WHAT STRUCTURE LURKS IN THE MINDS OF MEN?
Frege versus Fodor

0. Prologue: Late in life Wittgenstein wrote,

I confess that nothing seems more possible to me than that people should come to the definite view that the individual thought, the individual idea, memory, correspond to no sort of physiological image in the nervous system. (Wittgenstein, Last Writings vol. I (1982), §504)

One way for there to fail to be such images would be: our heads are full of sawdust (or some functional equivalent); our doing what thinkers do—holding positions on questions, acting on them, accordingly, and much more—is all just magic (or schein). Some read Wittgenstein thus. But what sense can be made of his idea? What follows focuses on the individual thought, that is, thinking (or holding) something so. For short I will call such attitudes ‘belief’.

A way for things to be (as that ‘for’ is to be understood here) is a way there might have been for things to be even were things not such as they are. For things to be such that Sid smokes is a way for things to be. There would still have been that way for things to be (or not) were things different than they now are in any of indefinitely many ways. For example, were Pia to imbibe, or Sid not to, there would still be such a thing as things being such that Sid smokes. (Of course, had Sid never been born, or tobacco never evolved, there would be no such way for things to be.) Correlatively, indefinitely many variations on the way things are would yield a case of things being such that Sid smoked (or, casu quo, did not). Such is the generality intrinsic to a way for things to be.

For Pia to believe that Sid smokes is a way for things to be. It is, more specifically, for her to be a way there is for one to be; for her to be one case of a certain generality. It is for her to be the same as a (potential) range of thinkers in some determinate respect; for her thinking to share something in common with that of certain others. What would it be for someone’s thinking to be, in this way, suitably the same as hers? When would there be another case of someone being the way Pia thus is; one of a thinker falling under the generality she thus does? One sort of answer to this question might mandate that idea of physiological correlates of ‘the individual thought one thinks’ of the sort that Wittgenstein, above, finds non-compulsory. Perhaps, though, there are other sorts of answers which do not. All depends on just what sort of generality for one to believe that P in fact is.

Such is the most abstract way of saying why what Wittgenstein is envisioning need not be sawdust. More specifically, for someone to believe that P is for him to take things to be some way there is for things to be. So it is for him to stand in some way to a generality of that same sort his so taking things itself is. Fix some such generality. There is then the question when there would be (what counted as) a case of someone taking things to be that way? Or, to ask after the same in a different way, for a given thinker, towards just what ways for things to be does he count as so standing? Again, one idea is that the answer to such a question is to be found by looking, either literally or figuratively, inside the thinker’s
head; and it is found there in such a way as to mandate physiological images for each individual belief. But, again, perhaps the right answer is of another sort.

To venture an image, the space of ways for things to be is, to understate, densely packed. To say someone to believe that such-and-such is to select some one way from among (again to understate) the multitude. What effects the true selections? What selects from the space those ways for things to be to which the given thinker stands, so to speak, in the believing way—those he takes to be ways things are? There is a way of thinking of belief which puts the burden for this on the thinker. The idea would be: the thinker has something like the same responsibility for effecting selection as a speaker would in asserting things to be some given way. It is precisely such an idea which seems to mandate physiological images of particular beliefs. But another idea would be: the burden lies primarily on the ascriber, or anyway on forces external to the thinker himself. Such an idea, worked out, might make that idea of images appear as hopeless. Such is another way of thinking of what Wittgenstein may have had in mind.

All of these are, so far, vague ideas remaining to be unfolded. In their present unfolding Frege will be our guide. What we will discover are very good reasons for thinking Wittgenstein right. Frege was concerned to separate questions of being true from ones of holding true. Our interest here is, of course, in holding true. But Frege’s work of separating these questions offers us, not just a conception of a thought—a pure question of truth—but also a new conception of thinking, at least where this is holding a stance towards some question of truth. Frege’s general picture of representing (truly or falsely) contains within it a cogent picture of the mind.

**Part I**

**1.1. Mental Representations:** There is, clearly, an allure to the idea that ‘the individual belief’—someone’s thinking (that) such-and-such—has a (literally) intracranial image. That is, where a thinker represents things to himself as being such-and-such way, there is also something else, intracranial and identifiable in principle, which represents things as that way. The fullest, and clearest, elaboration of this idea (by a proponent) is, I think, Jerry Fodor’s in the form of what he calls ‘The Representational Theory of Mind’ (henceforth RTM). So our search for this allure will start there.

RTM, or enough of it, divides in three. Fodor puts its first tenet thus:

RTM claims that mental representations are related to propositional attitudes as follows: for each event that consists of a creature’s having a propositional attitude with the content P (each such event as Jones’s believing at time t that P) there is a corresponding event that consists of the creature’s being related, in a characteristic way, to a token mental representation that has the content P. (1998: 8)

RTM is a claim about the metaphysics of cognitive states and processes. Tokens of cognitive mental states are tokens of relations between creatures and their mental representations. … There is no
tokening of a (cognitive) mental state or process (by a creature at a
time) unless there is a corresponding tokening of a mental
representation (by that creature at that time). (2008: 5-6)

These passages contain the two theses which will be of the most central concern in what
follows. The first I will call duplication. For someone to believe that P is, trivially, for him
to represent things to himself as such that P. Any attitude towards a way for things to be
(such that P) is, definitionally, a case of representing things as such that P. The representer,
in this case, is the holder of the attitude—a thinker. One might call such representing
autorepresenting. By RTM whenever there is a case of autorepresenting, there is another
case of representing which duplicates the representing the thinker thus does. Its content (as
RTM would have it) is just the content of the thinker’s attitude. In the duplicate case,
though, the representer is not the thinker, but rather something subcutaneous. The second
thesis I will call uniqueness. Again trivially, things are the way things are. For a given
thinker and time we may also speak (harmlessly, if we are carefully) of the way he thus
takes things to be. From the way things are we may carve out particular ways things are. For
things to be as they are is also, as it may be, for things to be such that penguins waddle.
From the way someone (at a time) takes things to be we may also, on occasion, at least,
carve out particular ways he takes things to be. Not only are things such that penguins
waddle but moreover Pia is apprised of the fact that penguins waddle. So she takes things to
be that way. As RTM has it, the way someone takes things to be at a time decomposes
uniquely into a set of ways for things to be which are the ways he then takes things to be:
one way for each mental representation which then enjoys the designated status in his
intracranial affairs. Such are the points about which doubts will start below.

One believes such-and-such (in present sense) truly or falsely, according as things are,
or are not, the way he thus takes things to be. (‘Things’ as just used, admits no questions
‘Which?’) What one believes (a value of ‘P’ above) is thus what might be true or false: what
poses a definite question of truth, the posing of which makes truth turn in some definite way
on how things are. So a value of ‘P’ is what Frege called a ‘thought’ (Gedanke). A thought,
in the form that P, presents what it is thus of as a way things are. Representing things as
being thus and so is to be distinguished from representing them so to be. Representing
something to be so is beyond a thought’s power. In representing things to be thus and so, a
representer assumes responsibility. A thought cannot do that. It represents only in the sense
that to express it, or to hold things to be as per it, is so to represent things, either publicly or
to oneself. A thought is thus a sort of abstraction from representing by what can assume
responsibility. One might thus think that there are representers whose content is a thought
only where these were (or, perhaps, are to be) produced in their representing by representers
who might assume such responsibility, that is, by thinkers.

Such, though, is not the view of RTM. Rather, RTM insists on duplication: where a
thinker stands towards a thought so as (inter alia) to represent things to himself as being as
per that thought—where, e.g., he believes that P—his so relating to that thought is
shadowed by his bearing a different relation to something else. For him, e.g., to believe that
P is for him to bear a certain other relation to a ‘Mental Representation’ (henceforth MR)
which bears the content a content-bearer would have precisely in representing things as
being that way which the thought is of things being. Henceforth I will call mental
representations with such content ‘MR*s’.
So far we know just one thing as to what MR*s are. They are content-bearers. Bearing content is one way to represent (something) as ((being) something). It contrasts both with authoring such representing (as, e.g., in asserting), and with representing to oneself. An author of representing-as may also, in the authoring, author, or issue, a content-bearer. A content-bearer—say, an English sentence—may also do so in the sense that it is for such authorship. There are no other known cases of content-bearing. In MRs, though, RTM posits a content-bearer of a different sort.

In any case, the crucial thing so far about a content-bearer is that it is something eligible to bear content; thus that it is identifiable as the item it is independent of reference to the content it bears (or the way it represents things). It might, e.g., be identified by a spelling, or an acoustic form, or an electro-chemical composition. There might still be something so spelled, or so sounding, or etc., even if that thing did not represent anything as anything, or, for any way for things to be, represent things as being that way. If a content-bearer does bear given content, then, it is fair (that is, makes sense) to ask for an explanation. By virtue of what does it do so? How was content bestowed on it? These are questions Fodor (rightly) takes seriously, and goes to considerable lengths to answer.

An English sentence—say, ‘Penguins waddle’—may represent things as a certain way in this sense: it is for so representing things. Roughly, use it in speaking English, and for what it is for, and you will ipso facto speak of penguins as waddlers. The relation between the sentence and someone who uses it so to speak of penguins is roughly that between the dimmer for the chandelier and the person who turns it to dim the lights. The dimmer does not, on its own, author any dimmings. But, all going well, turn it and what will happen is: the lights will dim. For ‘Penguins waddle’ to speak of penguins as waddlers is for it to have that sort of role in English use. No such explanation is available for MR*s. As RTM has it, for an MR* to have the content it does is not for it to play a role in the representing of any other (notably thinking) representer. If RTM is true, then someone who thinks that penguins waddle will, eo ipso, relate (in a certain way) to an MR* which represents penguins as waddlers. But for that MR* to play that role is not what it is for it to have that content. By RTM’s lights this last requires a story of a different sort.

1.2. Computations: Anyone who believes that penguins waddle stands in a certain relation to any content-bearer which represents things as being such that penguins waddle: believing things to be the way that content-bearer represents them. He so stands to the English ‘Penguins waddle’, equally to the Croatian sentence ‘Pingvini se gegaju’, speaking Croatian not required. Thus it matters that the relations RTM posits to MR*s are relations to tokens of them, and then to tokens peculiarly the thinker’s. What makes them his, for RTM, is that they are literally intracranial (or anyway subcutaneous). They are thus locatable (within the skin). MR*s thus qualify as those physiological images Wittgenstein speaks of.

RTM needs to insist on this, first, because of the role MR*s are to play in computations; and next because of the role these computations are to play in explaining whatever it is that is explained by the believer (or etc.) holding the attitude he thus does. Fodor puts what he insists on thus:

Tokens of mental processes are ‘computations’; that is, causal chains of (typically inferential) operations on mental representations. (2008: 5-6)
A proprietary sense of ‘mental process’ is at work here. Sid’s grief at the brewery’s closing may gradually dissipate, as may Pia’s annoyance at Sid’s snoring. Such are processes, not implausibly mental. Surveying his ‘proof’ Sid may find his error. Such may involve processes, e.g., of inspecting lines one by one. Suppose, though, that Pia refuses the lager at Café Zé Carlos because she thinks she never clean the taps. Or that Sid recognises his aunt at the airport by the feathers in her hat. No process, let along a mental one, is in sight here. Yet it is just here that RTM, given its ambitions, needs to locate some. For it is Pia’s belief which explains her abstention, Sid’s remembering that his aunt’s hat has such-and-such feathers which explains his feat of recognition. Here, then, RTM needs to posit a process. Its right to the title ‘mental’, such as it is, derives merely from the fact that what it explains is what a certain mental state would. That it needs to be posited is an assumption of RTM’s as to what explanation by a mental state must be like. That such a process must be a computation on mental representations is to be a further assumption pursuant to this first.

What, then, is a computation? First, as here conceived, it is a way of making syntactically recognisable the obtaining (or not of some relation between things of given sorts. This is to say: a computation is a terminating sequence of transitions from item to item drawn from some given stock, where each transition (counting the termination as a null one) is licensed by a given set of rules whose application is sensitive only to features of the items in the stock which are independent of their relations to what is being computed. So, for example, if what was being computed was the sum of two numbers, the stock from which items in the sequence are drawn might be a stock of numerals. The rules licensing transitions would be sensitive only to, say, geometrical features of the numerals; not to any fact as to for what number a numeral stood, or as to how these numbers relate to the sum being computed. So, from this perspective a computation might be viewed as a sort of cognitive prosthetic. One who trusted in the computation, but knew nothing as to when a number would be the sum of others might still learn the sum of 5 and 7 once he knew that that was what the sequence computed.

So a computation computes on items drawn from some given stock, and it thereby computes something—generally, the value of some given function for a given argument, though perhaps, sometimes, merely things which bear a given relation to some initial thing. As already implied, to think of a computation in this way is already to think of any given computation as belonging to a given system, whose vocabulary—stock of items to be computed on—and rules generate all the computations within some given set. A sequence is a computation only relative to some given system which generates it. The rules of a given system of computations are sensitive only to features the items being computed on would have no matter what was being computed. The question thus arises what a given system of computations computes (if anything). A simple answer is: suppose there is a function defined over a given domain, and a mapping of items of the vocabulary of a given system of computation into that domain. Suppose that, for any argument of the function, there is a computation in the system which begins with an item which maps onto that argument under the given mapping and terminates in an item which maps onto the value of that function for that argument; and, further, that any computation which so begins so terminates. Then we can say: that system of computations computes the values of that function for its arguments. The system might, of course, compute much more as well.
Fodor, though, has a more restricted notion of computation in mind. The computations he is interested in are on MR*s (hence sensitive only to their syntactic—that is, non-representational—features. So the set of all MR*s is the vocabulary from which those terms are drawn which form a sequence which is a computation. What they compute, insofar as computation is of any interest to RTM, are relations which hold between the contents of those MR*s. So, for example, there is a computation which leads from Pia’s belief that the taps in the Zé Carlos are never cleaned (at least) to the belief, or decision, on her part, that ordering a beer is not the thing for her to do. The computation originates in an MR* with the content that Zé Carlos never cleans the tap and terminates in an MR* with the content that ordering a beer is not thing thing (for Pia) to do. This computation belongs to a system, which is one for computing, from given ways things are taken to be (and, perhaps, given ways they are wanted to be) to what follows from this (by Pia’s lights, at least) as to the thing to do. Perhaps RTM conceives this as the system for computing what Pia is prepared to recognise as to the thing to do, insofar as, or wherever, this is explained by specific facts as to what she takes (and, perhaps, as to what she wants) to be so. Of course, one may remark, there can be such a system only insofar as there is a system for computing what Pia is prepared to do (or does) from her believing and wanting what she does. If there is such a thing as the set of all Pia’s beliefs (and desires) at a time, then there such be a system of computations—a computation to be performed—by which what she would be prepared to do, wherever her believing and desiring as she does explains this, is computable. Such is far from an unproblematic assumption.

1.3. Content’s Only Origin: RTM’s third tenet concerns the way MR*s come by their content, and then, further, the way in which any act, or state, of representing-as comes by its content. On this Fodor tells us,

RTM … contemplates no locus of original intentionality except the contents of mental representations. In consequence, so far as RTM is concerned, to explain what it is for a mental representation to mean what it does is to explain what it is for a propositional attitude to have the content that it does. (1998: 8-9)

There is an origin of content just where having content is contingent. It is thus content-bearers and not, e.g., thoughts, whose content has an origin. There, and just there is there a question how content is come by. But there certainly is such a question for MR*s. If Ed thinks that Sid drinks and Pia eats, he thus stands believingly towards a certain thought. But a thought does not have content contingently. The thought that Pia eats could not be the thought that something else. So the idea of an origin of its content makes no sense. Ed, by contrast, does not have content at all. He does not represent-as as a content-bearer does. The English sentence, ‘Sid drinks and Pia eats’ is another matter.

Ed’s belief that Sid drinks and Pia eats follows the pattern of the thought that this is so. It is not that this belief of his might have been, say, the belief that penguins eat fish, or a mere content-less bit of grey matter but for the grace of some content-conferring circumstance. Had history have gone differently, Ed might not have believed the above, but simply, say, that Sid drinks. History would not thus have conferred a different content on the belief first mentioned.
MR*s, like English sentences, are things on which for content to be conferred. That they are to be sole origins of content makes them yet unlike a sentence. An English sentence leads a life of representing-as. It leads that life in the representing done in speaking English. There is something it is for in speaking English, a use reserved for it. Roughly, to speak it in speaking English is to speak of penguins as waddlers. For this last to be so—for it to contribute in that way to making representing done in English recognisable for what it is—is (roughly) for it to have the content it does. MR*s call for a very different story. If RTM is right, then there is a certain MR*, with intracranial tokens within Sid, such that Sid thinks that Ed is glib just in case such tokens enjoy a certain status within his intracranial goings-on. But it is because the content of that MR* is that Ed is glib that what Sid thus thinks is that Ed is glib. What confers this content on the MR* must then be something independent of whatever work of the above sort it might do.

The story RTM envisions sees an MR* as derived from some fixed vocabulary by some fixed set of rules, as with English sentences, thus generated in generating a stock of all the items so derivable. A derivation of an MR* assigns it some one given structure, where each MR* in the stock generated is thus assigned precisely one such structure. The stock of MR*s is structured accordingly by relations between elements of the structures of each member of the stock. An MR* is thus—by contrast with a thought—intrinsically a part of some specifiable system of MR*s. Each element of the generating vocabulary is to make a fixed contribution to the content of all the MR*s in which it occurs. This (for the elements from which a given MR* is built), plus the structure imposed on it by those applications of rules which generate it, fully identifies what the content of that MR* is. Now the story about content goes like this. For Sid at a time, there is a stock of vocabulary available to his intracranium for generating MR*-tokens; accordingly a stock of MR*-tokens available for intracranial workings, or statuses, within him. For each of those vocabulary items to contribute as it does to the content of the MR*-tokens in which it occurs is for it to have the content it does anyway. And for it to have this content is for it to have a certain history of interactions (of the sort such intracranial stuff might have) with the (largely) extradermal world. Those interactions between vocabulary items and the world are to be the origin of all content.

So an MR* is always a member of a system of MR*s, generated from a fixed vocabulary (given building blocks) by fixed rules. It is thus structured by its derivation in a way which reflects an overarching structure of the whole system. The system’s building blocks are the units in terms of which structural relations are to be defined. But care is needed as to just why this must be so. What the story of origins requires is that MR* tokens be structured. They must be built out of MR*-element tokens. This for a familiar reason. An intracranium may need an MR* token with the content that penguins waddle even if neither it, nor its owner, has any contact with penguins, waddling or otherwise. So the MR* tokens available to a given intracranium must be each structured in a given way, mutatis mutandis for the system they form. But, despite all their other differences, MR*s share this with thoughts: as Frege puts it, they do not require a bearer. There is no reason so far why a given system of MR*s should not be available to two different intracrania of two different thinkers. So far, nothing prevents these different thinkers (or rather their intracrania) from each structuring these MR*s differently. Correspondingly, nothing requires the MR*s to be structured uniquely by any unique way of generating them.

That MR*s themselves, and not just stocks of tokens of them, must belong to a system
as per above follows from the fact that, unlike thoughts, but like English sentences they are content-bearers. They thus have a visible, or anyway non-representational, form by which they are identified as what they are. And now it is the idea of computation that does the work. These ‘visible’ forms must be such as to make syntactically recognisable (that is, in terms of non-representational features) all the significant ways in which the different contents of different MR*s may relate to one another—all those relations, that is, on which some ‘mental’ computation may depend. One might remark that this is a tall order.

So it must be not just tokens, but types, which are structured uniquely by what generates them. Perhaps something like this lies behind the fact that content-bearers, such as MR*s and English sentences, have tokens, whereas thoughts do not. But it is the same thought that penguins waddle which is what Pia thinks and which occurs (it, not a token) in the thought that if penguins waddle, then they walk like Sid. And such is related to the fact that thoughts are not generated from a stock of building blocks, have no structure thus imposed on them, no one thus privileged structure. But this adumbrates a story to be told two sections hence. In any case, tenet 3 will play a minimal role in what follows. Except, perhaps, for this. If the content of an MR* is composed by definite rules from the contents of (what are intrinsically) its elements, MR*s are thus far like English sentences. But the content thus composed, in the case of an English sentence, is not a thought. For a start, a typical English sentence (indexicality and demonstration aside) can, by virtue of its meaning what it does, express any of indefinitely many different thoughts. An MR* is not meant to be like that. What is problematic is whether anything generated within a system in the way both MR*s and English sentences are could fail to be like that.

**Part II**

**2.1. The Invisible Realm:** After truth, (whole) thoughts are the starting point for Frege’s investigations. A thought, Frege tells us, is “that by which truth can come into question at all” (1918: 60). ‘That by which’ here should be read ‘Precisely that by which’. A thought is, or poses, a particular question of truth—a yes-no question, whether things are thus and so. It is one way in particular of making truth turn on how things are. Its identifying features are those of some such question, no more, no less. A thought is a pure question of truth. As already noted, thinking-so being a truth-evaluable attitude, thoughts are, by definition, something there is to think, there being different thoughts just where there are different things to think. But, a main theme running through Frege, and what is to follow, what a thought is, and what thoughts there are (how truth can be made to turn on how things are) are not questions to be answered by studying individual psychologies (or human psychology). Nor, as we shall see, is the question what it would be for a given thinker to count as thinking some given thing. Four of Frege’s ideas about thoughts are particularly pregnant when it comes to philosophy of psychology. Thoughts are: invisible, multiply decomposable, general, and public. To these I add here one more correlative idea. I will call the whole ‘FP’ for Frege's Picture. It is alternative to—excludes—RTM (or so I argue). Part II will develop FP.

I begin with invisibility. Here ‘invisible’ is shorthand for: not a possible object of sensory awareness. Invisibility reflects the fact that thoughts are not part of what surrounds us. They lack locations. They cannot, as Frege notes, form images on retinas. Thus, as Frege
also notes, ‘see’ in ‘see that’ (a thought’s mention following the ‘that’) cannot be a verb of perception. To see that is, insightfully, to take something to be so.

The point so far is purely grammatical. As Frege puts it,

> A thought is something non-sensory, and all things observable by the senses are excluded from the domain of that by which truth can come into question at all. (1918: 61)

It will help to appreciate one of its motivations, though, to note that, for Frege, the notion thought (Gedanke) is his second try at a notion of a pure question of truth (or what poses one). His first try, under the title ‘judgeable content’, was a failed attempt, as he came to recognise by 1891. In 1892, commenting on this failure, he writes,

> When I wrote my Grundlagen der Arithmetik, I had not yet made the distinction between Sinn and Bedeutung, and thus still combined in the expression ‘judgeable content’ what I now designate differently with the words ‘thought’ and ‘truth-value’. (1892: 198(??))

The problem with judgeable content is thus, clearly, that too much was built into it. The features which were to identify a given judgeable content as the one it was were more than was needed to identify a single question of truth. In particular, a truth-value is extra to this task. For obvious enough reasons there cannot be two different thoughts, otherwise the same, but distinguished from one another by the fact that one is true, the other false. There can be no such thing as the true thought that Sid smokes and the false one that he does. (If a thought were not identified as the one it is without settling whether it was true, how could one ever settle whether any thought was true? The idea collides with the very idea of representing-as.)

Now we see that the same considerations apply to any visible, or, more broadly, sensible form. Just as there cannot be two thoughts that Sid smokes, the true one and the false one, so nor can there be two thoughts that Sid smokes, the one written in capitals and the one written in small case. And so on for any other sensory feature one could mention. Posing one’s question in falsetto is not a way of making truth turn differently on how things are than posing what is otherwise the same question in a normal voice. (Neither truth nor falsetto makes truth turn in any way on how things are. Nor, adumbrating, do either Sid or hiss flip-flops.) All of which means: thoughts are truth-bearers, not content-bearers. A content-bearer, indeed, must be identifiable as the one it is by features other than those which identify the content it bears; in the cases we know of, by perceptually observable features. A truth-bearer, if it is precisely that, can have no such features.

RTM does, of course, recognise the invisibility (and concomitant unlocatability) of thoughts. This is precisely why relating as one does to a thought in taking something to be so must (by RTM’s lights) also be relating (differently) to something else (tokens of some MR*, a certain sort of content-bearer). Such, the present thought will be, pushes questions of what so-and-so believes into an arena where they do not belong.

### 2.2. Decomposing:

An MR*, or an English sentence, is built out of units from some given
stock, according to given construction rules. So for a given MR*, or sentence, there is a particular set: the units from which it is (ultimately) constructed; and a particular structure which is the way it is ultimately structured: that imposed on it by the rules applied for forming a whole MR*, or sentence, from these. It is not like that with thoughts. For a thought there is no one set of units out of which it is ultimately built; nor, a fortiori, any one structure which is the way it is (ultimately) constructed. Rather, what is an element of a thought on one way of representing (or presenting) it may not be on another.

The work of ‘ultimately’ here is illustrated as follows. Familiarly, that Sid annoys Pia can be parsed into Sid and a way for one to be—such as to annoy Pia—or Sid, Pia and a way for a thing to relate to a thing—party of the first part annoying party of the second—or Pia and a way for one to be—annoyed by Sid. Three different ways of building a whole out of parts. But those second and third ways reduce to the first. Being annoyed by Sid is built of Sid and being annoyed by someone. Similarly for annoying Pia. Ultimately, then, all reduces here to the first. The idea is that, in this sense, for a set there is no set of building blocks which are, uniquely, ultimately its.

Such introduces the idea of multiple decomposability, of which Frege says these things (among others):

Now I do not think that the formation of concepts could precede judging, because that presupposes an autonomous existence for concepts, but I think a concept arises through decomposing a judgeable content. I do not think that for each judgeable content there is only one manner in which it can be decomposed, or that one of these possible manners can always claim objective precedence. (1882: 118)

A thought can be multiply decomposed and …thereby now this, now that, appears as subject and predicate It is not yet determined by the thought itself what is to be perceived as subject. If one says, ‘the subject of this judgement’, he thus only designates something determinate if at the same time he indicates a determinate manner of decomposition. Mostly one does this with reference to a determinate string of words. But one must not forget that different sentences can express the same thought. (1892: 199)

For Frege, whole thoughts come first. In 1919 he describes this as ‘what is most distinctive of my vision of logic’, and writes of it,

I do not begin with concepts and put these together into a thought or a judgement, but I extract concepts by decomposing thoughts. (1919a: 273)

Concepts, or, more abstractly, thought-elements, we are told, cannot have an independent existence, but arise through decomposing whole thoughts; are thus extracted from the thoughts. It remains to be said what having an independent existence might be. In any case,
on its face, this is the reverse of what is meant to be so of MR*s, or of sentences. The idea of being generated in generating some system of items from a fixed vocabulary by fixed rules is precisely what does not apply to thoughts on this conception. Thoughts are not so generated, or generable.

To understand this we need the notion of a decomposition. Decomposing here is breaking things into parts (‘zerlegen’), or their so breaking up (‘zerfallen’). The best model for applying this idea to thoughts is (with one reservation) that of decomposing a task. The task might be painting a barn, or, again, making an açorda de gambas. Such a task may be broken up into sub-tasks. In this last case, there is cubing the stale bread, peeling the garlic, and the shrimps, boiling the caldo, frying the bread in olive oil, and so on. In such cases, these tasks might be parcelled out: Pia the caldo boiler, Ed the bread fryer, and so on. Making an açorda decomposes into some such set of subtasks just in case those subtasks, performed in concert, are making the açorda.

A thought, for Frege, is what a judgeable content was meant to be, but, he came to see, was not: that “by which truth can come into question at all” (1918: 60). A thought is that which is (or poses) one particular question of truth. Its task is thus to make truth turn in some one particular way on how things are. This task, too, is decomposable. For the thought that Sid smokes, for example, there is the task of making truth turn on whether Sid smokes. Within this one might isolate the task of making truth turn in part on who smokes. One might also find the task of making truth turn in part on how, or which ways, Sid is. The general point about decompositions applies. Some set of subtasks, each detectable within the whole thought’s task, is a decomposition only if those subtasks, performed in concert, just are the whole task. ‘That by which truth can come into question at all’ should be read her as precisely that by which. A thought is meant to be a pure question of truth: a question identified by, and only by, features which which fix when it would be true that such-and-such. It is just this which a judgeable content failed to be. The features by which it was to be identified are more than just those of a way of making truth turn on how things are. (Notably, a judgeable content was to be identified, inter alia, by a truth-value.) The identifying features of a thought—that by which it is distinguished from any other thought—are features of its elements, on any decomposition, working in concert. Those superfluous, so to speak, contaminating, features would, correspondingly, would thus distort what a thought-element (an element of a decomposition of a thought) might be.

There are two salient differences between a decomposition of a thought and a decomposition of a task such as making an açorda. First, though a thought represents things as being thus and so, it is not the product of any other representer (as words which express a thought are the product of some speaker). So its subtasks cannot be assigned to different agents, as can those in making an açorda. Second, more crucially, its subtasks cannot be performed at all except in the context of a whole decomposition. There is no such thing as making truth turn in part on such-and-such other by, in tandem with other subtasks, make truth turn on how things are. Such is part of the idea that a thought is not built up out of independently existing building blocks.

One version of that idea is also this: it is not just that no set of would-be elements is a decomposition of a thought unless their performance in concert is performing the whole thought’s task; but also any set of subtasks whose joint performance is the performance of that task is, ipso facto, a decomposition. As Frege reads this, no decomposition of a thought
enjoys (as such) priority over any other, at least in re the phenomenon of being true. (Vide 1882: 118.) Thus the idea of multiple decomposability. In connection with this idea, it is important to remember that in what ways a given thought is decomposable depends on just how the notion same thought is to apply. Such is part of the import of the last quote, above, from 1892. Here, e.g., is a list of thoughts: the thought that Sid smokes, the thought that being a smoker is something Sid is, the thought that the concept smoker is instantiated by Sid, the thought that that concept is exemplified by Sid’s being as he is, the thought that for Sid to be as he is is for an object to be a smoker. Where on this list does one find the same thought mentioned twice? Wherever that is, one also finds different ways that thought may be decomposed.

Some readers of Frege have understood the idea of multiple decomposability on what I will call the ‘Lego model’. I might build, say, a (toy) garage out of Lego blocks. The garage may then be decomposed into parts in any of many ways. Each part, though, will always be some construction out of Lego blocks, where, on any decomposition, the sum of the blocks which make the parts is the blocks which make the whole. Any decomposition is thus constructible out of the parts. If the decomposition is in thought only—the parts are not themselves spatially separated—then the place of any block in the whole structure (the garage) remains the same relative to all the others no matter how we mark out a part which it is also to be part of. In that sense the construction out of blocks is fundamental. Any other decomposition of the garage is definable in terms of it. Such is exactly not how Frege thinks of multiple decompositions of a thought. On his conception, “one must not forget that different sentences can express the same thought.” (1892: 199) Different non-synonymous sentences, that is. For Frege, there is no set of fundamental units from which all decompositions may be built in some one fundamental way. There is no one decomposition which can claim any such priority.

Part of the idea that one carves elements out of thoughts (as Frege also expresses it, that elements arise (entstehen) through their role in thoughts) belongs to Frege’s anti-psychologism. The idea is that nothing else about an item can make it ‘the right sort of thing’ to be a thought-element. Otherwise put, a thought-element is identified as the item it is in no way other than by what identifies it as the thought-element it is—by its performing, in concert with other elements that task which is a thought’s. It has no other features than those conferred on it by that role.

There is a parallel point for content-bearers. A content-bearer (such as an MR*) which expresses a whole thought may well be decomposable into elements, each of which makes a particular contribution to making the thought thus expressed the one which is thus expressed. Content-bearers and their elements are, of course, identified as the items they are independent of any representational role they might play. Something with a certain visible form, e.g., might play the role of making expressions of thoughts to which it contributes expressions of thoughts which are, somehow or other, about smoking. But, the idea would be, nothing could make a visible form (or etc.) what would make such a contribution other than the life it leads in some more general form, or phenomenon, of expressing (or bearing the content of) whole thoughts. Such runs counter to RTM’s third tenet. So far, though, this is simply one counter-idea.

To decompose a thought is, of course, to bring it under a generality—to represent it, e.g., as a thought (one among many) about smoking. A thought-element identifies a particular feature that thought shares with a range of others. One main point of
decomposing a thought is to contribute to identifying those features on which the holding of logical relations may turn. Logic gets its grip on a thought through that thought’s decompositions. More generally, a decomposition may also identify features to which a computation may be sensitive. Such is equally so of any decomposition of a thought. (An MR* which expressed a thought would present it as decomposed in some one way. A computation on MR*s would be sensitive only to that structuring of just those elements from which that MR* is built (thus only to representational content as thus structured and presented). Such gestures at, though is not yet, a problem.

A thought is one genus of a more general category, Sinne. It is, Frege sometimes tells us, the sort of Sinn a sentence would express (in bringing truth into question). Frege is somewhat less clear on whether such Sinne are sentence meanings—that is, on whether for a declarative sentence to mean what it is is (often, or in some central class of cases, modulo indexicality an demonstrations, and so on) for it to express some given thought. Occasionally he supposes a positive answer to this, on one occasion at least to disastrous effect. (Cf. 1906: 208-209.) In any event, such a link between Sinn and meaning is (assuming that a thought is a sort of Sinn) incompatible with Frege’s more basic idea of the multiple decomposability of a thought. For on that idea truth is preserved when one moves from one expression of a thought to another expression of the same—e.g., from ‘Sid smokes’ to ‘The concept smoker is satisfied by Sid.’ Sentence-meaning, however, is not preserved across such transformations.

2.3. A Certain Generality: Frege wrote,

A thought always contains something which reaches beyond the particular case, by which it presents this to consciousness as falling under something general. (@1882?: Kernsatz 4)

There are, admittedly, several possible readings of that ‘contain’. One fits the present picture. A thought that things are thus and so is also a thought of things a certain way. For Sid to smoke is a way for things to be. The thought that Sid smokes is a thought of things being that way. A way for things to be has a certain intrinsic generality. That generality which Frege speaks of as intrinsic to any thought is contained in the fact of that thought’s being of some way for things to be. A way for things to be is (as understood here) a way there might have been for things to be even were things not just as they are. Were they suitably otherwise, there would still have been that way for things to be. It would have been a way things were (in being as they were) or were not. It would still have been a way things in fact are (or are not). We are thus off and running. For a given way for things to be, there is an indefinitely extendible range of cases of things being that way, and/or of things not so being. There is the way things are. There are the ways things were, or will be, or might have been. Any of these, if determinate enough, is a case of things being, or, selon le cas, of things not being, the relevant way for things to be. Each of these is, accordingly, a case of things being as the thought of thing being the relevant way represents things as being, or, again, is not such a case. Thus a thought’s generality: if it might be true, there are indefinitely many ways for that to be the case; mutatis mutandi if it might be untrue.

The point might stand out more clearly if we first decompose (say) the thought that
Sid smokes. Think of it as decomposing (roughly) into an element which makes truth turn on which ways Sid is, and on a certain way for an object (in Frege’s sense) to be: such as to smoke. The generality of the thought is thus distributed across these elements. A way for an object to be, like a way for things to be, has that certain intrinsic generality: if, say, Sid is that way, there might still have been that way for an object to be even were Sid not—stronger, even if Sid failed to exist. There is, for example, Ed. Ed may or may not be that way. If he is, then his being as he is (alternatively, the way he is) is a case of an object being such as to smoke. Similarly if he is not. There are thus indefinitely many ways for an object’s being as it is to be a case of an object’s being such s to smoke, and/or of an object’s being as it is not being such a case. There is generality for you. _Mutatis mutandis_ for being as represented in a certain sort of thought-element: one which makes truth turn on who smokes. I will call (the domain of) what has this generality (_the_ conceptual).

What instances that sort of generality intrinsic to any thought is what Frege here calls a particular case. A particular case is something _historical_, as, e.g., Sid’s being as he now is. Sid is the sort of thing one can bump into if not careful. In bumping into him one encounters him in the condition he then is. One encounters his then being thus. What one can encounter is what can interact with other things in that one environment we all cohabit with it. A particular case is thus part of that which is represented as thus in so in representing-as, not part of that which it is represented as being. As such it intrinsically lacks just that generality a way for things to be intrinsically has. It is not the sort of thing for anything to be a case of. It determines nothing as to what an object, or just things, would have to be to be a case of it, or, for that matter, to be a case of anything; as to when something would, when not, _count_ as a case of such-and-such. I will call what lacks such generality (_the_ historical).

Here is a way of thinking of the historical’s lack of generality. Suppose that some particular case—say, Sid’s being as he is—instances some given way for things to be—say, such as to be a smoker. For this to be so is for that particular case to hold a place in a _range_ of such cases—say, Sid’s being as he is, Alf’s being as he is, Zoë’s being as she is, and so on indefinitely. Each such case is _one_ thing that would count as an object being a smoker. In this way, _any_ particular case belongs to countless ranges of cases. But now take any range of which Sid’s being as he is is a member. Nothing about Sid’s being as he is, or about its membership in the range tells us anything about what else is in that range. For all said so far, the range might be any of the countless in which Sid’s being as he is falls—as well being a wearer of yellow bermuda shorts as being a smoker, and so on indefinitely. Such it is for a particular case to lack generality.

The key point about the historical parallels one frequently made by Frege. Sid is not the sort of thing to make truth turn in any way on things. Frege makes just this point of Venus, Mont Blanc and The True. Sid contrasts here with a certain way for an object to be: being that very thing, Sid. Such _can_ make truth turn on something. If the thought that Venus is Sid is false, this is just because the relevant object, Venus, fails to be a certain way there is for an object to be: being that very thing, Sid. Here a certain thought-element makes _being_ Sid that way for an object to be which relevant objects must be for the whole thought to be true; thus makes truth turn in part on which things are that way for a thing to be, being that very thing Sid. A thought element might also put that way for a thing to be to other work. It might make the (or any) object which is _that_ way the relevant object for the truth of the thought of which that element is part—that is, the object which must be relevant ways for the thought in question to be true (for truth so turning on how things are to yield the
result *true*). Nothing, though, could put Sid to either kind of work. Sid, as such, has no such
generality. Nor does the red meat’s fall onto the white rug, or for the falling of it, for its
slow oxidising etc.) I will call that which thus contrasts with the historical the conceptual.

That relation which holds between a particular case and something conceptual—a
way for things, or for a thing, to be—when the first is a case of (instances) the second I will
call the instancing relation. It is not a *logical* relation. Only what appears on one side of it is
what might have, or be part of, a logical form. Logic does not as such speak to the question
what instances what. But we may hope that it is a *rational* relation; that there are things *to be recognised* as to what stands in it to what. The next question on the table (here and in the
next section) is how it could be that.

For every thought, or way to be, then, there is its own particular way of relating to the
historical. So, to, for ways for an object to be, etc. There is that which would instance (that
is, be a case of) things being such that Sid smokes, or, again, an object being such as to
smoke. To be a given way for things (or *a* thing) to be, one would think, is, *eo ipso*, to reach
to (that is, be instanced by) precisely those particular cases which would do so: to reach any
differently would be, *ipso facto*, to be a different way-to-be. Suppose, for a moment (only),
that we tolerated the question by virtue of what a given way-to-be reached as it did. Any
answer would have to respect a principle which I put here like this: nothing on one side of
the instancing relation can determine on its own, in isolation from the other, to what it bears
(or what bears to it) the instancing relation.

The point is simplest (and most familiar) for the historical side of the relation. Take
any set of particular cases which would count as, say, an object being a smoker. These, on
their own, cannot settle of any further particular case whether *that* is one of an object being
a smoker. (Nor, hence, do they settle this of themselves.) The way Sid is today is a case of
someone being a smoker. (For him to be as he is is for an object to be one.) Ditto for
tomorrow, the next day, and so on. Ditto for the way Pia is today, and tomorrow, and the
next day, etc. Now here is Ed, who devotes a considerable part of each day to puffing away
(often two cigarettes in hand at once). Is Ed a smoker? Such depends on what being a
smoker is; what sort of generalisation it is over particular cases. About that history (that set
of cases of people being smokers), on its own, makes us none the wiser.

Here is another way of putting the point. There are ways for things (or an object) to be
which reach to all those first-mentioned cases of an object being as it is (Sid today, Pia
tomorrow, etc.), and which also reach to Ed’s being as he now is. And there are ways for
things to be which do all of that *except for* reaching to Ed’s being as he now is. Each of the
mentioned reaches is a reach for *some* way for an object to be to have. Which sort of way
for an object to be is *being a smoker*? Nothing in those cases themselves answers this
question.

On the other side of the instancing relation we find ways for things (or a thing) to be.
Suppose that, as the momentarily tolerated question invites us to do, we think of these as
identified independent of any fact as to which particular cases instance them. We then pose
the tolerated question. What *makes* being a smoker reach to just those cases to which it
does? Perhaps a condition on its application? But such a thing would be a generality. It
would belong to the conceptual. So the same question arises again. What would make the
*condition* apply to (be satisfied by) just those cases to which it does? We have made no
progress. There was a time when some thought that an answer to such questions might be
given by purely formal relations between what belongs to the conceptual. But, for quite a
long time it has been difficult to believe this. To grunt, e.g., is to make a noise. There is a relation between two items of the conceptual. It may be helpful in ruling out a particular case of an object’s being as it was as a case of an object grunting if that object’s being as it was was a case of an object’ being silent. But then, not unless one knew enough as to what particular cases were ones of an object being those ways for an object to be: such as to be making a noise: such as to be silent. Complicate the purely formal relations as you like, and, patently, the point still holds.

The best course, then, is to reject the momentarily tolerated question. There is no such thing as ‘by virtue of what a way for things to be reaches to the particular cases it does’. Of course not. It is intrinsic to a way for things to be to have just the reach it does. Hence, so, too, for a thought. Such is part of the sort of abstraction it is from the general phenomenon of things being, or not, as we take them to be, or as we otherwise represent them as being. A given way for an object to be—say, such as to smoke—simply reaches to the cases it does. For it so to reach just is part of its being that way for an object to be that it is. It is something intrinsic to it. Such may, for a moment, make the abstractions involved here seem somewhat puzzling. How, e.g., could one ever get a particular way for things to be in mind? But this just brings us to the fourth panel of Frege’s picture.

2.4. Publicity: Frege once remarked,

One can also understand by the existence of a thought that the thought can be grasped as the same by different thinkers. (1919b: 146)

This is not a casual remark. It is crucial for Frege that any thought—any object of a stance liable to be held truly or falsely—be shareable. Crucial enough for Frege to have argued the point at length. (Cf. 1918: 67-69.) A thought, the idea is, just marks a discussion point: something which indefinitely many may dispute about, agree on, jointly investigate, jointly find proof, or disproof, of. Such, for Frege, distinguishes thoughts from Vorstellungen—things of which someone must, and no two people could, be conscious; things to whose being thus and so the notion of truth would thus not apply.

As Frege also notes, there is no such thing as dispute or agreement, nor joint enquiry as to whether things are thus and so unless backed by sufficient agreement as to what is in dispute, or agreed to, or enquired after. In Frege’s example, two people are not disputing whether a hundred mark note is genuine unless each is speaking (and/or thinking) of the same note and each has the same understanding of what it would be for a note to be genuine. In general, to dispute, or agree with someone as to whether things are such-and-such way—more generally, to hold a view on the matter—one must have a correct understanding of—grasp—what way that is for things to be. Given that much, the rest is all a matter of commitment to the view in question. Grasping what way for things to be is grasping (well enough) what it would be for things to be that way; hence to be prepared to recognise (often enough), notably when it comes to particular cases, what would, what would not, count as things so being—to have an ability to see such things. (Frege’s point here is one which later Wittgenstein was to come to appreciate, and on which he laid great stress. If Frege eschewed concern with any psychology of being true, the above can be seen as a brief (philosophical) psychology of thinking, or speaking, truly.)
Thus a brief sketch of conditions on the possibility of dispute (etc.). Such is not meant to be preliminary to some sceptical problem about the occurrence of dispute. Dispute, agreement, enquiry, are all familiar enough human phenomena. It is not a *philosophical* worry (though it may well sometimes be one of another sort) if there are often enough illusions of agreement or, more generally, of understanding.

The whole business, though, can come to *seem* problematic if, to borrow a metaphor from John McDowell, we try to look at it from sideways on. From such a perspective, we would see, on one side, a thinker—say, Sid. On the other, we would see a space of ways for things to be, or thoughts thereof—of the things there *are* for one to think in thinking something so (or holding some other truth-evaluable attitude towards something). For Sid to think (or etc.) some one of these things, it seems, would be for something in his way of thinking of things to select from this space some one item for the role of *that which he thus thinks*. Which, given what is intrinsic to a way for things to be, or thoughts thereof, would be to have a certain capacity: one to distinguish, in particular cases, that which would count as a case’s being the way in question from that which would not; so to recognise of particular cases (where seen, so far as it matters, for what they are) that they are (where they are) or are not (where they are not) cases of things being the relevant way (or as the relevant thought represents things).

But such an ability would be one to recognise things of indefinitely many novel cases—ones entirely new to its possessor. If Pia’s being as she now is is a case of an object being a smoker, what of her being as she will be, e. g., next Boxing Day? Moreover, for any particular case, and any way-to-be (e.g., for an object to be a smoker), there are ways for things/an object to be which agree in their reach with this initial one over whatever range of cases you like, excluding the initial particular one, but disagree with it on this case: such that the case *would* instance them, but not, e.g., being a smoker, or vice-versa. Now, from our current sideways-on perspective, the question is how anything Sid could have known, or grasped, about the relevant way-to-be in advance of acquaintance with a novel particular case could have allowed him *now* to distinguish this way-to-be from some such divergent one; could have allowed him to *see* (hence could have *meant*) that *this* way-to-be reached as it *here* would, instead of in the divergent ways of those other, so far similar, ways.

What the idea of publicity here shows us, though, is that we need not thus look at things from sideways-on; nor does anything in Frege’s view force us to. As noted, (background) agreement, and its absence, are familiar enough phenomena. We often enough, e.g., understand what someone said. If Sid were now to tell us that Pia smokes, we might well understand him (to have said what he did). Such is not inevitable. And, of course, there are illusions of understanding (and of having been understood). If Sid really meant to say that Pia smokes fish, then we did not understand him. Such illusion, though, is what might emerge as such, and what is often enough absent. If we do understand Sid, as we well may have, then we know what he said. What he said is that things were a certain way. So we (understanders) know which way that is. We *mention* it in saying Sid to have said that Pia smokes. It is: things being such that Pia smokes (insofar as *that* is to be understood as what Sid spoke of). As understanders, we thus share an ability to recognise when things would, when they would not, be as Sid said. Without this we could not count as understanders. It is a shared ability to recognise that in a particular case which would count as an object being a smoker as so counting; *mutatis mutandis* for what would not so count. It extends to (for us) novel cases. (It extends as far as it extends). And such identifies *which*
way for things to be is mentioned (here) in speaking of things being such that Pia smokes. It is that way whose reach agrees with what our just-mentioned ability to recognise a reach is an ability to recognise.

Not that, for just any particular case, such a shared ability must make this case recognisable either as what does, or what does not, count as a case of things being the way in question. The limits of what an understander would be prepared to recognise as to what would count as someone smoking are just the limits of the reach intrinsic to that way for things to be. Nor should an ability to recognise what would count as things being that way Sid spoke of be confused with an ability to recognise whether what he said is true. Recognising what would count as being a smoker is one thing; recognising how someone is in being as she is another. Those overflowing ashtrays, if created in a certain way, just are the product of a smoker. If Pia is more discrete in her ash disposal, then discovering enough as to how she is for her being as she is to be revealed as what would count as an object smoking may be quite another project.

For Frege, publicity, or shareability, is essential for letting truth, hence thoughts, into the picture at all. Which makes his point a general point about a thinker’s, or agent’s, representing-as. When we say things to be a given way — when we have succeeded in saying some such thing at all — which way this is is determined, as per above, by what one who understood us to say what we did would be prepared to recognise; where what that is can be seen by reference to those who did understand us. There is, thus, nothing super-human in connecting to a particular way there is to be; nothing as daunting as what a sideways-on view suggests. A parallel holds for representing things to oneself as such-and-such way — e.g., to thinking something so. For someone to think things to be some way there is for things to be — for him to bring things being as they are under some given generality — is for him to think things to be such-and-such way — some mentionable way. Mention it. Now when would a particular case count as one of things being that way? Well, how would we understand that mention? The content of any particular belief is not to be found by looking to the individual psychology of any given holder of it. Such is a cornerstone from which, in part III, we will proceed.

2.5. Sinn and Proof: One more idea of Frege’s about thoughts, though perhaps less crucial than the first four above, will prove useful in understanding issues about attitudes in which one represents the way things are as such-and-such. I will take it, with the first four, above, to form FP. Frege offers the idea in his 1891 lecture, “Ueber Funktion und Begriff”, among other places.

Some background (cutting a few corners to be brief). One central idea of Frege’s was that logic (the discipline), in drawing the distinctions it requires, should not be overly influenced by purely grammatical (that is, linguistic) distinctions. In particular, he argued, the (perfectly good) linguistic notion of subject and predicate only sows confusion in logic. In logic, he thought, one should indeed think (in general) in terms of function-argument structure. His 1891 lecture is a study of how to do this. In terms of notation, the crucial point is that what expressed a predicative element in a thought would be seen as denoting, or naming, a function of a certain sort. For example, the ‘__ smokes’ in ‘Sid smokes’, expressing a predicative thought-element, would denote a function — up to a point, just as ‘Sin(_’) might. (There is this difference: while a mathematical function, like the sine function, is generally referred to by an equation showing how it links arguments to values,
e.g., ‘y=\sin(x)’ (see (Frege, 1904), no expression for the values of the function, say, ‘__smokes’ expresses is part of its designating the function it does. Such captures, in one form, Frege’s proposal for revising syntax.) More generally, the role of any open sentence would be to express a predicative thought-element (just the point of departing from grammar). So any open sentence used in the expression of a thought would denote a function.

The function denoted, say, by ‘__ smokes’, would capture just that which is relevant to logic in truth’s having turned on the way things are as the predicative element thus expressed makes it do. So it would be a mapping from objects to truth values which mapped just those objects into the value true which were, in fact, smokers. Now, if ‘__smokes’ denotes some such function, then when this incomplete expression is completed with a name of an argument, e.g., ‘Sid’, the whole is a name of the value of that function for that argument. So it must be a truth-value. Which, as Frege points out, makes the following a truth: ‘(2^2=4)=(2>1)’. To which Frege anticipates the objection that ‘(2^2=4)’ and ‘(2>1)’ say completely different things, “express completely different thoughts”. His first response is:

But ‘2^2=4’ and ‘4·4=4^2’ also express different thoughts; and still one can replace 2^2 by ‘4·4’, because both signs have the same Bedeutung.
One sees from this that identity of Bedeutung does not have identity of thoughts as a consequence. (1891: 13-14)

To show how it is that there is not this consequence, Frege then offers the following example:

When we say, ‘The Evening Star is a planet whose orbital period is smaller than the earth’s’, we have thus expressed a different thought than in the sentence, ‘The Morning Star is a planet whose orbital period is smaller than the earth’s’; for someone who did not know that the Morning Star is the Evening Star could take hold the one true, the other false. (1891: 14)

Here Frege suggests that the application of the notion same thought has something to do with what one would, or might not, know.

Before unfolding that suggestion, two notes. First, something similar to this last passage has sometimes been taken as an argument for Sinn, or for that variety of it, the whole thought. This is not so. A thought, to recap, is a judgeable content, stripped of those superfluous features which made it unfit for purpose. It is that by which truth can come into question at all—that without which there simply is no truth. For truth to come into question at all, it must be made to turn in some way or other on how things are. Objects do not do not make truth turn on anything in any way at all, not even in special cases such as colours. Nor, for that matter, do ways for an object to be. A thought just is what does this. A naming element in a thought would do part of this—e.g., making truth turn on which ways Sid is. Being what does this (in whole or part), or, if you prefer, just being the doing of it, is being a Sinn. A Sinn just is what makes truth turn (in whole or part) in some determinate way on how things are. That there are such things (given that there is such a thing as representing-
as) is not in need of argument. The point here is just: *given Sinne*, the idea that thoughts should be counted by *Bedeutungen* is simply unmotivated.

Second, Frege illustrates the relevant way in which *Sinne* work in counting truths with an example which appears to turn on how one counts *Sinne* of a particular sort: those which, in a decomposition of a thought, work to make its way of making truth turn on how things are consist in part of making truth turn on how some particular object is. It *appears* that, if the example works as Frege thinks, then it is because, anyway, a certain decomposition of a thought about Venus’ orbital size issues contains one such naming element, where a certain other decomposition of a thought, also about Venus’ orbital size issues, contains another, that these are decompositions of two different thoughts.

The ‘because’ here, though, could be reversed. If Frege is right about the data, what is a proof that The Morning Star has issues need not be a proof that the Evening Star has issues. An intermediate premise may be called for: that The Morning Star is The Evening Star. *Therefore*, there are two different ways of making a thought’s truth turn on how Venus is—two different naming elements, each in the decomposition of some thought about Venus’s orbital size issues, each naming Venus. *Sinne* must be distinguished wherever the facts as to what proofs there are require them to be. Thoughts—steps in proofs—must be distinguished in a way which permits distinguishing proofs from one another as they are to be distinguished—posing two different proofs just where there are two different proofs to be given. *This* need requires there sometimes to be two different naming elements which name the same thing. But not: *this* requires us to recognise *Sinne* which are naming elements (or *Sinne überhaupt*). That much we are committed to anyway.

Such reading fits the mathematical case which Frege uses ‘The Morning Star’ and ‘The Evening Star’ to illustrate. Prove that $2 \times 2 = 4$. Thus the relevant *Sinne*, whole thoughts here, are different. That *some* such *Sinne* are in play was never an issue. The example must have struck Frege as a convenient way to make his point. History has proven the choice a bit unfortunate. For peripheral reasons it has worked for some merely to cloud issues about *Sinn*. It need not so work for us.

The underlying point to be illustrated is this. If there is to be such a thing as mathematics (or as doing it), then mathematical truths need to be counted in such a way as to reflect, correctly, the facts as to what would be a proof of what—crucially, where the proof of a truth from a truth would be *immediate* (requiring no intermediate steps), and where it would not be. In a special case, where the truth (or thought) that $P$ just *is* the truth (thought) that $Q$—where there is just one thought here mentioned twice—any proof of $P$ is, by Leibniz’ law, a proof of $Q$, so that the proof of $Q$ from $P$ must be immediate. (This assumes that a proof just is what answers a particular question of truth.) For Frege, the identity of thought $A$ and thought $B$ is a special case of a more general phenomenon, that of (as he puts it) thought $A$ being contained in thought $B$. For example, the thought that Pia, Mia and Katia are all mortal *contains* the thought that Pia is mortal. So the proof from this first to this second is immediate. The proof from *that all men are mortal* to *that Pia is not immediate*. It requires the premiss that Pia is man. Which Frege uses as a proof that ‘men’ in ‘all men are mortal’ is *not* a name (of all terms of some conjunction), but rather what he calls a ‘concept-word’. (See 1914: 230-231)

So: the facts as to what allows of immediate proof, what not, are reflected in those as to what thoughts *contain* what others; where a special case of containment is the *reflexive* case: $A$ containing $B$ and vice-versa—the case of thought-identity. It is in this way that the
way in which thoughts are to be counted must correspond to the facts as to what is in need of proof (or of what sort of proof). Suppose, now, that mathematical truths were to be counted according to their Bedeutungen, on Frege’s notion of Bedeutung (one, inter alia, fitting the idea of function-argument structure, as sketched above; for more on which see my (forthcoming)). Then any truth of mathematics would be an immediate proof of any other. There would thus be no mathematics to be done. So Frege is not entitled to his notion of Bedeutung unless that goes paired with some other way of counting thoughts. His notion of a thought as a species of Sinn allows precisely for such an other way of counting.

Once again standing back from Frege’s particular concerns, the moral is that, whatever the right way of counting thoughts may be, it must be one which corresponds, in the way just sketched, to the facts as to what would be a proof of what. The notions same thought and proof are so connected. Here a thought is a question of truth (presented, where with a that, as answered positively). So presented it is thus precisely some one thing there is to think.

The idea from which we started was: there is no mathematics to do except where there is need enough for non-immediate proof; so the right way of counting mathematical thoughts must make room for enough such need. This last conclusion might call for a qualifier: ‘at least on an occasion for doing mathematics’. Such would allow for some occasion-sensitivity in what a proof of such-and-such may be (a sensitivity one might well see reflected in mathematics itself). By the above, if, here, proof is an occasion-sensitive notion, then so is same thought. It is thus worth noting that the relevant notion of proof here is epistemic (though I do not claim that Frege thought it so). Of course, once one sets up a formal system, there can be facts as to the proofs of P (for given P) within that system. These are not epistemic. But the questions here are prior to any such formal system. What would prove that P? Such is the sort of question which must have an answer before it is established what sort of formal system would do.

One might insist that there is a domain of mathematical truths, within which it is intrinsic to each such truth to admit of precisely the proofs it does. This, too, suggests a non-epistemic notion of proof. And there may be a temptation to think in that way about mathematics once it is decided how mathematical thoughts (truths) are to be counted. But it is part of Frege’s notion of proof in mathematics that to have a proof of P is to know that P. And it is knowledge to which he refers in explaining why a proof from thought A to thought B, each about Venus’ orbital size issues, may not be immediate. As to what truth it is that is in question where we speak of, say, there being no largest prime, there is what we would be prepared to recognise as to when it would have been shown that this is so, and what we are prepared to recognise as to when it would be this of which such was shown. The present point is that the operation of these two capacities is not, and could not be, independent.

The point of harping on all this. Epistemic notions are, in general, notoriously occasion-sensitive; and notoriously in need of such occasion-sensitivity for their survival. (Cf., here, Clarke (1972).) If so, then, by the above, we should expect the same of the notion same thought. That The Evening Star has orbital size issues, if a thought, marks a point for consensus or dispute between thinkers. Is someone who thinks that The Morning Star has orbital size issues ipso facto party to such dispute? If same thought is occasion-sensitive, such represents the sort of question to which one should not expect there to be an answer tout court. Again, I do not claim that Frege was alive to this point. Consider, though, the following list of thoughts: the Sid smokes; that the concept smokes is satisfied (fallen under)
by Sid; that For Sid to be as he is, \textit{inter alia}, for one to be a smoker; the the way things are is a case of things being such as for Sid to be a smoker. Where, on this list, is there one thought mentioned twice? Frege seems to opt for the first two, leaving the rest undiscussed. (See 1892: 199-200.) What are the right answers to these questions?

Part III

3.1. Publicity: The main focus of this section will be on the bearing of publicity (as per above) on the issue just \textit{how} it is, and how not, a \textit{psychological} question whether so-and-so thinks such-and-such. Just how might someone’s thinking of things as he does—thus thinking things to be the \textit{way} he does—bear on what things in particular he thinks—what \textit{ways} he then takes things to be? Publicity suggests a very different sort of answer to this question than that offered by RTM. But seeing this requires some preliminaries.

Whatever was identified as what it was simply by its way of making truth turn on how things are would be, \textit{eo ipso}, very different from a truth-bearer, which is precisely what cannot be so identified. So, in any case, a thought in Frege’s sense is very different from an MR*. But further, a thought in Frege’s sense is always what is liable to be decomposable in many alternative ways. Each of these makes thought-elements \textit{arise}. No one of these can claim priority. Thoughts, so thought of, fail to fit the Lego Model: there is no set of units which are \textit{the} ones from which it is built. The notion \textit{same thought} gets its content in very different ways. Whereas it is intrinsic to an MR* to be structured in some one way by its generation within the system to which it belongs. It is also otherwise structure, if at all, only insofar as permitted by the Lego model.

It follows from this that the sort of content an MR* would have cannot be of the same sort as the content of a thought. So, at the least, it cannot \textit{simply} be that the content of an MR* is a thought. In this respect an MR* would be comparable with an English sentence. In some important sense, the meaning of an English sentence (or, if it is ambiguous, its meaning on a reading) is composed out of the meanings of its parts. Part of what this means is that the meanings of the parts, plus their syntactic structuring in the sentence, fully determines what the sentence means. But another part of this is that, so to speak, the meaning of each part leaves its trace in the meaning of the whole. For example, consider the sentence, ‘Penguins waddle’. It is composed of a part which speaks of an item (here some given plurality) as being waddlers, and an item which, again, speaks of some plural entity as (being) penguins. So the \textit{whole} sentence speaks of penguins as being waddlers. Such belongs to the way in which a part is to be conceived of here as contributing to the meaning of a whole. For any sentence there are its (intrinsic) parts; the \textit{whole} sentence speaks of what those parts do—here of being penguins and of waddling.

Even if for a given sentence there is \textit{the} thought it expresses (modulo deixis), still, it belongs to its meaning what it does to present that thought as decomposed in a given way. Frege’s point is that there is no parallel to what meaning thus does in the content of a \textit{thought}. For a given thought, there are no units which are \textit{the} ones out of which it is constructed; \textit{a fortiori} no parallel in how its parts determine what it \textit{must}, as such, be understood to speak of. The \textit{thought} that penguins waddle is, of course, about penguins and waddling—\textit{as} decomposed in a certain way. But it is also, equally, about the concept of being a penguin, and the concept of waddling, and the relation falling under. And the
thought that penguins waddle may also be (for all said so far) the thought that a penguin’s forward motion on land is marked by a certain lateral sway from side to side (like this).

So where we speak of the thought that penguins waddle (thinking with Frege), we speak of a thought, perhaps, which can (at least sometimes) be expressed like this: ‘Penguins waddle’. But, if so, also of a thought which might, at least sometimes, be expressed in any of many other ways. What the thought in question is depends not just on the fact that it is (sometimes) expressible in this one way, but also on what else would count as an expression of the same thought. Whereas if we speak of the meaning of the sentence ‘Penguins waddle’ (should we indulge in such talk), we speak of what is fixed by the fact that it is expressed by that structuring of those (sentential) elements, each meaning what it does. Correspondingly, if, or insofar as, there is some thought which is, as such, the one which the sentence ‘Penguins waddle’ expresses, what it is is not fixed by the meaning of that sentence alone. For nothing in the meaning of the sentence fixes when some other sentence, composed of different parts, would be an expression of the same thought this one expresses.

So, in one way, the meaning of a sentence (where, if ever, the sentence, as such, does express some given thought) contains more information than is contained in what identifies a thought (as the one it is), and in another way it contains less. The meaning of a sentence is fixed by semantic features which are peculiar to that sentence, but not essential to the thought it expresses (assuming there is such a thing as such a thought), but it does not contain anything which fixes when something else would count as an expression of that same thought. It is not a sentence’s business to identify a thought, but only to express one. Whereas it is not a thought’s business to provide any one particular way of expressing it.

Which shows, in one way, how sentences and thoughts, though each engaged somehow in the phenomenon of representing-as, are very different sorts of abstractions from historical events, or episodes, of such representing. A sentence unites some given range of such episodes (those in which it was used as meaning what it does) in working in each to make it recognisable as an expression of the thought there expressed (whatever this may be). A thought unites some range of historical episodes in each of these posing the same question of truth, no matter how such expression of thought was there achieved. A thought is thereby dedicated to serving very different ends than those of making its expression recognisable (on which see 2.5). Differences in what is thus unified are plausibly reflected in the grammatical fact that while a sentence has instances, and occurs in these, a thought does not: where a thought occurs, e.g., where it is expressed, it is only in the guise of the thought (as such) itself.

It is in terms of these differences that we can understand Frege’s insistence on a thought’s multiple decomposability. A thought is, again, a question of truth—a particular way of making truth turn on how things are. It is thus thoughts which may stand in such logical relations as entailing, or being entailed. That penguins waddle may, e.g., entail (if, perhaps, not by logic alone), that penguins share something in common with the gravitationally challenged (even if not being gravitationally challenged)—a significant anatomical fact. So, for one thing, when it comes to counting thoughts, this must be done so as to present us with the right facts (that is, just the facts) as to what follows immediately, and what only mediately, if at all, from what.

For another (more directly to our present topic), since to believe something (take it to be so) is to hold a stance on some question of truth, it is to stand in a particular way towards
some thought. Thoughts—questions of truth—must thus be counted so as to coordinate properly our respective ways of standing towards the world with one another; counted, that is, so as to get right the ways in which the fates of our stances are intertwined; the ways in which, in each seeing things as he does, we go right or wrong together—either right together and wrong together, or right precisely where some others are wrong, and vice-versa.

Now the point is: if a thought is to be an abstraction dedicated to serving both of these demands, then it cannot be bound to be counted in any way which would be what it was whether it was serving these demands or not. A thought cannot be tied to being counted as the meaning of a sentence would if it is open for sentences which differed in meaning (insofar as meaning is fixed compositionally, as on the story above) still each to express a thought with the same role, as per above, in coordinating stances—a thought which, e.g., identified the same way for different thinkers to go right or wrong together.

There is a kind of representing to whose existence it is essential that it should be recognisable. In a central case, so to represent is to assume responsibility. You ask me the time and I tell you. There is then the question for what, precisely, I am thus responsible. If I say that it is 3, but it is 3:01, have I given my word for more than is so? But suppose I spoke inaudibly, or in Limburgs to an audience of West-Vlamingen. Then (ceteris paribus) I have not given my word at all, assumed no responsibility. Such illustrates, but does not exhaust, the sort of representing where to be is to be recognisable.

How one conceives the semantics, or meaning, of a sentence, depends on how one thinks of it as serving recognition’s needs. On one conception, a given sentence does so just in being, per se, the expression of some given thought. We have, at least lately, come to recognise another: the function of a sentence of a language is simply to make the expression of thought recognisable, where what thought it expresses in someone’s mouth, while serving this function, is liable to vary from case to case. In which case, many semantic features of the sentence—ones which equip it to serve this function—may simply not be features of the thought expressed. The thought may be, among others, simply, that Sid smokes. The sentence which makes this recognisable, on an occasion, as the thought then expressed might be, say, ‘That guy over there in the tank top and the flip flops, dribbling lager onto his ample girth, smokes.’

Where someone expresses a thought in given words, there are occasions for asking when one would have said what he thus did. The above applies: what those words mean, whether or not this, as such, makes them expression of some given thought, leaves the question open when some other expression of a thought would have expressed that same thought, so would have said the same. For the meanings of the words contain too much and too little to answer such questions on their own. In meaning what they do, the present the thought decomposed in one way. Answers to the question what other decompositions that thought admits of must come from elsewhere. As we have seen, this is for good and principled reasons.

Suppose, e.g., that Ed says, ‘Pia takes tea at 3.’ In the circumstances, it being now close to 3, we know where we can find her. There is a Portuguese late afternoon light meal called ‘lanche’. Afternoon tea (what Ed here spoke of) was, on one story, introduced to England by Catarina de Bragança, perhaps to continue old habits. Lanche, perhaps anything but accidentally, thus resembles tea in Ed’s sense, notably structurally, though differing somewhat in (typical) content. Suppose Al now says, ‘Pia takes lanche at 3.’ Has he said the
same thing Ed did? Here is one possible story. If the main point is to locate Pia, and given sufficient background knowledge in relevant places (wherever these may be) the right answer may be ‘Yes’. Further, even if so, for other purposes the answer might be ‘No’. Sometimes those fine differences between *laache* and tea matter to what counts as that which was said, sometimes not.

Such is, I think, not just a possible, but a plausible answer. For present purposes, though, it matters not whether this is right. What does matter is that the answer to the question, whatever it might be, is not determined by the semantics alone of either of the sentences used—nor, perhaps, by anything to be understood about Ed’s use of his words, or Al’s of his, considered in isolation. (It need not be, e.g., that Ed spoke on some understanding of what taking tea would be which, *per se* decides that taking *laache* is (c.q. is not) taking tea.) What is needed is an extra piece of information: what is to count as *same again*. Such is the position we are in where what is to be same again is a thought in Frege’s sense; so where it is to be a question of truth—that towards which one may stand, e.g., believingly or disbelievingly.

Is an MR* sentence-like in that its function is to make thoughts, or their occurrences, recognisable? Such is a plausible description of an MR*’s central role: to make thoughts available to computations from some of them to others. Again, though, this is not an issue we must now decide. MR*s are, anyway, crucially sentence-like in that their content is that of a particular way of presenting a thought, or at best a thought presented, or decomposed, in a particular way. And such content leaves open what is to count as another occurrence of that same thought—e.g, if MR*s express thoughts, as the content of some other MR*. So if Ed stands in the believing way (*whatever* this may be) towards some MR* whose content is that Pia takes tea at 3 (*whatever content that might be*), such as it stands leaves the question open when someone else would also believe what Ed thus does. In this sense at least, what Ed believes is not a psychological question; not a question to be settled by looking into his cranium, or in any other way within *him*, for anything other than his believing what he does. Here, then, is one end the duplication thesis *cannot* serve.

What there *is* for Pia to think is not a question about *her* psychology. What there is for *Pia* to think is what there is, anyway, for *one* to think. The stances one can hold are on the questions of truth there *are*; on the ways there are anyway for truth to turn on how things are. Such concerns, in Frege’s terms, the phenomenon of *being* true, not that of holding true. A thought (a question of truth) being the sort of abstraction it is, what any such item is is determined, not by any one particular expression of it, but rather, given such expression, *inter alia*, by what would count as another—a question to which that given expression does not speak.

Who thinks the *same* thing (thought) as Ed does in thinking what he does above? If *same thought* is to serve Frege’s purposes, then its application must discriminate between thoughts (and, more generally, *Sinne*) in that way which corresponds to the facts as to what proves what. Applying that idea to thoughts, Ed and Ned would think the same thing just where what would prove Ed wrong (or right) would *ipso facto* do the same for Ned, and vice-versa; or, again, where proof that things were (or were not) as Ed thus represented them to himself to be would be *immediate* proof (without further ado) that things were (or not) as Ned thus supposed. Such is a clue to how to think about same-thinking, and to how this would be otherwise than the way RTM recommends. But there is still more to be mined from Frege’s idea of the essential publicity of thought.
The most important departure from RTM contained in the idea of publicity is, in its simplest guise, purely grammatical. For RTM, which ways someone takes things to be (in taking things to be as he does) is decided by the means used in achieving whatever believing things achieves. More specifically, by which items of a certain sort (MR*s, or tokens thereof) are dedicated to achieving these ends—still more specifically, by which such items are designated as available for computing on where the computations are to be from the way things are (or are taken to be) to what follows for the thinker from things so being—most notably, to what the thing for him to do would be. Whereas publicity suggests that what one believes is decided by what he is prepared to recognise, rather than by some supposed means which so prepare him. The core idea is: holding a stance as to whether things are some given way requires (sufficient) preparedness to recognise when things would be (or count as being), when not, the way in question. These two contrasting ways of identifying what ways a thinker takes things to be (in taking them to be as he does) need not coincide in their verdicts.

Once again we can use saying as a model. Suppose Al is told, ‘Pia takes lanche at 3.’ He knows what lanche is. He believes himself thus to have been informed, so have learned, of Pia’s habits. What is he now prepared to recognise (acknowledge) as to when things would be as said (and thus as learned)? Vocal thinker as he is, Al might (or might not) be prepared to recognise, by and large, what would count as Pia’s taking (afternoon) tea at 3 as things being as he was told, and, hence, as things being as he takes things to be. Confronted with her tea-taking, he is prepared to acknowledge this as things being as he thus came to suppose.

There are now two distinct questions. One is whether the thought that Pia takes tea at 3 is the same thought as the thought that Pia takes lanche at 3. The answer to this question might depend on the occasion for its posing. In any case, the question is not decided by what Al is prepared to recognise the answer to be. A different question, though, is whether Al thinks that Pia takes tea at 3. By Frege’s idea of publicity, Al can count as holding a view on that question only if he is (sufficiently) prepared to recognise when things would count as being that way, when not. But that he is so prepared is built into what has been said already.

In a broad sense of ‘view’, to be eligible is here eo ipso to hold a view: either taking things to be so, or taking them not to be, or being unsure, or seeing oneself as in the dark on the matter, or never having thought about it, or etc. Given the choices there are, the only option here is that Al takes things to be the way in question: such that Pia takes tea at 3. The upshot: being told that Pia takes lanche at 3, and being responsive to what one was told as Al is above, is one thing that can count as coming to believe that Pia takes tea at 3— independent of whether that Pia takes tea at 3 and that Pia takes lanche at 3 are two thoughts or one. All depends here on the form of Al’s responsiveness. Not all depends on the content of the content bearer here instrumental in his so responding.

The point internalises. Suppose, for a moment, the RTM story. Now suppose that Al stood in the designated relation (the one making for belief) to tokens of some MR* with the content that Pia takes lanche at 3. Does Al thus believe that Pia takes tea at 3? If the thought that Pia takes lanche at 3 is the thought that Pia takes tea at 3, then, trivially, the answer must be ‘Yes’. If there are two different thoughts here, then RTM’s answer must be: not unless Al also stands in the designated relation to tokens of some other MR* with that different content: that Pia takes tea at 3. If whether there count as two thoughts here or one
depends on the occasion (or purpose) for the counting—if same thought is thus an occasion-sensitive notion—then there is no answer; the question is ill-formed.

First point: given the sort of content an MR* would have, the choice between these two options is not made (solely) by any content that MR* Al was supposed to relate to might have. Such an MR* would have the content of one way of presenting the thought that Pia takes lanche at 3. But nothing in such a content addresses, much less answers, the question whether the thought thus expressed is the same thought that would be expressed in speaking of Pia as taking tea at 3 (correspondingly, whether that way for things to be things are according to that first-mentioned thought—such that Pia takes lanche at 3—is that very way for things to be things are according to that second-mentioned thought. All depends here on how the notion same thought is to apply to this case.

Second point: even given the answer to this last question—a question concerning the realm of being true—we would still not have an answer to questions as to what Al is prepared to recognise (or acknowledge) in his standing towards the postulated MR* in the designated relation—a question within the realm of holding true, and one whose answer certainly depends on the details of Al's individual psychology. There is a way Al takes things to be. One can say which way in saying: it is things being such that Pia takes lanche at 3. Is his way of taking things to be that way also such as for him to count as taking things to be such that Pia takes tea at 3? Such depends on such things as his sensitivity to the structural similarities, and possible historical connections, between lanche and tea, and on the importance he attaches to such things. (And, of course, it depends on to what extent his concomitant preparedness to acknowledge things as counting or not as such that Pia takes tea at 3 accords with what is in fact so as to what is to be acknowledged.) Again, there is no reason to suppose (adequate) answers to either of these sets of questions as fixed uniquely by the mere fact of his bearing the designated relation to an MR* with the originally postulated content. Conclusion: If thinking that such-and-such required bearing some specifiable relation to some MR* with suitable content, it need not be, further, as per the duplication thesis, that that content just is the content of the thing believed. An MR* with the content of a presentation of the thought that Pia takes lanche at 3 might well do, in a thinker with the right propensities, for his thinking that Pia takes tea at 3, whether or not I have just mentioned twice just one thing to think.

Whether Al thinks that Pia takes tea at 3 can turn on what he is prepared to do—specifically, to recognise—in a way in which what this is is not decided simply by the content of some MR*, or the fact of his relating to this MR* in a way which would be believing something. But there are also ways for what someone thinks to be indifferent to this. Pia now lives in Barbican, with her nearly inseparable friend Enid. Back in Viseu Elvira, Pia's mother, concerned about Pia's welfare in the metropolis, wonders (aloud) whether Pia still remembers to take lanche at 3. That hour generally finds Pia and Enid together in a tearoom in the Strand—taking tea. So Enid is as aware as could be that Pia takes tea at 3. Enid has never heard of lanche. Suppose, though, that (at least for relevant purposes) taking tea at 3 does count as (a form of) taking lanche at 3. Might it then not be that if we reassure Elvira that Enid thinks (knows) that Pia takes lanche at 3, we have told the truth? Such depends, of course, on whether that Pia takes lanche at 3 and that Pia takes tea at 3 are one thought mentioned twice. What it would not depend on, though, is whether Enid relates in the designated way to tokens of an MR* whose content presents a thought as that Pia takes lanche at 3.
With which we return to Frege. Where someone’s thinking of things as he does—*inter alia*, taking things to be the way he does—articulates into his thinking things to be this or that way, what he thus thinks is always some of what there is for one to think. There is something for one to think just where there is something for different thinkers to dispute, or agree to, or wonder over. There is such a thing just where there is, or can be, agreement enough as to what it is; as to when relevant dispute would be settled for the one side or for the other—as to what would count as things being that way over which there would thus be dispute. There is in fact such agreement wherever it is possible to mention a way for things to be. For mentioning is possible just where understanding is. Accordingly, attributing belief, either truly or falsely, presupposes sufficient agreement as to what it is that one would thus think.

Frege leaves things open (to some extent) as to how, when it comes to cases, the notion *same thought* is to apply. this, I have suggested, for a reason: when it comes to cases, the facts of thought recurrence must reflect correctly the facts of what is provable from what, notably, of where proof is immediate, where not. Correspondingly, I have suggested, agreement as to what was mentioned sufficient for a mentioning to have occurred need not, in present matters, answer all questions as to when the same thing would be mentioned twice. One can grasp what it would be for Pia to take tea at 3 without yet deciding whether to do this is the same thing as to take *lancha*.

Suppose, now, that there is some way for things to be such that there is a determinate enough way it matters to Sid whether things are that way. He is sufficiently responsive in his thinking to whether things are that way—sufficiently prepared to recognise what is their so being, or not so being, as such. And, on recognition of such a thing (or the illusion thereof) he is prepared to adjust his ways of treating things in sufficient accordance with what adjustment might rationally be called for (Sid being as he is). Now the question is which way Sid thus takes things to be. One Fregean way to answer some such questions is now this. Suppose there is some specifiable issue on which for one to take a stand: whether things are such-and-such way. Suppose that what would settle whether Sid was right or wrong as to things being the way he has in mind above would *ipso facto* settle whether things are this just-mentioned specifiable way, and vice-versa. In more Fregean terms, whatever contains a proof of the one thing *ipso facto* contains a proof of the other. Proof from things being as Sid thus takes them to things being the specified way can be immediate. Such is at least one thing which might count as Sid thinking the specified thing.

Reason for belief to work this way is found in the sort of interest in one another to which belief ascription speaks. Suppose we are wondering whether to buy lead futures. Suppose that Pia is authoritative as to what the future price of lead will be. Then (barring eccentricity, or ignorance of what she is about) if Pia is buying lead futures, there is very good reason for us to be doing likewise. What Pia thinks in the matter at hand, if she is authoritative, bears directly on the thing for us to think. Such can be rendered in the more abstract terms above. Suppose there is some way Pia thinks things to be. Suppose she is in a position to recognise whether things are that way. Suppose that what would settle whether things are the way Pia thus thinks them would, *ipso facto*, settle whether lead futures are now a buy, and vice-versa. (Such is the structure of proof in this domain.) Then, for one who saw just this about Pia, that lead futures are now a buy is the thing for him to think. Indeed, for one who saw this much, there would be nothing else for him to think (on this score). Such, the idea is, makes Pia party to consensus, dispute, investigation, on the point...
in question—on whether lead futures are now a buy. Being thus party to joint thought on
that question just is, on Frege’s picture, what it is to think that lead futures are now a buy.

The main point of this section is that the above is bad news for RTM, and specifically
for the duplication thesis. For such a way of counting things thought—in terms of
something which (supposedly) enables so thinking rather than of the rational bearing on
what to think that someone’s so thinking may have—is highly unlikely to fit, as thought-
recurrence must, with the facts as to when a given thing thought, or thinkable, has been
settled.

3.2. Meeting The Historical: RTM’s attractions for those who feel them have much to do
with the role of attitudes such as beliefs and wants in the genesis of actions. Pia put a bottle
of champagne on ice because she believed that Sid would soon return with oysters (and was
festively inclined). At a stretch, and with a modicum of archness, one might say: her
believing that Sid would soon return with oysters caused her to put the champagne on ice.
But, one idea is, the causes there may be are no more than those physics allows for. The
event of Pia putting the champagne on the ice has a physical identity. It must then have
physical, locatable, causes (or causal antecedents). Physiological happenings, inter alia,
would do. But if the event has such causes, it can require nothing extra to these for that
event to have occurred. Hence, in the relevant sense of ‘extra’ (whatever that may be) Pia’s
believing that Sid would soon return with oysters can be nothing extra to this (if, indeed, it
did cause her to put the champagne on ice). Here duplication may seem to come to the
rescue. The idea is: Pia’s believing that Sid would soon return is duplicated in the
representing done by something else; something which, by nature, need not be extra to
those causal factors which resulted in the event of the translation of the champagne. If Pia’s
believing that Sid would soon return corresponds in the right way to such a duplicate
representation, then for her belief to cause the champagne-translation can just be for the
duplicate to do this. But that duplicate—a content-bearer—has (or its tokens have) an
understandably physical identity. Its causal workings, correspondingly, need no more
than the idea of physical causation (and locatable causal happenings) understandably allows
for. For the belief to cause the doing would just be for the duplicate to initiate a causal chain
which was also a computation terminating in a bearer with the content that such-and-such is
the thing to do (where the doing was a doing of that such-and-such); plus an understandable
causal connection between the content-bearing at that terminus and the doing. The
computation might, e.g., be from that Sid will soon return to that icing the champagne is the
thing to do. That belief’s causing, in this case, is (some of) that of the relevant bearers.

So to break the grip of RTM on our imagination, one needs to break the grip of such
an understanding of that arch ‘caused’ in ‘Pia’s belief … caused her to put champagne on
ice.’ This section works towards that in arguing merely that RTM’s understanding of how
beliefs and wants explain cannot possibly be right. The focus will be on Frege’s conception
of the intrinsic generality of thoughts—or, more fundamentally, of ways for things to be. In
particular, our interest will be in the instancing relation—the fundamental point at which the
conceptual meets the historical. This relation holds between A and B just where A is one
thing which would count as a case of B. For which B would have that generality which
marks the conceptual; while A would lack this—a mark of the historical.

One would not be a thinker at all unless he were able to recognise of indefinitely
many ways for things (or a thing) to be, indefinitely often, when, and by what, these would
be instanced: unless he could recognise of indefinitely many novel cases of what would count (or not count) as things being that way that these would (or would not) so count. To have views about cats, or lead futures, or hundred mark notes, one must be well enough able to recognise when it would be a cat, or lead future, or hundred mark note, that was in question. The significance of generality, and more specifically the instancing relation, for RTM, more generally for the nature of thinking, lies largely in what a capacity to recognise instancing’s obtaining would be like.

An ability to recognise (identify) the penguins, or colanders, or pound notes, or lead futures—e.g., on sight—differs fundamentally from, and need not draw on, an ability to recognise what would count as such. To one who knows his fairy penguins, sight might reveal that one just dived off the rock. To one who knows what would count as a pound note sight might reveal that, in any case, this is not one. But one might tell the barstools, or the geuzes, by sight or taste, while lacking a clue as to what it would be to be one—e.g., just when a liquid would count as a geuze and not a trippel. Conversely, one might know when to count a liquid as a geuze without knowing what one tasted like.

I will call a capacity to recognise of what would count (or not) as things being such-and-such way (on sufficient acquaintance with what is to do the counting) that it so counts (or does not) a conceptual capacity. The first of the above two points then comes to this. Suppose you want to teach someone to recognise (identify) pigs, or colanders, or geuze—to separate the pigs from the other beasts, the colanders from other kitchen implements, or the geuze from other liquids. For this you need only know a distinctive mark of a pig—say, the contours of a porcine snout. You need not so much as know that pigs form a genus (sus). Whatever enables sorting rightly will do. A given ability to recognise pigs, say, on sight, may then be identified by how recognition is thus enabled, or by what, or how, achieved—e.g., by sensitivity to maxillary contours for one who so achieves this. Call an ability so identifiable—e.g., one enabled by specifiable computations—a recognitional capacity. Might a conceptual capacity be a recognitional capacity in this sense.

How could one have a recognitional capacity (e.g., to tell fairy penguins at sight, or geuze by taste) without the corresponding conceptual capacity? The answer is: a recognitional capacity is free to rely on whatever is, in fact, distinctive of what is to be recognised. It may be conferred by suitable sensitivity to snout shape if such is, in fact, distinctive of pigs. But for a capacity to rely on no more than this is also for it to rely on an environment hospitable to it if it is to be a capacity at all. No one thinks that what it is to be a pig is to have a distinctive sort of snout. Plastic surgery cannot make a sheep out of a pig just by changing its snout. So a capacity to tell the pigs from other things by maxillary contours is so much as that only in an environment in which, e.g., there are not races of extremely porcine monkeys, or not too many tapirs.

Much in this essay many might dispute. But, I take it, not that cannot make a sheep out of a pig just by changing its snout. I hope for reader agreement to that extent. I thus hope to be able to draw on a capacity which I assume my readers to share. This is a capacity to distinguish between what would, what would not, make, or contribute to making, a thing’s being as it is one thing that would count (or fail to count) as a thing being a pig. I thus rely, to that extent, on a shared conceptual capacity, enjoyed here by speaker and audience.

A conceptual capacity in re being F is, inter alia, a capacity to recognise the limits of any mere recognitional capacity in re being F—any capacity to pick out the Fs merely by
something which *does* distinguish Fs from other things. We share conceptual capacities *in re* any ways for things to be we can mention. In different ones of us, such capacities take different forms. For example, I have little clue what the porcine genome might be, and have it only on hearsay that this *is* what distinguishes pigs from aardvarks. But I suppose myself to have, at least, a capacity to rely *well* on authority. Suppose, e.g., that were it to be so that the porcine genome is what it takes to *count* as a pig, it would also be so that no rib house in America’s heartland has ever served up pork. Then I can see the need for a very good story in the offing if it is to be so that genomes are what really do matter to counting as a pig. (Nor, we can see, could *all* depend on genomes. There are not multiple pigs in every pot in Portugal each *feijoada* day even given that every self-respecting *feijoada* is full of pig parts, each presumably chock full of the right genome.)

Telling a pig by its genome *might* be a way of dispensing with reference to maxillary contour. Perhaps further, the world being as it is, there could not be an environment inhospitable to identifying pigs in this way. Perhaps it is thus a fail-proof way of telling pigs from other beasts. Even so, though, we can imagine the genome story turning out to be a bad one. There might have been good reasons for supposing so. If, as things stand, there are only bad ones, at least we can recognise these as such. Such recognition is not enabled just by any mere capacity to sort out the pigs from the others. Such is one way in which a conceptual capacity does not reduce to a recognitional procedure. We have such irreducible conceptual capacities insofar as we can mention such things *as for a thing to be a pig*.

So if, or insofar as, there is a way of identifying those cases of an object’s being as it is which would count an object being a pig—if, or insofar as those cases are recognisable by other marks, by their counting as other things they anyway count as—still, our capacity to recognise what so counts, and what not, is not just a capacity to go by those marks—a preparedness so to respond—blind to anything further which might bear (or not) on whether an object counted as a pig. In that case such would simply be how we respond to those marks; such is what we do. It would not be sensitivity to *reason*. As history has in fact played out, a case of what would count as an object being a pig *is* identifiable by those marks. But we can also recognise what it would be for this to be so, or *not* to be so—when it would have been that history played out otherwise. Our capacity to recognise what we *are* prepared to recognise as to what would count, or would have counted, as an object being a pig, even where these marks of pig-hood are, in fact, a tip-off, is, *inter alia*, a capacity to be sensitive to when circumstances *would* be hospitable to being so tipped off.

What stands on the worldly side of the instancing relation—things being as they are (or some thing as it is)—cannot stand in relations such as entailment or making-probable. Things being as they are are *may instance* things being such that Sid is napping. But they do not *mean* that he is. What *means* that Sid is napping is not things being such that Sid is napping but rather, e.g., those snoring sounds, or their occurrence, or their emanating from his study—some part of history whose occurrence is not yet what would *count* as it being so that Sid is napping. Correspondingly, what stands on the worldly side of the relation is not anything from which *that such-and-such* (or anything) is computable. There is nothing yet to compute *on*. Nor is the obstacle here merely logical *form*. If the emanation of those sounds does not entail anything, *that* they emanated might. The corresponding grammatical manoeuvre for Sid’s being as he is yields only a pseudo-thought: ‘that Sid is as he is’, read, not as a triviality true no matter how Sid is, but rather as a would-be thought for which how it makes things turn on how things are is fixed by nothing short of all of how things are—a
thought of a way for things to be there could only be if things were just as they are (hence of no genuine way for things to be at all). (To know that this ‘thought’ was true would be to know no more than one knew in knowing what would make it so.)

A recognitional capacity—say, to recognise pigs at sight—is sensitive to given features (e.g., degree of maxillary curvature). Values of these might be inputs to some computation with the output ‘Pig’, or ‘Not’. What a conceptual capacity is sensitive to is not delimitable in any such way. Such a capacity, for some given way for things to be, is a capacity to be sensitive to whatever may matter in history’s being as it is to its instancing that way. What matters to its workings thus determines no specifiable input to a computation. A computation from values of given parameters as inputs to the outputs, pig, no pig would define a relation between those parameters and (putative) porcine presence. On occasion we might take such putative porcine presence simply for porcine presence But we would do so only when exercise of our conceptual capacities led us to take porcine presence to be recognisable in this way; only where we recognised that way of sorting cases as a way of distinguishing what would count as porcine presence from what would not. The idea of a conceptual capacity is precisely one of a capacity not exhaustively captured by any such computation; a capacity always to recognise when that way of deciding when one was in porcine presence was operating in circumstances inhospitable to it.

A conceptual capacity as here explained is exercised on what is not conceptual, or conceptualised—what lacks the generality of the conceptual, e.g., on things being as they are. It is a capacity to recognise things of this: most generally, as to what it is reason to think; in the special case, as to what it instances. A capacity to recognise, that is, to take in some of what is so. There is a certain structure inherent in reason to think, and in reasons to think. It is distinctive of a conceptual capacity, as it need not be to a capacity hostage to an hospitable environment, that it is sensitive to the place of that on which it operates in such structure, and to the occasion-sensitive nature of such placing. Recognition may sometimes be, so to speak, Moorean. What one sees in the barnyard, staring at the pig before him, or in the parlour staring at the chair before him, may just be the reason for taking it that there is a pig, or there a chair. Depending on just what sight then counts as making one aware of, one may just recognise at sight what does count as the presence of a pig, or chair, as so counting. One sees what settles the question. The question, asked of an Old Spot while walking past it in the Gloucester countryside, what a reason would be for counting that as a pig (or for taking oneself to see one) need not have an answer. But a conceptual capacity is also sensitivity to the presence of reasons where there are some, and to their weight. If a pub fills its front lounge with stuffed Old Spots, on which some customers are wont to sit, then for how many there are Old Spots to sit on may be a matter for debate. The question at what point GM fails any longer to issue in Old Spots, or even pigs, may be worthy of a special journal issue. It is in such ways, among others, that the bearing of things being as they are on whether there is an Old Spot in among the neaps is never the same as the bearing on this of things being thus and so; and that a conceptual capacity in re Old Spot presence is distinguished from a capacity to recognise the bearing on whether there is such presence of things being thus and so.

The next point, then, is that a capacity such as we enjoy to recognise, on particular occasions, what the thing for us to do might be is a full-fledged conceptual capacity. It is, that is, a capacity distinctive of a thinker in the sense Descartes sets out: inter alia, for any specifiable way of deciding what the thing for one to do might be, or any specifiable set of
factors which might matter to this, a capacity to reflect on whether such really is the way to settle the question in a way which leaves the issue genuinely open; thus a capacity to recognise different procedures, or different factors, as the ones which matter (should the world be so arranged that such is so).

RTM fails to reckon with what we are prepared to see as to what bears, or is liable to bear, on the thing for us to do. In the Ant and Acorn, Pia goes to the bar and (pointing at a tap) orders a pint of lager. She wanted to shout Sid one (buy a round), and she thought lager was Sid’s drink. She ordered the lager because of this. Archly rephrased, her wanting, and thinking, these things caused her to order it. RTM tells us that if this explains this, then there is also another less arch causal explanation of her ordering the pint (or at least of her coming to see this as the thing for her to do). This explanation consists in a chain of causally linked intracranial events. Each event is a transition from one content-bearing state to another, each such state bearing content by virtue of the involvement in it of tokens of some MR* (or set of MR*s). The whole chain constitutes a computation, in the sense which matters to RTM, from some initial set of contents (those of the MR*s involved in the initial state) to a terminal content (that of the MR*-token so involved in the last state of the chain). This terminal content is that ordering the pint is the thing (for Pia) to do. (To say this is to say that the whole chain is generated by some system of computations, thus by some intracranial state corresponding to Pia’s preparedness so to arrive at what the system computes on occasions for so computing (that is, for her moving from given beliefs and wants to a view as to the thing to do).

But suppose the mentioned want and belief are not what explains, or fully explains, Pia’s coming to see ordering the pint as the thing for her to do. Then, as RTM has it, and assuming that Pia did act for reasons, and not inexplicably, or in a sudden fit of something, there is some other (perhaps just more inclusive) set of beliefs and wants which are the ones which explain her ordering the pint, where the ones are the ones computed from by the relevant computation to the terminus, that ordering the pint is (was) the thing for her to do. In any event, provided she saw (then-conclusive) reason to act as she did. In her being thus caused so to order, she was also so caused by some given causal chain of the sort just described.

First, two (here) relatively minor points. Within a Fregean framework, not every case of rationally concluding, or coming to take something to be so, is a case of inference. There is another sort of rational move to be made. One can recognise, in confronting what he does of how things are, that this is (something which would count as) things being thus and so; the ‘this’ here precisely lacking the generality of anything eligible to stand in an inference. Recognition may be at sight: Lager! (Mirabilis dictum.) Or it may be on reflection as when, the pieces suddenly falling into place, one comes to see Pia as, not so much suffering Sid as provoking him. Recalling particular occasions may lead one to this insight. But such need not be by inference. Second, there are many sequences of inferential moves (not necessarily all good ones) from any given set of beliefs and wants to any given thought as to the thing to do. A sequence which explained why Pia saw ordering the pint as the thing to do would need to reflect at every point something Pia then saw (or thought she saw) as to what followed from what. A sequence which claimed the title, the way she came to see ordering the pint as the thing to do, would have to reflect, at every point, what she was prepared to see as to what followed from what in a sense in which any other sequence, from the same premises to the same conclusion, would not. It is a familiar fact that the prospects for a
unique sequence satisfying this demand are dim. Anyway, when we justify a claim by giving an argument, thus making something explicit as to what we see as justifying it, we are certainly not, in general, particularly attached to any one way of setting out the argument—e.g., any one way of parcelling out bearing into premises and rules.

This last point in isolation may seem unimpressive. But it points to something central to belief-desire explanation. For such explanation to explain is for it to make what was done understandable (to one). It is to show, *inter alia*, how given beliefs and desires could lead one to do what was done. Suppose, for example, that one were to say that Pia ordered Sid a lager because she believed that the herring were running in the Baltic, or that Alf needs a new vacuum cleaner, or that the price of lead futures will rise in August. Even if Pia believed these things, and even if they did, somehow or other, lead Pia to order the pint, still, we would not yet have an explanation of her doing so. By what sort of links might Alf’s need for a vacuum cleaner lead Pia to buy a pint? There is no reason why an intracranial state involving a token of an MR* with the content that Alf needs a new vacuum should not, just spontaneously, cause another involving an MR*-token with the content that ordering a pint is the thing to do. If, as so happens, for Pia to believe this about Alf is for her to be in that intracranial state, then her believing this would explain her coming to see ordering a pint as the thing to do. Within RTM it should seem unremarkable if such happened. Her ordering would then be explained by a belief. But such explaining would not be the explaining which it is a belief-desire explanation’s lot to do. Add to Pia’s belief about the herring run a belief that Baltic herring runs are one of the 37 special occasions which Sid resolves always to celebrate with an extra pint, and as odd as things still remain, belief desire explanation may now well be in sight.

But the failure above of Alf’s need for a new vacuum cleaner to explain Pia’s purchase is failure of a sort to which *any* explanation in terms of given beliefs and desires is liable—to which it could succumb depending on the circumstances of the citing. Why did Pia, a chardonnay-sipper, order a pint of lager? To shout Sid one, given that he is a lager drinker. Such might explain. But perhaps not if, e.g., drinking from the Ant and Acorn’s notoriously unhygienic lager taps is known to pose a threat of hepatitis, or if someone else has just handed Sid a fresh lager, or if, as everyone knows, Sid must leave in 5 minutes to get to the opera on time, or if to do this Pia needed to snub her favourite celebrity heartthrob, or if for Pia it is either the lager or the rent, or if this will be Sid’s 7th, and he is known to cut a bit of a figure after that. And so on *ad inf.*

In any such case, what now fails to explain might be expanded to something which does—how depending on the circumstances. As to those unclean taps, for example, perhaps Pia does not know about this. In her ignorance, one might correctly say, she expects the taps to be tolerably clean. Expecting this is a condition which might also be put as: she believes they are. Or, again, perhaps Pia thinks that it would serve Sid right if he got hepatitis, or hopes he does. Now, again, her doing what she did is understandable. Either way, we arrive at some set of beliefs and wants which, in the circumstances, do the explanatory job.

What we have so far is this. RTM tells us that where Pia had her reasons for ordering the pint, some intracranial computation occurred in her from some given set of beliefs and desires to the conclusion that ordering the pint is the thing to do, such that the occurrence of that computation (a given causal chain of states) explains her coming so to see things. But what attitudes on Pia’s part explain her coming to see what she did depends on the occasion for explaining. So for any truth to the effect that Pia ordered because she had such-and-such
beliefs and wants, its truth does not identify from what the relevant intracranial causal chain should have computed. Conversely, if there is such a chain, then whatever it computed from (if anything), this is what sometimes would, sometimes would not explain her ordering. There is an apparent mismatch between that arch-causation in ‘Pia’s desire to shout Sid one caused her to order’, and the plain intracranial causation which RTM postulates. Pia’s seeing what she did in seeing ordering the pint as the thing for her to do thus seems to involve more than is captured in the work of any given computation of the sort RTM posits.

What I have been insisting so far is that belief-desire explanation is tasked with making doings (or seeing these as things to do) understandable. How might beliefs one might hold and wants one might have make giving doings thus understandable to one? One might erase that ‘one’. The issue is then how things one might believe and things one might want can make it rational to do such-and-such; a special form of the general question how objects of belief and want can bear rationally on each other, and, notably, on the thing for one to do. In terms of Frege’s distinction between facts of being true and facts of holding true, the topic thus falls on the side of being true. Whether wanting to shout Sid one makes it rational to buy a pint is not a psychological question. But it is psychology that we are meant to be discussing here.

We can easily segue into that topic. Pia is, by hypothesis, one of us. So she can recognise the sorts of things I have been supposing we can as to what would bear on whether ordering a pint is the thing for her to do. In what she and we all can recognise, we can see conceptual capacities at work. Were Pia to soliloquise, she might say to herself on an occasion, ‘I want to shout Sid one. He drinks lager. So I will order a pint of same.’ Whether she so soliloquises or not, she is prepared to recognise, on that occasion, that those cited reasons so bear on what to do as to make ordering a pint a reasonable choice. (Ordering a pitcher or a bucket might also have been reasonable. I bracket such considerations.) But now the point is: to recognise this is, inter alia, to recognise something of the circumstances she is in (or takes herself to be in). In these circumstances, those reasons make a certain action reasonable. In others they would not. Were she in some such others (say, the unhygienic taps, or shortage of the ready), then, given sufficient awareness of their being as they were, she would no longer soliloquise as I supposed her to above, nor recognise such an argument as at all compelling.

There are thus two components in the sensitivity she in fact has to how the way things are bears on what the thing for her to do would be. If, in given circumstances, she recognises the above-cited reasons as the reasons they then are, there is then a question of getting from them to a conclusion—here that ordering a pint is the thing to do. That such a step is a correct one to take is something which might be settled by some computation. If it is claimed that Pia’s seeing what she thus does is enabled by some subdoxastic computation, then so far, at least, there is no complaint. Such is one component. But then there is the other: recognising how her circumstances bear on what, in them, would be a reason, what not, for doing given things; what in her circumstances, might be a correct way of reasoning from given reasons (or beliefs and wants) to the thing to do. (I bracket further factors such as seeing how, in the circumstances, what she wants and thinks is correctly representable. (A want to shout Sid one need not be a want to do so no matter what.))

The present point is that this second component is active even in circumstances where what it allows Pia to see is that in her present circumstances reasoning from wanting to shout Sid one to the decision to buy a pint is just fine. In the circumstances the thing to do
may be so computed. In others it could not be. Seeing that her circumstances are not thus relevantly other is part of what she sees in her preparedness now to reason in the indicated way. The capacity she exercises is not just one to reason in a given way from given premises to a given conclusion, but also a capacity to recognise when such reasoning would be, when not in order. Such is what it is for this to be a full-fledged conceptual capacity. Such a capacity is not explicable in RTM’s favoured terms. There is no specifiable computation, or set thereof, by which it could be computed, correctly, when given computations do meet reason’s standards—are ways of computing the bearing given facts (if facts) would in fact have on further ones—and when not. Or rather, spell out any such computation, and our capacities to recognise rational bearing of one thing on another (where such is present) are, inter alia, capacities to see how circumstance (the way things are) is liable to bear on when (if ever) so reasoning would be reasoning correctly.

Computations are on what has the generality of the conceptual. What distinguishes the historical from the conceptual is the lack of such generality. To reason, or compute, to truth from how things are—e.g., to truths as to the thing to do—one must first abstract from how things are to things which have the required generality—particular ways things are in being the way they are. One must recognise the way things are as what counts as a case of various such generalities. Reasons may bear on what is thus to be recognised. But recognition here is not simply reasoning to the right conclusion from something else. For reasoning to get a grip in a given matter (whether there is lager in the glass, whether to put it there, whether lead futures will rise, whether to buy them), for given reasoning to be a way of arriving at truth, one must abstract the right things from the way things are—those generalities which will in fact lead to truth in those given matters, given the way things are. There is no recipe for doing this. The project is of the wrong sort for that. Such is just Descartes’ idea of what it is to be a thinker. For any given battery of ways of solving problems (e.g., of building shelters), a thinker is always capable of finding, and of recognising, others; inter alia, others by which that initial battery may emerge as adequate or not.

Such flexibility in ways of pursuing truth, and whatever goals knowing the truth may serve entails just is that form of freedom from control by stimulus (cf. Chomsky ??) which is distinctive of thinkers of the sort we are. It is, for us, a freedom to distance ourselves from any specified way of arriving at truth, so as to reflect on it with the possibility of (rightly or wrongly) accepting or rejecting it—adhering to it or not as a guide in our pursuit of truth (and thereby of the thing to do). Such freedom is a precondition for being subject to the way of rational compulsion—that particular form of compulsion one feels himself under when, seeing what he does (or seems to) as to how things being as they are bears on what is so, sees himself with nothing else to think—and, ipso facto thinks accordingly. At least for creatures of our sort, it is thus the precondition for thinking things so (in our case holding them true) at all. For Pia to take the pint to have been drawn just is for her to see herself as with nothing else to think on that score (to be thinking truly).

There is rational compulsion; and there is causal compulsion. To be able to be under rational compulsion to think such-and-such is, in some sense, to be free of causal compulsion to do so. Such is another form of Descartes’ point. Suppose that Pia were in an intracranial state involving tokens of MR*s in such a way that for her to be in that state is for her to want to shout Sid one and take it that lager is his drink. Suppose that, somehow, a causal chain is triggered, initiating with that state, consisting of transitions from it to others of its ilk, terminating in a state such that for Pia to be in it is for her to see ordering a pint as
the thing for her to do. That causal chain leaves her nothing else to think (of matter in hand). But not in the way her seeing what reason there is for ordering the pint. The compulsion she is under is causal, not rational. Given the transitions, she simply will think this. Still, she is a thinker of our sort. So she enjoys the freedom distinctive of this. So she is able to stand back from her thinking it, and, reflecting, accept or reject it according as, reconsidering, she sees the world to bear on the question. She need not, often would not, reconsider. She may see no cause to. She may see her situation as one in which those stated reasons are reason enough to order a pint; no more reflection called for. It is precisely and only where she does so see things that a computation contained in such a causal chain might reflect (some of) what she sees as to how to find the thing for her to do.

So if there were any such intracranial computation, it would need to be one which would not have occurred had Pia had a different perception of what, in her circumstances, would decide the thing to do—inter alia, of what reason would have to be for ordering a pint. The causal chain which, for RTM, was to be such a computation would need to be one which, if things were thus different, would not have occurred. If there were any such causal chains as RTM posits, a thinker of our sort would have to stand in a very special way towards them. Whatever they might explain as to why a thinker did what he did (where he acted for reason) they would explain only given the thinker’s seeing what he then did as to how circumstances mattered to what a reason for such doing might be. And they would make what he did understandable only on an occasion for understanding it where those reasons would make so doing sufficiently understandable. What one of us—a possessor of conceptual capacities—is prepared to recognise on a given occasion as to the bearing, if any, of given (candidate) reasons on what the thing for him to do would be is not to be accounted for in terms of computations on representations, a fortiori, in terms of any causal chains (intracranial or not) which might be counted as such. Such is one reason, with Wittgenstein as cited at the outset here, not to expect there to be intracranial images of ‘the individual thought or memory’.

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