WHAT ARE WORDS FOR?

Grammar, which has a similar significance for language as that of logic for judgement, mixes the psychological with the logical. (Frege, 1897: 154)

Routinely (to understate) we perform acts of representing in speaking some language or other, e.g., English. Our words (the ones we use, so used) represent things as a certain way. Accordingly, we do so in them. They, and we in them, express a certain thought. On one reading of this, in such a case there is a thought which is the thought thus expressed; if we were really speaking the language in question—using its words for what they are for—they their meaning what they do determines what thought, in the circumstances, would thus be expressed, so which thought is the one expressed. Neither half of this reading is quite right. Crucially, how an act of representing was apart from how it represented things—all else so of what then occurred—does not by itself decide what thought it might count as having expressed. Further considerations come into play. Or so I will argue. If I am right, then each half of the above reading misconceives the relation between a thought and its expression. It does so because it misconceives the function of a thought. This last, then, will be the focus of attention here. In attending to it I will be following out Frege’s leads, though perhaps beyond what he would find congenial. The key point to be established is: there is no one way of counting thoughts. The notion same thought, does not decide when there is a case of one thought occurring twice, when of two thoughts, each occurring once.

1. Truth and Recognition: (In a central case) words express thoughts. There are two ways of hearing that. On one, for each suitably shaped (say, English) string, there is the thought it expresses. Such is one idea as to what words are for. It may be suggested by some things one can say truly about a sentence (again, in a central case). Take, for example, the sentence, ‘Pigs fly’. It speaks of pigs as flyers. It seems not entirely unfair to say: it says them to be such. Thoughts are, Frege tells us, ‘that by which truth can come into question at all’. A thought brings truth into question in a determinate way; a way which asks for an answer ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. So if ‘Pigs fly’, qua English sentence, is an expression of a thought, then it is an expression of what is (putatively) either true or false. A semantic theory might then identify it as meaning what it does, or at least take a large step in that direction, in saying when the thought it expresses would be true—in assigning it a truth condition. Similarly throughout at least a wide class of sentences. I will call this the ‘truth-conditional’ conception of meaning (TC).

On another understanding, to say that words (or, more specifically, sentences) express thoughts is to say that this is what they are for doing. Not that the sentence ‘Pigs fly’ need, for its part, express any one thought in particular, or even express a thought. But it is something fit for service in expressing them. The idea might then be: for it (or its parts) to mean what it does (or they do) is for it to be for the particular form of service it is; to be, in English, for a particular role in such expression. English makes it a device for a particular use in such expression (where expression is to be done in speaking English, in using its expressions for what they thus are for).

Reflecting on representing-as provides some reason for thinking that such is what words
are for. Representing things as a certain way can be just so picturing them, or being so guided in one’s treatment of things. It can be just holding a particular posture towards the world (grammatically a state). Such is one of its two main forms. In the other, that which concerns us here, representing is, grammatically, an act, or performance. It is authoring what represents things as thus and so. I will sometimes call such representing-as ‘allorepresenting’. Plausibly, such a form of representing-as has not occurred at all unless it is recognisable for the representing that it is (the term ‘recognisable’ being to some extent negotiable). In the case of this form of representing-as, the idea is, to be is to be recognisable. So, e.g., if Sid’s toast is burning, Pia cannot represent things as that way in uttering the word, ‘Philology recapitulates mycology’, or writing a note that reads, ‘$\mathbb{S}^2 \times \mathbb{S}^2 \cong \mathbb{C}$’, at least without a lot of stage setting. She may type out the note, she may pass it to Sid, but (again, without the setting), she will simply not have represented things as such that his toast is burning. She will have authored no such thing.

I would like to argue this point in more detail but will refrain here. (But see my 2013/2014.) It does, though, lend the English words, ‘Your toast is burning’ a certain beauty. If Pia and Sid both speak English, if Sid will not think that in uttering those words Pia is just bantering, or making allegorical allusion to the tenure of his lease on their relationship, or otherwise not using the words as meaning what they do, then their speaking as they do of toast burning might intelligibly make her recognisable as representing Sid’s toast as burning.

The general idea, then, is that words are devices for aiding us in making or representing recognisable—so that, notably, in this form of representing, we may author the expression of thoughts (or thought). So that for words of a language such as English to mean what they do is, in the sentential case, for them to be a particular device for the expression of a thought, in other cases, for them to make a definite contribution to forming such devices. And in both cases, for two expressions to differ in meaning is for them to differ in the specific such aid they put on offer (qua bits of English). I bracket the usual issues, notably ambiguity.

I will call this conception of what words are for the authoring-tools model, ATM for short. I subscribe to ATM. So, notably, does David Kaplan (Vide, e.g., 1989), at least to an extent. (I will end this essay by saying to just what extent). Familiarly (at least on one reading of him), for a sentence to mean what it does is (so near as matters) for it to relate circumstances of its use (as so meaning) in a particular way to the thought thus expressed. (There is another reading of Kaplan, but this will do for now.) The ensuing discussion will be within the ATM model.

2. First Fruits: Kaplan stresses one immediate consequence of ATM. Suppose two English sentences differ in meaning. They thereby provide different routes to making the expression of a thought recognisable. Since they are not themselves in the business of being, as such, the expression of a thought, nothing follows as to whether in using one one would express a different thought than had he used the other. For Kaplan this is particularly important where the difference in meaning is located in the difference between two expressions, each serving to make the expression of thought recognisable as an expression of a singular thought about some given object (same object both times). For example, consider (one of Frege’s examples) the two sentences, ‘The Morning Star is orbitally challenged’ and ‘The Evening Star is orbitally challenged’. (‘Orbitally challenged’ means: has a smaller orbit than Earth’s.) Call the first sentence ‘Ochtend’, the second ‘Avond’. Let us assume for the moment that both ‘The Morning Star’ and ‘The Evening Star’ function as names. Further assume that each
functions to make Venus recognisable as the one a thought was expressed about. Still further, suppose that ‘is orbitally challenged’ makes the same thing recognisable both times as to which way the relevant object was represented as being in that expression of thought. So, have two different thoughts of Venus been expressed, or just one? Answer: within ATM there is nothing yet to determine an answer. The question is about thoughts. Samenesses and differences in meanings of words used do not yet tell us anything about thoughts.

Kaplan likes to stress a special case of the above point. Consider a sentence like, ‘The man who helped Pia change a tire last Tuesday as she sat stranded on the roadside, late for her seminar, is now eating peanuts from the plate of the man sitting next to him at the bar.’ Suppose that this initial description functions as a name. A name, for present purposes, is what functions to make it recognisable that the thought expressed in the whole of which it is a part is a singular thought of a certain object, namely, the one which, in this sense, that name names. So understood, the description offers us some rather detailed instructions on how to identify which man is to be supposed to be the one here represented as eating peanuts from someone else’s plate. That its work of making recognisable is performed in this way says nothing whatever as to how thought binds itself to the man it does. It may contain no such instructions as to the right man (or object); nor, indeed, if Kaplan is right, any instructions at all.

All of which is a perfectly correct point about ATM. What needs stressing is that it is a purely negative point. So far, within ATM, we are not positioned to say anything as to when two different thoughts were expressed, each once, when two thoughts twice. This is because within ATM considerations of how to count meanings of words tell us nothing as to how thoughts are to be counted. To answer that question we would have to know something about why thoughts are to be counted in one way rather than another. which so far we do not.

That Ochtend and Avond might express different thoughts may seem anyway improbable or still less likely. In brief, suppose we know that a thought’s truth turns on how Venus is. We also know that whether it is true or false turns on whether that object it is thus about is orbitally challenged. What more could we need to know whether that thought is true or false? Venus is not more or less orbitally challenged depending on what you call it. But then, if you know all there is to know as to when a thought would be true, is this not to know how it makes truth turn on how things are—thus, in turn, which thought it is? This, however, prejudges questions of what thoughts are for.

3. Approaching A Watershed: Do Avond and Ochtend express one thought twice, or two thoughts, each once? In one way the question is ill-formed. Avond and Ochtend are sentences. The role of a sentence, within ATM, is to help make the expression of thought recognisable. ATM tells us: neither of these sentences expresses a thought as such. A well-formed question would need to ask what each does on some occasion of its use. What this might be (again within ATM) is not determined by their meaning what they do. The question is also premature, at least by present lights. We cannot know how to count thoughts until we know more than has yet been said as to what thoughts are for. We are unequipped so far to answer the above question. A first step, then, will be to investigate further the notion of a thought. Here there is no better guide than Frege.

1890 marked a watershed in Frege’s thought. It is in that year that he went public with two crucial ideas. The first was the idea of the two related notions, Sinn and Bedeutung. The
second was the idea of replacing a grammatical idea of subject-predicate structure, as it *had* figured in logic, with an idea of function-argument structure, as that had figured in mathematics. There is good reason, to come, for introducing these two ideas in tandem. The main elements of Frege’s notion of a thought, though, were in place at least as early as 1882 (though in those early days he spoke of judgeable contents (beurteilbare Inhalte) rather than thoughts (Gedanken). I will thus start in 1882, working my way to 1890 and *Sinn*.

In 1919, recapitulating 1882’s ideas, Frege wrote:

> What is distinctive about my approach to logic is recognisable, first of all, by the fact that I place the content of the word ‘true’ in lead position and then by the fact that I let the thought follow immediately as that by which truth can come into question at all. Thus, I do not start from concepts and compose thoughts or judgements out of them, but I extract thought elements by the decomposition of thoughts. (1919a: 273)

What Frege thus wrote to Darmstädter he had already written in 1882 (to Marty(?)), but for using ‘thought’ in place of ‘judgeable content’. (*vide* 1882: 118)

There are several strands in this idea of putting whole thoughts first. Part of the point is to stress the un-sentence-like nature of a thought. We can think of the sentences of the language as generated by a syntax from some finite vocabulary by some finite set of rules. That syntax assigns each sentence a particular syntactic structure. It must assign syntactic structures in such a way as to distinguish different sentences just where there are different sentences to be distinguished. So for, e.g., an English sentence to be the English sentence that it is just is for it to be the one with that structure which the syntax of English assigns it. Such is the mission of a syntax. (This presupposes a notion of a sentence on which a sentence is not just a (grammatically permissible) string of words. But there are good reasons for that notion.) Part of Frege’s idea is that thoughts are not generated from any vocabulary, or set of building blocks, by any given rules. A given thought is *not* identified as the one it is by some given structure assigned it by ‘the structure of thought’ as a given sentence is identified as the one it is by the syntax assigned it by its language.

In this Frege’s notion of a thought contrasts, I believe, with some standard notions of a proposition, as found, say, in Russell and in early Wittgenstein. That contrast is crucial for present purpose. For it means that Frege’s notion of a thought intentionally leaves a certain question open as to how to count thoughts which, e.g., the Tractarian notion of a proposition (if I understand it) closes off.

Rather than putting a thought together out of building blocks, Frege tells us, we get to thought-elements by decomposing whole thoughts. What we first need to understand, then, is Frege’s notion of a decomposition of a thought. We can begin with Frege’s words of 1918, repeated verbatim to Darmstädter: “I call a thought something by which truth can come into question at all.” (1918: 60) A thought is what fixes, or poses, a determinate question of truth—a question which can be answered, ‘True’, or ‘Not true’, a question of truth outright. It is precisely what does that, no more, no less. It is simply a particular way for truth to turn on how things are, or, reifying, just that which makes truth turn in a particular such way. Again, *precisely* that, no more, no less. Such is one constraint on how thoughts are to be counted, though not one which, on its own, yields an answer to such questions as what we wanted to
ask about Avond and Ochtend. Incidentally, the constraint that a thought be in this sense minimal is what led Frege to abandon the term ‘judgeable content’. He came to recognise that as he had developed that term, it took more to identify a judgeable content than simply what would distinguish one question of truth from another. (In particular (vide 1892: 35) a truth-value cannot be a thought-element.)

A thought is thus in the business of representing-as (in that aspect of ‘represent’ which fits it). It does particular work: it represents things as a way there is for things to be (or not), thus makes truth turn in a particular way on how things are. To decompose a thought is now to decompose the work that thought thus does. Up to a point decomposing this is like decomposing any other task. Sid and Pia, for example, aim to serve each guest at their party their choice of a drink from the following list: mojito, margarita, martini, manhattan. They decide to share the work. As they divide things up, each takes half the orders, then Pia handles the mojitos and margaritas, Sid the martinis and manhattans. Now there is a condition on this being a decomposition of the task in hand: that the joint performance of these subtasks be a performance of that whole task.

One might see this as the only condition on being a decomposition of the task. In which case there are many ways of decomposing it. Rather than the above, for example, it could have been that Pia filled the shakers (across the board), Sid shook and poured (and, perhaps, that Sid took all the orders and Pia did all the serving). And so on to the limits of our imagination. The same task, thus, is decomposable in many different ways. At least many tasks are like that.

Now Frege’s idea is: all of the above is also true of decomposing thoughts. To decompose a thought is to decompose its task into subtasks. The thought makes truth outright turn in a determinate way on how things are. Each element in a decomposition makes that whole thought one in which truth turns in part in such-and-such way on how things are. For example (speaking a bit roughly), an element might make truth turn, in part, on how Sid is; another might make it turn in part on who waddles. For those two elements to do what they do jointly might then be for that thought to do what it does (to make truth turn on whether Sid waddles). (As said, this is a rough account only.) We have a decomposition just where the elements do, jointly, just what the whole thought does. An element is intrinsically an element on a particular decomposition (only in context, that is).

This conception of a decomposition allows for many diverse ways of decomposing the same thought—many ways of meeting that one requirement on being a decomposition. And, Frege insists, it is generally true that there are many ways of decomposing any one thought. From his examples we see that these many ways can be syntactically and semantically diverse (taking semantics to concern linguistic meaning). So that, for example, it may not be intrinsic to a thought to be either first-order or second-order. It may be decomposable, ad lib, either way. (I will return to this point.)

We come to the limits of our comparison. Suppose that Sid and Pia agree to divide up the work as above. But, after taking the orders, Pia gets bored and goes to the movies. Still, those lucky guests who ordered martinis and manhattans get served. The whole task was not performed. There was no actual decomposition. But the task was partly performed. Something was done. By contrast, the sort of thing a partial performance of the task is in the case of a thought’s task is such that there is no such thing as a partial performance except in the context of a full one. There is no such thing as making truth turn somehow on how Sid is, though in no particular way on this.
Note that as I have explained things, a thought-element is in the same business as a whole thought: representing-as. It is just that a proper element is a partial doing of that whole thing the thought does. This means that neither objects nor concepts (on a notion of concept which is not quite Frege’s 1890 one, but more clearly on the 1890 notion) are thought-elements. Objects of course not. But now consider concepts. On one notion of a concept, where there is a way for a thing to be (or, perhaps, for some n, for an n-tuple of things to be), there is, correspondingly, a concept of (a thing) (being) that way. A thing might be, e.g., a waddler. There is, then, the concept of being a waddler. For it to be that concept is for it to be of that. A concept may apply to, or be satisfied, or fallen under, by, given objects. It is satisfied by just those objects which are that way which it is a concept of. But it does not represent any objects as that way. It does not, e.g., present Sid to us as waddling when he does not. If he does not, then it just happens to be a concept under which he does not fall.

We come now to 1890 and the introduction of the notion of Sinn. So far as I can see, and as I will suppose here, Sinn is just a generic, of which a whole thought (in present sense) is the central case, and then any thought-element another case. For our purposes I will restrict attention to whole thoughts, ‘naming’ elements (ones which make truth turn on how some object is), and ‘predicative’ elements (ones which make truth turn on which n-tuples of objects (for relevant n) are some given way. Part of the point of abandoning subject and predicate in favour of function and argument is now that a predicative element can be anything expressible in an open sentence, no matter where the gaps lie, and whether or not these occur at syntactically significant places in the sentence used.

It is often thought that that there are Sinne requires argument (or that Frege thought so). It is sometimes also thought that Frege attempted such an argument which went like this: for given things referred to in a thought—the objects and ways for things to be thus represented as relating to each other in one way or another—there are many thoughts all with those referents, so related. Hence a thought must be distinguished by more features than, say, objects and properties it is about. Sinne supply us with these extra features. Both these ideas are, I think, mistaken, and misconceive what a thought is supposed to be.

An argument for Sinn, if one were needed, would look like this. A thought makes truth turn in some determinate way on how things are—as it may be, on whether Sid waddles; thus, too, on how Sid is, and on who waddles. Sid cannot make truth turn on anything at all. He cannot make truth turn on whether he waddles. For that we need a question of truth. He is no such question. Nor can the phenomenon of waddling, or the property of waddling do any such thing. Waddling is something one may become prone to if he habitually helps himself to too much Christmas pudding. It cannot make truth turn on anything. Thoughts are about such things. But those things are not what makes any thought a thought about them. Quod erat demonstrandum.

Whether thoughts can be counted by what they are, in some such sense, about—whether, e.g., there is only one thought to the effect that Sid waddles—is another matter. I think Frege supposed the intuitively correct answer to this to be yes. But nothing that matters very much to him depends on this supposition being right.

What we are thus left with at this point is an open question. As a rule, a given thought is decomposable in many disparate ways. Suppose that we have one decomposition of a thought. What would decide when we have another decomposition of that same thought? One might plausibly think that, typically, an expression of a thought (in a sentence) presents it as decomposed in some one way. To speak, in these words, of the thought that Sid waddles, for...
example, is at least strongly to suggest a decomposition of it into an element which makes it about Sid and another which makes it about waddling. So thinking, it also remains an open question when two expressions of a thought would be both expressions of the same thought. All there is to say about this so far is that the very notion of a thought—what being a thought is—leaves this question open. Thus leaving it open was, I will suggest here, not an omission on Frege’s part.

4. Sinn and Meaning: Frege’s notion of Sinn comes paired with another. It is of what he calls Bedeutung. I will not yet approach that second notion. There is an intuitive sense of ‘meaning’ in which, for example, the English word ‘sofa’ does not mean what the Portuguese word ‘sofa’ means, in which ‘pull (someone’s) leg’ does not mean quite what ‘sell (someone) a bill of goods’ does, and so on. One might think of the job of a semantic theory of a language as, for each well-formed expression of it, to distinguish its meaning what it does from its meaning what any other expression of a language might. Perhaps that is too ambitious. It is, at any rate, idealised. It is an idea which in general works poorly, e.g., for prepositions. Anyway, such is a gesture at something we might call linguistic meaning. To adumbrate, this will not be Frege’s notion of Bedeutung. But, given as much as has so far been said about Sinn, we can see that nor can linguistic meaning be Sinn.

A whole Sinn, a thought, is the sort of thing which (with a few caveats) it would take a sentence to express. Sometimes Frege’s way of putting that point can mislead, as it sometimes seems to have misled him. In 1918, for example, his introduction of the notion thought runs in full as follows:

I call a thought something by which truth can come into question at all. Thus I count what is false as a thought just as much as what is true. Accordingly I can say: A thought is the Sinn of a sentence, without thereby meaning to assert that the Sinn of every sentence is a thought.

(1918: 60-61)

Such can be understood: for every sentence of the relevant sort, for it to mean what it does is for it to express the thought it does; this presupposing that, for each sentence (of the required sort) there is such a thing as the thought it expresses. And, in what are arguably anyway not his best moments (e.g., in (1906a)), Frege does seem so to understand his dictum.

If a whole Sinn is a thought, as per the last section, then ATM is committed to rejecting that connection between thoughts (questions of truth) and sentence meanings (means for achieving recognition of thought-expression). But anyway, the above understanding of Frege’s dictum is inconsistent with his idea of the ways in which thoughts are not sentence-like, most specifically and directly with his insistence, pretty consistently, at least from 1882-1919 (see also, especially, 1892) that thoughts are multiply decomposable. For the syntactic structure of a (say) English sentence requires, at the least, that the meanings of its parts are going to leave residues in the meaning of the whole in a way that the elements of a thought relative to some decomposition do not.

For example, the English ‘sofa’ speaks of sofas. Correspondingly, the sentence ‘Jon bought a new sofa’ speaks of some contextually definite (putative) person as having bought a new sofa. Since ‘sofa’ speaks of sofas, it is intrinsic to such a sentence meaning what it does
that, on one way or another, it, too, speaks of sofas. There is no parallel to this for thoughts. Take one of Frege’s own cases. The same thought, he tells us, may be expressed either in the sentence ‘The number 4 has square roots’ or in the sentence ‘The concept square root of 4 is satisfied. Only one of these predicates something of the number 4. Only one of these speaks of concepts. It is not intrinsic to the thought either to predicate something of a number or to contain any element which makes it about concepts.

At least to make Frege consistent, then, we need to read the above quote as follows: a thought is the Sinn of a sentence, where that sentence is used in the expression of a thought. Thus, if the sentence contains a predicative expression, the thought (on such a use of it) is not the Sinn of that predicative expression. Mutatis mutatis for names in any sense in which a name can occur in a sentence. It will be important to remember that, in what follows, thoughts are being distinguished from sentence-meanings. It will do for this to remember that all of what follows is developed within ATM.

From the point of view of English syntax definite descriptions are a sort of name. Russell argued that, from the point of view of logic they are not, not even well-formed parts of a ‘proposition’ at all. Russell thus took Frege’s idea of avoiding mere linguistic descriptions while doing logic very seriously. Flushed with this first success, Russell went on to try to argue that names, such as ‘Scott’, or ‘Diogo Cão’, were, from the point of view of logic, not really names either. In fact, he ended up arguing for something still stronger. Let us take a (singly) singular thought as one such that for there to be that thought is, inter alia, for there to be a certain object such that the thought is decomposable into an element which makes truth turn on how that object is. Let us further suppose that a name is what functions in a sentence to make it the expression of a singular thought: the name identifies that object to which the thought expressed relates as per above. Then, for Russell, the fundamental trouble with ‘Scott’, or ‘Diogo Cão’ is that they purport to be naming the wrong sort of thing, that is, a thing about which we are incapable of thinking singular thoughts; a think to which no thought could be bound as above. (I here bracket the fact that Russell was no fan of the word ‘thought’.)

Russell reasons as follows. Consider the sentence, ‘Diogo Cão sailed to the Bay of Sardines.’ We all understand those words. Now consider the following question: Could we conceivably understand those words as we do while it turned out that ‘Diogo Cão’ did not exist? Could it be, for example, that ‘Diogo Cão’ was a sailor’s joke misunderstood by Camões? Or that Camões himself was misunderstood by all the rest of us? Such (he expects us to conclude) are historical hypotheses which, however improbable, could prove worthy of investigation. But if ‘Diogo Cão’ were a myth, then in understanding those words as we do (and as we do in understanding them), we could not be understanding them to be expressing a singular thought, since there would be no singular thought for us to understand them to express. Since, given our presumed answer to Russell’s question, we could be understanding those words as we in fact do whether Diogo Cão existed or not, understanding them as we in fact do cannot be understanding them to express a singular thought.

Russell thought, not unreasonably, I think, that if the reasoning here is valid, then it can be extended to show that such things as people, boats, rivers, etc., are simply the wrong sorts of things for us to have singular thoughts about. In at least one instance (1906a(?)), Frege used similar reasoning to reach a (for him entirely atypical) conclusion. Working a twist on Russell, he asks us to suppose that we discover that the Odyssey is, not fiction as we had all along supposed, but history—that there really was a man named Odysseus, and that this book
is a more or less accurate story of his life. He urges that we would not conclude that all the sentences in the Odyssey expressed different thoughts than we had supposed. As with Russell, the core of this idea is that we would still understand the words used much as we always had. He concludes,

> Would all those sentences which contain the name ‘Odysseus’ thus express different thoughts? I think not. The thoughts would really remain the same. They would only be transferred from the domain of fiction to that of truth. Accordingly the object which a proper name designates appears to be entirely inessential to the thought-content of a sentence which contains the name. (1906: 208)

It is not entirely clear what Frege means by ‘the thought-content of a sentence which contains a name’. In any case, the object which a proper name designates (on a use) cannot be inessential to the thought-expressed in using that name if that thought is to be a singular thought. For in that case, for that thought to exist at all is for there to be that object for it to be about. Of course if, as supposed here, a thought is a Sinn of a certain type, then it is true in the case of a singular thought that once it is fixed what Sinn this is, nothing new is added when we say what object it is about. For, if we decompose the thought into a thought-element which makes truth turn on how some object is, and some predicative element—if, that is, we decompose the thought as singular—then, trivially, for there to be that first element in it is already for there to be that object and the thought to be about it. In fact, it is hard to make any sense of Frege’s suggestion.

Within ATM, though, Russell’s reasoning above collapses. For now suppose we understand the sentence ‘Diogo Cão sailed to the Bay of Sardines’ as we might have been even had Diogo Cão proved not to exist. For us to do that is, at most, for us to understand it to contribute to making the expression of a thought recognisable as we might have been understanding it to do even had Diogo Cão not existed. But this is no longer to understand it to be expressing a thought it might have expressed even had Diogo Cão not existed. Whatever one chooses to call ‘the thought-content of a sentence’ (if a sentence has such a thing at all), for a sentence to have the thought-content it does (e.g., for it to mean what it does) is not, for some thought, for it to express that one. Not, at least, within ATM.

Consider, for example, the sentence, ‘That indigent unemployed circus clown Pia’s sister is seeing drank us out of lager once again.’ Such is designed for (inter alia, perhaps) the expression of singular thoughts. As so used, that description in subject position would work to make recognisable what object the thought thus expressed represented as having drunk relevant parties out of lager once again. But it does its recognitional work via what, in the circumstances of its use, would be to be supposed. In those circumstance, say, there is someone who would be supposed to be the salient indigent one, the salient circus clown, and so on. The person (or object) of which all this would have been to be supposed might be, not indigent but rather a somewhat dishevelled currency trader, not a circus clown (sadly, that nose is really his), not seeing Pia’s sister, but just managing her account, and so on. The words of the sentence might have contributed as they did to recognition whether any of these things were so or not. What was thus made recognisable—what was, in fact, expressed—would not similarly remain constant.
There is, anyway, another possible gap in Russell’s reasoning. Perhaps to discover that ‘Diogo Cão’ was a sailor’s joke (or Camões’), or that Odysseus was an historical figure, need not be to discover that those words were to be understood any other than as we had understood them. But it is one thing for us to understand given words as we do, and another for us to understand them in such-and-such way, where what goes in the place of that ‘such-and-such’ spells out some particular understanding for words to bear. How an understanding is specifiable is liable to depend on the means available for specifying it. These need not be independent of history. Nor, as we shall see, of factors of a quite different kind. With this remark we approach what will be the central theme of this essay. But still, at this point, prematurely. For the moment I have laboured somewhat only to stress a point which is too often neglected: Sinn, for Frege, cannot be linguistic meaning (even if Frege sometimes failed to see this himself.)

5. Bedeutung: As with Sinn, I will not translate Frege’s term ‘Bedeutung’. Seeing just what this is is, I think, seeing that it is neither meaning nor reference on any usual understanding of those terms. To telegraph, if a Sinn makes truth turn in some determinate way on how things are, a Bedeutung simply identifies the outcome of such turning. As already noted, the introduction of the pair of terms, ‘Sinn’ and ‘Bedeutung’ went along with that of another idea: to refrain from imposing a structure on logic—that is, on the phenomenon of being true—which is simply borrowed from syntax (the structures of the languages we speak). As he writes,

Our logic books still always drag a lot in—for example, subject and predicate—which really do not belong in logic. (1897: 154)

The basic structural notion with which he wants to replace such grammatical ones is, as said, that of function and argument. This, of course, is, so far only a leading idea. 1890 represents one unfolding of it, perhaps not the right one in every respect. Anyway, though, the notion of Bedeutung needs to be seen in terms of this.

One main fruit of the distance between these two sorts of structure is that now a predicative thought-element is to be seen as what would be expressed, not necessarily by what is syntactically a predicate (as opposed to a subject), nor necessarily by any well-formed part of a sentence which expresses the thought, but rather by an open sentence in the now-familiar sense. The Bedeutung of a predicative element is, I think, the best place to start on the general notion of Bedeutung. Consider, say, the thought that Sid grunts, decomposed in the obvious way into a ‘naming’ element (one which makes it a thought whose existence depends in the familiar way on Sid’s), and a predicative element (one which makes truth turn on who grunts). What sort of function might be identified by that predicative element, just in being the element it is? The most obvious idea: if what it predicates is predicated of Sid (or of Marlon, or of Ernest), one gets truth; if of Pia, or Oscar, or Truman, one gets falsehood. So, it seems, that predicative Sinn identifies a function (mapping) from objects to truth-values.

My suggestion was that if a Sinn makes truth turn in a certain way on how things are, then we might think of a Bedeutung as identifying the outcome of such turning. In the case of an autonomous whole Sinn—a thought—the outcome of that turning (where there is one) is, obviously, a truth-value. Now we can see the Bedeutung of a predicative element as
identifying a partial outcome of such turning. If, e.g., truth turns in part on who grunts, then the outcome for the relevant turning of truth outright on how things are—that effected by the whole of which that predicative element is part—is fixed (insofar as it is fixed by that element) by the mapping which is that element’s Bedeutung. In the simple case of a singular thought such as that Sid grunts, e.g., we need only see into which value that mapping maps Sid. Now, then, if the outcome of a whole turning is truth or falsehood outright, and if the contribution to that outcome of the turning effected by a predicative element is, in the way sketched, identified by a mapping from objects to truth-values, then, of course, to get the right result one has to see the Bedeutung of a naming thought-element (what occurs with a predicative one in the singular case) as an object; that object on whose image under the mapping the truth of the whole depends.

Frege sometimes speaks as if it is just intuitively obvious that the Bedeutung of a naming element is an object. Well, it may be intuitively obvious that the Bezeichnung of a name is an object. ‘Bezeichnen’ is not a technical term for Frege. To say this much is only to say that the name refers to, or designates, such-and-such in an intuitively familiar sense. But when it comes to Bedeutung such intuitions are beside the point. A naming element in a singular thought must be taken to bedeuten an object because of the contribution a name makes in the representing a thought does to the way the thought thus makes truth turn on things.

Objects thus play a double role for Frege. As Bedeutungen of naming thought-elements, they contribute to a project of replacing what may be an empirical question with a mathematical one. Is the thought that Sid smokes true? Well, does Sid smoke? Such is a topic for empirical investigation. But suppose that, decomposing that thought as just presented, we assign Bedeutungen to each part. Then finding the Bedeutung of the whole is a problem in mathematics. We know what mapping from objects to truth-values is the one that must take on a certain value for a certain object for that whole to be true; we know what object the relevant object is. Now we must just examine the mapping to see what it does for that object as argument. Such is one role that objects play. The other is in representing. We might say that a thought-element bezeichnet Sid just where (so decomposed) the whole thought represents Sid as some given way. It is peculiar to each thought to have the particular generality it has; for there to be just that range of possible cases of which it would be true—a range which marks it as the thought it is. To fix which object the thought represents as the way it does (here as a smoker) is to fix in which range of cases it would be that object on whose smoking or not the truth of the thought depended. So: to say who the thought represents as a smoker is, viewed one way, to say how the thought represented things (in general) as being; to say what the Bedeutung of the relevant element is is to say, in part, how the truth of the thought can become a question in mathematics.

Those functions which are the Bedeutungen of predicative elements in thoughts are functions of a special sort. Frege calls these functions concepts (Begriffe). Frege has a right, of course, to use the word ‘Begriff’ however he likes. But this use of ‘Begriff’ needs to be kept clearly separated from another familiar one. On that other notion, we get from a way for things to be (or, more generally, a way for n-tuples of things to be, for given n) to a concept as follows. Suppose (in the unary case) the way is, for a thing to be a bovid, or for a thing to be a sofa. There is, correspondingly, the concept of a thing being a bovid, and that of a thing being a sofa. We get from ways for things to be to concepts just by syntactic operations.

On this notion it is intrinsic to the concept of being a bovid to be of being a bovid, to be
what, *ipso facto*, would be mentioned in speaking of something being a bovid. If we were to speak of mentioning here, it would be intrinsic to ‘the concept of being a bovid’ to mention what it does. None of which is true of Frege’s notion of a concept. For on this notion a concept is a mapping, and a predicative thought-element has as its *Bedeutung* just that mapping which maps into the true precisely what is the way that element is of being. Sid grunts. So an element which makes truth turn on who grunts *bedeutet* a mapping which maps him into *true*. But Sid might not have grunted had he been better brought up. Nor *need* he even have existed at all. In either case, the concept (in Frege’s sense) that *would* have been *bedeutet* by the just-mentioned element would not map Sid into *true*. In the first case, it would be one which mapped him into *false*; in the second it would not have mapped him into anything. Had things been such, the element in question—what makes truth turn on which things are a certain way for things to be—would have *bedeutet* a different mapping than it does. In one common terminology, predicative elements *bedeuten* concepts in Frege’s sense flaccidly.

6. What is *Sinn* For?: With the qualification that technically speaking the relation *identity* can hold only between objects, not concepts (even in his sense), Frege says:

> We are now in a position to assert: “What two concept words *bedeuten* is the same if and only if the associated concept-extensions coincide”, without being led into error by this improper use of the word ‘the same’. And with this, I believe, a substantial concession has been made to the extensional logicians. They are right in making evident, through their preference for concept extensions as opposed to conceptual content, that they regard the *Bedeutung* of words as what is essential for logic, not the *Sinn*. (1892-1895: 133)

Fix the *Bedeutungen* of the *bedeutende* proper parts of a thought (on some decomposition) and you fix the truth-value of the whole. How, further, the thought represents things—how it comes by those *Bedeutungen*—is further irrelevant. Do the same for another, and by comparing the two, you can just see (or calculate) whether a move from one to the other (e.g., in inference) preserves truth. Here we confront the facts on which truth-preservation depends.

Frege calls this an important concession which he gladly makes to ‘the extensional logicians’. But he is not an extensionalist himself. For, as he sees it, the task we assign logic is to answer the question ‘How must I think to reach the goal truth?’, though

> We do not expect form it that it delve into the particularities of each area of knowledge and its objects; but we assign logic only the task of treating the most general things which are valid for all areas of thought. (1897: 139)

Logic is thus concerned only with the most general truth-preserving structure of thought; that is, only with truth-preservation insofar as such is guaranteed by what being true is as such. But now, truth is preserved across those things which are eligible in the first place to be either true or false, that is, those things whose being is to be a particular form of representing-as—
that is, across thoughts. And it is preserved at that most general level Frege points to simply by that structure inherent in the very enterprise itself of representing either truly or falsely. So logic really is concerned with thoughts, and these being the fundamental kind of Sinn, with Sinne. It is concerned with that particular case of truth-preservation in which such is guaranteed by a structure imposed on thought simply by what being true is. What Frege sometimes refers to as the laws of logic, or, equally, the laws of truth are just the laws by which this particular form of truth-preservation is identifiable.

If logic were concerned only with Bedeutung, then any answer it could give to the question how to think to reach truth could only parallel that famous answer to how to get rich: ‘Buy low, sell high’: think truly. We might all like to follow such advice. The question remains how. Logic is concerned with the way in which a structure imposed on thought (on questions of truth) might make truth-preservation recognisable. Such might make its concerns seem psychological. But they are not. (Though formal logic is, of course, concerned with how truth-preservation can be made syntactically recognisable.) Some questions what we are able to recognise and how, are, to be sure, psychological. But these are preceded by questions what there is to be recognised, in the present case, where there is rational compulsion under which a sufficiently competent thinker might be placed. Such questions are not in general, and not here, psychological ones.

What matters for the moment is just the general idea that the function of thoughts is to be counted so as to accord with the facts of proof; with what there is to be proved, and, among such things, what would be a proof of what. Where one thought is expressed, or mentioned, twice, proof of what is expressed or mentioned one such time is ipso facto proof of what is expressed, or mentioned, the other. Proof of a thought from itself is always immediate. And what proves it, or what it proves (or contributes to proving) is always independent of how it is expressed or mentioned. Thus two expressions, or mentions, each of some thought, express or mention one thought twice just in case what each mentions has the that same place in proving and being proved, on the relevant notion of proof. Such is to be a fundamental principle of counting thoughts.

Such is Frege’s idea in (1906b(??)). Words A and B share a Sinn, he here suggests, just where

one who acknowledged the content of A as true would also need directly to recognise that of B as true; and, the other way around, one who recognised the content of B as true would also need directly to recognise that of A as true. (1906b: 213)

Frege adds some riders to this: that grasping the content of A and that of B poses no special difficulties; and that there is nothing in the contents of either A or B which, correctly grasped, would need immediately to be recognised as true. He calls the relation between A and B which thus holds ‘equipollence’. For it to hold is for what A says to follow immediately from what B does, and vice-versa.

Equipollence is stated here in terms of what one would need to recognise. But the ‘one’ is important here; and the ‘need’ is not psychological. Rather, the compulsion to recognise is rational compulsion. It is a matter of what is to be recognised as proof of what; where the relevant notion of proof, or following from, applies—where there is that to be recognised.
Frege puts the idea here to work at various places, not just in identifying a given thought, or distinguishing one thought from another, but also in identifying particular structures in the case of particular thoughts. In (1914: 230-231), for example, he uses it to try to show that ‘concept words’, such as ‘human’, are not ambiguous names—that, e.g., when we say, ‘Plato is a human being’, we are not giving Plato a new name. He reasons as follows. Suppose ‘human’ were an ambiguous name—that is, named, indifferently, each of some given collection of objects. Then it would name, inter alia, Cato. But then from the thought that all humans are mortal, the thought that Cato is mortal would follow immediately. We all see that it does not. To get from premiss to conclusion here, we need an intermediate premiss: that Cato is a man. Frege appeals here to (what he supposes) we are all prepared to recognise. But what we are all prepared to recognise is (he supposes) just some of what there is to be recognised; what reason dictates.

Thoughts, so Sinne, must be counted so that distinctions between one thought and another correspond to the facts as to what follows from, or is proof of, what. Frege puts this feature of Sinne to work in 1890 in defusing an apparent problem. Suppose Bedeutungen to be as stated above. Suppose to bedeuten to be to speak of, or be about on some intuitive understanding of those words. Now consider a simple expression of a thought such as ‘Sid grunts’. Here ‘Sid’ has as its Bedeutung Sid, ‘__ grunts’ as its Bedeutung a certain mapping (concept in Frege’s post-1890 sense). The two combine to form an expression which has as its Bedeutung a truth-value. That truth-value is the value of the function bedeutete by ‘__ grunts’ for the argument bedeute by ‘Sid’. They thus combine as would a function expression such as ‘Sin __ ’ and a name of an argument, such as ‘π’. These combine so as to form the name of the value of that function for that argument. Suppose that thus, too, ‘__ grunts’ and ‘Sid’. Then the Sinn they express should be that of a name: some thought-element which makes the truth of some thought turn in part on how some given object is; some way of making the relevant object (the value of the function ‘__ grunts’ bedeutet for the argument Sid) the object on which truth-relevantly depends. Now suppose that the relation between naming Sinne and their Bedeutungen is one-one. Then there is only one truth of arithmetic. Which means: any truth of arithmetic follows immediately from any other. Which dashes all hopes of a science of arithmetic, or any sort of mathematical theory in which arithmetic is developed (rationally) from some set of basic assumptions.

We see early on that this way of applying imagery leads quickly to nonsense. (A thought makes truth turn outright on how things are. It does not make truth turn in part on how some object is.) But a general point remains. Suppose we count truths of arithmetic by their Bedeutungen, no matter what leads us to do so. Then there is but one truth of arithmetic. Suppose we count truths of arithmetic by some structuring of the Bedeutungen of their parts on some indicated way of decomposing them. Still we will get wrong results. For (one of Frege’s examples) the Bedeutung of ‘__ is a square of 4’ is the same mapping as the Bedeutung of ‘is a fourth power of 2’, and, again, the same as ‘__ is that very number 16’. Yet (one might well hold) the inference from ‘16 is the square of 4’ to ‘16 is the fourth power of 2’ ought not to be immediate.

Frege stills such worries with the remark that while the Bedeutung of the first thought just mentioned may be the same as that of the second (and idem for such thought-parts as predicating being a square of 4 and predicating being a fourth power of 2), the senses involved need not be the same. In the general case, he tells us, different Sinne can, unproblematically, share a Bedeutung.
It is in the service of this point that Frege introduces Avond and Ochtend into the discussion. He does not really try to prove that these express two different thoughts. Rather, he supposes that this is something we can all readily enough agree to. Just so that they can be used, as he does, to illustrate the point that the relation Sinn-Bedeutung is in general many-one. Such is something, he supposes which stands out clearly in the case of Avond and Ochtend. Just so that this case shows how there can be different truths of arithmetic.

Frege does mention a reason for supposing that Avond and Ochtend express different thoughts. It is that “someone who did not know that the Morning Star is the Evening Star could take the one for true, the other for false.” (1891: 14) In other words, it would be ill-advised, at best, to take what Avond expresses to follow immediately from what Ochtend does, or vice-versa. On the face of it, Avond and Ochtend are not equipollent.

The point, so far, is not that Frege is right about this. We still need to investigate further how, when it comes to cases, thoughts are to be counted. It is just to stress again the obligation the notions thought and Sinne are under: to be notions of what is to be counted in that way which will correspond correctly to what is proof of what. Such is the requirement at the level of thought which corresponds to that requirement at the level of language that meanings of expressions are to be distinguished just where those expressions contribute differently to making the expression of thought recognisable.

Frege’s conception of the multiple decomposability of thoughts has this consequence: that the notion of a thought leaves it open for a thought to be identified as the thought it is in a way which leaves it open when it would be that same thought that was brought into question again (e.g., in expressing or mentioning it). One identifies a thought in decomposing it in a given way, or in presenting it as so decomposed, e.g., in expressing it in a sentence. Such is enough for a question whether something is that thought to have a definite sense. But so identifying a thought leaves the question open what another decomposition of the same thought would be. Pia shows Sid a tenor saxophone. There is one sax. Then she shows him an alto saxophone. There is another. Then she shows him a soprano saxophone. Is that a sax? Nothing in the mere fact that her first two examples were examples decides that question. Similarly, a decomposition of the thought that Sid grunts (in the obvious way) into a naming element and a predicative element is one decomposition of that thought. What might another be? Nothing in the fact of that first decomposition of it being one decides this question. It is no accident, I suggest, that Frege developed the notion of a thought thus.

7. Empirical Proof: However we count thoughts, this must not leave us with immediate inferences where, in fact, there are none. We must count so that there are enough thoughts to make for things to follow recognisably from other things just where they do. Conversely, there should not be too many thoughts; thus failure of immediate inference where it exists, or, plausibly, more than are required by the above demands on multiplicity. This in mind, we might ask whether Avond and Ochtend can express two different thoughts, one each. Or, somewhat better, whether there are two thoughts of Venus that it is orbitally challenged (or, henceforth for simplicity, whether it shines bright tonight).

Frege illustrates the conditions governing thought-counting with an example involving empirical proof. The step from the premiss that Morgenstern shines bright to the conclusion that Abendstern shines bright is not immediate (he suggests). What he means to illustrate is the working of these conditions on how to count truths of arithmetic. We need not (and will
not) accept Frege’s suggestion about Morgenstern and Abendstern. But the idea of using facts about empirical proof to illustrate the general situation with proof tout court is one I will adopt here. Admittedly empirical proof involves factors absent in arithmetic. Factoring these in, though, the general case is illustrated nicely.

In particular, in arithmetic the connections between elements in a proof by which some truth is recognisable as following from something else are all truth-preserving. A theory of arithmetic would be concerned to show how some truths of arithmetic are derivable from others. Such was certainly Frege’s project. In the empirical case, though, such connections need not be truth-preserving, not because in the empirical case proof might be something less than strict proof, but rather because sometimes what proves an empirical proposition has no proof to be preserved. It can, for that reason, transmit no truth. But it can confer truth, and can assure truth, in the strictest imaginable sense, if only its conferring of truth is (suitably) recognisable.

An example. A pig stands before Pia, munching (acorns). She sees it (munching). What she thus sees (in seeing what she does) is thus incompatible absolutely with things not being such that there is a pig before her (munching acorns). There is no such possibility anywhere in logical space; or certainly no more than there is a possibility that the fourth power of 2 is not the square of 4. So it seems that we have the right material here for proof in the strictest sense. If Pia were only entitled to the right attitude towards what she in fact sees—that of which she enjoys visual awareness—such would entitle her to the right attitude towards an object of awareness-that, that is, towards its being so that there is a pig before her (munching, etc.). She would be entitled to take this to be so. She would be because she has proof of it—no need to loosen standards for proof here from what one might expect in arithmetic. In enjoying the visual awareness she does (given her entitlement to the right attitude towards it) she would, ipso facto, enjoy awareness-that. Awareness would, so to speak, spread from its perceptual form to its thinking form in awareness-that. A suitable attitude towards what she sees might be: seeing things before her being as they (visibly) are as being a case of things being such that before her a pig is munching acorns—seeing the particular case in view as one thing that would count as a case of a pig before her munching.

Just here the rub. What would entitle her to such an attitude? We can factor entitlement here into two factors: what is before her eyes must be recognisable as a case of a pig munching; Pia must have a capacity to recognise such things (one properly exercised on this occasion). But how could such a condition ever be met? Without addressing that question directly I note: if you can ever see for yourself whether there is a pig before you (or any similar thing) then the requirement is sometimes satisfied. If Sid had no faith in Pia’s ability to do such things, he would not have worked so hard to keep the pig out of sight. I think we all share Sid’s faith. So, then, sometimes the object of one’s visual awareness—e.g., a pig before him—can be proof (for him) that there is a pig before him. Here we have spreading of awareness from its visual form to awareness-that. So we have proof. Though obviously we have no truth-transmission. We have, instead, truth-conferring. Such is the main, in fact, I think the only, difference between empirical proof and proof in mathematics. The difference, anyway, has nothing to do with strictness of proof. There is proof in mathematics just where what is proved is made recognisable as following from some set of premisses from which in fact it does follow.

The thing about pigs, though, is that sometimes it is possible to recognise of what you see in seeing one that it is a case of a thing being a pig, sometimes it is not. Idem munching.
Idem acorns. There is such a thing as a dead ringer for a pig: something which could not be distinguished from one by looking (from where you stand). There are pigs in wolf’s clothing, wolves in pig’s dress, very porcine marsupials, and so on throughout the philosophical menagerie. Similarly for Pia’s ability to recognise whether what she sees is really porcine. So if, as we have allowed, it is ever possible to recognise, in visual awareness of it, what is in fact a pig for one, then there are two kinds of case: the kind where such is recognisable, the kinds where it is not.

The trouble here is in the absolute extensionality of seeing. If what is before you is, in fact, a pig, then either you see a pig, or you miss it (it was obscured, moving too fast, there was that cinder in your eye, your mind was elsewhere, etc.). If it is a bíšaro, then the same. You need never have heard of bíšaros. If it is the bíšaro that Pia led on a leash en route to the rainmaker’s ball, then the same again: such is what you see. Recognisability is an extra, and, as such, something which always could go missing. What it requires is not fixed solely by what it is that is to be recognised. It matters too how many ways there are for a recogniser to go wrong; what pitfalls he must be on guard against.

Sometimes you can, sometimes not; there are two kinds of case. How are ‘sometimes’ and ‘case’ to be read here? One is (first-)personally. Consider some person. In his career there are, or will be, many occasions, say, of his viewing what is before him, on which he is either facing (viewing) a pig or he is not. Some of these are of the first kind: he can recognise, become aware by looking that there is a pig (if you like, a bíšaro) before him. Some of these are of the second. On these he cannot recognise, tell whether he confronts a pig (bíšaro) or not. Here we adopt his perspective on the world. Seeing things as through his eyes we see that, for him things divide up into these two kinds of case. So things would look from a first-person vantage point. By contrast, one can also read that ‘sometimes’ and that ‘can’ from a third-person point of view. From our own vantage point we note our subject engaged in living through his biography, unfolding his career. Again there are many occasions of his viewing something on which he is either viewing a pig (bíšaro) or not. For each there are many (potential) occasions for us to think, or talk, about what he is doing. On a given one of these we might correctly acknowledge him as recognising that there is (or that there is not) a pig before him. On other we could, and would, not. Sometimes he counts as able to do so; sometimes not. Here is another reading of that ‘can’ and ‘sometimes’. For the moment I merely note it.

We have now identified some facts holding of proof in general, whether empirical or mathematical. There is what proves: the object of perceptual (say, visual) awareness in one case; some set of arithmetical facts in the other. In each case, for this to prove what is to be proved it must be recognisable as the proof it is. For it to be the proof it is is, inter alia, for it to be, recognisably, absolutely incompatible with what is proved being any other than so (or true). There must be, recognisably, no possible circumstance in which the proof exists in the absence of what is proved.

8. First and Third Person: In philosophy it is often the case that clarity on a question requires a third-person stance. So it is with such questions as whether there are many thoughts, each of Venus, each that it shines bright tonight. Let us first view things in the first-person. Venus is a favourite night sky inhabitant of Pia’s. Working a late shift in the underground control centre, Pia wonders, wistfully, whether her favourite heavenly body is currently shining bright. She rings Sid. She makes clear to him which heavenly body she has
in mind. (She might, e.g., call it Venus.) She makes clear to him what she wants to know about it: Is it shining bright? Suppose Sid were to request further information as to what she wants to know: ‘That heavenly body as presented how?’ Pia might rightly be, at the least, put out. ‘What has that got to do with it?’ would be a mild, but entirely justified, reply. If there were an answer to that question—if it were intelligible at all—anyway, it could hardly help Sid in seeing what an answer to what Pia asked ought to be. It is not as if Venus might be shining bright presented in one way, not in another.

(If this is obvious, it shows something about the reading ‘present’ bears here: presenting Venus, where that is something done in a thought is representing Venus as the one on whose being as the thought represents something being truth depends. In another sense of ‘present’, what Sid asked might make perfect sense, depending on the circumstances. Presented in left profile Pia looks ravishing. Presented in right, not so much (the eyepatch). Insofar as the heavens might, in this sense, be presented to us in different ways, Sid’s question might make sense.)

Sid was out of line. Yet if there were different things to know, each of Venus, each whether it was shining bright, then, it seems, he ought not to have been. His request for further information should be perfectly normal. There are different things to know if there are different thoughts of Venus that it is shining bright. Such would be the whole point of distinguishing such different thoughts: so that proving the one need not be proving the other. So, it seems, there can be only one such thought. So things naturally seem from a first-person perspective, e.g., if we take Pia’s, as above. It is no wonder that so many, from Russell on, have opposed what seems to be Frege’s view here.

Moreover, things do not merely seem as above when viewed as Pia does. In an important sense they are what they thus seem—when viewed from that perspective. There was work for Pia’s words to do if it was to be recognisable to Sid what she was asking—e.g., of something whether it was burning bright. Words which spoke of burning bright understandably helped here. As for making it recognisable that it was Venus of which she was asking this, various expressions might have worked to achieve recognition. Perhaps ‘Venus’ for one. Perhaps ‘My celestial favourite’ for another. All depending on communicatory practice chez Pia and Sid. There may be various ways of achieving recognition. The point, though, concerns what has then been thus achieved—what is to be recognised. The answer to this question is reflected in the ineptitude of Sid’s imagined response. Until, e.g., ‘Venus’ and ‘burning bright’ had made recognisable what they did it was not recognisable what Pia’s question was. But what they made recognisable was just what object was in question and what it was meant to be doing or not. Once that much was clear, to go on to complain that not enough had yet been made recognisable is simply to commit to what is not so. It is, further, to leave us in the dark as to what else is missing. What contrasts are yet to be drawn between what Pia is asking and some other range of questions that might be posed? Such is a question as to how thoughts are to be counted (if there is more than one which shares those features now recognisable of Pia’s). Pia’s means for achieving recognition provided no clues on this score. But nor are any called for. As they would be if there were many thoughts all sharing those mentioned features. So from this perspective there are not. That is, no such things to be acknowledged.

From her perspective (and Sid’s), Pia did determine a definite question of truth; an answerable question whose answer she sought. She thus expressed a Sinn of the whole thought sort. She fixed a determinate way for truth to turn on how things are. From her
perspective, there are no rival ways for truth to do this which are also ways of making truth
turn on whether that heavenly body, Venus, is shining bright. There are no rival ways, in
particular, of making Venus the one on which truth turns as it does on that very object in the
thought she expressed. In usual jargon, from her perspective there are no rival modes of
presentation of that object amongst which to choose. Just so that Sid was out of line: he asked
Pia to make a choice which was not there for her to make. In present matters Pia’s standing as
she does towards things thus imposes one particular way of counting thoughts. On it there are
no two thoughts of the same object that it is thus and so.

If there were an intelligible question in which way Venus was presented in the thought
Pia expressed, then (so far) something about her expression of the thought would need to
make that expression recognisable as one of a thought with features which distinguished its
mode of presenting Venus from any other way there is to do this. But we can find nothing
about her act of expressing this which identifies, or makes for, any such features in the
thought thus expressed. For nothing peculiar to her expression of thought identifies by what
features one such mode of presentation might differ from another. And, from her first-person
perspective on the situation, there is nothing else to do so. Nothing shows up as that to which
her expression is to be contrasted. Such are considerations about how a system of
representations would need to be structured; questions whose answers must be looked for
elsewhere than from where she now stands. So, on her occasion for counting thoughts there
can be just one right way of counting them: the one just mentioned.

Nothing visible to Pia from where she stands could allow her to identify what other
ways of counting thoughts might be. Nor would the psychology of her interchange with Sid—
of how each thought of Venus in their grasp of what was being asked—make any such thing
recognisable. Psychology in this sense cannot answer the question what things there are to
think. So she cannot choose from some stock of alternative ways of counting (so nor of
identifying) thoughts some one of these, as opposed to others, as the right way of identifying
thoughts as it is to be done from where she stands, in her interchange with Sid. But suppose
there were many different ways in which thoughts might be counted—thus many different
things that might be (or not be) identifying some given thought as the one it is, depending on
how thoughts were then being counted. There would then be no such thing as the right way of
identifying a thought, or of counting thoughts; nothing for anyone to see in this regard. But
then, too, what Pia can see as to how to identify what she expressed may just be seeing what
the right way is of doing this from where she stands; of identifying a thought on the occasion
of her interchange with Sid. Such would be precisely what she did see above (and what she
thus did would then be seeing). Let us explore this possibility.

The ineptness of Sid’s misplaced question can make it seem intuitively compelling that
Russell is right: there can be only one thought of Venus that it is shining bright. But that this i
so can also be read as a sign that same thought is an occasion-sensitive notion. What is
occasion-sensitivity? Here is an example. Sid keeps feeding Pia margaritas (part of his
nefarious plan). Pia, determined that only the palm, and not she, shall be potted, repeatedly,
overturns her glass onto the plant. Is she consuming tequila? The bottle Sid bought is
consumed; thanks to Pia’s efforts. For all of which, the answer to that question might depend
on how you understand consume. There are various possible understandings of consume.
Correspondingly, there are various things, each of which might be what was said on some
occasion in saying Pia to have been consuming Sid’s tequila. Similarly, perhaps, for same
thought: there are various things this could (not per se incorrectly) be understood to be.
Correspondingly, what might sometimes be said, truly, to be two expressions (or mentions) of one thought might other times be said to be each an expression of a different one.

Taking a first-person perspective makes it appear as if there is only one thought of Venus that it is shining bright. Let us now turn to the third person. Some of us can recognise Pia at sight. If, in the morning, we see here eating a croissant, we can recognise what we see as Pia eating a croissant. If, in the evening, we see her with a kir, we can, again, recognise it as Pia who is enjoying a kir. The capacity we thus enjoy, being the sort of creature we are, is insensitive to many variations in Pia’s condition. It is as effective in recognising her in her morning state as in her evening condition. We cannot always rely on it—e.g., at the annual Pia ball, where everyone comes as Pia. But normally we can. We could, if we liked, introduce two new names for Pia—say, ‘Clothilde’ for use in describing her morning activities, and ‘Nicole’ for describing her evening ones. But this would be just for fun. For most of us, most of the time, it would require no proof that the person nursing the kir is that very person who bit into the croissant. So much is obvious, given our capacities for recognising what is in fact a case of Pia being (or doing) such-and-such as her so doing. So, despite those linguistic quirks which so amuse us, there is no point in introducing two different ways for a thought to present Pia as the one on whom its truth turns, nor two different thoughts of Pia, to the effect that she ate croissants this morning, one expressible in saying ‘Clothilde’, the other in saying ‘Nicole’. There is as yet no cause for holding our thoughts about her in the café and about her at breakfast apart in any such way.

We can imagine intelligent beings, Martians, whose recognitional capacities are constitutionally different from ours. Let us suppose (counterfactually) that in the morning Pia dons a chenille robe, large curlers, and a scarf. In the evening it is all frocks and pumps. Then these imaginable creatures might use ‘Clothilde’ and ‘Nicole’ as above, but not for fun. It might be news to them that Clothilde is Nicole. They might be simply incapable of recognising of what they see in the evening with the kir, anyway by sight, that this is Clothilde sipping. One would need a way of tracking Clothilde’s trajectory, through the day and her dressing room, from first coffee to her seat watching the waiter bringing kir. That it was Clothilde sipping kir would be for them, at least intially, something needing to be deduced from the data thus collected. Whereas for us it is Pia’s (aka Clothilde’s) presence which is proof that Pia (aka Nicole) is sipping. We do not deduce any such thing from some other proposition about her. Suppose, now, that we want to represent these Martians’ thinking, articulated into particular things they think (questions of truth to which they stand in some determinate way or other, e.g., thinking-so, wondering about); and, further, do so in such a way that we represent them as thinking something they have proof of just where they do, something they do not have proof of just where they do not. Then in the case of Pia and her evening kir we may need to carve two different thoughts out of their thinking; one which we might mention in words ‘Clothilde is sipping’ (if these words of our were understood suitably), another which we might mention in words, ‘Nicole is sipping’ (understood similarly). We would need to do this because what would prove to them the truth of the second of these thoughts might not be proof for them of the first. There is this difference between things for them to have, or lack, proof of. What matters here is not how we achieve mention of the thoughts, but rather that to represent the facts about the Martians correctly we need to count thoughts such as for there to be two different ones, both about Pia and her sipping kir. Only then can we see them as needing, and lacking, proof just where they would.

Not that the Martians fail to think singular thoughts of Pia. ‘Clothilde’ and ‘Nicole’ are
not merely two name-like things introduced to disguise the fact that their thoughts, in fact
made true by Pia’s doings, are really merely general: in fact made true by Pia’s doings, but
what could have been made true by someone else’s, had things been different enough. There
is a particular object which they can sometimes recognise as the one eating a croissant. It is
that same object which they can sometimes recognise as sipping kir. It is just that what they
can recognise of this object depends (here relevantly) on how it is encountered. For what they
(sometimes) cannot recognise is its being the same object. It remains to say what might
identify the thoughts whose truth they thus cannot recognise as the thoughts they are. As it
remains to say what might distinguish the thoughts of Pia as now sipping whose truth they can
recognise from those of her now sipping whose truth they cannot. But in any event it would
be wrong to conclude from what they cannot recognise that, on seeing Pia in the morning, in
curlers and chenille, eating a croissant, the most they can think is that anyone (or everyone)
now viewed so clad is so eating.

I cannot recognise Venus in any sky. So whatever I think of Venus—e.g., that it is cold
and distant—there is no question as to which of two thoughts of it I thus think, these
distinguished by which sky-viewings would make their truth recognisable. It is said that sky
viewings do make Venus recognisable to some. Among these are some to whom it is
indifferent whether the viewing is at dusk or dawn. That it is the same thing seen either way
is, for them, taken as read. So far, no need in their case either to distinguish two such thoughts
of Venus to get right what proof for them might be that Venus is thus and so. But (it is said)
some of these Venus-viewers relate to Venus in the way that the Martians relate to Pia in
curlers and Pia in frocks. Representing their epistemic standings rightly might require
recognising multiple thoughts of Venus that it is burning bright, just as with the Martians.

But was Phosphorous recognisable up there that evening? None of Pythagoras’ peers
could recognise anything in sight as that very thing which they so called. The obtaining of a
certain identity escaped them. Some of us could have done so had we been there. What do
you want to count as recognisable? Correspondingly, how many thoughts are there of Venus
that it is burning bright? Certain distinctions one would need to draw to get the epistemic
standings of Pythagoras’ peers right would be uncalled for if the need were to get right the
epistemic standings of those of us just mentioned. What counts as recognisable, it seems,
depends on the occasion for the counting. As does, correspondingly, what counts as proof. If
there is just one right way of counting thoughts, to what such facts is it answerable?

In the third person we can distance ourselves from those discourses in which
expressions of the same, or of different, thoughts are to be found, as, above we distance
ourselves from the discourse of Pythagoras and his contemporaries, or, for that matter, of the
Martians. From this perspective we can identify a range and variety of different occasions for
identifying the same thought over again, or distinguishing different ones. Now a possibility
comes into view: perhaps the right way of doing this on one such occasion differs from the
right way of doing it on another. Perhaps there is no such thing as the right way of counting thoughts, but rather there are many different ways in which this might be done, the right one depending on the purposes for, and occasion on which, thoughts are to be counted. Perhaps, that is, the notion same thought is an occasion-sensitive notion. Such is invisible form a first-person stance, such as Pia’s above. For such is not a perspective from which to survey a range of occasions for answering questions as to where there is one thought twice, where two, each once. From a third-person perspective, though, ranges of different occasions for expressing, or for thinking, thoughts become immediately apparent.

The contrast between first and third person here resembles that identified by Thompson Clarke (1965) in another case. Given that what we see is some of what is before our eyes, suppose we ask how much of this we do, or might, see. We imagine some scene in view, containing some of the usual middle-sized space-takers—in Clarke’s case a tomato. We imagine someone (ourselves, or alter ego) viewing the tomato. We ask how much of the tomato one could actually see from his position. We imagine being in such a position. What would it be like? We thus view things from a first person perspective. Clarke’s idea is that once we come this far, an answer to our question is forced on us. We see that, in this position, one could not see the backside, or the inside of the tomato. So it must be that the most we actually see is the facing surface. From the position into which we have imagined ourselves, Clarke notes, this conclusion is not the conclusion of an argument. We do not reason our way to it. We merely note that we do not see the back side or the insides; we see, just by appreciating the position we are in, that the most we could see is the facing surface. Suppose, though, that we hold fast to the third person. There is Sid, viewing the tomato. How much of it can he see? Now we see that there are various occasions on which we might be asking this of Sid, where, on different of these there may be different things it would mean for Sid to have seen the tomato, or for him rather to have seen only such-and-such part of it. Imagining ourselves into Sid’s position (as above we imagined ourselves into Pia’s), and posing our question from within it, it becomes a question which admits of only one right answer. Holding ourselves apart from Sid and considering, rather than his circumstances, those in which we might pose such a question about him, the issue is cast in a quite different light. We come to see that how much you see of a scene in view is an occasion-sensitive matter.

Just so with our present question how much, or what, it takes to identify a thought: how thoughts may differ, how they are to be counted. Imagining ourselves into Pia’s position we ask, from it, how many questions there could be of Venus whether it is orbitally challenged; how much we would have to make clear in order to make clear just what question we were asking. Thus reflecting on what would identify what we were asking, it takes no more philosophy just to see that there can be only one such thought. Given the way things look from this perspective, I have suggested, if there can be only one right answer to the question ‘How many (thoughts)?’, then the answer to that question must be: ‘Just one.’ That answer simply stares us in the face. When we view Pia’s position from outside it, though—when we disengage ourselves from her particular need to distinguish one thought from another—other possibilities come into view. There no longer need be just one right answer to the ‘How many?’ question. Rather, seeing a given discourse in terms of the expression of given thoughts is a particular way of presenting it, from the outside, for some particular purpose—notably, to exhibit something about its rationality, or lack thereof. And the right way of doing this need not be determined simply by the occasion of thought-expression having been what it was, or by anything short of the purpose for which such assignment of thoughts to expression is to be
done. In short, there may be many ways of counting thoughts, each sometimes correct. From within a first-person perspective occasion-sensitivity ineluctably disappears from view. But we can recover it if we stand back, adopting a third-person perspective on the situations our descriptions are meant to fit.

The contours of the phenomenon of thought are that of a phenomenon in which the way thought articulates into thoughts of things being one way or another depends on the occasion for articulating, and the point of then doing it in one way rather than another, the contrasts then needing drawing. A thought is an abstraction from historical acts or episodes of representing-as. It is to be just that which would serve the particular purposes for which it is abstracted. It serves in an unfolding of the idea of being true, notably in detaching that on which truth itself might turn from that in the expression of (or engaging in) thought which might make such-and-such (rather than something else) that on which truth there turns. It serves, too, in an unfolding of the idea of proof; an idea which, however impersonal we may make it cannot be detached entirely from epistemology. There can be no one right way of counting whatever would serve these ends.

9. Objects and Concepts Thereof: Can there be two thoughts of Venus that it is orbitally challenged? From a first-person perspective it seems not. But from a third-person perspective such a possibility opens up—not that there are multiple such thoughts, but that there are on what is sometimes the right way of counting thoughts. But does such a possibility really open up? One central element in the notion of a thought, as usually conceived, may seem to block this. If a thought is, as Frege suggests, a question of truth, then one might well think that there are two thoughts (thus two different such questions) only where these thoughts differ in when they would be true. And it may seem that two thoughts of Venus that it is thus and so could not so differ. But this last is just a false impression. Here follow two ways of seeing this.

The first way moves via the world-involvingness of thoughts. To begin, any singular thought owes thanks to the world for its existence. For any singular thought there is some object such that for the thought to be true just is for that object to be as, according to the thought, some object is. For there to be that thought, then, is for there to be that object. Just here the difference between the thought that Frege smoked and the thought that every teacher of Carnap who retired to Bad Kleinen smoked, even if the only one who did all that is Frege. It is more than conceivable for Frege never to have been conceived. There might then still have been this last thought, but not that first one. Such world-involvingness does not stop with singular thoughts. When Sid heard what Pia had to say, he swallowed his tobacco. But there would have been no such thing as swallowing tobacco had tobacco never evolved. There would then have been no thought to the effect that such is what Sid did.

Nor need world-involvingness stop there. A thought’s existence might require that of some episode in history: without that episode there might be no such thing as representing things as that thought does. Such would be so, of course, if it were specifically that episode which the thought represented as being thus and so. But, for the right sort of object, e.g., Pia, a way for a thought to make truth turn in the singular way on how some object is could be to make it turn essentially on some given protagonist of some such episode. It could be, that is, if there were need for it to be in order to get thought-counting right. The episode might be one of, say, Pia sitting in chenille and curlers biting on a croissant. Without that episode there would be no such thought. Without Pia there would not have been that episode. So, again,
there would not have been that thought. But the thought might exploit Pia’s role in that scene in order to make it her on whom its truth turns, e.g., in representing a certain item as, now seated in frocks and pumps, sipping kir. Nothing in what it takes for a thought to be singular prohibits a thought from binding itself to the item which makes it singular in some complex way such as that just described. To be the object on which the thought’s truth turns in the singular way, an object must be that very one with the indicated place in history—something an object could be only where there is that history. But the role the indicated object is to play is just that role some object must play for a thought to be singular.

The idea is that a thought which is, in the singular way, about Pia might be made such by an element in it which exploits actual history in the way described: thus exploiting history and being thus about Pia are compatible. Some thought might be that, that is, if (or where) such is the right way to count thoughts. The claim is not that there are such thoughts. Such is decided by other considerations, as above. It is just that if, or where, other considerations point in that direction, there is no obstacle to following them there. If there are two thoughts about Pia that she is sipping kir, or where there so count (say, ‘that Clothilde’ is and ‘that Nicole is’), then one cannot be true (nor false) unless the other is. But one could be where the other would not have. If Pia never sat in chenille and curlers—if, say, she were ‘Peter Pan’ throughout the day—there would not have been that first thought, whose existence depends on that of such an historical episode. But there still might have been the second.

The idea here is reinforced by a further idea of Frege’s. He expresses it thus:

That a thought is an identity does not preclude its also being a subsumption. We can transform the sentence ‘Napoleon is the vanquished of Waterloo’ into ‘Napoleon is identical with the vanquished of Waterloo’ and here Napoleon is certainly not subsumed under [being] the vanquished at Waterloo, but rather under the concept, ‘identical with the vanquished at Waterloo’. (24.8.1919b: 116(??))

We can decompose the thought that Napoleon was the vanquished at Waterloo either into an element making it about Napoleon and one predicating of him being the loser at Waterloo, or, indifferently, into an element making truth turn on him, another doing likewise (exploiting his participation in that historical event), and the predication of identity between what each of these makes turn on.

Identity is a two place relation between objects. A thought of the holding of an identity, so thought of, is thus doubly singular. ‘The vanquished at Waterloo’ can thus be understood as injecting singularity into a thought thus expressed. More carefully, it can contribute to the expression of a thought by identifying a bit of singularity in the thought thus expressed. It might do this, à la Kaplan, simply by making the expression one of a thought about a certain object, the one identified by its losing at Waterloo. But, still operating à la Kaplan, it might make that expression one of a thought which makes itself singular (in second instance) by exploiting that historical episode (Waterloo) as sketched above. It is for the demands of proof to decide whether such is ever called for.

Conversely, that very thought expressed by ‘Napoleon was vanquished at Waterloo’, though it can be understood as at least singly singular, predicating losing at Waterloo of someone in particular, could, exploiting Frege’s idea, be decomposed as universal. For, as
Frege suggests above, there is such a thing as being that very thing (being identical with) Frege. Such is a way for an object to be. All objects but one, of course, fail to be it. But such does not matter to its being something to be *predicated* of an object. There is then the thought that everything which is this way is also such as having lost at Waterloo; a perfectly respectable universal thought. As Frege reminds us (1892: 199-200), the *same* thought might be decomposed sometimes as singular, sometimes as universal. We need not give up the idea that it is *one* thought here, that Napoleon lost at Waterloo, which admits of two decompositions as above. If we now decompose each of our hypothetical two thoughts about Pia as universal, on the plan just scouted, we see that, at second order, each would be concerned with the fates of different things there are to predicate of something. Their entitlement to be counted as two thoughts rather than one now stands out more clearly. But it is entitlement, so far as it exists, which would belong to the *thoughts*. It is indifferent to their manner of decomposition.

*Are* there, then, two thoughts of Pia that she is sipping kir? Well, what are the requirements on *being proof*? Following Frege’s 1890 suggestion, what might be proof of what requires there to be two. When we (who know Pia as Sid does) see Pia, in frock and pumps, sipping kir, we thus have proof that Pia is sipping. What we see proves this. But would it prove what needed proving wherever the question was, of Pia, whether she was sipping? We could so understand it. What of someone who, with us, saw Pia sipping, but who could not recognise what he saw as Pia (who knew her only in chenille and curlers)? He, too, could *think* of Pia that she was sipping, hence wonder whether she was. But what we all saw would not be proof for him. Understanding proof as we now are, his predicament would be this: he saw what *was* proof alright, but simply could not recognise what he saw as *proof*. Such is a possible description. But the *only* possible one? Might *proof*, perhaps, be an occasion-sensitive notion?

10. **On What Is Said:** A thought is an abstraction, with particular intent, from historical instances of representing-as: historical cases of thinkers thinking as they do; historical cases of thinking agents authoring the representing that they do. Its point is to isolate particular questions as to what is and is not true; particular ways things may either be or not. How does this abstraction relate to that from which it thus originates?

We may speak of such a thing as the way Pia thinks of things as being, or the way she takes them to be, or the way she sees things as standing. What of the question just *what ways* she takes things to be—what thoughts she thinks—in taking to be so what she thus does. *Some* philosophy of psychology, with some currency, would require there to be, in principle, a unique right straight answer to such questions. It would require Pia’s taking things to be as she does to articulate, or decompose, into some particular set of ways for things to be (or thoughts to be thought) which are *the* ones she takes things to be (or thinks). Facts about *Pia*, or the idiosyncracies of her psychology, would then need to chose between the options.

For example, Pia knows (or thinks she does) what Sid is like after he has had a few. She knows her way around town (where to find what). She knows how to plan a menu. Just *which* things does she know to be so, *casu quo* think so, in knowing this? Reflection on such matters is one way to come to doubt the just-stated presupposition: that there is a unique way in which her thinking of things as she does articulates into particular things she thinks.

In the preceding, though, a different consideration has emerged. Suppose there is *not*
just one way in which Pia’s taking things to be as she does articulates into particular ways she takes things to be. Perhaps, then, her thinking is articulable ad lib in any one of these. But if it is an occasion-sensitive question how someone’s belief articulates into beliefs—in general an occasion-sensitive matter whether someone does believe such-and-such—then multiple articulability takes on a different cast. Now there might be right and wrong ways of articulating on an occasion; just different ones on different occasions. The idea of a domain of possible articulations from which to choose ad lib disappears.

One way for it to be an occasion-sensitive question just which things someone takes to be so is for it to be an occasion-sensitive matter how thoughts are to be counted. What would thus be occasion-sensitive would be when two expressions/mentions/thinkings of a thought would be expressions/mentions/thinkings of some one thought—the thought, say, which one would mention on an occasion in speaking of ‘the thought that such-and-such’. As it might be (staying within that small area of room for variation we have so far been scouting) it might be an occasion-sensitive matter whether someone who knows Pia as ‘Clothilde’ and only on morning encounters believes the thought someone else expressed on an occasion in saying ‘Nicole is sipping kir’, Pia being known as ‘Nicole’ in the circles of the expresser. If such were so, it would show, again only in a small way, how what (which things) Pia believes depends on more than her individual psychology. Which would put paid to philosophy of psychology of that above-mentioned stripe. The preceding discussion is, inter alia, a case for just such occasion-sensitivity.

Our present topic, though, is not attitude psychology. Our concern is with the abstraction as it figures in identifying what was said in historical acts of authorship (of thought expression). Suppose, e.g., someone says, ‘Nicole is sipping’, thus speaking of Pia. Suppose he has been perfectly clear and coherent (or as much so as any of us ever is), spoke quite unambiguously, and so on. Is there then such a thing as the thought he expressed? That he did is, in one sense a triviality. For authorship, like motherhood, is creative. Frege’s mother brought it about that there were countless thoughts—thoughts of Frege—which there would not have been but for her efforts. Saying ‘Nicole is sipping’, in the way just imagined, is also creative. There is now a thought which would be true just where things were as thus represented. If Sid was the speaker, it is a thought which might (sometimes) be mentioned in speaking of ‘the thought that things are as Sid thus represented them’. There is now that way for things to be, so to be represented as being—as there would not have been had Sid not so spoken. It is as clear as need be when so representing things would be representing truly—just where Sid would have spoken truly.

But where Sid expressed a thought impeccably, must there be a thought there would have been anyway were there not that expression of thought, which is the one thus expressed? Such need not be so. It might be that there are different things, each to be said truly on some occasion, but not on others, as to what thought Sid expressed. This would be so if what counted, on some occasions, as expressing the same thought Sid did would not so count on others—if, e.g., Sid were sometimes, in some circumstances, correctly reported as having said that Clothilde was sipping, where other times, in other circumstances, such would be saying what was not so. I claim neither that Frege envisioned nor would have welcomed such a result. But such seems to be the result we reach in continuing his search for the right way of counting thoughts given the constraints he places on how thoughts are to be counted. It is built into the demand that the right way of counting thoughts should yield the right results as to what is proof of what. Someone who knows Pia only as Clothilde may assure us (as seems
obvious to him) that Clothilde only drinks pastis—a view we might try to disabuse him of in
saying, correctly, that Sid said he saw Clothilde drinking kir last night. That he referred to her
as Nicole is here by the bye. What he gave his word for is what does settle the question at
issue here. On the other hand, if this same person now sees Pia drinking kir and suspects that
perhaps this is Clothilde sipping (though still incredulous), it would be incorrect to assure him
that Sid said Clothilde was sipping kir. Vouching for what he thus did is not vouching for
what is in question here.

There is another way in which singular reference, correspondingly singular thought, can
help bring out the kind of abstraction from historical representings that a thought is (and must
be to serve the purposes for which it is abstracted). Typically, for a given spatial stretch of the
environment, there are paths through it which will avoid collision with solid obstacles to
progress, and paths which will not. As Pia enters La Bellota Hermosa, she confronts, views,
such a spatial organisation. As she leaves, she runs afoul of it: there is an abrupt, progress-
stopping, collision. A natural way of reporting this would be to say: she ran into Sid on his
way to the bar. She is naturally enough thought of as having collided with a certain object;
‘Sid’ is a reasonable enough answer to the question (or at least some questions) which one.
What, though, is an object?

When one speaks of ‘objects’ he may have any of several notions in mind. One such
notion, though, is introduced in terms of a thought as Frege explains one: just that by which
truth can come into question at all; by which there is a determinate question whether (that)
such-and-such is true. An object is what fixes a certain sort of determinate contribution to the
way a thought represents things as being. The whole thought represents something as a way
for it to be. The way it thus represents something is a way for truth outright to turn on: the
truth of what so represents something does not turn on which things it so represents. A proper
part of a thought (on a decomposition) may also represent something as a way for it to be; but
where something’s being that way makes such representing true is liable to to depend on
which things it so represents. Such is a predicative thought-element in one terminology. In the
whole decomposition of which it is a part, there must then be another element which fixes
which things (or n-tuples of things) must be as thus represented for the truth of the whole
thought to turn on something for which that question does not arise. One way of making truth
turn on which things are the way that predicative element thus brings in question is to make it
turn on which ways some given thing is. Where object is a logical category, as on our present
notion, an object is just whatever would play the role of such a thing: whatever there is for a
thought-element to make truth thus turn on. Conversely, wherever there is a way for that role
to be played, there is a range of thoughts decomposable into, inter alia, an element which
makes truth turn (in part) on the role being played in that way. There is an object, on this
notion, wherever there is a way of playing it.

A proper predicative thought-element, as per above, may represent different things as
the same way: the way it represents a thing. Such is just what distinguishes it from a whole
thought; what it identifies from a question of truth outright. But for it to contribute as it does
to what the whole thought it is part of does, it must be that for any given things it represents,
that thing may either be as represented or not, but not both. Such is just part of what
predication, on this notion, is. For this requirement to be respected, what might do so must be
what participates in the relation of identity, so that wherever something is as the predicative
element represents something, and something is not there must be a definite answer to the
question ‘One thing twice, or two each once?’ With which we may introduce Frege’s
characterisation of what an object is: anything for which questions whether something is *that* one make sense. (The parallel to Frege’s (pre-1890) characterisation of a concept: anything for which the question whether something falls under it makes sense.)

Our starting point was this idea: objects are identified as such by the role they play in thoughts. That is, in terms of that particular abstraction from history which a thought is. A corollary now is: you cannot collide with something without colliding with a host of distinct objects. For, for any collision there are many different ways of fixing answer to questions whether something is what you just collided with. Pia collided with Sid, with a certain human body, (to borrow a definition once given of *dog*) with a certain perambulating intestinal tract, and so on. And there is more. There is something one stage of which is a larva, another of which is an adult moth. When we (or I) speak of a larva, or of a moth, we (I) tend to think of ourselves as speaking of an object to be which is to be a larva, or, *casu quo*, to be which is to be an adult moth. We *need* not, though. One *might* also think of humans in the way we (I) tend to think of moths. We might think of them as occurring in an immature stage (*a puerila*), or in a fully mature one (*a senila*). One way of talking of encounters with humans, then, would be in supposing one to be talking of something to be which is to be a puerila, or, *casu quo*, to be which is to be a *senila*. We do not (usually) do so, of course. But an object to be which was to be a puerila (or, *casu quo*, senila) would be equally fit for an object’s role in a thought as any other.

Suppose *thought* were not an occasion-sensitive notion. So, for every coherent way of distinguishing one thought from another, there are two different thoughts. So for every way of counting what you collided with (same thing again/not) there would be a corresponding range of distinct thoughts. The domain of thoughts would be, to say the least, thickly packed. But now, as Pia arrives at the *Versailles* for tea Zoë, who does not know Sid, cannot help but notice Pia’s swollen lip. ‘How did you get that?’ she asks solicitously. ‘On my way out of La Bellota Hermosa last night I bumped into this guy I know in a hurry to get to the bar’, she replies. Communication has succeeded, we may suppose, about as well as ever. Is there a thought within this thickly packed domain which is *the* thought which Pia thus expressed? If so, which one? It would be surprising, I suggest, if an answer to *this* question were to be found within the depths of Pia’s psychology, in, say, anything she intended, or understood herself, thus to be communicating. Nor, generalising, would it be found in anything ‘we all’, or most of us, know as to what it would be for a thing to be a ‘guy’. Not *every* question as to whether something is, or would be, one is answered, e.g., by investigating what it is to be that natural kind a guy is. On the other hand, imagine a community—call them the ‘Fieldsians’—which customarily thinks of the world as inhabited by puerilae and senilae. Suppose that Zoë, while visiting her Fieldsian friends, is trying to dine out on Pia’s swollen lip. Suppose that, to maintain her story’s pace, she says, ‘She *says* she got this from a collision with some senila she knows.’ Has she said Pia to have said something she did say? Such all depends, one might think, on how saying the same (expressing the same thought) is to be reckoned. As, in the interests of good anecdotal skills, we would all have an interest in maintaining.

Near the start of this essay I enlisted David Kaplan in my cause. Whether rightly or not, we now see, depends on how you read him. Kaplan insists clearly that the sort of work word of a language do is not the kind done in having a truth-condition or contributing to what does. In his discussion of singular reference (in language) he shows just how different from that *words*’ work is. On the other hand, his idea of ‘character’ as a *function* from contexts to contents, aside from its other defects, opens him up to being read as merely proposing
something on following lines. One might have thought there was this difference between a whole declarative sentence and a predicate within it: the whole sentence speaks of what makes it true or false outright; the predicate speaks of what merely makes it true or false of things. An n-place predicate is true or false of n-tuples of objects; a sentence is just true or false. For Kaplan (on this reading) a sentence just becomes a sort of n-place predicate, true of given n-tuples (e.g., of an object and a time where that object spoke that sentence), false of others. So one might think if the meaning of a sentence is a character in above sense. The present work is directed against that idea. Kaplan’s insight as to how one need not think of meaning fruitfully remains.

From ATM’s perspective, semantics, if a theory of expressions of a language is, in Frege’s terms, concerned with the phenomenon of holding true (or holding forth as true), rather than with that of being true. A study of meaning is thus not the study of thoughts where, as Frege conceives these, a thought is what fixes a question of truth. Meaning is a different sort of abstraction from historical instances of representing-as. In Kaplan’s own terms, the meaning of an expression is what remains constant across its uses for what it is for, and what is shared by expressions which are for the same. A well-formed expression of a language, on ATM, is a device dedicated to a specific use in achieving recognition of thought-expression. The sentence ‘Penguins waddle’, for example, speaks of penguins waddling (being waddlers). To use it for what it is for, for a start, to speak of that. That one is speaking of that can work to make recognisable how one is thus representing things to be. One needs to ask the question how one would be supposed to be representing relevant things as being in representing them as that way. Such is a question answered not merely by that sentence speaking of what it does, but in a way which parallels Kaplan’s account of using a description to identify an individual which is the one the thought expressed is to be taken to be about. On this model of thought expression there is no reason to expect meaning to fix a function from thought-expressions to thoughts expressed. Nor is there reason to expect historical expressions of thought to identify particular thoughts as the ones thereby expressed in any unique right way. The occasion-sensitivity of same thought would rule both things out.

11. Objectivity (At Time): Questions of truth arise with representing-as. They are questions whether (or when) things are (or would be) as represented; questions as to when, or whether, what would thus be related by the relation representing-as would also be related by the instancing relation. Truth is thus a cooperative enterprise between precisely two partners. One partner is responsible for determining how truth is to turn on the other; the other is responsible for yielding an outcome of such turning. Truth must be the exclusive work of these two factors. Such is rightly seen as a demand of objectivity per se. Against this background occasion-sensitivity can seem, on casual inspection, to force a third, hence extraneous, factor into the enterprise. For in representing-as, something is represented as a way for things to be. But it is just ways for things to be which occasion-sensitivity tells us admit of understandings, where on different such understandings what is so represented may yield different outcomes as to truth.

One thing we learn from Frege is that such an impression is a mistake. For Frege, a thought—a question of truth—is designed precisely so as to serve the end that objectivity demands of the first partner in the above enterprise. Historical episodes of representing-as, notably authored ones, then prove objective just insofar as, and where they can be counted, correctly, as the expression of some thought; as something over which, for some P, that way
for an episode to be, representing things as such that P, generalises. But for thoughts to play this role they must be suitably abstracted from concrete episodes of representing; abstracted so that a case of expressing one is, per se, one of engaging with truth in some one particular way.

When we try for such abstraction (I have argued) we find occasion-sensitivity forced on us. It is forced in one way because we cannot by the facts of language use. We cannot find any one way for truth to turn exclusively on how things are which is the way it would turn on that alone wherever words which spoke what they did in their language were used as meaning what they do. We cannot (in general) simply read off from the meanings of words so used a thought which would be the one thereby expressed. Rather than being a third factor in the cooperative enterprise, the occasion-sensitivity of those ways for things to be which words do speak of in meaning what they do saves us from needing to posit one.

What we have seen in the preceding is that occasion-sensitivity enters into the phenomenon of representing truly at a different point as well. As Frege saw, the thought is an abstraction (from the phenomenon of representing-as) which is destined for two roles in answering the question Frege sets logic: How must one think to reach the goal truth (insofar as such is determined simply by what being true is? One of these roles is to isolate the phenomenon of being true, conceived as just that which is the outcome of the joint enterprise described above. There are different thoughts just where there are different instances of that enterprise. The other role is in unfolding the notion being proved. The demand here is that there be different thoughts just where there are different things to be proved. So there must be two thoughts just where whatever proved the one might yet not prove the other. Thoughts must be abstracted so as to meet both of these demands on them.

The demands on performing the first function already require thoughts to be individuated very differently from sentences of a language; make them quite unsentencelike. So that, e.g., as Frege remarks, “One can, to be sure, express the same thought in different languages; but the psychological accessories to this, the thought’s material embodiment, will then often be quite different.” (1897: 154) The same thought can be expressed in many sentences, not all synonymous. The demands on performing the second function can be met only via an occasion-sensitive notion same thought. Occasion-sensitivity thus enters not only in that phenomenon of representing truly or falsely to which logic speaks, but also in its very means of speaking of this at all. But it should be as unthreatening here as it is on its first entry above. Just as the occasion-sensitivity of the notion having bathed twice, rather than making the truth of a judgement as to who bathed when relative to something, is a precondition for there being objectively correct judgements as to this, so, too, the occasion-sensitivity of the notion same thought is a precondition for there being objectively correct representations of when truth would be preserved.

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