

THINKING ABOUT THINKING

A main source of our misunderstandings is that we do not see the *whole* use of our words. (*Philosophical Investigations*, §122)

'Talking' (aloud or silently) and 'Thinking' are not concepts of the same kind, even if closely connected. (PI, p. 185)

If God had looked into our souls then, he could not have seen there whom we were speaking of. (Ibid)

The loneliness of the philosopher. Chemists, psychologists, geologists, have laboratories, apparatus, fieldwork, questionnaires. We have *nothing* from which to draw results but ourselves. *Angst*-provoking. But the tools of the sciences come dear. Philosophy is a low-budget intellectual endeavour. Universities, take note.

Our work would never pass for science among scientists. Nor is (or should it be) art—though, like mathematics, it *can* be beautiful. We aim for truth. Art could only mask it—or its absence.

What, then, do we do? We unfold concepts. Not, generally at random. Rather, central ones in thought about the world, or others, or ourselves, or about such thought—especially those most likely to entangle one.

A good way to ensnarl oneself in a concept is to fixate on one strand, ignoring its many others—to overlook the *whole* of how the concept works. One is *charmed*: it seems there is a way things *must* be. Here philosophy is liberating. Put the missing pieces back and the spell dissolves. We see how—and why—things *need* not be like that. Other ways of thinking become available. We may find the unexpected, the exciting—not *just* to ourselves. Much of philosophy's good lies here.

1. Thinking: A Strand: My case study is thinking—I mean *taking something to be so*: an attitude, or posture, towards the way things are. Here the strand that casts the spell makes thinking seem language-like. We can *say* what we think. So in *some* way thinking something is like saying it. Mistake that way and philosophy can seem to have lessons for psychology—for *cognitive science*, if you please. Jerry Fodor is the clearest of so-charmed philosophers; father of the Representational Theory of Mind (RTM), a seeming way things must be. He will state this in a moment. First the strand.

As I will speak, a thought is what one thinks in thinking something so. There is a way things are according to it. ('Things' has here catholic reference: you can't ask 'Which things?') *Which* thought it is is fixed by *what* is so according to it. It is a thought's business to be true or false.

There is English, and there are its sentences. Ditto for other languages. Many of these are also, in some way, in the business of being true or false. We can *use* them to say what we think. I think that iguanas eat flies; I can say, 'Iguanas eat flies.' For each such sentence there is that which it says (on *some* reading of 'say'). Perhaps, then, for each there is the thought it expresses. Perhaps, too, for each thought (thing one might think) a sentence which expresses it. A one-one correspondence.

Well, not quite. Consider 'Mary had a little lamb.' Read one way, this speaks of husbandry. Read another, it speaks of dinner. Read yet another it speaks of medical novelties. And anyway, who is Mary? When should she have done the thing in question? Etc. But perhaps such discrepancies between idea and fact are remediable. There might have been—might even *be*—different sentences for each of those readings of 'Mary had a little lamb.' If I know a dozen Marys then, in my idiolect, I can just label them 'Mary₁', 'Mary₂', etc. And so on. In an idiolect so repaired, there would be, the idea is, one sentence for each thing I might think so, and vice-versa.

A language so repaired would, it can seem, provide a sentence for each thought, and for each thought its sentence. It *might* then seem that its sentences are in the business of being true or false in the same way a thought is. One might then think: a sentence's *structure* is that of the thought it represents. So thoughts are structured as sentences are. Such are workings of the spell.

Fodor thinks sentences, or something like them, had better have a certain role in our thinking things so:

I don't see how an organism can stand in an (interesting epistemic) relation to a proposition except by standing in a (causal / functional) relation to some token of a formula that expresses the proposition.
(1981/1978: 201)

[[For taking it that Sid grunts, say, something is needed—something with a physical form, so that it can cause, and be caused by things, and which, further, expresses that thought—something like an inscription (or token) of a sentence (of a repaired

language).]] So, originally, he took

the objects of [such] attitudes to be sentences of a *non*-natural language; in effect, formulae in an Internal Representational System. (1981/1978: 194)

That System would be, in effect, a repaired language; its formulae its *sentences*. Thinking so *is*, here, a relation to such sentences.

Here is a recent version:

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*.

RTM say that there is no believing-that *P* episode without a corresponding tokening-of-a-mental-representation episode, and it contemplates no locus of original intentionality except the contents of mental representations. (1998: 8)

Thinking something may not *be* relating to a sentence; but one never does it otherwise.

A sentence has a (geometric, acoustic) shape by which to know it. It is a *vehicle*, bearer, of content: it is *to be understood* in a certain way. What has a shape is *ipso facto* structured: this part goes here, this there. The sentence 'Sid grunts' begins and ends in an 's'. But further, a *language* builds its sentences from a vocabulary, by given principles. Its sentences are structured accordingly: by the vocabulary they contain, and the applications of the principles which result in it. A language thus generates, from given building blocks, a *system* of related sentences. RTM's internal formulae form such a system. Its tokens might be, say, neural.

If I write an English sentence and you write another, each of us writes something distinguished by its structure from what the other does. Each English sentence is thus

identified by features which distinguish it from every other. This supposes *one* right way of counting English sentences: if I write an English sentence, and you do, there is a unique right answer to the question whether one sentence was written twice, or two once. It was one twice just in where English provides one identifying structure twice. English settles the matter. If I think something so, then if you think so too, there is some one thought we both share. If you do not think that, but think something else, then there are two different thoughts, the one I thus think, and the one you do. To think of thoughts as in correlation with vehicles of representation in the way RTM does is to suppose that, just as there is one right way of counting vehicles, in the above sense, there is also just one right way of counting thoughts. If not, then what RTM asserts makes no sense. This will matter.

2. More Strands: Frege: Is RTM right? What we need to do is unfold more strands in the notion thinking. I choose ones noted by Gottlob Frege, the greatest 19th century philosopher. He was succinct; so much so as hardly to look a philosopher to his contemporaries. We will need to look with care.

Both thinking and saying represent something as so. Saying relies on means for representing to others. Thinking—representing to oneself—does not. Representing to others relies on means for making both the fact of representing, and what is represented, recognisable to others. I cannot *say* things to you inaudibly, in Dutch, if Dutch is all Greek to you. So saying needs vehicles—incarnations of visible, audible, forms, recognisably doing what they do.

Representing to myself works otherwise. One *chooses* what to say; *not* what to think. I judge *just* where I can judge no other. It need not be *made* recognisable to me what I am judging for me to do so. Formulated in a vehicle, it would either be what I *anyway* judged, or what that formulation gave me no reason to. Its formulation could not be the judging. Judging needs no vehicles in *such* roles. Does it need vehicles at all?

A thought is *what* one thinks. It *bears* no message; it *is* one. In Frege's words, it is what brings *truth* into question at all. Such a thing, he argues, is *essentially* invisible, intangible, inaudible:

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

Why? Here is one reason:[[

Is a picture, purely as visible, tangible thing really true? And a stone, a leaf not true? Clearly one would not call a picture true unless an intention attached to it. (1918: 59)

A canvas need represent nothing as so. It *might* do, if *to be taken*, say, as showing how Cologne cathedral looks, or how the remodelled one *will*. Then things will be as represented if the cathedral so looks (or will). But when will that be? Does that patch on the canvas depict a shadow, moss, or a graffito? The cathedral's look at a certain time of day, or on a certain day, or always? When things will be as depicted depends on answers to such questions too. A visible form—a canvas, a sentence—may *raise* such questions, but cannot answer them. A thought is such an answer. It has no visible form. Just so, its answer does not depend on how *it* is to be taken. With that an answer can just be an answer.

A way of taking words which raises a question of truth *is* what Frege calls a thought. It is the one which raises precisely that question. A way of *taking* words, so a thought, is invisible. So *it* need not *bear* an understanding, as a visible representation must.

Another way to see a thought's invisibility starts, for Frege, here:]]

That the sun has set is not an object which emits rays which arrive in my eyes. It is no visible thing like the sun itself. That the sun has set is recognisable as true on the basis of sense impressions. (1918: 61)

Seeing that, for Frege, is just the same achievement whether *based* on sight or not; whether one sees that the sun has set, or that rate cuts fuel inflation. *What* one sees is invisible in *just* the same way in either case.

What way is that? Frege writes,

A thought always contains something which reaches beyond the

particular case, by means of which this is presented to consciousness as falling under something general. (1882: *Kernsatz* 4)

The particular case is: things being as they are. Reaching beyond it is reaching to a range of cases of things being as they might. A thought places the particular case within some particular such range; represents it as being the way things are in precisely those cases (the cases fixing the way, and vice-versa). Otherwise it would not be a thought at all. It would just be a 'That!', directed at the way things are. So the thought distinguishes what matters to belonging to the range from what does not. The sun would still have set had I enjoyed this with a *caiparinha*, not a *mojito*, or wearing my other hat. Not, though, if the rays still blaze past the ineptly placed *terrace* umbrella meant to shade me. The thought's generality is its way of choosing the range of cases it thus identifies.

Seeing that the sun has set is *recognising* something—not as one recognises the waiter who brings the *caiparinha* every day, but as one recognises that drink he carries on his tray as a *mojito*—as one of the indefinitely many ways (just *that* much frost) of realising being that. That range of ways of being a *mojito* is not visible (think of all the unrealised *mojitos*); even less so what it takes for membership. The thought, identified by its demands on membership, is thus invisible. This is Frege's point.

A sentence, by contrast with a thought, *is* something visible, or etc. It is, accordingly, structured. To write a sentence one needs to get the right bits in the right places. An English sentence is further structured by the building blocks and principles which generate it. A thought has no *such* structure.

The building blocks of sentences are meaningful—roughly, words. What a sentence *says* is decided by the meanings of its blocks, so structured. The sentence 'Sid grunts' speaks of Sid and of being a grunter. It says the first to do the second. Any sentence which bore its understanding would do the same. A thought represents *things* (catholic reading) as a certain way. An *expression* of a thought (in words) structures that representing in a particular way. Is a thought so structured? What might it mean to say so?

Frege tells us that thoughts are *not* structured, except relative to an analysis. He says,

A thought can be decomposed in many ways ... accordingly now this, now that, appears as subject and as predicate. The thought itself does not determine what is to be taken as its subject. If one

says 'The subject of this judgement', one designates something definite only if, at the same time, one refers to a definite way of analysing it. (1892: 199)

I might describe a thought as about Mary, and about eating lamb. I might express it in saying, 'Mary had a little lamb'. What do I thus say about it? When would a thought *count as* so structured?

Frege states the core point as follows:

What is distinctive about my conception of logic is that I begin by giving pride of place to the content of the word 'true', and then immediately go on to introduce a thought as that to which the question 'Is it true?' is in principle applicable. So I do not begin with concepts and put them together to form a thought or judgement; I come by the parts of a thought by analysing the thought. (1979/1919: 253)

Thoughts are not formed from building blocks as English sentences are. The *whole* thought is fundamental. We start from its particular way of reaching beyond the particular case; of picking out a range. Being about Sid, or a way of being about him, can be part of reaching out to that particular range of cases to which the thought that Sid grunts reaches. Similarly for being about being a grunter. Saying that the concept of being a grunter is part of the thought that Sid grunts is a way of saying *this*, and no more. To be an element of a thought is just to contribute in some identifiable way to its reaching as it does—to perform (or be) a recognisable sub-task in such reaching. It *just* this, and no more.

Being about Sid reaches out to no range of cases. Being about being a grunter does: those of *someone* being a grunter. Neither reaches to the *thought's* range on its own. Being about Sid can contribute to what the thought that Sid grunts does only jointly with the making of other contributions. Equally for being about being a grunter. Contributions need to be made in bunches, which bunches add up to what the thought does. This is known as Frege's context principle, which he states thus:

Never ... ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the

context of a proposition. (1950/1884: x)

A thought decomposes into some set of elements *just* where what they do (or are doing) jointly adds up to what the thought does. There is nothing else it is for something to be a decomposition. An element of a thought on a given decomposition is just part of what *thus* adds up to the right total job: reaching to the right range. What makes for a decomposition cannot guarantee that thoughts decompose uniquely. A US state decomposes by law into counties. A sentence decomposes by the principles of its language into given parts. A thought has no such legislation to identify some one way of decomposing it as right.

[[How could parts of a thought *make* a thought? List them, and you have not yet expressed the thought. To express it some further element is needed. Name the element. Now I add it to the list. I have still not expressed the thought. Another element is needed. And so on. That problem, inherited from Plato, much exercised F. H. Bradley, nearly exactly Frege's contemporary. If we treat the thought as fundamental there is *no* such problem. This is *part* of the point. Treating the thought as fundamental, we lose the idea of a thought as a uniquely structured way of representing. We must still ask: What is the good of that?]]

Suppose we decompose (articulate) the thought that Sid grunts into elements which make it about Sid and about being a grunter. Being about Sid is a way for a thought to be; the thought that Sid grunts a particular case of something which is that way. Being about Sid thus reaches out to a range of cases. These will be a range of thoughts which are all the same in that respect—particular understanding for *the same*. There is the thought that Sid snores, the thought that Sid salivates, etc. For something—say, being about Sid—to be an element of some thought—say, that Sid snores—is, *ipso facto*, for it to be an element for *a* thought to contain, so an element of a range of thoughts (in each case on some decomposition). This is also part of what it is to be an element.

[[Being about Sid is, as noted, unlike being about snoring. For snoring, unlike Sid, identifies a way for *one* to be; a way which, like a thought, reaches out to a range of cases. Sid's being as he is may be an instance of *someone* snoring. Pia's being as she is may be that too. It would not change this merely if Sid became fond of Henry Green, or if Pia parted her hair centre instead of left. So there is a double generality in being about snoring. That itself reaches out to a range of cases: ones of being about *things* being some given way; a certain range of thoughts. *Snoring* also reaches out to a given range of cases: ones of someone or other snoring. The someone in such a case need not be Sid.

But if we restrict the range to cases where it is Sid, we get precisely the generality of the thought that Sid snores: those cases in which *Sid* being as he is is Sid snoring. The generality of that thought, one might say, is inherited from the generality of that which the element, being about snoring, makes the thought about. Only in such matters paternity need not be unique.]]

The domain made up of all English sentences is structured in a unique way by the building blocks and principles from which English is built. The way a given sentence is structured is reflected in the way the whole domain is, and vice-versa. If we permit ourselves the conceit of a domain of all thoughts, then the way a given thought is liable to be structured is equally reflected in the way the whole domain is. If a thought is structured only relative to a decomposition, then so too for such a whole domain. The domain can be articulated into ranges, each made up of thoughts all the same in some specified respect. But it can be articulated into different collections of ranges on different ways of thinking of thoughts as decomposing into elements. No *one* articulation of the domain is *the* way it articulates in any sense in which others are not.

An *expression* of a thought—what Frege calls an *Aussage*—is structured as a sentence is. It structures the thought accordingly—as with given parts in given roles. It thus structures what is not *as such* so structured. An *Aussage* represents its elements (or their objects) as relating in some given way. If that is not as such part of how the thought represents things, then it remains to be said what it would be for an *Aussage* and a thought to represent things as *the same* way. We are still owed an understanding of *the same*. A thought commits itself to less specifics than an *Aussage*. A good question now is: What is the *good* of such a representation as a thought would be?

3. More Frege: A thought's role is to raise a particular question of truth. We both say and think true, or false, things. Liability to truth and falsehood is a special way of standing towards the world. For Frege truth *identifies* this special posture—what he calls *judging*. *Truth* is achieving all such a posture aims at. What a thought is begins here.

Judging is *essentially*, Frege tells us, exposing oneself to risk of error. How one fares is an objective matter: the *world* is to be sole arbiter of whether one has succumbed or escaped. Something in the judging dictates how arbitration is to go. Frege insists that this something is always separable from any given case of judging:

When something is judged to be the case, we can always cull out the thought that is recognised as true; the act of judgement forms no

part of this. (1979/1915: 251)

One always judges what there is for *someone*—no one it need be—to judge.

What is culled out is the thought. Culling it makes room for understanding the idea of the world as sole arbiter of succumbing to, or escaping, error. One judges *truly* just where *anyone* who judged *that* would. What is peculiar to *one* judging cannot bear on whether *what* is judged is right. The culling means this condition is not vacuous: many *could* judge *that*. So truth is decided by how things are independent of anyone's attitude towards their so being.

Any thinker is exposed to risk of error. We incur risk guiding, and measuring, our responses as we do. We may *mistake* how to do this. Not every reverse of fortune is an *error* on our part. The world may simply prove unkind. What error would be is another crucial thread in the idea of thinking. But I must bracket that here.

We are dealing so far with a whole: my being currently exposed to error as I am. Judging that Sid grunts, if I do, is an element in that whole; present just where that whole so articulates. How *does* it articulate? Lessons learned apply.

First, for me to judge that Sid grunts is for there to be that discernible sub-role to be played in making one exposed to error as I am. Such a sub-role *could* be played only in the context of the playing of suitable others. If I judge that Sid grunts, I am exposed to error I will have succumbed to in a certain range of cases, escaped in a certain range of others. In the context of other exposures, that just might add up to my being exposed to error just where I am. If so, then this is *one* way of articulating my exposure to error into elements. Nothing prevents there being others. As with articulating a thought, there is nothing further to make some one of these the right one—except, perhaps, for the purposes some particular articulating is to serve.

Second, for judging that Sid grunts to be an element of my exposure is for it to be cullable from *my* being so exposed; a way for *someone's* exposure, so for someone's thought, to be. It is thus an identifiable shape, or patten, for *a* thinker's thought to have; a particular respect in which different thinkers are the same. As being a *mojito* is instantiable in manifold ways, by the contents of different glasses, so thinking that Sid grunts is a shape instantiable in manifold ways in the contents of different thinkers' openness to disappointments, so expectations with which they guide their dealings with the world. What sorts of shapes might fit such bills? What sorts do we look for?

4. RTM Revisited: RTM posits a relation, J, and a range of internal vehicles, each of which expresses a given thought, such that, wherever someone judges something there is to judge, he bears J to some vehicle which expresses that. Where to begin? Perhaps with what lies in hand. The content of a vehicle is that of an *Aussage*. For RTM, it must be that of a thought. Fodor aims to understand our relation to one sort of content in terms of some presumed relation to another. But we do not yet know what it *means* to equate the content of an *Aussage* with a thought, given their clear differences.

If *the same* is so far undefined here, it might so far be any of many things. But suppose, for a moment, there is just one thing for it to be. A problem immediately arises. If RTM is true, the relation J partitions Pia's internal vehicles into those to which she now bears J and those to which she does not. Now articulate Pia's thought into judging this, that and the other, in some particular way this may be done. Suppose that for each thing she thinks, so articulating, there is an internal vehicle which expresses it, and to which she bears J, and, conversely, for each such internal vehicle there is a thing she thinks. So far, things are as per RTM. Now articulate Pia's thought in some other way it might be. On this way of articulating, she judges something which is not any of those things she thought so on that first way. No internal vehicle to which she bears J expresses it. Those ones have already been used up. RTM now turns out false.

A tidy argument. But philosophy does not consist in such. It is not clear, as in mathematics, which ones are good, or exactly what each shows. Such arguments are *objects* of philosophy. One must unfold the concepts whose strands make them seem to work. Here, I think, RTM emerges incorrect as stated. Should it be restated? Or scrapped? We would at least have to revise our views of internal vehicles: if (*unlike sentences*) they have the content of a thought, that must be relative to something. But such details are for another time.

Let our guiding questions serve us here. What *good* are representations which do not structure what they represent as so as sentences do? What shape do we look for in thought when we ask whether someone judges such-and-such? By a chain of small steps I will suggest an answer.

First step. Sid is the most urbane of men. He would never permit himself a public grunt. But he is a normal human. Suitably stimulated—by, say, a hard blow to the solar plexus—he would grunt. He is so endowed. Such shows various things one might say of someone in saying him to grunt. One might say something true of Sid by virtue of his capacity, or something false of him, by virtue of his urbanity. There are contrasting things being a grunter might be understood to be; correspondingly contrasting things to say in speaking of it.

[[Note. What the *sentence* 'Sid grunts' says is a function of what its parts mean; said function fixed by their structuring in it. What I *said* in speaking the sentence is *not* so fixed. The meanings of the words do not fix the understanding of being a grunter on which I spoke. If I spoke so as to have stated truth if Sid has the capacity, then, by Frege's principles, the thought I expressed decomposes into, *inter alia*, an element, *being about being a grunter*, on an understanding of so being on which the capacity will do. It does *not* follow that I grasp the whole thought by grasping some set of parts (under some given decomposition) and grasping how that whole thought is a function of them.]]

Second step. An illness can rob one of the capacity to grunt. Sid had a mild case, leaving *him* untouched. Pia knows he suffered it, believes his capacity survived. That is *one* way Pia takes things to be. How might she—or *we*—say things to be that way? She, or we, *might* say, 'Sid grunts.' Provided, that is, that our words would be (to be) suitably understood—as speaking of being a grunter on the first of the above sorts of understanding. Where our words would not be so understood, we, could not say the right thing in this way—at least without accompanying explanation of what we mean by being a grunter. Then we might say it in some other way. (There better be other ways explanation is to be so much as possible.) We might say, say, 'Sid has not lost/has retained the capacity to grunt.' Those words, too, can be understood in many ways, speak of various ways for things to be. They, too, would need to bear the right sort of understanding to say the *right* thing. But we can usually find ways to say what we think—some words which, in the circumstances, would be rightly understood.

Third step. Outré cases. 'Sid grunts', understood in a particular way (such as above) reaches beyond the particular case in a particular way, to a certain range of cases. Understanding it just *is* seeing to which cases it would reach. Ditto *idem* 'Sid retains the capacity to grunt.' Would things be as said in our first case of Pia's (or our) saying what she thinks precisely when they would be for our second case of doing this? Would a case be one of Sid having retained the capacity precisely, on the understanding on which we spoke of that, precisely and only when it would be one of his being a grunter, on the understanding on which we spoke of that? Perhaps, perhaps not. Suppose Sid, unaffected by the disease, was under post-hypnotic suggestion, blocking grunting, or that Sid, first robbed by the disease, was then fitted with an imperfect prosthetic which worked only sometimes and, when it did, produced sounds which only with some good will count as grunts.

Need we be bothered by such cases? They are, after all, not really in the cards, not really ways things *might* be. Or so, sometimes, one might, not unreasonably, hold. Sometimes they may *be* so to be regarded. An understanding of *in the cards*, or *what*

might be, does two things. First, it places a particular understanding on *same* in *say* (*speak of*) *the same thing*. 'Pia's 'Sid grunts' and our 'Sid retains the capacity' say the same on this understanding if they are right or wrong together in the same cases within the range picked out by this understanding of *in the cards*. Second, it identifies a particular way for a thought to reach beyond the particular case. What Pia thinks reaches out in this way if it reaches to just those cases *within the range* in which, on the understanding of being a grunter he words bear, Sid is one. The range of cases Pia's thought *thus* reaches to can be taken to identify a way for things to be: that way one *would* speak of in all those instances of speaking of the same fixed by this understanding of *same*.

If there is such a way for things to be, there is, accordingly, a thought: the thought that things are that way. There is that particular question as to how things are; so as to truth. Such a thought, expressible in many ways, is, *of course*, structured only relative to an articulation. The present role of same-saying shows how this can be. How does this this thought reach beyond the cases fixed by *this* understanding of *in the cards*? This is left open. If Frege would disapprove, we here part company—led by our goal: finding *point* in what remains his way of thinking of thinking.

Fourth point. How do we *say* people to judge things? First, in words which raise a question towards which one can stand in, *inter alia*, the judging way—words which speak of things as a certain way, e.g., 'Sid grunts', understood as they would be on that use of them, reaching out as they would so understood. Such identifies a way for things to be; a corresponding error there is to be exposed to. One escapes it in just those cases within the range reached to by the question thus raised.

Second, in attributing to a subject—say, Pia—a certain *posture* towards a question—on an understanding as to *what* question fixed, perhaps, by an understanding as to when one would be raising it—thus one of *saying the same*, so, perhaps, of which cases one must reach in saying it; which ones, for the purpose, are to count as in the cards. Such also fixes an error to succumb to. One succumbs to, or escapes, it in just those cases in this restricted range in which things are, or are not, as thus said. There is the way things are in *those* cases of escape, and the corresponding thought that things are that way. The posture we attribute may be towards *this* way for things to be. Our attribution is thus silent on cases without this range.

Such is a way of abstracting from perhaps uninteresting idiosyncracies of thought so as to collect thinkers into ranges and to identify a shape in common to each member of a range—just as in classifying things as *mojitos* we may abstract from the freshness of the mint or shape of glass, *perhaps* even from the difference between *añejo* and *aguardente de canne*. We *can* thus abstract from what is not to the point—as whether a certain

dubious prosthetic, if it existed, would mean that Pia escaped error.

Why abstract like this? Perhaps, for one thing, for what one might call normal posture dynamics. A question such as whether Sid grunts is one towards which we normally expect a standard range of postures, on roughly these lines: ineligible for a posture (say, unaware of Sid's existence); no view (e.g., never thought about it); vacillating, things so, thinks not. There may be hard cases. But most, we expect, are not. There are what we expect as *reasons* for someone falling in one category rather than another. Pia knows Sid. So she is eligible for postures. She is nothing like a vacillator (on this question). So, we expect, either she thinks *so*, or she thinks *not*. Given this, and unless she is a hard case, whatever disqualified her from thinking so should qualify her as thinking not, and vice-versa. Now, telegraphically, if every idiosyncrasy of thought mattered to which things Pia thought, and if thinking what we said her to required succumbing to, and escaping error, in *every* case reached by *our* words 'Sid grunts'—every case of his grunting, or not, on precisely that understanding *those* words bore—our expectations on classifying thinkers are doubtfully ever met.

Fifth point. Often, we care what someone thinks because there is a definite way someone who so thought would, or might, be. If Pia thinks Sid grunts (some anti-urbane pose), that might explain her peculiar resistance to dining with him. On a way of thinking of grunting, such would plausibly produce such resistance. Sid is not as Pia *thus* thinks him just where *such* resistance is misplaced. Suppose Pia does take Sid to be a certain way. There is a range of cases in which she would thus be in error, a range in which she would *thus* not be. The range spans, nearly enough, the ways Sid might actually be (or be thought to be). If he is well-groomed, debonair, suppresses bodily emissions, etc., then Pia is wrong. If not, not. *That* posture explains her resistance, just as thinking Sid grunts would. It would hinder our thought needlessly to refuse to count this as thinking Sid grunts merely on grounds of outré cases.

Conversely, suppose Pia's resistance *would* be misplaced in a certain range of cases—roughly, those ones, not too outré, in which Sid suppresses, sufficiently, primal sounds. In those cases, she would be in error. To be in that position *is* to judge something—that things are a certain way, *viz*, the way they are in those cases. It would, again, only hinder our thought not to count this as thinking Sid grunts—whether or not, *outré* cases included, this exactly matches what we would say, now, in saying 'Sid grunts'.

We can draw indefinitely fine distinctions between one way and another for things to be; so between one thing and another one may say or think. This hardly means we should always want to. On the contrary, fineness of grain having no limit, the limit is

also something we could never reach. *That* is a reason for wanting unstructured representations of things as so. They are a device by which we can fit fineness of grain to the needs of an occasion. For that reason, among others, RTM is dubious. But I have barely begun to unfold the concept *thinking so*. Riches remain. I have at most hinted at how, when unfolding begins landscapes change; illusions of how things must be disappear, new ways of thinking open. Such is much of the excitement of philosophy.

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