truly is. It's what is the case, when we look at something under certain conditions, that settles the matter. It doesn't follow that we can make a concept be simply whatever we like. What we see_1 when we do *this* (insert some action-in-context) is neither opinion, preference, nor choice. And it's the fact of what would be $seen_1$ in certain conditions that settles whether the colours are 'the same'.

In other words: It's part of our current concept, <colour>, that two $perceptible_2$ shapes of colour are "the same colour as each other" when, *under certain conditions*, we see_1 two shapes of the same colour. In the striped squares case, this requires $seeing_1$ two lines of the same shade of red when you cover the other stripes of the $perceptible_2$ squares.



So, the colour-shapes $seen_1$ aren't numerically identical to the colour-shapes $seen_2$. Rather: the first are those by which we know whether the latter are the same colour or not.

Anscombe calls the colours $seen_2$ "standing colours" (Anscombe 1981:47). I'd rather call them "the **objective colours** of some existent things", for our purposes. Because what matters for us here is that we can only be right or wrong about them, and hence about those objective things or shapes of which they're the colours. It's not logically possible to be infallible with respect to something's objective colour.

Anscombe's remarks helpfully highlight that the sentence, "Why do we say these are the same?" can express a distinctly conceptual, rather than *solely* empirical, question. We needn't be seeking a justification for a claim about some particulars available to $perception_2$. (For example, "Why did you say *these* two are the same colour? From where I'm standing they look to be different…."). We can be asking what the (or some) conditions are under which it's appropriate to judge, "These reds are the same. Even though we don't experience the same shades of red in our field of vision when looking at the squares without parts covered over."

That is: a "Why do we say these are the same?" question may be answerable by specifying a concept. By describing a practice involving words and gestures in a mutable environment. Not by speaking about this or that existent particular, or by trying to justify the practice as from a God's Eye view.

In learning to think$_1$ of a given kind of thing, we're acquiring a set of skills. If you have the sufficient skills, you know what qualifies you as thinking$_2$ of what. By learning how to do things.

It's like knowing how to tie your shoe-laces. Here are the shoe-laces, here the student's hands. "Does the student know how to tie them?" Yes or no. Asking whether the lace-tying, or the ability to lace-tie, is 'accurate' to anything expresses some confusion. The question is rather, "Can the student *do* this or that?" In other words: There isn't room, here, for speaking of a 'false concept' in the sense one speaks of a 'false thought', 'false belief' or a 'false proposition'. Propositions aren't skills you master, they're things you assert, deny, entertain as true, assess. Skills aren't "of" or "about" things in that sense.

So if I ask, "How do we know the standards of correctness give us a grip on the world as it really is?" I express confusion too. I'm treating the standards as if they're things we justify, like our assent to a proposition. To try and justify these standards, though, would be to try and justify *concepts*. That's like justifying 'the skill' of tying one's shoe-laces in itself.

We can justify the *application* or the *relevance* of a concept, for sure. It makes sense to ask if a concept would be useful to someone who does not have it. But we don't justify a concept in isolation from relevance, in the sort of way one justifies an empirical knowledge claim. If you ask me, "Does the concept <snow> really track anything in the world?", the only way I can read this is as: "Is there anything in existence that is snow?" or "Does what *you're* calling 'snow' align with what *we* call snow?" It doesn't mean: "Is the category of 'snow' *true*?" or "*valid*?"

4.8 Climbing Free

Let's step back, now, and revisit some puzzles from Chapters 1-3.

Our core questions included, "What is it for there to be truths and falsities for us to grasp, in 'our' spaces, concerning non-existents?" "What are the criteria for our coming to know, to even establish, such truths and falsities in the first place?" And, "What are the criteria for correctly identifying the same non-existent things at different times, though none of us (first-person plural) can interact with them; though they don't exist?"

I've argued that truths and falsities about mere non-existents, that are also presentational at some point, are established by who would say what, honestly and with a correct grasp on terms, regarding what they think$_1$ of. Meeting criteria for coming to know these truths and falsities involves acquiring the ability to answer certain questions by deference to what someone would have said about their object of thought$_1$, at a given time, when they thought$_1$ of it.

To correctly identify a non-existent at different times can be done in different ways, depending on whether it's merely non-existent, as above, or fictional. Regarding mere non-existents that are presentational at some point: it's still a matter of knowing how to answer questions and, in principle, to gather more information from original thinkers$_1$ or their records, etc.

Appreciating this has involved leaving off the idea that the object of thought *as such* is a sort of "thing" or "entity" that exists in anything like the way dragon-fruits or pineapples do (as though to be a non-existent pineapple was to be an existent something else). An object of thought *per se*

is what we called a 'question-thing', drawing on Anscombe's remarks concerning direct objects. To have an object of thought is not to be in possession of the non-question-thing which it 'is'. The thing it is is given by transparencies, distinct from opacities.

This touches on some issues raised when thinking with Aristotle and Husserl.

First, Aristotle's account allowed that changes within the body could give rise to behaviours by which the bodied person qualified as thinking of things. Even if the things didn't exist (and perhaps never had). So long as we equated objects of thought with the things they are, this made it seem like the things must exist as causal *relata* with one's bodily substance. But now we can say instead: "The *event* of having an object of thought is causally dependent on the *event* of certain bodily changes."

Aristotle's account sparked two questions to which I didn't give a final response (see §1.5). One concerned discrimination among similar non-existents:

> "[S]upposing we can tell that certain things are true of the non-existent object, like that it's a sphinx, not a satyr – how do we tell *which* particular non-existent sphinx it is? The set of non-existent things is surely vast, if not infinite. In Pit-B, every property, possible and impossible, will be in every possible and impossible combination with others. Won't there then be an infinite number of non-existent sphinxes sharing a certain set of traits in common (for instance, that it's standing in the doorway)? Even if there are various other features they have that distinguish them? Or are you really thinking of them all? How would you know if you were or not?"

A particular sphinx, if it's imagined up, is either presentational or fictional. If it's fictional, the fictional object as such has a distinct origin in the fiction's making. So if the sphinx in question is that authored by Sophocles in *Oedipus Rex*, then no matter how many other sphinxes it may be transparently alike, it is the The Sphinx of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. If on the other hand it's presentational, then it's the presentational thing of a particular person at a moment in history, alone. Again, no matter how similar it might be to other presentational or fictional sphinxes transparently speaking.

A second question was about pretence:

> "[Am] I not really *pretending* to tell you something factual [when I talk about this sphinx], and aren't you 'in' on the pretence with me? … Then isn't my so-called 'thinking of a sphinx' really just some activity, a set of behaviours, that makes it *look like* I'm thinking of a thing that's factually this or that?"

There's no need to invoke pretence. There are correctness conditions for transparent descriptions of a non-existent thing, and for the opaque descriptions concerning the object it is. These aren't rules for what to pretend and when. They concern the establishment of *facts* as a function of what someone would say if asked what they're thinking of, and answering honestly and with a correct use of terms. If they were pretending to think of sphinx, answering "A sphinx" would, at best, be incorrect. But it's neither correct nor incorrect. What one thinks_1 of in context determines what (if anything) one thinks_2 of. Presentational thought runs through every thought of humankind. Pretence does not.

When thinking with Husserl I denied there's only one intentional object if I think of a particular dragon-fruit. I'd now say that to think_2 of a dragon-fruit implies thought_1 of some particular non-

identical with the dragon-fruit. Defending this led me to remark in §2.4 on Frege's claim that , when learning "The Morning Star is the Evening Star", one's simply learning a new way to think and talk of Venus. I argued there were three *things* involved here, not just a single thing plus ways of thinking. There were a non-existent Morning Star, a non-existent Evening Star, and the existent planet Venus. The planet has, historically, been mistakenly identified with the two stars. Those two stars, I'd now say, are objective insofar as they're shared postulates in a community of astronomers and lay-folk.

This raised a question:

> "[W]hat is involved, exactly, in counting as thinking of something external (or perceiving it), and judging it to be this or that, without knowing what it is one's thinking of, perceiving, judging to be this or that[?] For example, when previous astronomers thought Venus to be two stars, it wasn't that they'd profess their belief in the following terms: "We hold that Venus is two stars." For in an obvious sense, they believed no such thing!"

The answer is: *Insofar* as they'd thought$_2$ of either star, they'd usually thought$_2$ of Venus without realizing it. They didn't realize it because there were three objective things – the two stars and planet – quite distinct from their presentational things, which varied merely between two stars. Thinking Venus to be two stars was a matter of having two stars as presentational things in such a context that they qualified both as thinking$_2$ of Venus and of the objective postulates the Morning Star and Evening Star. Each thinker had their own presentational versions, in such situations, of those *postulates*, but – crucially – not of Venus. This is consistent with their having presentational versions of the planet on other occasions.

Finally, we met seven sorts of 'doubling', laid out in §3.3. Sorts 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 have now been elucidated. These sorts were:

1 A doubling of the 'thing' taken first merely as itself, independently of mind, and then the 'same thing' as somehow having distinct and conflicting abilities 'in' thought. E.g. The tree merely as a thing doesn't bring associations to mind, but rather the tree in its role as what is thought of.

2 A doubling of 'things', in some use of "things", in there being different truths pertaining to the object of thought merely as such (quite independently of what thing it happens to 'be'), and the thing which we say it 'is'. The object as such has no literal location in any environment, nor weight nor size, though the tree it is has all.

3 A doubling of a thing in itself as intentional object… There is the existent tree which may stand and grow quite independently of what anyone thinks of. But there is also the presentational tree by which that existent counts as thought of. And this presentational tree, while it may – as a tree – have stood long before we thought of it, nonetheless has 'existed' as a presentational object only so long as the thinking.

5 The especially troubling doubling of presentational truths, in what seemed like sure contradiction. The purely presentational pineapple, I suggested, has a Husserlian horizon of its own. There are features of the pineapple that I'm not presently presented with, but have a 'feeling' for, and can focus my mind onto, which will in turn 'expand' the horizon to suggest yet further features I'm not presented with. Yet I'm presented with a pineapple as having all the features it does already, not in wait for

my exploration. Yet the pineapple, being presentational, was suggested to be something of whose features I can't be ignorant. Furthermore, in a case of illusion as here, and when I judge the pineapple real, it surely presents as a pineapple I can taste and touch. Yet if, as suggested, existence is attributed in terms of what stands in in relation to oneself (recognized in a first-personal thought), then I'd seem to be wrong about the pineapple. So it seems that at least one of the above claims needs to be given up, or qualified.

6 If I think of the presentational pineapple as having a determinate number of seeds, it seems right to say that what I think of has a determinate number. But I may not be presented with a determinate number. So it seems like it both does and doesn't have a determinate number, if a mark of presentational things is that I cannot be ignorant of their features.

The doublings in (1-2) reflect the distinction between an intentional thing and an intentional object. Insofar as something brings associations to mind, it is an intentional thing, implying an intentional object, rather than merely a thing not thought of. The doubling in (3) reflects the elementary distinction between that thing of which one thinks_2, and any presentational (or, indeed, non-existent but objective) intentional object by which one thinks_2 of the existent accurately as it was at a certain moment in its history.

The doubling in (5-6) *both* reflect the distinction between determinacy_1 and determinacy_2. In the case of (5), I'm presented with my intentional object as having fully determinate features, though it's not yet determined what these are. It has determinate_1 features, meaning in this particular case that if you asked me, "Has it all its features determinately?", then – granting I was honest and using terms correctly – I would answer infallibly, "Yes". But it doesn't have fully determinate_2 features; meaning that, if you asked me, "What are all its features it determinately has?" I would answer infallibly, "I don't know." This does not mean I am wrong about the transparencies of my presentational pineapple. In Chapter 5 we'll turn our attention to 'doublings'-sorts 4 and 7.

4.9 Oh, and One Last Thing:

A pithy objection to Anscombe's account of intentional objects was put forward by Arthur Prior in his posthumous monograph, *Objects of Thought*. Here's what he says:

> Miss Anscombe [insists] **that if what one thinks of happens also to exist, as in the case of Mr. Churchill, then what one thinks of just is the very object that one might also, for instance, bite or shave**. The name 'Winston Churchill', in other words, functions in exactly the same way as in 'X is thinking of Winston Churchill' as it does in 'X is biting Winston Churchill'; it serves to refer to an actual object, in the modern sense, which happens also to be an object (in the old sense) of thought
>
> … **But then Miss Anscombe says that 'the mere fact of real existence…can't make so much difference to the analysis of a sentence like "X thought of—"'** … This surely means that the grammar of 'X thought of—' is exactly the same in the two cases, so that if we have a couple of referring expressions and a two-place predicate in the one case we have it in the other, and if not in the one, then not in the other.
>
> … **But it would certainly be awkward to say that thinking of X isn't the same sort of thing when X exists and when it doesn't; for a man might well think of X, and know**

> **perfectly well what it is for him to be thinking of X, without knowing whether X exists or not**; and a third party might think that Y is thinking of X, and know perfectly well what he is taking Y to be doing, without knowing whether X exists or not.
>
> (a) X's thinking of Y constitutes a relation between X and Y when Y exists, but (b) not when Y doesn't; but (c) X's thinking of Y is the same sort of thing whether Y exists or not. **Something plainly has to be given up here; what will it be?** (Prior 1971: 129-30)

Two things appear to me true. First, that Anscombe is correct in holding that "the mere fact of real existence" can't make "so much difference" to the analysis of a sentence like "X thought of—". Second, that (a) is false: X's thinking of Y does not constitute a relation between X and Y when Y exists. Where is the problem?

If I think of a particular that exists, then it's true that this particular stands in a physical relation to me. But we saw in Chapter 3 that to have an object of thought is not equal to doing anything physical with something. The existence or non-existence of the thing thought of is of no consequence to whether one counts as thinking of it. The thing is thought of either way.

To think of something is to have a certain presentational thing and to be in a context such that one qualifies as having a fallible thought of something. This means being subject, potentially, to correction about a particular: for instance about what *thing* you judge it to be ("The thing in the grass there isn't a dragon-fruit but a pineapple"). "What you believe you're thinking$_2$ of is actually just a presentational thing; the thing you're thinking$_2$. What matters is the objectivity; the fact that there are standards of correctness for claims about some thing, so that there are ways of evaluating what are true and false transparencies about it.

In the case of existents, these standards are given by what one is presented with in apparent context. Given such and such presentations, it is right and proper to judge that one's objective object is this, quite independently of what anyone else would say if asked, "What are you thinking of?" In the case of someone else's presentational object, the standards are given precisely by what someone would say in answer to "What are you thinking of?"

My point is: When engaged in the activity of talking about thoughts and thinkings of things, the question, "Does this or that exist?" doesn't arise. The objectivity doesn't imply existence, even if existence implies objectivity. The criteria by which one thinks of something at all is impervious to the fact of whether the thing exists. All I mean to infer from this is that, *as* an object of thought$_2$, a thing needn't be real vs. unreal. There aren't two types of thinking, 'thinking of something real' and 'thinking of something unreal'. Thinking as such is simply presentational or objective. All there is, rather, is a fact of the matter as to whether that thing *of which* one's thinking is real or not. This may affect whether the thought of it is objective or presentational, but we didn't need existence for *that* to be affected.

5

Into the Forest

Individuals and Hyper-Opacity

In this chapter I aim to make sense of the remaining two 'doubling' puzzles laid out in §3.3. These concerned, (4) the phenomenon of 'fluctuation' met through Augustine and Husserl, and (7) the idea of an individual that's 'nothing' but not merely nothing, hinted at in Chapter 2:

> **4** The fluctuating which 'is' the object of thought that 'is' a thing that needn't exist but 'is' not fluctuating in the same way… The tree as a thing is growing. It's alive. It draws water up, soaks energy from the sun, unfurls its foliage. But the fluctuating of presentations of that tree – from different spatial perspectives, relative to different projects and wishes, with reference to different memories and contemplated possible futures – is not the fluctuating of something literally rooted and dripping sap as the tree is.
>
> **7** The doubling and more of 'individuals' in terms of the things they are yet are 'not'. I've hinted at the idea that 'something' may 'be' a thing without being equal to that thing. That it may even 'be' multiple things that aren't equal to each other.

§§5.1 appeals to William James's 1904 paper, "Does Consciousness Exist?" for a model to help us think clearly about individuals as such. He invokes the idea of intersecting lines, which I've echoed here and there throughout the essay so far. I call the more specific model adapted from James 'the Tapestry'. But by the end of this chapter, it will have morphed into the picture of a living, growing Forest.

§§5.2-5.3 begin applying the Jamesian Tapestry to cases of presentational and objective thought. This brings out the presence of further individuals – question-things – that the previous chapters haven't discussed directly. These sections try to get clearer on how these further individuals are conceptually related to one another. This is part and parcel of elucidating everyday practices of talk of thought beyond what we have so far.

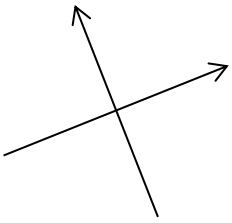
I'll give the second 'half' of this chapter introduction then, at the end of §5.3, where it'll make more sense in light of our findings. §§5.4-5.7 are, in brief, (i) a resolution of puzzle (4) above and (ii) a more complete articulation of how we ought to approach the Mu'tazilite puzzle of non-existent particulars 'becoming' existent. I urge that, to approach questions about identity and existence, we must become sensitive not simply to the notion of an 'individual' as a mere-question thing, but to the concrete practices of speech, gesture and expression in which puzzles about thinking and 'sameness' between things arise. To do this we must become students of many different forms of life.

5.1 James' Puzzle: How to Be In *and* Out of the Mind?

William James is puzzled. How can the room he sits in and thinks of be both external to himself – out in the world – and internal to himself: within his mind? On one hand 'objective', as we may want to say, and on the other, 'subjective'?

I suppose, he says, it's something that can be talked of in two ways. Both as a "thought" or "experience" (or what I've called an intentional object) and as a "physical" thing (what I'd call an intentional physical-thing). So he suggests picturing the room not quite as a 'thing' at all, but rather as an 'intersection'. The crossing point of two lines, each expanding in a given direction:

> The puzzle of how the one identical room can be in two places is at bottom just the puzzle of how one identical point can be on two lines. It can, if it be situated at their intersection; and similarly, if the 'pure experience' of the room were a place of **intersection of two processes**, which connected it with different groups of associates respectively, it could be counted twice over, as belonging to either group, and spoken of loosely as existing in two places, although it would remain all the time a numerically single thing….
>
> What are the two processes[?] … One of them is the reader's personal biography, the other is the history of the house of which the room is part…. The physical and the mental operations form curiously incompatible groups. **As a room, the experience has occupied that spot and had that environment for thirty years. As your field of consciousness it may never have existed until now.** (James 2003 [1912]:6-7)



If we read "experience" here as "object of thought$_2$" (or "object of perception$_2$"), we've a near description of the transparent/opaque distinction. Transparently speaking, here's a room with a thirty-year history. But now in terms of opacities: I may never have thought$_2$ of it before. 'As' my object of thought$_2$, it may only have existed* a few seconds.[23] Meaning that the physical thing may only have been thought$_2$ of a few seconds. The objective intentional thing is "subjective" in the sense of "being thought of by a subject". It remains objective still in the sense that there are standards for the thinker$_2$'s being right or wrong about it.

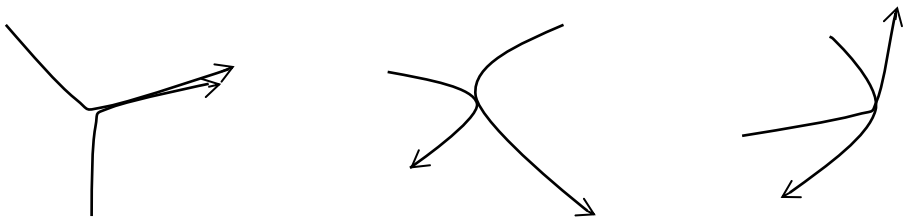
So these lines aren't "things" in the way paper-clips, stones or hands are things. They're more akin to *processes* of narrative and history, still unfolding in time**.** One, of the thinker in particular; the other, of the room in the house. These would be akin to processes of creating, curtailing, continuing, and developing deeds, skills, relations among entities. Neither process would have a 'telos' or 'end-goal' in the way that building a house does, or swimming to shore. Though they would have a direction of 'flow', as processes must. They would be open-ended determinations of facts about who is what in conceptual relation to what.

For example: the fact that James acts a certain way weaves him into the story of a dusty room. By acting the certain way, he qualifies as thinking$_2$ of the room. This changes the potential

[23] I introduced the term "exists*" in §4.3.

fortunes of that room; the sorts of acknowledgements, decisions, exploration of its contents now possible. And that this room is now thought of affords new directions for the thinker, James, in turn. A changing framework for the emergence of new experiences and orientations. Recall Augustine on his 'stretch' toward predicted futures.

The "things" at stake – James and the room – are here identified, in some intriguing sense, with their becoming what they are over time. To this extent the lines may also be figured as traces of an impact or interaction between two beings 'as' two trajectories of becoming-what-they-are. Each course affects the dynamics and trajectory of the other on encounter:



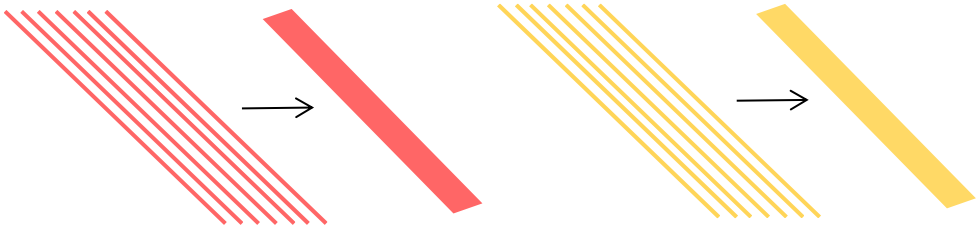
In this chapter I'm focused on an 'intersection' image and how it may help us understand the idea of an intentional object's 'being' a fluctuation of the sort indicated by thinking with Husserl on 'horizons'. Taken together with the idea of 'question-things', this image helps to visualize a notion of 'the individual as such' as, in effect, a question-thing. It's by thinking in terms of such 'individuals' that I seek to spell out that intriguing sense is in which something 'is' the process of its becoming what it is over time.

James talks of what the thinker thinks of as being *one and the same* as the existent room. But there's a sense in which "what he thinks of" is numerically-distinct from his object of thought. There's also a sense in which he really has two intentional things, two intentional objects; presentational and objective. Because we saw through Chapters 1-4 that:

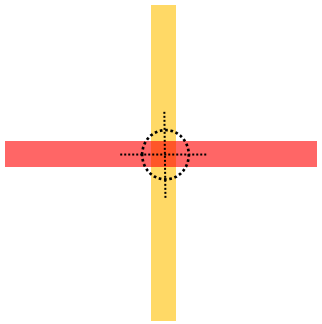
(i) insofar as one has a presentational object, one may or may not have an objective one too – but these can't be numerically the same, nor are either numerically identical with the intentional *things* they are;
(ii) there are different kinds of objective object: some are originally presentational objects, others simply existents, others neither existent nor presentational;
(iii) a thing or object can be presentational relative to one subject while objective relative to another.

James' way of talking doesn't distinguish thought$_1$ from thought$_2$, and is insensitive – as it stands – to the relativity of being presentational and/or objective. So I'll tweak James' image slightly to accommodate (i-iii). Though, as we'll see, I have no intention of dropping his way of talking. I would only understand it, rather, in terms of the practices with words we've been focused on and developing, through exploration, in the essay up to this point.

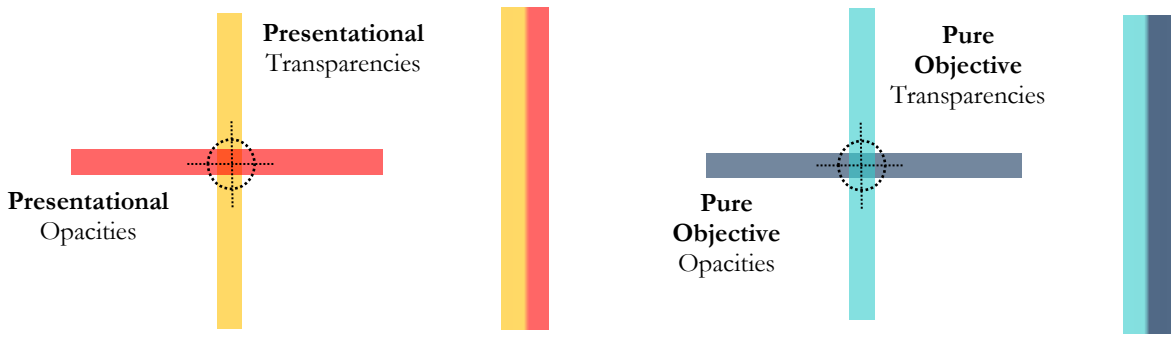
To begin, imagine a work-surface thick with threads. Each thread represents a true description of some presentational thing or presentational object. Red threads are opacities, gold threads are transparencies, including both determinate$_1$ and determinate$_2$ facts. (Mixed opacity sentences combine both sorts of thread). Gather the threads for 'one object' into two bundles, or 'cords'. We'll fold the mixed-opacities in with the reds:



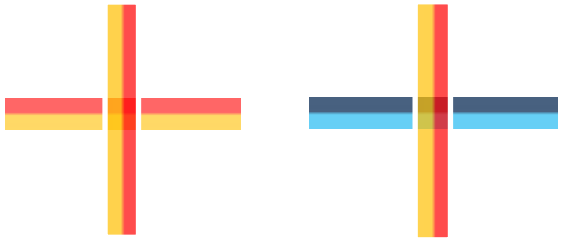
Now cross these cords at a right-angle. At the intersection are true transparencies, pure opacities and mixed-opacities. The intersection represents a special 'insofar' conceptual-relation among these truths. *Insofar* as one thinks$_1$ of the intentional thing, one has the intentional object. *Insofar* as one has the intentional object, one thinks$_1$ of the intentional thing. This relation is 'necessary'. One couldn't have the object without thinking$_1$ of the thing and vice versa.



The intersection model can be doubled for 'purely' objective things and objects. We can just use different colours (I'll use blues). And we can 'plait' the threads of an object-thing pair into a thicker cord, in order to show 'insofar' relations between multiple things and objects.



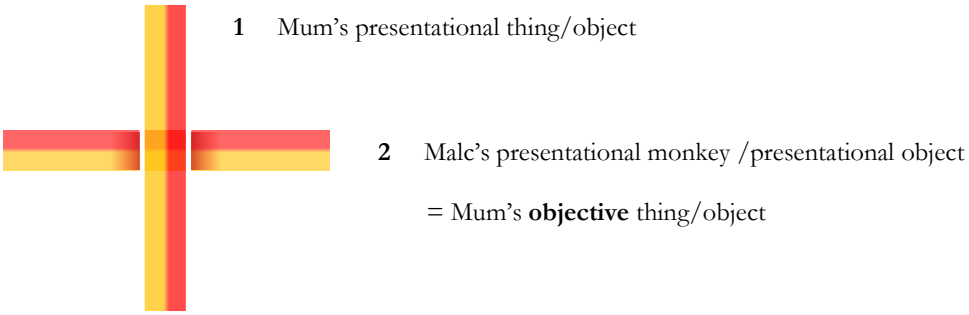
We can now cross such thicker cords over each other like this:



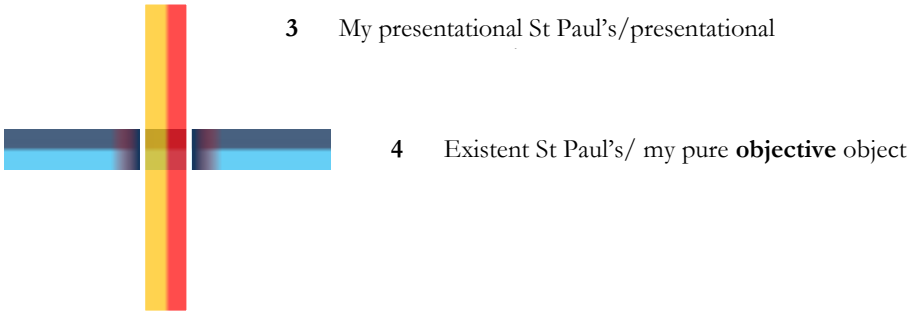
Such overlaps (rather than conjunctions of both cords and their treads) signify that insofar as someone thinks$_1$ of *this* object (on top), they qualify as thinking$_2$ of this *other* object (below it). But it doesn't signify the kind of necessary relation between an object and the thing it is. Because there are different ways in which one can count as thinking$_2$ of a purely objective thing, or someone else's presentational object.

Some examples.

If Malc's mum thinks of Malc's hallucinated monkey, Malc's presentational object is objective relative to her. So what I'll call here 1 and 2 aren't numerically the same. So-called '1' is that intentional thing/object pair by which Mum thinks$_2$ of Malc's monkey. So I show 1 crossed over 2:



Similarly when a thing exists. Suppose I think$_2$ of St Paul's Cathedral in London correctly as being St Paul's Cathedral. This implies that I've a presentational thing that 'is' St Paul's. But since the original St Paul's exists, and no presentational version does, the original St Paul's is nobody's presentational thing. So we'll use a blue braid to represent it, rather than a red-gold. What I call here 3 is that by which I think$_2$ of so-called '4'. So I show 3 crossed over 4:



James' original image of crossed lines, then, can be adjusted to resolve his puzzle in terms of 'insofar' relations. What's 'outside' the mind is 'inside' the mind by way of insofar relations. No magical fishing-line is needed. It's a matter of manifestation. And this can be articulated in terms of a distinction between different intentional objects and intentional things. And this distinction can in turn be articulated in terms of practices with questions, words, and gestures in a context. Let's call this adjusted picture 'the Tapestry'.

5.2 A Something and A Nothing: "The Individual"

"Why 'translate' the past chapters' findings into this 'Tapestry' picture with cords and crossings? And regarding these 'cords' called 1, 2, 3 etc. – what are you *naming* when you talk about them? A thing/object pair? No one talks like that in everyday language. So why do so now? It suggests that, somewhere along the way, we might have veered from the everyday linguistic phenomena you said you wanted to keep. Have we lost track of what we 'bracketed' in Husserl's sense?"

In everyday language we can ask, "What are you thinking of?", and in answer give either transparencies or opacities. My alter-ego, there, is right. And there's nothing wrong with this practice, which I'll call the 'everyday' one.

Yet we've identified another way of speaking, which distinguishes intentional things from intentional objects. This other way has been helpful to adopt when resolving puzzles about how we think of anything (even non-existents). I'll call this the 'new' practice. But how do the two they connect?

What I'm doing now is looking back again at the everyday way practice in light of the new one developed over Chapters 3-4. They don't conflict. Rather, the ordinary way turns out to be concerned with 'something' that doesn't collapse into an intentional object or thing as clarified in the 'new' practice, but nonetheless 'is' each and both. It is 'something' we count as giving in answer to a special question, "What are you thinking of?", without its amounting to our own presentational object of thought. It's something given by using a noun or phrase such as would denote either the intentional thing or the intentional object as such.

In other words, it appears to be a question-thing.

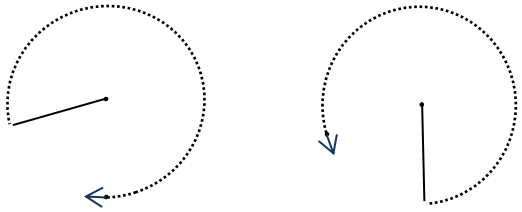
Suppose I'm wondering what Lucy's thinking of. The everyday practice allows the following. If you ask me, "What are *you* thinking of?", I can answer with opacities: "Whatever it is *Lucy's* thinking of" or "*Lucy's* object of thought". Later, after learning 'it' was a demon, I can answer rightly, "What were you thinking of?" with a transparency instead: "A demon, apparently." But this "it" doesn't denote either of Lucy's two intentional things or intentional objects (presentational and objective). For, on the new practice, the demon (the thing) is numerically distinct from the object it 'is'.

The word "it" is simply an appropriate word to use in the everyday kind of question/answer context. "It", one may want to say, names an individual that 'is' the intentional objects and things; where the 'is' here, of course, isn't used to numerically-identify what's 'given' with the things or objects whose descriptions I appeal to. The 'is' can only be elucidated by looking at this particular practice of answering "What are you thinking of?"

"—But didn't we already say that the question-thing proper to answering, 'What are you thinking of?' is what's given by opacities *only*? An object of thought as such?"

These are different practices involving the same question-sentence. The everyday practice is one where I count as talking of the "same thing" by giving what can be used to give either opacities *or* transparencies. But rather than be tempted to ask, "What sort of a 'thing' is this that's 'made

of' intentional things and objects?", or "What entity is this that can *qualify* as both?" (like a human may qualify as a butcher *and* a candlestick maker), we can now situate talk of "same thing" relative to the newer practice.[24] We can focus, now, on pivots between uses of words. One way of answering, "What are you thinking of?" is to give the phrases or terms that would be used to denote either an intentional thing or an intentional object in the newer practice. With these phrases as one's 'base', one can pivot between speaking of these numerically distinct things or speaking of a single question-thing. This question-thing is what I'm calling simply an 'individual'.



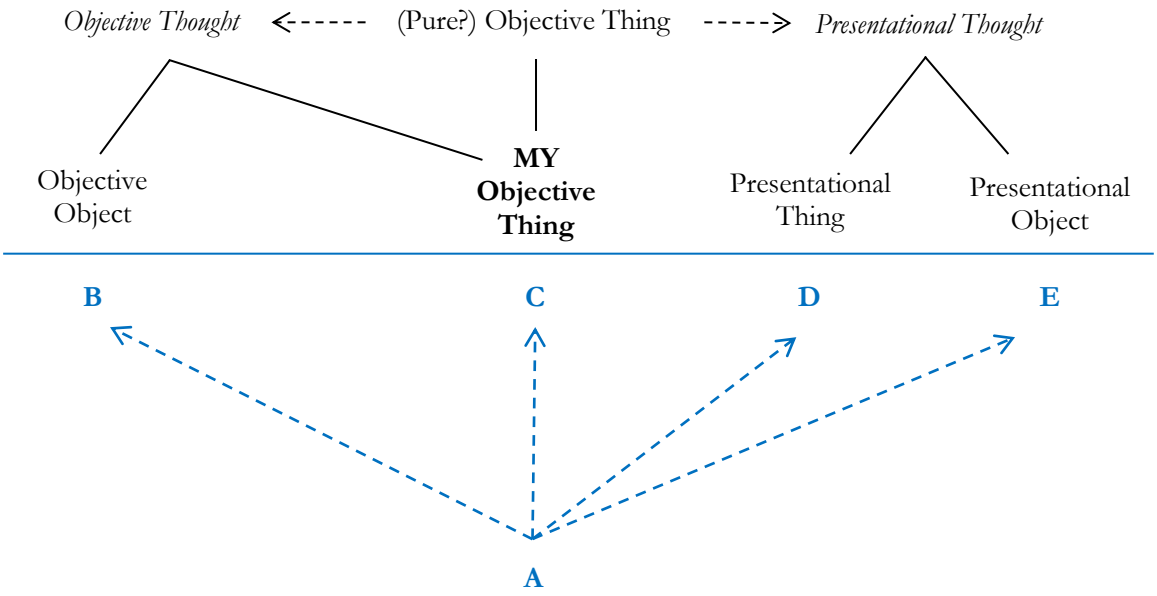
Unlike with direct-objects or intentional objects as such, notice that there's no 'one-to-one' relation of the individual to something else it 'is' in the everyday practice just described. A direct-object of the sentence, "John sent Mary the book" is given by "the book". So it 'is' (non-numerically) the book John sent. Lucy's intentional object as such is given by "King Dolt". So it 'is' (non-numerically) the thing thought$_2$ of, which is King Dolt. But there's no *single* thing that the individual we're concerned with, just now, non-numerically 'is'. There seem no fewer than four, in the case of objective thought. For if we give the individual the name 'A', the individual is what is 'given' by answering "What are you thinking of?" with the giving of names or descriptions (transparent or opaque, depending) of B, C, D and/or E below:

[24] A person falls under the concepts <person> and <baker>, only if as a person they do certain things, have certain features, which qualify them as a person as being a baker. We can ask, "Is this person a baker?", which is not to ask, "Is this baker a baker?" There is an asymmetry of sorts between the concepts. It's the condition of being a human animal, if under Capitalism, say, that it makes sense to ask of one of them, "What do they do for a living?" A possible answer to which is, "They're a baker." But it is weird to ask, "Is the baker a person?" A baker just is a person with a vocation in baking. They're not simply a baking machine.

Another example: "Dolt is the King on the Mound." "Dolt" is a proper name, and "King on the Mound" a definite description. But we might not know whether "King on the Mound" is some sort of code-name for a normal person, the title of a folkloric-figure, or a plan of attack. Knowing Dolt to be a man indicates that the question, "What is this man's position in life?" makes sense to pose. Because a man is the sort of thing – we may think – to have a position in life, all else being equal.

And if there are excusing circumstances, that doesn't mean the question's inappropriate. Rather that there needs to be some reason why it doesn't make sense, in this individual's case, to say that he has any position in life. (Maybe he's dead or a ghost).

Individuals Practice # 1

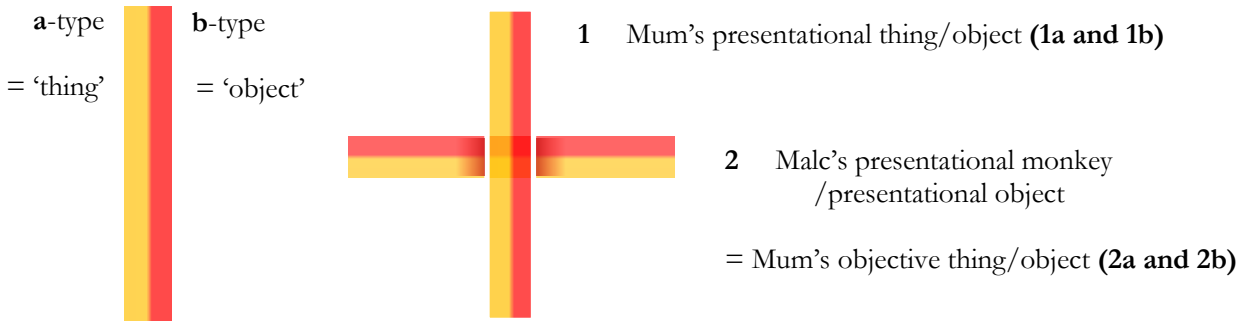


The individual is individuated by the fact of who would answer the relevant question with infallibility relative to D, in the everyday practice. And by what it's appropriate for someone to give, phrase-wise, that would also serve in another practice to give the names or descriptions merely of distinct non-question-things and objects (i.e. which particulars, relative to which subject, instantiate the logical categories of B, C, D and E). The individual is not itself a 'kind', but a particular question-thing. In other words, it has its own kind of transparencies only by reference to questions and answers in this particular practice.

"But what of the 'cords' you called '1', '2', '3', etc.? What are these 'things', if I can use that term, and how do they conceptually relate to this practice concerning the individual 'A'?"

Cords '1' and '2' are each "composed" of the truths pertaining to an intentional object/thing pair. They each represent a distinct a question-thing too. So each represents a distinct 'individual', in addition to individual A above. But these are a lot more akin to direct objects in that each is just one question-thing 'paired' not with four but with just one 'thing' (e.g. a demon).

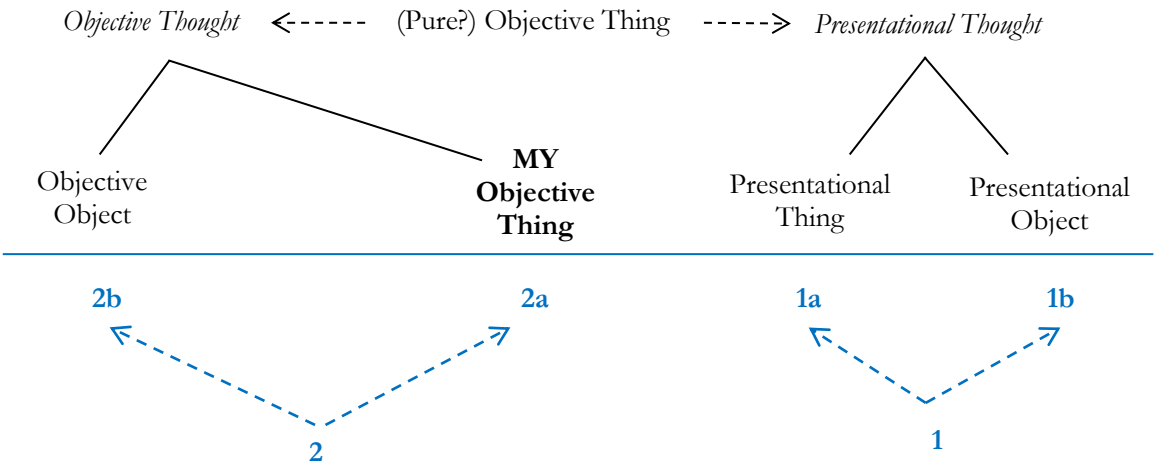
For example: If asked, "What's Mum thinking about?", there's a way of responding which limits itself to objective particulars, and a way of responding that limits itself to presentational particulars. On one way, the appropriate response is to describe (1a) the objective thing or (1b) objective object (and no more). On the other way, the appropriate response is describe (2a) the presentational thing or (2b) the presentational object (and no more). 'Things' (or 'a'-types) roughly correspond to the gold threads, and 'objects' (or 'b-types') roughly to the red ones:



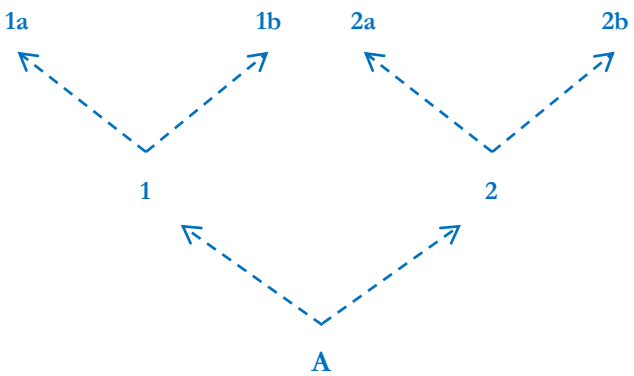
Notice what follows. We can conceive of individuals given in the earlier everyday practice of answering, "What are you thinking of?" as being 'composed' (metaphorically thinking) of such individuals given in the second everyday practice just described, of answering, "What is So-and-So thinking of?", when the latter can be split into "What is she thinking$_1$ of?" (Describe 1 or 1b) and "What is she thinking$_2$ of?" (Describe 2a or 2b).

So the 'logical form' of this second practice can be pictured like this:

Individuals Practice # 2



And – crucially – the 'composition' of individuals in the first everyday practice (or 'Practice 1') can be pictured relative to individuals of the second everyday practice (or 'Practice 2') like this:



In other words, individuals can be 'nestings' of other individuals, in the special sense of "individual" I've been using this chapter.

So we begin to see that James' intersection solution to the puzzle, of how things can be in *and* out of the mind, turns on an appeal to the everyday practice in which we can invoke individuals taking the role of A. Such individuals are 'given' by descriptions or names of four distinct particulars. But in doing so, it brings out an appeal to individuals at a 'lower level' already, taking the role of 'overlapping' or of 'overlapped' cord. These latter individuals are 'given' by descriptions or names merely of two distinct particulars.

5.3 Individuals, Manifestation, and Existence

This picture of individuals 'as such' in terms of 'backward turns' from things and objects (e.g. in roles of B, C, D, etc.) to the giving of a name (e.g. in the role of "A") – giving a question-thing – and of pivots between different practices with questions and answers, suggests two steps toward approaching the Mu'tazilites' puzzle in the right way: the puzzle met in Chapter 2 about non-existent particulars *becoming* existent.

In §2.8 I wrote that we should approach the puzzle as a riddle. That we had—

> to find a practice with words in which it makes sense to *say* the following and to thereby *say* something true: "'A' is the name of something, and A has no history as a thing, and A is this physical existent, and A was not this physical existent, and A is not equal to a physical existent, and A is nothing."

The first step toward doing so, I suggest, involves reference to the idea of individuals 'as such'.

In the diagram called 'Individuals Practice #1' above, 'A' is the name of an individual as such. It has no history as a 'thing' just in the sense that it's not, as such, an *entity* of any sort; certainly not a physical substance. Nonetheless it 'is' a physical existent if whatever instantiates the role of C is a physical existent. The 'is' here expresses a backward turn from the question-thing to a non-question thing. A pivot from one use of a phrase, like "the book", to another use.

This suggests we may approach the phenomenon of manifestation at least sometimes in terms of the logic of particulars as question-things. Particulars that are individuals as such, irreducible to the things and objects they are. Some such particular, A, will be manifest as B, C, D or E. A solution to the Mu'tazilite riddle may be one where all the physical things by which an individual is manifest up to a certain time are non-existents, whereas after that time it becomes manifest by an existent physical thing. We could then lean on this manifestational sense of "is" as opposed to a numeric-identificational sense of "is". We could say, "A 'was' not an existent, but now it 'is' – it has 'become' – an existent." In the original Qu'ranic context, the proposal would be that God makes manifest an individual as an existent entity (to which it doesn't reduce or collapse).

This brings us to the second step, which is to acknowledge that individuals as such stand in a strange relationship to the existent/non-existent distinction.

We've established that individuals are not equal to the things, intentional objects or grammatical objects which they are. So individuals *as such* don't have physical locations. The things which they are, though, can; whether determinately$_1$ or determinately$_2$. Individuals are certainly objective or presentational, according to whether or not someone can be wrong or ignorant about them without misuse of language or dishonesty. But can we say they're existent or not? Given the facts of manifestation, it depends what we mean.

An individual is something that we can think *of*. Just as we can think of direct-objects and of intentional objects as such. If an individual is objective and non-presentational, then it may seem reasonable to say it "exists". But we saw in Chapter 4 that being objective and non-presentational does not suffice for being *non-fictional*. Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is objective and non-presentational, but he exists merely relative to Dr. Watson and Moriarty.

So it might seem natural to say next, "And individuals *needn't* be fictional." But what might one mean by that? In what sense can one say it *can* be fictional? We can imagine a situation in which a question practice arises, such that there's an individual which 'is' an existent. In this case, if the existent is itself only fictional (i.e. if it only exists relative to fictional beings), then there's a sense in which the individual is fictional of course. But – *within* the world of the fiction – is it fictional *qua* individual or not? All else being equal, it seems the answer is, "No, it's not fictional."

There's a sense in which one can say, "This individual is existent *and* non-existent". This isn't a contradiction; it expresses a concern with the individual as it enjoys multiple manifestations. One manifestation may be an existent thing (e.g. that mountain I can hike or this fictional character Sherlock Holmes), while another manifestation 'is' a non-existent: this presentational object, say, and (switching now to a transparent discourse) a mountain, or private-detective, which that presentational object 'is'. The individual *as such*, here, isn't fictional if the question-answer practice exists. But neither is the individual as such existent in the manner a 'thing' – a physical thing – can be. To correctly say it's 'existent and non-existent' is rather to remark on the existential status of particulars by which it's manifest.

In other words: There is conceptual room, it seems, for saying that an individual neither exists nor does not exist, even though it can 'acquire' existence if it becomes manifest by way of an existent.

*

In the remainder of this chapter I want to explore some implications of thinking 'with' the idea of an individual as something and nothing.

§§5.4-5 concerns the deep 'entanglement' of individuals with one another, accessible to view when we take what I call a 'hyper-opaque' perspective on truths. This discussion draws up the idea of describing a thing from 'within' its world and from 'outside' it, without falling back on an appeal to a God's Eye View. This helps to clarify the sense in which an intentional thing is and is not a 'fluctuation'.

§5.6 further examines how to make sense of this possibility, distinguishing between two 'levels' of opacity concerning an intentional object. I show how the two levels reconcile with the notion

of individuals that 'hyper-opacity' rests on. This helps to make clearer the sense in which an individual doesn't itself exist even as it can be 'fictional' in one sense. The sense involves a 'jump', I argue, between the two levels of opacity.

§§5.7-8 then return us to Anscombe again, this time to a passage on objects of worship. I urge against the idea that we can deduce the limits or types of 'is' there are ahead of participation in the possible forms of life with words there can be. This indicates the way forward to approaching the Mu'tazilite riddle: We would have to return to the religious form of life expressed or sustained by the relevant Qu'ranic text.

In other words: We can't take a 'short-cut' to solving this puzzle by appeal merely to philosophical categories discerned in practices or puzzles that make *no essential reference* to that concrete, particular way of being in the world, in which an utterance like, "God said, 'Be!' and it *became*", for instance, has its distinctive meaning. To grasp that meaning we need first to listen and learn how to hear.

5.4 Hyper-Opacity and Entanglement

On the Tapestry perspective, dealing with threads, cords, cords made of cords, and crossings, the content of a truth – even a transparency – can be 'opaque' in the everyday metaphorical sense to those of us 'handling' the cords. The intersection 'contains', or is 'made from' truths about either thing or object that one need have no awareness of as the thinking subject. We may grasp them as particular truths concerning a particular thing or object. But we needn't know what the truths actually are. Even opacities may be 'opaque' to me in this sense.

For instance: I may know of something merely as that which Patrick's thinking$_2$ of and talking about, and know that descriptions P and Q are true concerning "it". But I needn't know that P and Q are these:

P	"The tomb in the mound"	(transparency)
Q	"What Lucy's thinking$_2$ of"	(opacity)

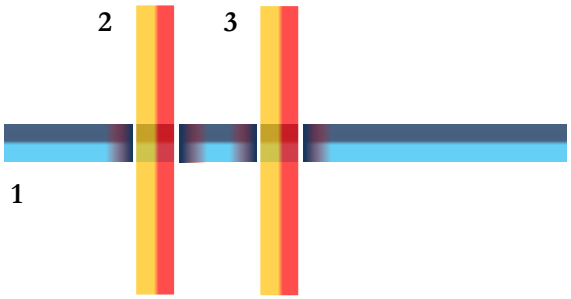
I can refer, too, to all the truths of an object as a group, while knowing only a few individually. I can refer to the collection merely as "all those transparencies and opacities of O". I can distinguish them collectively from other objects' truths: "The truths of *this* object, O, distinct from other objects and their truths." I am looking onto transparencies, opacities and mixed-opacities all from the 'outside'.

I'll call this a '**hyper-opaque**' perspective. The Tapestry is a picture one can use to help 'see things', I'll say, 'under hyper-opacity'. But as we use this picture, it slowly transforms into another. An image not of static threads, but of living roots, vines and branches in a Forest. Because once we start picturing individuals by way of cords – e.g. the individuals 1 and 2 above, or the individual A – a dynamic 'entanglement' comes to light. Changes to an individual's 'opacity threads' affect what is true of other individuals.

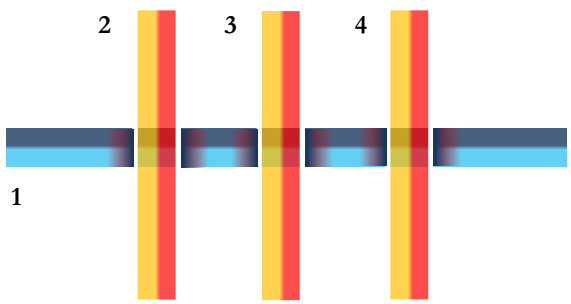
Suppose that I, J.M., am thinking$_2$ of St Paul's. There's now an objective object of J.M's that 'is' the cathedral. Additionally, it becomes true concerning other things in London that they stand in such and such physical relations (for example) to that of which J.M.'s thinking; so, their mixed-opacity threads are affected. Similarly, it's now true of other objective objects I have that they're in a class including St Paul's which is manifest to J.M.'s thought. And so on. There are fresh opacities (mixed and 'pure') to be given when giving the individuals which these things and objects are. I'll give two examples to capture the breadth of this claim.

First, suppose Lucy spies a gold torque in the excavated tomb. Whether or not Lucy thinks$_2$ of this torque, its golden twist *as such* is completely unaffected. Transparently speaking, it's no different in its composition than it was before. This is to view it from a Pit-ish perspective. There's no problem with this, so far as it goes. But try viewing it, now, under hyper-opacity. From this perspective, we get an individual made up of transparencies and opacities. Not metal or jewels.

Among the opacities of this individual, ('1', below) are those implied by the fact that we're thinking$_2$ of the torque right now. I'll represent the torque here as though an existent, in keeping with the supposition that Lucy is real. Since there are at least two of us, thinking$_2$ of this torque, this implies an overlap of two individuals, given by my presentational thing/object pair ('2') and by yours ('3'), respectively:



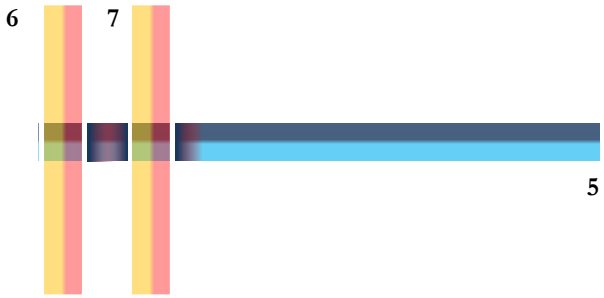
What 1 *is* is conditional on the very fact of 2 and 3. The individual 1 *contains* the opacity threads it does because of 2 and 3. So suppose that someone else asks of us, "What are you thinking of?" and we tell her by naming the golden torque. It follows that this further person is now also thinking$_2$ of the torque. So it follows that there is a further presentational thing by which the objective torque is thought$_2$ of. So it follows there's a further individual, 4 (see below). So it also follows that 1's constitutive opacity threads are altered and added to. The individual 1 is changed by the fact of the individual 4. These individuals are dynamically entangled.



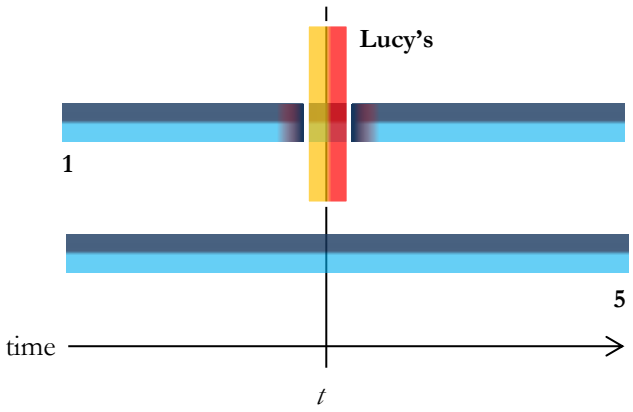
And since these individuals constitute members of a class, the present totality of individuals, and since every member of this class can thus be characterized in terms of the class' including 1-4 and the changes they undergo, the present totality of individuals is altered as 1 is altered. All individuals are dynamically related.

Second example. Suppose there were an artefact buried deeper in the tomb, which no-one living yet knows of. It's a truth concerning this artefact that it's one among several in the hill-side. So it's true that it's one of a group, some of which are now known to subjects above ground. This fact affects the individual that 'is' this artefact as thing and as object, conditional on the fact of *our* thinking$_2$ of it now. It affects its transparencies and mixed-opacities, concerning relations between physical things. There's an individual just insofar as a physical thing is presented to mind, even if it's only the minds of those who postulate the thing as a fiction, for the sake of a thought experiment like this.

So, insofar as we author this scenario together, we get a fictional thing. Therefore we get an individual, that 'is' the thing and an object of thought$_2$. Call this individual '5'. This implies our own presentational objects, hence at least two more individuals, 6 and 7, because every thought$_2$ of something implies a thought$_1$ of something distinct). I'll show these as faded, to draw attention to the fact that we're not 'in the world' of the artefact that 5 'is'. (I'll return to this issue of 'in/out' in the next section). Prior to 6 at least, there is no 5:



Nonetheless, we can identify objective changes to 5's threads (or 'roots') – to its constitutive transparencies and opacities – that arise in time within the fictional world. That arise with the torque's being thought$_2$ of by Lucy. Even if, as I'd now like to register, Lucy and the two artefacts are fictional with respect to ourselves. 5 changes at the moment Lucy thinks of the torque (marked here by '*t*'), even though no-one within our fiction yet thinks$_2$ of the mystery artefact. I'll call Lucy's presentational thing/object pair simply 'Lucy's'. We shift to a different 'perspective on the individual, that leaves in the background our own time-line with respect to it:



Such change to individuals in the two examples – each conditional on someone's coming to think$_2$ of (or perceive$_2$, etc.) something – exemplifies what I'm calling individuals' entanglement with one another. It's just in the 'nature' of individuals (to risk such a loaded term again) to be sensitive to the activities of *subjects* as such. Moreover, to the activities of subjects either within *or* outwith the world of the intentional 'thing' (or 'things') which an individual 'is'. This brings to mind, again, the remark in Husserl:

> If there are worlds or real things at all, the empirical motivations which constitute them **must be able to reach into my experience, and that of every single Ego**…. Things no doubt exist and worlds of things which cannot be definitely set out in any human experience, but that has its purely factual grounds in the factual limits of this experience. (*Ideas I*, §48, 93)

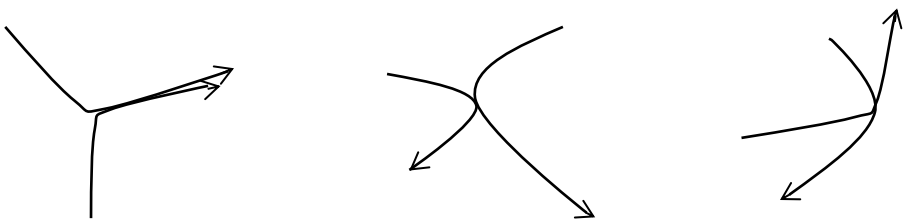
There are real things. And they are, necessarily, capable of reaching into the experience of every Ego (or, as I'd put it, of every *subject* as such). But with the help of William James' Tapestry/Forest, we should also say the inverse. The facts of all particular experiences, concretely unfolding in time, are necessarily capable of 'reaching into' the great net of individuals as such. The manifestation of things, understood in terms of individuals, is what renders this 'reach' the reach of subjects into the constitution of 'things' as particulars, specified in conceptual relations to each other.[25]

5.5 Entanglement, Time, and Flux

With such dynamic entanglement in mind, recall the broader context of James' remark on intersections. He said,

> The puzzle of how the one identical room can be in two places is at bottom just the puzzle of how one identical point can be on two lines. It can, if it be situated at their intersection; and similarly, if the 'pure experience' of the room were a place of **intersection of two processes** (James 2003 [1912]:6)

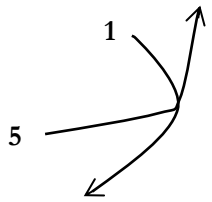
What were these processes? I suggested they were processes of narrative and history, still unfolding in time. One, of the thinker in particular; the other, of the room in the house. I said that, to this extent the intersecting lines may also be figured as traces of an impact or interaction between two beings 'as' two trajectories of becoming-what-they-are. That each course affects the dynamics and trajectory of the other on encounter:



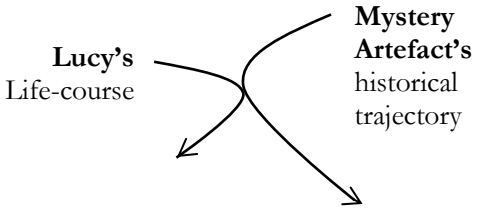
[25] There is a clear connection between the claims and images of this chapter and the image and idea of 'Indra's Net' in the Vedic philosophical tradition. That image finds philosophical development in the work of Nagarjuna. I haven't space in this essay to explore the continuities between my discussion of individuals and Nagarjuna's thesis of empty-being and the interpenetration of all things. But that exploration must be included in any published version.

We can now flesh out two versions of this idea in terms of individuals and their entanglement in time.

The first version allows each line, here, to represent the course of a particular individual in time. For every particular in the world, the event of its being thought$_2$ of (for example) entails a change in an individual's constitutive opacities and in the transparencies or mixed-opacities constituting all other individuals. This affects the likelihood, and perhaps even the possibilities, of further particular changes to transparencies and opacities in the future. The lines above, shown changing course as they intersect, reflect these changes. For example:



The second version concerns things 'in themselves' and subjects as embodied persons. In the original Jamesian context, we should understand one of the lines to be the life-course of an embodied subject *rather than* the trajectory of her presentational thing/object pair (such as the individual I called 'Lucy's' in the case of the mystery artefact):

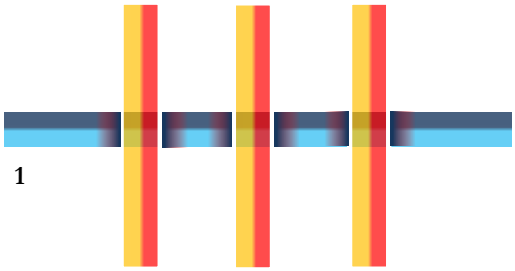


Nonetheless, this early Jamesian version doesn't show the "mechanics", as it were, of the individuals involved precisely in the life-course of Lucy, the historical trajectory of the artefact, or all the other things these 'touch upon' from a hyper-opaque perspective. So the first version is a 'zoom in' on the complexities involved in the sort of encounter modelled in the second version.

Moreover: Lucy herself, and her life-course, are each things of which we can think, and recognize as changing under hyper-opacity. That is, when we turn attention to the individual given by the thing/object pair that is Lucy and our objective object of thought as such. Likewise with the mystery artefact and its historical trajectory. These individuals are changing in time and are as entangled with one another just as with every other individual, as argued above.

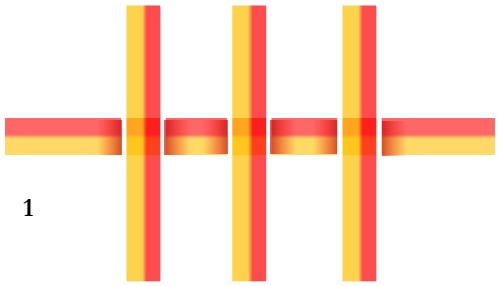
We might try to say this: "Insofar as I'm thinking of the mystery artefact, there are different ways it presents to me. I can think of it as something about whose origins as I don't know, or as buried in the earth, or as giving an example in this essay. This is a *fluctuation* of presentations, of the sort described in Chapter 2. It's open-ended as to how I think of the artefact; in what terms, from what 'perspective' in the most permissive sense of that term. The same object is given to me through different presentations. So there are multiple things to be spoken of in answer to,

"What are you thinking of?" The individual (call it 1), which is the objective thing plus the object it is, is thus affected in a distinctive way by this flux of presentations:"



But this image doesn't capture clearly enough the distinctive complexity of what's involved in fluctuation. It presents (1) as though it were an existent. But when it comes to a thing being a flux, we're concerned with a process, a phenomenon, that's essentially going on 'within' the domain of presentation, leaving existence as a matter off to one side. What is *presented* to me is the 'same', in some way, as the flux of presentations.

Yet, if we represent (1) with a red/gold cord, this makes it look like we're just thinking$_2$ of a presentational thing – as though it were objective relative to us:

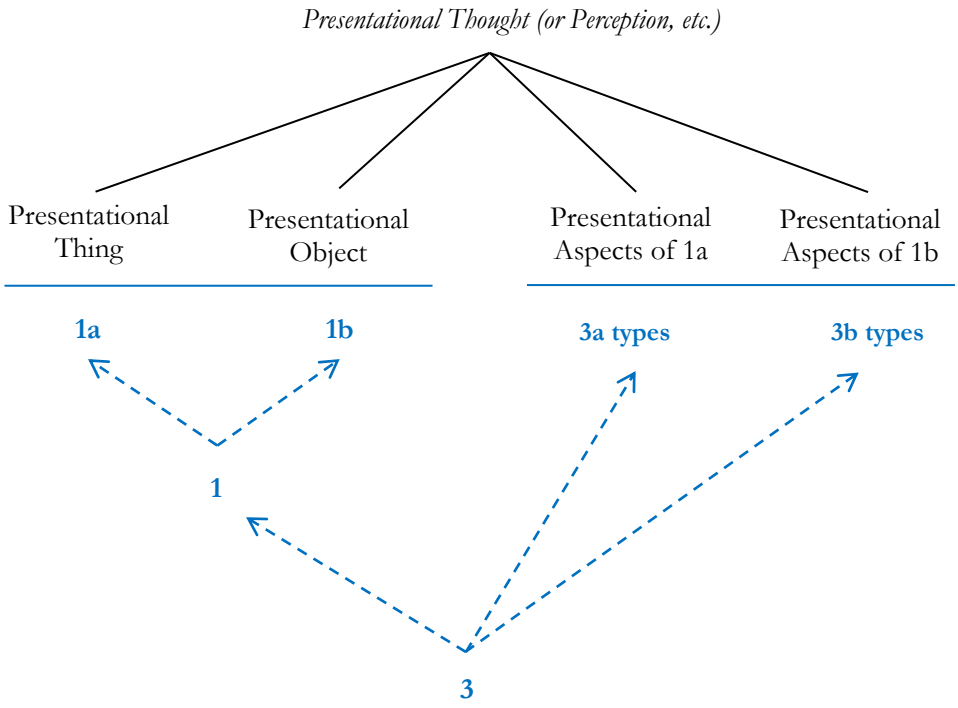


But it's *in* the presenting of something – 'within' a presentational thing, I *want* to say – that the flux of presentations, plural, is afoot. That's what's tricky to get a handle on.

We can perhaps better articulate the flux 'being' the presentational thing, in terms of individuals like this: There's a way of speaking on which we can answer, "What are you thinking of?" (or, e.g., "What do you see?") by giving either (i) something *I take to be* my particular presentational thing, or (ii) what *I take to be* various things by which it presents to me, but to which it does not collapse.

For example, in the dragon-fruit/pineapple case I can answer, "A pineapple," and I can answer with describing different views or aspects of the pineapple and other things. I fully understand that the pineapple is given to me by way of these further things. I'll call this 'Individuals Practice #3". So the difference from 'Individuals Practice #1' pictured earlier is that, in this fluctuation case with #3, I am necessarily presented with things *as* aspects or presentations of some distinct presentational thing irreducible to them. Therefore, too, of such aspects as 'being' objects by which I have the pineapple 'as' my object of thought$_1$. We expand our notion of the plurality involved in presentational thought from how diagrams in Chapters 4-5 have so far showed it. This is to remember and incorporate Husserl's notion of 'manifolds of appearance':

Individuals Practice #3



Another way of putting this is that the different aspects etc. present *as* presentations of 'the thing I am thinking$_1$ of'. I am presented (i.e. infallibly) with *opacities* regarding an individual that 'is' the presentational thing. Even if I am wrong about this particular thing – e.g. the pineapple – being that by which I accurately think$_2$ of or see$_2$ some existent.

"Wait a second, though. How can someone be *presented* – i.e. infallibly – with something as their *objective* thing of thought$_2$? Surely we're always fallible about what is objective relative to us?"

We are fallible about what's objective in fact, relative to us. But we are infallible about what appears to us to be objective relative to us, in whatever capacity.

Remember Putnam's rendition of Kant on the "I" that attaches to our every thought, quoted in Chapter 2:

> For Kant, **rational thought itself depends on the fact that I regard my thoughts, experiences, memories, and the like as all mine (the fact that I prefix the "I think" to all of them, not just at the time but also retrospectively.)** To illustrate Kant's point, imagine yourself going through a very simple form of reasoning, say "Boiling water hurts if you stick your finger in it; this is boiling water; so it will hurt if I stick my finger in this." If the "time- slice" of me that thought "Boiling water hurts if you stick your finger in it" was one person, person A, and the "time- slice" that thought the minor premise, "This is boiling water" is a different person, person B, and the person that thought the "conclusion," "It will hurt if I stick my finger in this" was yet a third person, person C, then that conclusion was not warranted; indeed, the sequence of thoughts was not an argument at all, since the thoughts were thoughts of different thinkers, none of whom had any reason to be bound by what the others thought or had thought[!] **We are responsible for what we have thought and done in the past, responsible now,**

> **intellectually and practically, and that is what makes us thinkers, rational agents in a world, at all.** (Putnam 2008:24-5)

I'm now making the point that "I think *of this*" is carried, as it were, by every thing with which we're presented. There is an opaque dimension to the content of our thoughts, to the extent that we're aware of the same things as being given to us in thought in different ways. If this were not the case it wouldn't make sense to us to grasp that something is other than it first seemed, or that we are returning in thought to something of which we've thought already.

In the next section, I explicitly distinguish two 'sorts' of opacity, then: those given within a presentation, on which we're infallible, and those given 'outwith' the presentation, on which we're fallible.

5.6 Internal and External Opacities

The last few sections touched on the idea, in different contexts, of viewing an individual from a perspective internal to the world of the intentional thing it 'is', and from a perspective 'external' to that world. In this section I want to focus on this phenomenon in more detail, going beyond the case of specifically fictional objects. I'll argue there are two sorts of opacity to distinguish here for even a presentational thing; precisely 'internal' and 'external', which are nonetheless constitutive of one and the same individual which the presentational thing is. This does not involve any appeal to a 'God's Eye View'.

Suppose Kate told us yesterday about a rabbit she thought$_1$ up. Today she says, honestly, that she's thinking$_1$ of a rabbit too. Then adds,

(1) Actually, it's the same rabbit.

What sort of "the same" might this be?

If (1) is true, the "is" can't express numeric-identity. Kate can't mean that her presentational object of today is one and the same as her presentational object of yesterday. Not unless she's been thinking$_1$ of it non-stop, and I'd like us to assume she hasn't. So what's Kate saying?

She might clarify,

(2) They're one and the same *rabbit*, not object of thought$_1$. The rabbit's called Bumble and is the sole survivor of her species.

If you ask her, "What is the rabbit's name?" or "Which rabbit is this?", her transparent answers would be perfectly similar irrespective of whether it's Today's Rabbit or Yesterday's we're asking about. And if asked, "Could you be wrong about what it was you thought of yesterday?", she'd be right in answering "Yes".

But if you asked her, "Could you be wrong about these *rabbits* being the same?" she'd be right in saying "No." Because the rabbit she's now thinking$_1$ of *presents* to her as being the rabbit, Bumble, she thought of yesterday too.

"But how can she be infallible about opacities? For example, Kate could fail to realize that she's Kate herself. She may wrongly judge, 'I'm Clare.' Then she could be wrong about her presentational object under an opaque description like this: 'This object of which I'm thinking$_1$ is Clare's presentational object.' So can't we infer that an object's opacities are the sorts of description their thinkers$_1$ can be wrong about?"

No. That would be over-generalizing.

Suppose Lucy's stopped thinking$_2$ of King Dolt. This affects his opacities, considered from our Tapestry perspective. Under hyper-opacity it now makes sense to say, "It's a truth of King Dolt that Lucy's stopped thinking$_2$ of him." But from within Dolt's world, there's no way to register that sort of change. It wouldn't make sense for Dolt's children, for instance, to say, "Lucy has now stopped thinking$_2$ of Papa!" For Lucy has no presence in that world.

We might put this as follows: the particular Tapestry these fictional characters think with and come to know is different from the particular Tapestry which you and I are exploring in our examples. The principles, the 'natural laws' are the same. Both are images of objects under the view of hyper-opacity. But the totality of threads in our cords differ from the totality of threads in theirs. In our world there are cords for the people you and me are, as well as cords for Lucy and for the characters Lucy thinks of. In the Tapestry with which Dolt's Children are concerned, there are no cords for Lucy, for you, or for me.

So there are opacities true internal to the world of the object, and there are opacities true within the world of this or that thinker. The difference between these is salient when it comes to asking, "Who is infallible regarding what?" and "For whom is it possible to know an object under this or that opacity?"

Given one's own standing with respect to objects, it makes sense to distinguish **internal** from **external opacities,** then. For example, given our standing with respect to Conan Doyle – someone who physically interacted with the same London you and I can visit – it makes sense to distinguish the pure- and mixed-opacities below like this:

Internal (to the world of Holmes):

(3) Holmes is thinking$_2$ of Moriarty
(4) What Watson thinks$_2$ of.

External (to the world of Holmes)

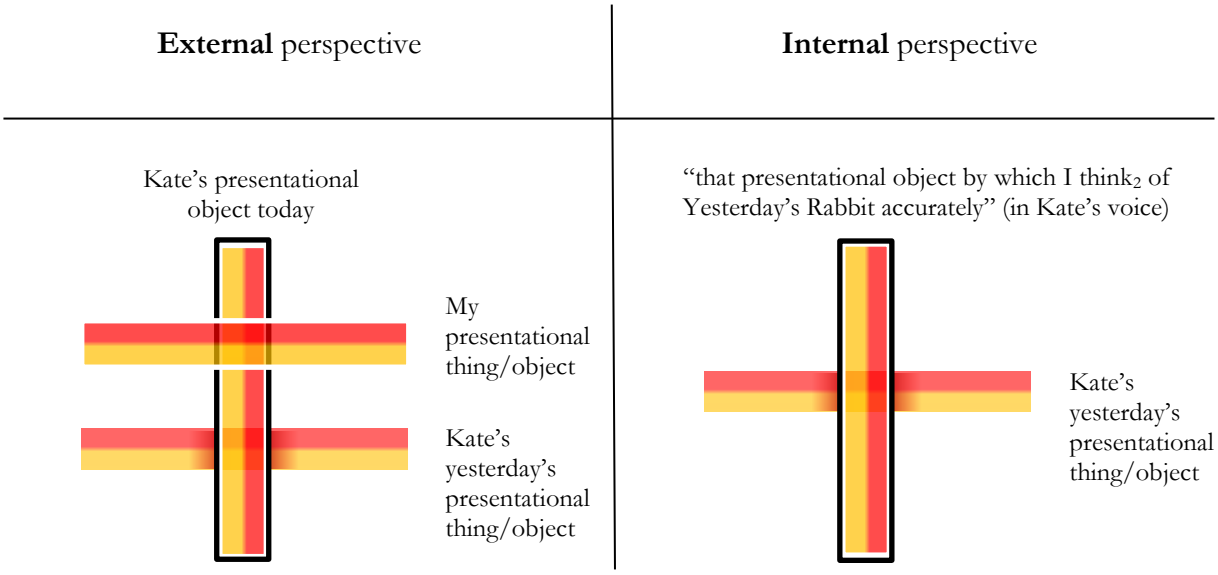
(5) Conan Doyle is thinking$_2$ of Holmes.
(6) What fictional thing I'm thinking$_2$ of.

The truth of (5), of itself, takes nothing from and adds nothing to the set of internal-opacities regarding Sherlock Holmes. Likewise with (6) for the fictional thing it says I'm thinking$_2$ of. But Holmes' thinking of Moriarty affects the internal opacities of Moriarty, just like whatever Dolt thinks$_2$ of is affected – under hyper-opacity – by that King's cognition of it.

Kate is presented with an object. From the perspective on which it presents, it is an object seen opaquely. All that means is, Kate can't be wrong (except through dishonestly or misuse of terms) if she said honestly, "This is the presentational object I have insofar as I think$_2$ of yesterday's object accurately." This is an opaque characterization, right? I'm not saying she must have the concepts <presentational object> or <objective object> as I've introduced them in this essay. I'm just remarking on how these concepts apply, in fact, to her objects of thought.

From our position, we can't correct Kate here about this presentational object as it holds in her world of experience. Stepping into the world of the presentational object as it infallibly presents to Kate, it is that object in virtue of which a version of Kate thinks$_2$ of the same presentational object she thought of yesterday. But from our perspective it makes sense to ask, "But is this version of Kate the real one? Stepping outside of the world of this presentational 'presentational' object, is what Kate thinks$_1$ of today – transparently speaking, a rabbit – the 'same' rabbit as yesterday's? Is it Bumble? Or is she having a 'false' memory? Was she in fact thinking of Bugs Bunny yesterday?"

Whether Kate's judgment about her presentational objects is right or wrong, we count as talking about one and the same object here. From an external perspective I take, it is simply, "Kate's presentational object of today". From the internal perspective of that object, it is "the presentational object by which Kate thinks$_2$ of her presentational object from yesterday". We're looking at a single individual picked out using different opacities. I show that individual here outlined in black:



The world of Kate's presentational object gives us a raft of internal opacities. These are folded in among the external opacities, when "that object" is seen in terms of an individual it 'is' under hyper-opacity.

This helps us make sense of how an individual as such, which is neither existent nor non-existent, can in certain contexts be called 'fictional'.

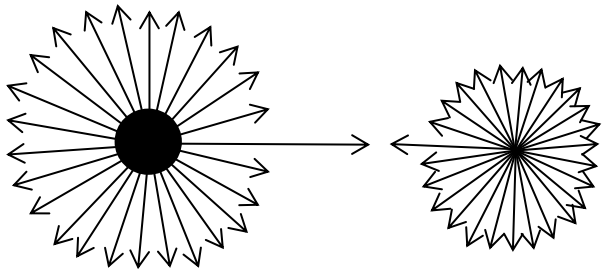
Suppose that, in a work of fiction, two people think$_2$ of the same real sphinx. This particular sphinx yields us an individual, given either by descriptions of the sphinx as thing or by the object of thought as such that it 'is'. This individual is a function of the intentional activities of two fictional thinkers. Now, it's an individual of which we can think, because we can share in the fictional thinkers' thinking$_2$ of the sphinx. The existence or non-existence, with respect to ourselves, of the sphinx makes no difference. But it is given for us to think of only because, within the world of this particular story, there's an existent sphinx. The fact of this individual is conditional on there being fictional thinkers. This is one context in which it may make sense to say the individual is 'fictional', without making the false claim that the individual is a fictional *thing* like the thinkers in the story are.

Another context is when we think of the individual as given to the fictional characters. The opacities of this individual from within the world differ from the opacities of the individual beyond that fictional world. We can here speak of the 'fictional individual', too, meaning simply that we attend to the individual only as it is exhausted, in opaque terms, by internal opacities. Another way of speaking is to call this a 'fictional version of' the individual.

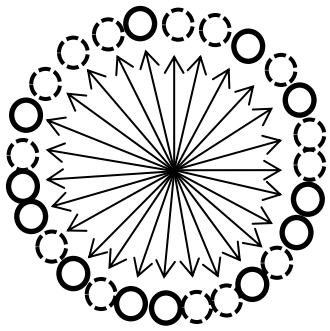
5.7 "They Worship Sticks and Stones"

In the remainder of this chapter, I want to turn now to the earliest picture I gave of individuals, back in Chapter 2: a 'sun', or, rather, the radial lines of light as from a sun.

I said there that every particular thing or object has a 'penumbra' or 'halo' of "is-es" radiating from it, connecting it in language to the description of numerically-distinct others, both real and unreal. The particular thing is shown below as a black circle. I had in mind, then, various 'is-es' given simply by the thing's conceptual connection to multiple different things by way of its connection to multiple different *individuals as such*; to multiple different question-things that each have their own 'cosmos' of things by which the individual is given in answer to a certain sort of question. Every arrow, in the image below, really points 'back' to a different *individual*. Every arrow, that is, points back to a pure and distinct vanishing point of 'is-es'.



Given a certain practice with questions, such as "What are you thinking of?", we can give various things. All these remarks give us an individual. All the things 'are' each the individual, and 'are' each other, in the thin, intriguing sense that they're given in answer to the question. This allows for as many uses of 'is', here, as there can be practices of answering a question so as to give a question-thing; an individual. Not a 'thing', but the vanishing point of a whole cluster of 'is-es', clustered precisely by a particular question/answer practice.



To understand how to answer a certain question, though, will then require partaking in that form of life in which the given practice of asking and answering it holds. In this essay I've tried to draw our awareness to some of our own practices concerning thought and perception. But from this we cannot deduce the entirety of concrete question-answer practices. We can't draw up a table, in advance, of the kinds of 'is', of 'identity', there are between things, objects, and even individuals, in the context of a nesting question-thing.

The following is a small case-study, if you like, of the need for immersion into a form of life in order to answer questions about what can be meaningfully said of individuals in appropriate context.

There's a curious passage in "The Intentionality of Sensation" concerning identity in a context of worship. Consider this sentence, says Anscombe:

> **"These people worship Ombola; that is to say, they worship a mere hunk of wood." (cf. "They worship sticks and stones.")** Or "They worship the sun, that is, they worship what is nothing but a great mass of frightfully hot stuff." The worshippers themselves will not acknowledge the descriptions. Their idol is for them a divinized piece of wood, one that is somehow also a god; and similarly for the sun. (Anscombe 1981:9)

I don't hear this "somehow" as sarcastic. Anscombe herself, a convert to Catholicism, was intimately familiar with the Eucharist:

> And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission [forgiveness] of sins." (*Matthew* 26:26-8; New King James Version)

We could hear this as 'mere' symbolism; the bread "standing for" but not "really being" the Christ. But we needn't. Many don't. Likewise, we needn't take Ombola's worshippers as speaking in 'mere metaphor' when they say, "Here is a piece of wood, that is also the god Himself."

"But how might such claims make sense then?" we may ask. "In what sense could the god be a 'mere hunk of wood'? Or 'nothing but a great mass' of hot stuff? Clearly a god that is a divinized block of wood is not numerically-identical with a *mere* hunk of wood, or a *mere* astral body. There's nothing Ombola can do *as* a god that qualifies *him,* Ombola, as a mere hunk of wood. And there's no state which mere wood can be in as such, nothing mere wood can do as such, that qualifies *it* – meaning the wood thing – as a god."

Notice that in Anscombe's statement the verb "to worship" seems to be apply in two ways.

On one hand, one can say, "We've an object of worship who needn't exist, like we've objects of fear that needn't exist (e.g. those which are the things Krampus, Cthulu, the Slender Man)."

On the other hand, one can say, "We've things that are, according to someone's judgment or also in fact, mistaken for such a *thing* as a god. Worshippers behave a certain way towards these non-deities, expressing that false numeric-identification.[26] These non-deities are so-called "worshipped" only insofar as this false-identification guides worshippers' behaviour toward them. For instance, toward a bundle of sticks and stones."

But can we assume that Ombola is a *thing*? If we treat Ombola as just another "thing" among things, or the body of Christ as just another body among bodies, this may assume too much.

Consider an artefact like Odysseus' Trojan Horse. I'd say, "Here's a wooden structure that's both a model of a horse and a carrier for hidden soldiers." It's natural to gloss this as, "The structure, model, and carrier are one and the same." But on one angle, and employing the very strict sense of "numeric-identity" I have, these things are surely three, even if the totality 'are' something with its own transparencies as a single artefact of a particular origin, use, and fate.[27]

The three things are numerically distinct in the stricter sense because they've different existence and enhancement conditions from each other. Model and container can each be modified by means of destroying that functional arrangement of constituent things with which the wooden structure's numerically identical. Over time you could remove all the wooden parts and replace them with steel. And such modifications could improve the horse but lose us the *container* as such: the inside may get over-riddled with struts and support-beams. Or they could make the *likeness* worse as such, but the container better as such. So different descriptions are true of each. One may go out of existence while the others don't, or one may improve while the others fail to improve, or become impaired. Nonetheless, the container and model are each made out of the very same wooden-structure, at the present time.

Similarly, a statue of Shiva may be made from a volume of gold. But that very lump of gold could be melted down and re-moulded into three diadems. The statue and gold were once 'the same' in one sense, the diadems and that gold are now 'the same' in the same sense. The artefact which we identify as the Golden Shiva statue has its own transparencies. But the statue of Shiva simply as likeness, the diadems as such, and the gold as such are numerically distinct. In virtue of seeing$_2$ the gold, one sees$_2$ what it composes; either the likeness or one of the diadems. In virtue of seeing the model horse, one sees$_2$ the container and wooden-structure. Even if one fails to experience them all as what they are. Either as the distinct things they are, or as the particular single thing they all 'count as': The Golden Shiva artefact, or Odysseus' Trojan Horse.

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[26] The two uses of "worship", here, don't stand to each other quite as "to perceive$_1$" stands to "to perceive$_2$". Insofar as I see$_2$ a god, that god must be real. And I must see$_1$ something in order to qualify as seeing$_2$ the god, here. But insofar as one mistakes something non-divine for one's true object of worship (as I'd phrase this), it doesn't follow that the true object's real. Nor need the 'false-god' object be real either. It could be something I've merely a notion of; like if I heard about the sticks and stones – as you just have – in a fiction, but not realizing it's a fiction. (Though, unlike with presentational and objective thought, one might suggest my true object of worship can only present to me as existent. That I can't think it unreal and worship it, both.)

[27] I don't reject the gloss. I'm simply disambiguating two uses of "one and the same".

I'll say: Two objects, *a* and *b*, are **materially-identical** at a certain time, t, if and only if insofar as one perceives$_2$ *a* at t, one perceives$_2$ *b* at t, and vice versa. This always implies a further object, c, that's merely presentational.

But is Ombola *materially-identical* to the hunk of wood? Does Christ claim his flesh *materially-identical* to this bread?

Suppose the different bits of wood 'exhaust' Ombola's constitution right now, as the wood structure exhausts the Trojan Horse's. What makes Ombola more than mere wood, then? With the Trojan case we've different capacities by which to distinguish the structure from the model and container. The container as such can hold soldiers, and can be retained *as such* though the planks are replaced by steel. This is to say that the wood-structure serves as a container, given its present make-up and shape. This is a consequence of its own properties as a wood-structure. *As* a wood structure of the right shape, the Horse qualifies *as* a container. But what does Ombola do that the *wood-hunk* provides, given its current make-up and shape?

Suppose we say, "Ombola heals the sick," and mean by this that Ombola rids mortals of viruses, infections, genetic impairments, paralyses, cancers. How would the wood do that? No matter how we shape it, if it's a *mere* hunk of wood then it's not curing cystic fibrosis. It would have to be more than wood in a certain shape. Hence, I think, Anscombe's phrasing that for the worshippers the "idol is [a] **divinized** piece of wood, one that is somehow also a god". It would need to be *more* than wood just arranged a certain way and whatever objects such arrangement affords.

This issue of "needing to be more" remains even if we amend the truths of Ombola as follows.

Suppose children among Ombola's worshippers are raised to speak, behave toward, and feel about Ombola like this: Whenever a child dreams of a bird, and describes this, she is told, "That bird is Ombola: the one who's the bird on the sand." The elders here point, without looking, to the location of the wood-block, curling their index finger in respect. "Ombola flies when you do," they say, "but he also stands still with us." If she approaches the block, the child is told to do so carefully, "because birds fly away at sudden movements". She's not allowed to look at the block directly; told that this is "dangerous". And that's it. Other talk of Ombola is not meant for pre-adolescents.[28]

"So then, at what point do children grasp that Ombola is a god?"

Perhaps you see the risk in such a question. Which concept "of" gods is at stake here? What are we assuming?

As such children grow, some come to fear dreams featuring birds, given how their families react when they describe them. When such children see younger infants look at the block directly, they experience a flash of anger or concern. At adolescence, adults start asking them to "bring Ombola his wings", handing them two knots of dried grass in the evening, and asking the children to retrieve Ombola's wings in the morning. Then the adults watch for signs in the children's behaviour.

[28] My variant is influenced, obviously, by Evans-Pritchard (1956) on Nuer religion.

How do they hold the wings when they think no one's looking? Do they just dump them at the block, or place them cautiously? How do they speak of nocturnal birds? How do they act around them? When they dream of birds, do they report this? To whom? Do they spontaneously express a concern as to what the dreaming means? Do they spontaneously slow down, and draw silent, if they're running through the village and pass into Ombola's clearing?

What it means to say, "This is a divinized piece of wood," isn't fixed. But one thing it must express is that children only qualify as grasping Ombola's status given certain of their behaviours and attitudes toward the wood. Yet the words "worship" and "god" need never occur. It's not that the wood block "does" something *as* a wood block. It's that the child is, (adults would say) "seeing Ombola as He is." This pattern could be extended to other objects, like certain individual stones, trees, or species of bird. It could make sense to say, "Ombola is the wood, and that stone, and those birds there." It would then be natural for many of us to say, I think: "Ah, so this is *a* conception of divinity in play."

My point is that it's hard to grasp what 'constitutes' Ombola, here, if we limit ourselves to speech of physical constitution or material-identities. Therefore it's hard to clarify what the relevant concept "of" divinity is if we focus on objects *as* physical things quite distinct and spread out through the village and dreams. Viewing the thing under hyper-opacity, though, we've a nest of sensitivities, emotions, gestures, practices which mark a child as perceiving$_2$ Ombola "as He is". There's no reason to assume Ombola is "made of" wood. The question is, "What is it appropriate to say of Him, and when, under what conditions?"

So consider these sentences again:

(1) "Here is a piece of wood, that is also the god Himself"
(2) "Take this bread, eat; this is Christ's body"

The "is" of (1) is subject to standards of correctness. But if asked, "What kind of "is" is it?", we might have recourse only to the full concept, <Ombola>. And to elucidate this concept, we should have to describe the culture and world of experience of those who are the masters of that concept. For example: "When in this context, *the person can say this, and will count as thinking*$_2$ *of* Ombola as He is." But the master of such a concept may not be placed to tell you – even if a master of the terms in this essay you're reading now – "By 'is' I mean Ombola and the block are numerically the same", or "I mean that Ombola and the block are materially-identical." Because Ombola may not be numerically the same as or materially-identical with any wood block.

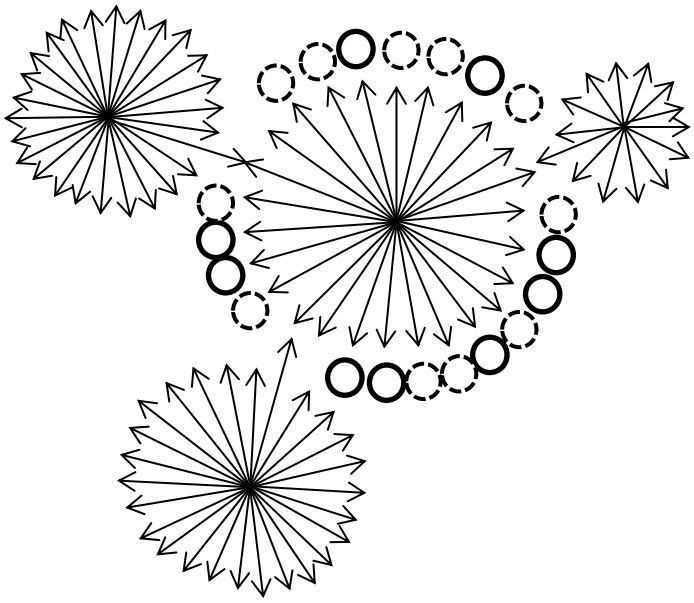
So suppose that two people are arguing whether Ombola is *real*. What needs to be in place for this argument to be fruitful? If he's the sort of 'thing' (and if ever you take my many inverted commas seriously, now is the time) that is perceptible, the two need to know what counts as perceiving$_2$ Ombola for real. They'll need to know under what conditions it'll make sense to judge of someone, "Yes, I see that they've mastered this concept, and are applying it correctly to *this* particular, Ombola." If we don't understand the concept, we're not in a position to say, "What you ascribe the concept to does not exist" or "What you ascribe the concept to is not actually that kind of thing."

But we can't assume it makes sense to ask if Ombola "exists", anyway, in the way that a wood-block does (e.g. such that it has certain causal powers among other bodies). In the Ombola-as-bird case what kind of 'thing' are we dealing with? There's such a thing as speaking correctly or incorrectly "about" Ombola. But this allows for quite a gap between this being and something like the fictional Sherlock Holmes, or the existent Scott's Monument in Edinburgh. The latter are things that certain other things can tap, knock over, dowse in water or photograph.

"Well, so is the (divinized) block of wood. I mean: so is Ombola."

Really? How are we using "to tap", "to knock", "to photograph", here? If someone destroys the wood, does it follow that Ombola has been destroyed? *Insofar* as one rubs the wood with red pigment, does one make Ombola red, or something else? Is he, in fact, unaffected? *Insofar* as one taps, knocks, dunks, the block, what is one doing with respect to Ombola? Logic alone gives no answer. We can't deduce our way to an answer here, unless we already know it as masters of the concept <Ombola>. There's no end to the variety at stake here. Again: We have to learn how to use the "is" this way from those who are masters of the "is".

What we can say, though, is that there is a question such as "What (or Who) is Ombola?" and potentially multiple practices of answering it, in each of which it may be that we give an answer by naming multiple things, objects, even individuals, that are numerically-distinct from each other. All these particulars would nest 'as' Ombola, in some sense. Every particular would be connected by being what's given in answer to the particular question. But Ombola 'himself' may not, therefore, be equivalent to a *thing*. He would be like the vanishing point of rays of light:



6

A Wood of One's Own

"I" and Existence

In this final chapter I turn to a joint pair of puzzles that have been following us round about the place since Chapter 1.

First: What is the connection between our capacity for first-personal thought and our capacity to ascribe things 'real' existence as opposed to merely relative existence between things that may both be fictional (like Holmes exists relative to Moriarty, but neither exists relative to us?)

Second: If there's a deep difference between merely relative and 'actual', or 'absolute', existence, and if it's essentially a matter of things being in relations to *oneself*, then what sort of 'thing' (if any) is 'oneself'? Another way of putting the second question is to ask, "What sort of a *thing* am I myself? – i.e. what, if anything, is named by my first-personal "I"?

§6.1 begins where we left off in Chapter 5, with the idea of a dynamic 'Forest' of individuals shifting and growing in relation to each other. I argue there are two Forests it's important to recognize: an Objective Forest we all share, and a Presentational Forest each subject has only to themselves. When we think of the subject as in both Forests, it becomes easier to grasp that a subject as such is not really a 'thing' on a par with the objects of their thought. Within a Presentational Forest, there is no individual to be found that is equivalent to the actual subject whose Presentational Forest it is.

This clears our palette (I hope) for judiciously receiving Anscombe's notorious (and in my view brilliant) argument in "The First Person" that the first-personal I, which expresses the subject's point of view *as subject*, isn't the name of any 'thing'. That it's not even the name of a question-thing. On our Anscombian account, instead, the word "I", in English, functions itself as a sort of linguistic 'pivot' for talking about one's presentational things to talking about that thing, a person, whose presentational things these are.

§6.2 presents Anscombe's distinction between two uses of "themselves" – one which refers to some entity (real or unreal), and another which refers to no thing or individual at all. In §6.3-6.4 I argue that, accepting Anscombe's argument and claims, we should understand the first-personal "I" to express one's infallibility with respect to certain things (i.e. one's presentational things). First-personal identity statements like "I am J.M." are not statements of numeric-identity between something called "I" and something called "J.M." Instead such a sentence, in the mouth of myself, is used by me ascribe my presentational things to the man J.M.

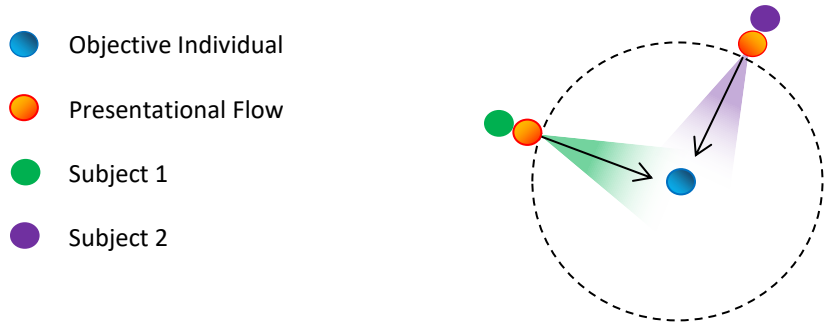
With this understanding of "I" in place, §6.5 can elucidate the difference between merely relative and absolute existence ascriptions in straightforward terms. §6.6 then clarifies how "I" can play a role within descriptions of pure-presentational things, drawing on Chapter 5's distinction between internal and external opacities. This is shown by considering a well-known scenario described by Peter Geach about different people wondering things about themselves and non-existent witches.

6.1 Twice Entangled (Or, 'No God's Eye View' Again)

Everyone has their 'own' Forest by which they navigate a shared one. There is a Forest of someone's presentational objects, with their internal opacities. Call this the Presentational Forest. And there is a Forest encompassing not only all presentational objects, from everyone's Presentational Forests, but all pure objective and existent objects, too. Call this the Objective Forest.

Everyone's Presentational Forests determine the growth and change of the Objective Forest, insofar as they determine the opacities of objective things. If I think$_2$ a certain way of that mountain over there, by having a presentational mountain, I affect the existent mountain under hyper-opacity. And what it is to be a mountain, under hyper-opacity, includes that certain changes would occur within the Presentational Forests of persons who stood in certain relations to things, transparently characterized (e.g. in this valley, looking eastward, or on that cliff-top, looking south), and thereby stood in intentional relations to existents and purely presentational things.

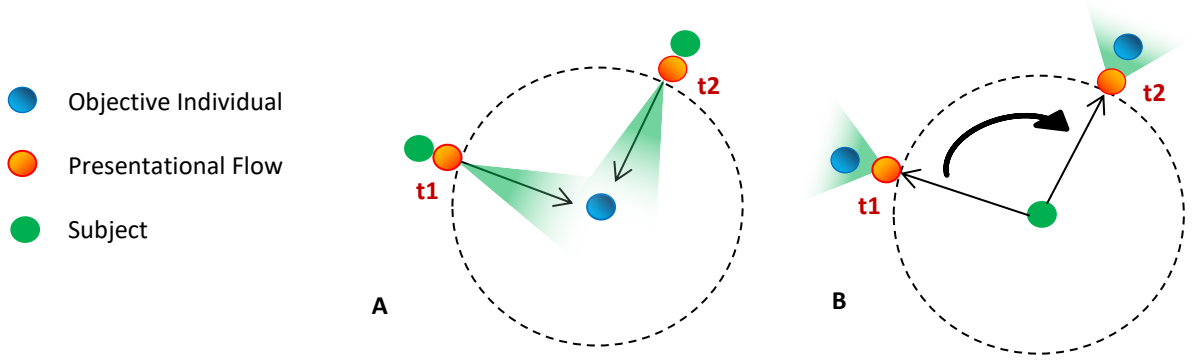
So different subjects can approach, *and simultaneously determine*, the same objective things from different 'angles' by way of their intentional acts. I'll use coloured discs to represent individuals here (i.e. cords of threads here) – think of them as cross-sections of cord. The beam of colour signifies the determination of an objective thing under hyper-opacity through the activity of subjects as such.



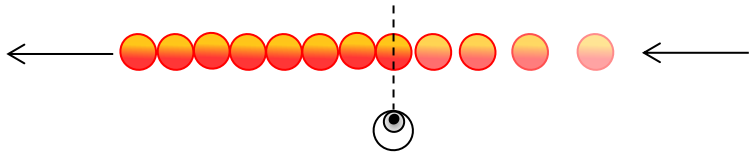
There is no way of standing 'outside' one's Presentational Forest to see the Objective Forest 'as it really is'. That wouldn't make sense. It would be comparable to studying one's present motions and gestures while not moving a muscle. The task demands a reflexivity that can't be avoided. Nonetheless, the Objective Forest isn't 'hidden' from us. It doesn't constitute a realm beyond the possibility of experience. It's simply that the Objective Forest is what we can be ignorant of. Whereas one's Presentational Forest, from one's point of view in having it, encompasses all those individuals of whose constitutive transparency and internal-opacity threads one can't be ignorant of.

Third, this imagery of multiple forests suggests a view-point on which one can relativize subjects of thought *as such*, by way of their Presentational Forests and their particular courses of change. When someone thinks$_2$ of something, they do so by thinking$_1$ of something. Different people can return, in their own thinkings$_1$, back and forth to the same objective things in different ways, at different times, while doing so through different presentational things.

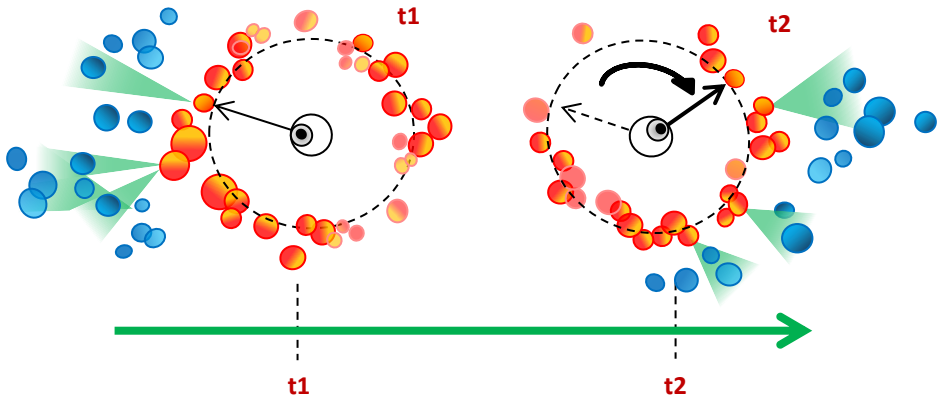
So, relative to the objective thing, the subject makes 'contact' with it by different paths at different times (see 'A'). Relative to the subject, though, there is a continuous flow of thoughts and experiences as she pivots back and forth between different presentations (see 'B'):



That is: from the **subject's perspective** there is a continuous flow of presentational things:



But viewing a subject's presentations over time 'from outside', they plot a complex path through the Objective Forest (shown below in green); a path that shifts the very vines of that Forest as the subject moves among them by way of their Presentational flow. With the emergence of new presentations at each moment, objective things are altered; figuratively re-arranged. Individuals are changed for all.



This suggests something hard to fathom on a Pit-ish perspective. A subject of thought might be individuated by that particular complex path taken through the Objective Forest. The line I've drawn in green. But such individuation doesn't require us to spell out what sort of object that subject is. The term "subject of thought" doesn't entail humanity specifically. The subject *as such*, we might say, has no transparencies.

But that raises an earlier question again: "What does it mean to say that a subject of thought *is* this or that object with transparencies?"

There's truth in saying, "A subject is what an object qualifies as being, by the object's capacities to do things". A bit like how a model horse can qualify as a container for hiding soldiers, or a wooden structure. But containers and wooden structures are things characterized, in part, using physical and causal concepts: of what the things can do in relation to other things. Whereas to speak of subjects *as such* is to speak in terms of *intentionality*; concerned with objects as objects *of* this or that mental act, say.

To be a subject is to have presentational things. But while an embodied being does things in physical space which qualify them as having such objects – exhibiting capacities as an object among others in an environment – the presentational things are not those abilities. And thinking$_1$ of something *per se* is not *equal* to moving about like this or that: the motions are only criteria for ascribing the act and its objects.

This signals an asymmetry between <object> and <subject>. A subject *as such* is that to which objects present, not a further object in physical relations to them. Nonetheless, a subject individuated by its path through the Objective Forest will need to 'be' a particular that behaves in some way among particulars if we are to ascribe subjectivity at all.

6.2 Two Uses of "Themselves"

We learn to 'give' the grammatical subject of a sentence by speaking a certain way in answer to certain questions: "Who, or what, is the subject of this sentence?" Although Lucy is the subject of a sentence, "Lucy thinks of Dolt", Lucy as an organic being is such things that the grammatical subject she is, *as such,* is not. There's something off in saying that "Lucy is on the page" or "Lucy is in the sentence". The dance doesn't permit that kind of move.

Anscombe argues that the first-person pronoun "I" doesn't denote anything. That it's not a name. Rather, that to judge something a subject of thought is tied up with ascribing it a special sort of knowledge. That this knowledge is expressible by the subject's use of "I". The next two sections re-articulate her argument there in terms both of presentational objects and of grammatical things.

Suppose I said,

(1) Lucy judged herself to be Lucy one day, but judged herself not on the next.

What might you think I'm saying?

Out of context, it's ambiguous. It depends, doesn't it? Does the reflexive, "herself", *denote* Lucy, here? Or does denote it nothing at all?

If it *denotes* Lucy, we can infer:

(2) Lucy judged Lucy to be Lucy one day, but judged Lucy not Lucy the next.

That doesn't imply that Lucy judges "I'm Lucy" or "I'm not Lucy". If we ask Lucy, "Who is Lucy?" on the first day, she might simply judge, "Some person in a story". Nor does it imply she judges that "The person Lucy is not Lucy". She might simply judge *of* Lucy that she's not Lucy.

If we ask her the next day, "Who's *that*?" (pointing to Lucy in a photograph, taken at a funny angle), she might simply and wrongly judge, "Well, not *Lucy*."

"But if 'herself' doesn't name Lucy, what *does* it denote? What other object could it be?"

Suppose I said, "It's not that Lucy judged that *Lucy* isn't Lucy. She simply judged *herself* to be other than Lucy". I'd rephrase this as:

(3) Lucy judged, "I'm not Lucy".

But we can't substitute "herself" with "I", as though it were another name. Otherwise we'd end up with nonsense or the wrong sort of assertion:

(4) Lucy judged that I is not Lucy.

In different dialects we use "is" instead of "am". There's no error there. But appealing to that fact wouldn't help us. Because either we'd be using "I" as though in the third-person yet still 'as' a first-person pronoun (i.e. incoherently, impossibly!), or we'd be speaking all of a sudden on *my* behalf. We'd be saying, "Lucy judged that *I* (– who am writing this essay –) am not Lucy".

So whatever's said by, "I am not Lucy" doesn't collapse into what's said by "So-and-So isn't Lucy." So it looks like "I", no less than the special "herself" in (3), doesn't behave like a name or denoting phrase either.

"But surely 'I am Lucy' *must mean* that the object named 'I' is one and the same, for example, as the object named Lucy? Because what else could it communicate?"

If "I" really was a name, we could substitute it with another noun-phrase of what is named. That is how I am using the term "name" here.

For instance, we could substitute opaquely: "the object Lucy just referred to using 'I'". The phrase "the object named 'I' (by Lucy)" is just such an opaque description. Or transparently, such as "the one who's writing this essay", or – I suspect some people would propose – "Lucy's *Self*". The reasoning for the 'Self' idea might run: "Well, my 'I' surely names me, and I am surely myself; myself is really my Self, and I am my Self. So, my first-personal 'I' is a name for my Self. And when Lucy uses 'I' correctly, it refers to *Lucy's* Self."

But we can't use it these ways and be capturing all that's said. For we'd be falling back into the third-person from the first-:

(5) Lucy judged **the object Lucy just referred to using 'I'** to be Lucy one day, but judged **that object** Odin the next.

(6) J.M. judged the one writing this essay to be the one writing this essay.

(7) Lucy judged **Lucy's Self** to be Lucy (…or Lucy's?) one day, but judged **it** to be Odin (…or Odin's?) the next.

These are all just *third*-personal thoughts.

*

"How can that be right, though? …Where would this leave us? I can say that the person who is speaking this very sentence is tired. I can't do that without believing that the person is me. So can't the word 'I' mean, for example, 'the person who's speaking this sentence'?"

The *word* "I" could be such a name in some language. But is it, in ours? When it's used as the first-personal subject?

Ask yourself: Who is speaking the sentence, "I am tired?" Whoever it is does not *merely* claim, "The person speaking this sentence is tired" is true. For that sentence may be heard aloud, and the person may judge it to come from someone else. Perhaps they've taken a knock to the head and are dissociated from their own actions (see Anscombe 1981:36; cf. James 1901 [1890]:273). My point is that it's a further move to judge, "*I* am speaking this sentence." That further judgment is not a tautology. For one could just be reading the sentence silently oneself, but also hearing a voice say it. But "The person speaking this sentence is speaking this sentence" *is* a tautology. So the judgments aren't identical.

I'm not making the weird claim that you can never 'really' tell if it's you speaking or not. Of course you can! It's no more wobbly than other empirical judgments. I'm merely noting that the first-personal "I" doesn't behave quite like the name of a thing or object.

This isn't merely a special feature of the letter "I", then. It concerns the first-person subject's *logical role* in propositions. If we swap its term for a term that behaves logically like a name, we can't but fall into the third-person. Even if the term were "I". It's how we *use* the term that counts.

Now, I would clearly know something if I know that I am Lucy, which I *wouldn't* suffice as knowing merely by knowing that Lucy is Lucy. This suggests that first-personal thoughts express a kind of knowledge or belief or awareness which cannot be expressed third-personally. If this reasoning is correct, then what is the special sort of knowledge or awareness? And might this shed light on the sorts of "am" involved if I say truthfully, "I am an object" or, indeed, if I were to say, "I am a *subject* of thought" or (which may be different) "I am a possessor of mental states"?

6.3 The First-Person and Infallibility Again

It's really tempting to say at this juncture, "Why can't the first-person pronoun just be a *very special* name that only the person using it can apply to themselves? Wouldn't *that* account for why you can't substitute it with another name? All that's going on, we could say, is that swapping 'I' for a name is against the rules. That this is just a quirk of the English language. And not because it doesn't denote anything, real or unreal."

But is this how we actually use the first-personal "I", "me" or "myself"? Would this suffice for the logical character of first-personal judgments?

No. To appreciate why, consider this thought experiment adapted directly from Anscombe.

Imagine we live in a community where everyone has two names. We've each got a unique Torso-name, written on one's front and back. In my case, suppose this is "James". And we've each a Wrist-name, scribbled on the inside of our arm. The Wrist-name, though, is the same for everyone: "I*".

Imagine that the rules for using these two names are different. When my neighbours see me herding sheep or milking the cows they'd report what I do using "James" as the grammatical subject: "James is herding sheep". If they want to get my attention from across the field they'd shout, "James, get over here!" not, "I*, come here!" They won't report my actions, or call me, using the special Wrist-name. Only I can call the person, James, "I*". Nonetheless, "I*" is very much used *as a name*.

My remarks about what the man James/I* is doing, therefore, can be based merely on my observation of James as a being in my field of perception, and on information gained from others through their own observations of James. I may learn that I* is milking cows from Mrs Thomas's telling me so, who lives on the next farm and saw; or by watching a live-feed of James doing so on TV from the barn. And Mrs Thomas will use "I*" to denote Mrs Thomas, and can make statements about what she calls "I*" on the basis merely of perceptual observations of Mrs Thomas. So, when I say, "I* is milking the cows", this is true only if James is milking the cows. But if Mrs Thomas says "I* is milking the cows", that's true only if Mrs Thomas is milking the cows.

This Wrist-name, "I*", does not behave *logically* like our first-personal "I" in real English. For if we swap the first-personal "I" and "me" for "I*", in the sentences above, we get third-personal propositions like this:

> "I* may learn that I* is milking cows from Mrs Thomas's telling I* so, for it's she who lives in the next farm and saw I* this morning."

This would be grammatically correct in the community. And still, there's nothing first-personal here. For I could judge the proposition to be true, yet fail to grasp that *I* am the one called I*.

"What if we keep the 'am', though, and don't change it to 'is'? Don't we keep the first-person then?"

But it's what logically follows from such sentences that matters. Not dialect or choice of symbol. James might only form judgments such as "I* experiences a monkey on his shoulder" (or, allowing the revision, "I* experience a monkey on 'my*' shoulder") on the basis of *observing* James over there, or on others' observations and their testimony, etc. And this, I'm arguing, would still be insufficient for distinctively *first-personal* empirical knowledge involving first-person identity judgments.

We've granted that "I*" is another name for the man James, that only James can use. That could be achieved simply by James' knowing to call James by the name on James's wrist, but that he can't call other people by the names on their wrists. That is, James' judgments about the man called I* can have the status of mere empirical knowledge claims about existents. Such claims are transparently fallible. It need not be correct just because James uses the words "experience",

"monkey", "his", "shoulder", etc. correctly. But, if James uses "(to) experience a monkey" correctly and makes the honest first-personal claim, "*I* experience a monkey", then he must be experiencing a monkey. *He can't be wrong about it*.

As we saw in earlier chapters: if I think$_2$ of something as being this or that, I can be wrong about the thing in itself. But I can't be wrong about what's present to me in thought in the same way; about what I think$_1$ of. More exactly: The only way I can be wrong about its transparencies and internal-opacities in language is through misuse of terms or dishonesty.

This indicates a connection between the first-personal "I" and the special infallibility one has concerning objects present to one in experience. The claim is that the first-person pronoun marks a kind of authority on the subject's part regarding what I call their presentational objects.[29]

As Anscombe writes,

> "I am this thing here" is … a real proposition, but not a proposition of identity. It means: **this thing here is the thing**, the [living] person… **of whose action *this* idea of action is an idea,** of whose movements *these* ideas of movement are ideas, of whose posture *this* idea of posture is the idea. And also, of which *these* intended actions, if carried out, will be the actions (Anscombe 1981:33)

As with her remark on colours (Chapter 4), I think this passage could be easily misread. Anscombe's *not* denying that there is a phenomenon called "first-personal identity judgment". She's denying that if one judges, "I am Anscombe", one's simply claiming, "So and So is one and the same as Anscombe". Every time you treat "I" like the name *of something*, so that you can supply different descriptions of the something using transparencies or opacities instead of "I", you slide back into a merely third-personal claim.

There is some numeric-identification *expressed*, she agrees. But it isn't between an object called "I" and some person. Anscombe emphasises the words "these" and "this". It's not just any ideas that are relevant. They're ideas that it makes sense to say in the first-person, "*these, which are mine only*". I take these to be the ideas one is having right now only insofar as one's *thinking*$_1$ of things. For these need to be ideas it wouldn't make sense for more than one person to have.

On my reading, then, we *might* do well to swap Anscombe's term "ideas" for the term "presentational things". For example, when I think of what I am doing at the moment, I think of myself writing this chapter. I'm presented in thought with this action *as thing*. My act of thinking$_1$ of this *thing* is precisely mine; it doesn't make sense to say my neighbours, for instance, are also the subjects of *my* act of thought$_1$.

In summary: I read Anscombe as saying that "I am this thing here, Anscombe" expresses, 'This thing, Anscombe, has presentational things that are *mine*.'" And I agree with Anscombe, on this reading, that the use of first-person pronouns signifies a recognition of special authority, on the part of the judge, regarding certain objects. Her current presentational ones.

[29] I of course use 'presentational' in a weaker sense than Anscombe does in her own papers, who uses the term to talk specifically about *perceptual* experience.

6.4 Clarifications

"When I use 'I', though, I don't *merely* express that the person speaking is someone to whom certain objects are presentational, do I? The idea's surely that I *express my recognition that I am the one, the thing, to whom* the objects are presentational. I express recognition that there's nothing hidden about the object to *me*. So isn't 'I' and 'me' the name of something special after all? Am I not ascribing something to someone – i.e. a special authority?"

It's very hard to resist this inference to "'I' must be a name". But we must, therefore, be very careful. We needn't have the explicit concept <presentational object>, in order to use the first-person pronoun properly. So we needn't be applying that explicit concept to things. Instead, we *behave* a certain way. And folks' understanding this behaviour shows in how they'll interact with the person speaking. A person's using the first-person pronoun correctly expresses something about them to others. It's part of a gesture.

I'm reminding us, here, that there are objective criteria for someone's having certain presentational objects irrespective of whether they apply the concept <presentational object> to them.

So suppose some David's thinking$_1$ of a rich man. If you ask him, "Are you sure you're thinking of a rich man?" he'd have to assume you're asking if he's mis-speaking, lying, or has confused an objective entity for something it's not – namely, a rich man. His behaviour expresses his grasp that these are the only options. And these are criteria, then, marking a distinction on his part between what I, personally, would call his "presentational" from his "non-presentational" objects of thought.

So when I say, "These presentational objects are *mine*," I am not using "mine" in the way I use a possessive noun-phrase like "James's" or "Lucy's" either. "Mine" expresses the infallibility of the speaker regarding certain objects. Granting this kind of infallibility is the condition of granting subjectivity to the speaker; their status as a subject of thought. *Because all thought presupposes presentational thought.* Granting this, I can then assess whether this subject makes a true or false claim regarding *this or that object* in particular. But it's never in question that there are objects presentational for them only.

Still: the idea that one's "I" doesn't name anything (real or unreal) may provoke the Pit-ish intuition. "We talk of the 'subject' of thought," one might say. "The subject is a sort of object. You can't deny that, for the subject – as I describe it – is evidently *being denoted* by a term. Namely, 'the subject of the sentence'. And this is a third-personal description, too! How could you deny this truth?"

But in what sense of "subject" is the "I" a subject? What dance is implied by the "is" in "This object is the subject of thought"?

The *term* "I" serves as a grammatical subject in sentences. There are no additional objects of thought that this grammatical subject "is", in a sentence, unlike for direct objects. Nonetheless, there are ways to 'pivot' from "I" and reflexives like "themselves", "herself", "itself" to objects.

Experiencing love for Juliet, Romeo says, "I love Juliet". This is true only if Romeo loves Juliet. But Romeo needn't refer to the object Romeo. Romeo may have no view as to what kind of thinking *thing* he himself (non-denotive) is. All he needs to know is how Juliet presents to *himself* (non-denotive). Nonetheless, there is a dance from Romeo's "I" to the name "Romeo" for us who take a third-personal view. Whomever we ascribe the correct use of the term "I" to, in this case, is to be called that person who asserts their love for Juliet. To check whether they are correct, or are lying or misusing terms, for example, will involve looking to the man Romeo in his environment.

This differs from the dance with mere direct objects. I don't have to ascribe anyone a correct use of the first-person pronoun in order to tell what object of thought a direct-object 'is'. But wherever concerned with subjects of thought, such ascription is implied.

6.5 Relative and Absolute Existence

Suppose I judge, "I'm eating this apple." It follows that I identify myself with an eating thing. But "myself" doesn't name the eating thing, or an object I'd mistakenly distinguished from the eating thing before.

The dance is from one set of objects to a judgment of relation. Tasting the taste of apple, feeling a crunch between my teeth, seeing the half-eaten apple in this hand, feeling its touch to the fingers – I have objects of perception$_1$. Given my presentational things, I naturally judge that something is eating and tasting$_2$ this apple, and that that something is me. I judge t*hese* (presentational) things to be the presentational things of someone eating this apple.

This suggests an account of what it is to ascribe something 'real' existence.

Through Chapters 1-6 I've talked of 'relative' existence. I've said that a fictional thing may exist relative to another fictional thing. Sherlock Holmes exists relative to John Watson and a version of London Bridge, but not relative to ourselves or the London Bridge *we* can visit. Notice that I used first-personal pronouns and reflexives there. "We" and "ourselves". If we drifted into third-person pronouns and reflexives, a crucial aspect of the claim would be lost. It would sound as if there are simply many worlds of objects, floating alongside each other. As though there was no deeper difference between Sherlock Holmes and ourselves other than what we stand in physical relations to.

But we do distinguish reality 'proper', and objects that exist "absolutely", as we might phrase it, from fictional realities and their contents; from things made up or merely imagined. Given the previous remarks about apples and eating-things, it seems that <first-personal thought> is *internally related* to the concept <existence>. My argument this section is that an appeal to the first-person makes sense of the distinction between merely **relative existence** and **absolute existence**.

My determining whether an object exists 'for real' – whether it exists 'absolutely' – involves asking, "What can *I* do in relation to this object?" If a star is real, then it is physically possible for me to see$_2$ it through a telescope, given the right range. And it's possible for me to suffer its heat

given the right proximity. It is the presentational objects that I have, along with sensations, that inform my judgments as to what I can objectively reach out for, eat, sand-down, twirl, kick, melt, or study under a lens. The star's reality would be revealed in what presentational objects I would have under certain conditions.

From a first-personal perspective, that comes to asking, "*What am I experiencing*? Given these objects I'm presented with, what can I reasonably judge to be the case *objectively*?"

If we considered intentional things only in the third-person, all intentional things would be considered objectively. The presentational/objective distinction would be lost. Let's pretend, for a moment, that that's logically possible. What would follow? We couldn't appeal to one's infallibility regarding certain things; one's presentational ones. We couldn't ask, "What am I experiencing?" in order to make fallible judgments about the world shared with others. In answer to, "What is this?", we couldn't give transparent descriptions with the requisite infallibility. One could only say, "James can see a star." And there'd be no further way of discriminating James from fictional things as such, like Sherlock Holmes.

Recall how we distinguished determinacy$_1$ from determinacy$_2$ in Chapter 4. Sherlock Holmes has a determinate$_1$ number of hairs on his head, because he's a normal (not fantastical) human being. All I mean by this is that, in Holmes' (fictional) world, there would be a fact of the matter as to how many hairs are on his head. But because Conan Doyle never specified the number, there's no determinate$_2$ fact as to what it is. That means not simply that Conan Doyle cannot know the answer except by authoring it, but that *we* can't know the answer unless Conan Doyle authors it and tells us.

That there is an object of thought, Conan Doyle, who knows the true answer, doesn't tell us whether Holmes is 'really' real. Conan Doyle might merely exist relative to Holmes; they'd be fictional characters in the same world. What matters is how *you or I* can learn the answer, if at all. If one can *only* learn it by reading what Conan Doyle writes, then Holmes can't be 'really' real. But if one can learn it by encountering Holmes, at least in principle, then relative to oneself Holmes exists. Which is just to say, Holmes exists absolutely.

One can articulate mere determinacy$_1$, therefore, using counterfactual first-personal propositions like this: "*If I were* John Watson, *then I* could in theory count the number of hairs on Holmes's head." I empirically know whether I'm John Watson or not on the basis of my presentational objects. If I'm not John Watson, nor what could in theory stand in causal relations to him, say, then the number of hairs on his friend's head can be merely determinate$_1$. And if it's additionally determinate$_2$, it can only be made by what his author writes. It's not a fact that the author can discover by physically checking Holmes's scalp.

6.7 Geach's Puzzle (Sort Of): "I" and Intentional Identity

There were once three farmers, called Hob, Cob and Nob. Hob had a horse he loved the most. Cob, a pig he liked the least. But Nob? A goat he *detested*. Now Hob's to the stable to saddle his mare. But he looks and he sees she's sick. Her bonny brown eyes are sad and grey, her coat

doesn't shine but is dull. "A witch," says Hob, "has cursed my Nell!", so he prays to the Lord for assurance. Now Cob's to the sty to feed his sows, and the least in his eye lies dead. "A witch," says Cob, "has killed my Sall. At last I shall have my insurance!" Nob, in the middle, is told his friends' news and wonders which witch is to blame. "Could it be," he thinks, "that the witch who cursed Nell and the witch who killed Sall are the same?"

Suppose there are no witches, says Peter Geach (1967). Then how can Nob talk of the 'same witch' at all? Hob doesn't refer to any witch in particular. Neither does Cob. So which particulars does Nob think about?

Strange question. Nob judges that a witch did curse Nell, that a witch did kill Sall. So he is presented, initially, with two things: the Curser and the Killer. Each is a witch (he can't be wrong about that). But so far as he's concerned, in thinking$_1$ of either he thinks$_2$ of something real (and he may be wrong about that).

Nob wonders if, insofar as he thinks$_2$ of Curser, he thinks$_2$ of Killer, and vice versa. (Recall our treatment of the Morning Star/Evening Star/ Venus case from Frege). Nob can also wonder something simpler: Whether a correct description of Nell's Curser counts as the right answer to the question, "Who killed Cob's sow?", and whether a correct description of Sall's Killer counts as the right answer to, "Who cursed Hob's mare?"

It makes sense to wonder all this whether or not there are in fact witches. What matters is what Nob believes.

Nob believes, "*I* live in a field between two farms that at least one witch paid call to last night." This is a first-personal thought. But it's a false one. Because the man who is *himself* (non-denotive) doesn't live in a field matching quite that description. His "I" gives us a pivot-point onto the man Nob, so that we can evaluate his judgement third-personally: "What things does Nob stand in physical relation to?"

If Nob supposes Curser and Killer are the same witch, then he's presented in thought$_1$ with a witch guilty of two crimes. If he tells Hob about this witch, it's up to Hob to judge whether this witch – a presentational thing – 'exists' or not. That is (in more careful language): whether there's a witch meeting the same transparent descriptions, and whom Nob's counted as thinking$_2$ of insofar as he thought$_2$ of the Curser whom Hob told him of, or the Killer whom Cob told him of.

Hob is already presented with a witch who cursed his horse, here. So there is a particular for him to tell Nob about over the fence. He doesn't name or denote it when he says, "Something cursed my Nell last night." (Though, if he's correct in saying that, it follows there is some individual whom we can speak of as the Curser – namely, *the Curser*, whom I've only now denoted, using italics.) But Hob does name a thing which presents as having cursed his Nell if he says, "The witch which did it is on the loose!" It's this presentational object Nob can then speak of too (which, relative to him, is objective). It's this object about whose existence and identity he can wonder as above.

But Nob doesn't need Hob or Cob to *name* any of their presentational things. So long as Nob judges, "Something cursed Nell and something killed Sall", he is presented with one or more culprits in thought$_1$. And he can ask questions about their what's thought$_2$ of (unknowingly) insofar as one thinks$_1$ of what, what external opacities are in the mix more generally, and so on.

What I've said implies that Nob can be presented with something as himself (non-denotive) though it is not really himself. But does that make sense? In Chapters 4-5 I distinguished transparencies from internal from external opacities. How does first-personal identity fit into that tripartite distinction (if at all)?

Let's try framing things from a first-personal view. I think$_2$ of Holmes, and I am (– so I judge –) the man J.M. If all that's right, then it's among the external opacities of Holmes that J.M. thinks$_2$ of him. But it's not among Holmes' internal opacities. Because Holmes is fictional, and in the world of the story J.M. reads him in, J.M. has no presence at all. Holmes' internal opacities include his being thought of by Watson, Moriarty, and so on.

If I think, "I am J.M.", or if Nob thinks, "I live in the field next to Hob's (etc.)", I or Nob expresses more than a transparency. I express a judgment regarding who thinks of what: *J.M.* thinks of these presentational objects / *Nob* does, and so on.

Only, there are two J.M., for instance, at stake. First, there's a J.M. I can be mistaken about: Objective J.M. I can be wrong that these presentational objects are his. Second, there's a J.M. I can't be mistaken about: Presentational J.M.

Suppose I do think right now that I am J.M.. Then it's among the *internal* opacities of my presentational things that they're J.M.'s. This is to say: I can't be wrong about these presentational things presenting as J.M.'s – they simply do present that way just now. Hence there's a J.M. whose intentional things they are; the presentational one. But it either is or is not the case that it's among the *external* opacities of these presentational things (the Presentational J.M. included) that they're *Objective* J.M.'s.

The take-home point from this is that one can, after all, be presented with something as *oneself* (non-denotive) and one can still be wrong. Rotating on the point of "I" affects the identity of the presentational objects themselves, of course. And this turns on, rather than complicates, the internal/external opacity distinction.

Conclusion

This essay began with a puzzle about non-existent objects. "How is it—" (asked one of my alter-egos) "—that anyone could think of something non-existent? Because in order to think of something, that something must be a thing to be thought of. A tree or a plane or jar of honey. If a tree's not real, there's no thing to stand in the relation of 'thinking of—' to. So, there's no thought of the tree to be had. (Even my talking of 'the tree' is suspect!)" This alter-ego, I'd now say, has failed to appreciate what it is to be a thinker.

To be a thinker is to be presented, infallibly, with certain things of experience. I called these presentational things. Insofar as one thinks infallibly (or 'thinks$_a$') of a tree, one may or may not also think fallibly (of 'think$_2$') of something else. It will depend on what the context is in which one's thinking$_1$. One can't be mistaken about one's presentational things (or, relaxing from the specific for-purpose terminology of the later chapters back into our every day use of word), the things as appear to you as the object of your thought or perception. But one can be wrong about what it is is that's manifesting in your thought or perception under the guise of a tree. Maybe it's not a tree but a lamp-post, or a tree of different proportions, species and particular features than it seems to you to be.

I've called such manifesting existents "objective things". Objective not in the constraining sense that to be an objective thing one must *exist*. We can think$_2$ falsely of fictional characters after all, and when thinking$_2$ of them we'll be presented in experience with a something infallibly as this or that fictional character. Rather, objective in the sense that it's possible for one to be ignorant, wrong or indeed even right about the thing. Every act of thought$_2$ implies an act of thought1: insofar as I think of something objective, I think of something presentational too.

This connects with another claim I made, that a presentational thing isn't something we are magically right about by way of a special 'access' to it (as if we had to traverse some sort of space to 'grab hold'). It's not 'out there' like existents are, ahead of our thinking$_2$ of them. It's not that we're simply not wrong about our own presentational things, it's that we're neither right *nor* wrong. What we think$_1$ of, instead, are things that it makes sense for other people than us to be right or wrong about them. My presentational thing has all those features I would say my object of thought does if asked, "What are you thinking of?" and answer honestly and with a correct used of words. What it is for a thing to have such and such features objectively is determined by what I would say in these conditions, rather than there being an object extrinsic to my thought that I 'receive from' or 'perceive at' some other place.

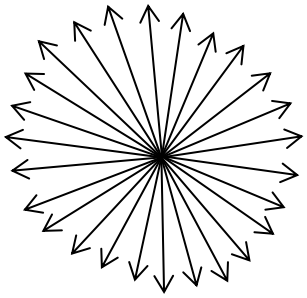
We saw, then, that to be infallible required having mastered the use of words and concepts. It's not that one applies the concepts correctly or incorrectly to a special object only you're infallible about. There is no correct or incorrect application. Rather, the words you give in answer to, "What do you think of?" will inform others of what concepts it is correct or incorrect for them to apply to the very same thing.

So we saw, too, that in order to think$_1$ of things, one will need to have been enculturated into thinking$_2$ of objective things. It's by behaving in appropriate ways using words and gestures,

relative mostly to existents in one's environment, that adults teach us as children how to use words correctly; how to conceive of things as of this or that kind. Learning to think of this or that is inseparable from learning how to partake in forms of life together with other beings.

We may forget, like my alter-ego and other 'Pit-ish' thinkers, that we are creatures who are enculturated by each other into thinking$_2$ of things. Failing to recall both our fallibility and attendant infallibility in matters of thought and perception, we think of ourselves not as the thinking subjects we are but on the model of merely physical entities entering into merely physical relations with other such entities. On such a model the idea of a non-existent object of thought makes no sense.

In recalling these facts for ourselves – by attaining for ourselves a more expansive Self-Knowledge – we've seen how may so-called 'things' of which we can think and refer to are not even 'things' exactly, but (to use William James' image) the non-extensional point at the intersection of various lines, or (to use my preferred image in several contexts) the vanishing point of various lines running back from talk of this or that thing. The vanishing point represents an individual that 'is' all the things these lines can be traced outward from. But the individual per se is no more than what we say is given in answer to a certain sort of question (such as "What are you thinking of?", on certain practices), by describing or naming various things not equal to each other or to the individual they are.



To conclude this essay, I'll give a last short 'case study' of puzzlement, different from what we've encountered so far, and focused primarily on perception rather than thought. In tackling this puzzlement, trying to melt it away by recalling our ways with words, I'll bring to bear various concepts we've developed over Chapters 1-6. This is one way of pulling the various claims I've made together into one 'application', as a model for further applications in future writings.

*

Consider this poem, 'It was a hard thing', by Gerard Manley Hopkins:

> It was a hard thing to undo this knot.
> The rainbow shines, but only in the thought
> Of him that looks. Yet not in that alone,
> For who makes rainbows by invention?
> And many standing round a waterfall
> See one bow each, yet not the same to all,
> But each a hand's breadth further than the next.
> The sun on falling waters writes the text

> Which yet is in the eye or in the thought.
> It was a hard thing to undo this knot. [30]

Hopkins articulates a puzzle with two halves. The first concerns the strange reality of a rainbow arched above a waterfall. The second, the duality of any object both 'out there' and 'in the mind'. The second anticipates William James' puzzle as met in Chapter 5.

The first half stems from a strange multiplicity. It's tempting to say a rainbow doesn't exist, but is really a presentational entity. That it merely exists* in the sense of being a thing of thought$_1$ and perception$_1$. It's tempting because there may seem *too many* rainbows. As each spectator at the waterfall looks, they "see one bow each", each "not the same to all", each a "hand's breadth further than the next." Multiple rainbows at different locations relative to the falls. Furthermore, the rainbow one sees$_1$ slides with you as you walk. The falls, on the other hand, don't 'shift' like that. One's impression is only of one's *own* location changing, in a landscape 'fixed' in place.

If it's tempting to anyone to say rainbows are in some way 'projections', of the mind, onto Nature's objective canvas, we might add to their temptation by considering that rainbows don't exclude what entities cross their beams. "Real and objective perceptible things," such a someone might be tempted to say, "take up space. Whereas the rainbow fully *is* where even birds share its location." "The rainbow shines," Hopkins first suggests, "but only in the thought / of him that looks."

But the rainbow remarked on can't be *merely* thought$_1$ of, nor *merely* seen$_1$. Can it? Because we can be right or wrong about it. After all, "who makes rainbows **by invention**?" And there are facts about them established differently than facts for things like hallucinated objects or fictional characters. Rainbows are things we can be wrong about, yes. But there is no-one, no book, no script we can turn to and demand, "Tell me what you see$_1$, or what's the case as you describe it, and that by itself will settle the facts."

So suppose I see$_1$ a half-rainbow in a garden sprinkler spray, under trees, in bright sunshine. I could be hallucinating, or having a mere illusion. Or I could be "seeing a real rainbow" which should be visible to others too. "Turn round, there's a lovely rainbow there in the sprinkler-spray!" About a real rainbow, notice, I can be wrong or ignorant. Perhaps I'm seeing$_2$ a full rainbow, partly occluded by the trees, and not one in the spray. Someone who sees$_1$ a full rainbow, in this shared context with me, yet stands several metres to my left, may be positioned to correct me, surely, about the so-called 'objective' rainbow. She wouldn't be speaking of my presentational rainbow but of something else. What sort of thing exactly?

The rainbow that's 'really there' is itself, in a sense, at *multiple locations at once*. Where it makes sense to say 'it' is depends on where one's looking from, relative to the falls.

I want to say, "Yet we don't speak of the Real Rainbow as at multiple locations simultaneously, do we?" But, less dogmatically, and more honestly, I would voice this: "The rainbow is and is not moving around in different directions simultaneously". This voicing feels truer to my experience – though I make it on the understanding that I might be expressing a contradiction. So, on a third try: If asked, "Is it (the real rainbow) a moving thing?" I think that one appropriate

[30] https://poets.org/poem/it-was-hard-thing-undo-knot; accessed 5th May2021.

response is, "No, it stays still", even as *another* appropriate response is, "That depends on what I am doing. And for *you* to give the correct answer, it shall depend on what *you're* doing." This is what makes me want to utter, "But then I suppose it is, in a sense, at many places, and I suppose in many movements…"

There's definitely a strangeness here. This is unlike talk about mountains.

The Real Rainbow's not entirely independent, then, of what anyone $sees_1$. At least not in one sense. Whether there's a Real Rainbow is determined by what one *would* see_1, in a certain context, looking in a certain direction. We can't know 'absolutely' (vs. empirically) whether we're in such a context, because it always makes sense to revise perceptual judgments on the basis of further impressions. The two claims don't conflict. But the Real Rainbow really is 'out there' or not. It's objective. Even if it can only be $perceived_2$ by way of $sight_1$, unlike birds that can be heard, touched, smelled. Even if it is, and is not, in multiple places.

The apparent contradiction in the last claim – I now wager – shall 'deflate' if only we can clarify the different occasions of 'is' involved in its expression.

"So perhaps the deeper error here would be to equate what is $seen_2$ with what's 'entirely non-dependent' on what anyone $sees_1$. Correcting for that, aren't we out of the woods?"

—But where would this leave us with *mountains*? The Cairngorms can only be $perceived_2$ by way of $perception_1$. If they exist, then were we to be in a certain context, we should see_2 them in virtue of what we see_2.

"But rainbows are different: they're not there *unless* you see_1 one."

—That's as false for rainbows, though, as for sounds, scents and rocks. If a tree falls in the forest, and there's no one there, there *is* a cracking noise. For if one was there, one would $hear_1$ a 'crack!' and count as thereby $hearing_2$ a 'crack!' And a mountain stands above a valley even if there's no one there to see it, yes. But if no one would $perceive_1$ a mountain, in any sort of context relative to that place, then what sense could there be in saying here exists a mountain?

Hopkins' "knot" gathers itself into a general difficulty about thought and perception, then, when the narrator spies the rainbow as 'there' in the light and spray, *and* as a phenomenon in the old sense: as something essentially experiential.

> The sun on falling waters **writes the text** / Which yet is in the eye or in the thought. / It was a hard thing to undo this knot.

A rainbow hasn't mass, density, or weight. But it surely has causal conditions. You can make rainbows by doing things with sunlight and vapour. The environment we're in, not our imagining-things, is *responsible* for the rainbow. And yet to see_2 rainbows 'is' to see_1 things that slide about with us in a curious sense. The sun writes the text. The text is on the waters. Yet the text is in our minds. And if we think the text a hymnal, who composed it? Who "sings"? Ourselves, as we walk from place to place and find the rainbow with us? Or the weather?[31]

31

I think it's right to say, "Both". But how, precisely?

The puzzle coming to light through Hopkins' words is how what's "out there" and "in here" are never shaken from each other. How the cords of individuals, in my development of James' figure, are overlapped when it comes to rainbows. How is it that something like a rainbow can be 'out there' and 'fixed' in location, in one way, even as – in one crucial sense that demands further elucidation – there's no seeing$_1$ a rainbow of one's own that stays put independently of one's varying locations and motions? How 'is' the Real Rainbow in many and only one place(s) at once? And is this really just a peculiarity of rainbows, or does something of this puzzle spread to objects of mind more widely?

Suppose one says: "I can't perceive$_2$ something unless I stand in spatial-temporal relation to it. So, I can't perceive$_2$ something unless it causally affects myself as 'thing'. I can't hear$_2$ the snap of branches unless the snapping alters my flesh– my nerves and neurons. Physicists and neurologists can account for such change by invoking sound-waves; vibrations which affect my ear-drum and thence my brain. I can't smell$_2$ the dinner baking in the oven unless particles of it enter through my nose."

If this were right, would we wish to say that rainbows are 'out there' with causal powers quite as branches and roasts are? It seems obvious that I can't see$_2$ the rainbow over those clouds unless light from the sky there reaches my eyes, affects my retinas. But consider this question: "Is the rainbow, itself, a causal agent in my perception?"

Leaning hard on the presentational/objective distinction, someone might be tempted by all my arguments so far to say 'No': "There is simply a function from what I see$_1$ to a set of descriptions that are true of what I see$_2$. I can be quite ignorant of the latter descriptions, let alone their truth. But this doesn't mean the thing seen$_2$ has every sort of physical power which other things, like mountains, have with respect to the thing I can claim to be. There is simply a function from my presentations to descriptions of the thing I 'am', too. There are simply *many sorts* of objective things, and rainbows are peculiar things. Perhaps rainbows don't, *themselves*, affect my retinas? Maybe they don't cause my perception of them in the manner mountains do?"

"—But can't we photograph rainbows? Can't they leave causal traces on film?"

Certainly, there's no such thing as distinguishing the real from the unreal, from knowing the existent, apart from having certain patterns of impressions. But how does that claim 'fit', find 'peace', with talk of mountains or rainbows making themselves apparent to us by *acting on our senses*? Acting on us from 'outside'? What is the connection between talk of causation between things – things affecting each other in a shared space – and talk of what a thing, like the man Hopkins, experiences?

"I have to be my own arbiter on what's really there and what isn't. But the distinction between 'really there' and 'not really there' is *itself* just something apparent to me, right? So are all of you! If I was to wave my arm to indicate you lot [wave-wave], this waving is just apparent to me, too, as real. It would make sense to be presented later with information about my waving that I presently lack. But the informing, the correction, would itself be presented – and in a way, it seems, I can't be wrong about."

The tempting claim would trundle out not as, "Nothing is really real", exactly, but rather: "All that is real, *and* all that is not real but present to someone or something, is at the deepest level dependent on me as a subject. All existents and existents* are, in a deep sense, necessarily in my mind. By which I mean, all hold within my mind alone."

Three observations, to begin.

First, any individual that is objective relative to myself does not depend on my thinking of it to be the things it is, even if it originated as one of my presentational objects. A warlock I imagined up yesterday, no less than the field outside my window, doesn't depend for his objective being on my thinking$_2$ of him *now*, or of the individual(s) whom he 'is'. Born of my mind, this object of thought$_1$ becomes a potential object of other people's thoughts$_2$.

Second, to judge something real involves relativizing one's presentational objects as such to those of a particular person who is among other *things*. Things who may have minds of their own. For to judge something real 'absolutely' involves a first-personal identity judgment. This object (say, an orange) is held and tasted by the one whom I am; the one who has *these* presentational objects (including not only an orange but a hand, a kitchen, etc.) and whose hand, holding an orange, I thereby count as seeing$_2$ right now. This implicitly draws a line between my presentations and those of others. There are things on the other side of the line from my 'mind', including others with minds themselves.

I don't have these others' infallibility, and none of us have the world "inside" ourselves. There is an 'inside' that does not exhaust or subsume all that's 'outside'. There is a 'me' (non-denotive) and my mind, and then there's what *isn't* me, my mind, or 'in' either.

Third, that my fallibility about the world is presented to me doesn't make the fallibility merely apparent. To entertain that it did would be to help ourselves, already, to fallibility; to the idea that what presented as the case was not in fact the case. The motivating confusion seems to be between presentational and objective thought. It's as though the fact of presentation is taken to rule out the fact of objectivity (a precondition for our sharing words, meanings and concepts with others). A moment's thought should show this 'idea' is nonsensical.

The temptation to think otherwise arises, I suspect, from thinking of presentational objects as 'mediations' between oneself and Real Things Out There. But, in the case of objective thought and perception, presentations are not mediations: they are direct manifestations of what, *qua things*, are independent of one's mind. The idea of 'mere' mediation, or representation, of an external world may rightly look unattractive, because it implies some gap or barrier between ourselves and the world we claim 'access' to. Only, a tempting way 'out' of ascribing mediation is to jump – unwisely, I think – at either of two options. And I think we must take another path.

The first option to resist is to bring the subject skin to skin with their 'real', 'proper' objects (ditching the presentational), so that we've a 'direct reach' for the pure objective. That error was pictured by the Pit; it figures the subject as equal to a thing. It is not.

The second option to resist is to soak up objects entirely 'within' the subject's realm (ditching the objective in fact), so that there's only the presentational; meanwhile insisting, perhaps, on a

distinction between objective/presentational sustained entirely from a single 'inside'. This is a form of solipsism.

Both jumps express the desire for a 'perspective-free view' of reality, as though perspective prevents one being objective. I have argued in this essay that that it does not.

To the extent that a mountain is perceived$_2$, for instance, a presentational object qualifies as one face, one manifestation, of that individual which the mountain is. We can understand the presentational object as among the individuals that are the individual which is the mountain. In less careful language, but nearer to how we speak: "What I see$_1$ is what I see$_2$; it's the mountain over there." This more everyday expression expresses a dance between different uses of 'is', different senses of identity.

This is not to numerically-identify the presentational and objective objects, then. Nor the individuals whom either is. Simply: one individual has at least three manifestations. First, the existent mountain. Second, the presentational object (which in turn is a 'thing' that can be understood as manifesting what the mountain is.) Third, the pure-objective object (distinct from the existent). As faces, none of these "things" (in the broad, misleading sense) are causally related to each other. They stand in a special relation of 'being' that the term 'manifestation' well captures.

Let's re-describe Hopkins' scenario with rainbows in terms of manifestation. In everyday language a person might say: "From where I stand by the waterfall, I can see$_2$ the rainbow now at *this* location [points a finger]." The judgement thus expressed can be re-expressed with: "I can see$_2$ the individual which the rainbow is at *this* location [points]." This brings out a logical possibility which the initial, everyday-language version leaves implicit. There may be one individual that is multiple rainbows. Some of these rainbows may be objective and non-presentational. Some may be presentational only. When I say, in ordinary language, "The rainbow", I may sometimes mean a particular manifestation of an individual, and other times mean that individual itself.

Some clarifications.

First, I'm not suggesting, therefore, that we fall back into 'mere subjectivism' about rainbows, as though the 'root' individual at stake could only ever manifest as presentational objects. That is wrong. I can be mistaken concerning an objective rainbow seen$_2$ from a certain perspective ("It's in the sprinkler spray, not behind the tree," a friend tells me). I've a new presentational rainbow, yes. But the objective rainbow remains the same. It is a manifestation of the root individual that, *qua* manifestation, exists independently of anyone's seeing$_2$ it.

Second, though, this objective rainbow is not *numerically*-identical with the various objective rainbows seen$_2$ by others at different locations round the waterfall. These rainbows each have different locations of their own. Each moves differently, too. These objective things are all distinct manifestations in one's physical world of the root individual.

In ordinary language, I'm suggesting, we refer to this individual simply as "the rainbow". Using the one noun-phrase "the rainbow", we move fluently between reference to particular things in

our space (objective rainbows) and reference to the *individual* which these rainbows all are. That root individual is physically manifest in the various pure-objective rainbows. It is also *perceptually* manifest insofar as at least one of these pure-objective rainbows are themselves perceptually manifest as presentational objects for someone.

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Appendix

Draft for a Chapter 7, "The Self-Absorbing Ink"

7.1 Changing in Oneself

Anscombe argued that the first-personal "I" is not a name. A name, on my reading, denotes something that can be described opaquely like, "the one I thought of yesterday" or "the one who saw$_1$ a ghost".

Names, then, don't need to name *things*: spatio-temporal substances. They can be pivot points onto descriptions of subjects as such. Pivot-points onto pivot-points. In Chapter 6 we pictured the subject as such as a pathway; a line. I wrote,

> A subject of thought might be individuated by that particular complex path taken through the Objective Forest. The line I've drawn in green. But such individuation doesn't require us to spell out what sort of object that subject is. The term "subject of thought" doesn't entail humanity specifically. The subject as such, we might say, has no transparencies.



Holding fixed the history of a path through *presentational* objects, we can call the path-maker 'Lucy', without thereby referring to the organism Lucy is (a human child). A proper name can allow one to pivot from object to subject like this. Lucy is (i) the subject of this thought, there, (ii) the one who's led this path – has this intentional history – and 'is' (iii) the mortal who broke the seal.

With (iii) we are expanding from 'Lucy' to speaking of what Lucy 'is', without requiring that 'Lucy' names a *thing*. We could then hold 'fixed' the path from the first-person view-point, make a copy in fiction, and tweak this copy to be that of different substances we choose. We can imagine, for instance, the *subject* Lucy discovering that she (non-denotive) is not the child she thought she was, but something much older and stranger.

Now, the pure subject 'called' Lucy is not equivalent to that *personality* we might call Lucy's: an 'essentialisation' of the individual as she herself [non-denotive] acknowledges or exists, as this or that, with things in the world. If there is 'the sort of thing the *individual* , Malc, would do', there is an image we can build up of Malc as a 'quasi-kind' of his own. Malc characteristics. Likewise with Lucy and other individuals. This is irrespective of whether they're pure subjects (not-quite-things) or people among things, in places.

Essentialisations here express either the discernment or projection of a pattern; a way of 'being'. But not necessarily a way of being a *thing*. A pattern of intentions, attitudes, dispositions, feelings, thoughts, strategies, and absorptions into different projects or states, qua subject. An individual subject can, at different times, be in accordance with different patterns (or 'forms') of subjectivity.

It's with such patterns we can be concerned when we say, "She's not herself at the moment", or "She's not who she used to be." The claim needn't be that the girl Lucy has been swapped for a doppelganger. Rather that the flow of presentational objects connected with the subject, Lucy, - the green path – has taken a 'turn'. With respect to the Objective Forest (as this strikes us), she reacts differently, resonates differently with the same sort of events and people.

This is something one can note of *oneself* (non-denotive). One can remember a way of being in the world, as it presented, and mourn one's incapacity to be that way now, as things present. The world once presented is remembered, but lost. I can be thrown into doubt as to which vision (if any) was 'true' to the world itself, and which a mirage or distortion. (Such a doubt gave birth to this essay).

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James quotes a Catholic priest, A. Gratry, who passed through such a crisis. As an isolated student, wrote Gratry, his "every idea of heaven" began to drain:

> I could no longer conceive of anything of the sort… Happiness, joy, light, affection – all these words were now devoid of sense. Without doubt I could still have talked of all these things, but I had become incapable of feeling anything in them, of understanding anything about them, of hoping anything from them, or of believing them to exist. There was my great and inconsolable grief! (A. Gratry in 'Souvenirs de ma jeaunesse', 1880:119-121, cit. and trans. James 2008 [1902]:106)

The grief was for a world in which heaven held and in which he, himself (non-denotive), had place. The kind of man he'd been was not *this* whom he was, who "neither perceived nor conceived any longer the existence of happiness".[32] He could recall the fact of his previous *experiences*. But such objects of memory became strangely opaque. He could list their appropriate transparencies. But he could not experience them now.

It might be tempting, here, to split fact from value. To treat the objective world as the set of facts, and one's personality as bringing 'mere' feelings, not objective, 'to' those facts. A projection of value from the inside out.

"Values," one might say, "merely reflect the imposition of feelings upon what's hard and objective." And James might seem to agree:

> It is notorious that facts are compatible with opposite **emotional comments**, since the same fact will inspire entirely different feelings in different persons **and at different times in the same person**; and there is **no rationally deducible connection** between any outer fact and the sentiments it may happen to provoke. These have their source in another sphere of existence altogether, in the animal and spiritual region of the subject's being. Conceive yourself, if possible,

[32] Ibid.

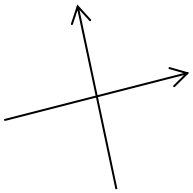
> suddenly stripped of all the emotion with which your world now inspires you, and to imagine it *as it exists*, **purely by itself**, without your favourable or unfavourable, hopeful or apprehensive comment. It will be almost impossible for you to realize such **a condition of negativity and deadness.**
>
> Whatever of value, interest, or meaning our respective worlds may appear endued with are thus **pure gifts of the spectator's mind**. The passion of love is the most familiar and extreme example of this fact. If it comes, it comes; if it does not come, no process of reasoning can force it. Yet it transforms the value of the creature loved as utterly as the sunrise **transforms** Mont Blanc from a corpse-like grey to a rosy enchantment; and it **sets the whole world to a tune** for the lover and gives a new issue to his life. (James 2008 [1902]:108-9)

*

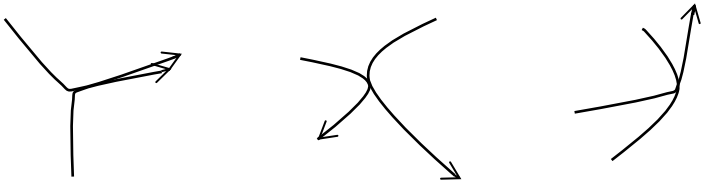
But notice two veins of imagery there. First, of mere *addition*: "emotional comments" on a primary text; the world "as it exists, purely by itself" independent of and prior to dress or adornment; receiving or not receiving "gifts" from another and independent "source" altogether. Second, imagery of *vitalization* or *quickening*: not simply the addition of emotion, but its intrinsic necessity to the health of world – "negativity", "deadness", the "corpse-like" versus the "rosy"; the world animated by feeling: its "transformation" through being loved, the world being "set to a tune".

I suggest there's no contradiction here. Because actual feelings do not amount to the values their occurrence may *express*. To feel toward something can be to perceive, or mis-perceive, that thing in its value(s).

Remember James' original lines-image from Chapter 5; to model an object's being both in the mind and out in the world:



Each line, I suggested, was an historical process: one of the subject as object, and the other of its object *per se*. Our Forest picture emerged from an 'intersection' reading of these Jamesian lines: an object as both a thing and an object of someone's thought. Now the alternative, 'interactive' reading of that image becomes more salient. Emotion brought *to* the world affects how its objects are 'handled', and how the objects affect their embodied thinker in history:



This doesn't imply that values are 'fictions', or the function of 'mere projections'. For it doesn't imply that the *concepts* of objects – skills – are divorced from our capacities for emotional acknowledgement of things and others. Rather, that the meeting between oneself and another can be 'inadequate', can mark a failure of recognition, if certain feelings aren't brought forth in the encounter.

7.2 Value, Feeling, and Skill

To show what I mean more carefully, consider this remark from Wittgenstein:

> If you ask yourself how a child learns 'beautiful', 'fine', etc, you find it learns them roughly as interjections… A child generally applies a word like 'good' first to food. One thing that is immensely important in teaching is exaggerated gestures and facial expressions. The word is taught as a substitute for a facial expression or gesture. The gestures, tones of voice, etc., in this case are gestures of approval. What makes the word an interjection of approval? It is the game [the whole practice with words and gestures] it appears in, not the form of words (Wittgenstein 1966: §5)

Wittgenstein's looking at certain concepts from 'outside'. How they hatch in a child's mind. It's through bodies, he says. Relations of faces.

With an early form of <good>, the adult looks for an experience in the child. This experience is expressed in a gesture. The adult teaches the child to class objects in accordance with this gesture. That is, in accordance with a complex intentional act, a kind of acknowledgment, of individuals. The adult teaches the child recognition of the sameness of action across different particular acts, and in this way of a *kind* of object (considered opaquely – as what's perceived$_2$), across different transparent *kinds of things* (foods, scents, colours, complex forms).

Notice how this works. The adult does it by becoming a kind of mirror to the child's own face. The adult (re-)makes the 'same' gesture as the child does spontaneously. The adult then speaks the word. And notice the concreteness here; the specificity in a unique environment, at a unique time. The child may perceive$_2$ something about which they feel, and think, differently than they have of anything else so far. These feelings may present as appropriate to the object. So that the child wouldn't judge someone else could see the object *as it is* unless it elicited from that someone such acknowledgements too.

This specificity will express itself in their specific pattern of behaviours, in turn. A new encounter opens a new course into the future (of language).

This leaves open the possibility for new concepts – skills – to emerge, *internally connected with feeling*. With approval or disapproval, or emotions not quite either. For suppose another child finds herself responding to something in the same way as the first. A mark of this will be her making similar gestures to the first. Applying the concept as such requires recognizing the propriety of a certain feeling; it could even require one to *have* that feeling. So was the child who worked dry grass on the block of wood that 'is' Ombola.

As I put it, this gives each child the 'mirror' to see their experience from outside. It reveals objective criteria by which to ascribe what they experience to others too. Conceptualising the intentional act is developed in acquiring such criteria.

"But how will they *know* they're responding in the 'same way' as the other?"

Finding oneself in the other is not as simple as seeing the exact same shape and form. The faces aren't *literal* mirrors of course. All faces are different, and they express things differently between them. How I show embarrassment may differ, more or less, from how my friend does. So the question is: "How, then, will I know that this face I see expresses the same as I'm feeling?" In Wittgenstein's example, it's clear the child has to grasp that what she herself feels, right now, is what the adult feels, who is teaching the word 'tasty' or 'good', if she is to have grasped the concept completely.

There must be a basic judgment of sameness in kind. A natural recognition that what one feels is as the other, too, expresses. The initial recognition is not exactly *justified*, then, by appealing to rules or further evidence. It's not, then, quite empirical in one sense of the term. For empirical judgments of particulars are the kinds of judgment you justify. Rather, some kind of agreement in judgment – a kind neither right nor wrong – must hold in order for the practice of correcting or accepting the application of a concept to get off the ground. It's a judgment as to what sort of thing is what. This is given within the presentational. But it is up to those around us to initiate us, through practices in places, to attaining the right presentations.

In other words: It's on the basis of seeing that "We're presented with the same" that a word for the object or act can be introduced. Once the word is introduced, there are standards for correcting someone's use of the term, and their application of a concept. For we can say, "They make this gesture, yet their word is mis-matched to it. They ought to say *this*, if they're experiencing *that*."

"How, though, can one correct another's judgment itself? Beyond 'You're using the wrong word' we can judge, 'You're mistaken about what's there' or 'what this is' or 'what's true.' What's the magic link between this 'not properly empirical' sort of judgment, you've described, and empirical judgments proper?"

To answer, we need to keep look from the outside. Ask: When teaching "good" as in Wittgenstein's example, are we merely copying the child's face? *Merely* acting like a mirror? Or are we showing her how things are in the world?

In a case like Wittgenstein's with "good", I've yet to meet a parent who doesn't guide their child's tastes by encouraging certain presentations *over* others. Infants, children, are receptive to our reactions. Wanting my baby niece to enjoy bolognaise – a food she'd not tried before – I showed myself tasting and smelling it, with exaggerated gestures of delight. She reached out for the spoon and wanted to try. I responded by smiling, giving her the spoon, encouraging her to have some. I was training her to acknowledge this substance a certain way: as something appropriate to eat and to want.

In other words, I was making bolognaise one exemplar of concepts, in development for her, like <food>, <edible>. I was trying to habituate my niece into patterns of behaviour such that it made sense to her to eat bolognaise when it was placed before her. Because, i.e., it's bolognaise. *That* kind of object. Furthermore, I wanted her to conceive of bolognaise as *pleasant* to eat. If, when she's older, she meets those who dislike the taste, I would (personally) use the case to teach the notion of <preference>. I'd be *altering*, that is, her concepts of <bolognaise> and <food> more generally.

Skills do not keep 'still'.

With dog droppings, spoiled meat, poisonous mushrooms, on the other hand, I'll not budge. I exaggerate looks of disgust. "Bleurgh, we don't want to touch that." I wash her hands with warm soapy water, express delight at how it feels to be clean. "Isn't that nice? Isn't that better?" With clean hands I reach for an acceptable piece of food, show my approval, and pass it to her. "Ooooh!" I say. I make sounds eliciting from her an excitement for the object. I actively cultivate a certain world of experience – "This thing is gross, that thing is delicious"; "This thing is bad, that thing is good." Just my making faces – frowns, raised eyebrows, 'downward' sounds, will make a child feel things about what they do. If it didn't, there could never be rebuke or encouragement between us.

When teaching concepts we are endorsing kinds and habits of attention. The reception of a kind of world. We're training the child into accepting certain objects of perception and thought, to the (often unwitting) exclusion of others. This means that, for some objects, approval is not 'contingent'. I mean that the objective criteria for experiencing this kind of object will include the spontaneous and authentic inclination to smile, or make other gestures, which one might supplement or substitute with a word (e.g. "delicious", "pretty", "cute", etc.)

In other words, a *necessary* approval holds where it's baked into the concept of an object, itself. When pleasure of approval is necessary to an objective presentation of the given object.

So, to return to William James. *Under pure transparency*, Mont Blanc is mind-independent by merely logical default. That's how <transparency> works: it's to see things 'free of' acts of mind. But to be a mountain *per se*, his imagery suggests, is to be more: an object of possible thought, perception, feeling. Such a capacity goes unmet when there is no-one to see, to climb, to witness. The unique mountain draws forth a response insofar as it is seen for what it is. The feeling isn't an add-on; it's a mark of objective perception.

So when James talks of "facts" and things "purely in themselves", I suspect he means things considered *torn* from the subject. Hence, as indeed *lacking* something – their dimension of acknowledgment. So I suggest we downplay his imagery of mere addition, for our current purposes, and emphasise that of vitalization contrasted with greyness. The mountains and their streams are objectively rosy with enchantment. The quickening of the world he describes is not Frankensteinian. Dead matter isn't 'jolted' unnaturally. The world *as it exists* is already green with mind; it grows and beats with thought.

We don't so much 'gift ourselves' meaning, then, so much as receive the gift of meaningful worlds. It takes feeling to find, and to form, the full facts. And given what feelings we are prone

to, swathes of the objective world can be hidden or obscured accordingly. In such obscurity, the world is neglected. The encounter blocked or incomplete.

7.3 Ryle's Puzzle: How Am I Both My Play and Not?

In 1954 Ryle constructed an image "meant to indicate … the conceptual region in which pleasure is located." The image starts out as of an ink drop sucked into blotting paper. A child who enjoys playing with their toy trains, says Ryle, becomes wholly drawn into the motions of these trains much like this ink into fibres:

> Every drop of [him] soaked up into the business of manipulating his clockwork trains…. All his thoughts, all his talk, all his controllable actions are those of his engine drivers, signalmen, and station masters. He does not coerce or marshal himself into playing, [else] there would be some drop of him which was recalcitrant to the blotting paper. (Ryle 1954b:143)

But this makes it seem like the child and the playing are independent. Two things meeting in space. Wouldn't a more appropriate image of this enjoyment then be the ink as absorbing *itself*? Or, stranger even, the *inky blotting paper* absorbing itself?

Yes, says Ryle:

> For [in the initial image] the blotting-paper had been one thing and the ink-blot another. But the game which absorbs the child is **nothing but the child himself, playing trains**. He, the **player**, has, for the moment, been sucked up, without resistance, every drop of himself that might have been on other business, or in no business at all. (Ryle 1954b:144)

*

"The analogy has significant limitations," one might say, "since the analogue is something logically impossible. So wouldn't we do best to find another, to accommodate this 'self-absorption'?" – But it's that paradoxical character which makes the image apt. The child, in their activity, is fully absorbed *by themselves* into it. The self-absorbing ink-and-paper holds this apparent paradox in view. It doesn't let us off the hook.

Yet, for myself, I don't want to say the child is straightforwardly "*self*-absorbed", with that phrase's connotations of blindness to others. And if I pause to reflect on why, the image of 'self-absorption' looks strange already. For it seems to piggy-back either on a division of the self into two, or on the false numeric-identification of two as one.

Consider, for instance, Ovid's Narcissus, gazing at his image in the pool. "This, surely, is a suitable icon of self-absorption." Surely; but in which way exactly? In Miller's version, the poem's narrator pleads with Narcissus:

> Why vainly seek to clasp but a fleeting image? What you seek is nowhere; but turn yourself away and the object of your love will be no more. (*Metamorphoses* 3.430/Ovid 1916:154)

It's poor advice, as Ovid surely knows. Narcissus has fallen for a Someone at Some Place. One with a sky and trees, like those Narcissus lies beneath. Narcissus can kiss and splash the colours

in the pool, but his reflection is not what he wants. What he wants is what he's confused the reflection for: a someone under the same sky as *himself* (Narcissus). And this non-existent Someone will continue to be (to exist*), and to be loved, even if Narcissus turns his back on him in space. A non-existent youth with his own transparencies.

The modern irony of this case is that Ovid's Narcissus is not, in a sense, narcissistic here. For he doesn't love himself *as* himself (denotive or otherwise).[33] When he realizes that he's merely mistaken himself for someone else, he's hardly relieved to find he now 'has' what he wanted. The suggestion that he 'has' him is blackly comic; a grim joke. On Mandelbaum's version:

> What shall I do? Should I be sought or seek?
> But, then, why must I seek? All that I need,
> I have: my riches mean my poverty.
> If I could just be split from my own body! (*Metamorphoses* 3.463/ Ovid 2013:97)

What real Narcissus wanted was not one who'd be *himself* (non-denotive), but someone with whom he could stand face to face. A full-blooded You to his I, not a reflection. To call the real Narcissus "self"-absorbed, then, is to ride on the back of that division: two Narcissi, each absorbed by the gaze of the other. Which makes it sound as though there were *two* selves, each 'other-absorbed'.

Who, then, *is* the narcissist? Perhaps one who glories in self-ascribed 'knowledge' of his own greatness or superiority. But the one so absorbed, so smitten, with the glowing image of himself fails to see *himself* (non-denotive) as the person whom *he* really is; particularly in relation to others. Like Ovid's Narcissus, he's self-estranged in some way. But unlike Ovid's Narcissus, he identifies himself as brilliant; one whom everyone should admire. The image isn't made an Other or mistaken for a You to his I. Instead, it is mistaken for someone he, the narcissist, *himself* is. And therein squats his own delusion. The narcissist is absorbed into a false-self; something other to himself in fact.

The child with his trains is not like Narcissus. His attention is fully on the trains and their drivers, not 'himself'. Yet neither is he like the narcissist, who believes himself to be what he's not. The child is, in a crucial sense, quite oblivious to himself in the moment. But it's in his own play that he's absorbed. We might say he's 'become' his play. Which isn't to say he responds to the play as to a You; as to an Other…

There's a pressure here to cut the poor kid into two anyways: the one who plays, and the one drawn up *into* this play. But of course he's not a poor kid, he's a whole and happy one: there's just the one boy playing with his trains. If we try to hide this apparent paradox by attending to different imagery than the kind Ryle gives us, we avoid, rather than tackle, the task of dissolving the appearance without 'dissolving' the phenomenon it illuminates.

"Should we try articulating this pressure in opaque terms, maybe? 'The playing as object of enjoyment is distinct from the subject of enjoyment as such'."

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[33] This observation has sparked a number of philosophically relevant thoughts, which I've not space to connect with mine explicitly here; see, for instance, Johnson 2008, Janan 2009, McLuhan's classic 2001 (1964), and, especially, Charles Stang's recent study of NeoPlatonic individuation, *Our Divine Double* (2016).

– That wouldn't be true for the narcissist. And in what respect is his playing really an 'object' here? We seem to slide again from (i) the idea of absorption (through activity) into the activity itself, to (ii) the idea of two transparently separate things.

A person can like or love a thing as a thing. So we can speak of the objects of their liking or love. Yet enjoying something implies some kind of activity qualified by – or *as* – the enjoyment. If I'm enjoying some cake, that implies I'm doing something with the cake. Presumably eating and tasting it. That I do *like* the cake is marked by my propensity to enjoy certain cake-involving deeds. But to like the cake, then, isn't marked by the mere doing of the deeds considered without reference to mind or experience. It's marked by doing them *in a certain way* called 'with enjoyment'.

My suggestion, after Ryle, will be that the enjoyment of activity can't be peeled from the concrete activity, in the way even thought, in *one* sense of the term, can be peeled from an object under transparency. Holmes is Holmes is Holmes, transparently, whether I think of him now or not. He's an object of thought. But an act being enjoyed is an act *done* a certain way. That certain way can't be peeled from the act.

The opaque/transparent distinction, here, starts to blur. The so-called object of enjoyment isn't quite an 'object' distinct from the act of enjoying.

And there's a sense in which the embodied subject of the act, being active, is the object this subject enjoys. That the subject, as we'd say in English, is *enjoying themselves*. So the subject/object boundary appears to blur too.

7.4 Enjoyment as Aristotelian 'Completion'

Look at the way a child moves when immersed in their game. They don't have to force their attention to the game and away from something else. Things beyond the game fade from thought. There is an ease and "energy" which goes unchecked. This very ease marks the absence of an *interfering variety of self-consciousness*. If their attention alights not on the game but on themselves as playing the game, or on the fact of their playing the game, their ease and fluidity may be interrupted.

There is a certain look in people's eyes when absorbed in this way. Though to share it doesn't require perfect similarity of face. Growing up we recognize the sameness of 'the look' across different bodies, different beings, in enjoyment. Dogs, cats, birds, dolphins, octopuses, humans of different physiognomies and characters. It may be various smiles, various tones of wildness, far-away-looks, or frowns of attention, and a sense – on our part – not only of the being's body as buoyed along by a (metaphoric) current, but of the body 'becoming' or 'channelling' that surge.

The recognitions, here, are hard to articulate except figuratively. We recognize a unity across differences in our own acknowledgements of different gestures in context.

Contrast this imagery with that of being snagged, dragged, or of strenuously running-after, asks Ryle. And contrast the child, we might add, with an engineer who must de-activate a bomb.[34] The engineer must learn to put aside, but not dismiss, thoughts of danger; her instincts to get away. We'd talk here of self-discipline, of will, of controlling one's passions. There's no 'letting oneself go', but the summoning of extreme concentration to keep certain things present, others quiet.

Ryle makes this point to contrast the kind of enjoyment he's concerned with from emotions like anger:

> The walker may enjoy his walk very much, but is not, thereby, assailed or overcome by anything. A man may be too angry or surprised to think straight, but he cannot enjoy his walk too much to think straight. He can be perfectly calm while enjoying himself very much. (Ryle 1954:137)

An object can anger us so much so that it prevents our attending to what we do. It pulls us out of things. If I do something *in* anger, or *angrily*, this can imply I do it spontaneously without much thought. "I just saw red". Our acknowledgement of some object has its own expression in action. But this is my being 'overcome' by the anger. What I was doing otherwise is interrupted, here. If what makes me angry is the walk, I may be pulled out of my walk into angry acknowledgment of it. I may stop walking, or have to force myself to continue by refocusing attention. Some ink, in other words, runs recalcitrant to the blotting paper.

My enjoying the walk, on the other hand, doesn't pull me out of it. Nor is it merely my happiness *to be* walking – the activity isn't identical to some fact. Walking angrily, or in fear, or excitedly allows for the objects of my anger or fear or excitement to be mere objects of thought, non-identical with what I'm doing. I am angry *that* something is the case, or *at* someone for what they've done, or *about* a result. But enjoying a walk doesn't imply being pleased *about* anything. And to be pleased about walking doesn't imply enjoying walking either: I might be pleased with my ability to walk, or what my walking entails, while hating trudging up this hill.

We might picture this difference using cakes again. The act done with enjoyment is like the sponge in its proper consistency as a whole. But an activity's enjoyment doesn't come in from the outside. It only emerges with the proper baking. If the cake is properly brought together, step by step, it will be 'just right' as a plain sponge. Anger or fear upset the balance, making a sponge too dry, too stodgy, a little burnt.

This casts light, I believe, on some imagery from Aristotle: of pleasure in activity as the activity's "completion" in a peculiar sense.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE), for instance, Aristotle writes:

> One might think that all men desire pleasure because they all aim at life; **life is an activity**, and each man is active about those things and with those faculties that he loves most; e.g. the musician is active with his hearing in reference to tunes, the student with his mind in reference to theoretical questions, and so on in each case; now pleasure completes the activities, and therefore life, which they desire. It is with good reason, then, that they aim at pleasure too, since for

[34] My thanks to Terry Irwin for this example (in conversation).

> everyone it completes a life, which is desirable. **But whether we choose life for the sake of pleasure, or pleasure for the sake of life is a question we may dismiss for the present. For they seem bound up together and not to admit of separation**, **since without activity pleasure does not arise, and every activity is completed by the attendant pleasure**.(NE X.4.175a10-21)[35]

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The suggestion is not merely that the pleasure colours the actualization of an activity. Nor that every time an action's finished, one feels pleasure ("If only pleasure were so easy to attain!") Rather that pleasure, of at least one kind, is an expression of the activity's 'fullness' in its own unfolding; its raw potential unlocked, uninhibited, in flow.

Completeness as 'fullness' here doesn't imply that the activity's done and dusted. Enjoyment, under this aspect, is not some further 'thing' to activity in its full splendour. It marks the perfection of the unfolding deed considered as its own end. The walk is not simply valued as a means to something one wants to have but presently lacks. Its perfection *as a doing* is felt by its enjoyment; and its doing with enjoyment just is for the particular walk to be fully realized as its own end.

A person's love of certain things, on this view, suggests their predisposition toward actualizing certain activities. These activities actualise by way of them. The person is the site, as it were, of their activities' being as they should *on these activities' own terms*.

This suggests a reading, in turn, of Aristotle's striking comparison of pleasure to the "bloom of youth". He writes,

> the pleasure [in an activity] does not complete [the activity] in the same way as the **combination** of object and sense, both good, just as health and the doctor are not in the same way the cause of a man's being healthy. (NE X.4.1174b24-7)

> [That is:] Pleasure completes the activity not as the **corresponding** permanent state [of being healthy] does, by its immanence, but [rather] as an **end** which supervenes as the bloom of youth does on those in the flower of their age. (NE X.4.1174b30-5)

*

Aristotle is suggesting that acts which take intentional objects, like thinking of, seeing, hearing, etc., aren't enjoyed simply *because* the objects, considered apart from the activity, are good in themselves, *and* one's sense- and perceptual-faculties are in good order. That would otherwise mean pleasure's there just whenever faculties of mind, for instance, are working well with good things. There's a truth to that way of putting it. But it threatens, as I read him, to get things back to front. Doctors treat their patients by acting on them: correcting for deficiencies, removing what shouldn't be there. They act for the sake of health. But health is not instrumental to itself in that way. It's the "end in itself". Similarly, pleasure is not an effect or further end of an activity considered as its own good. Rather, it's a mark of completeness (or 'fullness', 'perfection') in

[35] I will use Ross' 2009 translation.

action. As the bloom on the face of youth is a mark, a criterion, of optimal health (according to Aristotle), so pleasure is a mark, a criterion, of an action's perfection.

But being a criterion in this sense, it is not merely evidence of perfection. The claim is that it *is* that action's perfection, as the action bubbles into being.

One may get the impression, with such images, of actions on the model of little organisms. Animate beings considered not as for the sake of anything else, but as final ends, and with their own generics. "Among which," I then want to say, "are that they're enjoyed by humans." But from a straightforward "human perspective" (and I question whether "straightforward" has any place in this sentence), morally good actions may indeed be painful, unpleasant, but necessary. It may be necessary to avert various complete-actions, in Aristotle's sense, in order to act well as a human person. Enjoyment doesn't suffice for being *moral*.

The play of both perspectives, meanwhile, suggests an unsettling blur between the doer who does and the deed. The action, unimpeached, as absorbing the doer fully into *its* realization. And the doer experiencing the action, as it were, from 'the act's perspective', not the doer's as "the child Malc" or "the toddler Isaac".

Who, or what, is 'in control' here?

If we lean too far into such imagery, we end up not with a divided self (as with Narcissus) so much as a voided one. A human puppet coordinated by various impulses, mini puppeteers working from inside. It's the child, though, who enjoys the game, and who has a character, loves and interests. The child, however, is no puppet. He's a boy!

We must try to hold these varying images of enjoyment together; not to privilege one at the expense of the others or common sense. The challenge is in how to do this.

7.5 Doings in the Light of Adverbs

Ryle and Aristotle each distinguish more from less 'active' forms of activity. I don't mean a distinction between doing something *to* vs. being *done* to; or between active and passive *verbs* (to burn/ to be burnt; to teach/to be taught). Nor do I mean a distinction between physically demanding acts (heaving a ship's oar, beating cast iron) versus 'laid back' doings like listening to music. The more 'active' means, instead, 'more minded'. Not in the sense of following rules to the letter, either: but of piloting fresh sparks and connections. Of working imaginatively, nimbly, originally. Think of the surfer steering clear of a shark as they ride a crashing wave, of the jazz saxophonist dovetailing with, and expanding on, an unprecedented turn from the pianist.

Ryle, for instance, speaks elsewhere of intelligence as a faculty of readiness to act on new perceptions:

> It is part of intelligence to seize new opportunities and to face new hazards; to be, in short, 'not a tram, but a bus'. (Ryle 1976:69)

It is to act with thought and insight, rather than just executing pre-learned steps. The word he reaches for here is "improvisation".

While one might break down someone's insight into a sequence of perceptions and valid inferences for others to follow, it may occur, itself, in a flash. We're nonetheless tempted, he says, to mistake the form of our analytical 'break-down' of this flash for the flash itself. To think that since some thinkings are like, or can be modelled using, a sequence of points along a line, all thinkings must be the same and are, in essence, repeatable:

> Unfortunately one over-dominant part of our everyday ideas about such thinking is the assumption that since a stretch of calculating, say, or translating or anagram-tackling certainly does normally **embody** a succession of 'mental' moves, therefore to think is, always and essentially, **to go through a sequence** of 'mental' leap- froggings. (Ryle 1976:71)

Flashes of insight and perception may rather *characterize* a particular doing. So that metaphors of "dovetailing", "dancing", "harmonizing" and "acrobatics" become salient, as one acts fluidly on these insights as they arise *in situ*, while figuring what to do as one's doing it.

Notice how Ryle uses "thinking" here in a way comparable to "enjoying". He's concerned with ways of doing something. There's thoughtless action ("How could you be so thoughtless?"), deliberative action, perceptive action, "mechanical" or "robotic" action. "Such deeds," one might say, "incorporate a pattern of thoughts and insights (or lack of them) into their character."

But talk of 'incorporation' is already misleading. Because it suggests that image of putting things into a cake that could as well be left out (say, currants or all-spice). Yet what is done thoughtfully or imaginatively can't be separated from the thoughtfulness in the way Holmes, considered *transparently*, can be separated from my act of thinking$_2$ of him. Instead, we're brought up against that strange blurring of opacity and transparency again. I don't mean merely that one thinks *of* the activity. Rather that one's 'thinking' it, by one's actions, into being; and into being a certain way. And the subject doing the thinking just is the object, in one sense, that is 'thought' into having the features it does.

This stranger use of the verb "to think" seems like Aristotle's when he talks elsewhere of thinking as "*thinking itself*" (reflexive-verb). Consider these remarks:

> (i) Thought thinks itself insofar as it participates in what is thought of; for that which contacts and thinks comes to be thought of, **so that thought and what is thought of are the same**. That which is capable of receiving what is thought of, that is, substance, is thought. (*Metaphysics* 12.7, 107b19-22; cit. trans. Kosman 2013:215)
>
> (ii) **[T]o think and to be thought of are not the same.** (*Metaphysics* 12.9, 1074b37-38; cit. trans. Kosman 2013:224)
>
> (iii) [It] seems that **thought thinks itself** … [that] **thinking is a thinking of thinking**. (Metaphysics 12.9, 1074b28-34; cit. trans. Kosman 2013:221)

*

At first glance these remarks look inconsistent. If thinking is *not* a thinking of thinking – and certainly, my thinking of lunch is not one and the same as my thinking of my *thinking of* lunch, any more than my thought of lunch *is* my lunch! – then there's a sense in which thought and what is thought of aren't the same. So what might Aristotle mean by saying that what 'contacts and thinks' comes to be thought of? Or that thinking is a thinking of thinking?

We can hear "of" in two ways. There's the intentional 'of' ("I'm thinking of my fish and chips"), and the non-intentional 'of', as in "the making of cakes", "the washing of faces", "the melting of ice". First, thought thinks itself in the non-intentional sense, at least, of bringing itself about directly. There is no 'means' to thinking of my lunch: I just think of it. Second, [remark on the thicker meaning here, of being aware *of itself*]

The substance which is the capacity for thought is not a mere physical substance like a lump of wax. For wax to receive the impressions of objects the wax and the objects have to be brought into contact. This implies their separation. Whereas to think of anything just is to be presented with things, irrespective of their existence relative to oneself. While particular acts of thought are distinct from their objects, thinking *per se* seems to birth itself, presentational objects included, into being. Hence a feeling of mystery. There is no place we can point to and say, "Here's where thought literally 'grabs a hold of' the stuff out there". For talk of physical encounters is transparency-focused, while thinking is an opaque affair.

More than this: the activity of think*ing* belongs in time, not out of it. So we can think, too, of Martin Heidegger's remark in "The Thing" that the world is 'worlding' itself. His is a similar manoeuvre to Aristotle's, this time verbifying a noun (the world *worlds* itself, the thought *thinks* – or 'thoughts' – itself). The world under hyper-opacity is not a static frieze of objects. The world is an ongoing event of things becoming what they are, in time, in their fluctuating relations to one another. And there are ways of thinking the world into ways of being by the manner in which one attends, reflects or allows oneself to be absorbed.

Again: there's a blurring of the line between thinking of something (act and object) and its becoming what it is as such (my thinking and its being are aspects of a process in time).

It's in this context I read Ryle's "Thought and Imagination", where he gives the telling example of a footballer's play on the field:

> When a particular football player is praised for **playing imaginatively**, he is not being praised for dreaming up football games or football situations from his arm chair. He is being praised for things of this sort: in trying to get past the opposing fullback, he does not employ the same swerve or jink time after time – or maybe he does do so five times just in order to surprise him on the sixth occasion by a quite different manoeuvre. Nor does he assume that his own centre forward is going to pass out to the left this time, as he did the last three times. He is ready for it to come his way this time. He realizes swiftly that there is a chance of a gap opening up at a place where at the moment, it looks as though there is going to be no such opening. And so on. **He is ready and quick to anticipate, to recognize and to act on things which are out of the rut. He surprises his opponents and is not himself taken by surprise. He exploits the un-routine.** But all this [imaginativeness] has nothing to do with whether he also composes, so to speak, football fairy-stories as a private hobby. (Ryle 1979:53)

Responsive and proactive. The player doesn't simply author objects in thought at will. But neither does he 'simply' see things as though he were a camera. He slips into a stream of presentations, of things happening, things remembered, things possible, things as desirable, things as to be avoided. The stream flows onward as he moves, as the context shifts around him, and his intentions, acts and attempts arise within this flow. It involves his memory, his skills, his intentions. This stream, and its scaffolding in place and motion, 'comprises' the doing as a whole.

So the doing doesn't stop at the footballer's skin. It involves the football, other players, the field on which they play. Here's an eddy of worlding in a larger tide.

Note that such activity can encompass partial 'absorptions' into multiple and different acts – trying to kick here, calculating an angle or trajectory there, swerving to block, recalling who has what weaknesses or strengths to be anticipated. Nonetheless the player can enjoy the playing as it branches. The absorption distinctive of pleasure can *encompass, and unify*, various doings as strands of a greater whole. One not conceptualized in advance.

Likewise, the child playing may not know what he's going to do next. I don't mean, "He doesn't know what will happen for sure". I mean, he doesn't know his ends or intentions ahead, though they're integral to what he's doing and to what we'll say he enjoyed. He's sensitive to what he does as connecting both to what's been done and what will be, as one continuous action, though the action isn't over.

For example: This toy-train's motion with his hand like this is good, and now, as it curves the corner here, his thinking dances with the toy-cat. The toy-cat presents chiefly by its shape and colour, and the child desires the train to ascend its form, for the feel of the wooden wheels through his wrist on the plush, the heel of his hand on the soft coat, and a sense that the descent of the train will disclose – as it's happening – what is good next in the narrative, the embodied story-telling, the flow of events and processes he's 'within'. The feel and the descent aren't disconnected goods. They're experienced as a continuation of good action.

Am I using 'good' in a moral sense now? Again, not necessarily. For it doesn't follow the child does it for the sake of anything's or anyone's well-being, or out of respect for others' dignity, for example. For the child it will feel like riding a strong current, or channelling a surge of energy. Things will pop into his mind and he will feel, by desires, what is unified with what's been before; what will continue the course of the stream or jolt. This course is what is being enjoyed. In Ryle's image, it's what the child is absorbed into. The child follows through the flowing of one sort of ink. One good or bad for a human person (or should I simply say "person"?) to embody.

The objects in the flow enjoyed are connected, in at least one way, by their *internal opacities*: as continuations of the unified act still bubbling into being. Other objects will present as interruptions in this flow; as non-continuous with the act that is good. In this respect the child playing has the 'point of view' of the action. I mean by this that the 'good' of the action is given on the act's own terms, not absolutely (i.e. independent of terms), nor as a mere means to something else. Taking the action as its own end, certain things are to be done, in its being itself.

In sum: The flow of presentations *is* manifestation of the action by its subject. It entails a kind of subjectivity; a texture and patterning of experience.

7.6 'Here and Now' vs. Nowhere in Particular

It's striking that Aristotle explicitly connects an intensity of awareness and thought *in* deed, the stimulation of mind *in* action, with this very propensity to enjoy different things:

> Some things delight us when they are new, but later do so less… **for at first the mind is in a state of stimulation and intensely active about them**, as people are with respect to their vision when they **look hard** at a thing, but afterwards our activity is not of this kind, but has **grown relaxed**; for which reason the pleasure also is dulled. (NE X.4.1175a1-10)

The freshness of the activity itself can involve one in absorptions that are complex, but – again – held together as one thing. The unity is revealed, moment to moment, through the agent's pleasure. For the particular act to fully fruit, it must draw all attention into its innovation. Therefore it can't be aimed at simply under a concept like 'What I did last time, moving like so', or 'Acting however as to reach this end, here.'

Full enjoyment marks a move beyond generalities in thought. The active thinking is not simply one's thinking *about* one's vision. It's the kind of thinking that characterizes a unique act of attentive vision itself.

So if thinking can blur the opaque/transparent distinction, remarks like the following suggest enjoyment as revelation of unique, historically particular doings. One learns the 'wholeness' of a particular deed, and its conditions for perfection, in undergoing an activity's qualification by pleasure; its peculiar absorption of oneself as subject:

> [W]hile there is pleasure in respect of any sense, and in respect of thought and contemplation no less, the most complete is pleasant, and that of a well-conditioned organ [of a cognitive activity] in relation to the finest of its objects is the most complete; **the pleasure completes the activity**. (NE X.4.1174b20-25)

> [W]hen both object and perceiver are of the best there will always be pleasure, since the requisite agent and patient are both present. (NE X.4.1174b 25-30)

What makes an object "the finest" or "best" is not something external to the pleasure. It's marked by pleasure as a criterion, as realization, of completeness-as-perfection. Putting the <fine> ahead of the <complete> would get things the wrong way round. What Aristotle's calling the completion of an activity is known *by* our special immersion into it. And this can include activities characterized by intensity of thought, not only as 'mere thinking', but as the qualifier of deeds like looking, listening, navigating, strategizing, playing. The absorption is intensity.

This suggests, I argue, a reconciliation between activities considered as 'little organisms' of themselves, and as the deeds of human (or non-human) persons. The reconciliation will turn on distinguishing the aims of specific individuals from the features expressed in life-form generics, and return us to the distinction of Rylean absorption from standard 'self-absorption'.

To articulate the reconciliation, I'll start by splitting the subject as such from the *kind of animal* (say) that a particular subject may be. But rather than do this by direct appeal to grammar (as we did in Chapter 3), I'll speak first in terms of teleology and 'being what one should'. We'll then re-approach things grammatically with this discussion in mind.

In *Life and Action*, Michael Thompson notes an important difference between psychological and certain non-psychological forms of teleological explanation. With persons, the psychological concerns what this individual does 'here and now', for instance, in a manner not determined by the person's biological life-form:

> If a student moves behind a pillar and I ask, "What's going on? What's the point? Why?" and am satisfied with the response, "He's trying to avoid Professor X; he owes her a term paper", then it is the movements *hic et nunc* [here and now] and not elsewhere that form the object of my query. (Thompson 2008:78)

Thompson's contrast to 'here and now' is not simply the 'there and then'; the past. It's the 'not really anywhere or at any time'; the *non-particular*. A teleological explanation of why a *kind* of organism does this or that involves a special relating of generics, not merely of propositions about this or that individual. As we saw in Chapter 1, even with generics like, "Bobcats have two to four cubs in the Spring", no particular Spring-time is referred to. The claim concerns a *type* of season found instantiated in particular, discriminable Springs, in concrete, historical time.

To appreciate the difference between psychological and life-formal explanations, we're asked to imagine seeing$_2$ the beating heart of a living frog through its skin. Thompson points to it pulsing:

> Suppose[I] ask, "What's going on? What's the point? Why?" If I am satisfied with the response, "It's the heart, of course, and by so beating it circulates the blood", then, after all, I think, it was not the individual movements here and now that interested me. **I was not so much pointing into the individual, as pointing into its form.** I do not anticipate a different reply at a different lab bench, as I would at a different pillar. The… truth I apprehend and query [about 'what the point is'], the 'that' for which I seek the 'because', is to be formulated in a natural-historical judgement. (Thompson 2008:78)

A natural-historical judgment is a generic concerning a life-form. Not a psychological judgment about some particular. One's saying, "This is a heart, and this is the sort of thing a heart *as such* does (it's what beats the blood around a body). Like "Frogs have hearts," this is a generic, not falsified by the fact that some hearts fail to beat. The knowledge conveyed isn't empirical but conceptual.

Thompson notices that some teleological explanations are 'nestings' of such judgments, rather than claims about a particular. For instance: "Roses have blossoms of such and such a type in order that such and such insects should be attracted and thereafter spread the pollen about." The truth of this implies the truth of these two distinctively biological generics; what Thompson calls 'life-form', or 'natural history', judgments:

(1) Roses have blossoms of such and such type.
(2) Roses attract certain insects, which spread their pollen about.

The explanation of what blossoms are for nests features together as means and end in general terms. But in the case of the student behind the pillar, the statements involved aren't life-form judgments, nor generics more generally. Nor does the explanation imply the truth of any. The truth of "He's *trying* to avoid Professor X" doesn't imply the truth of "He avoids Professor X", or that humans, *per se*, avoid or try to avoid Professor X.

Attracting insects or passing on genes can too easily be spoken of as if they're ends *taken on* by the individual plant or animal. Things the individual wants or is attempting to achieve. But we needn't ascribe the plant or animal – the *being* – such desires. The 'gene's eye point of view', to take one example, is not the *individual organism's*. Nor are either of these the *life-form's*. The life-form isn't even a subject. And the individual fox doesn't view itself through the lens of <fox>, aiming to be a perfect exemplar of the kind.

An individual takes on ends of *their own*. These arise organically, for minded beings, with objects of thought and desire as the being lives and grows. They aren't known by knowing mere categorial knowledge. What does *this particular* fox want, here? What has startled *this* octopus so that it seeks to cling to the back of this shark like so?[36]

Once we split the individual from its generic form, notice that psychology *per se* doesn't presuppose one over another life-form. How a desire for food manifests, for instance, will differ relative to life-form, certainly. A hungry flea will behave differently from a hungry hippo or snail. The desire for food looks different. This holds for individuals within a species too. How Lucy behaves when wanting supper may differ from how Malc behaves. Yet appeal to desire in explaining an individual's action cuts across and beyond the lines of species. In certain activities and environments, an individual may be confronted with presentations not guaranteed to just any of its kind, not even in a similar context.

One's life-form doesn't determine one's objects of thought or their flow in their complexity. For the life-form is not a machine generating particulars to a mould. It is a logical structure, not a genetic 'code'.

We return to our earlier image: The subject of experience *as such* less as another object in the world, bound by life-form generics, and more like an eye at the 'boundary' of the world, to which flows of objects present. The subject *as such* is not determined as of this or that life-form. Why *I* did something, or what for, isn't determined by appeal to the life-form of that being whom I 'am'. Such explanations, which count towards the understanding of a particular subject, are concerned not with life-form judgments but the 'here and now' of what presents to that subject *qua* subject.

But do you see the risk in the vocabulary of 'presentation'? The eye as on the side-lines; the eye as out of the frenzy. It encourages (though it does not imply) a view of mind as passive. The eye as a pin-hole or camera-lens, merely receiving images, rather than the eye of a being that roves and looks, squints, seeks out, stares, watches, and attends within a world; and not just through sight, but all its senses.

[36] For two brilliant treatments of teleological concepts in connection with understanding species, individual creatures, persons and the cosmos, on which I've drawn alongside Thompson and Gotthelf 2012, see Kenny 1988 and Hacker 2013, Chapter 6.

If the Pit obscured the opaque, the Forest could seem to risk obscuring the blurs between transparency and opacity, subject and object, that mark agency and being alive.

When we perceive Ryle's child as "absorbed" into his game, then, what do we acknowledge the child *as*? Not simply as a human organism, nor simply as a player of games, but as an individual. One doing an utterly specific activity, here and now, complete and non-defective on its own terms. To be this one implies being presented with a certain flow of objects. But it is not adequately characterized as mere presentation. It is individual *doing*, and a doing with improvised agility and know-how.

7.7 Oneself in Plurality

The individual is not simply a human-being, then. As so-and-so's son the child may be over-engrossed in playing to the exclusion of listening to his gran or seating himself at the kitchen-table. As a human person he may be horribly undisturbed, un-'snagged', by another child's being bullied right beside him, though he's aware of the situation. But as *subject* of this particular, still unfolding act he enjoys, he is exactly as *he* (non-denotive) should be.

The kind of self-absorption at stake here is the child's slipping from one subjectivity into another. He is never not *himself* (non-denotive). If anything, he is more 'fully' himself. But there is a sense in which 'he' has been absorbed from one thing into another: from one way of being, marked by one flow of presentations, to another, experienced as complete on its own terms. He both undergoes *and achieves* a self-emptying and a self-making.

The medievalist and literary scholar Heather Webb says this about the Greek '*prosopon*' and the Latin '*persona'* and '*personare*'

> *prosopon*, often translated as person, also indicates a **mask**, a **role in a drama**, or **the human face itself**. Boethius tells us that the Latin word *persona* derives from those persons who represented men in comedies and tragedies and whose voices were amplified as they reverberated through the mask (*personando*). The actor's face may be covered, but the voice reverberates more strongly than it would without the mask. '*Personare'* is that *sounding-through*, the interaction between voice and mask, between hiddenness and revelation. (Webb 2016:164)

We use "mask" today to talk of concealments, deceptions, pretences; the inauthentic. There's a connection here to talking of models *as such* being misused. Models stand between what is modelled and the one who thinks or perceives. Some models as 'copies' might be passed off falsely as the real thing; mere imitations posed as the imitated. So, one modern concept of <mask> is of imitation through artifice.

But on an older use, something very like a mask is nonetheless the *direct presenting of a face*. It's a veridical, expressive gesture. And what is expressed may be a particular form of subjectivity, a way of being, that the one expressing it needn't always have had, nor need always have in future.

We're concerned with 'face', here, as the gesture of what can't express itself otherwise than by a particular form. A certain *gesture 'bearer'* (cf. Benjamin's 1933 'On the Mimetic Faculty', in

Benjamin 1999). To take up a mask in an "authentic" way, it would seem, is to show oneself directly as one is, while allowing there to be many things one is; what one is together with, or in connection to, the other whom one's facing. It doesn't exclude one's being other things with them too, and with others beyond that. (The individual, remember, can never be taken 'pure'.)

So notice how Webb continues:

> That the face may stand for the whole of the individual in medieval thought [, for example,] is confirmed by Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*: 'Facies dicta ab effigie: ibi est enim tota figura hominis et uniuscuiusque personae' [i.e. 'The word for face (*facies*) comes from "**visible likeness**" (*effigies*), for all of the characteristic form (*figura*) of a human being and **the ability for every person to be recognized resides in the face**.'] (Webb 2016:165; cf. Barney *et al.* 2006:223)

The face, in Isidore's 'personal' sense, just is a form by which this ability to be recognized manifests. But to this extent I suggest caution around talk of such a face as 'standing for the whole', at least for our (unusual) purposes here. What a subject *wholly is* can't be adequately expressed by a single face, if we attend to individuals; attend to beings, even, under hyper-opacity. For I've no reason to think an *object* can be 'wholly' expressed, even, since it is endlessly changing with history, and has many aspects (or 'faces') in turn. Nor is there a limit to the number of Isidorian faces that one could know in advance. Different recognitions may demand different forms.

What should we make, then, of '*personare*', the sounding of voice through mask? On a 'mere model' reading, the voice is just the actor's. It merely *represents* the voice of what the actor pretends to be. But on the 'face' reading, the voice through mask just is the expressive voice of the speaker who is rightly characterized by way of the particular face. It's not that there's a 'fundamental face' behind the 'false' mask, or that the voice is 'false'. Rather that there are many faces for the different things one is, different ways of being, who may each communicate on their own terms, speak in different voices.

This is not pretence. It's the capacity for having multiple *presences*. What it is to hear such a person's speech is for them to 'sound' (in the active sense) a certain way through images. The voice is a voicing of the individual into what they're becoming in time.

Coming face to face with an object, then, doesn't collapse into meeting an organism as mere physical entity. There are as many ways of encountering another – a subject, and an individual – as there are faces, both yours and their own. One's acknowledgment of a face is not something fully separable from what the face is. Nor, therefore, from what the object is. The acknowledgment is proper to the face's reception. It's not seen as it is *without* the response.

This resonates with Wittgenstein's remark on teaching children "beautiful" and "good", cited in Chapter 3. Perceiving$_2$ something as it is can require not only acting but feeling a certain way, which one's gestures express. It also connects, I think, to a later remark from his same lectures, on 'giving a face' to works of music. Which raises the question, "Are there limits on what can count as a You?"

Many aesthetic adjectives, Wittgenstein suggests, are substitutes for acknowledgments of others' very specific intentional acts or moods. So that one may do far better in expressing oneself using a precise or subtle gesture than by stringing together more general terms:

> Such words as "pompous" and "stately" [, e.g. as applied to music,] could be expressed by faces. Doing this, our descriptions would be much more flexible and various than they are as expressed by adjectives. If I say of a piece of Schubert's that it is melancholy, that is like **giving it a face**. (I don't express approval or disapproval). I could instead use gestures or… dancing. In fact, if we want to be exact, we do use a gesture or a facial expression. (Wittgenstein 1966:4)

"Giving it a face", he says. But aren't we *discovering* a face?

– "But how could one do either, when music's just an artefact, and not really a person with feelings or thoughts?"

On giving vs. discovering: I think what Wittgenstein means is that we attempt to embody something the music expresses as *we* would express it, should *we* have the emotion or experience which it has, with a literal human face. It's not a projection on our part. It's a natural response to some music to become a mirror to it. Or, to *try* and become so.

We might find, though, that the human mirror looks and behaves very unlike what any human would in the absence of their listening. That the faces music gives rise to with us, and the thoughts or feelings we may try to shape our faces to, may be unlike those in a music-less world.

So I think he's also concerned with individuals (- might we also now say *subjects*? –) being and becoming themselves 'across' or 'through' different bodies, in ways that don't collapse into different subjects 'simply' responding to one another. It's part of the power of music, this passage suggests, that it animates such 'imitations' that aren't '*copyings*' so much as expansions in encounter, and acknowledgements of itself in new forms. The gestures we make don't just give exemplars of intentional acts proper to the music. They show the music's being what it is by igniting us into such gestures. By making certain feelings express upon our faces.

In other words: We're not just 'giving' a face. Doing what we do, we show ourselves as *part of* the music in action. We become faces of Others.

If we represent kinds as black lines, at any given point in the 'course' of an individual, we can represent it as at the intersection of various lines (see A). The relevant array of kinds can shrink, expand, change up over time. Some fall into, others leave, the intersection (see the purple lines in B). The individual unfolding – the green line of the Path itself – never reduces to those kinds it intersects with (see C), nor simply to a concatenation of intersections.

