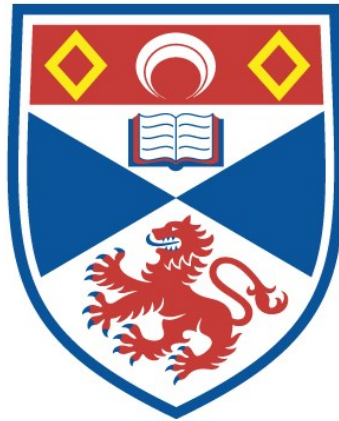# IDENTIFYING ONESELF AS AN ELEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVE ORDER: NAGEL'S QUESTION AND EVANS' RESPONSE

Jack Dylan McGrath

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews

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Identifying Oneself as an Element of the Objective Order: Nagel's Question and Evans' Response
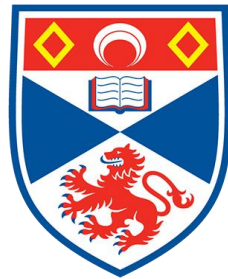
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Abstract

Frege leaves us with a task: to elucidate the fundamental character of the way in which we know which spatio-temporal particular is in question when we use the first person by formulating a semantic account of the first person. This investigation takes up this task, approaching it through the following question, *Nagel's question*: is it possible for one to identify oneself as an element of the objective order? After thinking through the insights of Elizabeth Anscombe's *The First Person* and examining the collapse of Gareth Evans' response to the question, the investigation draws on Sebastian Rödl's *Intentional Transaction* to answer Nagel's question in the positive by formulating a semantic account of the first person and, as such, resolves its central task.

"Don't do it," she said. "Think of Charlotte!"

"Think of you!" I answered; "need you bid me do so? Think of you—I do not think of you: you are ever before my soul!

- Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*

Introduction

Our central task will be to reveal the fundamental character of the way in which we know which spatio-temporal particular is in question when we use the first person by formulating a semantic account of the first person. The task is originally left to us by Frege. For Frege was the first to sketch out a semantic account of the first person (hereafter, just 'I') in an effort to elucidate the way in which we each think of a certain spatio-temporal particular with the device, and his effort is by no means conclusive. Indeed, Frege also left us the semantic framework, in the shape of his conception of sense and reference, which a response to the task should be anchored to.

Our investigation will fall into four parts. In the first, we shall reconstruct those elements of Frege's general semantic framework that will be central to our investigation; and immediately thereafter, we shall motivate our central task by reconstructing Frege's semantic account of 'I'. In the second, we shall set up the following question, which we shall term *Nagel's question*: is it possible for one to identify oneself as an element of the objective order? It is through Nagel's question that we shall come at our central task; specifically, we shall endeavour to answer Nagel's question in the positive by formulating a semantic account of 'I' and, as such, resolve our central task. In the third, we shall reconstruct Gareth Evans' response (1982, pp.210-212) to Nagel's question and find that Evans' response is unacceptable. In the fourth, we shall draw on the insights contained in Sebastian Rödl's *Intentional Transaction* (2014) to articulate a semantic account of 'I' that stands to answer Nagel's question in the positive and, in doing so, we shall resolve our central task.

There is much more that we could try to say in the way of an introduction to our investigation. But, as far as is possible, I think it should speak for itself.

I

1. Frege thought that significant expressions possess a capacity, what Gareth Evans terms a *semantic power* (1982, p.8), to influence the truth-value of the sentences in which they may feature (see, for example, 1948, pp.215-218).

2. Frege also presumed that the semantic power of an expression is such as to be determined by its association with a certain non-linguistic entity, an entity which it should be unproblematic for us to term the *referent* of an expression (cf. Evans, 1982, p.8). Within this framework, Frege thought that singular demonstratives in contexts of utterance (i.e., 'This cup' and 'That man'), certain proper names (i.e., 'John' and 'Mt. Everest'), and 'I' are such as to have *spatio-temporal particulars*—that is, elements of the spatio-temporal world—as their referents (1956, pp.300-301; 1948, p.213; 1956, pp.297-298).

3. In light of these brief remarks, we can come to a minimal characterisation of what it is for expressions to refer. Evans' principle (P) is illuminating on this front:

> (P) If S is an atomic sentence in which the n-place concept-expression R is combined with n…terms t_1 … t_n, then S is true iff ⟨the referent of t_1 … the referent of t_n⟩ satisfies R. (1982, p.49)

According to Evans, we can adopt (P), which regards the semantic relation of reference as empirically anchored by its connection with the concept of truth as that concept is applied to atomic sentences, as a definition of reference and criterion for judging whether an expression is a referring expression (ibid.). This is a plausible and informative suggestion. But as Evans is no doubt aware, (P) can only provide us with the resources to judge whether an expression is a referring expression in a *minimal*

sense. For example, if one's aim is to understand what the Fregean conception of a *singular referring expression* amounts to, (P) will be of little help; for, to understand that conception, one must be sufficiently acquainted with the Fregean theory of sense and, so, have moved beyond (P) which makes no mention of that theory.

4. This last point is crucial. For if we are to make any headway, we shall have to understand what the Fregean conception of a singular referring expression amounts to. So, let us turn to the Fregean theory of sense.

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5. Frege introduced his theory of sense as a response to what we can term *the problem of cognitive value*. To work ourselves into the theory, we can do the same.

6. The problem of cognitive value is presented at the outset of *Sense and Reference* in the following manner:

> "If the sign "*a*" is distinguished from the sign "*b*" only as object (here, shape), not as sign (i.e., not by the manner in which it designates something), the cognitive value of *a=a* becomes essentially equal to that of *a=b*, provided *a=b* is true. A difference can arise only if the difference between the signs corresponds to a difference in the mode of presentation of that which is designated. Let *a*, *b*, *c* be the lines connecting the vertices of a triangle with the midpoints of the opposite sides. The point of intersection of *a* and *b* is then the same as the point of intersection of *b* and *c*. So we have different designations for the same point, and these names ("Point of intersection of *a* and *b*," "Point of intersection of *b* and *c*") likewise indicate the mode of presentation; and hence the statement contains true knowledge." (1948, p.210)

Frege's point is this: if two signs '*a*' and '*b*' are co-referring expressions and we regard signs as distinct from one another only on account of their referents, then we shall have to conclude that the cognitive value of "*a=a*" is equivalent to the cognitive value of "*a=b*". And we cannot be content with this limitation, for there can be no doubt that utterances of the form "*a=a*" and "*a=b*" may possess different cognitive values. If, for example, we exchange for '*a*' 'The Morning Star' and for '*b*' 'The Evening Star', then this possibility should become clear; after all, a rational language user could surely understand "The Morning Star is shining" and also understand "The Evening Star is shining" and yet simultaneously take different epistemic attitudes to the utterances— accepting the one and rejecting the other. Now, the theory of reference distinguishes signs only on account of their referents. So, if we have only it to hand, we shall be forced into the untenable conclusion that the cognitive value of "*a=a*" and "*a=b*" must be equivalent; and, equally, we shall be unable to explain the possibility of rationally and simultaneously taking distinct epistemic attitudes to utterances of the aforementioned sort. Given that, we need to enrich what we are saying by introducing a further theory: the theory of sense.

7. Frege characterises the sense of an expression as a *mode of a presentation* (1948, p.210). Evans provides an interpretation of this characterisation in the following passage from *The Varieties of Reference*:

> "Someone who hears and understands an utterance of a sentence containing a singular term, such as 'Aphla is over 5000 metres high', must at least think of the mountain—in having, precisely, this thought: that what the speaker is saying is true if and only if that mountain is over 5000 metres high. Now, it is not possible to think of a mountain save in some particular way. If you gave the way in which our subject was thinking of it, you would be giving what Frege calls

the sense he attaches to the name 'Aphla'...I suggest that we take Frege's ascription of a sense to a Proper Name [that is, for our purposes, to demonstratives such as 'This…' and 'That…', proper names such as 'Mt. Everest' and 'John', and 'I'] to mean that not only must one think of an object— the referent of the term—in order to understand a sentence containing it, but also anyone who is to understand the sentence must think of the referent *in the same particular way*. It is therefore, for Frege, as much a public and objective property of a term that it imposes this requirement, as that it has such and such an object as its referent." (1982, pp.16-17, my interpolation)

In other words, according to Evans, Frege's idea of a mode of presentation can be equally understood as the idea of *a way of thinking of something*, in particular, a way of thinking of the referent of an expression. This reading stands opposed, for example, to Michael Dummett's suggestion that Frege meant the phrase 'mode of presentation' to characterise the sense of an expression as equivalent to a certain method for figuring out an expression's referent (Dummett, 1978, p.121). We shall simply accept Evans' interpretation and not venture into his (good) reasons for rejecting Dummett's interpretation (see, for example, Evans, 1982, p.15).

8. The idea of sense merely as a way of thinking of something has an equal application to expressions at the sub-sentential level and the sentential level: as the sense of any sub-sentential expression is a way of thinking of *something*, so, too, is the sense of any complete sentence a way of thinking of *something*. This is informative. But if we are to resolve the problem of cognitive value, we shall need to distinguish the difference between the way of thinking associated with assertoric sentences and the ways of thinking associated with sub-sentential expressions such as 'I', certain proper names

(i.e., 'John' and 'Mt. Everest'), and singular demonstratives in contexts of utterance (i.e., 'This cup' and 'That man').

9. According to Frege, the sense of a sentence such as 'The Morning Star is shining' or 'The Morning Star is The Evening Star' is a *thought*, which is that "for which the question of truth arises" (Frege, 1956, p.292) and which, as such, is a possible content of a propositional attitude. In other words, when one makes an assertoric utterance what one *says*—what is expressed by one's utterance—is a *thought*, which is the *sense* of the sentence one utters; and thoughts say, in general, that things are *thus-and-so*, and since thoughts are world-directed in this manner, individuals can believe them or disbelieve them or withhold judgement about them, which is what it is to say that thoughts are possible contents of propositional attitudes (cf. McDowell, 2005, pp. 56).

10. Once we grasp this last point, we can think of a difference in the sense of those sub-sentential expressions that we mentioned in paragraph 8 as a difference in how *spatio-temporal particulars* are thought of in thoughts expressible by sentences containing the expressions in question (cf. McDowell, 2005, pp. 49-50).

11. With all that said, we can return to the problem of cognitive value with an understanding of the theory of sense to hand. In the first instance, let us turn to what Frege says when he does the same at the close of *Sense and Reference*:

    > "If we found "*a=a*" and "*a=b*" to have different cognitive values, the explanation is that for the purpose of knowledge, the sense of the sentence, viz., the thought expressed by it, is no less relevant than its referent, i.e., its truth value. If now *a=b*, then indeed the referent of "*b*" is the same as that of "*a*," and hence the truth value of "*a=b*" is the same as that of "*a=a*." In spite of this, the sense of "*b*" may differ from that of "*a*," and thereby the sense expressed in

"*a=b*" differs from that of "*a=a*." In that case the two sentences do not have the

same cognitive value." (1948, p.230)

Essentially then, according to the theory of sense, the cognitive value of an expression is determined by its sense, the way of thinking associated with its use. This is crucial. For insofar as the theory of sense embodies this idea, we can use the theory to resolve the problem of cognitive value, specifically, by explaining that the difference in cognitive value between utterances such as "*a=a*" and "*a=b*" comes down to a distinction of sense, that is, with respect to "*a=a*" and "*a=b*'", to the fact that competent utterances of "*a=a*" will express a thought distinct from the thought expressible by competent utterances of "*a=b*" (and *vice versa*). This, of course, does not explain how sentences such as '*a=a*' and '*a=b*' could come to be associated with distinct thoughts in the first place. But to explain this, we can simply add, in accordance with what Frege suggests in the above remark, that it is precisely because the expressions contained in the sentences are themselves associated with different senses—here, individuating the senses in such a way as to construe them as the contributions made by the expressions to the thoughts expressible by the sentences they feature in (McDowell, 2005, p.49)— that the sentences are determined to be associated with distinct senses, or thoughts. And, in light of all that we have now said, we can also account for the possibility that a subject might rationally and simultaneously take different epistemic attitudes to sentences such as 'The Morning Star is shining' and 'The Evening Star is shining'. We need only note: (i.) that thoughts are possible contents of propositional attitudes; (ii.) that sentences such as 'The Morning Star is shining' and 'The Evening Star is shining' are bound to be associated with distinct thoughts and, so, (iii.) that 'The Morning Star is shining' and 'The Evening Star is shining' are bound to be associated with distinct

possible contents of propositional attitudes, making it possible for a subject to rationally and simultaneously take distinct epistemic attitudes to the two sentences.

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12. When we understand Frege's theory of sense well enough to apply it to the problem of cognitive value, we shall likely begin to wonder about the possibility of revealing the sense of an expression such as 'Mt. Everest' or 'Elston Gunn'. Of course, if we want to reveal the referent of an expression such as 'Elston Gunn', we can simply come out with a clause of the following form:

> (1) The referent of 'Elston Gunn' is Jack Frost

Let us say that in coming out with a clause of this form, we succeed in *stating* the referent of an expression. Crucially, it does not look as though we can simply state the sense of an expression. As Evans notes:

> "Frege nowhere appears to have envisaged a theory which would entail, for any sentence, *S*, of the language, a theorem of the form
>
>> The sense of *S* is…,
>
> derived from axioms which would state the sense of the primitive words of the language. Frege had no more idea of how to complete a clause like
>
>> The sense of 'and' is…
>
> than we do." (1982, pp.25-26)

Fixing on this passage in isolation, we may mishear Evans as claiming that there is a unique difficulty associated with the attempt to state the sense of a logical connective, that is, with the attempt to complete theorems of the form 'The sense of 'x' is…' where

'x' is replaced with a logical connective. But Evans' point is a general one, as the following passage reveals:

> "Although a theory of meaning for a language must give the senses of expressions, we are not to think of the theory of sense as a separate tier, additional to and independent of the theory of reference. If sense is a way of thinking of reference, we should not expect to be given the sense of an expression save in the course of being given the reference of that expression. Rather than look for a theory quite independent of the theory of reference, we must take one formulation of the theory of reference - the formulation of the theory which identifies the references of expressions in the way in which one must identify them in order to understand the language - and make it serve as a theory of sense." (1981, p.282)

So, Evans is not merely saying that we have no clear idea how to state the sense of a logical connective, but that we have no clear idea how to state the sense of an expression *at all*. Crucially though, as Evans sees, this last idea should not come as a surprise. After all, the attempt to state the sense of an expression amounts to the attempt to give the sense of an expression independent of any referent; and yet, the very notion of the sense of an expression as a way of thinking of the referent of the expression in question surely contains within itself the idea that the sense of an expression cannot be given independent of the referent of the expression in question. So, essentially, the idea of stating senses does not take seriously the idea of sense that we have been describing. Once we see this, we have to conclude that the only route toward revealing the sense of an expression must lie in stating the referent of an expression *in a certain way*. Dummett enriches this suggestion helpfully

11

"The sense of an expression is the mode of presentation of the referent: in saying what the reference is, we have to choose a particular way of saying this... In a case in which we are concerned to convey, or stipulate, the sense of an expression, we shall choose that means of stating what the referent is which displays the sense: we might here borrow a famous pair of terms from the *Tractatus*, and say that, for Frege, we say what the referent of a word is, and thereby *show* what its sense is." (1981, p.227)

Consider the following clauses:

(2) The semantic value of 'Aphla' is Aphla

(3) The semantic value of 'Aphla' is Ateb

Let us say that 'Aphla' and 'Ateb' are co-referential. In that case, clauses (2) and (3) will be equivalent in the confines of a theory which is designed only to state the referents of the expressions it concerns. But outside the confines of such a theory, we can point to an important distinction between the clauses. For, following Dummett, we can point out that (2) uniquely succeeds in stating the referent of 'Aphla' in such a way as to *show* the sense of the expression, that is, insofar as it identifies the referent of 'Aphla' by *using* the expression and, so, by identifying the referent of the expression in the way in which speakers of the language themselves identify it—in other words, by putting the sense of 'Aphla' into act. Given that, what we should conclude is that while the sense of an expression such as 'Mt. Everest' or 'Elston Gunnn' can never be stated, it can be *shown* through a clause such as (2) and, thus, be revealed.

**

13. Embedded within what we said in the last paragraph, there is a certain connection between sense and knowledge. In a remark in which he suggests that we can get at what must be involved in understanding expressions and languages through a certain use of the term 'knowledge', John McDowell goes some way toward elucidating the connection:

> "Semantically simple expressions would be mentioned in axioms of such a theory, designed so that knowledge of the truths they express—in the context of knowledge of enough of the rest of the theory—would suffice for understanding utterances containing those expressions. The hypothetical knowledge involved here, then, is knowledge of truths (French '*savoir*', German '*wissen*'). The reference (*Bedeutung*) of a name, on the other hand, is, in Frege's usage, its bearer—an object. To know the reference of a name would be, failing an unpardonable equivocation, to know that object: acquaintance, perhaps, but in any case not knowledge of truths but, what is grammatically distinct, knowledge of things (French '*connaftre*', German '*kennen*'). It is not, then, the sort of knowledge which it would make sense to *state* in clauses of a theory. The grammatical distinction between knowledge of things and knowledge of truths guarantees a difference of role for 'sense' and 'reference'. Without putting that difference at risk, we can claim that a clause which does no more than state—in a suitable way—what the reference of an expression is may nevertheless give—or as good as give—that expression's sense." (1977, p.162)

The axioms that McDowell has in mind are familiar to us, for each one will be a clause of the form of (2) which *states* the referent of the expression it concerns in such a way as to *show* the same expression's sense. As McDowell notes, in the context of enough of the rest of a total theory of understanding, such a clause succeeds in expressing a

truth knowledge of which will suffice, precisely because the clause shows the sense of the expression it concerns, for understanding the expression it concerns. To be sure, McDowell does not mean to say that knowledge of *any* truth expressed by a clause which states the referent of the expression it concerns could suffice for understanding. For, while (2) and (3) may be equivalent in a theory which is designed only to state the referents of the expressions that the theory concerns, (3) fails to show the sense of the expression it concerns and, consequently, knowledge of the truth expressed by (3) would not suffice for understanding the expression that (3) concerns. So, what we have to say is that knowledge of a *sufficiently restricted* set of truths could suffice for understanding expressions. That said, when we have McDowell's suggestion in view, we can see that what McDowell reveals is that sense and knowledge are bound together at least insofar as they play a joint role with respect to clauses of the form of (2) which are apt to feature in theories designed to provide for understanding.

14. This last point is specific, but it opens our eyes to the possibility that the connection between sense and knowledge may run deeper still. Perhaps, we are apt to think, there is a form of knowledge associated with sense that is distinct from, but not unconnected with, knowledge of truths. This is a crucial idea, for there is a form of knowledge of this very sort—indeed, I think McDowell is onto it where he adverts to 'knowledge by acquaintance'—and it is the key to understanding the Fregean conception of a singular referring expression.

15. To engage with this form of knowledge, we can come to what Evans terms *Russell's Principle*:

> "A subject cannot make a judgement about [an object] unless he *knows which* object his judgement is about." (1982, p.89, my emphasis, my interpolation.)

In other words, according to Russell's Principle, one cannot think about a spatio-temporal particular unless one 'knows which' spatio-temporal particular one's thought is about. More precisely, to think about a spatio-temporal particular one must possess what we can term *identifying knowledge*—which amounts to a discriminative capacity to distinguish one thing from all other things—of the spatio-temporal particular in question (ibid.).

16. The key to grasping the Fregean conception of a singular referring expression lies in understanding the connection between sense and identifying knowledge. To come to terms with that connection, we can work from the following passage from *The Varieties of Reference*:

> "English contains a category of linguistic counters, which we may call genuine demonstrative singular terms, such that, if anyone uses such a counter, say 'that cup', with the intention of using a genuine demonstrative singular term, then it is a necessary condition for understanding what is said that one have what I shall call a *demonstrative thought* about the referent. (Unfortunately the classes of linguistic counters and of word types do not match perfectly here; as we shall see (5.5, 9.1), there are many uses of 'that φ' that are obviously not intended to evoke a demonstrative thought on the part of the hearer.) Now, what a demonstrative thought about an object is will be the subject-matter of a great deal of work that lies ahead, but the general idea is that thinking about an object demonstratively is thinking about an object in a way which crucially depends upon the subject's currently *perceiving* that object. Thus one simply will not have understood a normal use of the sentence 'That cup is F', unless (i) one can perceive the cup, and (ii) one thinks, in a way that depends on that perception,

'That cup is F, that's what the speaker is saying' (or something along those lines)." (1982, p.72)

Here, Evans notes the fundamental character of the demonstrative mode of thought: that it is a way of thinking of something through its presence to sensory consciousness understood as sensory receptivity or, equivalently, a way of thinking of something through the aid of receptivity. In noting this, Evans reveals a *general capacity* that must be in act in every demonstrative thought, namely, a capacity to distinguish a spatio-temporal particular on the basis of the functioning of one's perceptual faculties. As identifying knowledge amounts, in general, to a capacity to distinguish one thing from all others, we can note that what Evans says could be considered the beginning of a general theory of the identifying knowledge embodied in any demonstrative thought. This suggests that insofar as we succeed in elucidating the way of thinking associated with the use of singular demonstratives, we shall succeed in elucidating the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of singular demonstratives. This is correct. And it is correct, ultimately, because the way of thinking associated with the use of singular demonstratives and the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of singular demonstratives *essentially amount to the same thing*: a discriminative capacity to distinguish a spatio-temporal particular from all other spatio-temporal particulars on the basis of the functioning of one's perceptual faculties. And crucially, this is, in fact, a specific instance of a general state of affairs. The way of thinking associated with an expression and the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of an expression essentially amount to the same thing—namely, a discriminative capacity to distinguish a spatio-temporal particular from all other spatio-temporal particulars—whether we are speaking of singular demonstratives, proper names such as 'John' and 'Mt. Everest', or 'I'; although, to be sure, the capacity in question need not be a capacity to distinguish

a spatio-temporal particular *on the basis of the functioning of one's perceptual faculties* in the case of 'I' (and, strictly speaking, it is not in the case of the proper names).

17. Of course, in presenting Russell's Principle, Evans did not mean to present a principle unique to his own thought. On the contrary, it is surely correct to say that Evans rightly saw Russell's Principle as implicit in the plausibility of the application of Frege's conception of sense to proper names such as 'John' and 'Mt. Everest', singular demonstratives, and 'I'. So, what we said throughout the preceding paragraph holds for Fregean thought in general: the way of thinking associated with the use of any of the aforementioned expressions and the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of any of the aforementioned expressions essentially amount to the same thing, namely, a discriminative capacity to distinguish a spatio-temporal particular from all other spatio-temporal particulars.

**

18. On the basis of our last remarks, we can say what the Fregean conception of a singular referring expression comes to: ultimately, more than just the idea of an expression the use of which conforms to (P), it is the idea of an expression the use of which is associated with a way of thinking of a spatio-temporal particular; better still, it is the idea of an expression the use of which embodies identifying knowledge of a spatio-temporal particular (cf. Haddock, 2019, p.958).

19. In the Fregean framework, singular demonstratives, proper names such as 'John' and 'Mt. Everest', and 'I' are all usually considered paradigmatic singular referring expressions.

20. To the extent that we agree with treating these expressions as singular referring expressions, we can say that Frege has left us with a general semantic framework for all those expressions. But this framework is merely general. What it says, centrally, is *that* the competent use of any of these expressions embodies identifying knowledge of a spatio-temporal particular; it does not say what this identifying knowledge comes to with respect to any one of the expressions in question.

21. An account designed to elucidate what the use of a given expression amounts to is a *semantic account* of the expression in question. In light of what we have said, it should be clear that a semantic account designed to elucidate the *sense* of a given singular referring expression, or *the way of thinking* associated with the use of a given singular referring expression, should be designed to elucidate the character of the *identifying knowledge* embodied in the use of that expression. In particular, it should be designed to articulate a *general theory* of that identifying knowledge, a theory which reveals what that identifying knowledge amounts to in *any* competent use of the expression in question or, equivalently, a theory which elucidates the character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of the expression in question *on anybody's lips*.

22. In general, Frege is strikingly quiet about the specific character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of any of the singular referring expressions. But against this, he does attempt, albeit briefly, to provide a semantic account of 'I'.

23. Let us reconstruct that account now and, in doing so, pick up our central task.

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24. In *The Thought* (1956), Frege begins his enquiry into the use of 'I' by asking whether one man, Dr Gustav Lauben, would express the same thought by uttering the sentence

"I was wounded" as that which another man, Leo Peter, would express by uttering the sentence "Dr Gustav Lauben was wounded" (1956, pp.297-298). On the basis of what we have already said, we can see that the question makes good sense as part of an enquiry into the use of 'I'. For, if the utterances express different thoughts then, as any given thought is determined by the senses of the constituent expressions of the sentence the utterance of which is apt to express the thought in question, it must be the case that the sense of 'I' is distinct from the sense of 'Dr Gustav Lauben', and this would warrant the *general* conclusion that the way of thinking with 'I' must be distinct from the way of thinking with proper names; equivalently, it would warrant the general conclusion that the *identifying knowledge* embodied in the use of 'I' must be distinct from the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of proper names. (Hereafter, as we have already had occasion to do, we shall sometimes speak in terms of 'the way of thinking associated with 'I'' and sometimes in terms of 'the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I''. It is crucial to remember that these phrases come to the same thing: the capacity, manifested in the use of 'I', to single out a certain spatio-temporal particular—oneself—out from all other spatio-temporal particulars.)

25. Frege's answer is in the negative. To point the answer up, he suggests introducing into the situation a third man, Rudolph Lingens, who hears Dr Gustav Lauben's assertion and at some later point also hears Leo Peter's assertion. Frege suggests that if the thoughts expressed by the two men's assertions were indeed the same, then we would have to conclude that upon hearing Leo Peter's assertion, Rudolph Lingens would immediately know that Leo Peter was talking about the same man that Dr Gustav Lauben was talking about and this, Frege thinks, is unreasonable. For, if we only suppose that Rudolph Lingens simply does not know Dr Gustav Lauben in any personal capacity and that, as such, Rudolph Lingens did not know that it was, in fact, Dr Gustav

Lauben who said "I was wounded", then we could conclude that Rudolph Lingens could hear Leo Peter's assertion and fail to realise that it concerns the same man who earlier said "I was wounded".

26. Having sought to demonstrate in this manner that the way of thinking associated with the use of 'I' must be somehow distinct from the way of thinking associated with the use of proper names, Frege proceeds to attempt to articulate this distinctness. In particular, he remarks:

> "Now everyone is presented to himself in a special and primitive way, in which he is presented to no one else. So, when Dr Lauben has the thought that he was wounded, he will probably be basing it on this primitive way in which he is presented to himself. And only Dr Lauben himself can grasp thoughts specified in this way." (1956, p.298.)

According to what Frege says in this passage, then, the way of thinking associated with 'I' is uniquely *private*. So, whereas Rudolph Lingens and Leo Peter might express the same thought by uttering a sentence containing the name 'Dr Gustav Lauben' provided they possess the very same information about Dr Gustav Lauben and both use the name 'Dr Gustav Lauben' to refer to the same man, by contrast, nobody could grasp, or themselves express, the thought that Dr Gustav Lauben can grasp, and express, with his utterance "I was wounded". This might seem to raise an immediate problem, for it might seem that we have to conclude from this characterisation of the way of thinking associated with the use of 'I' that we cannot associate communicable thoughts with utterances of sentences with 'I' as subject. In fact, Frege seems to anticipate this line of thought in the following passage:

> "But now he may want to communicate with others. He cannot communicate a thought he alone can grasp. Therefore, if he now says 'I was wounded, he must use 'I' in a sense which can be grasped by others, perhaps in the sense of 'he who is speaking to you at this moment'; by doing this he makes the conditions accompanying his utterance serve towards the expression of a thought." (ibid.)

So, it would be inaccurate to claim that Frege thinks that the use of 'I' is associated solely with a private way of thinking. Really, Frege thinks that 'I' can be used in two ways. In the first, we use it to present ourselves to ourselves in a primitive and private way. And, given that, thoughts based on this way of thinking cannot be communicated to others. In the second, we use it in such a way as to call attention to ourselves for the purposes of communication, and thoughts based on this mode of presentation can be communicated to others. In this light, Frege's semantic account of 'I' comes down to a certain bifurcation in the idea of how 'I' is used: in one manner of use, the use of 'I' embodies a private form of identifying knowledge, and in a second, communicative, manner of use, the use of 'I' embodies a non-private form of identifying knowledge.

27. The account should strike us as unsatisfying. Centrally, because Frege nowhere provides us with a reason to legislate that the use of 'I' splits as he suggests it does into a private manner of use that embodies a private form of identifying knowledge and a communicative manner of use that embodies a non-private form of identifying knowledge. Indeed, he only seeks to *show* one thing, namely, that whatever the form of identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' is, it is *not* the form of identifying knowledge embodied in the use of proper names. As this aspect of Frege's account is purely negative, and cannot serve to set up the other, positive aspect of his account, Frege ultimately leaves us in the dark about the fundamental character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' and, in precisely that, he equally leaves in the

dark about the fundamental character of the way in which we know which spatio-temporal particular is in question when we use 'I'.

28. So, Frege leaves us with a task: to formulate a semantic account of 'I' which reveals the fundamental character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' and which, in that, reveals the fundamental character of the way in which we know which spatio-temporal particular is in question when we use 'I'.

29. In what follows, this task will be our central task.

II

30. In this second part of our investigation, we shall establish a particular way of approaching our central task by setting up the following question, which we shall term *Nagel's question*: is it possible for one to identify oneself as an element of the objective order?

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31. To pick Nagel's question up, we can think through a series of remarks that Thomas Nagel advances in *The Possibility of Altruism* (1970).

32. Nagel begins the series of remarks in question by wondering whether it is possible for one to think of oneself as merely a person among other people. He takes it that, if such a manner of thinking is possible, then, in addition to any initially personal judgement, that is, in addition to any judgement wherein token-reflexives—expressions the use of which refer to the time, place, or speaker of their utterance—are employed, it must be possible to intelligibly advance:

> "(a) an impersonal judgment to the same effect about the same situation and characters; (b) a basic personal statement saying who, in the impersonally described scene, he is. The latter will justify the token-reflexives employed in the original judgment." (1970, p.102.)

On the one hand, it seems right to say that for Nagel, the importance of the impersonal judgement lies in the following thought: since in any initially personal judgement, we accord ourselves a metaphysically privileged perspective on the world through the use of token-reflexives, we will only be able to make sense of ourselves as *merely* people among people if we can redescribe everything that we say of the world in any personal

judgement without token-reflexives and, so, impersonally. And on the other hand, insofar as a basic personal statement is essentially meant to be a statement of the form "I am so-and-so" the use of which hopefully should, as such, serve to express a first person identity-judgement, it seems right to say that Nagel sees the importance of the possibility of intelligibly advancing a basic personal statement as lying in the thought that we must be able to identify ourselves in any impersonal description of the world if we are to make sense of *ourselves* as merely people among people.

33. To grasp Nagel's line of thought beyond this point, it will help to say more about what the impersonal standpoint comes to. To do so, we can turn to the following passage:

> "The impersonal standpoint, like the standpoint of temporal neutrality, abstracts from the relation between the speaker and what is being spoken about, and merely asserts what can be asserted given *any* such relation." (1970, p.102)

So, the operative idea seems to be this: to conceive of the world from the impersonal standpoint is to conceive of the world irrespective of the significance of any relation between a speaker and what may be asserted about the world and, as such, is to conceive of the world *as it is in itself*, while to conceive of the world from the personal standpoint, since any personal standpoint on the world characteristically embodies a relation between a speaker and something asserted about the world, is not yet to conceive of the world as it is in itself. We can point this up with an example. Let us say that while he is at Main Street, Hibbing NN remarks "At 15:00 on Tuesday 17th of August it will rain here" and that NN subsequently remarks of the same situation "At 15:00 on Tuesday 17th of August it will rain on Main Street, Hibbing". According to Nagel's framework, NN's first statement is characteristically *personal* insofar as the statement comprehends the place that it will rain at as the very place that NN is at and, so, insofar as it embodies

a relation between NN and what NN asserts. In this case, the world is not yet conceived of as it is in itself but, rather, from a metaphysically privileged viewpoint within the world. By contrast, according to Nagel's framework, NN's second statement is characteristically *impersonal* insofar as it embodies no relation between NN and what NN asserts. In this case, the world is conceived of as it is in itself and, in that, from no metaphysically privileged viewpoint within the world.

34. As an aside, against any confusion regarding the matter, it may help to note that Nagel could have complemented his framework by drawing on the Fregean conception of sense. True enough, the following remark may suggest that Nagel actually repudiated the Fregean conception of sense:

> "Shifts of grammatical person, like shifts of tense, cannot be permitted to alter the *sense* of what is asserted about the circumstance which is the subject of the statement. They represent only shifts in the point of view from which the observation is being offered." (1970, p.101, my emphasis)

After all, if we read this remark in conjunction with the remark that we reviewed in the preceding paragraph, it is clear, I think, that by 'sense' Nagel means what a statement says of the world irrespective of the significance of any relation between a speaker and what is said, and this use of the word surely violates the Fregean use of the word. To see the conflict, we can simply compare the two uses of the word 'sense' with respect to NN's two statements from the preceding paragraph, the statement that "At 15:00 on Tuesday 17th of August it will rain here" as uttered by NN at Main Street, Hibbing and the statement that "At 15:00 on Tuesday 17th of August it will rain on Main Street, Hibbing". According to Nagel's use of the word 'sense', the two statements would possess the same sense because, Nagel would surely say, what the two statements assert

of the world irrespective of the significance of the relation between NN and what NN says is the same. Whereas, by contrast, according to the Fregean use of the word 'sense', although NN's statements concern the very same state of affairs, because they feature expressions, namely, 'Here' and 'Main Street, Hibbing', respectively, which are themselves associated with distinct senses—distinct ways of thinking, or distinct forms of identifying knowledge—and, since it is the Fregean senses of the expressions which feature in a sentence that serve to determine the Fregean sense of a statement, the two statements would surely not possess the same sense. But we should not be misled by this: Nagel nowhere outright rejects the Fregean conception of sense, and beyond a terminological contrast, there is simply no reason to suppose that Nagel repudiated the Fregean conception of sense. Indeed, as we suggested at the outset of this paragraph, in actual fact, Nagel could have unproblematically admitted a place for the Fregean conception of sense in his own framework. For example, he could have said something like the following: because the Fregean sense of a sentence which features the indexical expression 'Here' is such as to be determined, in part, by the Fregean sense associated with the use in a certain situation of the indexical expression 'Here' which itself is associated with a sort of 'personal' Fregean sense insofar as its use embodies a way of thinking of a place in a privileged manner, specifically, as the place one actually occupies, the Fregean sense associated with the sentence in question will, in turn, be a sort of 'personal' Fregean sense—moreover, crucially, Nagel could have also added that it is the Fregean sense of an expression that determines its cognitive significance.

35. Clear in our minds about what the impersonal standpoint amounts to, we can press on to consider what Nagel thinks about the possibility of advancing (a) and (b).

36. Regarding judgements of the form of (a), Nagel says the following:

"Now it is of course true that distinct personal standpoints towards the same circumstance yield judgments and expectations that are extremely different. Given a situation with several characters in it, even if I know what it is like from the impersonal standpoint, I cannot know what to expect unless I also know my location in it. Just as I cannot know what form the evidence of a fire will take unless I know whether the fire is past, present, or future, so I cannot know what to expect in the way of evidence that one of the persons in a group has been poisoned unless I know whether it is I or someone else. And it seems likely that with certain psychological attributions, the difference between other standpoints and the first person will make the difference between needing evidence and needing none. But every one of these differences between standpoints is itself the result of connections, principles and regularities which can be comprehended within the scope of the impersonal standpoint. All of the persons in a situation, and all of the viewpoints, expectations, and conditions of evidence associated with them, fall within a single impersonal conception. This will include impersonal specification of those relations between psychological states and behaviour (whatever they may be) which permit the ascription of psychological states on behavioural evidence. It will also include an impersonal statement of conditions on first person psychological ascriptions, including the provision that some of them do not call for behavioural or observational evidence. Even the respects in which one's own experiences may be systematically different from those of others are open to impersonal description, for if one is just a person among others, one can be singled out impersonally, idiosyncrasies and all." (1970, pp.102-103)

Here, in the first instance, Nagel notes that distinct personal standpoints on the same situation are apt to produce distinct expectations and judgements. Presumably, Nagel originally came to this idea on the basis of a line of thought that consists in moving through three related ideas that are all embedded within his framework. First, the idea, which we broached in paragraph 33, that the significance of a given personal standpoint is a function of what is happening in some situation and the relation between what is happening and the occupant of the personal standpoint in question. Second, the idea, which seems simply to be embedded within Nagel's idea of the personal standpoint, that any given personal standpoint on a situation must embody a relation of *unique* significance between the occupant of the personal standpoint in question and what is happening in the situation that the standpoint concerns. Third, the idea, which seems to follow from the second, that any given personal standpoint must, as such, possess a unique significance. That said, moving on from his initial observation, Nagel proceeds to illustrate certain implications that might arise from distinct personal standpoints on given situations. As an example, Nagel suggests that the evidence of food poisoning at a dinner party would take a form within the standpoint of the one who has been poisoned that is different to the form it would take within the standpoint of one who has not been poisoned. Within the former standpoint, the evidence would presumably take the form of experiencing actually being poisoned at the dinner party. Within the latter standpoint, the evidence could take the form of observing another person being ill at the dinner party. The crucial point that Nagel goes on to stress, however, is that differences of this sort between distinct personal standpoints on the same situation can always be understood from within an impersonal standpoint on the situation in question. With respect to the dinner party, for example, I take it that Nagel would say that how the conditions of evidence that someone has been poisoned may differ across the various

personal standpoints on the situation could be comprehended from an impersonal standpoint because it is possible to provide an impersonal description of what the symptoms of food poisoning tend to amount to and that, therefore, it is possible to understand from an impersonal standpoint what the various people at the dinner party, both those who have not been poisoned and the one who has been poisoned, could respectively expect to gather in terms of evidence toward the fact that someone at the dinner party has been poisoned. As he believes that differences between distinct personal standpoints on a situation can always be comprehended within an impersonal standpoint on the same situation, Nagel has no qualms with the plausibility of advancing a judgement of the form of (a).

37. However, when he moves to consider the possibility of advancing a statement of the form of (b), Nagel says the following:

> "The only personal residue, therefore, which is not included in the system of impersonal beliefs to which I am committed by a personal judgment, is the basic personal premise itself, the premise which locates me in the world which has been impersonally described. The addition of this premise makes a great difference in *how* that world is conceived, but no difference in what is conceived to be the case. I can conceive impersonally my house burning down, and the individual T.N. standing before it, feeling hot and miserable, and looking hot and miserable to bystanders, and seeing their sympathetic looks, etc. etc. If I add to all this the premise that I am T.N., I will imagine feeling hot and miserable, seeing the sympathetic bystanders, etc.; but this is not to imagine anything happening differently. Anything which I can imagine feeling, I can imagine being felt by the person impersonally described, who I in fact am. Anything I can judge or believe about my own situation, experiences, actions, I

can judge or believe about him, without any alteration in what is being believed to occur." (1970, p.103)

This is the most central of Nagel's remarks in *The Possibility of Altruism* for our investigation, for from it we can pick up *Nagel's question*.

38. How we are to read the remark is not altogether obvious, but the following strikes me as the most plausible interpretation. Speaking generally, Nagel thinks that the following kind of line of thought is especially significant: I can conceive impersonally JK being particularly warm as he passes through Tangiers and I can add that "I am JK" and, in doing so, I will no doubt come to *imagine being* particularly warm passing through Tangiers, but this change will make no difference to what circumstances I believe are actually unfolding, it will merely make a difference to *how* I conceive the situation (i.e., such that I conceive of the situation not from an impersonal standpoint, but from a personal standpoint). Crucially, this kind of line of thought embodies the more abstract idea that one's utterance of a basic personal statement will not change what circumstances one believes are actually unfolding in a given situation, but merely how one conceives the situation in question. And, so this interpretation of the remark goes, Nagel thinks that we should conclude from this more abstract idea—and, accordingly, the line of thought which embodies it—that utterances of basic personal statements do not express facts *at all*.

39. Now, if this really is Nagel's reasoning, it is undoubtedly dubious. This comes out straightforwardly when we realise that insofar as it is no part of the character of any identity-judgement whatsoever to alter what one believes is unfolding in a situation, there would seem to be no justification, presuming we accept the reasoning in question, for not applying the reasoning to identity-judgements in general and, in doing so, for

coming out with the conclusion that utterances of identity-judgements, *in general*, do not express facts at all because such utterances never alter what one believes is occuring in a situation. For example, let us take the identity-judgement 'The Morning Star is The Evening Star'. We can agree that the following is correct: I could be watching The Morning Star rise in the sky and believe, on account of what I see, that The Morning Star is, in fact, rising in the sky; and, if I note at any point that "The Morning Star is The Evening Star", I will not alter what I believe is actually occurring. Presuming we accept the reasoning in question, we should surely add the following: insofar as the utterance brings about no such alteration, it fails to express a fact at all. And this last point is surely untenable.

40. Accordingly, we may be tempted to try to come to an alternate interpretation of what Nagel is trying to say in the remark in question. Now, the only alternate reading that I can conceive of amounts to regarding Nagel as trying to argue toward the claim that he advances at the outset of the remark, the claim that a basic personal statement cannot be included in a system of impersonal beliefs. But insofar as we entertain this reading, we shall surely run into another issue. For, essentially, we shall be treating Nagel's remark as designed to set up an entirely trivial concern; after all, it is surely obvious that a personal statement cannot be included in a system of beliefs which excludes personal beliefs by definition.

41. Putting interpretive matters to one side, and since I think that we should be overwhelmingly disinclined to regard Nagel as having had the intention to argue toward the aforementioned trivial worry, we shall proceed in accordance with the initial interpretation.

42. That said, if Nagel is right that utterances of basic personal statements do not express facts at all and, as such, are unintelligible, then it must not be possible for one to identify oneself as an element of the objective order at all. After all, if we presume it is possible to intelligibly advance a basic personal statement, we must surely say it is the office of any utterance of a basic personal statement to express a first person identity-judgement concerning the element of the world that one is.

43. Accordingly, Nagel's concern regarding the possibility of intelligibly advancing a basic personal statement can be captured in the form of the following question, *Nagel's question*: is it possible for one to identify oneself as an element of the objective order?

44. There are two clarificatory points regarding Nagel's question that are worth making. First, the phrase 'objective order' which, in the context of Nagel's concern, can be traced back to one of John McDowell's appendix entries in *The Varieties of Reference* (1982, p.265), is meant to bring to our minds no more than the idea of the spatio-temporal world. Second, the occurrence of 'oneself' in Nagel's question is an occurrence of the *indirect reflexive* (cf. Anscombe, 1975, p.22), which, ultimately, is to say that as one identifies oneself as an element of the objective order, one thinks something expressible by a sentence whose subject is 'I'; equivalently, it is to say that a statement which says that one thinks of oneself as an element of the objective order is such as to take the form of a statement whose subject is 'I'. Following Hector-Neri Castañeda (Castañeda, 1966), we could signify that the occurrence of 'oneself' in Nagel's question is an occurrence of the indirect reflexive rather than the ordinary reflexive by formulating Nagel's question as follows: is it possible for one to identify oneself* as an element of the objective order? However, in what follows, we shall do without using Castañeda's notation.

45. Nagel's question has a clear relation to the general task that Frege leaves us with. After all, to answer Nagel's question in the positive one must formulate an account which reveals how it is that we think of ourselves as elements of the objective order, and provided that such an account takes the form of a semantic account of 'I', it will amount to a semantic account of 'I' which elucidates the fundamental character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I', the very account that the task in question calls for the formulation of.

46. The remainder of our investigation shall be anchored to Nagel's question, and we shall come at the task that Frege leaves us with, our central task, by answering Nagel's question in the positive through formulating a semantic account of 'I' which elucidates the fundamental character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I'.

47. What we shall do next is turn to Elizabeth Anscombe's *The First Person* (1975), from which we shall pick up a serious motivation for Nagel's question and, in doing so, also identify a series of key negative insights regarding the character of 'I'.

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48. In *The First Person*, Anscombe's central claim is that 'I' is "neither a name nor another kind of expression whose logical role is to make a reference, *at all*" (1975, p.32). The claim should be read as denying that 'I' is a singular referring expression as we defined that term in paragraph 18, that is, a device the use of which embodies identifying knowledge of a spatio-temporal particular. The following, early passage from *The First Person* can serve to reassure us of this reading:

> "To repeat the Frege point: we haven't got this sense just by being told which object a man will be speaking of; whether he knows it or not, when he says "I".

But we have a right to ask *what* he knows; if "I" expresses a way its object is reached by him, what Frege called an "Art des Gegebenseins", we want to know what that way is and how it comes about that the only object reached in that way by anyone is identical with himself" (1975, p.23)

Here, Anscombe indicates that her interest in *The First Person* lies, centrally, with the following question: if the use of 'I' is associated with a way of thinking of a spatio-temporal particular, what could that way of thinking amount to? True enough, rather than use the term 'way of thinking' Anscombe really speaks of a 'way of reaching', but with respect to singular demonstratives, proper names such as 'John' and 'Mt. Everest', and 'I' these terms amount to the same thing. Again, the way of thinking associated with 'I', presuming there is such a way of thinking, is really a discriminative capacity to single oneself out from all other spatio-temporal particulars. To speak of a 'way of reaching' associated with 'I' is to speak of a thought expressible by the use of 'I' which reaches *all the way* to a spatio-temporal particular, that is, oneself, and, in that, just such a capacity. That said, insofar as Anscombe's interest in *The First Person* lies, centrally, with the aforementioned question, her general concern in the paper is to try to make sense of 'I' as a device the use of which is associated with a way of thinking of a spatio-temporal particular or, equally, a device the use of which embodies identifying knowledge of a spatio-temporal particular. And, what Anscombe comes to think—what the central claim of *The First Person* stands to say—is that it is not possible to make sense of 'I' as such a device.

49. Let us try to reconstruct an outline of the path that Anscombe takes to the central claim of *The First Person*.

50. Toward doing so, we can begin with the idea that 'I' is a singular referring expression the use of which is associated with a way of thinking that amounts to a discriminative capacity to distinguish a spatio-temporal particular on the basis of the particular's *being given to sensory consciousness*. As we noted in paragraph 16, the demonstrative mode of thought is just such a way of thinking. So, to accept the idea in question is, ultimately, to treat 'I' as a singular demonstrative.

51. But, as Anscombe sees (1975, pp.27-28), 'I' cannot be a demonstrative: for, whereas demonstratives, in general, are vulnerable to reference failure, 'I' must be invulnerable to reference failure if it is, in fact, a singular referring expression. On the one hand, it should not be too difficult to see that demonstratives, in general, are vulnerable to reference failure. The phenomenon is particularly apt to arise in situations in which one's perceptual faculties are not well-suited to the environment that one is in. For example, let us imagine that NN is lying in his bed in relative darkness and that hanging upon a door there is a coat which NN mistakes for a shadowy figure on account of the fact that his perceptual faculties are ill-equipped for the dark. In this case, if NN says something of the form "That shadowy figure has been motionless for some time", he will have uttered something featuring a demonstrative which fails to refer to anything. However, it would be a mistake to think that the phenomenon of demonstrative reference failure only arises in situations such as NN's or, similarly, in situations in which one's perceptual faculties are malfunctioning. As we said, demonstratives, *in general*, are vulnerable to reference failure. And this means that the phenomenon can arise even when one's perceptual faculties are functioning properly and are well-suited to the environment that one is in. In other words, with respect to demonstratives, we need to keep in mind the following: in competently using a demonstrative, one means to refer to something that one currently perceives; however, it is always possible to be

mistaken about the actual presence to sensory consciousness of that which one believes is present to sensory consciousness and, consequently, it is always possible that when one comes out with an utterance of the form "This…" or "That…" there may be no such thing as that which one means the demonstrative in one's utterance to refer to. In her own discussion, Anscombe presents a way of coming at the phenomenon through a pair of terms: the *intended referent* of a demonstrative and what a demonstrative *latches on to*. Using these terms, following Anscombe, we could say that a demonstrative fails to refer whenever the *intended referent* of the demonstrative and that which a demonstrative *latches on to* do not coincide. In our earlier example involving NN, the *intended referent* of the demonstrative which featured in NN's utterance was, of course, the shadowy figure, and that which the demonstrative in question *latched on to* was the coat. Interestingly, Anscombe claims that a demonstrative will always have something to *latch on to* if it is used correctly (1975, p.28). So, accordingly, it seems to me that Anscombe conceives of the correct use of a demonstrative as coming down to using a demonstrative to express that something determinate is present to sensory consciousness when, in fact, something determinate is present to sensory consciousness, leaving it open that what is, in fact, present to sensory consciousness is not what one says is present to sensory consciousness. After all, she denies that a demonstrative would have anything to *latch on to* in a situation of sensory deprivation (1975, p.34), a situation in which "sight is cut off, and I am locally anaesthetized everywhere, perhaps floated in a tank of tepid water; [in which] I am unable to speak, or to touch any part of my body with any other." (1975, p.31, my interpolation.) And what seems characteristic about the state of sensory deprivation—what allows in the situation for the possibility that a demonstrative may be used without its latching on to anything and, thus, what allows in the situation for the incorrect use of the expression—

is that nothing, in fact, is present to sensory consciousness. I would suggest that, for Anscombe, part of the significance of the *intended referent*/*latching on to* distinction comes down to a further contrast that the distinction embodies between demonstratives and 'I'. After all, if we accept Anscombe's claim that 'I' is not a singular referring expression, then we must also affirm that the use of 'I' expresses no kind of a way of thinking of something through its being given to sensory consciousness. And, if we accept this last idea, then, at the very least, even the competent use of 'I', unlike the correct use of a demonstrative, will not involve 'I' *latching on to* anything given through its presence to consciousness. In any case, turning our attention away from the vulnerability of demonstratives to reference failure, we can see, again without too much difficulty, that if 'I' is a singular referring expression, then it must contrast with demonstratives for, unlike demonstratives, 'I' would have to be invulnerable to reference failure. After all, as Anscombe sees, supposing 'I' is a singular referring expression, merely using 'I' must guarantee the real existence of the referent of 'I' because any use of 'I' is bound to guarantee the real presence of the referent of 'I'. And, on account of this contrast, Anscombe sees that we have to deny that 'I' could be a singular demonstrative.

52. Perhaps, instead, we can conclude that 'I' is a singular referring expression the use of which is associated with a way of thinking that is founded upon the demonstrative mode of thought. This would be to treat 'I' as a proper name which has its reference fixed by the use of a demonstrative.

53. However, as Anscombe sees (1975, p.30), 'I' cannot be a proper name: for, whereas it is never possible to use proper names in subject-position in expressions which are invulnerable to errors of misidentification, it must be possible to use 'I' in subject-position in expressions of this sort if 'I' is a singular referring expression. That it is

never possible to use proper names in subject-position in such expressions is clear enough. For example, although NN may initially attach the proper name "The Great One" to a particular man and use it competently on many distinct occasions, there is, of course, the possibility that one day NN sees a man who looks almost indistinguishable from The Great One wearing, say, a yellow hat and in which NN mistakenly says to a friend "The Great One is wearing a yellow hat". In this case, on account of the near-indistinguishability between The Great One and the man with a yellow hat, NN uses the name 'The Great One' with respect to a man who is not, in fact, The Great One and, in doing so, misidentifies a man as The Great One. Here, the possibility of misidentifying the man with a yellow hat as The Great One arises from the fact that the statement "The Great One is wearing a yellow hat" rests on an identity-judgement which itself has the capacity to be false (i.e., an identity-judgement expressible by a sentence such as "This one is The Great One"). It is precisely because the use of a proper name must rely upon an identity-judgement which has the capacity to be false that, ultimately, it is never possible to use proper names in subject-position in expressions which are invulnerable to errors of misidentification. When we turn our attention to the use of 'I', presuming 'I' is a singular referring expression, we may want to concede that there is a class of expressions with 'I' as subject that are dependent upon identity-judgements which themselves have the capacity to be false and that, therefore, there is a class of expressions with 'I' as subject that are vulnerable to errors of misidentification. However, even if we concede that, Anscombe sees that we cannot deny that there must a class of expressions with 'I' as subject which are *not* dependent upon identity-judgements which themselves have the capacity to be false and, therefore, that we cannot deny that there is a class of expressions with 'I' as subject that are invulnerable to errors of misidentification—first personal reports of pain such as "I am

in pain" are examples of such expressions. Crucially, as Anscombe acknowledges this last class of expressions, she comes to a contrast between proper names and 'I' and, as such, the observation that 'I' cannot be a proper name if it is a singular referring expression.

54. Faced with these difficulties, we may wonder about the possibility of treating 'I' as a special sort of demonstrative, one that is uniquely invulnerable to reference failure. However, as Anscombe notes (1975, p.31), there is no good reason to suppose that this is a reasonable strategy. As Anscombe sees, the strategy would have to involve treating 'I' as a device the use of which is associated with a way of thinking of a Cartesian Ego: "a stretch of thinking" as Anscombe says (ibid.), or an instance of thinking. But then, in Anscombe terms, the strategy would have to involve "the intolerable difficulty of requiring an identification of the same referent in different "I" - thoughts." (ibid.) In the first instance, the difficulty that Anscombe adverts to is apt to be approached as a problem about how to recognise an instance of thinking over time (cf. Haddock, 2019, p.961). For example, let us imagine that a past instance of thinking leaves a trace of itself in NN's memory, and that there is a present instance of thinking which is sensibly indistinguishable from the trace of the past instance of thinking. Even in such a case, there can be no guarantee whatsoever that the present instance of thinking and the instance that the trace in NN's memory presents are one and the same. And crucially, this means that it is always open for NN to regard a present instance of thinking as, as he would say, "myself" despite the fact that it is not. In fact, the difficulty that Anscombe is on to is still deeper and more serious. (cf. Haddock, 2019, p.962). For the very idea of misidentifying an instance of thinking involves the idea that an instance of thinking that is able to persist through time is replaced by a distinct, but sensibly indistinguishable, instance of thinking that is also able to persist through time; and yet,

it is unclear whether the idea of thinking can even stand to provide for the idea of an instance of thinking that persists through time. Perhaps we could conclude otherwise if only we possessed some conception of what it could be for an instance of thinking at one time to be the same as an instance of thinking at another time. But it is not clear that any such conception is available. For example, we cannot simply say that two instances of thinking are the same just so long as they are 'internal' to the same thinker, for insofar as we are operating in the Cartesian context, the very idea of a thinker is such as to be explained in terms of the idea of an instance of thinking. And equally, we cannot simply say that two instances of thinking are one and the same just so long as they have the same content. After all, insofar as it must be possible for one thinker to think distinct things at distinct times, then, in the Cartesian context that we are operating in, it must be possible for one instance of thinking to have different contents at different times. So, we cannot even presume that the idea of thinking has the substance to provide for the idea of instances of thinking that persist through time. Anscombe notes that it was because Russell recognised this difficulty that he "was led at one point to speak of 'short-term selves'" (1975, p.31). And yet, even the conception of 'short-term selves' must face difficulties for, as Anscombe goes on to say:

> "How, even, could one justify the assumption, if it is an assumption, that there is just one thinking which is this thinking of this thought that I am thinking, just one thinker? How do I know that 'I' is not ten thinkers thinking in unison? Or perhaps not quite succeeding. That might account for the confusion of thought which I sometimes feel. - Consider the reply "Legion, for we are many", given by the possessed man in the gospel. Perhaps we should take that solemnly, not as a grammatical joke." (ibid.)

The possibility of the sort of confusion that Anscombe describes in the above remark points to what is really the core of the difficulty that she adverts to: the fact that, because it is unclear whether the idea of thinking can stand to provide for the idea of instances of thinking that persist through time at all, it is unclear whether the idea of thinking can provide for the idea of instances of thinking as objects of singular demonstrative reference at all. Given this difficulty, we have to conclude that the strategy that we outlined at the outset of this paragraph is really no reasonable strategy at all.

55. As we concede that 'I' cannot be a demonstrative or a proper name and, additionally, as we concede the untenability of the 'special demonstrative' account, we may come to wonder about the possibility of revealing the way of thinking associated with the use of 'I' through formulating an account of 'I' as a definite description. After all, it may seem that we could succeed in saying what 'I' refers to in such a way as to *show* the sense of 'I' if only we could come out with something of the form "'I' refers to 'such-and-such'" where we have replaced 'such-and-such' with the definite description to which we assimilate 'I' (Haddock, 2022, p.392-393). But, as Anscombe sees, the only serious way of construing 'I' as a definite description would be to regard it as an abbreviation of the description "The sayer of this", where 'sayer' implies 'thinker' (1975, p.32). And then, more fully, the description would have to essentially amount to "The thinker of this thought". As we see this, we see that on the only plausible way of construing 'I' as a definite description, we have to treat 'I' as an abbreviation of a description which employs demonstrative reference to a stretch, or an instance, of thinking. To suppose that such a description is intelligible is to simply assume against the difficulties that we raised in the preceding paragraph; most centrally, it would be to assume that instances of thinking are proper objects of singular demonstrative reference. So long as we are unable to adequately respond to those difficulties—and as

no such response seems forthcoming—the preceding paragraph serves not merely to refute the intelligibility of the 'special demonstrative' account of 'I' but, additionally, the plausibility of the definite description account of 'I'.

56. Anscombe suggests that a certain temptation is apt to trouble us once we come to terms with the fact that 'I' cannot be a demonstrative, proper name, or definite description. In particular, she suggests that we may be tempted to hold onto the idea that 'I' is associated with a way of thinking and, *at the same time*, affirm that it is not associated with a way of thinking of a spatio-temporal element of the world. As we give into the temptation, we are apt to attempt to characterise that to which 'I' supposedly refers in something like the following manner: not *a spatio-temporal particular given* to sensory consciousness, but that *to which* spatio-temporal particulars are given; not a*n object*, but *the subject* (Anscombe, 1975, p.32; cf. Haddock, 2019, p.962).

57. Interestingly, it is precisely a temptation of this sort that Nagel eventually gives into in his essay *The Objective Self*:

> "But the experiences and the perspective of TN with which I am directly presented are not the point of view of the true self, for the true self has no point of view and includes in its conception of the centerless world TN and his perspective among the contents of that world. It is this aspect of the self which is in question when I look at the world as a whole and ask, " How can TN be me? How can I be TN?" And it is what gives the self-locating philosophical thought its peculiar content." (1986, p.61)

Ultimately, Anscombe regards remarks of this sort as 'raving' (1975, p.32).

58. According to Anscombe, the only proper response, the one that avoids 'raving', is to deny that 'I' is a singular referring expression (1975, p.32). And this denial is, of course, the central claim of *The First Person*.

59. Clearly, the claim is related to Nagel's question: for, if 'I' is not a singular referring expression, then there is no way of thinking of something associated with the use of 'I' at all—no identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I'—and, as such, no possibility of identifying oneself as an element of the objective order. Accordingly, through the line of thought that we described between paragraphs 50-58, Anscombe presents a new route toward—and, thus, a new motivation for—Nagel's question.

60. And the idea that 'I' cannot be a demonstrative, proper name, or definite description is, I think, correct; so, crucially, the new motivation is far from obviously dubious. After all, in order to escape it, we would have to reveal that the use of 'I' embodies identifying knowledge of an element of the spatio-temporal world—oneself—*without treating 'I' as a demonstrative, proper name, or definite description*. Of course, in what follows, we shall attempt to do exactly this. The present point is merely that as we see that 'I' cannot be a demonstrative, proper name, or definite description, it cannot be obvious that the use of 'I' really embodies identifying knowledge at all.

III

61. Now that we have picked up and seriously motivated Nagel's question, we shall shift our attention toward reconstructing the response that Evans offers in *The Varieties of Reference* to Nagel's question. Toward doing so, however, we shall begin by fixing on John Perry's attempt in *Frege on Demonstratives* to account for the nature of 'I'-thoughts with an eye, ultimately, to appreciating Evans' criticism in *Understanding Demonstratives* of what Perry says.

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62. In *Frege on Demonstratives*, the core of Perry's account of 'I'-thoughts is contained in the following passage:

> "We accept that there is no thought only Hume can apprehend. Yet only he can know he is Hume. It must not just be the thought that he thinks, but the way that he thinks it, that sets him apart from the rest of us. Only Hume can think a true thought, by saying to himself,
>
> I am Hume.
>
> Self-locating knowledge then requires not just the grasping of certain thoughts, but the grasping of them via the senses of certain sentences containing demonstratives." (1993, p.21)

To come to terms with Perry's account, we need to put in place two aspects of Perry's general semantic framework, both of which play a role in his account of the nature of 'I'-thoughts: (i.) his conception of the sense of sentences containing demonstratives, and (ii.) his conception of thoughts.

63. To get at (i.) we should turn, initially, to Perry's notion of the 'role' of a demonstrative, which he introduces in the following passage:

> "When we understand a word like "today," what we seem to know is a rule taking us from an occasion of utterance to a certain object. "Today" takes us to the very day of utterance, "yesterday" to the day before the day of utterance, "I" to the speaker, and so forth. I shall call this the *role* of the demonstrative." (1993, p.8)

In other words, according to Perry, the role of a demonstrative is a constant function from the context in which a demonstrative is uttered to a certain value (i.e., a certain spatio-temporal particular). We might say, following some of the terminology that Evans uses to describe Perry's account, that when one competently utters a sentence containing a demonstrative and, in doing so, thinks of a certain spatio-temporal particular, one can, at the sub-sentential level, be said to be 'entertaining' the role of the demonstrative in question (Evans, 1981, p.301; Perry, 1993, p.30).

64. Perry also speaks of whole sentences as being associated with roles, and it is in this context that he reveals what he takes the sense of sentences containing demonstratives to amount to:

> "Let us speak of *entertaining* a sense and apprehending a thought. So different thoughts may be apprehended, in different contexts, by entertaining the same sense…We can take the sense of a sentence containing a demonstrative to be a role…To have a thought we need an object and an incomplete sense. The demonstrative in context gives us the one, the rest of the sentence the other. The role of the entire sentence will lead us to Truth by leading us to a true thought." (1993, p.22)

So, for Perry, the sense of a sentence is a role or, more precisely, it is a constant function from the context in which the sentence is uttered to what Perry terms a *thought*. Putting what we have said thus far together, we can say the following: in uttering a sentence containing a demonstrative one entertains the role of the demonstrative in question and, if all goes well, doing so will deliver a spatio-temporal particular which, complementing the rest of the otherwise incomplete sentence, will allow the one who utters the sentence to apprehend—that is, think—a thought.

65. With Perry's general conception of the sense of sentences containing demonstratives in view we can turn to his conception of thought, which we have already had cause to mention. This latter conception is best come at, I think, in light of what Perry says in the following passage:

> "We can take the sense of a sentence containing a demonstrative to be a role, rather than a Fregean complete sense, and *thoughts to be the new sort, individuated by object and incomplete sense, rather than Fregean thoughts*. Though senses considered as roles, and thoughts considered as information, cannot be identified, each does its job in a way that meshes with the other. To have a thought we need an object and an incomplete sense. The demonstrative in context gives us the one, the rest of the sentence the other. The role of the entire sentence will lead us to Truth by leading us to a true thought, that is just in case the object falls under the concept determined as reference by the incomplete sense…Using the concepts of sense, thought, and indirect reference in a way compatible with the way Frege introduced them, but incompatible with his identifications, sentences containing demonstratives can be handled. I do not mean to imply that Frege could have simply made these alterations, while leaving the rest of his system intact. *The idea of individuating thoughts by*

objects, or sequences of objects, would be particularly out of place in his system." (1993, p.22-25, my emphasis.)

What the passage reveals is that Perry takes himself to have formulated a conception of thought which constitutes a significant departure from Frege's conception of thought. By contrast, in *Understanding Demonstratives*, Evans suggests that Perry's conception of thought is ultimately no more than a 'notational variant' of Frege's conception of thought (1981, pp.297-300). In fact, it is far from immediately obvious which interpretation is the more accurate. So, let us think Perry's conception of thought through, carefully.

66. In the first instance, it will help to draw out the motivation that Perry identifies for emphasising a significant distinction between his conception of thought and Frege's conception of thought. As we noted in paragraph 64, when we put the two applications of Perry's idea of a role together, we can say the following: in uttering a sentence containing a given demonstrative, one *entertains* the role of the demonstrative in question and, if all goes well, doing so will deliver a spatio-temporal particular which, complementing the rest of the otherwise incomplete sentence, will allow the one who utters the sentence to *apprehend*—that is, think—a thought. Accordingly, we can see that for Perry the sentence F(t) uttered in context c will express the same thought as the sentence F(t') uttered in context c' provided that the referent of t in c is the same as the referent of t' in c' (Perry, 1993, pp.22-25; Evans, 1981, p.299). Following Evans (1981, p.299), we can label thoughts of the kind that Perry has in mind *P-thoughts* and, given what we have said, we can regard any particular P-thought in the context of sentences containing demonstratives as identifiable with an ordered pair of a spatio-temporal particular and an incomplete sense of a concept expression. According to Frege, on the other hand, a thought is the (Fregean) sense of a sentence, and a thought expressed by

the utterance of a given sentence containing a demonstrative can be identified with the ordered pair of the (Fregean) sense of the demonstrative which features in the sentence in question (in the context in which it is uttered) and the (Fregean) sense of the concept expression which features in the sentence in question. So, for Frege, the thought apt to be expressed by the sentence 'Here it is F' as uttered at a place p is to be equated with the ordered pair of the (Fregean) sense which 'Here' has at p and the (Fregean) sense of the concept-expression '(ξ) is F'. Part of this aspect of Frege's notion of thought was implicit in our earlier discussion where we made the following remark:

> "It is precisely because the expressions contained in the sentences ["The Morning Star is Shining" and "The Evening Star is shining"] are themselves associated with different senses—here, individuating the senses in such a way as to construe them as the contributions made by the expressions to the thoughts expressible by the sentences they feature in (McDowell, 2005, p.49)—that the sentences are determined to be associated with distinct senses, or thoughts."

We can label thoughts of the kind that Frege associates with the use of sentences containing demonstratives *F-thoughts*. Clearly, P-thoughts are *not* F-thoughts. This is evident in the mere fact that while a P-thought is such as to be identified with an ordered pair of a spatio-temporal particular and an incomplete sense of a concept expression, an F-thought is such as to be identified with an ordered pair of the sense of a demonstrative expression in the context in which the demonstrative is uttered and the sense of a concept expression. Ultimately, the reason that Perry identifies for emphasising a significant distinction between his conception of thought and the Fregean conception of thought comes down to the fact that P-thoughts and F-thoughts are identifiable, respectively, with the aforementioned distinct ordered pairs.

67. As we note this distinction between Perry's conception of thought and Frege's conception of thought, we may suspect that Perry, not Evans, is bound to be right about the relation between the two conceptions. After all, most strikingly, it is a consequence of the distinction just noted that the bare idea of a P-thought will not involve the idea of a way of thinking of a spatio-temporal particular at all, and this may seem to suggest, in particular, that Perry's conception of thought involves a repudiation of Frege's account of the possibility of rationally and simultaneously taking different epistemic stances to sentences such as "The Morning Star is shining" and "The Evening Star is shining". If such a repudiation really is involved in Perry's conception of thought then, no doubt, it is significantly distinct from Frege's conception of thought.

68. But in fact, it is not obvious that any such repudiation is involved in Perry's conception of thought. To see this, following Evans (1981, p.299-300), we need to make two further observations. First, we need to note that Perry insists that a proper investigation of Hume's utterance that "I am F" would have to attend not merely to the P-thought associated with Hume's utterance but to the *way in which* Hume thinks the P-thought (1993, p.21). The crucial, underlying point here is that in the context of his general account of sentences containing demonstratives, Perry is committed to P-thoughts themselves being apprehended *in certain ways*. True enough, the P-thought that Hume's utterance that "I am F" is associated with would be the *same* P-thought that Hume would think by uttering "That man is F" while pointing to himself in a mirror, for P-thoughts are individuated by spatio-temporal particulars, and both utterances concern the same spatio-temporal particular, namely, Hume. But the point is this: the single P-thought which both utterances are associated with will, in Perry's general framework, be *differently apprehended* across the utterances. When we have this in view, we can say that while F-thoughts associated with the use of sentences containing

demonstratives are world-directed judgements wherein spatio-temporal particulars are thought of in certain ways, P-thoughts associated with the same such sentences are world-directed judgements which concern spatio-temporal particulars and which are themselves thought of in certain ways. So, whereas the fact that P-thoughts and F-thoughts are identifiable, respectively, with the aforementioned distinct ordered pairs may have suggested that there is no place in Perry's framework for ways of thinking associated with the use of expressions, this last point suggests that Perry merely allocates ways of thinking to a different level in his general semantic framework. Second, we need to note that Perry nowhere claims that differences in cognitive value between sentences such as "The Morning Star is shining" and "The Evening Star is shining" have nothing to do with these ways of thinking. And this observation, together with the first, surely speaks against concluding that any such complete repudiation of the sort mentioned in the preceding paragraph is a part of Perry's conception of thought.

69. This is not to say that Perry's conception of thought is, in fact, merely a 'notational variant' of Frege's conception of thought. But, for the moment, we will say no more about this interpretive matter; later, in the course of evaluating Perry's account of 'I'-thoughts, we shall return to it, albeit briefly. For now, having said what we have said about Perry's framework, we can proceed to come to terms with his account of 'I'-thoughts.

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70. Again, in *Frege on Demonstratives*, the core of Perry's account of 'I'-thoughts is contained in the following remark:

"We accept that there is no thought only Hume can apprehend. Yet only he can know he is Hume. It must not just be the thought that he thinks, but the way that

he thinks it, that sets him apart from the rest of us. Only Hume can think a true

thought, by saying to himself,

I am Hume.

Self-locating knowledge then requires not just the grasping of certain thoughts,

but the grasping of them via the senses of certain sentences containing

demonstratives." (1993, p.21)

So, by grasping the thought apt to be expressed by his first person identity-statement "I

am NN" 'via the sense' of the first person identity-statement, NN thinks of himself.

(Similarly, as Evans notes (1981, p.301), Perry could say that by grasping the thought

apt to be expressed by his statement "I am here" 'via the sense' of that statement, NN

would think of a particular place, namely, the place NN is at.) This seems to capture

the broad outline of what Perry says in the above passage. We can follow Evans (1981,

pp.299-303) to unfold what is, I think, the most plausible reading of what Perry's

remark is meant to amount to beyond this broad outline.

71. It seems right to say that we should read Perry's remark as amounting to the following

claim:

(4) NN comes to possess identifying knowledge of himself by grasping the P-

thought apt to be expressed by his statement "I am NN" through entertaining

the 'role' of 'I'.

Since the role of 'I' will be, as suggested, a constant function that underwrites the use

of 'I' and which has as its value the 'I'-user—in NN's utterance of "I am NN", NN

himself—we can equally render (4) as:

(5) NN comes to possess identifying knowledge of himself by grasping the P-thought apt to be expressed by his statement "I am NN" through entertaining the constant function that underwrites the use of 'I'.

As the function in question must be determined by the rule that in any context of utterance the value of the function is the speaker in the given context, then, to 'entertain the function', we can, following Evans, presume that Perry's idea is meant to be that NN would have to entertain something like the description "the person speaking". (This last assumption ensures that the present reading is as charitable as it can be in its reading of Perry's account of 'I'-thought as seeking to reveal the character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I', for the notion that a description can serve to elucidate the way of thinking associated with an expression is not an uncommon notion.) More precisely, since Perry does not believe that 'I' can deliver a thought by itself and, additionally, since he believes that different people must entertain the very same role in their use of 'I', it may be that we should think of this description as involving a free variable. Thinking of the description in this way, we could formulate it as follows:

(6) The person who utters χ and χ is a token of 'I' (Evans, 1981, p.302)

So, according to this reading of Perry's claim, Perry's central idea is that it is by thinking the P-thought expressible by a first person identity-statement *by entertaining a description of the form of (6)* that one singles oneself out from all other spatio-temporal particulars.

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72. In *Understanding Demonstratives* (1981, p.300-303), Evans sees that with respect to the outlined reading, what Perry says surely fails to reveal the character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I'. Indeed, the issue is not so much that Perry somehow mischaracterises that identifying knowledge. Rather, strictly speaking, the issue is that as an account designed to elucidate the character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I', what Perry says comes to nothing.

73. Again, on the outlined reading, Perry's central idea is that it is by thinking the P-thought expressible by a first person identity-statement *by entertaining a description of the form of (6)* that one singles oneself out from all other spatio-temporal particulars. Now, what we have to keep in mind is that (6) is importantly *context-dependent*. In particular, we have to keep in mind that in abstraction from a context, (6) embodies no conception of a specific utterance nor, as such, a conception of a specific speaker—as the presence of the free variable in (6) exhibits. This is crucial, for what this means is that identifying knowledge of a particular speaker, or a way of thinking of a particular speaker, is alien to (6) by itself; no such identifying knowledge, nor any such way of thinking, is a part of the content of (6). Accordingly, in this way, Perry does not so much mischaracterise the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' in what he says. The fault is deeper: because any such identifying knowledge is alien to the content of (6) by itself, what Perry says simply does not have any such identifying knowledge in view at all. We can equally say that Perry's core idea falls apart on itself: it simply cannot be that one comes to possess identifying knowledge of oneself by thinking the P-thought expressible by a first person identity-statement *through entertaining a description of the form of (6)*, for identifying knowledge of a particular speaker is not any part of the content of (6).

74. What all this reveals is twofold. First, returning to the interpretive matter we last mentioned in paragraph 69, we have good reason to conclude that Perry's conception of thought is not a 'notational variant' of Frege's conception of thought, all things considered. After all, if Perry's account of 'I'-thoughts is anything to go by, identifying knowledge seems not to be any part of the content of Perry's ways of thinking of P-thoughts by themselves. Whereas, on the other hand, there can be no doubt that identifying knowledge is a part of the content of Frege's ways of thinking of F-thoughts; indeed, as we said in paragraph 16, identifying knowledge and Frege's ways of thinking of F-thoughts essentially come to the same thing with respect to singular demonstratives, proper names such as 'John' and 'Mt. Everest', and 'I': a discriminative capacity to single out a spatio-temporal particular from all other spatio-temporal particulars. So, here, we have hit upon a distinction between Perry's conception of thought and Frege's conception of thought which is surely not merely notational in character. Of course, this does not mean that we have to conclude, for instance, that Perry in fact altogether repudiates Frege's account of the possibility of rationally and simultaneously taking different epistemic stances to sentences such as "The Morning Star is shining" and "The Evening Star is shining"; but, given the distinction that we are presently stressing, it still cannot be doubted that Perry would nonetheless have to offer an account of that possibility which is not merely notationally distinct from Frege's own account. Second, and more pertinently, we can see that if we are to elucidate the character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I', we must not attempt to do so by invoking anything to which that identifying knowledge could be alien. And what this means, which is the really crucial point that we have been moving toward so far in this part of our narrative, is that we must not merely refuse to treat 'I' as a demonstrative, proper name, or definite description; we must, additionally,

refuse to treat 'I' as an *indefinite description*, which is what (6) amounts to. This is the crucial lesson that the failure of Perry's account of 'I'-thoughts leaves us with.

75. As an aside, we might briefly illuminate a certain idea that is perhaps implicit in some of what we have said about the inadequacy of Perry's account of 'I'.

76. In what we said in paragraph 74, connected with the notion that we must avoid treating 'I' as an indefinite description, the following was implied: if our account of 'I' is to succeed in elucidating the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I', it will have to succeed in revealing what it is that any 'I'-user understands in using 'I' where identifying knowledge—specifically, the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I'—is internal to this understanding. Now, *since we ourselves are competent 'I'-users*, we can equally say: if our account of 'I' is to succeed in elucidating the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I', it will have to succeed in revealing what it is that *we* understand in *our* uses of 'I' where identifying knowledge—specifically, the identifying knowledge embodied in *our* uses of 'I'—is internal to this understanding. This second formulation succeeds in illustrating that it is not as though we are strangers to the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' but that our understanding of this identifying knowledge is merely as-yet *unclear* to us, and, accordingly, it succeeds in illustrating that our principal aim is not really to make some new discovery but, rather, to elevate our understanding of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use 'I' from a merely *implicit* sort of understanding to an *explicit* sort of understanding. Here, we have surely come to an element of the truth in the following of Wittgenstein's remarks:

> "Philosophy just puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. — Since everything lies open to view, there is nothing to explain. For

whatever may be hidden is of no interest to us. The name "philosophy" might

also be given to what is possible *before* all new discoveries and inventions."

(2009, p.55, §125)

Being competent 'I'-users, the character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' lies open to our view. Insofar as our understanding of the capacity is lacking, it is merely implicit; it has not yet been raised to full clarity. Accordingly, insofar as we are seeking to elucidate the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' through a semantic account of 'I', what we are seeking to do is make the understanding we already possess of that identifying knowledge more explicit: here, there is no new discovery; we are casting light where shadows linger. (Beyond Wittgenstein, this notion is not unfamiliar in the history of philosophy. Sartre might have said (1956, pp.17-19), for example, that the endeavour to elucidate the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' is an endeavour to raise that identifying knowledge from the scope of *non-positional consciousness* to *positional consciousness*.)

77. There is a manner of conceiving the idea of revelation according to which revelation is the process of something once obscure becoming clear. In the twenty-four texts of the Hebrew Bible this use is common. It comes out most clearly in certain uses of the Hebrew word "גָּלָה" (*galah*) (see, for example, Deuteronomy 29:28; Numbers 24:4; Daniel 2:22-30; Samuel 20:2-13; Ruth 4:4). At times, the word and, so, the idea of revelation is used more narrowly in the context of implicit understanding, or knowledge, being raised to full clarity. We see this perhaps most plainly when Daniel reveals the meaning of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream to the king (Daniel 2:29-30). If, accordingly, we understand revelation to be the process by which something that is initially implicitly comprehended becomes explicitly comprehended, then we can think of what we have been saying since paragraph 75 as illuminating the following idea: as

we attempt to elucidate the identifying the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' through a semantic account of 'I', we shall be engaged in a project of *revelation* with respect to that identifying knowledge. Indeed, since our semantic account shall express the capacity to single oneself out from all others in language and, in so doing, put that capacity into act, we can add that as we formulate our semantic account of 'I', we shall be engaged in a project of *self-conscious* revelation, for the semantic account will itself be a moment in the life of the capacity to single oneself out from all other objects.

<div align="center">**</div>

78.   Toward reconstructing Evans' response we should, first, come to terms with his conception of the so-called *Generality Constraint* and, second, his account of the identification of spatio-temporal particulars.

79.   Accordingly, let us turn our attention, in the first instance, to the following of Evans' remarks:

> "It seems to me that there must be a sense in which thoughts are structured. The thought that John is happy has something in common with the thought that Harry is happy, and the thought that John is happy has something in common with the thought that John is sad." (1982, p.100)

Here, Evans wants to suggest two things. First, he wants to suggest that a person who thinks on distinct occasions that John is happy and that Harry is happy exercises on distinct occasions the conceptual ability which we can term 'possessing the concept of happiness'. Second, he wants to suggest that a person who thinks on distinct occasions that John is happy and that John is sad exercises on distinct occasions another ability,

in particular, the ability to think about John. The suggestions are not independent in Evans' framework. They come together in the single, more general idea that thoughts are a complex of the exercise of several distinct conceptual abilities (1982, p.101). Schematically, this is the idea that any thought which we can think of as having the content *that a is F* must involve the exercise of two abilities (1982, p.103), namely, (i.) the exercise of the conceptual ability to possess the concept of *F,* which can be exercised in indefinitely many distinct thoughts, and (ii.) the ability to think about a specific spatio-temporal particular, *a*, which can also be exercised in indefinitely many distinct thoughts. As Evans twice puts the point in *The Varieties of Reference* (1982, p.104; 1982, p.209) we are, in light of the general suggestion, to think of the thought *that a is F* as lying at the intersection of two series of thoughts: first, the series of thoughts *that a is F*, *that b is F*, *that c is F* and, second, the series of thoughts *that a is F*, *that a is G*, *that a is H*. Together, the series represent the understanding that a subject must have of 'F' and of 'a', respectively, in understanding the whole thought *that a is F*. Whenever a subject has such a thought, Evans says that the subject possesses an *Idea* of a spatio-temporal particular and a concept of a property (1982, p.104).

80. In Evans' framework, for a subject to possess an Idea of a spatio-temporal particular at all, they must comprehend what Evans terms the *fundamental ground of difference* of the spatio-temporal particular in question, that is, that which distinguishes the spatio-temporal particular in question from all other spatio-temporal particulars (1982, p.107). This commitment comes out in the following remark:

> "There is no thought about objects of a certain kind which does not presuppose the idea of *one* object of that kind, and the idea of one object of that kind must employ a general conception of the ways in which objects of that kind are differentiated from one another and from all other things." (1982, p.108)

But really, the commitment should come as no surprise at all. After all, it essentially amounts to a commitment to Russell's Principle, the principle that one cannot think a thought about a spatio-temporal particular unless one can distinguish the spatio-temporal particular in question from all other spatio-temporal particulars, and we have already noted Evans' commitment to Russell's Principle.

81. What this last point reveals is that Evans' general account of what must be involved in thought about spatio-temporal particulars comes back, at root, to the familiar notion of *identifying knowledge*. For, as we said in paragraph 15, Russell's Principle is equally the principle that to think a thought concerning a spatio-temporal particular one must possess identifying knowledge of the spatio-temporal particular in question. So, while we may use Evans' own terms to say that the guiding idea of his general account of what must be involved in thought about a spatio-temporal particular is the notion that an Idea of a spatio-temporal particular must always involve a comprehension of the fundamental ground of difference of the spatio-temporal particular in question, we may equally use the familiar notion of identifying knowledge to say that the guiding idea is the notion that an Idea of, or an intelligible thought about, a spatio-temporal particular must always embody *identifying knowledge* of the spatio-temporal particular in question.

82. Clear in our minds that the notion of identifying knowledge is, in this way, at the core of Evans' notion of Ideas of spatio-temporal particulars, we are well-placed to turn to Evans' introduction of the Generality Constraint:

> "If a subject can be credited with the thought that *a* is *F*, then he must have the conceptual resources for entertaining the thought that *a* is *G*, for every property

of being *G* of which he has a conception. This is the condition that I call 'The Generality Constraint'" (1982, p.104)

We can say that the Generality Constraint amounts, in other words, to the following condition: if a subject can be said to think the thought that *a* is *F*, then they must be capable of thinking of the same spatio-temporal particular with respect to any other concept that they possess in indefinitely many thoughts of the same form (that *a* is *G*, that *a* is *H*, that *a* is *S*). As may be clear, the Generality Constraint was essentially embodied in what we said in paragraph 79, in particular, in the notion that a thought of the form *a* is *F* must involve the ability to think about a particular spatio-temporal particular *a* which can be exercised in indefinitely many distinct thoughts (i.e., *a* is *G*, *a* is *H*, and so on), an Idea of *a*. But that does not mean that subsequently thinking through Evans' terminology in paragraphs 80 and 81 was without reward. For insofar as those paragraphs revealed the intimate connection between Ideas of spatio-temporal particulars and identifying knowledge, we can see, in light of that connection, that a subject will only be able to think a thought about a spatio-temporal particular that conforms to the Generality Constraint if they possess identifying knowledge of the spatio-temporal particular in question. Thus, we have hit upon the following criterion in Evans' framework: if a supposed thought about a spatio-temporal particular does not at some level embody identifying knowledge of a spatio-temporal particular, then the supposed thought will not conform to the Generality Constraint and, as such, will not amount to an intelligible thought about a spatio-temporal particular at all.

83. As this criterion lies at the core of Evans' account of what must be involved in thought about spatio-temporal particulars, it ensures that at the core of Evans' thought in *The Varieties of Reference*, there also lies the idea that the possession of identifying knowledge of a spatio-temporal particular is the key to being able to think about a

spatio-temporal particular. This is crucial. For insofar as Evans keeps this idea in view, his response to Nagel's question will, presumably, seek to demonstrate that the use of 'I' does, in fact, embody identifying knowledge of oneself, which is the key to resolving Nagel's question.

84. That said, we can turn to the second of the two matters that we should come to terms with in order to reconstruct Evans' response, namely, Evans' account of the possibility of possessing identifying knowledge of spatio-temporal particulars through demonstrative identification.

85. Doing so, we can fix, in the first instance, on the following passage:

> "In the case of a spatio-temporal particular...an adequate Idea of an object involves either a conception of it as the occupant of such-and-such a position (at such-and-such a time), or a knowledge of what it is for an object so identified to be the relevant object (or, equivalently, what it is for the relevant object to be at a particular position in space and time)" (1982, p.149)

In terms of identifying knowledge, Evans' point seems to be this: identifying knowledge of spatio-temporal particulars amounts to either (a) a capacity to identify a spatio-temporal particular as the occupant of a certain position in a spatio-temporal map of the world, or (b) knowledge of what it is for a spatio-temporal particular identified as the occupant of a certain position in a spatio-temporal map of the world to be the spatio-temporal particular so identified. The suggestion raises two questions. First, the question of what Evans thinks is involved in the identification of places. Second, the question of what Evans thinks allows us, in general, to identify a spatio-temporal particular as the occupant of a certain position in a spatio-temporal map of the world. Once we grasp the outline of these two points we will understand enough to say how it

is that, according to Evans, we come to possess identifying knowledge of spatio-temporal particulars and, on the basis of that, we will be well-placed to articulate Evans' response to Nagel.

86.   We can begin with what Evans thinks is, in general, involved in the identification of places. In the first instance, regarding this point, Evans suggests that places are distinguished on the basis of their spatial relations to whatever spatio-temporal particulars constitute our frame of reference (1982, p.151). Accordingly, Evans thinks, a *fundamental identification* of a place would identify a place by simultaneous reference to the place's relations to each spatio-temporal particular which constitutes the subject's frame of reference. Notably, since these identifications will not identify places by reference to a small number of spatio-temporal particulars, fundamental identifications of places will remain accurate even if a few spatio-temporal particulars in the frame of reference change position or are somehow destroyed. In other words, fundamental identifications of places will possess a *holistic* character. Our own identifications of places possess this character, Evans thinks, whenever we rely, in our thinking about places, on a so-called 'cognitive map': "a representation in which the spatial relations of several distinct things are simultaneously represented" (ibid.). As Evans thinks that it is essential to the existence of a genuine concept of space, and of spatio-temporal particulars existing in space independently of perception, that we have the capacity to conceive and employ representations of this form, he thinks that our fundamental level of thought is sustained by these representations. On this basis, he remarks that our fundamental level of thought about the spatio-temporal world is, to a certain extent, "objective, since it relies on a cognitive map of the sort described and represents every place on equal footing with every other, not relying upon indexical expressions such as 'here' and 'there'" (1982, p.152). That said, Evans does not think that our thought about

the spatio-temporal world is somehow exclusively 'objective'. On the contrary, he thinks that the content of our spatial experiences is such as to be expressed in terms of indexical expressions (1982, p.154), which, he thinks, belong to a system of thoughts about places which include thoughts such as 'It's *F over there*', 'It's *F to the right*', 'It's *F down there*', 'It's *F ahead of me*' (1982, p.153). He terms this system of thinking about places *egocentric*: in thinking egocentrically, one takes oneself to be the centre of a space with spatial coordinates given by the concepts 'left', 'right', 'up', 'down', and so on (1982, pp.153-154). This might raise another potential confusion, namely, the confusion that we are restricted, given the suggestion that cognitive maps forgo the use of egocentric terms, to identifying places in egocentric space and, so, from a purely 'subjective' perspective. Against this worry, Evans suggests that an Idea of a place in egocentric space, say p, will be an adequate Idea of a position in public space provided one possesses knowledge of what it is be for $[\pi = p]$ to be true, where π represents an arbitrary fundamental, and thus holistic, identification of a place (1982, p.162). And possession of knowledge of this sort is natural. After all, any subject who can form a cognitive map of an area must be able to make such an identification in imposing his knowledge of the 'objective' spatial relations (i.e., the cognitive map) on an egocentric space (1982, p.163). Indeed, in our daily lives we constantly impose the 'objective' way of thinking about the spatio-temporal world upon our egocentric way of thinking about space—effecting coincidences between them. For example, trying to locate baked foods in a large supermarket I might think 'If I am here, with the appliances aisle on my left and the frozen foods aisle on my right, then the baked goods aisle must be in front of me'. Holding this last point together with everything else we have just been saying we can, with extreme brevity, capture what Evans thinks is, in general, involved in the identification of places as follows: first, we identify a place in egocentric space, and

then we identify it in public space by imposing our knowledge of the relevant objective spatial relations on our egocentric space.

87. Regarding what Evans thinks, in general, allows us to identify a spatio-temporal particular as the occupant of a certain place at a certain time we can turn to his conception of an *information-link* (1982, p.174). In general, whenever a subject encounters a spatio-temporal particular in the world they will be connected to it through some such link. Any particular link serves, according to Evans, three purposes. First, it will provide a subject with their 'governing conception' of a spatio-temporal particular. Second, so long as the link is actual, the link will enable a subject to remain 'in contact' with a spatio-temporal particular and leave the subject disposed to alter their governing conception of the spatio-temporal particular that they are 'in contact with'. Third, and this is the crucial point, it will enable a subject to locate a spatio-temporal particular in egocentric space and, thereby, in public space.

88. Putting what we have said in the preceding two paragraphs together, we can lay out the following line of thought: (i.) when a subject encounters a spatio-temporal particular they will be in contact with it through an information link; (ii.) this information-link will enable the subject to locate the spatio-temporal particular in egocentric space; (iii.) by imposing their knowledge of the objective spatial relations on their egocentric space, the subject will be able to locate the spatio-temporal particular in public, 'objective' space; (iv.) on the basis of the preceding point, the subject will be able to think of the spatio-temporal particular as the occupant of such-and-such a place at such-and-such a time in the spatio-temporal world. Finally, once we have all that in view we can note that, in light of what we said in paragraph 85, once the subject is able to to think of the spatio-temporal particular as the occupant of such-and-such a place at such-and-such a

time in the spatio-temporal world then, for Evans, the subject will be in a position to possess an adequate Idea of the spatio-temporal particular.

89. With all that we have said in this part of our narrative, we are now in a position to come to terms with Evans' response to Nagel's question.

<center>**</center>

90. First, we should turn our attention to the following of Evans' remarks:

> "Nagel suggests that we cannot really understand what it is for such an identity-proposition to be true. But in fact I have already implicitly explained what is involved in grasping such an identity-proposition—in knowing what it is for such an identity-proposition to be true. It seems to me clear that as we conceive of persons, they are distinguished from one another by fundamental grounds of difference of the same kind as those which distinguish other physical things, and that a fundamental identification of a person involves a consider" (1982, p.211)

The crucial point here is that Evans thinks that the possibility of making a fundamental identification of oneself—of possessing identifying knowledge of oneself—arises in essentially the same manner as the possibility of making a fundamental identification of any spatio-temporal particular. In other words, drawing on our familiarity with his account of the demonstrative identification of spatio-temporal particulars, and in accordance with what Evans says in the above remark, we can see that this must mean that Evans thinks that fundamental identifications of persons, including oneself, are to be conceived of as involving an understanding of a person as the occupant of a certain location in a spatio-temporal map of the world.

91.   To my eyes, Evans is right in this: NN will possess identifying knowledge of himself if he is able to locate himself in a spatio-temporal map of the world. But we cannot be content to stop here. For even with this idea, we remain far too much in the dark concerning the fundamental character of the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I': we need some account of *how* one is able to locate oneself in a spatio-temporal map of the world.

92.   Evans seems to provide us with such an account in the following passage:

> "Any thinker who has an idea of an objective spatial world—an idea of a world of objects and phenomena which can be perceived but which are not dependent on being perceived for their existence—must be able to think of his perception of the world as being simultaneously due to his position in the world, and to the condition of the world at that position. The very idea of a perceivable, objective, spatial world brings with it the idea of the subject as being in the world, with the course of his perceptions due to his changing position in the world and to the more or less stable way the world is. The idea that there is an objective world and the idea that the subject is somewhere cannot be separated, *and where he is is given by what he can perceive*." (1982, p.222, my emphasis.)

At first, the passage serves to stress the harmony of the objective conception of the world and the egocentric way of thinking about the world. To this end, the point of the passage seems to be that we are not to think of the objective conception of the world and the egocentric way of thinking about the world as remotely separable: the very idea of the objective conception of the world comes with the idea that the subject is located in the world and, in that, the idea that the subject's perceptions are due to the course that the subject takes through the world. Thus, as Evans remarks in one of the appendix

entries to his account of demonstrative identification, "the seemingly objective mode of thinking about space is, after all, contaminated by egocentricity." (1982, p.265) This is a point that has been implicit in our own overview of Evan's account of demonstrative identification. For, in that overview, we saw both that Evans is committed both to the notion that we impose the 'objective' way of thinking upon the egocentric and, additionally, that he is committed to the notion that for demonstrative identification to function at all—in the sense that we understand the spatio-temporal particular we locate to be spatio-temporal particular located in 'objective' space—we must conceive of ourselves as located in space. The more crucial point for our present purposes is what Evans says on the back of all this toward the close of the passage: *that one is given by what one perceives*. Evans alludes to supposed examples of this manner of being given in the following passage:

> "I have in mind the way in which we are able to know our position, orientation, and relation to other objects in the world upon the basis of our perceptions of the world. Included here are such things as: knowing that one is in one's own bedroom by perceiving and recognizing the room and its contents; knowing that one is moving in a train by seeing the world slide by; knowing that there is a tree in front of one, or to the right or left, by seeing it; and so on…" (ibid.)

So, Evans' thought seems to come down to the idea that one is able to locate oneself in a spatio-temporal map of the world through being given a spatio-temporal particular other than oneself in a manner that places the spatio-temporal particular in the spatio-temporal world relative to oneself.

93. At first, this may seem to be a promising line of enquiry. After all, Evans at least seems to be actively seeking to elucidate the character of the identifying knowledge embodied

in the use of 'I', which he must do if he is to make any real headway in responding to Nagel. Perhaps, as we suggested, he is aware of this requirement thanks, ultimately, to the prominent place in his framework of the criterion that we introduced in paragraph 82. Moreover, Evans' thought does not simply amount to the idea that one succeeds in locating oneself in a spatio-temporal map of the world by being given oneself in perception and, thus, it does not obviously fall foul of fact that 'I' cannot be a demonstrative.

94. However, despite all this, we cannot regard Evans' account as a successful positive response to Nagel's question.

95. In the first instance, the account collapses by its own lights. We can draw this out by identifying two conflicting lines of thought that are present in Evans' framework. The first line of thought, which we articulated in paragraph 92 and which is essentially the core of Evans' response to Nagel, is the following: one singles oneself out in the process of singling out the object of one's demonstrative thought and, in this very way, one supposedly succeeds in locating oneself in a spatio-temporal map of the world in any act of demonstrative identification. Crucially, embedded within this line of thought there is a commitment to the idea that there can be no distinct act of demonstrative identification in which one so locates oneself, for any act of demonstrative identification is, according to the present line of thought, already related to the subject. Thus, embedded within the present line of thought, there is a commitment to the idea that 'I' must not itself be a demonstrative. The second line of thought comes a little after Evans' direct response to Nagel and essentially amounts to the notion that the use of 'I' *is vulnerable to reference failure* (1982, pp.249-255). As we will recall, it is characteristic of demonstratives to be vulnerable to reference failure. Essentially then,

embedded within this second line of thought, there is a commitment to the idea that 'I' is a demonstrative. Clearly, the two commitments cannot be held together.

96. So, we cannot accept Evans' response as it stands. Perhaps, however, our proper reaction should be to deny that part of Evans' framework wherein Evans conceives of 'I' as a demonstrative—this would make sense for us, in particular, because it is one of our commitments that 'I' cannot be a demonstrative—and simply hold on to the core of Evans' direct response to Nagel, that is, the first line of thought detailed in the preceding paragraph, as by itself an acceptable response. But that would be unsatisfactory; centrally, because Evans nowhere goes on to explain what the possibility of locating oneself in a spatio-temporal map of the world through being given a spatio-temporal particular other than oneself in a manner that places the spatio-temporal particular in the spatio-temporal world relative to oneself really comes to. The idea of this possibility is simply incomplete. Indeed, all it substantively amounts to in its present form is the negative idea that 'I' cannot be a demonstrative; thus, here, we find no substantial positive story about the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' and, accordingly, no substantial positive response to Nagel.

97. But there are at least two helpful lessons that are embodied in the failure of Evans' response. First, the failure reaffirms that we must be careful that in formulating our semantic account of 'I' we do not somehow render the use of 'I' as vulnerable to reference failure; indeed, the failure suggests that it would useful to make it an enquiry at some point to show how we have avoided so rendering 'I'. Second, it reaffirms that if our account is to respond in the positive to Nagel's question, it must actually present a substantial positive story regarding the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I'.

98. We approach the final part of our narrative with the following core ideas:

    I.   'I' cannot be a demonstrative, proper name, or definite description. And it is no help to try to account for 'I' as a special kind of demonstrative which is uniquely invulnerable to reference failure.

    II.   On the basis of (I), it is far from obvious what the character of the way of thinking associated with the use of 'I', or the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I', amounts to. Indeed, more seriously, on the basis of (I), we are apt to wonder whether the use of 'I' is really associated with a way of thinking, or whether the use of 'I' really embodies knowledge, at all.

    III.   Accordingly, given this last point, (I) motivates the following question, *Nagel's question*: is it possible for one to identify oneself as an element of the objective order?

    IV.   If Nagel's question can be answered in the positive, it can be answered through a semantic account of 'I' which reveals the fundamental character of the identifying embodied in the use of 'I'. But such a semantic account would have to avoid treating 'I' as a demonstrative, proper name, definite description, or indefinite description. And the one who attempts to formulate such an account must be careful to actively ensure at some point that they have not fallen into treating 'I' as any one of these expressions (i.e., by rendering the use of 'I' as vulnerable to reference failure).

IV

99. What we picked up from *The First Person* may seem to leave us with only a dubious path to tread. For as we affirm (i.) that the use of 'I' cannot be associated with a way of thinking that amounts to a discriminative capacity to distinguish a spatio-temporal particular on the basis of the particular's being given to sensory consciousness, that is, insofar as we affirm that 'I' cannot be a demonstrative, and (ii.) that the use of 'I' cannot be associated with a way of thinking that is founded upon the demonstrative mode of thought, more precisely, insofar as we affirm that 'I' cannot be a proper name which has its reference fixed by a demonstrative, it may seem that we have to set the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' against sensibility altogether. If this reasoning were right, then we would have to conclude that insofar as one can represent oneself in thought at all, one can only do so in the form of a non-sensible representation. But this reasoning is too fast. The notion that 'I' cannot be a demonstrative or proper name (or definite or indefinite description) does *not* legislate that the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' must be set against sensibility altogether. It merely legislates that the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' cannot arise thanks to the aid of sensory consciousness understood as sensory receptivity—that is, thanks to the aid of being given an object, or thanks to the aid of being affected by an object in a sensory manner—and what this reveals to us is that thinking whatever is expressed by the use of 'I' must be sufficient to provide identifying knowledge of a spatio-temporal particular *without the aid of receptivity*.

100. Our present aim is, of course, to formulate a semantic account of 'I' adequate to answer Nagel's question in the positive and, in that, to resolve our central task. It may help to present a general outline of how we shall do this—a touchstone that can be returned to

at any point. First (in paragraphs 101-106), we shall distinguish various forms of thought from one another and fix on a specific form of thought, *dyadic thought*, within which an idea of *actual distinction* is embodied. Second (in paragraphs 107-114), we shall think through the character of *dyadic dynamic self-thought* and introduce the term 'one-another-thought' and the dyadic pronoun 'one another'. Third (in paragraphs 115-119), we shall demonstrate that the condition that underlies specific one-another-thoughts is itself a one-another-thought, *universal one-another-thought*. Fourth (in paragraphs 120-129), we shall think through the significance of this last point and, in particular, come to see that merely by falling under the concept *Man*, merely by being a human being, one possesses identifying knowledge of oneself. Fifth (in paragraphs 130-142), we shall complete our semantic account of 'I'. Once we have achieved all of this, we will have answered Nagel's question in the positive and, as such, resolved our central task.

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101. Let us begin, following Sebastian Rödl (2014, pp.307-308), in distinguishing certain forms of thought.

102. In the first instance, we can characterise any given form of thought by the quantity of its subject. Doing so, we will come to at least the three following distinctions amongst forms of thought:

> (7) Singular thought - *Duberville Castle was built fifty years ago*; *A goose is grazing on the river-bank*

> (8) Plural thought - *Small cottages surround Duberville Castle*; *Geese are grazing on the banks of the river*

(9) Generic thought - *Cottages in the 18th century had only one room*; *Geese eat grass*

The distinction between singular thoughts and plural thoughts should be fairly clear. They are distinct from one another, of course, insofar as the quantity of the subject of any given singular thought is one, while the quantity of the subject of any given plural thought is more than one. Generic thoughts, on the other hand, are distinct insofar as they assert something general about a kind—not that *a* goose is eating grass, nor that *multiple* geese are eating grass but that geese, *in general*, eat grass.

103. We may also characterise thoughts by their form of temporality. Doing so, we are apt to come to the two following distinctions amongst forms of thought:

(10)   Static thought - *The apple was on the tree*; *The apple is on the ground*

(11)   Dynamic thought - *The apple fell to the ground*; *The apple is falling to the ground*; *The apple was falling*

Static thoughts are distinct insofar as they merely contrast the past and the present, while dynamic thoughts are distinct insofar as they contrast the *perfective* and the *progressive* (or *imperfective*) aspects. Static thoughts are simple enough, but it may help to explain what we mean by the perfective and the progressive aspects. Essentially, on the one hand, it is characteristic of the perfective aspect to represent an occurrence as *a completed whole*. We see the perfective aspect exhibited by the first of the three thoughts listed alongside our 'Dynamic' heading: *The apple fell to the ground* represents an occurrence that is a completed unit. On the other hand, it is characteristic of the progressive (or imperfective) aspect to represent an occurrence as *in progress* at some time. We see the progressive aspect exhibited by the last two thoughts listed alongside our 'Dynamic' heading: *The apple is falling to the ground* and *The apple was*

falling both represent an occurrence in progress. That said, we can also distinguish thoughts whose predication exhibits the contrast of aspect in a general way, specifically, time-generally:

(12)   Time-general thought - *Pear trees bloom in May*; *Tigers can swim*

104. Finally, we may characterise thoughts by the structure of the predication that is internal to them. Doing so, we are apt to come to the two following distinctions amongst forms of thought:

(13)   Monadic thought - *Peter is running*

(14)   Dyadic thought - *Peter is giving a paint brush to Paul*

Monadic thoughts characteristically predicate something of one thing (or of one kind). It may seem, in that light, that it must be right to say that dyadic thoughts are distinct insofar as they predicate something of *two* things (or of two kinds). But let us presuppose that the following is a genuine, distinct form of thought:

(15)   Dual thought - *Peter and Paul are painting the wall*

So long as we merely say that dyadic thoughts are distinct insofar as they predicate something of two, we will be incapable of distinguishing dyadic thoughts from dual thoughts. And yet they are distinct from one another. Ultimately, what distinguishes dyadic thoughts such as *Peter is giving a paint brush to Paul* is that they provide for the idea of *actual* distinction (between, specifically, two). No dual thought succeeds in providing for such an idea. For example, let us consider the dual thought *Peter and Paul are painting the wall*. As we express this thought in language, we invoke two distinct names 'Peter' and 'Paul', and doing so serves to show that the thought is of two. However, the predication involved in the thought does not embody any actual ground

for distinguishing two. Accordingly, an element of the dual thought in question—and, indeed, any dual thought which is of two individuals—is the *presumption* that there are two distinct individuals: an idea of *possible* distinction. As suggested, matters are different with respect to dyadic thoughts. After all, an element of the dyadic thought *Peter is giving a paint brush to Paul* is the comprehension that there are two who are distinct from one another, that is, specifically, insofar as there is the comprehension of one as giving a paint brush to another who is receiving a paint brush. Here, two are brought together *in the manner of being held apart*, specifically, as giving and being given and, thus, the dyadic thought in question, unlike any dual thought, involves an idea of *actual* distinction between two.

105. Crucially, all these distinctions between forms of thought can intersect in manifold ways. Here are two such ways:

(16)   Generic monadic thought - *Chimpanzees like fruit*

(17)   Generic dyadic (dynamic) thought - *Chimpanzees scratch each other*

By focusing on the distinction between generic monadic thoughts and generic dyadic thoughts we can re-articulate the unique character of dyadic thoughts. The generic monadic thought *Chimpanzees like fruit* predicates something (i.e., liking fruit) of a kind. In being general, it contains the idea of a manifold, namely, exemplars of the species *Chimpanzees*. However, the thought itself embodies no comprehension of an actual ground for distinguishing exemplars; indeed, it would be an accident, with respect to such a thought, if there really were multiple exemplars. Thus, the generic monadic thought *Chimpanzees like fruit* merely *allows* for the possibility of a manifold of multiple exemplars; thus, it contains, at best, the idea of a possible manifold. By contrast, an element of the generic dyadic thought *Chimpanzees scratch each other* is

the comprehension of an actual ground for distinguishing chimpanzees from one another. In this case, the thought does not merely allow for a manifold of multiple chimpanzees; in embodying the idea of chimpanzees set against each other as agent and patient (as scratching and scratched) it *requires* such a manifold. In this way, in the generic dyadic thought *Chimpanzees scratch each other*, an idea of an actual manifold is contained.

106. The preceding remarks reveal two connected ideas. First, they reveal that the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' cannot arise simply and straightforwardly from specifications of the form of monadic thought by itself. For, ultimately, no monadic thought on its own embodies an idea of actual distinction (cf. Rödl, 2014, p.314). For example, thinking the thought *Peter is running*, I comprehend Peter as doing something, namely, running, but, nonetheless, I do not comprehend him as distinct from anything else. We may want to object here. For we may suspect that the name 'Peter' contains the conception of a certain kind, namely, *human being*, and that, as such, it contains the idea of instances of this kind each of which are, on account of the fact that they are instances of a kind, distinct from one another; and if we suspect that that is the case, then we may object that the thought *Peter is running* does, in fact, embody a conception of Peter as distinct from other things, namely, those other instances of the kind to which Peter belongs. In response to this objection, we need to ask ourselves, presuming that the name 'Peter' does, in fact, contain a conception of a kind, whether the idea of the kind embodied in the name 'Peter' would amount to the idea of a *possible* manifold or the idea of an *actual* manifold. Here, the correct answer is surely that the idea in question would amount to the idea of a possible manifold. And then, so long as we note that, we will have refuted the objection: for the idea of a possible manifold, unlike the idea of an actual manifold, does not involve a

comprehension of an actual ground for distinguishing instances, it merely *allows* for the existence of multiple instances. Returning to the main thread of our present point, as we affirm this first general idea, that is, as we affirm that the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of 'I' cannot arise simply and straightforwardly from specifications of the form of monadic thought by itself, we reject the traditional thought that the use of 'I' ultimately embodies identifying knowledge of a *reflexive-monadic* sort. Of course, Anscombe rejected this traditional thought, too. But Anscombe went on to affirm that the use of 'I' embodies no identifying knowledge whatsoever. And that is not our path. We are committed to making sense of the use of 'I' as embodying identifying knowledge. But, what we can see now is that insofar as we succeed in doing so, we shall come to a more explicit understanding of a sort of identifying knowledge that is ultimately *not* simply reflexive-monadic in character (because it is ultimately not simply monadic.) And this leads on to the second key idea that our preceding remarks reveal: the idea that the identifying knowledge associated with 'I' must ultimately arise from specifications of a *dyadic* form of thought, for, as we have said, dyadic thoughts embody a comprehension of actual distinction between the things which they concern. This second idea, arising in connection with the first, is, I think, the key insight that Rödl presents in *Intentional Transaction* (2014). So, with all that said, let us follow Rödl in thinking through the nature of dyadic thought.

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107. Let us fix on thoughts of the form *Peter is giving an apple to Paul* and *Brutus is giving a decree to Caesar*.

108. From the perspectives of the relevant parties, these thoughts are acts of *practical thinking*, and each thought is associated with a certain *intentional transaction* (Rödl,

2014, p.308). As these thoughts are acts of practical thinking, they are not merely dyadic dynamic thoughts; more than that, they are *dyadic dynamic self-thoughts*.

109. We can regard a self-thought as a thought wherein thinking and being are one (cf. Rödl, 2014, pp.306-307). Essentially, at the very least, this is to say that a thing's being the referent of a self-thought coincides with its thinking the very self-thought in question; equivalently, it is to say that being the referent of a self-thought and thinking the very self-thought in question are one reality.

110. As Rödl sees (2014, pp.309-310), any dyadic dynamic self-thought such as *Brutus is giving a decree to Caesar* must always be *one* thought which is thought by whoever the subjects of the thought are. After all, a transaction, properly understood, is *one* action and, so, the intentional transaction constituted by the dyadic dynamic self-thought *Brutus is giving a decree to Caesar* is, equally, *one* action; and we can only associate *one* action with the thought *Brutus is giving a decree to Caesar* if we regard the thought as being thought *as one thought* by both Brutus and Caesar. For, if we think, on the contrary, that there are two thoughts, namely, Brutus' *I am giving a decree to Caesar* and Caesar's distinct *I am receiving a decree from Brutus*, then we shall have to say that, as there are these two thoughts, there are two intentional actions, and not one intentional transaction. Accordingly, dyadic dynamic self-thought must *itself* be transactional. Brutus' act of thinking must be the *same act of thinking* as Caesar's act of thinking: it is Caesar's *thinking toward* Brutus, it is Brutus' *thinking toward* Caesar. This is manifest when we say that the dyadic dynamic self-thought *Brutus is giving a decree to Caesar* embodies two *perspectives*: first, Brutus' *I am giving a decree to you*; second, Caesar's *I am receiving a decree from you*—here, the two perspectives constitute the same act of thinking.

111. In light of this, Rödl essentially recommends exchanging the term 'dyadic dynamic self-thought' for '*one-another-thought*' (2014, p.310). The advantage of doing this seems to lie, most notably, in the capacity of the new term to bring to mind the idea of 'one another', like 'one, the other' or 'each other', as a reflexive pronoun which serves to pick up the subjects of a dyadic dynamic self-thought (one subject, and the other subject) and to remind us that any such thought is *one* act of thinking across 'one, and the other' of the subjects. We shall follow Rödl's recommendation.

112. Once Rödl has made the exchange, he puts forward two remarks of the first importance. First, drawing on Castañeda's formulation of the special starred pronoun, which we discussed earlier, he says:

> "It is familiar that we must distinguish an ordinary reflexive pronoun, which indicates the identity of the subject with the object of the thought, from a special reflexive, which indicates that the thought itself is a consciousness of this identity. Castañeda assisted the English language, which lacks a separate word for this pronoun, by introducing one, the starred pronoun, "he*" (Castañeda 1966). We may do the English language the same service with respect to "one another". As Peter is giving an apple to Paul, they think that one is giving an apple to the other, equivalently, that one is being given an apple by the other. In order to indicate that this is [one-another-thought], we star: Paul and Peter think that he* is giving an apple to him*. This is Peter's *I am giving an apple to you*, and it is Paul's *I am being given an apple by you*. The starred pronouns are the first person pronoun and the second-person pronoun." (ibid., my interpolation)

Here, Rödl puts forward the idea that we can formulate the dyadic dynamic self-thought which Paul and Peter both think in the manner "Paul and Peter think that he* is giving

an apple to him*”. Most notably, the formulation has the merit of highlighting, by drawing on Castañeda's formulation of the special starred pronoun, that Paul and Peter think the very same thought: from Peter's perspective, the thought *I am giving an apple to you* and from Paul's perspective the thought *I am receiving an apple from you*. Indeed, more than being a merely terminological point, what this clearly draws out is a crucial idea that we have already drawn attention to: that any one-another-thought is a *self-conscious thought* (equivalently, a *self-thought*), a single thought expressible by either partner, from either perspective, through a use of 'I' and 'You'. That said, immediately after this passage, Rödl goes on to say:

> “However, it is not the case that one is the first person pronoun and the other the second person. Both are both. This may lead us to say that the first person and the second person are the same…But this is misleading. Both pronouns are both because they are not two pronouns, but *one*, one dyadic pronoun, “one another”. (ibid.)

Here, Rödl puts forward the crucial idea that we are not to think of the starred pronouns as the first person and second person pronouns, respectively. Both starred pronouns are, in fact, *both* the first person and second person pronouns. And, ultimately, this is because we are to think of the starred pronouns as *together constituting the one dyadic pronoun 'one another', which picks up both subjects of the thought*. This does not mean that any talk of the first person and second-person pronoun in the context of one-another-thought becomes incoherent. But it does mean that talk of the pronouns in this context as somehow distinct from one another must be. Accordingly, we can reintroduce talk of the first person pronoun and the second person pronoun in the context of one-another-thought just so long as we say that both are, here, fundamentally,

the same pronoun, which we can regard as divided within itself, the dyadic pronoun 'one another'.

113. Of course, this second idea must be reflected at the level of thought. As 'I' and 'You' are not somehow distinct from one another when it comes to one-another-thought, neither is the way of thinking associated with the use of 'I' somehow distinct from the way of thinking associated with the use of 'You' when it comes to one-another-thought. Indeed, as 'I' and 'You' are fundamentally *one* pronoun when it comes to one-another-thought, the way of thinking associated with the use of 'I' and the way of thinking associated with the use of 'You' must fundamentally be *one* way of thinking when it comes to one-another-thought, specifically, *one* dyadic way of thinking.

114. Before we press on, it may help to clarify one point. In particular, it may help to clarify what justifies us in affirming that the dyadic pronoun 'one-another' is ultimately divided within itself *between 'I' and 'You'* and not some other linguistic device or devices. Here, the justification arises, perhaps ultimately, from the fact that one-another-thoughts are, as we have said, self-thoughts (or self-conscious thoughts), thoughts wherein thinking and being are one. So, for example, it would be entirely incorrect to claim that the dyadic pronoun 'one-another' might be divided within itself between demonstratives which are used to refer to certain individuals. For in demonstrative thought, thinking and being are not one: a thing can be the referent of a demonstrative thought and not be thinking a demonstrative thought; whereas, two things being the referents of 'I' and 'You' in a one-another-thought coincides with their thinking such a thought, it is one reality.

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115. With all that said, Rödl enjoins us to consider what the form of consciousness that underlies any specific one-another-thought amounts to, or, equivalently, what the condition of one-another-thought is (Rödl, 2014, pp.311-313). In terms of Brutus and Caesar's one-another-thought, we can say that Brutus, giving a decree to Caesar, is conscious of Caesar as a potential partner in transaction, and what Rödl wants us to consider is the nature of Brutus' consciousness of Caesar as a potential partner in transaction.

116. In the first instance, as Rödl sees (2014, p.311), the condition cannot be a matter of monadic time-general thought (i.e., *x can do A*, *x does A*). That it cannot be is implicit in the following of Rödl's remarks:

> "But now we must recall that Peter's giving to Paul is Paul's thinking of receiving from Peter. Paul is someone to be given something by Peter only if he is conscious of Peter as someone from whom to receive something. Paul is a partner of Peter's in transaction only if he, Paul, is conscious of Peter as a partner in transaction. Therefore Peter, being conscious of Paul as a partner in transaction, is conscious of Paul as someone who is conscious of him, Peter, as such a partner." (ibid.)

Essentially, the condition that underlies any specific one-another-thought cannot be a matter of monadic time-general thought (i.e., *Paul can be a partner in transaction*) because, in terms of Rödl's example, a monadic time-general thought relating to Paul would not represent Paul as conscious of Peter, which, for Paul to be a partner in transaction, he must be.

117. So, on the contrary, as the condition must be Paul's consciousness of Peter as partner in transaction, it must *itself* be dyadic, it must itself be a one-another-thought. When we

see this, we see matters aright. For when we now consider the thought in virtue of thinking which Paul is a partner in transaction as a thought of Peter's we can see that it *is* Peter's consciousness of Paul as a partner in transaction (Rödl, 2014, p.312).

118. Accordingly, the condition underlying the one-another-thought *Brutus is giving a decree to Caesar* is itself a one-another-thought, in particular, it is the one-another-thought in which Brutus is conscious of Caesar as a partner in transaction and Caesar is conscious of Brutus as a partner in transaction (2014, p.312). It is crucial to note that nothing here depends, significantly, on the peculiar character of Brutus or Caesar. On the contrary, the condition of the one-another-thought *Brutus is giving a decree to Caesar* is a *universal* condition. We see this idea, and the significance of this idea, when we reflect on the fact that that in virtue of which Brutus is a potential partner in transaction must be the *same* as that in virtue of which he is a potential partner in transaction with Cassius, Cicero, Octavian, and so on. (To say otherwise would be to affirm that that in virtue of which Brutus is a potential partner in transaction with Cassius is due to the peculiar character of Cassius, and that that in virtue of which he is a potential partner in transaction with Cicero is due to the given character of Cicero, and so on.) What is more, as Brutus' being a partner in transaction with Caesar is his thinking the one-another-thought in thinking which he is conscious of Caesar as a partner in transaction and, keeping in mind that that in virtue of which Brutus is a partner in transaction with Caesar is the same as that in virtue of which he is a potential partner in transaction with Cassius, Cicero, Octavian, and so on, then it follows that, in the very same act of thinking, Brutus is conscious of all those others as partners in transaction. Indeed, more generally, Brutus is conscious of *anyone* who is a partner in transaction as a partner in transaction. And this is not all. We will recall that the act of thinking in which Brutus is conscious of Caesar as a partner in transaction is the same

act of thinking as the act of thinking in which Caesar is conscious of him, Brutus, as a partner in transaction. So, in light of this, we can say that in the act in question *any partner in transaction* is conscious of Brutus as a partner in transaction. Indeed, in this act anyone is conscious of anyone as a partner in transaction. In accordance with these observations we can say that the condition which underlies any specific one-another-thought is a universal thought, a *universal one-another-thought* (Rödl, 2014, p.313).

119. And this last point means that the general form of thought, or condition, underlying specific one-another-thoughts is itself a self-conscious form of thought (i.e., a form of self-thought); in other words, here, the general form of thought that we are concerned with, universal one-another-thought, and the specifications, or the determinations, of that general form of thought, specific one-another-thoughts, are both self-conscious forms of thought. This, of course, complements what we said in paragraph 114.

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120. As universal one-another-thought is the form of any specific transaction, we can regard the universal relation as exhausting the form of the species *partner in transaction* (cf. Rödl, 2014, p.314). Indeed, it is because of this that we can say that there is no such thing as *discovering* that another is a partner in transaction for, insofar as universal one-another-thought underlies, and is the form of, any transaction whatsoever, any partner in transaction must always already be conscious of any other partner in transaction as a partner in transaction (Rödl, 2014, pp.313). Another way of coming to this last idea is to note that what the initial claim of this paragraph reveals is that any partner in transaction must always already be in an *essentially dyadic nexus* with any other partner in transaction and that, *as such*, they must always already be conscious of any other partner in transaction as a partner in transaction.

121. And we can add that any recognition of partner by partner whatsoever will be a specification of the universal one-another-thought in which any partner is always already conscious of any other partner in transaction as a partner in transaction (Rödl, 2014, pp.313-314). Even the mere *apprehension* of partner by partner—and anything seen in a partner—will suffice to be formally transaction, for it will be one partner recognising another partner.

122. The following idea falls out of these last two paragraphs: being a partner in transaction with another is thinking a specification of the universal one-another-thought in which partner is brought together with partner *in the manner of being held apart*. And this idea must be the key to understanding how it is that we conceive of ourselves as sensibly distinct from one another. For, internal to this idea is the thought that simply *being* a partner in transaction with another is thinking a thought the thought of which *is* the thought of the sensible distinction of partner from partner. (This is so for *any* recognition of partner by partner whatsoever—equivalently, *any* apprehension of any partner by partner whatsoever.)

123. We can say that we, as self-conscious subjects, recognise our material distinction. This is worth reflecting on. In the self-conscious subject there is an intimate relation between material existence and the subject's recognition of that existence. (As matter is the ground of distinction of those things which are the same in form (Rödl, 2014, p.314), the material existence of a thing is its existence *as distinct* from other things.) Indeed, this is not strong enough. What we have to say is that in the self-conscious subject material existence and the subject's recognition of that very existence *come together*. Better still, we can say the following: *in being*, the self-conscious subject is materially distinct and recognises its material distinction. Or, finally, we might say: the material existence of the self-conscious subject and the self-conscious subject's recognition of

its material existence are *one reality*. That said, since we have come to find that it is acts of thinking that are specifications of universal one-another-thought that afford comprehension of actual sensible distinction, we can note that universal one-another-thought must be the principle of the material existence of the self-conscious subject, where the material existence of the subject and the subject's recognition of its material existence come together (cf. Rödl, 2014, p.314). (Of course, it is not the principle of material existence in general, but the material existence of the *self-conscious subject* where the material existence of the subject and the subject's recognition of its material existence are one reality.)

124. As universal one-another-thought is the principle of the material existence of the self-conscious subject, "it is the principle of the self-conscious subject's animality: her spatial articulation, her manner of movement" (ibid.) It is so because the self-conscious subject's animality and the self-conscious subject's recognition of its material distinction come together. As Rödl notes, "this justifies replacing the term *partner in transaction* by *man*" (ibid.).

125. When we do this, we can say the following: any man comprehends himself to be materially distinct from another merely in virtue of falling under the concept *Man*, for by falling under the concept *Man* one is conscious of others as falling under the same concept by thinking a specification of the universal one-another-thought which underlies the possibility of falling under the concept *Man*, and thoughts which are specifications of this universal one-another-thought are thoughts the thought of which are the thought of that which falls under the concept *Man* as being brought together in such a manner as to be held apart (and, thus, represented as distinct). Accordingly, as we fall under the concept *Man*, we are afforded a comprehension of our actual sensible distinction.

126. With an eye to stressing the relational aspect of one-another-thought we can put this last idea another way by saying the following: merely by falling under the concept *Man*, we comprehend ourselves as distinct from one another because to fall under the concept *Man* is to be engaged in an act of thinking a *relational* thought in which self-conscious subjects falling under the concept *Man* are yoked together in such a manner as to be held apart and, so, represented as distinct.

127. I think that we should exchange the term 'universal one-another-thought' for the term 'Relation of Reason'. There are two central reasons for doing so. First, the new term may be regarded as more clearly bringing out the fact that insofar as we are essentially defining the term *Man* in terms of universal one-another-thought and, in so doing, defining the concept *Man* in terms of *a form of thought*, we are treating it, as Rödl sees (2014, p.314), as on a par with the concept *Rational Agent*. Second, insofar as we regard Reason itself as self-conscious the new term more clearly stresses that insofar as we are defining the concept *Man* in terms of one-another-thought, we are defining in terms of a form of *self-thought*. And, among much else, this would serve to stress that where the Relation of Reason is the principle of the material existence of the self-conscious subject, it is a form of self-thought that is the principle of the material existence of the self-conscious subject. As we draw on this new terminology, we can say the following: as we fall under the concept *Man*, we comprehend ourselves as distinct from one another because to fall under the concept *Man* is to be engaged in an act of thinking a specification of the *Relation of Reason*.

128. We can put the remarks of the last few paragraphs together. First, what we have keep in mind is that what it is to fall under the concept *Man just is* to stand in certain relations to others (i.e., mere apprehension of another, more substantively acting toward another, and so on) where to stand in these relations involves thinking specifications of the

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Relation of Reason. Otherwise put, we have to keep in mind that what it is to fall under the concept *Man just is* to be in a dyadic nexus with another where to be in any such dyadic nexus must involve thinking a specification of the Relation of Reason. So long as we keep this point in mind, then we will grasp that the concept *Man* is *internal to specifications of the Relation of Reason*. And once we grasp this—while being aware, also, that as one thinks a specification of the Relation of Reason, one is afforded a comprehension of one's sensible distinction (and the sensible distinction of another)— we can note that it is on account of the fact that the concept *Man* is internal to specifications of the Relation of Reason that all those that fall under the concept *Man* (i.e., all human beings) comprehend their sensible distinction merely by falling under the concept *Man* (i.e., merely by being human beings).

129. And we can stress—what has already been implied—that in all this talk about the concept *Man*, we are, in effect, onto an idea of what it is to be a human being; in particular, we are onto the idea that what it is to be a human being just is to stand in certain relations with others—relations of apprehension, relations of acting toward, and so on—where to stand in these relations involves thinking specifications of the Relation of Reason. According to this idea, being a human being is an essentially relational matter, one that requires two.

<center>**</center>

130. We conceive our actual sensible material distinction by thinking specifications of the Relation of Reason. In other words, we comprehend our actual sensible distinction through acts of thinking which are specifications of the Relation of Reason. This comprehension, being comprehension of our actual sensible distinction, amounts to identifying knowledge of ourselves. We need to note this last formulation: this

comprehension, being comprehension of our actual sensible distinction, amounts to identifying knowledge of *ourselves*. We have not said: this comprehension, being comprehension of *one's* actual sensible distinction, amounts to identifying knowledge of *oneself*. The first formulation is correct. For in acts of thinking which are specifications of the Relation of Reason, we conceive ourselves as distinct in virtue of a thought in which *two* are brought together *in the manner of being held apart*. So, strictly speaking, acts of thinking which are specifications of the Relation of Reason do not contain the idea of the actual sensible distinction of one, but, rather, of *two*. This is reflected at the level of language, because acts of thinking which are specifications of the Relation of Reason are, strictly speaking, expressible by sentences wherein the respective occurrences of 'I' and 'You' are both fundamentally the same pronoun, the *dyadic* pronoun 'one another'.

131. This might lead us to doubt whether we can coherently formulate a response to Nagel's question by formulating a semantic account of 'I'. There is a grain of truth in this. We cannot coherently formulate a response to Nagel's question by *merely* formulating a semantic account of 'I', for it is only thanks to acts of thinking that are specifications of the Relation of Reason that we comprehend our actual sensible distinction. And these acts of thinking are, strictly speaking, expressible by the use of the dyadic pronoun 'one another'. But this does not prevent us from formulating a semantic account of 'I' by *abstracting* 'I' from the dyadic pronoun 'one another'. Indeed, this is what we must do.

132. Essentially, we can conceive of 'I' and 'You' as terms of address. As terms of address, we can then regard the use of 'I' and the use of 'You' as expressing specifications of the Relation of Reason in the form of verbal or written communication. Otherwise put, if we were to conceive of the Relation of Reason as a universal dyadic quantifier which ranges over any partner to any partner, then the use of 'I' and 'You' could subsequently

be thought of as instantiating the dyadic structure exhibited by this universal quantifier. In actuality, the idea of 'I' and 'You' as terms of address and as devices the use of which serve to express specifications of the Relation of Reason is a familiar idea. For, as someone utters a sentence containing 'I' toward us, *we* turn their utterance of 'I' into 'You'. For instance, as NN says toward us "I am hungry" we turn his use of 'I' into 'You' so as to entertain the thought expressible by the utterance "You are hungry". In this, it is rather apt to think of the use of 'I' as analogous to the raising of one's hand. After all, on the conception we are articulating, the use of 'I' is an instance of address, a term meant to signal that the user is the locus of some matter (being hungry, for instance). Similarly, when a student raises his hand after hearing a teacher explain a point in class, the student means his act of raising his hand to signal that he, the student, is the locus of wanting to ask a question. And, as when we hear another person use 'I' and, in doing so, turn it into 'You', the teacher, upon noting the student's raised hand, will think the thought expressible by the sentence "*you* want to ask a question". On this manner of conceiving 'I' and 'You', the parties to any relevant utterance think *toward one another*, in *one* dyadic one-another-thought. Accordingly, the thought expressible by NN's "I am hungry" is the *very same thought* that his audience thinks when they turn NN's 'I' into 'You'.

133. As a notable aside, let us imagine a conversation between two people, namely, Bob and Neil, in which Bob says to Neil *of a person not involved in the conversation* 'He is very relieved'. In this case, the use of 'He' cannot be accounted for by straightforwardly extending the notion of thinking *toward one another* involved in the use of 'I' and 'You'. After all, the person that Bob's utterance concerns in this case is not a party in the conversation at all. In other words, the problem seems to be this: in this situation, Bob is thinking toward Neil but he is not thinking toward the person his utterance

concerns; although, indeed, he is thinking about that person, and this might seem to mean that with respect to 'He'-thoughts of this sort (or 'She'-thoughts, and so on) we are compelled to say that there is a manner of thinking of others not through specifications of the Relation of Reason.

134. I think that the key to understanding 'He'-thoughts of the kind in question lies in coming to terms with 'He' as a special sort of demonstrative. On the one hand, we can say that the 'He'-user sees the person that they mean to refer to with 'He' and that this seeing enables them to refer to the person in question and, on the other hand, we need to add that this seeing is itself a recognition of the person as one who falls under the concept Man, as one who is a human being, and that, thus, the sensory presence of the other person is itself a form of one-another-thought. As we hold these thoughts together we treat the way of thinking associated with the use of 'He' as, primarily, a way of thinking which is itself a form of one-another-thought. There is a great deal more that we could say about 'He'-thoughts but, for now, we shall be content with this brief sketch of the way of thinking associated with the use of 'He' which speaks toward affirming the unity of 'He' and 'I'.

135. Returning to the main thread of our present point, it should be clear that in all that we are saying, we are respecting the idea—and, as such, can abstract a notion of 'I' and 'You' from the dyadic pronoun 'one another'—that the pronouns are always fundamentally the pronoun 'one another'. It is a consequence of this that, though we can regard NN's use of 'I' as the use of a term of address, we must conceive of 'I' as, *fundamentally*, the dyadic pronoun 'one another'. Equivalently, 'You' must be conceived of as, fundamentally, the dyadic pronoun 'one another'. Both pronouns are, fundamentally, the same essentially partitioned pronoun. What is more, as this is the case, and as we conceive of 'I' and 'You' as terms of address, we conceive of their use

as manifesting a subject's comprehension of the material distinction of all those party to the address. Here, I think we have essentially hit upon a fundamental insight of German Idealism. It is present in, for example, the following of Fichte's remarks:

> "As has been demonstrated, the concept of individuality is a *reciprocal concept*, i.e. a concept that can be thought only in relation to another thought, and one that (with respect to its form) is conditioned by another—indeed by an *identical*—thought. This concept can exist in a rational being only if it is posited as *completed* by another rational being. Thus this concept is never *mine*; rather, it is - in accordance with my own admission and the admission of the other - *mine and his*, *his and mine*; it is a shared concept within which two consciousnesses are unified into one." (2000, p.45)

Strikingly, I think we can also read part of what we are saying into the following lines of Dante's *Paradiso*:

> "And there before my eyes with wings spread wide
>> that splendid image shone, shaped by the souls
>> rejoicing in their interwoven joy
>
> They were set there like splendid rubies lit
>> each of them by a gleaming ray of sun
>> which was reflected straight into my eyes.
>
> And what I have to tell you here and now
>> no tongue has told or ink has written down
>> nor any fantasy imagined it,
>
> For I could hear the beak and see it move;

I heard its voice use words like *I* and *Mine*

when in conception it was *We* and *Ours*. (Canto XIX, 1986, p.225)

To be sure, despite the similarity, which may nonetheless still appear striking, what Dante calls our attention to in this passage is not quite what we are describing. We might say that part of what we are doing is elucidating the dyadic nexus that constitutes the concept *Man*. In doing so, we have seen that 'We' (or, strictly speaking, 'one-another') takes precedence over 'I'. What Dante describes is 'I' becoming submerged, in a sense, in 'We' insofar as all the voices in the situation that he describes which are using 'I' are exclaiming the very same things. But when we note this, we come to another striking point; this time, a striking *contrast* between what we are saying and what Dante describes. In Dante's description, all the voices are exclaiming the same things, I take it, on account of the fact that the speakers all grasp, and want to give voice to, the divine knowledge that they have acquired. So, in Dante's description, it is almost as though 'We' takes precedence over 'I' thanks to the Divine. Whereas, again, part of what we have been saying is that 'We' (or, again, 'one-another') takes precedence over 'I' insofar as the nexus that constitutes the concept *Man* is itself dyadic. So, in what we are saying, 'We' (or 'one-another') takes precedence over 'I' not so much thanks to the Divine but thanks, really, to the constitution of the concept *Man*. (Or, perhaps, what we should say is that the dyadic constitution of the concept *Man* is itself divine, in a sense.)

136. Once we conceive of 'I' in abstraction from the dyadic pronoun 'one another' in the manner we have described, we can understand 'I' as a genuine linguistic device the use of which embodies an idea of the actual sensible distinction of oneself and, so, identifying knowledge of oneself. Of course, this does not reinstate the reflexive-monadic conception of 'I', for 'I' is, fundamentally, the dyadic pronoun 'one another'. What we should say is the following: fundamentally, 'I' is the dyadic pronoun 'one

another' and, to this extent, the use of 'I' fundamentally embodies a reflexive-dyadic way of thinking of a spatio-temporal particular. But, so long as we do not lose sight of this, we can still understand the use of 'I' as embodying identifying knowledge of oneself which, crucially, does not amount to a discriminative capacity to distinguish a spatio-temporal particular from all others on the basis of the spatio-temporal particular's being given to sensory consciousness. On the contrary, it embodies identifying knowledge of a spatio-temporal particular (oneself) which arises *without the aid of receptivity* and, yet, provides for the *sensible* representation of oneself. Having demonstrated this, we have provided a semantic account of 'I' conceived of as a term of address the use of which embodies identifying knowledge of the sort described, which, along with the other terms of address ('You'. 'He', 'She', 'They', and so on) must conform to the Generality Constraint.

137. But there is a looming concern: the concern that our account may, in fact, treat 'I' as one of those terms that we have said we must not treat it as (i.e., as a definite description; an indefinite description; a proper name, or a demonstrative). Only if we have formulated an account wherein this concern is avoided, may our account stand to resolve Nagel's question.

138. As we begin to consider this concern, one particular worry is apt to arise: the worry that our account renders the use of 'I' vulnerable to reference failure (and that, thus, our account treats 'I' as a demonstrative). The worry is apt to arise precisely insofar as we keep in mind that we have affirmed that the use of 'I' is associated with a way of thinking of oneself as a sensible thing, a way of thinking of oneself which, as such, employs the *senses* at some level; after all, with respect to demonstratives, it is precisely on account of the role of sensory consciousness in demonstrative thought that the use of a demonstrative is always vulnerable to reference failure.

139. But we need not harbour any such worry; in our account, the use of 'I' is never vulnerable to reference failure. To draw this out, we need only return to what we said about the concept *Man* and relate that to what we have just said about the use of 'I'. Again, what it is to fall under the concept *Man just is* to stand in certain relations with others where these relations involve thinking specifications of the Relation of Reason. In this way, the concept *Man* is internal to specifications of the Relation of Reason. Crucially, as we have sought to stress, as one thinks a specification of the Relation of Reason one is thinking a thought the thought of which *is* the thought of the sensible distinction of person from person; so, as one thinks a specification of the Relation of Reason one possesses identifying knowledge of oneself (and another). When we draw all this together we have the idea that merely by falling under the concept *Man*, merely by being a human being, one possesses identifying knowledge of oneself—indeed, possession of that identifying knowledge is an element of what it is to be a human being. Now, as we conceived 'I' in abstraction from the dyadic pronoun 'one another', we conceived of 'I' as serving to express this very identifying knowledge, identifying knowledge of oneself which one always already possesses simply on account of being a human being. Here, there is no room for the possibility of reference failure in the use of 'I'. Of course, no such explanation can be used to show that demonstratives are invulnerable to reference failure: for, whereas merely falling under the concept *Man* is enough to possess identifying knowledge of oneself—indeed, possession of that identifying knowledge is an element of what it is to fall under the concept Man—merely falling under the concept *Man* is insufficient to provide for the identifying knowledge embodied in the use of a demonstrative; in the case of demonstrative thought, one is reliant on the presence of a spatio-temporal particular to receptive sensory

consciousness for possession of identifying knowledge, and it is as a consequence of this reliance that the possibility of demonstrative reference failure opens up.

140. And we should not worry that our account has treated 'I' as a proper name, either. After all, the way of thinking associated with the use of proper names does not reach through sensory consciousness; one does not need to be seeing the referent of a proper name to competently use a proper name. Whereas, on our account of 'I', the use of 'I' always embodies identifying knowledge and, thus, a way of thinking of a spatio-temporal particular, that is, a way of thinking which does reach through sensory consciousness but not in such a way that there is the sort of reliance on receptive sensory consciousness embodied in demonstrative thought nor, as such, the possibility of reference failure.

141. That said, it seems to me that once we have responded to the worry that we may have treated 'I' as vulnerable to reference failure—and, equally, as a demonstrative—and the worry that we may have treated 'I' as a proper name, we can conclude, more generally, that we can move beyond the looming concern of paragraph 137. For there is no indication that we have treated 'I' as a definite description or an indefinite description.

142. And, as we move beyond the looming concern, we can, I think, conclude that our semantic account of 'I' answers Nagel's question in the positive and, in that, resolves our central task.

Conclusion

To close our investigation, I want to make three final remarks.

First: I am reminded of an especially disturbing passage from Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*:

> "We live together, we act on, and react to, one another; but always and in all circumstances we are by ourselves. The martyrs go hand in hand into the arena; they are crucified alone. Embraced, the lovers desperately try to fuse their insulated ecstasies into a single self-transcendence; in vain. By its very nature every embodied spirit is doomed to suffer and enjoy in solitude. Sensations, feelings, insights, fancies—all these are private and, except through symbols and at second hand, incommunicable. We can pool information about experiences, but never the experiences themselves. From family to nation, every human group is a society of island universes." (1954, pp.12-13)

Say what we may, do what we can, we are inescapably isolated from one another *at the root of things*. This, I take it, is Huxley's thought. It is a somewhat common thought, or at least feeling, I think. Something like it haunts many of us at some point. Yet, I also think that what we have said in our investigation must speak against Huxley's thought. Fundamentally, I do not conceive myself in isolation in the world. On the contrary, my very conception of myself as an element of the world is possible only because, primarily, I conceive of myself with *others*. *At the root of things*, we conceive ourselves as *together* with one another. In this way, the feeling of isolation is a sentiment against our nature.

Second: in the *Phaedrus*, we find Socrates remarking:

"But I have no time for such things; and the reason, my friend, is this. I am still unable, as the Delphic inscription orders, to know myself; and it really seems to be ridiculous to look into other things before I have understood that" (1997, 229e–30a)

Rödl makes the following observation about Socrates' claim:

"Socrates maintains that, as long as he lacks self-knowledge, it is ridiculous to pursue any other knowledge (or, perhaps, other-knowledge). This cannot be true if self-knowledge is knowledge of a special object, a special topic, a special content: the self. It can be true only if self-knowledge is distinguished by its manner of knowing. Socrates' question cannot rule philosophy, it cannot rule human life, if self-knowledge, as knowledge of a certain area of reality, lies alongside knowledge of other areas of reality." (2017, pp.280-281)

If Socrates is after understanding of that which Rödl describes, he is after understanding of a way of knowing. I think we can say that this way of knowing is self-conscious knowing. As we have seen, the ultimate principle of this way of knowing is the Relation of Reason. Thus, we might say that insofar as philosophy seeks understanding of self-conscious knowing, its ultimate principle is the Relation of Reason and, in that, the essential togetherness of any person with any person.

Finally: in *Mind and World*, John McDowell remarks that we, unlike animals, are "open to the world" (1996, p.115). As the Relation of Reason is the ultimate principle of the self-conscious thought in virtue of which we are open to the world, it is on the basis, ultimately, of the Relation of Reason that we are open to the world. I think this justifies exchanging the term 'Relation of Reason', if we like, for a final formulation: *Light*. After all, it is by light that we see. And it is by Light, we have found, that our eyes are open to ourselves and the world.

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