Thought Without Illusion

Solveig Aasen

University College London

PhD

I, Solveig Aasen, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed: _Solveig Aasen_

Abstract

This thesis targets the part of Gareth Evans's and John McDowell's view of singular thought which involves the claim that there can be illusions of thought. Singular thought is, according to Evans and McDowell, an object-dependent thought-content; such thought-content could not be entertained unless the object it is about exists. Nevertheless, in a case of perceptual hallucination, where a subject mistakenly takes it that there is an object in front of him or her, Evans and McDowell think that it can seem to a subject exactly as though he or she is having an object-dependent thought, although the subject is in fact not thinking at all due to the absence of any object to think about. The thesis argues for a rejection of this idea of illusions of object-dependent thought. It is further argued that the idea of illusions of thought can be eliminated from Evans's and McDowell's view *without* abandoning their fundamental insight about how singular thought-content is object-dependent. Following specifically McDowell's development of the view, it is suggested that singular thought is about the world in virtue of how things cognitively appear to the subject. It is suggested that in an alleged case of illusion of thought, the subject has an object-dependent thought about an object whose existence in part is due to the mind's directedness in that very episode of singular thinking. Furthermore, Evans's and McDowell's respective views of acquaintance are criticised, and an idea about acquaintance as awareness of a wider range of objects than just perceivable objects is put forward. In general, the thesis outlines a revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view, a version according to which singular thought, although externalistically individuated, is transparent to the thinker.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Finally, I thank my parents and my sister for their constant help and encouragement provided in so many ways.

Introduction

An illusion of thought is a case of it seeming to one that one has a certain thought, although this is in fact not the case. There are two ways of understanding the idea. Either, it can be the idea that it seems to one that one is having a certain thought, but that, in fact, one is not thinking at all. Or, it can be the idea that it seems to one that one is having a certain thought, but that, in fact, one is having a different thought than what it seems. By most people, the general possibility that one may be under the illusion of having a thought goes unconsidered. One simply takes it for granted that one is thinking what it seems to one that one is thinking. This, I take it, is a fact about our mental behaviour. It is for this reason, I think, that untutored intuition is opposed to the idea that there can be illusions of thought. However, whether the assumption implicit in our mental behaviour is *correct*, i.e. whether there are no illusions of thought, is a further question. This thesis will examine one particular version of the first idea of illusions of thought, held to arise for singular thoughts. In favour of the verdict passed on the basis of untutored intuition, I will argue against the idea of illusions of thought involved in Gareth Evans's (1982) and John McDowell's (1977, 1982, 1984, 1986) view of singular thought. I seek to identify what is problematic about their idea of illusions of thought in order to separate it from other elements of their view. In this way, I seek to develop a revised, illusion-free version of their view of singular thought.

Defining singular thought is a matter of controversy, as I will survey below. Still, those who hold that there is such a thing as singular thought seem to agree that it is a certain cognitive phenomenon wherein one thinks about an object in a way that targets the object's identity. Singular thought is often contrasted with descriptive thought, wherein one thinks about objects by targeting their properties and relations to other objects. As Robin Jeshion (2010a) explains it in her introduction to a recent anthology on the topic, the contrast between singular and descriptive thought is the contrast between thinking, about a particular rose in one's garden, that *that* rose is lovely, versus thinking, about the same rose, that the tallest rose in the garden is lovely. Alternatively, following Bertrand Russell's (1912) distinction between logically proper names and descriptions, singular thought has been explained to be thought that is 'directly' about its object, to contrast with descriptive thought, which

is about its object in a way mediated by descriptions. It is not uncommon in the literature to tie singular thought to a certain range of linguistic expressions. Thus, Francois Recanati (1993) defines 'non-descriptive' or '*de re*' thought, which are other labels used for singular thought,[1] as 'the type of thought expressed by an utterance in which a referential expression occurs' (ibid., p. 98). Similarly, in their recent book on the topic, John Hawthorne and David Manley (2012) define singular thought as a specific kind of content: 'singular contents are those that are expressed by sentences containing referential terms' (ibid., p. 4). Referential terms typically include demonstrative phrases, and arguably also names, pronouns, variables, definite and indefinite descriptions.[2] As the quotation from Hawthorne and Manley makes explicit, explication of singular thought by reference to referential terms involves understanding singular thought as a type of mental content. By contrast, the general definition suggested above, according to which singular thought is a certain kind of cognitive phenomenon, leaves it open that singular thought may instead be a type of mental event or episode. When understood in the latter way, singular thought is often explained instead as thought from 'mental files' (see Crane 2013, Jeshion 2010b, Recanati 2012).

In this introduction, I give an overview of the main views of singular thought, so as to locate Evans's and McDowell's view in relation to available alternatives. I also present Evans's and McDowell's view in more detail, explaining which part of it I think is promising and seek to preserve in my revision of their view in the following chapters.

* * *

As indicated already, the various available views of singular thought are divisible into two general categories, namely views that understand singular thoughts

---

[1] As Bach (2010, pp. 44-46) and Crane (2013, pp. 153-155) explain, it is not recommendable to use the notions 'singular thought' and '*de re* thought' interchangeably, as is often done in the literature. A *de re* report relates the subject to the object thought about and cannot be stated when there is no such object. But, as we shall see below, there are several views according to which there can be singular thought when no object is thought about. Thus, a singular thought need not be reportable in the *de re* style, and in this sense it is not a *de re* thought.

[2] See Hawthorne and Manley (2012) for discussion of whether there is a common 'singular' feature of these expressions.

to be mental contents versus views that understand singular thoughts to be mental episodes. This division is marked in the overview on page 15 as the distinction between semanticism and psychologicsm.[3] Semanticism is the traditional view. By a mental content, semanticist views mean a proposition, i.e. an abstract entity that exists independently of the thinking of it on any particular occasion, that can be entertained by more than one subject, and that is true or false. A proposition is often held to be 'structured', i.e. to be a complex entity with constituents such as objects and relations, or, if it is a Fregean proposition, a complex entity with only senses as constituents. Semanticists further assume that the thought-content a subject entertains is specified in a report of this thought-content. Thus, the report becomes a guide to the nature of the subject's thought-content, and hence semantic considerations become highly relevant to an examination of the question whether there are thoughts of a characteristically singular kind.

Among semanticist views, we can broadly distinguish two contrasting types of position, the difference between which concerns whether or not singular thought-content is held to be *object-dependent*. To hold that singular thought is object-dependent is to hold that such thought cannot be entertained if the object it is about does not exist. A special variant of positions that advocate object-independence is *descriptivism*, advocated by Stephen Schiffer (1978) and John Searle (1983). Descriptivism is the view that all thought is descriptive thought. Descriptivism has also been called 'the Frege-Russell view', because it can be seen to incorporate both the (arguably) Fregean idea that every meaningful expression has a descriptive condition associated with it in virtue of which its referent is determined, and the Russellian idea that proper names may be, and usually are, concealed descriptions. The central descriptivist claim is that all thought has the same type of intentionality. The object thought about is determined 'satisfactionally', as Kent Bach (1987, p. 12) explains it; it is determined in virtue of the fact that the object instantiates some properties, and it is determined independently of any relation between the object and the thought. Even if no object is satisfactionally determined due to the fact that no object instantiates the relevant properties, there nevertheless is a determinate thought-content, albeit one that is not about any object and only about properties.

---

[3] I borrow these labels from Crane (2013, p. 157).

Descriptivism faces powerful objections, for instance from Saul Kripke's (1980) arguments to the effect that many uses of names do not require knowledge nor existence of a uniquely identifying description, and from Keith Donnellan's (1966) argument that there can be referential uses of definite descriptions. Partly for these reasons, most theorists hold that there are two kinds of thought, corresponding to two kinds of intentionality. The starting point for semanticist views that, by contrast to descriptivism, construe singular thought as object-dependent is Russell's (1912, 1913) notion of a 'singular proposition'. Russellian singular propositions contain the object they are about as a constituent, and, for this reason, they are available to entertain only if the object they are about exists. So-called Neo-Russellians[4] (Bach 2010, Kaplan 1978, 1989, Perry 1977, 1979, Salmon 1986, 2010) follow Russell in conceiving of object-dependence as a matter of there being objects that are constituents of thought-content. However, neo-Russellians depart from Russell and take a step towards Frege in allowing that even singular thoughts may be grasped under modes of presentation. But as Russellians they maintain that these senses are not part of the content of the thought; they are merely guises under which these contents are accessed. In David Kaplan's (1989) terminology, this is to say that the character gives the rule for determining the content, but does not form part of the content.[5] So, for instance, when I think that 'Russell was a great philosopher', I may think of Russell under the guise 'the author of *The Problems of Philosophy*', but if the thought is singular then this description does not enter into the truth-conditional content of the thought; it merely serves to determine who I am thinking about.

By contrast to Neo-Russellians, Neo-Fregeans (Evans 1982, McDowell 1977, 1982, 1984, 1986, Peacocke 1981) hold singular thought-contents to be Fregean propositions, i.e. to contain only senses as constituents; the thought-content is purely conceptual. Thus, singular thought is not object-dependent in the sense that it contains objects as constituents. Rather, singular thought's object-dependence consists in that it contains *de re* senses as constituents, where *de re* senses depend existentially on a certain object, its *res*. Thus, Neo-Fregeans interpret Frege's view as being that there are certain modes of presentation of objects that could not be part of

---

[4] I borrow the labels 'Neo-Russellian' and 'Neo-Fregean' from Recanati (1993).

[5] This position where determination of reference is set apart from determination of the truth-condition is also called 'two-dimensionalism' (see Lewis 1979 , Stalnaker 1978).

our conceptual repertoire unless the object they present exits. As McDowell writes: 'a conceptual repertoire can include the ability to think of objects under modes of presentation whose functioning depends essentially on the perceived presence of objects' (McDowell 1984, p. 287).

There is also another aspect of the distinction between Neo-Russellian views and Neo-Fregean views. On the one hand, Neo-Fregeans are often 'acquaintance-theorists'. As will be further examined in chapter four, Evans and McDowell follow Russell in holding that in order to have a singular thought one must be 'acquainted' with the object the thought is about, where acquaintance is a direct relation between a subject and an object. They understand acquaintance as a relation that affords epistemic access to the object. As Evans emphasises, it enables the subject to 'know which' object is thought about (see Evans 1982, pp. 89-120). On the other hand, the Neo-Russellian position is often associated with a thesis labelled 'semantic instrumentalism', advocated by Kaplan (1989).[6] This is the thesis that we can generate a singular term for any object we would like, by introducing a descriptive name (see Evans 1982, pp. 60-63) or a *dthat* expression (see Kaplan 1979) for it. No relation to the object is required.

A range of interesting positions result from combining aspects of the Neo-Fregean and the Neo-Russellian positions. For instance, the Neo-Russellians Nathan Salmon (1986, 2004) and Kent Bach (1987, 2010) hold that singular thought requires that one has a causal-historical connection to the object thought about. Hawthorne and Manley (2010, pp. 21-23) describe this idea about a causal-historical connection as 'causal acquaintance'. By contrast, Francois Recanati (1993) is much in agreement with Evans in holding that epistemic access, and not just causal-historical connection, is required for singular thought. Nevertheless, Recanati also preserves part of the neo-Russellian position, in that he thinks the *de re* mode of presentation of the object, facilitated by acquaintance, does not figure in the truth-conditions of the singular thought. An intermediate position is also presented by Tyler Burge (1977), who holds that singular thought places the believer in a non-conceptual contextual relation to the object it is about (ibid., p. 346), but who sides with the neo-Russellian in holding that the thought-content contains the object as a constituent.

---

[6] See also Jeshion (2010b) for discussion of semantic instrumentalism, and Taylor (2010) for a partial defence.

As mentioned, Neo-Russellian and Neo-Fregean positions are all positions according to which singular thought is object-dependent. However, there is a variety of semanticist views that, by contrast to descriptivism, side with Neo-Russellianism and Neo-Fregeanism in holding that there is a difference between singular thoughts and descriptive thoughts, but that nevertheless side with the descriptivist in holding that singular thought is object-*in*dependent. This is a bit of a rag-bag category, as is signalled in the overview on page 15 by agglomerating the labels of its various members. One view in this category is Hawthorne and Manley's (2012) 'liberalism', which is stated as the negative thesis that 'there is no general acquaintance restriction on reference or singular thought' (ibid., p. 24). At first, this view seems compatible with semantic instrumentalism, which also denies that acquaintance is required for singular thought. But, unlike the semantic instrumentalist, the literalist does not make the positive claim that singular terms can be generated at will. Rather, Hawthorne and Manley analyse expressions in various semantic categories and identify a feature of *uses* of them that unifies these uses as referential. This, they think, as semanticists do, serves as a guide to the notion of singular thought too, because 'some of the primary ideas associated with 'singular thought' are in turn parasitic on the notion of reference' (ibid., p. 243).

Also Mark Sainsbury (2005), in developing the view he calls 'reference without referents' (RWR, for short), takes reference as a guide to singular thought. As the name of the view suggests, one of its central features is that it allows for reference in the empty case. Rather than to link the meaning of an expression with its referent, RWR links it with a property. For instance, the meaning of the empty name 'Vulcan'[7] is linked to the property of being Vulcan, which can be specified as follows: For all x ('Vulcan' refers to x iff x = Vulcan) (bid., p. 93). In classical logic, this claim would commit one to the existence of Vulcan. But Sainsbury endorses free logic, and then there is no inference from Fx to the conclusion that there is an x that is F. In particular, Sainsbury endorses negative free logic, and thus he holds that any atomic sentence containing an empty singular term is false.[8] However, in *Fiction and*

---

[7] 'Vulcan' is the name for a planet postulated in 1859 by the French astronomer Urbain Le Verrier, who had previously discovered Neptune by the same method as that he used in postulating Vulcan.

[8] A similar view of reference which allows for meaningful expressions without referents is advocated by García-Carpintero (2010), but he combines this with a normative acquaintance-requirement on

Fictionalism (2010a; see also Sainsbury 2010b), Sainsbury seeks to accommodate the intuition that there can be true atomic sentences about fictional characters; this can be accommodated differently in different cases, e.g. by using paraphrase or by identifying presuppositions under which the sentence is true. Corresponding to this modification with regard to reference, Sainsbury also modifies his view of intentionality. Instead of holding that intentionality is a relation (2005, pp. 237-238), he holds that subjects can think about objects that do not exist by using 'individual concepts' that have no referent. This view of singular thought is further developed with Sainsbury and Tye's (2012) 'originalism', according to which concepts (constituents of representational contents) are individuated by their historical origins. This makes it possible for originalists to make room for true thoughts containing concepts with no referent in a different way than Sainsbury (2010a, 2010b) does: Instead of looking to the semantics of the concept, originalists can appeal to the historic origin of the concept in order to explain why it plays a certain role in thought (see especially Sainsbury and Tye 2012, pp. 140-145).

By contrast to semanticist views, psychologistic views are motivated by the idea that we should start from the theory of thought to provide an explanation of singular thought, rather than look to our reporting practice. The idea is to treat the psychological reality of thoughts as primary in an attempt to characterise singular thought. As aforementioned, psychologist views are often explained in terms of the 'mental file' metaphor. A mental file is, in a metaphorical way of speaking, a mental container into which information is put and stored. Information can further be added, deleted, or taken out of the file and placed elsewhere. The files themselves can also be merged into one file or split into two. Perhaps one file can also be put inside another.[9] In this light, we may alternatively define psychologism as the view that a thought-episode is an instance of singular thinking if it is thinking by means of a singular mental file.

Robin Jeshion (2010b) calls her psychologistic view 'cognitivism'. According to cognitivism, all mental files have a 'singular-function', which makes it the case that 'thinking about an individual from a mental file is constitutive of

---

reference, which makes utterances of sentences containing such expressions unsuccessful rather than false.

[9] For an account of mental files and file dynamics, see e.g. Perry (1980) and Recanati (2012).

singular thinking about that individual' (ibid., p. 132). The motivation for attributing this singular-function to mental files comes, Jeshion thinks, from vision theory, where it is held that in the early stage of visual processing we attend to objects, not properties (see Pylyshyn 2003). But this does not mean that we open mental files for all individuals we visually track. Jeshion's claim is that we individuate a mental file only when the individual is *significant* to us. Thus, she claims that one would think singularly about, for instance, what one on the basis of footprints takes to be a bear in the nearby environment, but not about Newman 1,[10] provided that one takes the bear, but not Newman 1, to be significant with regard to one's plans and affective states.

Also Tim Crane (2010, 2013) defends psychologism about singular thought. He explains singular thought-episodes as having a particular cognitive role, namely the role that they purport to refer to just one object. Alternatively, in terms of the mental file metaphor, Crane's view is that singular thought is thought from singular mental files, where a singular mental file is such that the information in the file only can be made sense of as being true of just one thing.[11] Crane emphasises that a thought is singular even if there is no such object as that to which the thought purports to refer. Thus, as for RWR and originalism, it is central to Crane's psychologism that it succeeds in making sense of singular thought in the empty case. In short, singular thought is characteristically object-*in*dependent on Crane's view.

Although it is not a central focus for Jeshion, also cognitivism seems to be able to accommodate singular thought in the empty case; for instance, one may open a mental file for one's imaginary friend, given that this friend is important to one (see Jeshion 2010, p. 136). By contrast, Recanati's (2010, 2012) psychologism[12] involves that singular thought has a form of dependence on objects. Recanati operates both with the notion of a singular thought-content and the notion of a singular thought-

---

[10] Newman 1 is a descriptive name for the first person born in the 20th century.

[11] Azzouni (2010) criticises Crane's (2010) view for failing to make sense of singular thought about pluralities with this definition. However, in Crane (2013), a singular file for a plurality of objects is defined as follows: It is a file such that not all of the information in the file can be made sense of as being true of each object in the plurality singly (ibid., p. 159).

[12] While many of the central ideas in Recanati (2010, 2012) are anticipated in Recanati (1993), the emphasis in his more recent work is on cognitive reality, described in terms of mental files. He omits the semanticist definition of singular thought in terms of referential terms (1993, p. 98), and thus it seems justified to regard him as advocating a novel, psychologist view.

episode, where he explains the latter as tokening a singular thought 'vehicle', or as thinking by using a mental file. While singular thought-content is held to be object-dependent in the Neo-Fregean sense, Recanati holds that singular thought-episodes are subject to a normative requirement, namely that in order to be justified in opening a mental file for an object one must be acquainted with the object in question. Recanati adds, however, that one may *expect* to become acquainted with an object, and open a mental file for it on this basis. If one's expectation is never met and one never is acquainted with the object, one only has a singular thought in the episode sense and one does not entertain a singular thought-content, he thinks.

In summary, the different views I have mentioned are related as in the overview below.

Views of singular thought:

Semanticism — Object-independence (Descriptivism, Liberalism RWR Originalism), Object-dependence (Neo-Russellianism, Neo-Fregeanism)

Psychologism — Object-dependence (Normative acquaintance (Recanati)), Object-independence (Purporting to refer (Crane), Cognitivism (Jeshion))

* * *
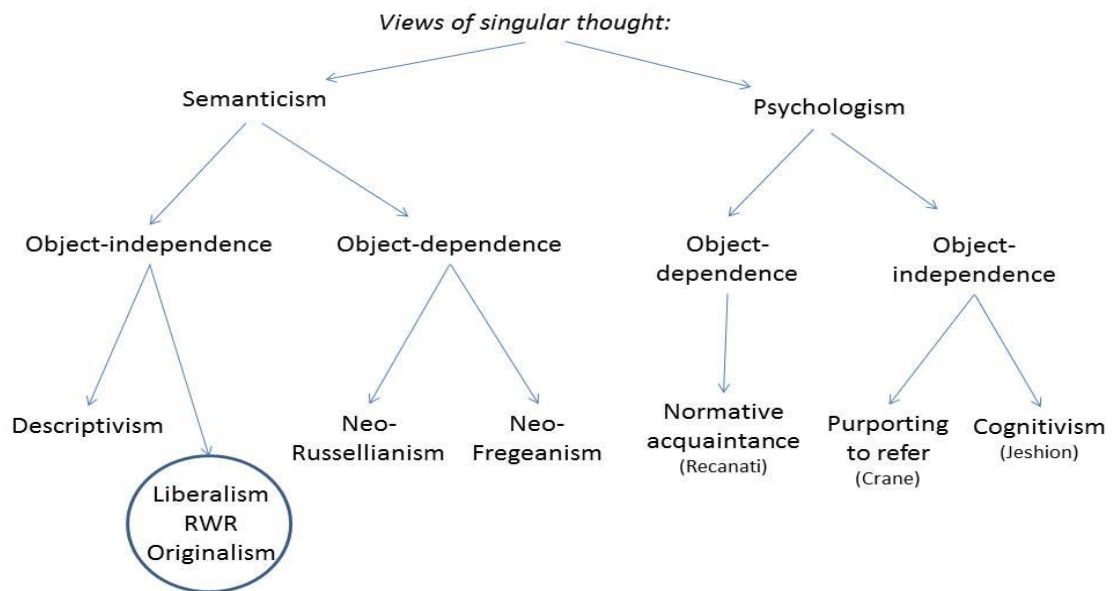
Like Recanati's view, the view I will be working towards makes use of both the notion of a singular thought-content and the notion of a singular thought-episode, but, unlike Recanati's view, it does not open up for the possibility, also envisaged in a different way by Crane (2013, p. 161), that one may have a singular thought-episode but not be entertaining a singular thought-content. Perhaps the recognition of singular thought-episodes makes my view more similar to Recanati's view, and to psychologism generally, than the view from which I intend to develop it, namely Evans's and McDowell's view. In any case, despite being a psychologistic view,

there is a core idea in Evans's and McDowell's view, concerning the form of object-dependence singular thought has and the form of intentionality that follows with it, that I think gets preserved in the revised version I will develop. For this reason, I think the view I develop can justifiably be regarded as a revision of Evans's and McDowell's view. At the very least, it is a revision of their view in the sense that my strategy in developing it in the following chapters will be to identify the problematic elements of Evans's and McDowell's view and to modify the fruitful elements accordingly. In order to motivate this project, let me try to explain what I take to be the central insight worth preserving about singular thought in Evans's and McDowell's view.

Russell's idea that singular propositions are object-dependent is Evans's and McDowell's starting point. For this reason, Evans refers to object-dependent thoughts as 'Russellian thoughts', providing the following definition:

> ... a thought is Russellian if it is of such a kind that it simply could not exist in the absence of the object or objects it is about (Evans 1982, p. 71).

In the following, I will use the term 'object-dependent thought' to refer to such thoughts. As was pointed out above, Evans and McDowell depart from Russell by denying that the reason for object-dependence is that the object forms part of the thought-content. Especially McDowell (1984) emphasises that the problem with holding that the object is a constituent of the thought is a puzzle associated with Gottlob Frege's 'On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*' (1997): Since there can be two different names for the same object, and since a subject may be unaware that they are indeed names for the same object, it can happen that a subject assents to the claim that the object is F when one name is used to refer to it but not when the other name is used to refer to it. This cannot be accounted for in Russell's theory, since there cannot be two different singular propositions in which the same property is predicated of the same object. Thus, there is motivation for conceiving of object-dependence in an alternative way. The alternative idea that Evans and McDowell advocate is to conceive of thought-content as containing *de re* senses. A *de re* sense depends on the existence of a certain object; it is not thinkable unless this object exists. However, there can be several *de re* senses for one given object. Thus, it is possible to individuate thoughts finely enough to account for the difference between the two

thoughts in Frege's puzzle and to simultaneously hold that singular thought is object-dependent. (For elaboration, see McDowell 1984.)

The general idea underlying the notion of a *de re* sense is that the state of the world matters to what one is able to think. So, a general motivation for Evans's and McDowell's alternative conception of object-dependence is provided by considerations that lead towards externalism about mental content, such as the thought-experiments put forward by Putnam (1975) and Burge (1979). According to externalism, facts about the subject's environment are relevant to the individuation of the subject's mental contents (for elaboration, see chapter five). However, also Neo-Russellians can appeal to externalist considerations as a motivation for their view. In fact, as Arthur Sullivan (2010) explains, the idea about causal acquaintance, advocated by some Neo-Russellians, can be conceived of as an especially strong form of externalism; 'Millian externalism', as Sullivan dubs it. The idea is that how the subject thinks of an object (the mode of presentation) makes no difference to the thought entertained; it is only the externalist fact about which object is in question that matters to individuation of content. As explained above, this idea, which is often construed as the idea that the object is a constituent of the thought, is rejected by Neo-Fregeans. Nevertheless, Evans and McDowell advocate a form of externalism that is especially strong in a different respect. The strength does not consist in endorsement of the claim that nothing else but externalist facts matter to the individuation of thought. Rather, their view is a strong externalism with regard to the nature of the link between the thought and the object it is about. Evans and McDowell hold that object-dependent thought has a counterfactual dependence on the object it is about. As Evans expresses it in the definition of Russellian thoughts above, such a thought '*could* not exist in the absence of the object or objects it is about' (my emphasis).

What is recommendable about the strong form of externalism involved in the idea about counterfactual dependence on the object the singular thought is about? Also according to the Neo-Russellian idea about object-dependence the thought-content essentially relates to the object it is about. But this is not due to the subject's mental activity; the thought just happens to essentially relate to that particular object. The Neo-Russellian idea about causal acquaintance and Millian externalism seems to be an idea about how the world impinges on our cognitive reality. There is no active element having to do with the subject's role in making thought reach out to the

world. This seems to be to conceive of the subject's involvement with the objects his or her thoughts are about on the model of a machine receiving input to its already generated but incomplete states. To my mind, and perhaps in a Kantian spirit, this model seems to leave out the subject's contribution in the production of mental content. By contrast, and as McDowell (1986) explains, counterfactual dependence on an object comes about due to a subject's active engagement with the mind-independent world, through the mind's directedness towards it. As I will elaborate in chapter three, McDowell argues that such directedness is crucial if we are to avoid certain Cartesian problems concerning the subject's relation to the mind-independent world. I think McDowell is right about how this removes the ground for Cartesian worries, and that this is a virtue of the view.[13] The idea that the mind's directedness plays an indispensable role in the type of object-dependence that Evans and McDowell advocate also gets reflected in the idea of acquaintance that Evans develops. Rather than thinking that acquaintance is merely to stand in the right relation to the object thought about, as those who advocate causal acquaintance hold, Evans emphasises, in advocating what he calls 'Russell's principle', that acquaintance involves an active element, namely an ability to discriminate the object from all others.

The version of the idea about object-dependence advocated by Evans and McDowell is thus the main reason as to why I think their view is attractive compared to other views of singular thought. However, there is one aspect of their view that I find problematic. Evans and McDowell both emphasise that they reject Russell's restriction of object-dependent thought to objects about whose existence one is infallibly knowable. Instead, they hold that there can be object-dependent thought about, for instance, material objects. I think this rejection of Russell's restriction is a virtue of their view. But I think Evans and McDowell are wrong when they add that acknowledging object-dependent thought about material objects brings with it the possibility of illusions of object-dependent thought. On Russell's view, there are no illusions of object-dependent thought, because there are no illusions of acquaintance. By contrast, on Evans's and McDowell's view, 'one can be under the illusion of

---

standing in a relation to an object that would count as acquaintance, the impression being illusory because there is no such object' (McDowell 1986, p. 141). This, Evans and McDowell think, opens the possibility of illusions of object-dependent thought. The subject may take himself or herself to, for instance, perceive an object, and on this basis take himself or herself to form a thought about it. As Evans explains it:

> …it may be, for a subject, exactly as though he were thinking about a physical object (say) which he can see, and yet that, precisely because there is no physical object he is seeing, he may fail to have a thought of the kind he supposes himself to have (Evans 1982, p. 45).

It is here clear that the kind of thought that the subject supposes himself to have is an object-dependent thought. There is an illusion of perceptual acquaintance in which it is seems to the subject that he sees a physical object, and this lays the ground for a cognitive appearance – a case of it being 'for a subject, exactly as though he were thinking'. But because object-dependent thoughts cannot be entertained without the existence of an appropriate object, the cognitive appearance is a mere appearance, an illusion.

The point that illusions of acquaintance bring with them the possibility of illusions of object-dependent thought is also expressed by McDowell in various places. For instance, he writes that

> ...it will *seem* to a deluded user of an empty singular term that he is entertaining and expressing thoughts, and (so to speak) supplying merely apparent singular [i.e. object-dependent] thoughts for these to be (1986, p.144, original emphasis).

The merely apparent object-dependent thoughts that it seems to subjects that they are entertaining and expressing is both by McDowell and Evans sometimes referred to as *mock thoughts*, which is a notion they take from Frege's 'Logic' from 1897 (Frege 1979), albeit arguably unjustifiably so (see Bell 1990). So, one implication that Evans and McDowell think follow from their development of Russell's ideas about object-dependence and acquaintance may be put quite simply as the claim that there are mock thoughts.

Mock thoughts can occur also when there is an illusion of other sorts of acquaintance than perception, and they can be due, not to the lack of one particular

object, but rather to the inability of discriminating between two particular objects[14]. However, for simplicity, I will restrict attention to cases where subjects have a hallucinatory perceptual experience that is indistinguishable by introspection from a veridical perceptual experience, and where they take it that they are thinking something they would attempt to express by a sentence on the form 'That *a* is F' about what they, wrongly, take themselves to perceive. For ease of reference, I will refer to this as a 'mock thought scenario', since Evans's and McDowell's view is that subjects who find themselves in this sort of situation have a mock thought.

Criticism of Evans's and McDowell's postulation of illusions of object-dependent thought or mock thought has been voiced by others too.[15] But such criticism has been put forward for the purpose of rejecting object-dependent thoughts altogether. By contrast to other criticisms, I will seek to identify what is problematic about mock thoughts in order to save Evans's and McDowell's idea about how singular thought counterfactually depends on the existence of the object it is about. It should be noted that, although the core elements of Evans's view and McDowell's view are the same – which is what justifies regarding them as holding the same view – the arguments and the aspects of the view that are emphasised differ between them. As long as these arguments and aspects are not in conflict with the other author's position, it seems permissible to trade on them in order to develop the revised version of their view. This is a strategy I employ. For instance, I base my revision on McDowell's criticism of the Cartesian picture of mind, which is not discussed in much detail by Evans (but see Evans 1982, pp. 44-45, 199-200). In order to argue for my view of communication in mock thought scenarios, I exploit Evans's argument for 'Russell's principle', which is a principle and an argument that plays no central role in McDowell's discussion. I also make central use of an idea Evans has concerning 'interpretational' facts about subjects.

One central source to the difference between their expositions is that, despite agreeing about the nature of singular thought, Evans and McDowell hold contrasting views of perceptual experience. This influences how they envisage that singular

---

[14] See for instance Evans's example concerning recollection of 'that nice Polish grocer', where there are really two Polish grocers (1982, p. 78), or his similar example concerning the two identical steel balls that one may fail to discriminate in memory (ibid., p. 90).

[15] See for instance Bell (1998), Blackburn (1984, pp. 316-322), O'Brien (2009), Noonan (1993), Segal (1989).

thought is enabled by perception, i.e. how acquaintance works, and it also affects how they in general can argue for their view of singular thought. While I think McDowell is right about the nature of the content of experience, as I briefly explain in chapter three, I reject both Evans's and McDowell's view of acquaintance and I seek to replace it with a view that is neutral with regard to one's view of the content of perceptual experience.

Let me provide a brief overview of the chapters. In the first chapter, I explain what I find problematic about the idea of illusions of object-dependent thought. This idea involves a positive claim, namely that even if object-dependent thoughts cannot be entertained in the absence of the object they are about, it can nevertheless *seem* to the subject that he or she entertains this kind of thought when no appropriate object for the thought to be about exists. I challenge this positive claim by asking for an account as to how this alleged mere appearance of object-dependent thought arises. Chapter two is concerned with the question as to whether a subject can communicate to others how things cognitively appear to him or her in a mock thought scenario. I argue that the subject gets confused about how to interpret his or her own utterances made in order to communicate this appearance. This confusion concerning the communication of one's mental state can explain why one may be tempted to conclude, as Evans and McDowell do, that the subject is cognitively deceived. Both chapter one and two motivate elimination of the idea of illusions of thought from Evans's and McDowell's view. A suggestion as to how such elimination can be achieved emerges in the third chapter. Through an analysis of McDowell's (1986) argument for the object-dependence of singular thought, I outline a view that preserves his idea as to how 'object-directed intentionality' is an essential ingredient in singular thought's object-dependence. This involves introducing the notion of a singular thought-episode, in addition to the singular thought-contents that figure in Evans's and McDowell's view, and it also involves introducing an alternative notion of thought-content. Chapter four develops a notion of acquaintance that fits with the revised view suggested in chapter three. I criticise Evans's and McDowell's respective views of acquaintance for leaving open certain explanatory gaps in an account as to how perception facilitates singular thought. Finally, chapter five considers two potential objections against my proposal of eliminating illusions of thought from Evans's and McDowell's view, where these objections arise in light of the fact that Evans's and McDowell's view is an externalist view of mental content.

1

What Is Responsible for a Mere Appearance of Object-Dependent Thought?

What is in my view a puzzling aspect of the general claim that there can be illusions of thought is the idea that it can merely seem to a subject that he or she is thinking something, when, in fact, the subject is not thinking. In other words, what puzzles me is the idea that there can be mere appearances of intelligibility, mere appearances of mental content. Let it be conceded that that there are cognitive appearances, i.e. that when one has a thought, it seems to one that one has a thought. The idea that there can be illusions of thought requires a further concession, namely that such appearances can occur independently of the thinking of thoughts. With Evans's (1982) and McDowell's (1977, 1982, 1984, 1986) claim that there are 'mock thoughts', or illusions of object-dependent thought, the idea of independently occurring appearances of thought is restricted to appearances of *object-dependent* thought, i.e. appearances of the type of thought that a subject could not have unless the object it is about exists. It is in this restricted form that the present chapter analyses and challenges the idea.

Let us focus on the following example, which is an instance of what I refer to as a 'mock thought scenario'.

> A subject has a hallucinatory perceptual experience that is indistinguishable by introspection from a veridical perceptual experience of a green apple. In addition, while having this experience, the subject takes it that he or she is thinking something expressible by the sentence 'That apple is green' about what is, as far as he or she can tell, the perceived object. In other words, for all the subject can tell everything is as it normally is when he or she sees an apple and thinks a thought expressible by means of a sentence containing the singular term 'this apple' about it. But, unknown to the subject, no apple is seen.

This is a typical example of a case where the subject, according to Evans and McDowell, has a 'mock thought'. It seems to the subject that he or she has an object-

dependent thought, despite the fact that this is not the case, since there is no object to think object-dependently about. The part of this claim that will be examined in this chapter is the part that concerns how things cognitively appear to the subject, i.e. the claim:

(Cognitive Appearance)   In mock thought scenarios, it seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought.

It is possible to agree with Evans and McDowell on the point that, in a mock thought scenario, the subject does not have an object-dependent thought and yet dispute Cognitive Appearance. As an alternative to Cognitive Appearance, one can claim that, in a mock thought scenario, things are as they cognitively seem to be. This claim can be made in two ways. One can claim that it seems to the subject that he or she either has an object-dependent thought or is in a mock thought scenario (a claim I label 'Symmetry'). Or, one can claim that it seems to the subject that he or she is in a mock thought scenario (a claim I label 'Identity'). The possibility of claiming, in either of these ways, that there is nothing deceptive about the subject's cognitive situation puts pressure on Evans and McDowell to say why Cognitive Appearance is correct. Thus, there is motivation for challenging Evans's and McDowell's position by posing the following question: In virtue of what does it seem to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario?

The chapter considers some ways in which this challenge may be sought met. After outlining what Evans and McDowell hold a mock thought to be in section one, section two presents the challenge in more detail. Section three suggests what I think is the best attempt at meeting this challenge that can be made on Evans's and McDowell's behalf. This suggestion makes appeal to Evans's and McDowell's claim that a subject *aims* to have an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario. Section four works out further details of the more promising proposal by introducing an idea about 'interpretational' ascriptions. Finally, sections five and six discuss some problems with the proposal.

1.1 What is a mock thought?

From what has been said already, we know that Evans and McDowell hold that a subject has a 'mock thought' when it wrongly seems to him or her that he or she is shaving an object-dependent thought, i.e. in a case of illusion of object-dependent thought. But what is a 'mock thought'? I take the three following features to be central.

(*a.*) Firstly, despite grammatical appearances to the contrary, a mock thought is according to Evans and McDowell not a kind of thought; it is not a thought that is mock. Rather, it is not a thought at all. As was emphasised in the Introduction, Evans and McDowell define thoughts as mental contents, or more precisely, as Fregean propositions. So, Evans's and McDowell's claim is that a subject is not entertaining any mental content at all in a mock thought scenario.

It is admittedly not always crystal clear that Evans should be interpreted as holding that mock thoughts are not thoughts. Although he remarks with regard to mock thought scenarios that 'when there is no object, *there is no thought*' (Evans 1982, p. 136, original emphasis; see also ibid., pp. 31, 173), he may in some places seem to hold only the weaker view that mock thoughts are not *object-dependent* thoughts, leaving it open that they may be a different kind of thought (see e.g. ibid., pp. 71, 73). There is reason to disregard the weaker view, however. Those of Evans's remarks that seem to support the weaker view can plausibly be read as emphasising a different point. His remarks might be read as stating that, although there is no *object-dependent* thought occurring in the mind when a subject has a mock thought, there may nevertheless be other thoughts occurring, where these other thoughts are independent of the mock thought. This seems to be the point Evans makes when he writes: 'It is not part of this proposal that his [i.e. the subject's] mind is wholly vacant; images and words may clearly pass through it, and various ancillary thoughts may even occur to him' (ibid., pp. 45-46). These 'ancillary thoughts' are clearly not to be equated with the mock thought. Rather, they occur independently of it.

McDowell makes essentially the same point about independence when he metaphorically speaks of any cognitive activity occurring together with a mock thought as occurring in a different 'region of cognitive space'. He writes:

> [A subject] may think there is a singular thought at, so to speak, a certain position in his internal organisation although there is nothing precisely there.

[Continued in footnote:] Nothing precisely there; of course there may be all sorts of things in the vicinity. (McDowell 1986, p. 145).

As in the quotation from Evans, I take the idea to be that, if mental content is entertained in a mock thought scenario, this happens in isolation from the mock thought. The mock thought is not to be identified with any ancillary mental content; it is not a mental content at all.

(*b.*) It is obviously not sufficient for demarcating what a mock thought is to say that it is not a thought, since this does not distinguish cases of mock thought from cases where a subject is *simply* not thinking. But mock thoughts will be distinguished from cases where a subject is simply not thinking if we add that, in mock thought scenarios, 'it will seem to a deluded user of an empty singular term that he is entertaining and expressing thoughts' (McDowell 1986, p. 144). Or, as Evans remarks, 'it will seem to a sincere speaker and a suitably deluded hearer that the case is exactly as normal, with thoughts being entertained and communicated' (Evans 1982, p. 39), where the normal case is a case of object-dependent thought. This is to say that the claim I labelled 'Cognitive Appearance' holds: In a mock thought scenario, it seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought. This claim serves to distinguish mock thought scenarios from cases where the subject is simply not thinking. In the latter case, there is a *mere absence* of object-dependent thought. In a mock thought scenario, by contrast, there is not merely an absence of object-dependent thought; there is also a mental event of a certain kind, namely a mental event wherein it appears to one that one has an object-dependent thought.

(*c.*) The claim that it seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario raises the question: What is it for it to seem to a subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought? There is a fairly common view of this in the literature that I believe Evans rejects.

David Bell (1988) reads Evans's idea about mock thoughts as a denial of the claim that the following two principles hold in general:

I think that I think that p → I think that p   (TTp→Tp)

It seems to me that I think that p → I think that p   (STp→Tp)

Bell thus regards Evans's idea as being that it seeming to one that one has an object-dependent thought amounts to a second-order thought or attitude taken towards the absent thought content, p. On this reading, Evans's view is subject to what Lucy O'Brien (2009) calls 'the no-content problem': If it is impossible to think that p due to the fact that there is no such content, then an embedding of p under a propositional attitude verb must constitute something that is equally impossible to think, considering that there can be no such content as that constituted by an embedding of p either.

There is reason to reject Bell's reading of Evans. Evans emphasises that there is a certain point made by A. N. Prior (1971, pp. 153-154) that cannot be regarded as an objection to his view. Prior's point is more or less precisely the no-content problem, and Evans summarises it efficiently as follows: 'Surely if a subject can think that he has the thought that *a* is F, he must be able to have the thought that *a* is F?' (Evans 1982, p. 46). Evans grants Prior's point, but claims that it is irrelevant as an objection to his view, because it is unjustified to assume that 'those who hold that a person may wrongly think he has a thought of the form '*a* is F' need be committed to the view that such a subject has a thought of the form 'I am thinking that *a* is F'' (ibid.). In other words, Evans denies that it seeming to a subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought will necessarily involve that the subject has a second-order thought. This makes Bell's reading fall into disfavour.

But if Bell's proposal is rejected, what *is* it for it to seem to a subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought? I believe there is a clue in Evans's formulation that the possibility of there being illusions of object-dependent thought is the possibility that 'it may be, for a subject, *exactly as though* he were thinking ...' (ibid., p. 45, emphasis added). Taking this claim at face value, it looks like what we need to do to arrive at what it is for it to seem to a subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought is to consider veridical appearances of object-dependent thoughts and ask: how do things seem to one when one has an object-dependent thought? The cognitive appearance in a mock thought scenario would then be defined as a case of things being introspectively indistinguishable from this.

One may think it questionable that object-dependent thought, or thought in general, should *seem* or *appear* in any particular way at all to the subject who has it. This, one might think, would be to conceive of thought rather too much like experience. This would especially be so if the claim that a thought seems or appears

a certain way to the subject who has it is taken to mean that the thought has a phenomenology, that it is something it is like to have the thought.[16] But the claim need not be understood thus. Even if the claim that thoughts seem or appear to the subjects who have them requires conceiving of thought like experience, in the sense that thought has an appearance, this appearance can be conceived of in what we, following M. G. F. Martin (2006, pp. 362-363), may call an *epistemic* way: The claim that it seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought may be understood as the claim that *the subject cannot tell his or her situation apart from one wherein he or she has an object-dependent thought*. One advantage of this epistemic conception of the cognitive appearance is that it only in a very minimal sense commits one to claiming that there is something it is cognitively like to be in a mock thought scenario. There is something it is cognitively like only in the sense that the situation is introspectively indistinguishable from another situation. Thus, we avoid contentiously claiming that object-dependent thought has a characteristic phenomenology.

A second and more important advantage for present purposes is that, unlike the second-order conception, the epistemic conception of the cognitive appearance does not involve that the subject has reflected upon how things cognitively seem to him or her. This permits regarding the ascription of the cognitive appearance as an 'interpretational truth'[17] about the subject: Rather than being something the subject would self-ascribe, it is a truth described by theorists as part of making sense of the subject's situation. In this respect, it is similar to the truth that a dog chasing after a cat is striving to make the angle between the directions of their velocity vectors as small as possible. It is true about and may help to make sense of the dog's behaviour, but clearly the dog is not able to formulate it. Similarly, the claim that it seems to the subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought does not presuppose that the subject possesses the concept 'object-dependent thought'. It is clear that if it did, Evans's and McDowell's claim should be rejected straight off as false about most subjects, since most subjects have no idea of what an object-dependent thought is.

---

[16] For discussion of this idea, see for instance Horgan and Tienson (2002), Siewert (1998), and the essays in the collection edited by Bayne and Montague (2011).

[17] This is McDowell's phrase in Evans (1982, p. 138). I will elaborate a similar idea about 'interpretational' ascriptions in section five.

In summary, the three abovementioned features combine to form the following definition of a mock thought: It is an absence of mental content associated with a mental event wherein it seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought, in the epistemic sense that the subject cannot tell his or her cognitive situation apart from a situation wherein the subject has an object-dependent thought.

1.2   A challenge

We now have a more elaborate comprehension of how Evans and McDowell understand the subject's cognitive situation in a mock thought scenario. What in my view remains puzzling about Cognitive Appearance, however, is how it can seem to subjects that they are having an object-dependent thought when, in fact, they are not having an object-dependent thought. In virtue of what does it seem to subjects that they have an object-dependent thought in mock thought scenarios?

This question is made more pressing when we observe that there are other reasonable ways of conceiving of the subject's cognitive situation in a mock thought scenario that involve no deception. Under (c.) above, I suggested that Cognitive Appearance should be read in an epistemic way, as the claim that the subject cannot tell his or her situation apart from a case of object-dependent thought. This epistemic claim is compatible also with the following conception of how things cognitively appear to the subject:

(Symmetry)   In a mock thought scenario, it seems to the subject that he or she either has an object-dependent thought or is in a mock thought scenario.[18]

Also if things seem thus will the subject be unable to tell his or her situation apart from a case of object-dependent thought. Unlike Cognitive Appearance, Symmetry makes no claim about it seeming to the subject that he or she is in one rather than the other of the two introspectively indistinguishable situations. In this sense, the cognitive appearance is symmetric. Another way of conceiving of the subject's cognitive situation as involving no deception would be to hold that it appears to the

---

[18] As for Cognitive Appearance, I am assuming that Symmetry is an 'interpretational truth' and does not presuppose the subject's possession of the concepts required for understanding it.

subject that he or she is precisely in the situation he or she in fact is. Thus, one can assert:

(Identity)   In a mock thought scenario, it seems to the subject that he or she is in a mock thought scenario.

Identity permits maintaining the epistemic claim that the subject cannot tell his or her situation apart from a case of object-dependent thought. Given that mock thought scenarios are introspectively indistinguishable from cases of object-dependent thought, it seeming to one that one is in a mock thought scenario does not exclude as an epistemic possibility that one is in fact having an object-dependent thought.

The fact that Symmetry and Identity are possible conceptions of the cognitive appearance in a mock thought scenario is sufficient to turn my puzzlement about the alleged cognitive deception in a mock thought scenario into the following challenge to Evans's and McDowell's view:

What makes Cognitive Appearance, and not Symmetry or Identity, the correct assumption about how things cognitively appear to the subject in a mock thought scenario? In other words, what makes the claim that it seems to the subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought the correct 'interpretational' truth about the cognitive appearance in mock thought scenarios?

With regard to genuine object-dependent thoughts the corresponding question is readily answered. When the subject has an object-dependent thought it can be explained that it seems to the subject that this is so in virtue of the fact that it is so. Similarly, defenders of Symmetry and Identity can defend their claims about how things cognitively seem to the subject by explaining that it seems so because it is so. In short, the account as to why things cognitively seem a certain way can be deferred to a defence of a claim about how things cognitively *are*, as opposed to merely appear to be. Such deferral is clearly not available to Evans and McDowell as a defence of Cognitive Appearance, since the claim is that things are not as they cognitively seem to be. So, in order to answer the challenge they must find some alternative approach.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will be concerned with examining whether and how Evans and McDowell may defend Cognitive Appearance by explaining what makes it seem to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario. However, it should be noted straightaway that the challenge cannot be met simply by appealing to the fact that the subject has a hallucinatory perceptual experience in a mock thought scenario. I emphasise this because one might have thought that the reply to my question is simple to provide: The reason as to why it cognitively seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought is that it perceptually seems that there is an object in front of him or her. The idea underlying this response is that precisely what goes right about how perception enables object-dependent thought in the good case is what goes wrong in the bad case, such that the non-veridical perceptual experience produces a non-veridical cognitive appearance.

The details of this response play out differently for Evans and McDowell, due to their differing views of perceptual experience. The gist of Evans's picture (to be elaborated in chapter four) is that one in object-dependent thought employs an 'information-based conception' of an object formed on the basis of 'information', i.e. non-conceptual and general content individuated by reference to a source. In the good case where an object is perceived, the conception will determine the object from which the information derives. He seems to envisage that the same mechanism for the formation of a conception is at work in the bad case, but here the conception formed on the basis of information is defective in that it does not determine the object from which the information derives (see Evans 1982, pp. 132-135). This picture rather naturally leads to the idea that it is the perceptual experience in the bad case that is responsible for producing a non-veridical cognitive appearance. However, I think this reply to my challenge is unsatisfactory. Note that the perceptual hallucinatory experience and its content cannot be *all* that explains the illusion of object-dependent thought. For the cognitive illusion is something *additional* to the perceptual experience. It seeming to one that one has an object-dependent thought does not accompany every case of perceptual hallucination. Hence, we must appeal to something additional to the perceptual appearance in order to defend that the cognitive appearance, as stated in Cognitive Appearance, obtains too. In Evans's account, it is the formation of an information-based conception that is supposed to constitute this additional element. But, as I will argue in chapter four,

Evans's account does not explain how a conception of a particular object, and not just of any object that satisfies certain conditions, can be formed on the basis of purely general perceptual content. Thus, he fails to provide for the bad case the additional explanation as to why a defect information-based conception is formed. So, this defence of Cognitive Appearance fails.

If we assume McDowell's view of perceptual experience, the abovementioned reply to my challenge collapses. McDowell holds that the content of perceptual experience is 'conceptual' in the sense that it can be the content of thought and judgement.[19] As I will argue in chapter four, his conceptualism prevents him from providing an explanation as to *how* perception is responsible for object-dependent thought in the good case; it amounts merely to an assertion that it is. If I am right about this, it is clear that seeking to defend Cognitive Appearance in the way suggested, i.e. by explaining that what goes right in the good case is precisely what goes wrong and produces the non-veridical cognitive appearance in the bad case, is not an available explanatory strategy, given McDowell's view of perceptual experience. The strategy can only work if we have an account of what goes right in the good case, but, as I will argue in chapter four, this is something McDowell's view is prevented from providing.

1.3   Seeming to think and aiming to think

The best and most natural proposal I can think of on Evans's and McDowell's behalf is to defend Asymmetry by appealing to the idea that a subject is aiming to have an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario. Evans and McDowell repeatedly speak of subjects as *aiming to have*, *intending to have*, or *essaying* object-dependent thoughts, and they often do so interchangeably with speaking of it seeming to subjects that they have object-dependent thoughts. For instance, Evans writes:

> … there is a kind of thought we sometimes have, typically expressed in the form 'This G is F', and we may *aim to have a thought of this kind* when, in virtue of the absence of any appropriate object, there is no such thought to be had. (Evans 1982, p. 46, my emphasis.)

---

[19] See McDowell (1994). The view has been criticised by Peacocke (2001).

My suggestion, on Evans's and McDowell's behalf, is that it can be in virtue of the aim to have an object-dependent thought that it seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario, even if the aim, in fact, fails.

The first point to be noted about this proposal is best made by contrast to an alternative strategy for defending Cognitive Appearance. It would be natural to suggest that what makes it seem to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought is that the subject's introspective situation *resembles* the subject's situation when having a genuine object-dependent thought. The problem with this suggestion, however, is that resemblance is a symmetric relation. Hence, on this proposal, it would not only be the case that having a mock thought resembles having an object-dependent thought, but also vice versa. In order to defend Cognitive Appearance we need to appeal to some asymmetric relation between having a mock thought and having an object-dependent thought. It is in this light that a subject's aim to have an object-dependent thought looks promising. There is room for claiming that one aims to have an object-dependent thought when one has a mock thought, while maintaining that one does not, conversely, aim to have a mock thought when having an object-dependent thought. However, this asymmetry will only be useful for present purposes if the aim matters to how things cognitively *seem* to the subject. So: Is there a connection between seeming and aiming to have an object-dependent thought?

I think there might be, given certain constraints. It is clear that, in general, aiming to φ does not imply that it seems to one that one is φ-ing, for it may be all too obvious to one that one's aim is not being met.[20] But what if there is nothing to suggest to one that one's aim to φ has not been achieved? Let us consider a case not of mental but of physical action as a test case. Suppose one is aiming to write a good philosophy essay and there is nothing to suggest to one that one is not succeeding. Does it seem to one that one is writing a good philosophy essay? One would need to be terribly sure of oneself if it did. Either that, or perhaps just in a very fortunate position: Perhaps one has never failed to write a good philosophy essay when one

---

[20] In the following, I am assuming the epistemic way of reading the claim that it seems to one that one is φ-ing, mentioned in section one. That is, it seeming to one that one is φ-ing means that one cannot tell one's situation apart from one in which one *is* φ-ing.

aimed to do so – or at least never been told that one failed. If in that position, one may simply have no inkling that one might not be succeeding. It may simply not occur to one. If in that position, I think it starts to look plausible that if one is aiming to writing a good philosophy essay, then it seems to one that way too. So, my suggestion is that (i) the absence of negative feedback on one's aim to φ and (ii) the fact that it does not occur to one that one might not have succeeded can, in combination, play the same role as positive feedback that one is φ-ing. The reason as to why it seems to one that one that one is φ-ing is that there is, as we might put it, an illusion of positive feedback on one's aim to φ.

If it is right that there is this connection between aiming and seeming under the conditions outlined, the next question is whether the relevant conditions are present in a mock thought scenario. It is clear that at least condition (i) is met. As is clear from section two, even those who hold Symmetry or Identity and who think that there is no cognitive illusion in a mock thought scenario can accept that the subject cannot tell his or her situation apart from a case of object-dependent thought. So, nothing suggests to the subject that he or she is not having an object-dependent thought. However, by analogy to what we noted above, this would be insufficient for a claim that it is in virtue of aiming to think an object-dependent thought that it seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought. In particular, it would be insufficient if the subject were in doubt about whether he or she is having an object-dependent thought. Does the subject have such doubt in a mock thought scenario? Probably not, I think. The possibility that one might be under an illusion of thought is not one likely to occur to most non-philosophers, and perhaps not even to most philosophers at most times. So condition (ii) is met as well. Now, as per above, my suggestion is that the absence of negative feedback that one is not thinking (condition (i)), combined with the fact that it does not occur to one that one might not be succeeding in one's aim to have an object-dependent thought (condition (ii)), produces the illusion that one is succeeding. Again, the suggestion is that if one simply has no inkling that one might not be thinking an object-dependent thought, then the absence of evidence that things may be otherwise than how one aims that they should be creates an appearance that the aim has succeeded.

Given this connection between aiming to think an object-dependent thought and seeming to think an object-dependent thought, Cognitive Appearance can be defended, *provided* that a subject is indeed aiming to have an object-dependent

thought in a mock thought scenario. But *does* the subject aim to have an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario? This question must be answered affirmatively if the aim-proposal just set out is to be of any use in defending Cognitive Appearance. The next section demonstrates that if an aim to have an object-dependent thought can be ascribed, it must be ascribed in what I call the 'interpretational' sense. With this type of aim-ascription in mind, section five argues that the subject does *not* aim to have an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario.

1.4   *Evans's interpretational ascriptions of aim*

The idea that a subject may aim to have an object-dependent thought faces at least two natural objections. First, note that most non-philosophers do not know what an object-dependent thought is. This fact gives rise to the worry: How can such uninformed subjects aim to think an object-dependent thought, given that this would be to aim to do something they have never heard of? This constitutes the first objection. A second objection pertains also to subjects who *do* know what an object-dependent thought is. Even such subjects, one might object, cannot be aiming to have an object-dependent thought, neither in mock thought scenarios nor in cases of object-dependent thought. For having a thought, one will continue, is the sort of mental event that just happens; it is not a mental action.[21] Given that thoughts are mental events that just happen to one, one cannot aim to have a thought, since one can only aim to *do* something, not to have something happen to one.

In order to bypass the first objection, we may appeal to an idea developed by Evans about ascriptions of aims (see Evans 1982, pp. 129-132). As aforementioned, McDowell's appendix to chapter five of Evans's book issues the notion of an 'interpretational truth', a truth that we as theorists describe in order to make sense of the subject's situation (ibid., p. 138). In the chapter, Evans similarly discusses ascriptions of aims to subjects that the subjects themselves may not be prepared to accept as a true report on their situation. Rather, the idea is that one may ascribe aims to subjects as part of one's attempt at making sense of the subject's situation, taking into account relevant facts about the subject's situation that the subject may not know

---

[21] That thoughts are not mental actions is for instance argued by Strawson (2003). Searle (1983, p. 3) holds, more generally, that no intentional states and events of any kind are mental actions.

or believe to obtain. We may call this an 'interpretational' ascription of an aim. To elucidate, Evans presents the following analogy:

> A young student is reading out an ill-prepared essay to his class. It contains the sentence 'A spark is produced electrically inside the carburettor'. 'That's not right', the teacher says. 'What does he mean, class?' And here someone may say 'He means the cylinder, sir'. In saying this, the second student is *not* committed to the idea that the subject had the thought, or even has the capacity to have the thought, 'I shall say that a spark is produced in the cylinder'. But nor is what he says independent of the subject's goals and beliefs. The point is rather something like this: to be saying that a spark is produced in the cylinder is what, given his general plans and his situation, the subject should be doing; that is, doing that is what would conform best with the subject's plans at this moment. (Evans 1982, p. 130.)

Evans here makes one negative and one positive point about the ascription of the aim to say that a spark is produced electrically inside the cylinder. The negative point is that the ascription of the aim is *not* made on the basis that the student had the thought he is reported as having aimed to express. The ill-prepared student's situation importantly differs from a case where one has a certain thought in mind and simply uses the incorrect words to express it, e.g. a case where one pronounces the word 'carburettor' instead of the word 'cylinder' by a slip of the tongue. By contrast to such a case, the ill-prepared student did not entertain, and might not even have had the capacity to entertain, the thought that he is reported as having aimed to express.

Evans's positive point in the passage is that the aim is, instead, ascribed to the student on the basis of 'his general plans and his situation'. Evans's idea here, I think, is that in order to carry out a general plan, a subject needs to perform several specific actions. Which specific actions these are may not be foreseen. Rather, it becomes clear in the various situations that arise. More specifically in Evans's example, it is natural to assume that the ill-prepared student has a general plan to describe the mechanics of a car accurately; this is presumably what he is endeavouring to do in his essay. Given the situation that he is asked to read out the essay to the class, it is clear (although perhaps not to the student) that one of the specific speech acts required for carrying out his general plan is to say that a spark is produced electrically inside the cylinder. The basis for ascribing to the student the aim to say this, then, is that performing this speech act constitutes a part of what it

would be to carry out his general plan in his present situation. In this sense, it is an interpretational ascription of an aim.

If Evans is right about both the negative and the positive point just elaborated, then it is not in general true, as the first the objection says, that a subject cannot aim to do something he or she does not have any idea of what is. The ill-prepared student in Evans's example need not have been in a position to entertain the thought that a spark is produced inside the cylinder, and so he may have no idea of what this thought is. Nevertheless, an aim to express this thought can be ascribed to him, on the basis of his general plan and his situation. Thus, Evans's example can serve as a demonstration of the general point that, on an interpretational ascription of an aim, there is no obstacle to ascribing an aim to φ to someone who has no idea of what it is to φ. This general point can be argued with regard to other ascriptions of aim we make too. For instance, an aim to turn on the light may be ascribed in the interpretational sense as an aim to start the motion of electrons in the circuit, even if the subject does not know what electrons and circuits are. In general, then, the fact that a subject has no idea of what an object-dependent thought is does not preclude ascribing an aim to have an object-dependent thought. This removes the first objection.

What now about the second objection, i.e. the complaint that having thoughts and having appearances of thoughts are the sort of mental events that just happen, and therefore cannot be aimed for? It would seem that Evans's example of the ill-prepared student cannot help us here, since it concerns the production of a particular speech act rather than the having of a particular thought. A speech act is clearly something one can aim to achieve, since it is an action at least partly under one's control to perform. By contrast, the second objection involves the claim that thinking is not an action, but rather a mental event that simply occurs and that therefore cannot be aimed for.[22]

One possible response to the second objection would be to insist, contrary to its core claim, that thinking *is* an action. This could for instance be supported by the common sense observation that one sensible response to the question 'What are you

---

[22] A similar claim about thoughts and our control over them is made by Jeshion (2010b, p. 125), who emphasises that starting a mental file for an object, which in her view is necessary for singular thought, is not something one can choose or intend to do, because it is not under agential control.

doing?' is 'I am thinking'. This observation does not seem defensible in all cases, however. For instance, it does not seem defensible with regard to episodes of thought that occur as a result of belief, insofar a belief is not something one can choose to have, as Bernard Williams (1973) argues. However, I do not here wish to enter into the substantial issue as to whether thoughts are mental actions. Bracketing this issue and granting that having a thought is not under our direct control, I think there is another way to resist the second objection's conclusion that one cannot aim to think.

How to resist this conclusion is easily observed if we compare thinking to desiring. Desires are typically held to not be under our control; they simply occur. Nevertheless, it can make sense to aim to have a particular desire. This need not be understood as involving that one is choosing to have a particular desire, which is something one cannot do. Rather, it may be understood as involving that one is aiming to make it the case that one has a particular desire. This can be done by causing various events or states of affairs that, in turn, cause the desire to arise.[23] Note that ascribing an aim to have a desire in this sense does not require that having the desire is directly under one's control. My point is that a similar idea can be made out with respect to thoughts. Aiming to have an object-dependent thought may be understood as aiming to make it the case that one has an object-dependent thought. For instance, one may be aiming to make it the case that one remembers a certain object-dependent thought. This does not require that having a thought is directly under the subject's control. So, contrary to what the second objection asserts, there is room for saying that someone aims to think an object-dependent thought, even if having a thought is not under our direct control.

The two objections to the idea that one can aim to have an object-dependent thought, outlined at the start of this section, are thus bypassed if (i) the aim is ascribed independently of how the subject would describe their own situation (i.e. in the interpretational sense), and (ii) if the aim is understood as an aim to make it the case that one has an object-dependent thought. However, if the conception of aiming to have an object-dependent thought as specified by (i) and (ii) is to serve in a defence, of the sort proposed in the previous section, of the claim that it seems to a subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario,

---

[23] This distinction between trying to φ and trying to bring it about that φ receives further elaboration in Mele (2009).

then it is not sufficient to establish, as we now have, that there is no general obstacle to ascribing such an aim to a subject. It must in addition be established that an aim to have an object-dependent thought can be ascribed to the subject in *all mock thought scenarios*, and not just in some.

With regard to this, what becomes important is Evans's point that ascriptions of an aim in specific situations may be made on the basis of a subject's general plan. Recall that in the ill-prepared student's case, the basis for ascribing to the student a specific aim to perform a certain speech act is the subject's general plan to describe the mechanics of a car accurately. Analogously, Evans claims, a subject generally has a 'desire that his activities be well-grounded' (ibid., p. 131), where an object-dependent thought is well-grounded if it employs an 'information-based conception' of the very object from which the information on which the conception is based derives. On the basis of this general desire, an aim to entertain or express a specific object-dependent thought can be ascribed in the interpretational sense in particular situations. However, Evans also holds that there is a risk of 'ill-groundedness', i.e. that a subject's information-based conception is *not* a conception of the object from which the information on which it is based derives. In that case, one has a mere appearance of object-dependent thought. This means that in aiming that one's activities be well-grounded, one is precisely seeking to avoid mere appearances of object-dependent thought. Thus, since any particular mock thought scenario constitutes a failure of the subject's general plan to engage in well-grounded activities, we may ascribe to the subject an aim to have an object-dependent thought in any such scenario, given that the success of this aim in each such scenario is what would constitute success with the general plan.

This is the way in which I think Evans could best defend the claim that subjects aim to have object-dependent thoughts in mock thought scenarios. I think McDowell is in a position to provide a similar defence, but he would need to account differently for the subject's general plan to have an object-dependent thought, since he thinks differently about the way in which perception grounds thought (see chapter four). In particular, since McDowell holds perceptual content to be object-dependent, just like thought-content, there can be no perceptual content responsible for 'ill-groundedness' in mock thought scenarios on his view. Instead, a general plan to have one's cognitive activity be 'well-grounded' can on McDowell's view be understood

as a plan to have one's thought-contents be grounded in perceptual content. 'Ill-groundedness' can then be understood as violations of this general plan.

With regard to both versions of this defence, suggested on Evans's and McDowell's behalf respectively, one may object that a general desire that one's cognitive activities be well-grounded is too general a basis for ascribing an aim to have an object-dependent thought in any particular mock thought scenario. In order to succeed with the general plan to engage in well-grounded cognitive activities in a mock thought scenario, one could simply refrain from engaging in any cognitive activity whatsoever. So, given the subject's general plan, there seems to be equally good basis for ascribing an aim to refrain from cognitive activity, as there is for ascribing an aim to have an object-dependent thought.

My response to this objection, on Evans's and McDowell's behalf, is the following. In any given mock thought scenario, M, the subject is engaging in a particular ill-grounded cognitive activity. The subject's general plan that his or her cognitive activity be well-grounded applies to M, just like it applies to all of the subject's cognitive activities. More specifically, as applied to M, the subject's general plan manifests itself as an aim that *this* cognitive activity be well-grounded. As a matter of fact the subject's cognitive activity is not well-grounded. But, given the general plan, the subject desires *it* to be so. By contrast, the general plan does not provide a basis for ascribing to the subject an aim that *this* cognitive activity not be engaged in, since the general plan is not to avoid one's own ill-grounded cognitive activity (how could one do that anyway, given that it is one's *own* cognitive activity?). Although not having engaged in the particular cognitive activity occurring in a given mock thought scenario would have been a way of succeeding with one's general plan, it is a fact about the situation that one did engage in it, and this fact, combined with the application of the general plan, provides a basis for ascribing an aim to have this cognitive activity be well-grounded.

Thus, I think we may grant that there is a basis for ascribing an aim to have an object-dependent thought in mock thought scenarios, and I will proceed on that assumption. However, should my above support on Evans's and McDowell's behalf be found unconvincing, this would not frustrate my overall purpose in this chapter. Ultimately, I think the attempt to defend Cognitive Appearance by appeal to the subject's aim to have an object-dependent thought fails. So, if this section's argument is not accepted, my overall argument may still be accepted. Although I

think we may grant that there is a basis for ascribing in the interpretational sense an aim to have an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario, the ascription, as I will argue next, does not make sense on closer inspection.

1.5   Analysis of the aim to have an object-dependent thought

Compare again our subject in the mock thought scenario and the ill-prepared student in the example from Evans. There is a sentence that Evans's student means, in the interpretational sense, to read out; this is the sentence expressed by the second student, i.e. 'A spark is produced electrically inside the cylinder'. But is there, in a mock thought scenario, an object-dependent thought that the subject is aiming to entertain in the interpretational sense? No. Since the subject is having a hallucinatory perceptual experience, there is no object to have an object-dependent thought about. No object-dependent thought can be had, since having an object-dependent thought is to think about a certain existing object in a way it could not be thought about if it did not exist. In this light, the following question becomes pressing: Given that no object-dependent thought can be entertained in a mock thought scenario, can the subject be *aiming* to think an object-dependent thought?

It is not obvious that the answer to this question should be 'No'. We just noted that it is impossible for the subject – and for anyone else as well – to think an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario, since there is no object to think about. But there is no principled obstacle to aiming to do the impossible. A subject may, for instance, aim to find the Fountain of Youth. As there is no Fountain of Youth, it is impossible to find it. But that does not prevent subjects from *aiming* to find it. One might think that something analogous holds for subjects who aim to have an object-dependent thought in a case of perceptual hallucination. Although it is impossible to have an object-dependent thought in a case where there is no object to think about, would it not be possible nevertheless to *aim* to have an object-dependent thought in such a case? In order to find out, we need to analyse what the aim would amount to.

Note that subjects who aim to find the Fountain of Youth would normally believe that it exists. According to them, they are aiming to find an existing object, just like they would be aiming to find their missing glasses. But insofar as we are concerned with *interpretational* ascriptions of an aim, as the previous section showed

that we must be in order to avoid certain objections, we are not concerned with the aim subjects would self-ascribe. The interpretational ascription of an aim is instead a way of seeking to make sense of the subject's situation that takes into account facts unknown to the subject, such as the fact that there is no Fountain of Youth. Thus, in the interpretational sense, aiming to find the Fountain of Youth amounts to aiming to find a certain object that does not exist. Clearly, this is not an aim the subject would self-ascribe, but it is how we must seek to make sense of his or her 'situation and general plans' given that we know there to be no such thing as the Fountain of Youth. Similarly, it is clear that if a subject is aiming to have an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario, where there is no object to think about, then

(AIM)   the subject is aiming to think in the object-dependent way about a certain object that does not exist.

The problem, I will show, is that this is not an aim to do something impossible, but rather an impossible aim.

   AIM contains two aims as components. On the one hand, to aim to think in the object-dependent way is to aim to think in a way that one could not think unless the object thought about existed. So, to the extent that the subject is aiming to think in the object-dependent way, he or she must be (i) aiming to think about an object that exists. This is part of what it is to aim to think in the object-dependent way (although not all of it; one also needs to aim to think about the object in a way that depends on its existence). But, on the other hand, AIM also explicitly involves that the subject is (ii) aiming to think about a certain object that does not exist. As constituent aims of AIM, (i) and (ii) must be understood to concern the same object. So, combining (i) and (ii) accordingly, it can be seen that AIM, at least in part, amounts to the following aim:

(AIM⁻)   The subject is aiming to think about a certain object that exists and that does not exist.

There are two readings of AIM⁻; one *de re* and one *de dicto*.[24] The *de re* reading says that there is an object, *x*, such that the subject is aiming to think about *x* and *x* does not exist. We need not deliberate the peculiarities of this aim. It suffices to note that, since there is no object to think about in a mock thought scenario, the *de re* reading must be discarded as inapplicable. We are looking for a way of understanding the subject's aim in the interpretational sense, and hence we must take into account our knowledge that there is no object to think about. This means that the *de re* reading cannot be stated, for there is no object, *x*, about which the subject can be aiming to think.

The *de dicto* reading says that the subject is aiming to think about an object which is such that it exists and does not exist. If we treat existence as a predicate, this is analogous to an aim to think about something which is F and not-F, such as aiming to think about an infinite finitude or, perhaps, a square circle. Aims to think about such things make good sense, even if one should think that such aims cannot succeed. So the problem with the *de dicto* reading is not that there is no way to make sense of it. The problem arises from the point that an object that exists and that does not exist belongs in the realm of *impossibilia*, and therefore it cannot be an object that exists. But aiming to think about an object that exists is part of what it is to aim to think in the object-dependent way. So, on the *de dicto* reading, AIM⁻ is not an aim to think in the object-dependent way. The problem is that it was supposed to be. This is what we tried to build into it with (i).

This is a fatal problem that cannot be resolved: AIM⁻ on the *de dicto* reading cannot be reconciled with an aim to think in the object-dependent way. Observe what happens if we try to add to the *de dicto* reading of AIM⁻ that the subject is, in addition to aiming to think about an object that exists and that does not exist, aiming to think about an object that exists, where the latter aim is essential to aiming to have an object-dependent thought. We would get the result that the subject is aiming to think about an object that exists and that does not exist and (as we are now adding) that exists. This is still to aim to think about an object that belongs in the realm of *impossibilia*. So, seeking to reconcile the *de dicto* reading of AIM⁻ with an aim to think in the object-dependent way leads to a regress of failures of reconciliation.

---

[24] For the original way of drawing this distinction, see Quine's (1966) distinction between a *relational* and a *notational* sense of ascriptions of propositional attitudes.

What this shows is that there is an internal inconsistency in AIM. An aim to think about an object that does not exist cannot be reconciled with an aim to think about an object that exists, where *both* aims are supposed to be involved in AIM. Now, our starting point was the observation that AIM states what it is to aim to think an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario. So we must conclude that, although it may appear plausible to attribute to the subject an aim to have an object-dependent thought when seeking to make sense of his or her situation and general plans in a mock thought scenario, this attribution of an aim cannot be a way of making sense of the subject's situation and general plans because it, on closer inspection, in fact does not make sense at all. Aiming to think an object-dependent thought about an object that does not exist thus amounts, not to an aim to do something impossible, but, rather, to an inherently inconsistent aim. This is not something that can be meaningfully attributed to a subject; it is, as we may put it, an impossible aim.

At this point of defeat we must recall the reason for introducing Evans's idea that a subject may be aiming to think an object-dependent thought. The idea was supposed to serve as the basis for a way of meeting the challenge posed to Evans's and McDowell's view. The challenge is to support their claim labelled 'Cognitive Appearance' – i.e. the claim that, in mock thought scenarios, it seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought – by explaining what is responsible for this cognitive appearance. My suggestion, made on Evans's and McDowell's behalf in section three, was that Cognitive Appearance would be supported by explaining that it is in virtue of the aim to have an object-dependent thought that it seems to the subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought in mock thought scenarios. But now, if no sense can be made of a subject aiming to have an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario, then this support for Cognitive Appearance cannot be made use of.

One might think, however, that it is possible to resurrect this general line of defence of Cognitive Appearance if one can specify the aim to have an object-dependent thought in a way that makes no mention of the existence or non-existence of the object aimed to be thought about. As the above analysis makes clear, the source to the inconsistency of the aim to have an object-dependent thought is the claim about existence and non-existence identified in AIM⁻. So, if this claim can be avoided, we may avoid the inconsistency too. The next section considers some

alternative ways in which the aim to have an object-dependent thought may be specified.

1.6   *Alternative specifications of the aim*

Given AIM⁻, the most straightforward way to avoid mention of the existence or non-existence of the object aimed to be thought about is to simply conceal this part of the formulation in AIM⁻. This leads us to the following minimal sense in which the subject's aim to have an object-dependent thought can be specified:

(AIM⁻⁻)   The subject is aiming to think about a certain object.

Unlike AIM⁻, this is clearly an aim a subject *can* have in a mock thought scenario, since the aim is neutral with regard to whether the object in question exists or not. In this way, it looks like we can after all make sense of the idea that a subject may be aiming to have an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario, if we understand the aim in the minimal way stated in AIM⁻⁻. It thus looks promising to use this specification of the subject's aim in the proposed line of defence of Cognitive Appearance from section three.

Another promising-looking way of specifying the aim is to use a non-standard construction. In arguing against Evans's and McDowell's claim that there is no thought-content for the subject to entertain in a mock thought scenario, Peter Carruthers (1987), Michael Pendlebury (1988) and Mark Sainsbury (2005, pp. 166-169) have suggested that a thought-content indeed can be specified if we reject the idea that such content must be specified by means of ascriptions on the form 'The subject had the thought that p'. Their idea is efficiently captured in Carruthers's rhetorical question: 'Why, in particular, is it assumed that a statement of the content of a demonstrative thought must always present it in the form of a simple that-clause?' (Carruthers 1987, p. 24). Setting aside how Evans and McDowell may respond to this criticism, we may instead for present purposes turn their insight into a point in Evans's and McDowell's favour. We may construct a non-standard ascription of the subject's aim in a mock thought scenario. For instance, the following may be suggested:

(AIM$^+$)   Being in the grip of the perceptual hallucination that there is a certain object in front of him or her, the subject is aiming to think about it.

Although AIM$^+$ mentions that the object aimed to be thought about is hallucinated, which means that it does not exist, this is only mentioned in the description of the scene in the first half of the ascription. In the second half, where the aim is specified, the object thought about is picked out by referring anaphorically back to the description of the scene. So, in the second half any claim about whether the object exists or not is avoided. As for AIM^{--}, it thus looks promising to attempt to apply AIM$^+$ in the line of defence of Cognitive Appearance suggested in section three.

Both of these specifications of the aim are, however, too minimal to function in a defence of Cognitive Appearance of the sort presently under consideration. Recall that the proposal is to defend how things seem to the subject by appeal to what the subject's aim is. Plugging AIM^{--} into this proposal, we can thus defend that it seems to the subject that he or she is thinking about a certain object. Similarly, if we plug AIM$^+$ into the proposal, we can defend that, being in the grip of the perceptual hallucination that there is a certain object in front of him or her, it seems to the subject that he or she is thinking about it. The problem is that each of these two claims about how things cognitively seem to the subject are claims that can be accepted also if one holds that there is nothing cognitively deceptive about a mock thought scenario. According to Evans and McDowell, the subject's aim to have an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario is an aim that *fails*; the subject does not have an object-dependent thought. The aims specified in AIM^{--} and AIM$^+$ must also be aims that fail, if they are to justify the claim that things are not as they cognitively seem to be. The proposed defence of Cognitive Appearance is in short as follows: The subject aims to have an object-dependent thought, and for this reason is seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought, but in fact the aim fails and hence the cognitive appearance is deceptive. But when AIM^{--} or AIM$^+$ is plugged into this defence, it becomes unclear that we should think the aim specified is an aim that fails and that the cognitive appearance is deceptive.

In fact, there are several accounts of singular thought according to which the aims specified in AIM^{--} and AIM$^+$ may succeed. For instance, unlike Evans and McDowell who define singular terms as mental contents, Tim Crane (2011, 2013) defines singular thought-episodes as thoughts that purport to refer to just one object.

Even if the thought fails to refer to just one object, it is a singular thought-episode; the purport to refer, whether it succeeds or not, is sufficient for aboutness on this view. Thus, the subject will on this view be succeeding to think about a certain object in a mock thought scenario, just as he or she aims to, given AIM^{--}. The aim specified by AIM^+ will also be achieved: Being in the grip of the perceptual hallucination that there is a certain object in front of him or her, the subject will be thinking about that object. The same verdict will be passed if one accepts Robin Jeshion's (2010) view of singular thought, according to which the subject has a singular thought in a mock thought scenario, provided that what the subject takes to be an object is significant from the subject's perspective with regard to the subject's plans, motivations or affective states.[25]

Due to the possibility of holding views like Crane's and Jeshion's, then, it is not clear that the aims specified in AIM^{--} and AIM^+ fail. Thus, if we attempt to plug these specifications of the aim into the defence of Cognitive Appearance from section three, it is not clear that this will be a defence of the claim that things cognitively appear differently from how they are. The defence may instead amount to a defence of the claims I labelled 'Symmetry' and 'Identity', which both are claims to the effect that things cognitively appear as they are. So, if AIM^{--} and AIM^+ are used, the defence of Cognitive Appearance suggested on Evans's and McDowell's behalf does not preform the job it was supposed to, namely to provide us with a reason to think that Cognitive Appearance, and not Symmetry or Identity, is the correct claim about how things cognitively seem to the subject in a mock thought scenario. Without a defence of Cognitive Appearance, it is unclear why we should accept Evans's and McDowell's idea that the subject is under the illusion of having an object-dependent thought. While we can agree that the subject cannot be having an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario, since there is no object to think about, it is not clear that we should agree that it nevertheless seems to the subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought.

---

[25] Jeshion's focus is not on the empty case or on mock thought scenarios in particular, but she does mention that one can have singular thoughts about one's imaginary friend (Jeshion 2010, p. 136), and hence she seems to be holding singular thought to be possible in the empty case.

1.7   Conclusion

Although I conclude that the defence of Cognitive Appearance suggested on Evans's and McDowell's behalf is unsuccessful, I think there can also be drawn some positive conclusions from this chapter's discussion. One positive result – positive, that is, if one wants to preserve Evans's and McDowell's idea about illusions of object-dependent thought – is that we have a half-finished account as to what makes it seem to a subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario. The appearance can be explained by appeal to an aim the subject has. In order to complete this account, defenders of Evans's and McDowell's view would need to provide a specification of the aim that avoids mention of the existence of the object aimed to be thought about, and where the aim under this specification is an aim that fails. While the specifications of the aim that I have suggested here do not fulfil the latter condition, it is not excluded that there may be other specifications that do.

A second positive conclusion from the foregoing discussion concerns what I think would constitute an improvement of Evans's and McDowell's view. Rather than seeking to complete the account here suggested on Evans and McDowell's behalf, I think a preferable option for preserving Evans's and McDowell's central idea that there can be object-dependent thoughts would be to reject Cognitive Appearance, i.e. to reject the claim that in mock thought scenarios, it seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought. Rejection of this claim need not bring with it a rejection of the idea that there are object-dependent thoughts. For one may adopt the following position. The cognitive appearance is non-deceptive both in a mock thought scenario and in a genuine case of object-dependent thought; things cognitively appear as they seem. Still, the appearances are not the same. In a case of genuine object-dependent thought, it appears to the subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought. But in a mock thought scenario, one may insist, things cognitively appear as the claim I labelled 'Identity' states, i.e. it appears to the subject that he or she is in a mock thought scenario. (Alternatively, one may insist that things cognitively appear as the claim labelled 'Symmetry' states, i.e. it appears to the subject that he or she either has an object-dependent thought or is in a mock thought scenario.) The idea that the nature of appearances differs between each type of case is part of what Evans and McDowell hold already, since they think that in the one case the cognitive appearance is deceptive in nature and in the other it is not

deceptive (more on this in chapter three). Where the suggested position departs from Evans's and McDowell's view is the point that the appearance in a mock thought scenario has nothing to do with object-dependent thought, except for the epistemic fact that the subject cannot tell the situation apart from a case of object-dependent thought. The major improvement that this brings with it, in my view, is that the suggested position avoids the problematic idea of mock thoughts. This demonstrates that it is not true, as has often been supposed both by Evans and McDowell and their critics, that holding singular thought to be object-dependent thought about perceivable objects must bring with it the idea of mock thoughts.

The possibility of modifying Evans's and McDowell's view in the way just sketched is not quite the modification that I favour and will seek to approach in later chapters. Unlike what I have suggested here, my revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view involves maintaining that it in a mock thought scenario seems to the subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought. However, in likeness with the position just sketched, I will argue that this appearance is non-deceptive and different in nature from the cognitive appearance in what Evans and McDowell would claim to be genuine cases of object-dependent thought. In particular, I think the appearances in each type of case are appearances of different object-dependent thought-contents.

The function of this first chapter in the grander scheme of developing Evans's and McDowell's view is primarily to motivate. I have put forward a challenge to Evans's and McDowell's view, namely to provide a defence of their claim that it in a mock thought scenario seems to the subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought. This is, in other words, a challenge to provide a defence of the claim that there can be mere appearances of object-dependent thought. The challenge has been proved difficult to meet. What is as far as I understand the most promising-looking strategy, namely to ascribe in the interpretational sense an aim to the subject to have an object-dependent thought, faces the dilemma that it either amounts to ascribing an impossible aim or that it, on a less committal reading, amounts to an aim that succeeds, rather than an aim that fails. Thus, the idea that there can be mere appearances of object-dependent thought is shown to be very hard to support. When we take into account that the nature of the cognitive appearance in a mock thought scenario can equally well be conceived of as non-deceptive (either as stated in Symmetry or as stated in Identity) it is thus unclear that we should accept Evans's

and McDowell's claim that it seems to the subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought in a mock thought scenario. It is unclear why we should accept their claim that there can be illusions of object-dependent thought. In fact, given the difficulties associated with providing any defence, as elaborated in the present chapter, it seems recommendable to avoid commitment to the idea of illusions of object-dependent thought altogether.

2

Can we 'capture' what merely appears to be a thought?

Chapter one sought a defence of Evans's and McDowell's claim about how things seem to a subject in a mock thought scenario, i.e. the claim that it seems to the subject that he or she is having an object-dependent thought. The focus was on the type of thought-content in question, and not on the specific content it appears to the subject that he or she entertains and that there simply is not due to the absence of the appropriate object. In the present chapter, the focus is on the specific rather than the type of content that, according to Evans and McDowell, there merely appears to be in a mock thought scenario. Moreover, the focus is not, as in the previous chapter, on the nature of the appearance of thought and what gives rise to it, but rather on the communication of what the appearance of thought is like. Whether one thinks that the subject enjoys a mere appearance or one thinks that the subject has a thought of some kind in a mock thought scenario, the following question is intriguing: Can others who are not situated in the mock thought scenario be made to appreciate how things cognitively appear to be to the subject? Can the subject communicate what, rightly or wrongly, seems to be his or her thought? Given the stipulation that the appearance of thought is introspectively indistinguishable from the having of a genuine object-dependent thought, what there is to appreciate about the appearance of thought is not just the type of appearance it is, e.g. that it is an appearance of an object-dependent thought about an apple. One may also appreciate that it is the appearance of thinking about a particular object. It is the question as to whether this particularity can be appreciated by subjects situated outside the mock thought scenario that is my concern in the following.

My reason for considering the possibility of communicating what the appearance of thought is like is that I think distinguishing between the ability to entertain object-dependent thought and the ability to appreciate what is expressed by an utterance of a sentence containing a singular term[26] is especially important in a

---

[26] By a 'singular term', I mean a term that is typically used to express a singular thought, and not a term belonging to a certain semantic category, as semanticists tend to mean (see the Introduction). Thus, as I define it, the range of singular terms is not determined in advance of determining the range of singular thoughts.

mock thought scenario. This distinction helps to identify why one may be inclined to think that the subject is mistaken about the nature of their mental state, as Evans and McDowell hold. In my view, the subject is not mistaken about the nature of their mental state. The subject has the very object-dependent thought that it (in the 'interpretational' sense, explained in the previous chapter) seems to him or her that he or she has. But the subject does make a mistake. The mistake is to think that what the subject understands to be expressed by an utterance intended to express his or her thought is the thought he or she is having.

In arguing for this view and diagnosis, I remain neutral with regard to whether the appearance of thought in a mock thought scenario is a mere appearance or an appearance of a genuine object-dependent thought, so as to not exclude Evans's and McDowell's view at the outset. Indeed, my strategy is to argue for my view of communication in mock thought scenarios by building on some of their central ideas. In this way, I aim to convince defenders of Evans's and McDowell's view.

In section one, I present Evans's and McDowell's view of ascriptions of object-dependent thought, and I build on this view in order to construct a similar view of ascriptions of appearances of object-dependent thought. The consequence of adopting the latter view is that the question as to whether bystanders outside a mock thought scenario can be made to appreciate how things cognitively seem to the subject is made more precise. It is reformulated as the question whether the subject can do what I call 'capture' the appearance of thought such that bystanders can appreciate it. Section two sets up a thought-experiment suitable for evaluating the question in the more precise form. Sections three, four and five raise and respond to a complication of the question, namely the complication that there are several alternative interpretations of an utterance made in an attempt to 'capture' an appearance of thought. What I label 'the problem of reinterpretation' is to decide on one interpretation. This problem is set out in section three by combining two ideas from Frege and Evans respectively. In section four, I defend that this problem applies generally in all mock thought scenarios. I also explain how Frege's idea about 'reinterpretation' receives support from a weakened and independently defensible version of what Evans calls 'Russell's principle', and I argue that, if accepting this weakened principle, one should also accept that the interpretation of utterances is relative to interpreters. This leads to my response to the problem of reinterpretation: There is no general answer as to how an utterance made in order to capture an

appearance of thought in a mock thought scenario is interpreted. Section five considers and rejects an alternative line of response to the problem of reinterpretation, namely the response that the interpretation is indeterminate. Finally, section six argues that, given the response outlined in section four, there seems to be no way of establishing that a given utterance captures the appearance of thought had by a subject in a mock thought scenario.

2.1   To 'capture' an appearance of thought

According to Evans and McDowell, canonical ascriptions of object-dependent thought must achieve two things: (i) The ascription must identify the object that the thought is about, and (ii) it must identify the way in which the subject thinks of and identifies the object. An object-dependent thought can in addition be ascribable in other ways that do not fulfil these conditions. But the fundamental characterisation of the thought, from which other descriptions can all be derived, must achieve (i) and (ii). Let me explain how Evans and McDowell defend this claim, before turning to an application of the claim to mock thought scenarios and ascriptions of appearances of object-dependent thoughts.

The requirement in (i) in part becomes evident with Evans's and McDowell's resistance to what they call 'the ordered-couple conception' of singular thought. The ordered-couple conception is in agreement with Evans's and McDowell's view of singular thought insofar as it recognises that singular thoughts are object-dependent; such thought depends for its existence on the object it is about. But the ordered-couple conception adds that an object-dependent thought expressible by means of a sentence '*a* is F' is to be represented by an ordered couple consisting of the object the thought is about and the property of being F. In order to ascribe the thought to a subject, one simply specifies this ordered couple.[27] Evans admits that there may be some utterances that are reportable in this 'transparent' or *de re* style (Evans 1982, p. 83). But object-dependent thought cannot generally be ascribed in this way, he thinks. The central reason for this is his view of the relationship between transparent reports and notational reports:

---

[27] Evans mentions Donnellan (1974) as defending this idea. In general, the idea is associated with the Neo-Russellian position, mentioned in the Introduction, according to which object-dependence is a matter of the object constituting part of the thought-content.

Transparent reports commonly involve a retreat back from some notational report that could be given ('He is saying that such-and-such is thus and so'), with some loss of information consequent upon the retreat, since the transparent report gives the object which the saying concerned, but not the way it was identified in the saying. But if a saying can be accurately reported only in the transparent style, then there is no more informative notational report from which the transparent report represents a retreat: the transparent report is the fundamental description. (Ibid.)[28]

A notational report that gives the object in the way it was identified in the utterance is necessary in many situations if we are to make sense of the utterances made, Evans continues. It is required when the same object is identified in two different ways and where a subject may assent to one utterance and dissent from another. For instance, if there is a long ship the middle part of which is obscured, and a subject assents to an utterance of 'That ship is F' said pointing to its bow and dissents from an utterance of the same sentence said pointing to its stern,[29] then we need the information about the way in which the ship is identified in each utterance in order to explain why the subject is not involved in a contradiction. Therefore, with respect to such cases, Evans concludes that 'if our only conception of Russellian [i.e. object-dependent] thoughts is the ordered-couple conception, then we shall have no coherent characterisation to give' (ibid., p. 84).

This explains why an ascription of object-dependent thought must identify how the subject identifies the object, i.e. why it must fulfil (ii) above. Such identification is required in order to avoid ascribing contradictory attitudes in cases like that mentioned. But this is not a sufficient condition for a canonical ascription of object-dependent thought. What the ordered-couple conception gets right, in Evans's and McDowell's view, is that one must identify which object an object-dependent thought is about, i.e. fulfil (i) above. Evans does not discuss why this is required, but he seems to regard it as following from 'Russell's principle', i.e. the principle that one in order to have an object-dependent thought about an object must know which object is in question (see Evans 1982, pp. 65, 89-92). If one does not identify which object the thought is about in the ascription of thought, there will clearly be an

---

[28] Also McDowell (1977, p, 173, n. 1) provides this account of the relationship between transparent and notational or 'opaque' reports.

[29] The example is a version of Perry's (1977, p. 483) example.

essential feature of the thought that one has left out. McDowell, by contrast, offers a deeper reason for requiring that the object in question must be identified in the ascription. An ascription that only identifies the way in which the subject thinks about the object, but which does not specify which object is in question, would constitute what McDowell calls an 'intrinsic characterisation' of the thought. This is a characterisation that 'would have succeeded in specifying the essential core of the thought even if extra-mental reality had not obliged by containing the object' (McDowell 1977, p. 174). Thus, an intrinsic characterisation would not characterise an object-dependent thought at all, but rather a thought that is independent of the object it is about. Moreover, McDowell holds that to conceive of thought in the way described by an intrinsic characterisation is to adopt a 'Cartesian' conception of the mind, bringing with it a form of scepticism from which there is no escape (see chapter three). This constitutes a deeper reason for rejecting an intrinsic characterisation.

The way to fulfil both (i) and (ii) and achieve both identification of how the subject thinks about an object and identification of the object in question is, McDowell suggests, to make an ascription of thought by oneself expressing the thought in question. He writes:

> This alternative [i.e. McDowell's alternative to the ordered-couple conception] exploits the idea that in order to specify a thought-content, which one does typically in a "that" clause, *one must express the thought oneself.* [Footnote: This idea is well captured by, though does not require, the view of "that" clauses suggested by Davidson (1969).] In this context, a singular thought is a thought which one cannot ascribe to someone, or assign as the content of an assertion, without oneself making a reference to the appropriate object. (McDowell 1982, p. 307, my emphasis.)

The suggestion by Davidson referred to here is the view that a report such as 'He said that that apple is green' is to be analysed as an utterance of two sentences as follows: 'He said that. That apple is green.' The demonstrative 'that' of the first sentence refers to the thought expressed by one's utterance of the second sentence. By uttering the second sentence one expresses the same thought as the subject being reported expressed. It is immediately clear that a thought-ascription like this identifies the object in question, as (i) requires, since the object is referred to by the person making the ascription. Moreover, the way in which the subject thought about

the object can be identified by such ascriptions too, as (ii) requires, if the reporter refers to the object in the same way as the person being reported did.

With this view of ascriptions of object-dependent thought in place, let us now turn to mock thought scenarios. I will suggest that the outlined view of ascriptions of thought can be extended to a view of ascriptions of appearances of thought. Consider a subject, John, who is situated in a set-up designed by cunning scientists to produce a hallucinatory perceptual experience as of there being an apple before one. In response to a task the scientists present him with, John takes himself to have an object-dependent thought about what he takes to be a perceivable apple before him. Let us call the mental event wherein things cognitively seem thus to John 'mental event A'. It is evident that on Evans's and McDowell's view of ascriptions of object-dependent thought there can be no canonical ascription of an object-dependent thought to John, since no reference can be made to the appropriate object. Indeed, if Evans and McDowell are right that the subject is not thinking, then there can be no ascription of thought at all, since there is no thought to ascribe. But it is also clear that if there are other subjects exposed to the same hallucinatory set-up as John is, they can take themselves to be ascribing an object-dependent thought to John by making reference to what they take to be the apple in question. This, I think, suggests that there is something to get about how things cognitively were for John in mental event A, even if there should be no thought-content John entertains. So, insofar as there is something to get about how things cognitively seemed to John we may ask: Is there a canonical ascription of this appearance of object-dependent thought, paralleling the canonical ascription of object-dependent thought that Evans and McDowell defend?

My reason for asking for a canonical appearance-ascription, and not just an appearance-ascription of some kind or other, is that one clearly can describe John's situation for example as I have just done in setting out the example and thereby ascribe an appearance of object-dependent thought to him. But this ascription only describes the general way things appear to John, i.e. that it appears to him that he is thinking in the object-dependent way about an apple. We may add that it seems to him that he is thinking about a specific apple. But this description is still general in that it does not identify the particular apple in question. Of course, there is no such apple as it seems to John that he is thinking about, so it cannot be identified. But I think one may be able to identify the particularity of the apple that John takes himself

to be thinking about; this seems to be what fellow subjects situated in the mock thought scenario do when they take themselves to be making reference to what they take John to have been thinking about.

The point that there is particularity to the subject's appearance, which others may or may not be in a position to appreciate, is something Evans and McDowell seem to accept as well. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the appearance in a mock thought scenario cannot be told apart from the appearance involved in a genuine case of object-dependent thought. So, given that it in the latter case seems to one that one has an object-dependent thought about a particular object, that is also how it appears in the former case. To elucidate, consider the following modification of the example just rendered. Suppose that John in mental event A, i.e. when taking himself to be thinking about the green apple that the set-up produces a hallucination of, is in fact placed before a green apple that he cannot see, such that this apple occupies the region where he takes the hallucinated apple to be.[30] Neither Evans nor McDowell would say that it seems to John that he is thinking about the apple which is in fact there, and that he is having an object-dependent thought.[31] It cognitively appears to John that there is a particular apple he is thinking about; it does not just appear that he is thinking about an apple that is green and present before him.

It is clear that if we can identify the particularity of what seems to be the object thought about, then we can always retreat to a more general description of the appearance, e.g. it may be described as an appearance of thought about an apple. This is similar to how Evans and McDowell think we can retreat from a notational to a transparent report of object-dependent thoughts. For this reason, I suggest that the canonical ascription of an appearance of object-dependent thought, which parallels Evans's and McDowell's view of canonical thought-ascriptions of such thoughts, is

---

[30] This sort of set-up is called a 'veridical hallucination', and is originally due to an example from Grice (1961, p. 142). See Martin (2002, pp. 183-184) and Soteriou (2000) for discussion of this set-up in relation to perceptual experience.

[31] For Evans, this is because John is attempting an 'information-based' thought, and such thought will only be object-dependent if it is about the object from which the information it is based on derives (see chapter four for elaboration). McDowell, by contrast, holds that both perception and singular thought involves that the subject directs his or her mind towards the world, and that the world offers up an object in the relevant place (see chapter three for elaboration). In the present example, John directs his mind at something different than what the world offers up, and hence there is no object-dependent thought.

one that fulfils the following two conditions: (i*) It identifies the particularity of the object that a subject like John takes himself to be thinking about, and (ii*) it identifies the way in which the particular object appears to be thought about. With regard to ascriptions of object-dependent thought, we saw that McDowell suggests that the way to make a canonical ascription fulfilling both of the corresponding conditions (i) and (ii) is for the reporter to make an utterance that *expresses* the object-dependent thought. By analogy, I stipulate that the way to make a canonical ascription of an appearance of object-dependent thought that fulfils (i*) and (ii*) is for the reporter to make an utterance that '*captures*' the appearance. In addition, I will use the notion of '*accessing*' an appearance of thought as paralleling the notion of 'understanding' a thought. In this terminology, our question as to whether bystanders situated outside a mock thought scenario can be made to appreciate how things seem to the subject can be reformulated as follows: Can the subject's appearance of thought be captured in an utterance so that bystanders situated outside a mock thought scenario can access it?

In pursuing the question as to whether we can capture the appearance of object-dependent thought that John had in mental event A, I am assuming a view that Evans and McDowell would not necessarily accept. But as I see it, their view of ascriptions of object-dependent thought naturally extends to the view I assume. The main function of the idea of capturing, however, is to provide a framework within which to explore the nature of the communication between subjects situated inside and outside mock thought scenarios. It facilitates distinguishing between the fine-grained aspects of the appearance of thought that a canonical ascription, on this view, identifies. I do not mean to deny that these fine-grained aspects can be appreciated by the use of many sentences, forming a thorough description of the situation. In fact, in chapter four I will suggest that a subject can be enabled to think about a particular object in the object-dependent way through discussion about it. The point in this chapter, however, is to examine whether the particularity of what appears to be a thought-content about a particular object can be canonically ascribed in a similar way to how object-dependent thought-content can.

2.2   *A thought experiment*

By drawing on Evans's and McDowell's view of canonical ascriptions of object-dependent thought, I have defined what it is to capture an appearance of thought. This is to make an utterance that identifies both the particularity of the object that the subject takes himself or herself to be thinking about and the way in which this object appears to be thought about. In this section, I will clarify how I think such identification can be achieved in relatively easy cases, and I will set up a thought experiment for a hard case.

How can capturing be achieved in a mock thought scenario? That is, how can one identify the particularity of what appears to be the object one thinks about, if there is no object present? In some mock thought scenarios, this can, like in cases of genuine object-dependent thought, be done by identifying a particular object. Suppose, for instance, that a subject is presented with a hologram of a familiar person, but fails to recognise that it is just a hologram. When the subject takes himself or herself to be thinking an object-dependent thought expressible by 'That person is William', the particularity of what according to Evans and McDowell would be a mere appearance of thought can plausibly be identified by identifying William.[32] In the case of our abovementioned subject John, by contrast, things are not so straightforward. Insofar as there is no particular apple displayed in the set-up – if the set-up induces a hallucinatory experience of a computer-generated image, for instance – there is no particular apple that one can identify. Still, insofar as it seems to one that one is having an object-dependent thought, it seems to one that one is thinking about a particular apple.

Another relatively easy case for identifying the particularity of the object thought about occurs when the subjects who perform the identification are situated inside the mock thought scenario. For instance, consider a subject who enjoys a hallucinatory experience produced by the same set-up as what produces John's experience. Such a subject cannot in fact identify the apple that John takes himself to be thinking about, since there is no such apple. But the subject can *take it* that he or she identifies the apple. For instance, he or she may by uttering 'That apple is green'

---

[32] The subject will, however, not be having an object-dependent thought, because the way the subject thinks about William, i.e. as that person, purports but fails to be demonstrative. This is especially clear if one accepts Evans's claim that the subject must be able to locate an object in egocentric space in order to think demonstratively about it (Evans 1982, pp. 151-170).

take himself or herself to be expressing the thought John had in mental event A. In this way, the subject seems to be able to identify the particularity of the object in a way that other subjects in the same situation can appreciate, although he or she does not thereby identify the object.

However, even if John's appearance of thought can be captured by an utterance such that subjects situated in the same set-up access it, it is not at all clear that subjects outside the mock thought scenario can access the appearance by hearing this utterance. John and his fellow subjects situated inside the mock thought scenario will probably seek to capture the appearance of thought by using a sentence to make an utterance that, in the subjects view, expresses what is taken to be his or her object-dependent thought. Call this sentence 'S'. In John's case, I take it that S is the sentence 'That apple is green'. Does John's utterance of S capture the appearance of thought such that subjects outside the mock thought scenario can access it? Not necessarily. For things are not as John and his fellow subjects take them to be. The circumstances with respect to which John takes it that an utterance of S expresses a certain thought are non-actual circumstances. But this provides no reason for thinking that an utterance of S captures the appearance of thought in the *actual* circumstances, which is what it would need to do if it is to capture the appearance such that subjects outside the mock thought scenario who know the truth about John's situation can access it.

It is thus clear that, by contrast to the two sorts of cases mentioned, the hard case for capturing an appearance of thought occurs when there is no such object as what the subject takes it that he or she is thinking about, and when the context in which one seeks to capture the appearance is not the context of the mock thought scenario. This is the sort of case on which I will focus when considering the possibility of capturing appearances of thought. In particular, I will focus on the case where the person making the appearance-ascription to John is not situated in the experimental set-up. This person may be John himself after he has been released from the scientists' experiment. Thus, we may consider the following question:

> When John has made the discovery that the apple that he seemed to be thinking about does not exist, will it be possible for him to make an utterance that captures what it seemed to him that he was thinking in mental event A?

In asking this question, I will be presupposing that when John discovers that he was subject to a set-up that induced in him a perceptual hallucination he comes to know the truth. He does not come to form another misconception about his situation. This means that asking whether it is possible for John to capture what he seemed to be thinking is equivalent to asking whether it is in general possible to capture what it seemed to John that he was thinking when one knows the truth. Thus, John's capacity for capturing the appearance of thought is not limited by any epistemic constraints. On the contrary, the reason for asking about *John's* capacity for capturing what he seemed to be thinking is that John has an epistemically advantageous position compared to others: If there is anything in virtue of which a certain utterance of a sentence can be claimed capture what it seemed to John that he was thinking, it must be how things cognitively seemed to John in mental event A. It is only John who has access to this through memory, independently of any utterance that captures it.

Furthermore, in considering the question above, I will neither presuppose nor exclude Evans's and McDowell's view that a subject entertains no thought at all in a mock thought scenario. I remain neutral with regard to whether John's appearance of thought is an appearance of a genuine object-dependent thought or a mere appearance of object-dependent thought. This means that talk about capturing of appearances will reduce to talk about expressing thoughts if John is thinking. In that case, the sentence used to capture the appearance of thought expresses the thought entertained.

The remainder of the chapter is concerned with the thought experiment just set up and the question as to whether or not John can use a sentence to capture what it seemed to him that he was thinking in mental event A. The next section introduces a complication of the question by focussing on an example Frege mentions, which is similar to but more extreme than the situation John finds himself in when he seeks to capture the appearance of thought by making an utterance. I return to discuss how Frege's example relates to the case of John in section four.

2.3   Reinterpretation

I mentioned in the previous section that whether a given utterance captures John's appearance of thought seems to depend on in which context it is interpreted, e.g. inside or outside the mock thought scenario. In the present section, I will make this idea more vivid by combining two ideas found in Frege's and Evans's writing respectively. Although it is a conclusion neither Frege nor Evans draw, I will suggest that combining these ideas leaves us with several equally good options as to how an utterance is to be interpreted when there has been a change in belief in the existence of the referent of a singular term in the sentence used to make the utterance.

In Frege's discussion of 'fiction', which is a term that in his usage refers to a region of thought and language use within which sense without reference can be permitted, Frege considers a situation similar to the situation John is in when he discovers that the apple he took himself to be thinking about does not exist. The situation that Frege considers, however, is more comprehensive in that it concerns far more than one subject on one occasion possibly mistakenly taking it that he or she has a certain thought. In fact, Frege considers the case of a whole community of speakers making a discovery analogous to, but more significant than, John's discovery that he was subject to a perceptual hallucination; the community discovers that idealism is true. With this discovery, Frege suggests, the possibility of 'reinterpretation' arises. In 'Logic' from 1897, Frege writes:

> If the idealist theory of knowledge is correct then all the sciences would belong to the realm of fiction. Indeed one might try to reinterpret all sentences in such a way that they were about ideas. By doing this, however, their sense would be completely changed and we should obtain quite a different science; this new science would be a branch of psychology. (Frege 1979, p. 130.)

Frege here identifies two different ways of regarding the sentences used in the sciences after a discovery of the truth of idealism. He first mentions that the sentences could be regarded as belonging to the realm of fiction, i.e. that they would be without reference. Thus, Frege here draws on an idea we may label *Objectivity*: How things are – e.g. whether things are such that idealism is true or not – decides, at least in part, to which region of thought and language use sentences belong. Secondly, however, Frege also admits the possibility of what we may label *Reinterpretation*: There is the alternative possibility of assigning reference to the

sentences by reinterpreting them in accordance with the idealist world view. In particular, we may reinterpret them in such a way that their truth now turns on the mind-dependent, whereas we previously took their truth to turn on the mind-independent. For instance, the sentence 'Hubble is eleven kilograms' may be reinterpreted to be about ideas. It is far from straightforward to see how this can be done, but presumably it would involve conceiving of the property of having mass as a property of ideas, and conceiving of the name 'Hubble' as referring to something that is constituted by one's own consciousness. In any case, Frege's central idea is that by reinterpreting the sentences this way 'their sense would be completely changed'. We would be grasping different thoughts by understanding the same sentences. Reinterpretation, therefore, is a matter of assigning new sense to old sentences.

One might baulk at the fact that Frege here seems to think that a sentence can be assigned a *new sense* when it is discovered that it belongs to the realm of fiction. In other passages, Frege seems to say that no change in sense results from such a discovery. For instance, he describes a case where it turns out that the name 'Odysseus' does refer to a man after all, and he concludes:

> The thoughts would strictly remain the same; they would only be transposed from the realm of fiction to that of truth. So the object designated by a proper name seems to be quite inessential to the thought-content of a sentence which contains it. (ibid, p 191).[33]

The discovery that 'Odysseus' refers is here taken to effect a change of discourse, in accordance with the idea I labelled 'Objectivity'. But that is all. No reinterpretation occurs; the thoughts 'strictly remain the same'. Why does Frege here exclude the possibility of reinterpretation? My guess is that Frege considers the possibility of reinterpretation only in the idealism example, because only here is the nature of other

---

[33] It should be mentioned that Frege describes the example as a case where 'we have convinced ourselves, contrary to our former opinion, that the name 'Odyeesus', as it occurs in the Odyssey, does designate a man after all' (ibid.). Thus, it might seem as if Frege is concerned only with *belief* in the existence of a referent, rather than the discovery that the name *in fact* has a referent. But the surrounding context makes this reading unnatural. Bach (2010, p. 49), Bell (1990, pp. 272-274) and Peacocke (1981, p. 197) also read Frege as here being concerned with existence rather than belief in existence of the referent.

beliefs about the referent radically affected by the change in belief about the referent's existence. What we understand by Odysseus being a king and a seafarer does not change, Frege seems to think, when we come to believe that he existed. We may simply add to our previous make-believe understanding that he existed. By contrast, what we understand by Hubble having mass and being a space telescope may be radically changed when we come to believe that idealism is true. The understanding *need* not be radically changed: As we saw above, Frege thinks we have the option of keeping fixed our understanding of what it is to have mass and to regard the change in belief as concerning only the existence of the referent. But he also thinks there is the second option of reinterpreting what having mass is and what being a space telescope is, thereby providing new referents and new senses for the sciences' sentences. This demonstrates that not just any change in belief in the existence of the referent suffices for reinterpretation, according to Frege. It must be a change significant enough that it alternatively can be regarded as a change in belief about the *nature* rather than the existence of the referent.

In summary, Frege's idea about reinterpretation can be stated as follows:

(Reinterpretation$_{Sentence}$) A sentence *may* be understood to express different thoughts by subjects who have differing beliefs about the existence of the referent of a singular term in the sentence.

I emphasise that it *may* be understood to express a different thought, because it also may not; Frege thinks we have two options, provided that the change in belief is significant enough. After Frege, it has become more common to conceive of *utterances of* sentences as expressing thoughts, rather than sentences in abstraction from use. So, if we qualify Frege's idea accordingly, we may reformulate Reinterpretation$_{Sentence}$ as follows:

(Reinterpretation$_{Utterance}$) An utterance of a sentence containing a singular term *may* be understood to express different thoughts by subjects who have differing beliefs about the existence of the referents of the singular terms in the sentence.

Is this idea defensible? Frege provides no explicit argument. However, I expect most theorists will agree that the meaning of words is influenced by changes in belief about the referent. It is an evident phenomenon that words change their meaning over time because of changes in use, and at least some of the changes in use seem to be due to changes in belief about the referent, e.g. a word comes to be used to refer to something that is believed to be a mammal rather than a fish, as was the case for the natural kind term 'whale'. Frege's idea about reinterpretation seems to be an application of the same idea to the understanding of earlier used sentences. The idea does not seem to be that we are recycling sentences to be used for different purposes. Rather, we are interpreting the use of old sentences uttered at an earlier time in a new way. We have re-interpretation, not re-use. Frege seems to think that neither the old nor the new interpretation is the 'real' sense expressed. Instead, there are two interpretations, each equally legitimate as such. It is for this reason that we after the discovery of idealism's truth have two options, according to Frege: Either to interpret the sentences – or the utterances – as one did before and as fictional, or to reinterpret them.

However, this is not to say that a given utterance of a sentence in the sciences can be *correctly* interpreted in more than one way. It can be maintained, as Frege may want to maintain, that the correct interpretation is the one made in accordance with the speaker's beliefs. This would mean that when a realist spoke before the discovery of the truth of idealism, he or she is to be understood as speaking within fictional discourse, although one, as an idealist, may reinterpret and *mis*understand the utterance as stating a truth about a mind-dependent object.

This view is challenged by Evans. Although Evans puts quite demanding conditions on entertaining and understanding object-dependent thoughts, he holds it to be relatively easy to express such thoughts. In particular, although he thinks a subject must be 'acquainted' with an object in order to think and understand object-dependent thoughts about it (see chapter four), he puts no such constraint on expression of object-dependent thoughts. There is no constraint because 'a subject may exploit a linguistic device which he does not himself properly understand'

(Evans 1982, p. 92).[34] Thus, a subject may be expressing other thoughts than what he or she takes it that he or she is expressing. Evans explains that when his claim about the ease of expression seems obviously true to many contemporary discussants, this is because one, unlike Frege and Russell, conceives of language as a social phenomenon. There are facts about how expressions can be used in a linguistic community. A speaker who is confused about what these facts are may fail to appreciate what he or she is in fact saying. But, because of the community-relative facts, other members of the linguistic community may correctly understand the speaker's utterance, despite the speaker's own confusion. (See Evans 1982, pp. 67-69.) Thus, the interpretation of an utterance is independent of the subject's own interpretation of it:

(Independent Expression)   A subject may make an utterance that expresses a certain thought even if he or she takes the utterance to express a different thought.

Although Evans's idea concerns what a linguistic expression is used to express, the idea has a natural extension to what a linguistic expression is used to capture, insofar as what is central to the idea is the opacity of which use one makes of linguistic expressions. I take Evans's general conviction to be that a subject may be able to use a linguistic expression in a certain way without himself or herself recognising or believing this to be so. Thus, capturing appearances of thought, like expressing thoughts, can be held to be independent of the subject's interpretation in the following sense:

(Independence)   A subject may make an utterance that captures an appearance of thought even if he or she takes the utterance to capture a different appearance of thought.

---

[34] As Sullivan notes (2010, p. 257), the distinction between sufficient conditions for expressing versus entertaining singular thought is broadly defended, also by those who deny that acquaintance is required for singular thought, such as Kaplan (1978).

Let us now combine Reinterpretation_{Utterance} with Independence. The question left hanging if we accept Independence is the following: If it is not the speaker's interpretation of his or her own utterance that settles what it expresses or captures, then what does? With regard to singular thoughts, Evans thinks it is whether the singular term has a referent that determines whether the utterance of a sentence containing it expresses a singular thought or no thought at all. So, although he rejects that the speaker's intention settles the interpretation of an utterance, he does think that there is *one* correct interpretation of the utterance.

The problem, however, is that if we accept Frege's idea about reinterpretation, the question as to whether a singular term has a referent is not as easily answered as Evans imagines. Consider Frege's example again. Up until the discovery that idealism is true, realists will have taken their utterances of sentences like 'Hubble is eleven kilograms' to have mind-independent objects as their referents. But, in fact, their belief that these mind-independent objects exist is false, given the truth of idealism. Did singular terms like 'Hubble' have referents when the realists made utterances by using sentences containing them? Well, that depends on whether their utterances are interpreted in the way that realists would understand them, or if they are reinterpreted in the way that idealists would understand them. In the former case, the singular terms would lack referents, since there are no mind-independent objects. In the latter case, by contrast, the singular terms would have mind-dependent entities as their referents. So, if we combine Reinterpretation_{Utterance} and Independence, we are left without any single answer as to whether the realists' utterances express thoughts about mind-independent entities.

Let me call the problem just sketched 'the problem of reinterpretation'. The problem is to decide how the speaker's utterance is to be interpreted, when we are left without any single answer to this due to the possibility of reinterpretation. It is clear that if this problem pertains to John's situation, it presents a complication for the question as to whether John after the discovery that he enjoyed a hallucinatory experience of an apple can capture the appearance of thought had in mental event A. Whatever sentence or sentences John uses to seek to do this, there will then be several interpretations of his utterance. In the next section, I argue that this complication does arise in John's case. I will argue that reinterpretation is a more general phenomenon than Frege appears to think, and that it in this general form is

close to a weakened version of what Evans calls 'Russell's principle'. I will also present my preferred response to the problem of reinterpretation.

2.4 Belief-dependence and content relativism

As I mentioned above, Frege seems to think that the possibility of reinterpretation arises only when the nature of other beliefs about the referent is radically affected by the change in belief about the purported referent's existence. Only then can the discovery that the object does not exist alternatively be taken as a discovery that the object does exist but has a different nature than what one assumed. This can make one doubt that the example concerning John set out in section two is a case where the problem of reinterpretation arises. The change in beliefs may not seem radical enough to make reinterpretation arise as a possibility.

However, if this is one's view, one will be committed to imposing an arbitrary cut-off point for when the possibility of reinterpretation arises. When is a discovery significant enough to radically affect one's other belief about the purported referent? In my view, the preferable alternative to seeking to answer this question is to conceive of *any* discovery concerning a purported referent's existence as effecting a small change in one's beliefs. I think the difference between Frege's example concerning idealism and John's case is comparable to the difference in physics between cases that require using Relativistic versus Newtonian mechanics. In the latter cases, the inadequacy of Newtonian mechanics is unnoticeable, but as a matter of fact it is still the relativistic laws that determine the behaviour of also these objects. Analogously, I suggest that although the change in our beliefs about the nature of the object may be very small and indeed negligible for the purpose of successful communication in cases like that of John, it is nevertheless there. So, if one accepts that utterances may be reinterpreted as a result of a change in belief about the existence of the purported referent, then I think one should accept that it occurs in all cases, and that the difference between the original interpretation and the reinterpretation may be minimal.

But should one, in the first place, accept that utterances may be reinterpreted? I think one should. Support for the idea about reinterpretation can be gained by considering an idea that bears close connection to it and that figures in Evans's writing as a weakened version of what Evans calls 'Russell's principle'. Let me set

out what Evans's idea is and how it can be motivated, before I explain its connection to Frege's idea about reinterpretation.

What Evans calls 'Russell's principle' says that in order to entertain a singular thought one must 'know which' object the thought is about (Evans 1982, pp. 65, 89-92). Knowing which object is in question is spelled out as an ability to discriminate the object from all others (although the range of objects among which it can be discriminated may be restricted (see ibid., pp. 278-284)). However, in the course of giving an argument for object-dependent thoughts, Evans builds on the following lemma:

> [E]ven though it is possible to possess information in the absence of belief, it does not appear to be possible to bring this information to bear, coherently, upon the interpretation of a referential remark, unless one believes that there is a particular object to which the speaker is referring, and to which the information concerned is faithful. (Evans 1982, p. 330.)

This claim is, in effect, a weakened form of what Evans calls Russell's principle. The passage says that a requirement for singular thought is, not that one *knows* which object the thought is about, but that one *believes* that there is a particular object that the thought is about. In other words, the claim is that singular thought is what we may call 'belief-dependent':

(Belief-Dependence) In order to entertain and understand singular thoughts one must
                      believe in the existence of the object that the thought is about.

Evans's argument for belief-dependence is in brief the following. He claims that what it is to understand an utterance of 'That F is G' is to 'bring the information to bear' on the interpretation of the remark, where by 'information' Evans means general and nonconceptual content individuated by reference to its source. Then he adds that to bring the information to bear thus is to form the belief that there is an object from which the information derives and that this object is G. This argument presupposes that one already accepts Evans's view of 'information-based thought'. However, I think there is a less theory-laden motivation for Belief-Dependence.

The central idea behind Belief-Dependence is that one's cognitive powers for understanding and entertaining thought are affected by the content of one's beliefs.

One's ability to understand an utterance of a sentence containing a singular term is lost once one loses one's belief in the existence of the purported referent of the term. It is clear that this idea involves a demanding notion of understanding. How can this demanding notion be motivated? One observation that I think counts in its favour is that there seems to be some things about a thought that one does not "get" without having the requisite beliefs. For instance, if one as a realist seeks to understand an idealist's utterance of 'This chair is a mind-dependent entity', one thing one does not get about that utterance is its truth (supposing that it is true). Perhaps it will be suggested that one can get its truth if one pretends that idealism is true. But also then, there is something about the idealist's understanding that one does not get, I think. One does not get how its truth links up with one's own reality, with the tables and chairs one spends one's life among. One only conceives of the utterance as true within the pretence. Moreover, when one is pretending, one's conception of the utterance is significant in a different way than when one relates to utterances without pretending. As for instance Walton (1990) notes, one's incentive to act as a consequence of taking utterances to be true within pretence is absent; e.g. one does not stand up to defend a person who is being wrongly accused of murder on the theatre stage. Similarly, if one as an atheist pretends that God exists in order to seek to conceive of a believer's utterance of 'God created all there is' as true, this will not make one haste to the nearest church to pray for forgiveness for one's sins. This shows, I think, that there is an aspect of these utterances that the realist and the atheist do not get. If they did get it, it would have a stronger influence on their belief system and their behaviour. Of course, one may here object that having such a strong influence does not matter for one's ability to understand and entertain the thought expressed. I have no good response to this objection. Thus, admittedly, the considerations presented may be better suited to serve as statements of what accepting Belief-Dependence involves than as a motivation for it, but my hope is that these statements speak in its favour. At the very least, they bring out the sort of differences that according to Belief-Dependence matter to differences in understanding.

Let us now turn to the connection between Belief-Dependence and Reinterpretation$_{Utterance}$. The outlined motivation for the former also can serve to motivate an aspect of the latter, on the basis of an overlap between these ideas. According to Belief-Dependence, one's ability to understand an utterance of a

sentence containing a singular term like 'Hubble' or 'that apple' will alter if one loses one's belief in the purported referent of the singular term. Note that this idea also can be put the other way around: Coming to believe in the existence of the referent of a singular term like 'Hubble' or 'that apple' makes it possible to come to understand utterances one did not understand before. In this latter guise, the claim is similar to the idea about reinterpretation. It says that belief influences the understanding of utterances. However, Belief-Dependence does not imply, as the idea about reinterpretation involves, that one can understand the utterance in a different way by converting disbelief in the existence of the purported referent into a change in belief about the nature of the referent. But also this further claim can be motivated, I think. In particular, there is a central objection made against the view that singular thought is belief-dependent to which the best response, in my view, is to adopt the view that lack of belief in the existence of the referent enables a different understanding of the utterance. Let us therefore consider the objection and some responses to it. This response will also guide us towards my favoured response to the problem of reinterpretation.

The claim that understanding and entertaining a singular thought requires belief in the existence of the object it is about is often met with bafflement. It is objected that it is hard to accept that subjects who, rightly or wrongly, do not believe that some object exists fail to understand utterances about these objects. As John Hawthorne and David Manley put it: 'It is hard to take seriously the suggestion that, for example, Hartry Field [who does not believe that numbers exist] does not understand the arithmetical part of natural language' (2012, p. 90).[35]

This point need not force us to reject that singular thought is belief-dependent, however. All that needs to be done is to avoid the consequence that a disbelieving subject fails to understand utterances of sentences containing singular terms. At least three suggestions for avoiding this conclusion are available.

(i) One option would be to claim that the subject can understand and entertain singular thoughts by *presupposing* that the relevant beliefs are true. In my view, this suggestion should be resisted, because presupposing a belief to be true cannot

---

[35] A similar point is made by Blackburn (1984, p. 319). The question as to whether understanding is conditioned by belief and knowledge is discussed at length by Williamson (2007, pp. 73-133) in relation to analytic sentences and thoughts. He similarly thinks there is need for conceiving of understanding as possible in the absence of belief.

perform the same psychological role as having it. Beliefs do not seem to be the sorts of things one can choose to have (see Williams 1973), whereas presuppositions can be made and dropped at will. It thus seems that making a presupposition cannot suffice for getting oneself into the same state of mind as one is in when one believes. Thus, if one wants to defend Belief-Dependence, appeal to presuppositions does not seem to provide a satisfactory reply to Hawthorne and Manley's objection.

However, it is worth observing that the view that understanding is facilitated by making the relevant presuppositions can be used to further substantiate the objection from Hawthorne and Manley, as follows: It is hard to take seriously the suggestion that Field does not understand the arithmetical part of natural language, because he *can* understand it by making the relevant presuppositions, where making a presupposition need not involve adopting a belief and may instead involve merely "accepting" the presupposition for some other reason than that it is believed to be true.[36] So, *pace* the defender of Belief-Dependence, belief is unnecessary for understanding. In response to this version of the objection, the best defence I can think of is to appeal to the sort of considerations that I above used to motivate Belief-Dependence. In short, the reply is that when making presuppositions, as when pretending or engaging in a game of make-belief, there is something one does not get about the utterance, for instance in the sense that the content acquires a different significance with regard to one's actions. This reply does not constitute a conclusive argument for the more demanding notion of understanding, but at least it serves to identify what is at issue between a defender of Belief-Dependence and a defender of the mentioned view of presuppositions and understanding.

(ii) A different suggestion that can be made in order to avoid Hawthorne and Manley's objection would be to claim that, although the mode of presentation of a singular term cannot be *employed* without the relevant beliefs, it can be *referred to*, and that the latter is sufficient for understanding a thought containing it. The idea is that by thinking about or referring to other people's mode of presentation and their thoughts one can *understand* their thoughts, although one is not *entertaining* their thoughts.[37] With regard to the present discussion, this distinction may be applied as

---

[36] This is argued by Stalnaker (2002, p. 716) and Sainsbury (2010, pp. 145-148).

[37] Peacocke (1981) holds this view with regard to indexicals. A similar idea is advocated by Recanati (2012, pp. 181-192) when he claims that mental files can be used 'vicariously'.

follows. When for example Hartry Field does arithmetic, he cannot be entertaining the thought that 2+2=4, since he does not believe in numbers. But he can nevertheless understand this thought by referring to other people's way of thinking about numbers. On this view, Field's understanding consists in taking a third person perspective on the thought, a perspective that is at a remove from the perspective of subjects who entertain it. While I think adopting this suggestion may be a possible way to proceed for a defender of Belief-Dependence, I would prefer to avoid it. Especially with regard to a thought like 2+2=4, it seems to me that in order to deserve being credited with understanding of it, taking a third person perspective on the thought does not suffice. One must have thought it through, as we might say, or one must have done the sum mentally. Although it is hard to say precisely what such mental operations amount to, it seems clear that they involve thinking about numbers, and not about the way other people think about numbers. If Field only thinks about or refers to other people's way of thinking about numbers, then it seems to me that, if he thereby gains understanding of something, the object of his understanding is not the thought that 2+2=4, but rather a certain part of other people's cognitive life.

(iii) The most promising suggestion for avoiding Hawthorne and Manely's objection, I think, would be to say that, even though someone like Hartry Field cannot understand the arithmetical part of natural language in the way that those who believe in the existence of numbers do, he can correctly understand it to express a *different* thought. He can correctly understand it thus even though that is not how the speaker would understand it. The general view that an utterance can be correctly interpreted in different ways relative to different interpreters has been developed and defended by Herman Cappelen (2008) as 'content relativism'. Cappelen argues for this view by considering various kinds of linguistic expressions (indexicals, conditionals, epistemic modals and certain predicates used in instructions, orders and laws) and how utterances made by using sentences containing them plausibly vary with different interpreters. For instance, he considers the instruction 'Move suspicious packages away from crowds' directed at airport employees. What should here count as suspicious is interpreter-relative and is to be judged by the employee rather than compared to some airport-fixed standard of suspiciousness, Cappelen claims. To avoid Hawthorne and Manley's objection against Belief-Dependence, content relativism can be adopted for utterances made by using singular terms, letting

interpretations vary with varying beliefs about the term's purported referent. To believe, like Field does, that the purported referent of a number term '2' is an abstract object and that it does not exist is to have a different belief about the purported referent than, say, what a mathematical Platonist has. The idea is that this difference will influence the understanding of utterances of sentences containing number terms.

In my view, one independent reason for adopting content relativism for singular terms stems from consideration of which assertions subjects with different beliefs about the purported referent are prepared to accept. Being a mathematical Platonist who holds that abstract mathematical objects like numbers exist one may find a fictionalist's claim like the following not only false but also quite alienating: 'That 2+2=4 is not literally true'. Although one may think one is in no doubt about what is being said, it may be hard to understand where the claim is coming from, especially if one has not studied the fictionalist's position in great detail. But to a fictionalist the claim seems very natural. Now, what I think recommends content relativism about such utterances is the following consideration: If we posit that the fictionalist's understanding of claims like that mentioned differs from the Platonist's understanding, we will have an explanation as to why the former finds such claims not only true but also natural and why the latter finds them false and alienating. The explanation is that, because the fictionalist has different beliefs about the purported referent of number terms, he or she understands this claim differently from how the Platonist understands it. In general, then, I suggest that positing a difference in understanding between fictionalists and Platonists can explain their differing attitudes towards utterances of sentences containing number terms.

It is clear that this explanation fits well with the motivation I presented above for accepting Belief-Dependence, i.e. the argument for the claim that there is something the realist does not "get" about the idealist's utterance. It is because the Platonist does not quite get or understand the fictionalist's claims that they seem alienating. However, it is equally clear that one also with regard to the explanation I have offered here may maintain that the difference in belief does not affect the subject's understanding, and that an alternative explanation for the differing attitudes can be provided, for instance by appealing to background beliefs. As above, I must in reply to such insistence admit that I have not offered a conclusive reason for

accepting content relativism, and that my considerations are perhaps better suited to explain the conclusions of the view than to defend it.

The content relativist idea just set out as my preferred response to Hawthorne and Manley's objection is similar to the idea about reinterpretation. Both views involve that a difference in belief about the nature of the referent of a singular term leads to a difference in the understanding of utterances made by using sentences containing the term. Moreover, I think content relativism can, similarly to reinterpretation, be understood as an idea that denying the existence of the referent may alternatively be regarded as a change in belief about the nature of the referent. Let me as an end to this section explain how I think this plays out with respect to the example concerning John from section three.

With regard to Frege's example, I mentioned that interpreting an utterance of sentence like 'Hubble is eleven kilograms' in accordance with the idealist world view would plausibly involve taking it as being about something mind-dependent, whereas it before the reinterpretation was taken to be about something mind-independent. Now, what could John's utterance of the sentence 'That apple is green' be reinterpreted as being about when adopting John's new belief that he was hallucinating in mental event A? I suggest that the sentence would be reinterpreted as being about a 'hallucinatory apple', rather than, as John would have said before his discovery, about a perceived apple. By a 'hallucinatory apple', I mean something that is an object for someone, in this case for John. The ground for its existence, however, is not only that John is aware of it; its existence is also grounded in facts about the experimental set-up in which John is situated, and events of speech, thought or appearance of thought. Still, what is special about the hallucinatory apple, compared to ordinary apples, is that awareness of it is necessary for its existence.[38] I think that having the hallucinatory experience does not involve being aware of any hallucinatory apple, and hence this experience does not suffice for bringing a hallucinatory apple into existence. One also needs to be aware of the hallucinatory apple, where this requires an additional mental activity, which I will describe in

---

[38] The Husserl-student Roman Ingarden (1927) defends a similar idea in the philosophy of art. He argues that the aesthetically relevant entity is a purely intentional object whose existence depends both on the physical art object, e.g. the book, and on the subject's apprehension of this object.

chapter three as directedness or "mental attention". I will refer to objects that share these general features with hallucinatory apples as 'conversational objects'.

It is clear that my view does not involve that the hallucinatory apple is a result of engaging in make-believe, as some fictionalists claim (e.g. Walton 1990). The view is neither a Meinongian view, according to which there are non-existent objects, i.e. objects that have being but not existence. I think my view also differs from realist views that postulate the existence of "exotic" entities, such as nonactual or nonconcrete objects (e.g. van Invagen 1977, Voltolini 2006). Although I, like the realists, claim that the hallucinatory apple exists, I also claim that a necessary condition for its existence is that someone is aware of it. Moreover, unlike the realist's exotic objects, a hallucinatory apple is not isolated from concrete and actual reality, since its existence is rooted both in facts about concrete actual objects and in an actual person's awareness of it. The only sense in which a hallucinatory apple is an exotic object is that it is nonconcrete and non-perceptible (although its existence may be grounded in concrete objects). There is a range of everyday things of which the same may be true, e.g. institutions, borders, days, university degrees, handshakes. I would also like to point out that my view differs from many realist views in that I mean to limit the claim that there are conversational objects like hallucinatory apples to the non-fictional case. Thus, I do not mean to assert that there is the conversational object Pegasus, and that this is what we think about when we think about Pegasus. Like Evans (1982, pp. 343-372), I think fictional thought and discourse should receive special theoretical treatment.

The idea that awareness is necessary for the existence of a hallucinatory apple has some resemblance to Mark Sainsbury's (2005, pp. 216-254, 2010a, pp. 62-63, 2010b) idea that 'individual concepts' come into being in an event of attending to an object, or an act which is introspectively indistinguishable from attending to an object. But, unlike Sainsbury's individual concepts in empty cases, a hallucinatory object in my sense is what the thought is about, and not something that is used in thinking. I hold that something is thought about in empty cases, whereas Sainsbury holds that in such cases the individual concept has no referent and the thought is about an object that does not exist (but not a non-existent object).[39]

---

[39] This is his view in Sainsbury (2010a, 2010b). In Sainsbury (2005), by contrast, he claims that '[s]trictly speaking, there is no state of thinking about *something which does not exist*' (ibid., pp. 238).

Let me sum up. The relevance of this and the previous section for the question as to whether John can capture the appearance of thought in mental event A is the following. Firstly, I have argued that the complication of this question, represented by the problem of reinterpretation, does arise for John's case. Moreover, I have motivated acceptance of the idea of reinterpretation by drawing on Evans's idea about belief-dependence and on a version of Cappelen's content relativism, where the latter was presented as the preferable reply to Hawthorne and Manely's objection to belief-dependence. Finally, I have introduced the notion of a hallucinatory object, as that which John's utterance is interpreted as being about if the utterance is reinterpreted in accordance with true beliefs about his situation. In this light, the problem of reinterpretation can be put as follows in John's case. John's utterance of the sentence 'That apple is green', made in order to capture his appearance of thought in mental event A, has at least two possible interpretations. One is that the term 'that apple' has no referent, because the purported referent is a perceivable apple. The second interpretation is that the term refers to a hallucinatory apple.

If content relativism is accepted, then the problem of reinterpretation, i.e. the problem that we the lack a general answer as to how John's utterance is interpreted, is not a threatening problem. The response to the problem will simply be that there is no general answer to be had. This differs from holding that there is no answer at all to be had, i.e. that it is indeterminate which of the two interpretations John's utterance gets. In the next section, I will consider and reject two versions of the latter response to the problem of reinterpretation. Both of these responses imply that John cannot capture the appearance of thought in mental event A. As I will explain in section six, I think this conclusion is correct, but not because of any indeterminacy in interpretation.

2.5   *Indeterminacy of interpretation*

The previous two sections raised a complication of the question as to whether John can capture the appearance of thought in mental event A. The complication is that if John seeks to do this by using the sentence 'That apple is green', then there are two different interpretations of his utterance. On one interpretation, we understand the utterance in accordance with John's belief in mental event A and there is no

object to which the term 'that apple' refers, because there is no perceivable apple for the term to refer to. On the other interpretation, we understand the utterance in accordance with John's beliefs after the discovery that he was hallucinating, and the term 'that apple' refers to a hallucinatory apple. Now, one might think that John's situation and the interpretation his utterance receives is similar to a case that is mentioned by Donald Davidson (1984) as a case where W. V. O. Quine's (1960) thesis of the indeterminacy of translation applies to 'cases nearer to home'. Davidson writes:

> Let someone say … 'There's a hippopotamus in the refrigerator'; am I necessarily right in reporting him as having said that there is a hippopotamus in the refrigerator? Perhaps; but under questioning he goes on, 'It's roundish, has wrinkled skin, does not mind being touched. It has a pleasant taste, at least the juice, and it costs a dime. I squeeze one or two for breakfast.' After some finite amount of such talk we slip over the line where it is plausible or even possible to say correctly that he said there was a hippopotamus in the refrigerator, for it becomes clear he means something else by at least some of his words than I do. The simplest hypothesis by far is that my word 'hippopotamus' no longer translates his word 'hippopotamus'; my word 'orange' might do better. (Davidson 1984, pp. 100-101.)

There are two parallels one may draw between this example and the example concerning John. One is to compare the reporter's dilemma in Davidson's example with John's dilemma as a reporter on his appearance of thought. Another is to compare the reporter's dilemma with the dilemma that *interpreters* face when interpreting an utterance John makes in order to capture the appearance of thought. The former comparison staggers. Davidson's reporter reports an utterance, whereas John reports an appearance of thought, i.e. something that is not tied to the use of words. What is relevant here, however, is the latter comparison. The similarity between the examples that makes this comparison seem apt is this: In Davidson's example it is not clear if the speaker's utterance purports to be about a certain type of animal or a certain type of fruit, and in the example concerning John it is not clear if John's utterance purports to be about a perceivable or a hallucinatory apple.

One might think that Davidson's example is essentially different from the example concerning John, since the utterance, if it is taken as purporting to be about a certain type of fruit, the word 'orange' is word available as a translation of the word 'hippopotamus' used by the speaker. But this difference need not mark a

substantial contrast to the example about John. Suppose that we know Davidson's speaker to have the habit of referring to any orange he encounters as a 'hippopotamus'. Without changing the word, we can then, when speaking among those of us who know this fact about the speaker, report his utterance by switching to his use of the word 'hippopotamus'. That is, we could report him as having said that there is a hippopotamus in the refrigerator and thereby have reported him as purporting to say something about the location of a certain type of fruit. If we did this, we would, instead of translating the speaker's utterance, be using his language ('hippopotamus'-for-orange-English, as we might call it) to report what he said.

Now, if John's utterance is in this way analogous to the speaker's utterance in Davidson's example, then there is a point Davidson makes which would be relevant to John's case as well. According to Davidson, a way to determine which use of the sentence 'There is a hippopotamus in the refrigerator' his speaker should be reported as making is not forthcoming. Davidson writes:

> Hesitation over whether to translate a saying of another by one or another of various non-synonymous sentences of mine does not necessarily reflect a lack of information; it is just that beyond a point there is no deciding, even in principle, between the view that the Other has used words as we do but has more or less weird beliefs, and the view that we have translated him wrong. (Ibid., p. 101.)

The point is that it may simply be indeterminate, in Davidson's example, whether we should report the speaker as having said something about a fruit or an animal. This is because there may be no fact of the matter as to whether this subject has weird beliefs or if he needs to be translated. If the example concerning John is analogous to Davidson's example, then John's utterance is similarly and principally undecidable. The claim would be that also for John's utterance it is not possible to determine its interpretation, because it is not possible to determine whether John in making the utterance had a belief that is 'weird' – i.e. a belief that there is a perceivable apple before him – or if his utterance should be translated – i.e. that the term 'that apple' is taken to refer to a hallucinatory apple. The problem of reinterpretation, i.e. the problem as to how we should interpret John when he seeks to capture the appearance of thought after the discovery that he was hallucinating, would then have no answer at all. This, in turn, would mean that there is no answer as to whether John can

capture the appearance of thought; there is simply no answer as to what the utterance captures or expresses.

However, there is reason to deny this application of Davidson's point in the passage to John's utterance. The application, I just said, involves claiming that it is not clear if John has a 'weird' belief. But unlike the beliefs had by Davidson's speaker, John's beliefs are, by stipulation of the example, settled and known to us. After the discovery, he believes that he was subject to a perceptual hallucination in mental event A; acquiring this belief constitutes his discovery. Hence, it would seem that we are not, as Davidson puts it, beyond a point of no deciding with regard to whether John has weird beliefs (i.e. thinks there is a perceivable apple present) or if we need to translate his utterance (i.e. regard him as speaking about a hallucinatory apple). John does not have weird beliefs. His beliefs are like ours and, *ex hypothesis*, these are the true beliefs. So, despite the similarity that it is not clear either in Davidson's example or in the case of John what type of entity the utterance purports to be about, this lack of clarity is only in Davidson's example and not in John's case due indeterminacy with regard to the speaker's beliefs.

Davidson's idea about indeterminacy is thus not applicable in John's case. However, a second and alternative version of the claim that the interpretation of John's utterance is indeterminate stems from consideration of John's *aim* in seeking to capture the appearance of thought from mental event A. John seems to aim to achieve two things. He wants to capture both that it seemed to him that he was thinking about a perceivable apple and that there can only have been a hallucinatory apple for him to think about. It thus seems like, on the one hand, John attempts to use the term 'that apple' to refer to a perceivable apple, and, on the other hand, he attempts to use it to refer to a hallucinatory apple. In other words, it seems that there are two conflicting ways in which John seeks to use the term 'that apple'; John's attempted usage contains an internal conflict. This conflict, one might think, produces indeterminacy of the interpretation of John's utterance, insofar as facts about how words are attempted to be used matter to the interpretation of the utterance made (which is not to deny that the interpretation can differ from how the speaker intends his or her utterance to be taken, as the principle I labelled 'Independence' asserts).

A structurally similar conflict to that just noted is described by Cora Diamond (2000) with regard to the possibility of understanding someone who is under an

illusion and utters nonsense. Diamond discusses how Wittgenstein can be understood, even if we accept that his assertions are nonsensical. Although John does not regard his utterance A as nonsense and the case in general is very different from what is Diamond's concern, it is worth observing that the conflict Diamond describes is analogous to the one noted here. She outlines the following dilemma as arising for anyone who wants to specify what the illusion of a person who speaks nonsense consists in:

> He wants to be speaking a language in which the sentence that the other person utters have been given sense, because he wants to mean them himself; yet he also wants to remain in the language in which no meaning has been given to those sentences. We could say that he has not got clear what language he wants to be in. (ibid., p. 158.)

Analogously, on the present suggestion, in seeking to capture the appearance of thought in mental event A John wants to do two things. He wants convey that how things seem to him is not the way things were. At the same time, he also wants to explain how things seemed to him cognitively; he wants others to play along with his earlier self and take the singular term 'that apple' to refer to a perceivable apple. There may be long-winded ways of conveying both of these things to others; John can provide an extensive description and present both sides to the appearance of thought, both the internal and external perspective. But if John wants to get both goals fulfilled at once and do what I call 'capture' the appearance (i.e. to provide a canonical appearance-ascription, as set out in section two), then his use of a sentence like 'That apple is green' must be used in two conflicting ways. The singular term 'that apple' would both need to be used to refer to a perceivable apple and to refer to a hallucinatory apple. In short, it would be indeterminate how he wants to use the sentence.

As with regard to the application of Davidson's point to John's case, the described indeterminacy arising as a result of conflicting intentions also leaves us without a solution to the problem of reinterpretation; there would be no answer as to how we are to interpret John's utterance when he seeks to capture the appearance of thought. Without such an answer, we are also left without an answer as to whether John can capture the appearance of thought; there is simply no answer as to what the utterance captures.

As I see it, however, the conflicting ways in which John attempts to use the term 'that apple' need not lead to indeterminacy of interpretation. I think it would sooner lead to what we may call an "open" interpretation, by which I mean an interpretation of John's utterance on which it is not settled whether the term 'that apple' refers to a perceivable or a hallucinatory apple. This constitutes a determinate interpretation of John's utterance. So, conflicting intentions as to how the singular term 'that apple' is aimed to be used need not lead to indeterminacy. Whether the open interpretation is a correct interpretation of John's utterance is however a further question. Moreover, it would require further argument to settle whether John's utterance, on the open interpretation, captures the appearance of thought in mental event A, as he intends it to. I turn to the possibility of providing such an argument in the next section.

I have argued that both versions of indeterminacy of interpretation considered in this section fail to apply in John's case. However, I think the conclusion such indeterminacy leads to, i.e. the conclusion that John cannot capture his appearance of thought, is correct. As I will explain in the next section, I think this conclusion follows from the point that, as far as I can see, there is no viable way to establish that John's utterance of a sentence captures the appearance of thought.

2.6   *A criterion for capturing*

In discussing the problem of reinterpretation, I have focussed on the complication represented by the problem of interpretation, i.e. the problem that there are several interpretations of John's utterance made in an attempt to capture the appearance of thought in mental event A. However, determining the interpretation is only a necessary precondition for answering the question as to whether capturing is possible. In the previous section I argued against analyses according to which this precondition cannot be met. Hence, in this section I will assume the view I argued for in section four, according to which the interpretation of an utterance made by a subject like John is relative to the beliefs of the subjects who interpret him. Given one such interpreter-relative interpretation of John's utterance – e.g. an interpretation on which he purports to speak about a perceivable apple, about a hallucinatory apple, or about either of these (an 'open' interpretation) – the concern of the present section is to answer the following: Can it be established that the utterance thus interpreted

captures the appearance of thought in mental event A? I will argue that commitment to Evans's idea that singular thought is belief-dependent, which I defended in section four, leads to a negative answer to this question.

Note that establishing that a given utterance on a given interpretation captures John's appearance of thought is quite unlike establishing that a given thought is a reinterpretation of an earlier utterance. Frege's idea of reinterpretation, when taken as an idea concerning utterances rather than sentences, amounts to the following. Imagine that the utterances made before the discovery that idealism is true are interpreted after the discovery by idealists, and consider the question: How would these utterances be taken now, if they are taken to express truths (i.e. if we are to avoid taking them as being part of fictional discourse)? On this procedure for reinterpretation, it is in virtue of the sameness of the utterance in question that a thought acquires the status of a reinterpretation, and is not simply counted as a novel thought without any ancestry. By contrast, when assessing whether a certain utterance captures what it seemed to John that he was thinking, we cannot rely on the sameness of any utterance to secure that it is really John's appearance of thought that is captured, and not a novel, unrelated appearance of thought. Thus, we need to find some other means to underwrite the status of an utterance as one that captures John's appearance of thought. In this light, our question about establishing the capture-relation can be sharpened to the following: On what can we rely in order to ensure that what an utterance captures is John's appearance of thought, and not an appearance of thought which is wholly unrelated to John's state of mind in mental event A?

The most natural thing to rely on would be John's memory of the appearance of thought. Recall that the reason why it appeared promising in section two to ask about whether *John* can capture the appearance of thought, and not just whether anyone can do this, was that John is in a particularly favourable epistemic position. John presumably has some access through his memory to what it seemed to him that he was thinking. This is something other subjects lack. So, it is natural to suggest that John's memory of the appearance of thought in mental event A can serve as a measure relative to which the utterance of a given sentence on a given interpretation can be assessed as succeeding in capturing the appearance of thought. But exactly how can John's memory be exploited in order to establish that a given utterance on a given interpretation captures the appearance of thought? Once again we may take our

lead from Frege. Better known than his remark about reinterpretation are his remarks about a criterion for the identity of senses. The general idea is that if two sentences express the same thought, then a subject who is in a position to understand both of them cannot coherently take different attitudes towards the thoughts expressed. Although Frege has many and perhaps conflicting formulations of this criterion, one central statement of the idea is found in 'A Brief Survey of my Logical Doctrines' from 1906, where Frege writes:

> Now two sentences A and B can stand in such a relation that anyone who recognizes the content of A as true must thereby also recognize the content of B as true and, conversely, that anyone who accepts the content of B must straightaway accept that of A. (Frege 1979, p. 197.)[40]

This formulation issues a demand rather than a constraint on the mental behaviour of the subject, as dictated by rationality. Instead of saying, as I formulated the general idea above, that the subject *cannot* coherently take different attitudes towards two sentences that express the same thought, the criterion in this form says that, by taking a certain attitude towards one of the thoughts − by taking it to be true, say − the subject *must thereby* take the same attitude towards the thought expressed by the other sentence. For present purposes, this difference is not essential, but for simplicity I will use the second version in what follows.

Capturing what it seemed to John that he was thinking is of course different from establishing sameness of sense in at least two respects. Firstly, we are holding it open, so as not to prejudge the matter in Evans's and McDowell's disfavour, that what it seemed to John that he was thinking may not be a thought; it may merely appear to be so. If there is to be a criterion for establishing whether an utterance captures what it seemed to John that he was thinking, it thus will not be a criterion specific to thought. It would need to concern appearances of thought, whether these are veridical or not. Secondly, as has been emphasised, there is in John's case no question of establishing a relation between one utterance and another. Rather, we are

---

[40] Following on from this statement, Frege mentions several caveats on the application of the criterion. For discussion of these and of the identity-criterion in general, see Textor (2010, pp. 140-148). Frege also mentions a criterion for the identity of sense in other places in his writing (see for instance Frege 1997, pp. 321, 305-306).

searching for a criterion for establishing a relation between an utterance and an appearance of thought.

In spite of these two major differences between the application of Frege's criterion for identity of sense and the criterion we are seeking, the central idea in Frege's criterion can be of use to us. Although there for John can be no question of understanding two thought-expressions and taking the same or different attitudes towards them, there may be a question of there being two methods for accessing appearances of thought and taking the same or different attitudes towards them. Recall that talk of *accessing* appearances of thought here is meant as the analogue of *understanding* genuine thoughts. So, the idea is the following. Analogously to how Frege's criterion concerns understanding the same thought by means of two different sentences, there may be a criterion for capturing that concerns accessing the same appearance of thought by two different methods. One method of access goes through memory. As aforementioned, John is supposedly epistemically privileged in that he can remember mental event A. This method of access to what it seemed to John that he was thinking would thus be special to John. However, a second method of access goes via the utterance of a sentence. In particular, the appearance of thought could be accessed through an utterance that captures it. This method of access may be available to other subjects besides John; indeed, the idea is that it is by accessing the appearance of thought in this way that other subjects gain insight into how things seemed cognitively to John in mental event A.

Suppose that John is in a position to access the appearance of thought in mental event A through his memory of it, and that he is also in a position to access an appearance of thought that a given utterance on a given interpretation captures. A *criterion for identity of appearances of thought*, inspired by Frege's criterion, would then say that these two methods provide access to the same appearance of thought if, by taking an attitude towards the appearance accessed by one method, John must thereby take the same attitude to the appearance accessed by the other method, and vice versa. From this, we can derive the following criterion for establishing whether or not an utterance on a given interpretation captures a certain appearance of thought:

(Captured-by-U)   An utterance, U, captures the appearance of thought had by a subject, X, in a certain mental event, M, if, by taking a certain attitude towards the appearance

accessed through memory of M X must thereby take the same attitude towards the appearance of thought accessed by means of U.

Can Captured-by-U be relied upon in order to establish that a given utterance on a given interpretation captures what it seemed to John that he was thinking in mental event A? As aforementioned, it is required for the application of the criterion that the subject, in this case John, is able to access what it seemed to him that he was thinking both through memory of it and through an utterance that captures it. One may have doubts about whether either of these methods of access is possible. I will not say much about accessing what it seemed to John that he was thinking through his memory. We may simply note the obvious point that even if one may be quite confident that one remembers what it was like to do, think or feel this or that, the question as to whether one remembers accurately, albeit perhaps more faintly than how it was, seems hard to settle.[41] The same point presumably holds for accurate memory of appearances of thought. However, even if we suppose that John does accurately remember what it seemed to him that he was thinking during mental event A, there remains a problem with the second thing he would need to do, namely to access the appearance of thought through the use of an utterance that captures it. This problem requires some elaboration.

As I argued in section four, I think Evans is right that singular thought is what I called 'belief-dependent'. In order to entertain or understand a singular thought, one must believe in the existence of the object the thought is about. However, belief-dependence also adds a further complication with regard to possibility of capturing an appearance of thought. For belief-dependence plausibly generalises to *appearances* of singular thought. Given that belief in the existence of the object of a singular thought is held to be necessary for entertaining the thought in question, access to an appearance of thought – be it veridical or not – would presumably be held to require that one believes there to exist the object that one, through such access, would seem to be thinking about. With respect to John's situation after he has

_____

[41] Part of the difficulty, I think, concerns what counts as accurate memory. It may be natural to think that the memory should in some sense stay unchanged. But if one's beliefs, skills, tastes, etc. change, then perhaps the memory needs to go through corresponding changes in order to count as an accurate memory.

discovered that he was subject to a perceptual hallucination, it is clear that he no longer believes that there was any object that it seemed to him that he was thinking about in mental event A. But then he cannot, by this generalisation of belief-dependence to appearances of thought, access what it seemed to him that he was thinking through a sentence that captures it. So, after the discovery, Captured-by-U cannot be applied in order to establish that John's utterance captures the appearance of thought in mental event A, since the second method of access is blocked.

When taking into account the belief-dependence of appearances of singular thought we thus observe that the criterion labelled 'Captured-by-U', although it may be correct, has very limited application. The criterion can only be applied when the subject believes in the existence of the object that the appearance is taken to be about, e.g. when John has not yet discovered that he was hallucinating in mental event A. Thus, other subjects who are situated in the same set-up as John is, and who also enjoy a hallucinatory experience as of an apple, can 'access' John's appearance of thought in mental event A, since they believe in the existence of what John took to be a perceivable apple. But subjects who know the truth about John's situation, like John himself after the discovery that he had a hallucinatory experience, cannot gain access to the appearance of thought by means of any utterance, for they do not believe in the existence of what John took to be a perceivable apple.

That Captured-by-U is not a helpful criterion for establishing that a given utterance captures the appearance of thought in mental event A does not mean that there can be no way of establishing that an utterance captures that appearance of thought. But insofar as it would require access to the appearance of thought to establish that the capture-relation holds, the possibility of establishing this looks dim from the standpoint of someone who does not share the relevant beliefs that the subject in a mock thought scenario has. The picture resulting from the belief-dependence of singular thought and appearances thereof is that comparison between, on the one hand, what someone like John would say about what it seems to him that he is thinking in mental event A and, on the other hand, what he would say about this after his discovery that he was subject to a perceptual hallucination, is not possible.

2.7   Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with a specific question about mock thought scenarios, a question that arises independently of Evans's and McDowell's view, namely: Can bystanders who are not situated in the relevant mock thought scenario appreciate how things appear cognitively to a subject who, according Evans and McDowell, has a mock thought? By extending Evans's and McDowell's view of ascriptions of object-dependent thought to ascriptions of appearances of object-dependent thought, this question was reformulated as a question about whether the subject can make an utterance that 'captures' his or her appearance of thought, so that bystanders can 'access' how things cognitively seemed by hearing this utterance. Let me summarise the present chapter's argument for the conclusion that the appearance of thought *cannot* be captured and thereby conveyed to bystanders.

The central point I have made is that when there is a change in belief about the existence of the purported referent of a singular term, as there typically will be when a subject discovers that he or she has been situated in a mock thought scenario, then this change in belief can alternatively be taken as a change in belief about the nature of the purported referent. When taken in the alternative way, an utterance of a sentence containing the singular term is 'reinterpreted'. The singular term then receives a different referent than its purported referent on the original interpretation. I argued that reinterpretation arises as a possibility in all cases where there is a change in belief about the existence of the purported referent, even if the change may not seem very significant. I further argued that the phenomenon of reinterpretation receives support both from the idea that singular thought is belief-dependent, and from the idea that the interpretation of an utterance aimed at capturing an appearance of thought is interpreter-relative, where the latter, I argued, should be endorsed by defenders of belief-dependence in order to avoid a central objection to their view. The upshot is that we lack a general answer as to which interpretation an utterance receives when the possibility of reinterpretation arises. One might have thought that lacking a general answer means that the interpretation of the utterance is indeterminate, and hence that we also lack an answer as to whether the appearance of thought can be captured. But I argued that indeterminacy of interpretation does not arise in mock thought scenarios. Rather, my basis for concluding that the appearance of thought cannot be captured once one is no longer situated in a mock thought scenario is that there seems to be no way to establish that an utterance, on a given

interpretation, captures the appearance of thought. Given that singular thought is belief-dependent, access to the appearance of thought is possible only when one has the belief had in the mock thought scenario. Thus, the prospects for establishing that an utterance captures the appearance of thought from outside the mock thought scenario look dim, insofar as establishing this requires that one accesses the appearance of thought.

What is the relevance of the foregoing discussion for the general project of this thesis? Two points are important. Firstly, the discussion of belief-dependence and content relativism point towards a revision of Evans's and McDowell's view which is suitable in light of the problems, identified in the previous chapter, associated with commitment to illusions of object-dependent thought. In the present chapter, I suggested that, due to the subject's belief in the existence of a perceivable apple in a mock thought scenario, there is a hallucinatory apple for the subject to think about. This alerts us to the following possibility: Why not hold that the subject has an object-dependent thought about *the hallucinatory apple* in a mock thought scenario? This would have the advantage of avoiding commitment to illusions of object-dependent thought. I will develop this proposal in the two proceeding chapters. In chapter three, I will elaborate on how awareness of or, as is McDowell's focus, directedness towards an object in a mental episode gives rise to object-dependent thought-content. And in chapter four, I will develop a view of 'acquaintance' as awareness of an object.

The second relevant point vis-à-vis the thesis's general project concerns the consequence of combining the view of understanding of utterances argued for in this chapter with the revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view to be developed in the next two chapters. Consider again our subject John and an utterance he makes of the sentence 'That apple is green' in the mock thought scenario, prior to any discovery that he enjoys a hallucinatory experience. According to the revised view to be developed in the next two chapters, John entertains an object-dependent thought about a hallucinatory apple. But, as I have argued in this chapter, John interprets his own utterance as being about a perceivable apple, due to his mistaken belief that he is perceiving rather than hallucinating. In short, John interprets his utterance of the sentence 'That apple is green' to purport to be about a *different* object than the object he is thinking about. This may seem like an unwanted result. But I think it is defensible. Recall Evans's insight labelled 'Independence', i.e. the claim that a

speaker may use words to express thoughts that he or she is unable to entertain. This implies that an utterance can be interpreted in ways that the speaker did not intend for. Once the utterance is made, it is out there and the speaker cannot control how it is interpreted. But note that such independence pertains also to the speaker's interpretation of his or her own utterance. In particular, if one takes there to be a perceivable apple before one, an utterance of 'That apple is green' is naturally interpreted as being about a perceivable apple. So, even if one intends to express the object-dependent thought one in fact has (and that it in the 'interpretational sense' (see chapter one) seems to one that one has) about a hallucinatory apple, one can still interpret one's own utterance made in an attempt to express one's thought as purporting to be about a perceivable apple.

As I see it, therefore, the subject's mistake in a mock thought scenario is only to think that what he or she understands to be expressed by an utterance intended to express his or her thought is the thought he or she is having. This is not to say that one's utterance is mistakenly interpreted by oneself, however. It is just that one's own interpretation of the utterance is not a good guide to the thought one seeks to express with it. Observe that if this verdict about mock thought scenarios is accepted, we have diagnosis as to why one might be tempted to believe, as Evans and McDowell do, that the subject has a mock thought. On the subject's own interpretation of his or her utterance, there is no such content as he or she takes there to be. While situated in the mock thought scenario, John takes his utterance to purport to be about a perceivable apple, but there is no perceivable apple for it to be about. What should be resisted, however, is the conclusion that this means that John's cognitive situation is as he interprets his utterance to be, i.e. without content.

3

McDowell's argument for the object-dependence of singular thought

In light of the difficulties identified in chapter one with making sense of the idea of illusions of object-dependent thought and chapter two's revelation as to how one may be led to wrongly conclude that a subject has an illusion of thought in a mock thought scenario, there is motivation for seeking to improve Evans's and McDowell's view of singular thought by eliminating the idea of illusions from their view. In the final sections of this chapter I move towards an account of singular thought that preserves core insights of Evans's and McDowell's view but that is nevertheless free from illusions of thought. The possibility of developing this account will become visible by analysing the way in which McDowell, in his paper 'Singular Thought and the Extent of Inner Space' (1986), wishes to give an analogous theoretical treatment of singular thought and perception.

Apart from making visible the prospects of freeing Evans's and McDowell's view from the idea of mere appearances of thought, McDowell's argument is appropriate to consider also in its own right. Despite the previous two chapters' criticism of Evans's and McDowell's view, I think their view is generally on the right track. Thus, McDowell's argument is worth examining both in virtue of the support it may constitute for the general view, and with regard to whether it can constitute such support if mere appearances of thought are eliminated from the view.

In arguing for the object-dependence of singular thought, McDowell's general argumentative strategy is to criticise the alternative. That is, he criticises views according to which singular thought is not object-dependent. What is in common between such views, McDowell argues, is that they endorse a certain way of thinking about the mind and its relation to the mind-independent world; they endorse what he calls 'the Cartesian picture of mind'. The central difference that McDowell emphasises between his own 'less than Cartesian view', or, his disjunctivism, and the Cartesian picture of mind concerns the nature of *appearances*, e.g. an appearance that one is perceiving something, or an appearance that one has a singular thought. McDowell's charge is that, on the Cartesian picture of mind, appearances constitute a realm that is 'isolated' from the mind-independent world, and that this isolation is problematic not only with regard to epistemological issues

but more fundamentally with regard to our position as subjects relating to the objective, mind-independent world. If we adopt the Cartesian picture of mind, McDowell writes, 'our problem is not now that our contact with the external world seems too *shaky* to count as knowledgeable, but that our picture seems to represent us as out of touch with the world altogether' (McDowell 1986, p. 151, original emphasis). It is far from clear, however, what a view of perception or singular thought must look like to deserve characterisation in such metaphorical terms. As part of reconstructing and examining McDowell's argument, therefore, this chapter aims to achieve a less metaphorical account of what the Cartesian picture is and why McDowell thinks it is problematic.

Something that complicates McDowell's discussion is that his argument against the Cartesian picture of mind seems to come in two versions. In the first version, the argument is surrounded by discussion of Cartesian scepticism and the denial of the claim that we can have knowledge of the external world, and so it is natural to see McDowell as here being concerned with perceptual experiences. Later on, he then runs analogous and additional considerations with regard to singular thoughts and their relation to the mind-independent world. The fact that he bothers doing the second suggests that he does not regard the former considerations as straightforwardly establishing his view that singular thought must be object-dependent. In my view, McDowell's transition from perception to singular thought is even less straightforward than what McDowell's paper might suggest. In fact, what I have to say about his argument for the object-dependence of singular thought largely relates to the respects in which it presupposes an extensive analogy between perception and singular thought. To an even larger extent than McDowell, therefore, I strive to keep a sharp distinction between the two versions of his argument and the two versions of the Cartesian and the less than Cartesian view.

With a view to the discussion in the previous chapters, it is worth noting that what is meant by deceptive or mere appearances of singular thought is the same as what I earlier have referred to as 'mock thoughts'. Thus, the view for which McDowell argues is the same as Evans's view that singular thought has illusory instances. However, unlike McDowell, Evans does not think about singular thought and perception in analogous ways. Evans thinks the way perceptual experience is about the world *contrasts* with the way in which singular thought is about the world. In fact, the version of McDowell's argument that concerns perceptual experience can

be regarded as an argument against Evans's view that the content of perception is general. So, although Evans would consent to the view of singular thought for which McDowell argues, I expect he would reject the version argument that concerns perceptual experience.

I start by presenting the Cartesian view and McDowell's less than Cartesian view as views about perceptual experience only, and by outlining McDowell's argument against the former. This constitutes sections one and two of the chapter. However, it is the version of the argument relating to singular thought that is my primary object of investigation. This version of the argument, as well as the Cartesian and less than Cartesian view of singular thought, are set out in section three. Section four then raises the general possibility that McDowell may not be right in thinking that a Cartesian view of perception brings with it a Cartesian view of singular thought. Focussing exclusively on singular thought, sections five and six are concerned with the additional and self-contained considerations McDowell introduces in favour of his view of singular thought. This involves classification of Simon Blackburn's (1984) and Colin McGinn's (1982) views as Cartesian views. Section seven examines how and whether the arguments against a Cartesian view of perceptual experience outlined in section two are successful as arguments against a Cartesian view of singular thought. Finally, by drawing both on the discussion of McGinn's view and on a way in which I think perception and singular thought differ structurally, section eight outlines a revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view of singular thought.

3.1 *McDowell and the Cartesian sceptic*

Let us start with an analysis of McDowell's argument against the Cartesian picture of mind as he presents it with regard to perceptual experience. The argument is set out in section five of McDowell's paper and seems to consist of two parts. The first part, to be presented in the present section, is disguised as a reconstruction of the reasoning that leads Cartesian sceptics to their conclusion. The real argumentative function of this first part, however, is to identify the view that is the target of the argument, i.e. the Cartesian picture of mind. The second part of the argument, to be presented in the next section, is intended to show that the Cartesian picture must be rejected.

It is debatable whether McDowell's reconstruction of the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning successfully captures the scepticism that Descartes discusses and seeks to overcome in the *Meditations* (Descartes 1996). It is clear that McDowell means his analysis to target Descartes's first meditation, which McDowell thinks holds a firmer grip on contemporary thinkers than 'Descartes's purported regaining of the world, in the later stages of his reflections' (McDowell 1986, p. 147). However, it is also clear that McDowell has the broader aim of targeting a line of thought responded to in a certain philosophical tradition of which he thinks many of his contemporaries form part.[42] So, while McDowell seems to take seriously the claim that this philosophical tradition originates with the form of scepticism that Descartes seeks to overcome, it seems equally important for his argumentative purposes that the form of scepticism he outlines is one whose basis can be identified in many of his contemporaries' theories of thought.[43] For present purposes, I must set aside discussion as to whether McDowell's reconstruction of the 'Cartesian sceptic's' reasoning succeeds in identifying the form(s) of scepticism targeted by Descartes and contemporary authors.

In reconstructing the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning, McDowell aims to show that the conclusion reached is something more radical than just the general sceptical claim that we have no knowledge of the external or mind-independent world. In particular, he thinks that the Cartesian sceptic's scepticism has the consequence of 'putting subjectivity's very possession of an objective environment in question' (McDowell 1986, p. 147), or of implying that 'we cannot escape losing the world' (ibid.), or of leaving the subject with 'no access to outer reality at all' (ibid., p. 149). One may also in Cartesian epistemology find similar descriptions of the Cartesian

---

[42] McDowell mainly references descriptivist theories of thought, advocated by Schiffer (1978) and Searle (1983). However, he further claims that, despite their attempt to argue against descriptivism, also Kripke (1980) and Donnellan (1970) retain a descriptivist element that makes their view fall under the Cartesian tradition. He also references Dennett (1983) as holding a Cartesian view due to his recognition of 'narrow content'. Moreover, as I will elaborate on below, he argues that Blackburn's (1984) view and McGinn's (1982) view are Cartesian.

[43] It is debatable whether these two forms of scepticism coincide. For an argument in favour of the claim that there is an important difference between the sceptical worries that occupy Descartes and the scepticism that contemporary philosophy reacts to, see Broughton (2002, pp. 82-93). See also Wright (2002) for criticism of McDowell's construal of scepticism and an argument to the effect that there are sceptical worries that McDowell's view does not put to rest.

sceptic's conclusion. For instance, Barry Stroud (1984) sometimes speaks of the Cartesian sceptic as 'having lost the whole world' (ibid., p. 31) or as being 'imprisoned within … representations' (ibid., p. 32). The sense in which Stroud speaks of the whole world as being lost, however, is the sense in which the subject *knows* nothing about the external world. It is not thereby said that the subject has no beliefs or thoughts about the world; the point is just that we have no way of telling whether or not they are true of it. The loss of the world in Stroud's sense is thus purely epistemic. By contrast, we shall see that what McDowell has in mind is that the Cartesian sceptic's position involves that perceptions, beliefs and thoughts are not *about* the mind-independent world. In other words, the Cartesian sceptic does in effect deny the intentionality of the subject's mental states, according to McDowell.

How does McDowell proceed in order to show that this more radical conclusion is the real conclusion if the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning is accepted? McDowell's general methodological approach seems to be to demonstrate that if a general sceptical conclusion is to follow from the Cartesian doubt, then a number of additional premises must be endorsed. And among the additional premises, he thinks, is the Cartesian picture of mind. As McDowell puts the claim: 'our grip on the world must have been loosened already for the Cartesian epistemological reflections to take the course they do' (ibid., p. 148), where the 'loosened grip' consists in adherence to the Cartesian picture of mind. For this reason, he thinks, the conclusion reached by the Cartesian sceptic must be understood against the background of the Cartesian picture of mind, and, when it is, it amounts to the more radical conclusion that we have 'no access' at all to the mind-independent world. Keeping this methodological strategy in mind, let us now consider the details of McDowell's reconstruction of the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning.

McDowell starts his analysis by noting that one standard construal of the Cartesian reasoning is to represent it as resting on a certain principle concerning knowledge and elimination of alternative possibilities. McDowell writes:

> Barry Stroud, for instance, plausibly traces the Cartesian threat of losing the world to this principle: one can acquire worldly knowledge by using one's senses only if one can know, at the time of the supposed acquisition of knowledge, that one is not dreaming (ibid., p. 147).[44]

---

[44] McDowell references chapter one of Stroud (1984).

So, in order to possess perceptual knowledge one must be able to eliminate the possibility introduced by the Cartesian doubt, i.e. the possibility that one might presently be dreaming, or, as will be our focus here, the possibility that things seeming to one to be thus and so is a mere appearance, a hallucination. But such elimination, Stroud continues, can never be achieved. Hence, we can never possess perceptual knowledge. In other words, Stroud reasons as follows:

(C1)   In every case where it seems to one that things are thus and so, this is either (i) a case of things being as they seem or (ii) a case of things merely appearing to be a certain way.

(C2)   In any case where it seems to one that (i), it may be the case that (ii).

(C3)   In order to know that things are thus and so one must be able to exclude that (ii) obtains.

(C4)   One is never in a position to exclude that (ii) obtains.

(CC)   One cannot know that things are thus and so.

In this line of reasoning, C1 states the general possibility that there may be perceptual hallucinations, or, as was Descartes's focus, that there may be dreams that cannot be told apart from waking experience. C2 is the Cartesian doubt. And C3 and C4 are the premises that, according to Stroud, lead to the Cartesian conclusion, CC, when added to the Cartesian doubt.

McDowell thinks there are several problems with the reasoning from C1 to CC. For a start, it supresses the possibility of a certain view – his own view – about perceptual knowledge. In light of this, McDowell envisages the possibility of objecting to premise C3 and C4 by claiming that there are circumstances in which one knows that one is not dreaming – or not hallucinating – even though one is not able to exclude that possibility:

> …one's knowledge that one is not dreaming, in the relevant sort of situation, owes its credentials as knowledge to the fact that one's senses are yielding one knowledge of the environment – something that does not happen when one is dreaming (ibid., p. 148).

McDowell is here suggesting that one can know that one is not dreaming if one possesses perceptual knowledge of the environment, for when one possesses such knowledge one is not dreaming. He realises that this will of course not satisfy the Cartesian sceptic, who will think that this response puts the cart before the horse. What one must question, the Cartesian sceptic would say, is precisely whether one ever has perceptual knowledge of the environment, and in order to establish this one needs to find a situation where one can exclude that one is dreaming.

In anticipation of such a reply, McDowell notes that it is not given that 'the direction of epistemic support must be like that' (ibid.). His main point with this remark seems to be that the Cartesian sceptic presupposes that it must. In other words, if Stroud's reconstruction of the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning is to be convincing, we must already presuppose that potential perceptual knowledge needs other justification to count as knowledge. A hidden premise in the reasoning from C1 to CC is thus the following:

(C5)   That things are thus and so cannot be known on the basis of perceptual knowledge alone.

C5 must clearly be accepted if C3 and C4 are to be accepted. However, McDowell does not stop here. Delving further into the Cartesian sceptic's presuppositions, he is interested to uncover what motivates acceptance of C5. What presuppositions must be made in order for perceptual knowledge to not be a possibility?

In short, McDowell's answer to this is that the Cartesian picture of mind must be presupposed. To show this, his key move is to point out that there is another sort of scepticism available than Cartesian scepticism, namely ancient scepticism as presented by M. F. Burnyeat (1982). It is worth going through the details of this move rather slowly.

Essential to McDowell's move is a certain point of contrast between ancient and Cartesian scepticism. Ancient scepticism, as Burnyeat sets it out, can be regarded as a certain response to the problem of conflicting appearances. Starting with the observation that things appear differently to people in different circumstances, the ancient sceptic looks for a way to decide which appearance he should accept, assuming that conflicting appearances cannot be equally true of the world. And when it turns out that there is no criterion he can use to decide between the appearances, he

concludes that he cannot accept any of them; he must suspend belief about everything.[45] Like the Cartesian sceptic, then, the ancient sceptic concludes that he can have no knowledge of the world. The important point for McDowell, however, is that this conclusion means rather different things for the Cartesian sceptic and the ancient sceptic respectively.

For the ancient sceptic, the conclusion that he can have no knowledge of the world is, as Burnyeat emphasises, a source to happiness and tranquillity. Unlike modern sceptics like Descartes, the ancient sceptics did not regard their philosophical conclusions as purely theoretical and 'insulated' from life (see Burnyeat 1984). The conclusion that one has no knowledge of the world has practical consequences. In particular, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly to the modern reader, it means that the ancient sceptic can 'assent' to appearances without a need to accept them as true or false. This is because, in the ancient sceptic's view, appearances are not the sort of thing there can be truth or falsity about. The ancient sceptic's 'assent' to appearances is thus not a result of deliberation but rather a result of appearances not being conceived of as the sort of thing that is open to question. It is the point that there can be no question of appearances being true or false that McDowell emphasises as a significant contrast to the Cartesian sceptic's position. He writes:

> In effect, Descartes recognises how things seem to a subject as a case of how things are; and the ancient sceptics' concession that appearances are not open to question is transmuted into the idea of a range of facts infallibly knowable by the subject involved in them. (McDowell 1986, p. 148).

The distinction to which McDowell draws our attention here is that between appearances being unapt for questioning, as the ancient sceptic holds, and appearances being unquestionable because they are infallibly knowable, as the Cartesian sceptic holds.[46] The latter conception involves acknowledging a new type

---

[45] It is specifically Pyrrhonian scepticism as represented by Sextus Empiricus that Burnyeat outlines so (see Burnyeat 1982, pp. 36-37).

[46] These conceptions of appearances need not be contraries. One may regard Descartes's conception of appearances as constituting a development of the ancient sceptic's conception; see Burnyeat (1982, p. 47). Burnyeat writes, moreover, that it must be regarded this way, if Descartes is to be entitled to his claim that his discussion overcomes the ancient sceptical arguments: 'If the Academics and Pyrrhonists could object that their arguments do not admit the further and more radical developments

of fact, namely facts about appearances. The introduction of this type of fact is held by McDowell to play a crucial role in the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning.

As mentioned already, the contrast to ancient scepticism is used by McDowell to bring out a further hidden assumption in the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning. On a general level, the contrast makes it clear that the conclusion that we have no knowledge of the external world can be arrived at through at least two routes, where the Cartesian doubt constitutes part of only one of them. This constitutes some reason to suppose that the Cartesian sceptic has a more specific goal than just to reach the general sceptical conclusion. The more specific point that McDowell wants to bring out with the contrast to ancient scepticism, however, concerns the infallibly knowable facts about appearances. Acknowledging such facts can serve to take the edge off a sceptical conclusion; in McDowell's words, acknowledging such facts means that we can 'refute the claim that we know nothing on the ground that at least we know these newly recognized facts about subjective appearances' (ibid.). But, according to McDowell, the infallibly knowable facts about appearances also play a hidden role in the reasoning that brings the Cartesian sceptic to the conclusion that we have no knowledge of the external world. In particular, they play a hidden role as the basis for a stronger premise, namely the premise that McDowell calls 'the Cartesian picture of mind'. It is this stronger premise that motivates the already identified hidden premise C5, i.e. the premise that it cannot on the basis of perceptual knowledge alone be known that things are thus and so.

McDowell's route to establishing that the Cartesian sceptic presupposes infallibility about appearances strikes me as problematic. He seems to make the methodologically suspect move of assuming what his reconstruction of the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning seeks to demonstrate. That is, he assumes that the Cartesian sceptic's real conclusion is that we have no 'access' to the world, or, less metaphorically, that we have no beliefs about the world, which is the more radical conclusion that he thinks the Cartesian sceptic in effect is after. However, despite this assumption, we may appreciate how McDowell in the following passage moves towards identifying the Cartesian picture by arguing that we still at this point of his

---

on which Descartes insists, Descartes would lose his entitlement to claim that he had overturned that whole tradition' (ibid., p. 48).

reconstruction lack a complete set of presuppositions special to the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning, even if infallible knowledge about appearances is presupposed:

> …even if the inward step to a region of reality where we can call a halt to scepticism involves conceding that we have no knowledge of outer reality, why should that threaten us with the conclusion that we have no access to outer reality at all? Why should the availability of infallible knowledge about the newly recognized inner region of reality encourage us to such defeatism – as opposed to either the ancient option of deeming knowledge inessential to our hold on the world, or an even less concessive approach whose suppression needs explaining: namely trying to construct a conception of fallibly acquired outer knowledge which could peacefully coexist with a conception of infallibly acquired inner knowledge? (Ibid., p. 149.)

McDowell here appeals to the two alternative positions already discussed: The ancient sceptic's 'assent' to appearances, and McDowell's 'less concessive approach', i.e. the view that we can possess perceptual knowledge despite being mistaken in some cases about the nature of our perceptual experience. Presupposing that we possess infallible knowledge of appearances does not exclude that we may have 'access' to the world, either in the ancient sceptic's way or by possessing knowledge through veridical perceptual experiences. So, additional presuppositions must be made to exclude the ancient sceptic's position and the disjuctivist's position.

Following on from the passage discussed, McDowell presents his answer to the question raised; that is, he presents the presupposition that will exclude the ancient sceptic's and the disjunctivist's positions as possible retreats from the conclusion that we have no access to the world. What we need, he writes, is something more controversial than the assumption that there are infallibly knowable facts about appearances:

> We need something more contentious: a picture of subjectivity as a region of reality whose layout is transparent – accessible through and through – to the capacity for knowledge that is newly recognized when appearances are brought within the range of truth and knowability' (ibid.).

The notion 'subjectivity' has hitherto remained unconsidered, but in this passage, as well as in McDowell's argument generally, the notion plays a key role. Subjectivity, McDowell seems to think, is the part of reality that is associated with a particular perspective, namely the perspective that is the subject's point of view, to contrast

with an external perspective. What McDowell says in the quotation is that the Cartesian picture of mind consists in regarding subjectivity, the part of reality associated with the subject's point of view, as knowable in the way that appearances on the Cartesian sceptic's view are known. In other words, subjectivity is infallibly knowable through introspection.

What is further clear from the quotation is that on the Cartesian picture appearances are items in the region of subjectivity. In the quotation, appearances serve as the primary example of the sort of thing that is infallibly known through introspection, as the region of subjectivity generally is. However, it is worth noting that the claim that subjectivity is infallibly knowable through introspection does not imply that there are no facts about appearances other than those knowable in this way. A fact about appearances that cannot be infallibly known according to the Cartesian picture is for instance the fact that a given appearances is non-deceptive. It is only the 'subjective facts', as we may call them, such as the fact that things seem to be thus and so, that are infallibly known about appearances according to the Cartesian picture. Since it is the fact that things seem to be thus and so that plays the central role in McDowell's argument against the Cartesian picture of mind as a view of perceptual experience, it is useful to formulate the Cartesian picture of mind as a view about this particular appearance, as follows:

(C6)   It makes no difference to the fact that things seem to be thus and so whether one is in a case where things are as they seem or in a case where things merely appear to be a certain way.

This means that on the Cartesian picture there is nothing different from the subject's point of view between a case of perception and a case of hallucination or illusion.

Premise C6 states what McDowell thinks must be presupposed in order for the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning to be complete. Unfortunately, the full account as to how C6 completes the Cartesian reasoning can only be appreciated when we have in view how McDowell thinks C6 brings with it the view that we have 'no access' to the external world, in the sense that there can be no aboutness of representational states. This will be presented in the proceeding section. However, if we for the moment anticipate this conclusion, we may observe how he thinks C6 has the effect

of excluding disjunctivism by supporting C5 and excluding ancient scepticism as a retreat from the conclusion that we have no knowledge of the world.

Let us suppose, then, that McDowell is right in judging C6 to imply that appearances come to constitute a closed system which is both epistemically and metaphysically isolated from the world, so that there can be no aboutness of representational states. Firstly, it is clear that without aboutness, there can be no knowledge of the world, since there is no possibility of taking a stance towards it. Thus, there can be no perceptual knowledge, as C5 says. Furthermore, not only knowledge, but also belief about the world and other propositional attitudes are made impossible. Hence, the ancient sceptic's option of there being a relation between the subject's appearances and the world, despite the subject's lack of knowledge of the world, is excluded too. Now, since McDowell, as we have seen, thinks these conclusions must be reached in order that the Cartesian doubt in C2 is to lead to the general sceptical conclusion that we have no knowledge of the external world, we may appreciate why he thinks the conclusion reached by the Cartesian sceptic is really something more radical than the general sceptical conclusion. Due to the fact that the general sceptical conclusion can be reached in other ways – as demonstrated by the ancient sceptic's reasoning, for instance – the real conclusion that the Cartesian sceptic must be driving at is a conclusion that includes the Cartesian picture of mind in C6 as a background view. With this background view in place, McDowell seems to think that what the Cartesian sceptic in effect has in mind is that the reason as to why we can have no knowledge of the world is that we can hold no propositional attitudes at all towards it. By demonstrating that the conclusion that we have no knowledge of the external world is arrived at in this way, therefore, McDowell's point is that it must be read as a conclusion that we have no 'access' to the world at all.

As mentioned, McDowell's main purpose with going through the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning seems to be to make clear what the Cartesian picture of mind is. This constitutes the main import of the discussion insofar as it constitutes the first step of McDowell's argument against the Cartesian picture of mind. In the second step of the argument, to which we now turn, McDowell rejects the Cartesian picture. His rejection proceeds by, first, outlining the position which is the anti-thesis – or, in McDowell's view, the antidote – to the Cartesian picture of mind, and, second, by

showing that this alternative position is preferable to the Cartesian picture. My presentation follows the same structure.

3.2 *McDowell against the Cartesian picture of mind*

Compared to the ancient sceptic's view, McDowell's view is in at least one respect closer to the Cartesian picture of mind. Whereas the conception of appearances as something there can be facts and knowledge about remains an unconsidered option for the ancient sceptic, McDowell and the Cartesian sceptic alike accept this conception of appearances. McDowell also accepts the premise I above labelled C1. That is, he accepts that when things seem to one to be thus and so, there are two alternative kinds of situation that this may involve; things may either be as they seem or it may merely appear that things are a certain way. In arguing against the Cartesian picture of mind, McDowell's emphasis is, first, on showing that the basic assumptions mentioned can be understood in a more 'innocent' way than when they form part of the Cartesian picture, and, secondly, to show that this more innocent way of understanding them is preferable.

The more innocent understanding of the fact that things seem to one to be thus and so is introduced as follows:

> …the newly countenanced facts [e.g. 'subjective facts' about appearances] can simply be the facts about what it is like to enjoy our access, or apparent access, to external reality. Access or apparent access: infallible knowledge of how things seem to one falls short of infallible knowledge as to which disjunct is in question. One is as fallible about that as one is about the associated question of how things are in the external world. So, supposing we picture subjectivity as a region of reality, we need not yet be thinking of the newly recognized infallibly knowable facts as constituting the whole truth about that region. (Ibid., pp. 149-150.)

In saying that the infallibly knowable facts do not constitute the whole truth about appearances, McDowell does not seem to think that there are additional facts to be discovered. Rather, he seems to suggest that what is on the Cartesian picture taken to be an infallibly knowable fact is a fact that divides into two exhaustive options. The fact that things seem to one to be thus and so should be thought of as relating to the mind-independent world in either of two ways; either it is the fact that things seem to the subject the way they are, or it is the fact that things merely seem to be a certain

way to the subject. What we are infallible about is that the first or the second of these facts holds true. What we are infallible about, in other words, is what we may call 'the disjunctive fact': the fact that things seeming to one to be thus and so is either a case of things appearing as they are or a case of things merely appearing to be a certain way.

It can readily be seen that this view is a denial of the Cartesian picture of mind as a view of subjective facts about appearances, which above was rendered as premise C6, i.e. the premise that it makes no difference to the fact that things seem to be thus and so whether one is in a case where things are as they seem or in a case where things merely appear to be a certain way. Although McDowell admits that there are some infallibly knowable facts about appearances, namely the disjunctive facts, he denies that 'the fact that things seem to one to be thus and so' is something one is infallible about. 'The fact that things seem to one to be thus and so' can according to McDowell refer to two different sorts of facts and thus be read in two different ways. Either it can be a fact that things seeming to one to be thus and so is a case of things appearing as they are. Or, it can be a fact that things merely seem to be a certain way. One is fallible about both sorts of facts.

The most important point for McDowell seems to be that this conception of the appearance that things are thus and so allows for facts in the region of subjectivity that are not wholly unrelated to the mind-independent reality. He writes:

> …since this further fact [i.e. the fact about which sort of case is in question] is not independent of the outer realm, we are compelled to picture the inner and outer realms as interpenetrating, not separated from one another by the characteristically Cartesian divide (ibid., p. 150).

Before analysing this passage, we should here stop briefly to consider a terminological difficulty with the notions 'external' and 'internal' that McDowell employs in this passage, which are notions he also uses throughout his paper. In the context of McDowell's discussion, the contrast between the external and the internal arises with the Cartesian picture's distinction between the realm of subjectivity (which is infallibly known through introspection, according to the Cartesian sceptic) and the realm of mind-independent reality (of which we have no knowledge, according to the Cartesian sceptic). 'The characteristically Cartesian divide' that McDowell refers to is thus his idea that, on the Cartesian picture, facts about the one

realm are independent or insensitive to facts about the other. In opposition to the Cartesian divide, McDowell describes his view as involving that there is a dependence of the inner on the outer, as explained above. However, in this light it is slightly problematic to continue using the terms 'external' and 'internal'. For, to the extent that there is dependence of the inner on the outer on McDowell's view, there is no longer a clearly defined 'inner' realm that contrasts with the 'outer'. The way of distinguishing between the two realms available to the Cartesian sceptic, i.e. as the realms about which we have, respectively, infallible knowledge and no knowledge, is no longer available to McDowell, who claims that we have fallible knowledge of both realms. Towards the end of his paper, McDowell may, to a certain extent, seem to recognise this difficulty. In stating his position in terms of the contrast between the inner and the outer, he puts the word 'external' in single quotes: 'Cognitive space incorporates the relevant portions of the 'external' world' (ibid., p. 167). So, perhaps he recognises the point that if it makes sense to state his view by making reference to the 'external', it is because one is trading on an understanding of what constitutes the 'external' dictated by the Cartesian picture of mind.

The presence of this terminological difficulty does not suggest that McDowell's position is in any way confused. It is possible to state point in the passage as I did above, avoiding use of the notions 'external' and 'internal': The point is that, since things seeming to one to be thus and so is, either, an appearance that things are as they seem, or, alternatively, an appearance that things merely seem to be a certain way, that appearance (whichever one it is) depends on how things stand in the mind-independent world. If it is an appearance that things are as they seem, it is so in virtue of things being as they seem. And if it is an appearance that things merely seem to be a certain way, it is so in virtue of things not being as they seem. So, in either case the appearance that things are thus and so, which is an item in the realm of subjectivity, essentially relates to the mind-independent world. By the same token, the mind-independent world relates to this item in the realm of subjectivity. Note, however, that in this terminology, it is not the case that the nature of the mind-independent world depends on the nature of the appearance that things are thus and so, as the nature of this appearance depends on the mind-independent world. This sort of 'interpenetration' that McDowell refers to in the passage above only obtains if his position is stated in terms of the Cartesian notions of the 'inner'

and the 'external', in which case McDowell's category of subjectivity includes items in both realms.

It is at this point useful to summarise the premises on the basis of which McDowell reaches his position and his denial of the Cartesian picture. Premises M0 and M1 below constitute what I at the beginning of this section mentioned as the common ground between the Cartesian picture and McDowell's view. M0 is a denial of the ancient sceptic's assumption that appearances are not open to question. M1 is simply a restatement of C1 in the reconstruction of the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning from the previous section. McDowell's position is reached by adding, instead of the Cartesian picture of mind, another single and powerful premise, namely M2 below. Thus, McDowell's position, stated in MC below, can be arrived at by the three following premises:

(M0) That things seem to one to be thus and so is a fact there can be truth and knowledge about.

(M1) In every case where it seems to one that things are thus and so, this is either (i) a case of things being as they seem or (ii) a case of things merely appearing to be a certain way.

(M2) That things seem to one to be thus and so is either a fact that things are as they seem, i.e. that (i) obtains, or a fact that things merely appear a certain way, i.e. that (ii) obtains.

(MC) That things seem to one to be thus and so relates to the mind-independent world in one out to two possible ways: Either by fulfilling (i) or by fulfilling (ii).

It is crucial here that the fact that things seem to one to be thus and so is an item in the realm of subjectivity; it is a fact conceived from the subject's point of view. Thus, to accept MC is to accept that there is an item in the realm of subjectivity that relates to the mind-independent world. This constitutes a rejection of the Cartesian picture of mind, according to which subjectivity is infallibly knowable through introspection.

In turning to the defence of his view and arguing it to be preferable to the Cartesian picture of mind, it is premise M2 that McDowell concentrates on. Or, rather, he concentrates on the anti-thesis to M2, i.e. the Cartesian picture's view of

the appearance that things are thus and so. To repeat, this view was stated in C6 as the view that it makes no difference to the fact that things seem to be thus and so whether one is in a case where things are as they seem or in a case where things merely appear to be a certain way. In other words, acceptance of the Cartesian picture of mind involves acceptance of the thesis that whether (i) or (ii) obtains has no effect on how things seem to one.

In McDowell's view, there are two problems with the conception of appearances that this anti-thesis harbours; one concerning what is involved in holding, as both McDowell and the Cartesian sceptic does, that the appearance that things are thus and so is an item in the realm of subjectivity, and one concerning description of appearances and the directedness of perceptual experience towards the mind-independent world. These problems will remain at the centre of discussion throughout the remainder of this chapter. Later on, we shall evaluate them in the context of a discussion of singular thought. However, in setting out the problems McDowell naturally continues to situate his discussion in the context of a debate about perceptual experience, as has been his focus also in setting out the Cartesian picture of mind and his own position. Let us therefore first consider McDowell's two problems for the Cartesian picture in this context.

Subjectivity. The first problem with the Cartesian picture of mind that McDowell mentions may initially seem to simply amount to an assertion that any position deserving the label 'Cartesian' is unattractive. While it is certainly true that there is in general an element of unsupported condemnation in McDowell's paper – in keeping with the philosophical fashion at the time, perhaps – there is at this specific point also a concrete reason provided as to why the Cartesian picture of mind is theoretically problematic. In setting out the consequences of accepting the Cartesian picture of mind and comparing them to the consequences of accepting his own view, McDowell writes:

> We cannot now [on the Cartesian picture] see the inner and outer as interpenetrating: the correlate of this picture of our access to the inner is that subjectivity is confined to a tract of reality whose layout would be exactly as it is however things stood outside it, and *the commonsense notion of a vantage point is now fundamentally problematic*. (Ibid., pp. 150-151, my emphasis.)

It take it that the 'the commonsense notion of a vantage point' referred to in the passage is the idea of a distinction between what is viewed and the way in which it is viewed. Given this idea, there arises the possibility that when something appears a certain way to someone, it may appear differently to someone else, where neither appearance need be non-deceptive. This idea, McDowell claims in the passage, is problematic for those who adhere to the Cartesian picture of mind. But what is the problem?

As McDowell states in the first part of the passage, the Cartesian picture of mind involves that subjectivity 'is confined to a tract of reality whose layout would be exactly as it is however things stood outside it'. This cannot in itself be a problem for the view; it simply is the view. The view just is that whether things are as they seem or merely appear to be a certain way makes no difference to the fact that things seem to one to be thus and so. Nevertheless, McDowell thinks that something objectionable follows from this view. He thinks it follows that the object or event perceived in a veridical experience is wholly irrelevant to the appearance of it; the appearance would be exactly the same if no object or event was perceived, i.e. if one had a non-veridical experience.[47]

McDowell's worry, I take it, is that if the thing perceived is irrelevant to the appearance of it, it becomes problematic to say that the appearance is an appearance *of* that thing, or of anything at all. In the case of a veridical experience, McDowell seems to think, there must be something that appears to the subject. Thus, the sense in which the notion of a vantage point becomes problematic on the Cartesian picture of mind is the sense in which this view seems to imply that there is nothing that is viewed in a certain way; there is nothing to take a vantage point on. There is just the viewing in a certain way without it being the viewing of something. In this sense, we have no 'access' to the mind-independent world through an appearance that things are thus and so on the Cartesian picture.

What I take to McDowell's point, then, is that on the Cartesian picture the realm of subjectivity cannot be conceived as, precisely, constituting the subject's perspective, for there is nothing for the subject to take a perspective on. But since

---

[47] As we will see later on in discussion of the two-component picture, however, Martin (2002) explains that the sameness of appearances in veridical and non-veridical perceptual experiences need not imply that appearances have nothing to do with the particular objects and events perceived in veridical experiences.

both McDowell and the Cartesian sceptic agree that the appearance that things are thus and so is perspectival in this sense, this is something also the Cartesian sceptic's position should hold room for.

Directedness. In order to introduce the second problem for the Cartesian picture of mind, McDowell starts with noting that the problem in question is not a problem for his own 'innocuous' position:

> Short of the fully Cartesian picture, the infallibly knowable fact – it seeming to one that things are thus and so – can be taken disjunctively, as constituted either by the fact that things are manifestly thus and so or by the fact that that merely seems to be the case. On this account, the idea of things being thus and so figures straightforwardly in our understanding of the infallibly knowable appearance; there is no problem about how experience can be understood to have a representational directedness towards the external reality (ibid., p. 151).

The idea McDowell is voicing here has close connection with the first problem already presented. The aspect of the Cartesian picture that is the source to McDowell's first worry was above phrased as being that the appearance that things are thus and so is not an appearance of anything; there is the appearance but nothing that appears to one. McDowell's view, by contrast, is that the mind-independent world appears to one in cases where things appear as they are, i.e. in veridical perceptual experiences. In the passage just rendered, McDowell is concerned with the reverse perspective on the relationship between the mind and the world. The emphasis is not on it being the mind-independent world that manifests itself in the appearance that things are thus and so, but rather on the appearance being directed towards the mind-independent world. A notable difference between the former and the latter is that the reversed idea about directedness also holds true when things merely appear a certain way to one. In cases of hallucination or dream, there is nothing that the appearance that things are thus and so is directed towards, but there is nevertheless directedness. By contrast, it is only in veridical perceptual experiences that the mind-independent world appears to one.

On McDowell's view, then, the appearance that things are thus and so is both in the veridical and in the non-veridical case *characterised* as an appearance of the mind-independent world, even though it in some non-veridical experiences, i.e. in hallucination or dream, is not the case that the mind-independent world appears to

one. That his view of perceptual experience involves this sort of characterisation of appearances – characterisation in content-involving terms – is by McDowell considered as a clear advantage of his view. More importantly, however, he regards it as a problem for the Cartesian picture of mind that it does not allow for such characterisations. On the Cartesian picture, McDowell explains, the infallibly knowable fact should be characterised in a way that involves no reference to entities in the mind-independent world. According to the Cartesian picture, he writes,

> ...[the infallibly knowable] fact is a self-standing configuration in the inner realm, whose intrinsic nature should be knowable through and through without adverting to what is registered, in the innocuous position, by the difference between the disjuncts – let alone giving the veridical case the primacy which the innocuous position confers on it. This makes it quite unclear that the fully Cartesian picture is entitled to characterize its inner facts in content-involving terms – in terms of it seeming to one that things are thus and so – at all. (Ibid., pp. 151-152.)

McDowell here builds on the point that, on the Cartesian picture, it is irrelevant to the nature of a veridical appearance that things are thus and so what it is an appearance *of*, since its nature is exhaustively given by the element common to veridical and non-veridical experiences. Thus, the appearance is not an appearance of something in the mind-independent reality; rather, it is 'a self-standing configuration in the inner realm'. McDowell's idea seems to be that this way of thinking about the metaphysics of such appearances implies that they should be characterised in a way that makes no mention of entities located in the mind-independent world. In other words, the idea is that, since the nature of the appearance that things are thus and so is independent of anything in the mind-independent world on the Cartesian picture, a characterisation of it should be free from terms that refer to the mind-independent world.

The conclusion that the Cartesian picture cannot licence a content-involving characterisation of the appearance that things are thus and so is only problematic for the Cartesian picture if it is at odds with the facts about how we characterise such appearances. And it clearly is at odds with these facts. When describing how things appear to one in a perceptual experience, one says things like 'It seems to me that things are thus and so', where the part following the 'it seems to me that'-clause is a statement about how things stand in the mind-independent world. The statement will

involve mention of things that, on the Cartesian picture, only figure in the 'external' realm, such as trees and sunsets. The fact that we characterise the appearance that things are thus and so in this manner is by McDowell described as 'the most conspicuous phenomenological fact there is' (ibid., p. 152). The problem for the Cartesian picture, he thinks, is thus that it is not entitled to affirmation of this phenomenological fact.

This marks the end to the primarily exegetical part of the chapter. We now have in view what the Cartesian picture consists in, how McDowell's view contrasts with it, and the two main points McDowell makes to show that his position is preferable. All of this has been discussed in the context of a debate about the nature of perceptual experience. In my view, McDowell is right about the points he makes against the Cartesian picture considered as a view of perceptual experience. Both the point that we seem to be perceptually cut off from the mind-independent world if an appearance that things are thus and so cannot be understood as an appearance *of* something (Subjectivity) and the point that the characterisation of appearances licenced by the Cartesian picture is at odds with our practice (Directedness) seem to be decisive points against Cartesian views of perceptual experience. These are points that also count against Evans's view of perceptual experience, to the extent that Evans's view is Cartesian. According to Evans, the content of perception is general and can be represented in the form of an open sentence, e.g. 'Red(x) & Ball(x) & Yellow(y) & Square(y) & On Top of(x,y)' (see Evans 1982, p. 125). An appearance that things are the way this open sentence describes can obtain either in a veridical or a non-veridical experience. Hence, the view is Cartesian in that the same appearance can obtain in the veridical and the non-veridical case.[48]

---

[48] This seems to be the view of appearances that is the most natural for Evans to hold. However, Evans could individuate appearances by reference to informational states, i.e. an appearance that things are thus and so could be understood as an appearance that one is in a certain informational state. If so, there is a sense in which the appearance is an appearance *of* something; it would be an appearance of something in the same sense as an informational state is of something, namely in the causal sense that it is of the object from which the information derives. Since a piece of information that derives from an object is different from a piece of information that derives from nothing, according to Evans, this would mean that the appearances in a case of perception and a case of hallucination *differ*. This might be sufficient to qualify as a less than Cartesian view of perceptual experience, although the causal sense in which appearances are of something seems to differ from

The remainder of the chapter is concerned with the nature of singular thought. As flagged at the outset, my aim is to show that there are differences between perception and thought that preclude an analogous treatment of singular thought and perception in the way we will see that McDowell envisages. However, before the problems with the analogy can be addressed, we need to have in view how the Cartesian and the less than Cartesian view work out as views of singular thought. This is the concern of the next section.

3.3 The Cartesian and the less than Cartesian view of singular thought

We have seen that McDowell presents two opposing views of the perceptual appearance that things are thus and so. Firstly, there is the Cartesian picture of mind, according to which items in the realm of subjectivity, such as the appearance that things are thus and so, are infallibly known through introspection. This view has the consequence that the nature of this appearance is exhausted by what can be common between a veridical and a non-veridical perceptual experience. The fact that things seem to one to be thus and so is, on this picture, an indubitable fact about one's phenomenological situation, which is independent of whether the way things seem is the way things are or a mere appearance. Secondly, there is the 'less than Cartesian view', according to which the nature of the appearance that things are thus and so is sensitive to the difference between veridical and non-veridical perceptual experiences. The appearance involves a relation to the mind-independent world. The fact that things seem to one to be thus and so is either a fact that things are as they seem or a fact that things merely appear a certain way. Either fact is fallibly knowable. What is infallibly knowable is that one of these facts obtain, i.e. that the appearance that things are thus and so is either deceptive or non-deceptive in nature. Now, McDowell thinks that there are also two different views of singular thought that parallel these two views of perceptual experience:

> There is a parallel contrast between two ways of conceiving singular thought: first, the idea that if one seems to be thinking about an ordinary external object in a way that depends on, say, its appearing to be perceptually present to one, the situation in one's inner world is either that one is entertaining an

McDowell's idea, set out under the point labelled 'Subjectivity', that the mind-independent world is manifest in non-deceptive appearances.

object-dependent proposition or that it merely appears that that is so; and, second, the idea that a difference corresponding to the difference between those disjuncts is external to the layout of one's inner world, which is for these purposes exhausted by something common to the two cases. (McDowell 1986, p. 156.)

It needs to be unpacked both what these views are and how they relate to the views already on the table, in order to appreciate how McDowell's argument plays out with respect to singular thought.

As regards the relation to the views already set out, it is clear that McDowell regards the views of singular thought as an extension of the opposing pictures of mind already discussed. More specifically, we can see from the passage above that McDowell works with genuine singular thought as an extension of the category of veridical perceptual experience. Similarly, the category of non-veridical perceptual experience is extended to include mere appearances of singular thought, i.e. what we in previous chapters have referred to as mock thoughts. Finally, the overarching category of the appearances involved in perceptual experience, i.e. the appearance that things are thus and so, seems to be extended to include what we may call 'appearances of singular thought'. As McDowell puts it, this is 'the idea that ... one seems to be thinking about an ordinary external object in a way that depends on, say, its appearing to be perceptually present to one'. Such appearances can be either deceptive or non-deceptive, just like the appearances involved in perceptual experiences are; that is, an appearance of singular thought may be, either, an appearance of a genuine singular thought, or a mere appearance of singular thought.

With the extension of the above-mentioned categories in place, we can reconstruct the two views of singular thought by exploiting the analogy to perception. On the one hand, we have what we may call the *Cartesian view of singular thought*. On this view, it seeming to one that one has a singular thought is simply an indubitable fact about one's cognitive phenomenology, and independent of whether one is having such a thought or if it merely appears that way. As McDowell puts it in the quotation, 'the difference between those disjuncts is external to the layout of one's inner world', where the 'inner world' is the realm of subjectivity. This means that the same appearance of thought may accompany a genuine singular thought as that which accompanies a mere appearance of singular thought. On the other hand, we have what we may call *the less than Cartesian or 'innocuous' view of*

singular thought; that is, McDowell's view. On this view, the difference between the disjuncts *does* matter to the nature of the appearance of singular thought. That it seems to one that one is having a singular thought is either a fact that one is having a singular thought or a fact that it merely appears that way. Hence, an appearance of thought that accompanies a genuine singular thought is different in nature from an appearance that accompanies a mere appearance of singular thought.

It is slightly puzzling that McDowell in the passage above characterises the overarching category of appearances of singular thought as cases where 'one seems to be thinking about an ordinary external object in a way that depends on, say, its *appearing to be* perceptually present to one' (ibid., my emphasis). At least with regard to McDowell's view of singular thought, according to which singular thoughts are object-dependent thoughts, this seems to be an unhappy formulation. It would be natural to think that, at least on McDowell's view, if not on the Cartesian picture, an appearance of a singular thought is an appearance of an object-dependent thought, i.e. an appearance that one is thinking about an object in a way that one could not if the object did not exist. But if one's way of thinking about the object depends only on the *appearance* that there is an object there, it is not an object-dependent way of thinking. It is a way of thinking that depends on an appearance of perception rather than on perception. However, since McDowell in the rest of the paper seems to be thinking of appearances of singular thought as involving an appearance of an object-dependent way of thinking, I will in the following assume that this is what he has in mind also in the passage above. His formulation in the passage seems best explained as slightly inaccurate.

Even more puzzling than McDowell's particular characterisation of appearances of singular thought, however, is his implicit assumption of their general possibility as natural to other positions than his own. Extending the Cartesian picture and the less than Cartesian picture to singular thought involves recognising that having a singular thought is accompanied by an appearance which is different from the appearance accompanying one's current perceptual experience. Thus, both positions involve that cognition, like perception, has a phenomenology. This assumption is puzzling not only in its own right, but because it is far from clear that the authors to whom McDowell attribute the Cartesian view of singular thought accept it. As we shall see in the discussion below, the philosophers who McDowell targets acknowledge that perceptual experiences are associated with appearances, but

they do not, at least not as far as I have found, speak of appearances of thought. It is, admittedly, conceivable that they could accept McDowell's talk of appearances of thought without any substantial change to their position. I will in the following seek to read them thus. Still, it is worth bearing in mind that the talk of appearances of thought and the accompanying idea that cognition is regarded as a type of experience is primarily McDowellian in spirit.

Now, to the extent that we accept McDowell's extension of the Cartesian picture and the less than Cartesian picture respectively as views of the nature of singular thought, it is to be expected that the argument from M0 to MC from the previous section can be extended so as to constitute an argument in favour of the less than Cartesian view of singular thought. The argument will run precisely as before, with the only change being that, instead of speaking of appearances of things being thus and so, we must speak of appearances of having a singular thought. With this change, we get the following reasoning leading to the less than Cartesian view of singular thought:

(M0*) That it seems to one that one has a singular thought is a fact there can be truth and knowledge about.

(M1*) In every case where it seems to one that one has a singular thought, this is either (i*) a case of one having a singular thought or (ii*) a case of it merely appearing to one that one has a singular thought.

(M2*) That it seems to one that one has a singular thought is either a fact that one has a singular thought, i.e. that (i*) obtains, or a fact that it merely appears to one that one has a singular thought, i.e. that (ii*) obtains.

(MC*) That it seems to one that one has a singular thought relates to the mind-independent world in one out to two possible ways; either by fulfilling (i*) or by fulfilling (ii*).

With the reasoning from M0 to MC presented in section two, we saw that whether McDowell's position is to be accepted depends on support for M2. This was because a defender of the Cartesian picture of mind would accept the two other premises. This remains the case also with the reasoning just presented from M0* to MC*, and hence McDowell's discussion focuses on support for premise M2* also here. Before considering his considerations in favour of the less than Cartesian view,

however, it is worth noting that it is possible to object to M1*. One might hold that there cannot be mere appearances of thought, and that in every case where it seems to one that one entertains a singular thought one does entertain a singular thought. McDowell seems to brush off this claim as adherence to the Cartesian view. This is puzzling, since M1* is *accepted* if one holds the Cartesian view of singular thought. In the next section, I consider why McDowell may fail to fully recognise the possibility of objecting to M1* in the way mentioned. What prevents him from recognising this, I suggest, is that he takes it for granted that the Cartesian picture of mind as a view of perceptual experience belongs with a Cartesian view of singular thought, and that the same holds for the less than Cartesian view.[49]

3.4   The analogy between perception and singular thought

In order to accept M1*, one must accept a distinction between a case where, as (i*) states, one entertains a singular thought and a case where, as (ii*) states, this merely appears to be the case. This distinction is accepted both on the Cartesian and on the less than Cartesian view of singular thought. The less than Cartesian view regards this distinction as a contrast between two different appearances of singular thought. And the Cartesian view regards the distinction as a contrast between two cognitive states that are indistinguishable as far as the appearance of singular thought is concerned. Rejection of M1* on the ground that the possibility of mere appearances of singular thought is inconceivable thus amounts to rejection of both positions, since a central tenet of each is possible to formulate only if the distinction between singular thought and mere appearances of singular thought can be drawn.

It is striking that Russell, as McDowell describes him, considers it 'evident in its own right' that mere appearances of thought must be disallowed (McDowell 1986, p. 145). On this basis, it looks like we should conclude that, whatever is Russell's view of singular thought, it is neither the Cartesian view nor the less than Cartesian

---

[49] Also Jeshion declares it as natural that theories of perceptual experience and theories singular thought be treated analogously: '[A]nalyses of the content of perceptual experience as singular are much more naturally paired with analyses of thought as singular, while those of the content of perceptual experience as general are more natural associated with descriptive thought' (Jeshion 2010a, p. 11). Given the difference between how perceptual content and singular thought-content relates to appearances (to be elaborated in section seven), I am not sure this claim should be generally accepted.

view, since he rejects the distinction that both positions rely on, between singular thought and mere appearances thereof. Given that Russell's position occupies a central place in the development of McDowell's paper, it would in this light be expected that the possibility of objecting to M1* on the basis of rejecting the possibility of mere appearances should occur to him. But it does not seem to.

In McDowell's portrayal of Russell, the rejection of the possibility of mere appearances of thought is considered a sign of Russell's adherence to the Cartesian picture. To emphasise that Russell harbours Cartesian sympathies is dialectically important for McDowell because he develops his own less than Cartesian view of singular thought by modifying Russell's idea of singular propositions, i.e. propositions whose existence depend on the existence of a certain object. As a central deviation from Russell's view McDowell highlights the point that, on his own less than Cartesian view, singular propositions or object-dependent thoughts are to be possible also in cases where we are fallible about the existence of the object in question, and not only in cases where we are infallible about this. Limiting singular propositions to cases where we are infallible about the existence of the object on which the proposition depends is by McDowell referred to as 'Russell's restriction'. He suggests that it is 'plausible that the ultimate basis for Russell's restriction is a conception of the inner life, and the subject's knowledge of it, which it seems fair to label 'Cartesian'' (ibid., pp. 145-146). So, the label 'Cartesian' is fair, he seems to suggest, because Russell's restriction is based on postulation of entities about the existence of which we are infallibly knowable.

It is conceivable, however, that Russell's reason for rejecting mere appearances of thought is not Cartesian sympathies. What does betray a Cartesian sympathy, we may concede, is Russell's view that we perceive sense-data. Sense-data are entities whose existence and nature we possess infallible knowledge of and whose nature is independent of how things stand in the mind-independent world. The perceptual appearance that things are thus and so is thus on Russell's view an appearance that this sense-datum is thus and so, and the nature of this appearance is the same in perception and hallucination. Even so, Russell need not have adopted an analogous outlook on the metaphysics of thought. It may be that Russell's rejection of illusions of thought, much like my criticism of this in the first chapter, simply amounts to incomprehension of their possibility. Or, even if one should think that such a reading of Russell would not be textually well supported, it is at least a

theoretical possibility that one might reject illusions of thought, not on the basis of Cartesian sympathies, but because an adequate account of their nature cannot foreseeably be given.

Along with a rejection of illusions of thought made on this basis, one could nevertheless simultaneously maintain a Russellian – and Cartesian – view of perceptual experience. Thus, on this way of reading Russell, he does not only deny M1*. He denies in addition that acceptance of M1 must involve acceptance of M1*. In other words, there is at least one possible position – a position that Russell might have held – on which an analogous treatment of perception and singular thought is denied.

It thus becomes clear as a general possibility that a Cartesian view of perceptual experience does not mandate a Cartesian view of singular thought. This possibility seems to be suppressed by McDowell. Already with setting up the two views of singular thought as *extensions* of the Cartesian and the less than Cartesian views of perceptual experience, McDowell is assuming an analogous treatment of perception and singular thought. The implication is that a less than Cartesian view of perceptual experience brings with it a less than Cartesian view of singular thought, and vice versa. The same, he seems to think, holds for the Cartesian view; it comes in one package that includes a view both of experience and of singular thought. But the above consideration of what might have been Russell's view shows that the unity of this package can be questioned.

What is further questioned in light of a rejection of M1* like that I have suggested Russell might have had in mind is whether each view there is of singular thought falls neatly on one side or the other of McDowell's Cartesian versus less than Cartesian dichotomy. As I mentioned above, it looks like both the Cartesian and the less than Cartesian view depend for their formulation on a distinction between singular thoughts and mere appearances of them. If one rejects this distinction by rejecting that there can be mere appearances of singular thought, it is then unclear whether one's view is to count as Cartesian or less than Cartesian. However, an alternative characterisation of the distinction may be made by making reference to two types of case that are cognitively indistinguishable by introspection but that, according to the less than Cartesian view, differ from the subject's point of view. I return to this way of drawing the distinction in the final section of the chapter.

The general suspicion as to whether McDowell's analogous treatment of perception and singular thought is in good order will be further questioned in the remainder of the chapter. I think that, in the end, McDowell's reasoning from M0* to MC* falls short of support because what he has to say in favour of M2* relies ultimately on an analogy between perception and thought that staggers in vital respects. The next two sections, however, will consider the part of McDowell's defence of M2* that does not depend on this analogy. The analysis of this part of the defence will help to reveal a view of singular thought important to the revision of Evans's and McDowell's view that I will suggest at the end.

3.5   *Two Cartesian views of singular thought*

In McDowell's paper, there is a shift in focus from section seven and onwards, after which McDowell concentrates on singular thought rather than perceptual experience. McDowell's general strategy in this final part of his paper is to defend his view of singular thought by pointing out how particular available views display Cartesian tendencies that make them unattractive. In section seven, McDowell's discussion proceeds by, first, considering a line of defence likely to be attempted by defenders of a Cartesian view of singular thought. Simon Blackburn (1984) is mentioned as exemplifying this defence when putting forward the claim that, in McDowell's terms, the appearance that one is having a singular thought is the same in cases where there is no introspective difference between having a singular thought and having a mere appearance of singular thought. After explaining how Blackburn's defence begs the question against the less than Cartesian view, McDowell gives his answer to the question-begging question in section eight through his considerations of Colin McGinn's (1982) two-component view of content. In the present section, I present McDowell's criticism of Blackburn, which I think is justified, and I set out the general accusation McDowell makes against McGinn's two-component view. The next section argues that the two-component view has the resources to respond to this accusation.

Blackbrun's (1984) concern is Twin-Earth scenarios, rather than cases of perceptual hallucination. As the standard thought experiment from Hilary Putnam (1975) goes, we suppose that there is a planet, Twin-Earth, which is just like Earth except for the fact that the transparent liquid that fills rivers and oceans and that

Twin-Earthlings call 'water' is not H_2O but XYZ. Apart from their chemical structure, however, the substances are indistinguishable. Blackburn emphasises that the Twin-Earthling who experiences XYZ, or twater as we may call it, has the same phenomenological properties as the person on Earth who experiences water. This is something McDowell declares that he can accept. But Blackburn continues by claiming that sameness in phenomenological properties implies that everything stays the same from 'the subject's point of view'. Witness for instance his claims about the following Twin-Earth style example:

> Consider two astronomers looking through their instrument, and suddenly seeing a new planet where there should be no planet. In w_a they have indeed spotted a particular planet, in w_s they have spotted a different heavenly body (a star perhaps), and in w_c they are victims of a defect in the optics of their telescope which made it look as though there is a planet. But in each story we are imagining the situations to be the same from the standpoint of the subjects. … [W]e have said that in each case the situation is the same from the subjects' point of view, and so it is natural to say that *their* understanding of what they have said is the same in each situation. (Blackburn 1984, p. 313, original emphasis).

Blackburn makes the claim that the situation of the astronomers in the different worlds is the same from the subject's point of view, and he clearly thinks that this pertains not only to their perceptual situation but also to their cognitive situation; the subjects have the same 'understanding'.[50] In McDowell's terminology, this is to claim not only that the perceptual appearance that things are thus and so is the same, but also that the appearance of singular thought is the same. Thus, Blackburn's claim clearly amounts to a rejection of McDowell's view that the nature of the appearance that one is having a singular thought varies between cases of singular thought and cases of mere appearance of singular thought.

According to McDowell, however, Blackburn makes an illegitimate inference in passages like the one just quoted. He is drawing a conclusion about the nature of

---

[50] Later on, Blackburn makes it clear that he holds the subjects to have the same thought across these different worlds sketched. His view is that 'thinkers could think the same even where they in the presence of a different cause of their thinking' (ibid., p. 314). The view is motivated by an idea he attributes to Russell, namely that although our thoughts and perceptions are caused by particular objects, it is only the general features emanating from particular objects that subjects 'have to go on' (see ibid., p. 315).

an appearance of singular thought solely on the basis of what is by introspection of their situation distinguishable to the subjects. In particular, Blackburn must be thinking that B1 entails BC, as follows:

(B1)   The difference between the cases is not introspectively distinguishable to the subjects.

(BC)   The difference between the cases does not concern the appearance of singular thought had by the subjects.

As McDowell remarks, there is a hidden premise the acceptance of which is required if one is to be led to the conclusion in BC. McDowell writes that 'the legitimacy of the category of how things seem [where this is understood as the infallibly knowable fact, i.e. what is introspectively indistinguishable to the subject] is consistent with an essentially disjunctive conception of the state of seemingly entertaining a singular thought' (McDowell 1986, p. 157). Only if the appearance of singular thought had by the astronomers is exhausted by what is introspectively indistinguishable between Blackburn's three cases does acceptance of B1 lead one to conclude that each case involves the same appearance. So Blackburn must tacitly be assuming the following premise:

(B2)   The nature of the appearance of singular thought is exhaustively determined by what is introspectively indistinguishable between the three cases.

B2 is precisely the sort of claim that McDowell wants to deny when he asserts M2*. In asserting, as M2* does, that it makes an essential *difference* to the nature of the appearance of having a singular thought whether one is in fact having a singular thought or if it merely appears that way, McDowell asserts that the nature of appearances is *not exhausted* by what is introspectively the same between the cases. Hence, Blackburn's inference from B1 to BC is question-begging as an argument against premise M2*.

Furthermore, McDowell notes, left with only B1 there is no dispute between himself and Blackburn. That singular thoughts and mere appearances of singular thought are introspectively indistinguishable, as Blackburn builds his point on, is not

something that McDowell would dispute. The dispute only concerns whether this should be the only thing that individuates an appearance of singular thought. And this dispute, McDowell concludes, cannot be settled by appealing only to a subject's introspection of their mental state. Appeal to introspective indistinguishability, he concludes,

> …is hence powerless to recommend the conclusion that thoughts are only extrinsically connected with objects. Extracting such a recommendation from the phenomenological facts to which Blackburn appeals betrays a conception of the realm of appearance more philosophically contentious than anything that sheer phenomenology could deliver. (McDowell 1986, p. 157.)

With his criticism of Blackburn, then, McDowell shows that a certain – and perhaps intuitive – way of rejecting M2* does not work: Claiming that singular thoughts and mere appearances of them are introspectively indistinguishable does nothing to show that they involve the same cognitive appearance. To suppose that it does is the question-begging move that Blackburn makes. However, revelation of the question-begging nature of this move does not yet give us any reason to prefer McDowell's less than Cartesian view of singular thought to Cartesian views like Blackburn's. In order to produce a reason in favour of his own position, McDowell needs to answer the question that he reveals Blackburn to be begging. That is, the question to be answered is: Why *not* think, as the Cartesian view implies, that what is introspectively indistinguishable between having a singular thought and having a mere appearance of singular thought determines all there is to the nature of an appearance of singular thought?

This question seems to be what McDowell answers with his criticism of McGinn's (1982) two-component view of content, which he pronounces to be 'the most clear-sighted form of the [Cartesian] position' (ibid., p. 158).[51] Before we start to untangle McDowell's criticism, however – which will occupy both the reminder of this section, as well as the next – we must identify what McGinn's position is, both in McGinn's and in McDowell's terminology.

According to McGinn, there are two complementing ways of specifying the content of a subject's belief. Firstly, one may specify the content of a belief as

---

[51] The two-component view is also discussed and criticised in the appendix to chapter six of Evans (1982, pp. 200-204).

standing in a relation to the subject. This is the sort of specification that McGinn takes to be relevant when we seek to explain the subject's psychological states and actions, that is, when we 'view beliefs as causally explanatory states of the head' (ibid., p. 216). This sort of description is 'methodologically solipsist', or concerns only 'the intrinsic aspects of belief', according to McGinn. It describes what is introspectively indistinguishable between, for instance, the beliefs that both a person on Earth and his or her Twin-Earth *doppelganger* would express as 'Water is wet', or the beliefs that A and B would both express as 'I am F'. By the same token, I take it, McGinn would say that this is a description of what may be introspectively indistinguishable between a genuine singular thought and a mere appearance of singular thought. McDowell refers to this first way of specifying the content of belief as constituting 'the internal component' of the description of the belief. Secondly, there is what McDowell calls the 'external component' of the belief. This refers to a way of specifying the content of a belief such that the relation to what the belief is about is central, e.g. the relation to some object in the mind-independent world. We specify beliefs this way, McGinn writes, when 'we view beliefs as relations to propositions that can be assigned referential truth-conditions, and so point outward to the world' (ibid.). The external component is thus the part of the description that is concerned with the reference aspect of the belief.

According to defenders of the two-component view, the external component makes beliefs like that expressed by 'Water is wet' by a person on Earth and a person on Twin-Earth respectively *different* beliefs. This distinguishes the two-component view from two-level views like that Blackburn holds. Also Blackburn recognises that there are two ways of describing or classifying beliefs or thoughts, namely in terms of their introspective character and in terms of their truth-conditions. But according to Blackburn it is only the former that matters to the nature of the thought. As we saw above, McDowell reads Blackburn as holding also that only the former matters to the nature of the appearance that one has a singular thought, which is an appearance that constitutes part of 'the subject's point of view'. In McGinn, it is not clear that the same association between what is introspectively accessible, or what the internal component describes, and subjectivity needs to be made. It could be that, to the extent a two-component theorist like McGinn is prepared to acknowledge the idea that there are appearances of singular thought, he or she would want to describe such appearances as having a reference aspect. If that is so, the two-component view

would go clear of the charge of being a Cartesian view of singular thought. The relation of the appearance of singular thought to the mind-independent world would matter to the nature of the appearance. This is how McDowell thinks the two-component theorist wants his or her view to be taken, as he writes that '[t]he composite picture is offered as, precisely, a picture of the mind in full and intelligible possession of its perspective on the external world' (McDowell 1986, p. 159). According to two-component theorists, then, the difference between their view and McDowell's is only that they, but not McDowell, postulate a common element to, for instance, the beliefs involved in Twin-Earth scenarios, namely what is given in the internal component of the description of them.

McDowell argues, by contrast, that the two-component view is a Cartesian view. The two-component theorist's claim that the relation of the mind-independent world matters to the nature of singular thought is, according to him, undermined by the conception of appearances of singular thought that he thinks the two-component view brings with it. McDowell argues that on the two-component view there is no difference between appearances of genuine singular thought and mere appearances of singular thought; this makes it a Cartesian view. His general accusation against the two-component view is the following:

> If we want to consider the mind's relation to the world, according to this position [i.e. the two-component picture], we ought not to worry about the nature of the internal component of the picture taken by itself. What makes this unsatisfying, however, is the way in which the internal component of the composite picture, and not the compositely conceived whole, irresistibly attracts the attributes that intuitively characterize the domain of subjectivity. (Ibid., p. 159.)

As we saw in section two, one attribute of the domain of subjectivity is in McDowell's view that it involves the idea of a vantage point. This seems to be the attribute that his support for the claim in the passage centres on, as we will see when this is considered in the next section.[52] However, for now the main focus is McDowell's accusation against the two-component picture in this passage, which in short is the following: *Only the internal component characterises items in the domain of subjectivity, such as the appearance that one has a singular thought.* Since

---

[52] McDowell also mentions introspectability and the presence of representational content as other attributes of subjectivity (ibid., p. 155, n. 31).

only the external component concerns the relation to the mind-independent world, this accusation implies that the relation to the mind-independent world does not matter to the nature of an appearance of singular thought on the two-component picture. As will be remembered, this conception of appearances of thought belongs with the Cartesian view of singular thought. It contrasts with McDowell's less than Cartesian view, according to which the relation to the mind-independent world *does* matter to the nature of an appearance of singular thought. In the proceeding section, I will examine McDowell's justification for the accusation.

3.6   *The argument against the two-component view*

McDowell makes two points in order to justify his accusation that only the internal component characterises appearances on the two-component view. Both of these, I will argue, fail. The first point is stated thus:

> If introspection is to be distinguishable from knowledge at large, it cannot be allowed access to the external circumstances which, according to this position [i.e. the two-component picture], partly determine the full composite truth about the mind; so its scope must be restricted to the internal component' (ibid., p. 159).

McDowell's point, I take it, is that insofar as the internal and the external component are to describe separate, clearly distinguishable aspects of thought-content, the internal component – which describes what is accessible to introspection – cannot concern what only the external component is supposed to concern, namely the relation to the mind-independent world.

However, this point can be granted without granting what McDowell intends the point to support, namely the accusation that only the internal component characterises appearances of singular thought on the two-component view. We may grant that the internal component characterises belief in a way that leaves out its relation to the mind-independent world, and that what is accessible to introspection is fully characterised in this way. But this would not have the consequence, as McDowell intends his point to have, that *appearances of singular thought* are characterised only by the internal component – unless one adds Blackburn's illegitimate premise that what is accessible to introspection exhausts all there is to an appearance of singular thought. Unless this premise is assumed, nothing excludes

that also the external component can be used to characterise appearances of thought. Thus, McDowell's first point in support of the claim that only the internal component characterises appearances of thought fails.

The second point McDowell makes to support his accusation against the two-component picture requires more extensive presentation and evaluation. Evaluation of this second point also deserves closer attention because it, as we shall see, leads to development of the two-component framework on which I build my revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view.

McDowell's second point concerns the difference between two beliefs that, as described by the external component, are about the same object, but which differ with regard to the internal component. McDowell writes:

> It is in the internal component that we have to locate the difference which Frege's constraint requires us to mark between pairs of (say) beliefs which in the full composite story would be described as involving the attribution of the same property to the same object, but which have to be distinguished because someone may without irrationality have one and not the other. There is nowhere else to locate the difference once the picture of the mind is structured in this way. So Frege's notion of a mode of presentation is supposed to have its use in characterizing the configurations of the interior (remarkably enough, in view of the fact that they are in themselves blind). But a mode of presentation should be the way something is presented to a subject of thought. (Ibid., pp. 159-160.)

I take the following to be McDowell's line of thought. First, he makes the point that beliefs described in the same way by the external component may nevertheless be distinguished to the extent that it is rational for someone to hold one of them and reject the other. A typical example would be the beliefs expressible as 'Tully is F' and 'Cicero is F'. A rational subject who does not know that Tully is Cicero will consider these to be different beliefs. McDowell makes the uncontroversial claim that (1) the difference between such beliefs is described only by the internal component. He then further makes the uncontroversial claim that (2) the difference between the beliefs is, in Frege's terminology, that the beliefs have different modes of presentation. Combining (1) and (2), we get the uncontroversial conclusion that, on the two-component view, the notion of a mode of presentation is used only in the internal component of the description of a thought.

What is puzzling and controversial about the passage enters with McDowell's objection at the end that 'a mode of presentation should be the way something is presented to a subject of thought'. I think the emphasis here is meant to be that a mode of presentation is a presentation of *something*; the presentation relates what it presents to the mind-independent world. In the previous section, we saw that a description of the relation of a thought to the mind-independent world is provided by the external component, and not by the internal component, on the two-component picture. Hence, given the uncontroversial conclusion that the notion of a mode of presentation is used only in the internal component, it is clear that the notion of a mode of presentation cannot be used to characterise the aspect of thought-content that relates to the mind-independent world. The puzzling and controversial bit is the following: Why does McDowell think it constitutes an *objection* to point out that the notion of a mode of presentation should relate that which it presents to the mind-independent world?

In order to appreciate this, we must remember the claim that McDowell intends the passage to justify: It is supposed to justify the accusation that only the internal component characterises appearances of singular thought on the two-component picture, i.e. the accusation that the two-component picture harbours a Cartesian conception of appearances of singular thought, according to which such appearances do not relate to the mind-independent world. It is puzzling how the passage can serve thus, given that there is no mention of appearances in it. However, I think McDowell assumes that any given appearance of singular thought must be characterised in terms of the notion of a mode of presentation, or, more generally, in terms of the notion of cognitive role. Following on from the passage above, he writes that what he has said about the relation between modes of presentation and the internal component holds also if we replace talk of modes of presentation with talk of cognitive roles:

> The same point emerges more generally in the way it is natural, in the two-component picture of mind, to speak of an item's role in the strictly internal aspect of the composite truth about the mind as its *cognitive* role: something's cognitive role should be its role in the cognitive life of (surely) a subject of thought (ibid., p. 160, original emphasis).

The claim in the last part of the sentence parallels the claim in the final sentence of the passage above. McDowell clearly intends both of these claims as objections to the uncontroversial conclusion that the notions of cognitive role and a mode of presentation are used only in the internal component. But unless we assume that appearances of singular thought must be characterised by using these notions, it is not clear why these claims are objections. Only if it is assumed that appearances of singular thought must be characterised in terms of the notions of a mode of presentation and cognitive role will locating these notions within the internal component, as the uncontroversial conclusion does, mean that this is also where characterisations of appearances of singular thought are located. We would then reach the conclusion that appearances of singular thought are characterised only by the internal component, as is McDowell's accusation. In other words, we would reach the conclusion that the two-component view harbours a Cartesian conception of such appearances, i.e. a conception on which appearances do not relate to the mind-independent world.

In summary, as I have analysed McDowell's second argument in support of his accusation against the two-component view, it goes like this:

(1)   The difference between two beliefs like 'Cicero is F' and 'Tully is F' is described only by the internal component on the two-component view.

(2)   The difference between such beliefs is that the beliefs have different modes of presentation.

(Uncontroversial conclusion) The notion of a mode of presentation is used only in the internal component on the two-component view.

(Assumption)   An appearance of singular thought must be characterised in terms of the notion of a mode of presentation.

(The accusation)   An appearance of singular thought is characterised only by the internal component on the two-component view.

I will argue that the two-component theorist can resist McDowell's accusation by denying (2) on the reading it gets if Assumption is silently endorsed. Note that the first uncontroversial claim, (1), is a claim about what one thought-content is that the

other is not, i.e. a claim that concerns the metaphysics of thought-content. By contrast, McDowell's accusation against the two-component view concerns the appearance aspect of thought. The leap from the metaphysics of thought-content to the appearance aspect of thought is supposed to be bridged by the second uncontroversial claim, (2), when it is read on the basis of Assumption. Assumption connects the notion of a mode of presentation to appearances. Thus, given Assumption, (2) is supposed to connect the metaphysical difference between the beliefs, characterised by the internal component, with the appearance aspect of the beliefs. But when (2) is taken this way, it is not an uncontroversial claim. What is uncontroversial is that one may define the notion of a mode of presentation as characterising precisely what is the metaphysical difference between beliefs like 'Cicero is F' and 'Tully is F'. But, given Assumption, (2) amounts to a claim that the phenomenological difference between the beliefs, i.e. the difference in their appearance aspect characterised in terms of the notion of a mode of presentation, is identified when one identifies the metaphysical difference between them, i.e. the difference characterised by the internal component of the description of the beliefs. That there is the possibility of denying this claim for someone like a two-component theorist is argued by M. G. F. Martin (2002, pp. 197-200). Let us see how Martin suggests this can be done.

Martin considers McDowell's argument against the two-component view as a point that may be made against an intentionalist about perceptual experience. An intentionalist thinks about the content of perceptual experience analogously to how a two-component theorist thinks about the internal component of the description of a thought. That is, analogously to how a two-component theorist holds that the relation of a thought to the object it is about is irrelevant to the internal component of the description of it, an intentionalist holds that the relation of a perceptual experience to the object experienced is irrelevant to a description of its content. Martin envisages that an intentionalist may be charged with holding a Cartesian view of experience, similarly to how a two-component theorist is charged with holding a Cartesian view of singular thought. But the intentionalist can ward off McDowell's charge, Martin argues.

He explains that the intentionalist can acknowledge that there are two aspects to the phenomenology of experience. First, there is the aspect that is repeatable in other experiences of the same kind. But this aspect, Martin thinks, involves an

abstraction from the particular experiential episode; this aspect comes into view first when the experience is regarded as the same as some other experience, when we consider its phenomenological kind and, in this sense, its 'content'.[53] If we describe the experience from a first-person perspective, however, the intentionalist can acknowledge that there is also an aspect to the phenomenology of a veridical perceptual experience that is unrepeatable and can only be described by making reference to the object or event experienced.[54] This is compatible with holding that the content of the experience and what the experience constitutively *is* is identified when it is regarded as the same or different from some other experience. On behalf of the intentionalist, Martin puts this point as follows:

> For such a theorist, the proper description of the phenomenal nature of experience [i.e. of the unrepeatable aspect] when one perceives some object is to be given partly by reference to the very object before one then. ... This is quite consistent with recognising that in some other circumstance a state of mind with the very same content would not be expressible in the same way, i.e. by demonstrating that very object. Qualitatively the two experiences would be the same. ... [T]he fact that two experiences are qualitatively the same does not force us to deny that in the one case a particular object must be picked out in relation to the phenomenal nature which is not picked out in the other. (Martin 2002, pp. 198-199.)

Similarly to how Martin's intentionalist can bypass McDowell's charge of endorsing a Cartesian view of experience, a two-component theorist can avoid the accusation that their view involves a Cartesian view of appearances of thought. As a metaphysical claim about the difference between thought-contents like 'Tully is F' and 'Cicero is F', the two-component theorist can accept McDowell's first uncontroversial claim about their view, i.e. the claim that only the internal component describes the difference between such thoughts. In particular, it can be claimed that the internal component describes 'content' in the sense of what is the

---

[53] Martin seems to understand the notion of content to refer to the sort of thing that is common between similar episodes of thought. As I will explain below, I think this notion of content is compatible with Evans's and McDowell's notion, which refers to propositional content with truth-conditions.

[54] There is also an unrepeatable aspect to experience in a non-veridical case where no object or event is experienced, but it is slightly more complicated to describe; we would need to make reference to the object or event that would have been experienced had the experience been veridical. In short, the description of the particularity of a non-veridical experience is parasitic on the veridical case.

same between similar thought-episodes. Still, insofar as we recognise episodes of entertaining singular thought-contents as relating to the object that the thought is about, it can be maintained that there is an aspect of the phenomenology of the singular thought-*episode*, i.e. an aspect of the appearance of the singular thought-episode, that involves a relation to the mind-independent world, and hence is described by the external component (since the external component describes the thought's relation to the mind-independent world). Even for two thought-contents that differ only in the internal component, such as the thoughts 'Tully is F' and 'Cicero is F', it can be maintained that there is an aspect to the appearances of singular thought-episodes that can only be characterised by making reference to the object the beliefs are both about. Hence, (2) on the controversial reading is rejected: It is rejected that the difference between the thought-contents described by the internal component is the same as the difference between the appearances of thought described by using the notion of a mode of presentation. The appearance of singular thought includes an aspect of the singular thought-episode that relates to the object thought about. This means that McDowell's accusation against the two-component view, the accusation that only the internal component characterises appearances of singular thought, is rejected.

Note that this version of the two-component view is more complex than the intentionalist position Martin outlines. Martin's intentionalist does not recognise two components of content. He or she understands content only as what is common between similar experiential events. By contrast, the two-component view I sketch here regards this type of content as constituting one component of thought-content, namely the internal component. The external component of thought-content, however, is constituted by propositional, object-dependent content with truth-conditions, i.e. the sort of content that Evans and McDowell are concerned with. I think there is no obstacle to adopting both of these notions of content. By analogy to how it has been argued that experience can have multiple types of contents which do not conflict but rather serve different theoretical purposes,[55] I think the same holds for the two types of content in the external and the internal component.

---

[55] See e.g. Chalmers (2006) and Siegel (2010). Siegel argues that there can be both singular and nonsingular accuracy conditions. In a case of illusion, she argues, experience can satisfy some or all of the nonsingular accuracy conditions and hence be veridical to a certain extent, although its singular accuracy conditions are not satisfied. Similarly, Chalmers holds that phenomenal content includes

Martin's suggestion for the intentionalist, reworked as a suggestion for the two-component theorist, shows that McDowell is unsuccessful in establishing that the two-component theorist is forced to a Cartesian view of appearances of thought. However, while this adaption of Martin's suggestion to a view of singular thought is possible, one may object that it is not very plausible. The starting point for Martin's argument on behalf of the intentionalist about perceptual experience is an intuition about how the particularity of experience is manifest in the phenomenology of experience, namely the intuition that it perceptually appears to one that one is presented with a particular object or event.[56] This is what motivates the idea that experiences are particular, unrepeatable events, and that it is possible to hold that this aspect of them is reflected in their phenomenology although their content is given by what is introspectively indistinguishable between different experiences. But is there similar motivation for the idea that singular thoughts have an unrepeatable and object-specific phenomenology?

There does not seem to be any intuition about the phenomenology of singular thought corresponding to the intuition about how the particularity of experience is manifest in its phenomenology. However, depending on whether one considers a singular thought to be a mental content or a mental episode, and depending on what one considers mental contents to be, I think theoretical considerations of the nature of singular thought may present some reason to believe that singular thought has an object-specific phenomenology. Being presented with a content, one might think, is to be presented with something general rather than with a particular. At least, this seems plausible if one thinks of content in Martin's way, i.e. as what is common between similar episodes of thinking. This is something that can be tokened on several occasions. So, given this conception of content, an appearance of thought-content is not an appearance of a particular, but rather an appearance of something repeatable. By contrast, if content is propositional content with object-dependent truth-conditions, it may seem natural to think that also appearances of it are sensitive

___

both Russellian content, composed of objects and properties, and Fregean content, which only involves properties (or modes of presentation). However, Chalmers also adds a third kind of phenomenal content, 'Edenic content', which reveals 'perfect', non-instantiated phenomenal properties.

[56] However, it can also be argued that the phenomenology of experience is general, in that it registers what can be common between veridical and non- veridical experiences (see e.g. Schellenberg 2010).

to the object it is about. Similarly, if one considers an appearance of singular thought to be the appearance involved in an episode of singular thought, then it may be natural to think that it is an appearance of a particular, insofar as the episode relates to the particular object thought about. In general, singular thought can be believed to have an unrepeatable and object-specific phenomenology on the basis that it is itself a particular or relates to a particular object.

In section eight, I will outline a less than Cartesian view that builds on the sketched version of the two-component view and that acknowledges appearances of both singular thought-contents and singular thought-episodes. Before that, the next section completes this chapter's analysis of McDowell's argument. In the present section, we have seen that McDowell's criticism of the two-component view fails to constitute a reason as to why we should *not* think, as Blackburn does on question-begging grounds, that what is introspectively indistinguishable between having a singular thought and having a mere appearance of singular thought determines all there is to the nature of an appearance of singular thought. In short, McDowell's criticism of the two-component view fails to provide a reason to reject the Cartesian conception of appearances of singular thought. However, McDowell seems to think that he has another reason to reject the Cartesian view of appearances of singular thought, namely what follows if we extend his arguments against the Cartesian view of perceptual experience as arguments against the Cartesian view of singular thought. In the next section, I will argue that this extension fails.

3.7   *Disanalogies between perception and singular thought*

Martin's suggestion demonstrates that a two-component theorist has the resources to hold an anti-Cartesian conception of appearances of singular thought, i.e. to hold that appearances stand in a relation to the mind-independent world. Thus, there is at least one other possible view than McDowell's own which is a less than Cartesian view. This constitutes a significant correction to McDowell's argument, since it means that a view that he argues to be Cartesian need in fact not be. However, this correction does not question McDowell's rejection of the Cartesian view of singular thought. So, we are still left without an answer to the question: Why should we prefer McDowell's less than Cartesian view, or the anti-Cartesian version of the two-component view, to Cartesian views of singular thought?

McDowell's short reply to this question is that only the less than Cartesian view allows for 'object-directed intentionality in cognitive space' (McDowell 1986, p. 165). The problem with a two-component view that, unlike the version of the view based on Martin's suggestion, rejects that appearances of singular thought are characterised by making reference to the mind-independent world is, according to McDowell, that it does not allow for this particular a form of intentionality. McDowell's idea of object-directed intentionality is that the intentionality of singular thought must be conceived from the subject's point of view. Only if an appearance of singular thought is an appearance to the effect that the subject relates to the mind-independent world can it be in virtue of how things seem to the subject that his or her thought is about a mind-independent object. Thus, the Cartesian view of appearances of singular thought cannot accommodate object-directed intentionality.

Now, McDowell does not in the latter part of his paper explain why failing to accommodate such intentionality is a problem. He seems to think that this explanation is provided already, by analogy to what he argues in the earlier part of the paper with regard to a Cartesian view of perceptual experience. As we saw in section two, the points I labelled 'Subjectivity' and 'Directedness' are McDowell's most explicit arguments against the Cartesian picture as a view of perceptual experience. But these points, I will argue, do not extend smoothly to arguments against the Cartesian picture as a view of singular thought, due to certain problems with the analogy between perception and singular thought that McDowell envisages.

One might think, as McDowell sometimes seems to suggest, that there is no need for an argument against views that cannot accommodate object-directed intentionality of singular thought. As McDowell discusses in section nine of his paper, many theorists have sought to follow Saul Kripke's (1980) and Keith Donnellan's (1966) examples as to how referential intentions may override descriptive conventions, and to account for the intentionality of singular thought as holding in virtue of the subject's conception of the relation between their state of mind and the mind-independent world.[57] If convinced that these attempts are on the right track, one might think the Cartesian view can be discarded on the basis that it

---

[57] McDowell (1986, pp. 161-168) argues that Kripke's and Donnellan's contributions fail to properly split paths with the Cartesian view and therefore fail to capture the object-directed intentionality of singular thought. Discussion of this reading of Kripke's and Donnellan's work must be set aside here.

does not allow for object-directed intentionality. But McDowell cannot take such conviction for granted. For the fact remains that the Cartesian alternative – descriptivism – is accepted by many too. Descriptivism, as I mentioned in the Introduction, is the view that singular thought (in likeness with all thought) is about the mind-independent world in virtue of a descriptive fit with entities in it. Thus, descriptivism openly favours a sort of intentionality of singular thought that is independent of whether or not the subject conceives of it. Hence, we are in need of a reason to think that singular thought is about the world in the way that McDowell claims it is. Let us therefore consider what would be required if 'Subjectivity' and 'Directedness' are to be developed as points against the Cartesian view of singular thought.

Consider first the point labelled 'Directedness'. A brief recapitulation is in good order. McDowell draws on the fact that in order to describe perceptual experiences, we make use of terms that refer to entities in the mind-independent world. In short, we provide a content-involving characterisation. This notably holds true also of non-veridical perceptual experiences, the descriptions of which are parasitic on the descriptions of veridical perceptions. McDowell's point is that the Cartesian view should be rejected because it conflicts with this generally acknowledged fact about how perceptual experiences are characterised. The conflict arises from the fact that, according to the Cartesian picture, the nature of an appearance that things are thus and so is indifferent to the difference between veridical and non-veridical experiences; such experiences can involve the same appearance. This means that it would, according to the Cartesian picture, be appropriate to characterise the appearance in a way that leaves out reference to what is different between veridical and non-veridical experiences, i.e. their relation to the mind-independent world. On McDowell's own view, by contrast, both veridical and non-veridical perceptual experiences have directedness towards the mind-independent world. This makes it appropriate to characterise how things appear to the subject in both veridical and non-veridical experiences in content-involving terms.

The trouble with making an analogous point about the Cartesian view of singular thought is that there is no corresponding commonsensical fact about the description of appearances of singular thought. Although it seems to be generally accepted that descriptions of non-deceptive appearances of thought, i.e. of singular

thoughts, make reference to entities in the mind-independent world,[58] the same cannot be said about descriptions of mere appearances of thought. It is not clear whether or not there is any description at all of the latter. In the previous chapter we saw that the prospects for finding an utterance that 'captures' a mere appearance of thought look dim. It seemed difficult to find any criterion for establishing that an utterance amounts to a characterisation of a given appearance of thought, and not to a characterisation of a nearby but unrelated appearance of thought. But if there can be no description of mere appearances of singular thought, then there can be no description of the sort required for making McDowell's point about Directedness either. So, the Cartesian view of singular thought cannot be criticised for accounting for appearances of singular thought in a way that implies that descriptions of them should not make reference to entities in the mind-independent world. What the Cartesian view of singular thought *can* be criticised for – to the extent that there can be no descriptions of mere appearances of thought – is the implication that there *are* such descriptions. But this would be a criticism to which McDowell's less than Cartesian view is liable as well.

The point labelled 'Directedness' thus cannot very easily be extended as a point about descriptions of appearances of singular thought, since it is not clear if there are descriptions of mere appearances of thought. Even so, it would be possible to extend it as a point only about the description of *non-deceptive* appearances of singular thought, and to refute the Cartesian view thus. But this requires a revision of McDowell's view, to be developed in the next section, so as to prevent the extended version of the point about directedness from bringing with it the claim that there also can be descriptions of mere appearances of thought. Before considering this, we should examine whether Subjectivity can be made as a point in favour of McDowell's less than Cartesian view of singular thought.

Recall that as a point about a view of perceptual experience, Subjectivity is the criticism that, since the Cartesian picture involves that the nature of appearances is indifferent to the difference between veridical and non-veridical experiences, an appearance that things are thus and so cannot be an appearance *of* something. We saw that McDowell thinks this conception of appearances is problematic because 'the commonsense notion of a vantage point on the external world is now fundamentally

---

[58] For instance, this claim seems to be endorsed by Recanati (1993, p. 210).

problematic' (ibid., p. 151). By contrast to the Cartesian picture, McDowell's view seems to be that the appearance that things are thus and so is subjective or perspectival, in the sense that the mind-independent world is manifest in non-deceptive instances of it. A non-deceptive appearance is the appearance *of* something. We may put the point as being that the appearance has a specific structure; it is, metaphorically speaking, the function of an argument given by the mind-independent world.

If this criticism of the Cartesian picture is to extend as a criticism of the Cartesian view of singular thought, it would again require that the analogy between perceptual experience and appearances of singular thought can be upheld in a certain respect. It would require that the structure of veridical appearances of thought is analogous to the structure that, according to McDowell, is characteristic of the appearances involved in veridical perceptual experiences.

It is relatively clear that McDowell himself thinks about appearances of singular thought as having such structure. He seems to picture it as if we in non-deceptive appearances of singular thought seem to "see" something before our mind. This comes out most strikingly in some of his claims about mere appearances of thought. For instance, he writes that a subject 'may think there is a singular thought at, so to speak, a certain position in his internal organization although there is nothing precisely there' (ibid., p. 145). Similarly, in his paper '*De Re* Senses' he states that one of the essential constituents of a singular thought, a *de re* sense, wrongly appears to be before the mind in a mere appearance of thought. In a mere appearance of thought, he writes, 'there can only be a gap – an absence – at, so to speak, the relevant place in the mind – the place where ... there appears to be a specific *de re* sense' (McDowell 1984, p. 288). Even though McDowell is clear that the spatial metaphors used in these statements are, precisely, metaphors, what he seems to think is literally true is that in a mere appearance of thought the mind seems to be presented with something that, if it were in fact presented to the subject, would make the appearance non-deceptive. However, the important point about these formulations at present is not what they reveal about how McDowell must be thinking about the non-veridical case, but what they reveal about how he must be thinking about the veridical case. In non-deceptive appearances of singular thought, McDowell seems to think, there *is* something presented to the subject, namely the thought-content, as the first quotation suggests, or, the *de re* sense, as the latter

136

quotation suggests. Thus, the structure of non-deceptive appearances of singular thought is analogous to that of the appearances involved in veridical perceptual experience insofar as there in both cases is something that appears to the subject.

That is McDowell's view. But is there any reason to think that veridical appearances of singular thought must or should be such that there is something (a thought or a *de re* sense) that appears in them, analogously to how, according to McDowell, bits of the mind-independent world appears to the subject in perceptual appearances? The alternative view held by the defender of the Cartesian view is that the appearance that one has a singular thought is non-deceptive when there is a match between the appearance and some state of the world. Metaphorically speaking, the idea is that the appearance is like a stencil that fits with a part of the world, without existentially depending on it. It looks hard to find a general reason for thinking that only McDowell's model for non-deceptive appearances is acceptable. Perhaps a reason to prefer McDowell's conception can be found with regard to perceptual experience; I leave that question to one side. In the case of singular thought, however, the two models for conceiving of appearances clearly correspond with the two notions of aboutness or intentionality that belong to the Cartesian view (and descriptivism) and the less than Cartesian view respectively, i.e. aboutness as descriptive fit and aboutness as directedness towards an object. It seems that making a decision about which model of appearances is right cannot be clearly distinguished from the question as to which notion of aboutness is right. But settling the latter question is precisely what McDowell would want to achieve by claiming that appearances should be conceived of such that there is something that appears in them. Thus, appeal to McDowell's favoured conception of appearances cannot constitute a reason for rejecting the Cartesian view of singular thought.

On the whole, we may conclude that seeking to extend Directedness and Subjectivity as points against the Cartesian view of singular thought is an unsuccessful enterprise. This is due to lack of analogy in relevant respects between perceptual experience and singular thought. Thus, at this stage we still lack a reason for preferring McDowell's less than Cartesian view of singular thought to a Cartesian view and for thinking that singular thought has an object-directed intentionality, even if Directedness and Subjectivity may constitute reason for preferring the less than Cartesian view as a view of perceptual experience.

As noted, however, Directedness may be developed with regard to non-deceptive appearances of thought exclusively, but this would require revision of McDowell's view so as to make it immune to the objection that mere appearances of thought come out as requiring descriptions that it is not clear they can have. In the following section I outline a revision of McDowell's view on the background of which this argument can be made. It should be emphasised that this is not a revision I think McDowell would endorse. Rather, the sense in which I mean to revise McDowell's view is that I want to preserve a central and, in my view, insightful aspect of his view of singular thought, namely the idea that singular thought has an object-directed intentionality.

3.8   The revised view of object-directed intentionality

Given the first chapter's criticism of the idea that there can be mere appearances of thought, it will come as no surprise that my suggestion for revision of McDowell's view is to eliminate mere appearances of thought from it. Let me start by explaining how this revised view builds on the framework of the two-component view outlined in section six by drawing on Martin's proposal for the intentionalist.

Recall that Martin's proposal is that there is a version of the intentionalist view according to which hallucination and perception have a common object-independent content, which can be identified by considering them as events of the same phenomenological kind, but where the particularity of experience can nevertheless be accounted for by appeal to the particular, unrepeatable experiential event. Unlike the intentionalist about perceptual content who only recognises object-independent content, the two-component theorist holds that there are two components of content, and that the external component is constituted by object-dependent content. For this reason, I compared the intentionalist's view of perceptual content with the two-component theorist's view of the *internal* component of thought-content. My claim was that, similarly to how the intentionalist can acknowledge an aspect to phenomenology that is sensitive to the particular object experienced while maintaining that the content of perception is insensitive to this, the two-component theorist can acknowledge an aspect of appearances of singular thought that is sensitive to the particular object thought about while maintaining that the *internal* component of content is insensitive to this.

The framework of the two-component view that I adopt is the following. On the one hand, there are singular thought-contents and appearances thereof, and both of these have an external and an internal component. The internal component of thought-content is constituted by content in the sense of what is common between similar episodes of thought, i.e. the type of content that Martin acknowledges. The external component of content is constituted by object-dependent propositional content, i.e. the sort of content that Evans and McDowell acknowledge. However, as Martin emphasises, his notion of content, which figures in the internal component, requires acknowledging singular thought-episodes, since content on this notion is something that can be common between singular thought-episodes. So, the framework of the two-component view must, on the other hand, also make room for singular thought-episodes and appearances thereof. We may also speak of these as having an internal and an external component. In particular, we can identify the unrepeatable aspect of the phenomenology of the singular thought-episode, i.e. the aspect that relates to the mind-independent world, with the external component of an appearance of singular thought-content.

What I would like to add to this framework is an idea about how objects such as what I in chapter two called a 'hallucinatory apple' come into existence in mock thought scenarios. In order to motivate this idea, let me mention a further disanalogy between perception and thought, concerning the interaction between the two points from the previous section labelled 'Subjectivity' and 'Directedness'.

As points about perceptual experience, it is clear that there is a certain reciprocal relationship between Subjectivity and Directedness. That any perceptual experience has directedness towards the mind-independent world and that there is something in the mind-independent world that appears to one in a veridical experience can be considered two sides of the same coin in the following way: What the mind is directed towards in perceptual experience is also what appears to one in veridical experiences, namely some object or event in the mind-independent world. However, the same cannot be said about the relationship between Subjectivity and Directedness as points about singular thought-contents in McDowell's sense. Although McDowell thinks singular thought-content has directedness towards the mind-independent world – and hence should be characterised in content-involving terms – he does not think mind-independent objects and events are what appear to one in appearances of singular thought-content. Rather, as we noted above, what

McDowell thinks appears to one in appearances of thought are (very naturally) thought-contents, or thought-content constituents like *de re* senses. So, by contrast to how there is a fit between Subjectivity and Directedness on McDowell's view of perceptual experience, it is not the case that what singular thought-content is directed towards is also what appears to one in non-deceptive appearances of it. This discrepancy between what singular thought-content has directedness towards and what appears to one in it can motivate an alteration to the idea that singular thought is object-dependent. It can motivate the possibility of there being cases where the mind's directedness gives rise to the object on which the content that appears to one existentially depends. This possibility, I think, is realised in what I earlier have referred to as a 'mock thought scenario'.

Consider again the mock thought scenario where John has a hallucinatory perceptual experience as of an apple about which he also takes himself to be having a thought he would seek to express by the sentence 'That apple is green'. Because his situation is introspectively indistinguishable from a situation where he perceives an apple, John engages, as Evans and McDowell will agree, in a particular form of mental activity, an activity based on the assumption that there is a perceivable apple before him. We have seen that McDowell thinks this mental activity involves that John directs his mind towards the mind-independent world. I picture that directing one's mind is, as I believe also McDowell thinks of it, to exercise a form of "mental attention", which, like conscious attention in perception, can be directed towards nothing, similarly to how a spotlight can light up an empty location. In John's case, McDowell would say that there is "mental attention" to nothing, even though John's situation is introspectively indistinguishable from a case of "mentally attending" to a perceivable apple. By contrast to McDowell, however, I think that by doing what on the basis of introspection seems to be to "mentally attend" to or direct one's mind towards something indistinguishable from a perceivable apple, John is as a matter of 'interpretational' fact (i.e. a fact we as theorists can ascribe on the basis of John's plans and general situation; see chapter one) directing his mind towards a hallucinatory apple. In a nutshell, the idea is this: John's "mental attention" constitutes the essential existential ground for the hallucinatory apple, where the hallucinatory apple is the object about which John, in behaving mentally as he does, has a singular thought.

Let me explain this idea about how I envisage that hallucinatory objects come into existence in a little more detail. Note first that the following example illustrates a similar but importantly different idea with regard to perception. Suppose that one does what on the basis of introspection seems to be to consciously attend to something indistinguishable from a barn, and that what is in fact before one is just a two-dimensional barn facade.[59] By attending thus, one is aware of the barn facade and one is in fact directing one's attention to the barn facade. In this example, it is the fact that what perceptually appears to be a barn is in fact a barn facade that makes it the case that one is aware of the latter by doing what on the basis of introspection seems to be to attend to the former. By contrast, my claim is *not* that what in John's case perceptually appears to be a perceivable apple is in fact a hallucinatory apple. Rather, the claim is that a hallucinatory apple, which is an object we can think about but not perceive, comes into existence with what seems to John, on the basis of introspection, to be an act of mental attention to something indistinguishable from a perceivable apple.

The mechanism by which I envisage that a hallucinatory apple comes into existence and into John's awareness is similar to the mechanism by which one may think that a fictional or a make-believe object comes into existence in pretence. It may be argued that if one pretends that there is a perceivable apple before one when there is in fact nothing, then one becomes aware of a fictional apple or a make-believe apple.[60] The act of pretending that there is one type of object before one gives rise to another type of object, of which one is aware. I have in mind essentially the same idea outside the scope of fiction. By taking it that there is something indistinguishable from a perceivable apple before him, John behaves mentally as if there is a perceivable apple before him, and this gives rise to the hallucinatory apple, of which he is aware. Instead of the pretence that is involved in giving rise to fictional objects, there is a certain mental behaviour that gives rise to the hallucinatory apple. A central difference between the fictional case and my view of how things are in the case of John is that there is no barrier between John's thought-contents about the hallucinatory apple and his thought-contents about objects that

---

[59] The example of fake barns was introduced by Goldman (1976) and is usually discussed in relation to the relationship between justified belief and knowledge.

[60] A view like this is advocated by Thomasson (1999), who holds that authors create abstract artifacts in telling a story or writing fiction.

exist independently of his mental activity. By contrast, one's thought-contents about a fictional apple in pretence are at least in certain respects isolated from one's thought-contents outside the pretence. For instance, one will not think to oneself 'That apple will be my lunch' outside the pretence, whereas John may well have this thought after he has left the hallucinatory set-up and remains unaware that he had a hallucinatory experience (for a related point concerning understanding and pretence, see above p.69).

This idea about how the hallucinatory apple comes into existence can be further clarified by placing it within the framework of the abovementioned version of the two-component view developed from Martin's suggestion for the intentionalist. Observe first that "mental attention" to or directedness towards the mind-independent world can be regarded as constituting part of an episode of singular thought. This episode can be regarded as having both an internal and an external aspect. On the one hand, when we consider the internal aspect of the singular thought-episode it is accurate to describe John as "mentally attending" to something indistinguishable from a perceivable apple. In introspection, that is how things cognitively seem to him. On the other hand, the external aspect of the singular thought-episode is that John "mentally attends" to a hallucinatory apple. In this framework, the idea about how hallucinatory apples come into existence can be put as follows: By doing what is described by the internal component as "mentally attending" to something indistinguishable from a perceivable apple, John is doing what is described by the external component as "mentally attending" to a hallucinatory apple.

As I promised at the start of this section, this view involves no illusions of thought. Let us first consider the singular thought-episode and the appearance thereof. As described by the external component of the appearance of the singular thought-episode, it seems to John that he is directing his mind towards a hallucinatory apple, and, since the hallucinatory apple comes into existence with his mental activity, this is also how things are. As described by the internal component, it seems to John that he is directing his mind towards something indistinguishable from a perceivable apple. Note that the internal component does not conflict with the external component, since a hallucinatory apple is introspectively indistinguishable from a perceivable apple. If John directs his mind to a hallucinatory apple, he thus also directs his mind towards something introspectively indistinguishable from a

perceivable apple. So, also with regard to the internal component of the singular thought-episode, things are cognitively as they seem. It can be readily observed that there is nothing deceptive about the singular thought-content either. As described by the external component of the appearance of singular thought-content, it seems to John that he entertains an object-dependent thought-content about a hallucinatory apple. Given that the "mental attention" involved in the singular thought-episode gives rise to a hallucinatory apple, that is also how things are cognitively, and so the external aspect of the appearance of thought-content is non-deceptive. As described by the internal component, it seems to John that he entertains an object-dependent thought-content about something introspectively indistinguishable from a perceivable apple. Since a hallucinatory apple is introspectively indistinguishable from a perceivable apple, also the internal aspect of the appearance of singular thought-content is non-deceptive.[61]

One may object that there seems to remain a cognitively deceptive element in this view. A subject like John is likely to claim that he or she has a thought about a perceivable apple, not a hallucinatory one. But the mistake John makes if he makes this claim, I think, derives from the mistake he makes in interpreting his own utterance, and is not due to cognitive deception. I think his mistake can be explained on the background of the point, elaborated in chapter two, that John interprets his utterance of 'That apple is green', made in order to express the thought he is having, as expressing a thought about a perceivable apple.

Another objection concerns the status of the outlined view as a revision of Evans's and McDowell's view of singular thought. On their view, thoughts are understood as contents, more specifically as Fregean propositions. The view outlined here, by contrast, requires understanding thoughts as mental episodes. It may thus look like what I claim to be a revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view requires revising their basic decision to define singular thought as a certain type of content. Given this, one may wonder if the outlined view can at all be regarded as a revision of their view.

---

[61] Note that acknowledging an internal component to the appearance of singular thought-content has the advantage that we can account for what is from the subject's point of view common to mock thought scenarios and cases where a subject has a singular thought about a perceived object. This is an explanatory advantage McDowell's view lacks.

However, while the outlined view adds a notion of singular thought-episodes, I think it is possible to simultaneously keep Evans's and McDowell's definition of singular thought as a certain type of content. As noted above, the two-component view I adopt acknowledges, in addition to Evans's and McDowell's notion of content, a second notion of content, namely the content in the sense of what is common between similar thought-episodes. While it might be traditional to pick just one of these notions of content, there is no obstacle to use both of them in one's theorising. Indeed, it may be fruitful to use them both in order to account for different phenomena.[62] But if the notions of content involved in the external and the internal component respectively can peacefully coexist in one's theory, then so can the notion of singular thought-episodes and singular thought-content in Evans's and McDowell's sense. For the notion of content as what is common between similar thought-episodes already involves recognition of the notion of singular thought-episodes.

In fact, I think a stronger point can be made about the relationship between singular thought-contents and singular thought-episodes on the outlined view. The relationship is not just that the two notions are compatible. Mere compatibility cannot guard against the following development of the objection: When does one have a singular thought? When one has a singular thought-episode or when one entertains a singular thought-content? The stronger point to be made is that on the outlined view one does not have to choose, for every case wherein there is a singular thought-episode there is also a singular thought-content entertained, and vice versa. In this respect, the revised view contrasts with Francois Recanati's (2010, 2013) view, which also recognises two notions of singular thought, namely singular thought-vehicles and singular thought-contents. Recanati holds that there may be cases where the subject is unsuccessful in entertaining a singular thought-content but nevertheless entertains a singular thought-vehicle. By contrast, the revised view involves that if there is a singular thought-episode, then there is also a singular thought-content entertained. The episode and content always go hand in hand – sometimes even in the extra intimate way that the external component of content (i.e.

---

[62] For example, with regard to his various sorts of phenomenal content of experience, Chalmers (2006) observes that what he calls 'Fregean content' is well suited for capturing our judgements about veridicality, while what he calls 'Edenic content' is better suited for capturing our judgements about phenomenology. (See note 55, p. 130 above.)

content in Evans's and McDowell's sense) depends on an object whose existential ground includes the singular thought-episode.

The outlined view can thus be considered a revision of Evans's and McDowell's view in that it retains, in the external component of content, the definition of singular thought as object-dependent thought-content, while adding that entertaining such content is to have a singular thought-episode wherein the mind is directed towards the object thought about. There is also a further central respect in which the outlined view constitutes a revision: It involves preservation of McDowell's idea about object-directed intentionality. As observed with McDowell's criticism of the Cartesian view of singular thought, he thinks it is important that appearances of singular thought should relate to the mind-independent world. This is important because it facilitates holding that it can be in virtue of it seeming to the subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought about an object in the mind-independent world that he or she in fact has such a thought. To have this appearance of singular thought-content is, on McDowell's view, to have one's mind directed towards an object in the mind-independent world. The outlined view preserves McDowell's less than Cartesian conception of appearances of singular thought by maintaining that the external aspect of an appearance of singular thought-content is that it seems to the subject that he or she has an object-dependent thought about an object in the mind-independent world.

Finally, it should be noted that the outlined view can be considered a revision of Evans's and McDowell's view in that the idea, especially developed by Evans, that a subject must be 'acquainted' with an object in order to have a singular thought about it can be retained. In the next chapter, I will work towards an idea of acquaintance that extends even to objects like hallucinatory apples. Moreover, the outlined view makes it possible to retain Evans's idea about how one by exercising the practical ability of keeping track of an object over time can entertain the same singular thought about it at a later time (see Evans 1982, pp. 146-147, 174-176, 192-196). The practical ability in question is by Evans centrally discussed as an ability to keep track of perceivable objects. One might think that this idea is difficult to preserve on the revised view, since it is "mental attention" and not specifically perception that is held to be required for singular thought. As I will elaborate in more detail in the next chapter, however, I think the notion of conscious attention to perceived objects can be extended to a broader notion of 'awareness' of all types of

object. This, I think, makes conscious attention, and the related idea about keeping track of a perceivable object, a special variety of a broader idea about awareness of an object obtained by "mental attention" to it.

To sum up, the revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view that I have outlined in this section is an illusion-free, two-component view that acknowledges both singular thought-episodes and singular thought-contents. A mental content is singular if the external component of it is object-dependent in Evans's and McDowell's sense, i.e. it cannot be entertained unless the object it is about exists. A mental episode is singular if it involves that the subject's mind is directed towards an object in the mind-independent world. The subject's mind is also in a mock thought scenario directed towards an object in the mind-independent world (e.g. a hallucinatory apple), for while the object's existence in part depends on the mental episode of directedness it also depends on mind-independent facts. The relationship between the singular thought-episode and the singular thought-content is the following: In the singular thought-episode, the mind is directed towards the object that the singular thought-content is about. In a mock thought scenario, it is added that the mental content is about an object whose existence in part depends on the mental episode; by introspection of the episode it seems to the subject that he or she "mentally attends" to something indistinguishable from, e.g., a perceivable object, and due to this "mental attention" there arises a different object of which the subject is aware.

3.9   *Conclusion*

It can easily be observed that the revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view is a less than Cartesian view of singular thought. As was formulated in premise C6 of McDowell's reconstruction of the Cartesian sceptic's reasoning, the Cartesian picture of mind is a view according to which it makes no difference to the fact that things seem to be thus and so whether things are as they seem or merely appear to be that way. By contrast, the less than Cartesian view is that the difference between these cases does matter to the nature of the appearance and to how things are from the subject's point of view. With respect to appearances of singular thought, this is a distinction between views according to which there is a difference in the nature of the appearance in mock thought scenarios and in what Evans and McDowell would

consider cases of genuine singular thought, versus views according to which there is no difference. On the revised view, there is a difference, but it is not that in the former case the appearance is deceptive and in the latter case non-deceptive, as McDowell holds. Rather, it is held that the appearances of singular thought-content in each type of case differ because different contents appear to one. In a mock thought scenario it appears to one that one entertains an object-dependent thought-content about an object such as a hallucinatory apple. In a case which is introspectively indistinguishable from this but where one in fact perceives an object, by contrast, it seems to one that one entertains an object-dependent thought about the object perceived. (As noted above, also the appearance of the singular thought-episode differs between these cases.)

As mentioned in section seven, I think the point labelled 'Directedness' can be made as a point against a Cartesian view of singular thought if it is made from the standpoint of a less than Cartesian view that does not acknowledge mere appearances of singular thought, like the revised view outlined. The point would be as follows. Since the nature of an appearance of singular thought is indifferent to the difference between mock thought scenarios and what Evans and McDowell would consider cases of singular thought, also the description of the appearance should not make reference to the aspects that differ between the cases, e.g. to hallucinatory apples or perceivable apples. This means that the Cartesian view is not entitled to characterisation of appearances of singular thought in content-involving terms. But as a matter of fact we do characterise such appearances in content-involving terms. So, the Cartesian view is at odds with this fact. By contrast, a less than Cartesian view is entitled to characterise appearances of singular thought by making reference to what is different between the two types of case, since it acknowledges a difference in the nature of the appearance in each type of case. We observed that the problem for McDowell's less than Cartesian view at this point of the argument is that he, by acknowledging content-involving descriptions of appearances of singular thought, simultaneously acknowledges descriptions of mere appearances of singular thought. This is problematic in light of the discussion in chapter two, which gives reason to doubt that there are descriptions of mere appearances of singular thought. The revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view does not encounter this difficulty, since there are no mere appearances of singular thought on this view. Thus, from the

standpoint of the revised view, Directedness can be made as a point against the Cartesian view without this backfiring as an objection to the revised view itself.

Among the various arguments against the Cartesian view of singular thought that McDowell makes in his paper, this version of Directedness is the only argument that the present chapter's analysis can grant. We have seen that McDowell presents both self-contained arguments and arguments based on the analogy to perceptual experience in support of premise M2*, which is the crucial premise in McDowell's argument for the less than Cartesian view. While granting McDowell's rejection of Blackburn's argument in favour of his Cartesian view of singular thought, I argued that McDowell's criticism of McGinn's two-component view fails, because there is a version of the two-component view that remains untouched by it. By contrast to what McDowell envisages, it is possible to reconcile the internal component of content with the acknowledgement of an aspect of appearances of singular thought-episodes that relates to the mind-independent world. Thus, this self-contained argument against the Cartesian view of singular thought was shown to be flawed. Among the arguments that draw on the analogy to perceptual experience, we saw that both Subjectivity and Directedness fail if we presuppose McDowell's view.

In addition to the negative conclusions, the present chapter has outlined a revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view. What has been emphasised as the central idea preserved by the revised view is McDowell's idea that singular thought has object-directed intentionality; it is in virtue of how things cognitively seem to the subject that singular thought is about the mind-independent world. This idea requires looking at the nature of appearances of thought as involving a relation to the mind-independent world. For if appearances of thought stand in no relation to the mind-independent world, then it cannot be in virtue of the fact that the world cognitively appears to one that one's thought is about an object in it. I have shown that the idea about object-directed intentionality can be retained without commitment to illusions of singular thought. In the next chapter, I will work towards a notion of 'acquaintance' that complements the view outlined in the present chapter.

4

How can we think about the things we perceive?

In chapter one, I mentioned that one attempt at accounting for how mock thoughts arise, that both Evans and McDowell seem to endorse, is to let this account piggyback on an explanation as to how object-dependent thought is made possible by perception (see section 1.2). The idea was that, whatever mechanism is at work in enabling object-dependent thought in the good case, it is the malfunctioning of this mechanism that is responsible for enabling mock thought in the bad case. In this chapter, I will examine the mechanism in the good case, and I will argue that Evans's (1982) and McDowell's (1994) respective and contrasting views of it leave explanatory gaps open. In this way, the chapter completes the first chapter's criticism of mock thoughts. More importantly, however, the chapter's overall aim is a positive one, namely to develop an alternative view of how perception enables singular thought. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I think McDowell is right to hold that perceptual content is object-dependent rather than general. If perceptual *content* enables singular thought, it could then be expected that I should also endorse McDowell's view of this mechanism. However, as I will argue by extending John Campbell's (2002) account of the explanatory role of experience, I think that what enables singular thought about a perceived object is independent of an account of the content of perception, and hence compatible with holding also Evans's account of the content of perception. I will argue that singular thought is enabled by something that is not special to perception, although it is something involved in perception. My reason for developing this view here is that, on the view I develop, the enabling of singular thought extends to thought about objects like 'hallucinatory apples', i.e. objects that cannot be perceived and that depend for their existence on a subject's mental activity. Thus, this chapter complements the revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view outlined in the previous chapter.

The idea that perception enables singular thought can be referred to as an idea concerning 'acquaintance', following Russell's (1911, 1912, 1913) usage of the notion. So, asking about the mechanism by which perception enables singular thought is to ask about the mechanism of acquaintance. Acquaintance can be conceived of in several ways, so let me specify how it will be conceived of here.

Following Russell, I take it that acquaintance is a direct relation between a subject and an object, through which we acquire knowledge of the object itself without relying on knowledge of any truths about it. Perception is a typical example of this relation. Acquaintance-theorists after Russell have often exclusively focussed on perception, or even defined acquaintance as perception (e.g. Dickie 2010, discussed below). In this chapter, even though I mainly focus on cases where the object one thinks about and is acquainted with is a perceived object, I hold it open, as Russell did, that there can be several other acquaintance-relations in addition to perception – indeed this is central to my argument for extending Campbell's view. By contrast to Russell's view, however, I will not assume that what we are acquainted with through perception is a sense-datum. Instead, as is more common nowadays in the literature on acquaintance[63] I will assume that perception acquaints us with mind-independent entities, for instance distal objects in the environment.

Something important for present purposes is the way Russell uses acquaintance to distinguish singular from descriptive thought. Russell asserts a principle of acquaintance thus: 'Every proposition which we can understand must be composed wholly of constituents with which we are acquainted' (Russell 1911, p. 117; see also Russell 1912, p. 32). He explains, however, that there are some propositions – singular propositions – that we understand directly, in virtue of a simple acquaintance-relation to an object, without going via a description. The understanding of descriptive propositions, by contrast, requires that the subject stands in a complex arrangement of acquaintance-relations. For instance, understanding the description 'the first Chancellor of Germany' requires acquaintance with the general property of being a chancellor and with the particular object Germany. This idea has been taken up by later acquaintance-theorists as the idea that acquaintance enables a fundamental kind of intentionality specific to singular thought, and that the intentionality of descriptive thought is derived from that of singular thought. It is for this reason, I think, that acquaintance-theorists often seem to work with the assumption that singular thought is a fundamental kind of thought, the range and variety of which is to be determined by an account of acquaintance. While this does not mean that such theorists must deny that there is an

---

[63] See e.g. the acquaintance-theories advocated by Bach (1987, 2010), Donnellan (1979), Recanati (1993, 2010, 2012), Salmon (1987).

intuitive phenomenon of singular thought (intuitive at least to philosophically trained subjects), it does mean that the method for accommodating this intuition is to adjust one's definition of acquaintance.

This is a methodology I accept in the present chapter, since my aim is to develop a view of acquaintance. By contrast to earlier chapters, therefore, where I have been seeking to revise Evans's and McDowell's definition of singular thought, my starting point here is the definition of singular thought that acquaintance-theorists endorse, namely as the fundamental kind of thought that is enabled by acquaintance in the direct and simple way. This means that other views of acquaintance than Evans's and McDowell's views are included under the scope of this chapter's investigation. In order to distinguish this approach to singular thought from that of earlier chapters, and also because it is the term Campbell uses, I will speak of 'demonstrative thought' as the fundamental kind of thought that acquaintance-theorists hold to be enabled by acquaintance and with regard to which our (philosophically trained) intuitions are sought accommodated. Anyone who is not an acquaintance-theorist will deny that there are demonstrative thoughts in the sense I am using the term here. As the name suggests, demonstrative thought is held to most typically be expressible by means of demonstratives, but, despite the fact that I will use demonstratives to express such thought in the examples to follow, I hold it open that there might be other ways to express it in addition. Moreover, I do not presuppose that demonstrative thought is defined as thought expressible by means of a certain class of linguistic expressions.

My project, then, is to examine how perception can serve as an acquaintance-relation and enable demonstrative thought, taking it as a matter of definition that acquaintance does enable demonstrative thought. The first section argues that McDowell's and Evans's respective accounts leave explanatory gaps open. However, Imogen Dickie (2010) has developed an account of acquaintance that can be regarded as an improvement of Evans's account. I consider this account in section two. I argue that also her account is explanatorily unsatisfactory and, moreover, too restrictive with regard the range of demonstrative thoughts it acknowledges. In section three, I consider Campbell's (2002) account of the explanatory role of experience, which delegates a key role to the conscious attention that, according to Campbell, is involved in perception. I suggest that this account can be extended, and that what is central to enabling demonstrative thought is an attention or awareness

that is not perceptual. In the concluding section four, I explain how this suggestion fits with the revision of Evans's and McDowell's view suggested in previous chapters.

4.1   *Evans and McDowell on acquaintance*

It should be conceded at the outset that it is not entirely clear whether McDowell (1994) can justifiably be called an acquaintance-theorist. Claiming to follow Kant's insight, he holds that there can be no thought without perception, and in this sense it looks like he acknowledges some form of perceptual acquaintance. However, it is not clear if McDowell holds that the access perception provides enables thought about the world. In *Mind and World* (1994) he advocates a conceptualist view of perceptual content, which roughly is the view that perception has a content that could be the content of thought or judgement. Thus, instead of holding that perception *enables* thought, it might look like McDowell holds that perceiving is a way of thinking.

For present purposes, it is relevant to focus on a central part of McDowell's motivation for conceptualism. At the beginning of his lecture on nonconceptual content, he argues that if we are to be able to account for how perception can enable thoughts, beliefs and judgements, it must be presupposed that perception has conceptual content. He writes:

> To avoid making it unintelligible how the deliverances of sensibility can stand in grounding relations to paradigmatic exercises of the understanding such as judgements and beliefs, we must conceive this co-operation [the co-operation of sensibility and understanding] in a quite particular way: we must insist that the understanding is already inextricably implicated in the deliverances of sensibility themselves. Experiences are impressions made by the world on our senses, products of receptivity; but those impressions themselves already have a conceptual content. (McDowell 1994, p. 46.)

McDowell's first point in this passage seems to be that, because perception and thought are so wholly different things, it is hard to see how there could be any connection between the two. In particular, it seems unintelligible how the first can ground or enable the second. This is, I think, a good point. Indeed, I think it is the crux of the challenge facing an acquaintance-theorist when we ask how it is envisaged that perception enables demonstrative thought. Once we have

acknowledged this challenge, we may be tempted follow McDowell in the next step of his argument where he suggests making the connection between thought and perception intelligible by conceiving of perception and thought as more alike. In particular, he wants us to conceive of perception and thought as simply being different ways of entertaining the same content, i.e. a conceptual content.

I agree with McDowell that 'insisting' that the content of perception is of the kind that can also be the content of thought makes it *intelligible* how perception can ground, or enable, thoughts. Perception would then ground thought by providing its content. However, although his conceptualism makes this intelligible, it has a serious shortcoming in that it is precisely an *insistence* rather than an explanation that makes the grounding relation intelligible for the conceptualist. McDowell's insistence appears as a way of simply asserting that perception enables thoughts, rather than as a way of explaining it.[64] But if one really was puzzled in the first place and agreed with McDowell that it is unintelligible how perception, which is something so wholly different from thought, can ground thought, then McDowell's insistence on conceptual content can hardly be considered a satisfactory dissolution of the puzzle.

McDowell's argument in the passage also has the further shortcoming that it involves a false claim, namely the claim that it is *necessary* to accept conceptualism about the content of perceptual experience in order to make it intelligible how perception can ground thought. This is to claim that it is necessary to accept McDowell's non-explanatory view, and to refuse to answer the question of this chapter, i.e. the question as to how perception enables demonstrative thought. But the falsity of McDowell's necessity-claim is witnessed by the attempts of theorists like Evans, Dickie and Campbell to try to explain how perception enables demonstrative thought. Even if their accounts should be unsuccessful in the end, the mere fact that an explanation can be attempted shows that it is not necessary to insist on conceptualism without further explanation in order to conceive of perception as enabling demonstrative thought.

Evans's view of acquaintance is very different from McDowell's. Although they both hold that demonstrative thought has object-dependent content and that perception enables such thought, their views of perceptual content differ, and this

---

[64] That this is a shortcoming of McDowell's view is further elaborated by Campbell (2002, pp. 120-125).

influences their view of acquaintance. With regard to perceptual content, Evans holds that such content is nonconceptual, not conceptual as McDowell argues. On one way of looking at it, the difference between these views is that Evans holds that one needs to exercise conceptual skills in moving from a perceptual experience to a thought about an object (see Evans 1982, p. 227). McDowell, by contrast, holds that the same skills are exercised in perception and in thought. A second difference between their views of perceptual content, noted already in earlier chapters, is that while McDowell holds perceptual content to be object-dependent, Evans holds that it is purely general. Evans emphasises, however, that even if the content of perception is general, it can be *of* an object, namely the object from which it derives (if any). He uses the notion of 'information' to refer to this general, nonconceptual content that can be of an object.

These differences make clear that in answering how perception enables demonstrative thought Evans faces a greater explanatory challenge than McDowell: He must explain how nonconceptual, general content enables conceptual, object-dependent content. In brief, Evans's explanation is as follows (see ibid., pp. 121-142). When we perceive an object, we receive information from it. On the basis of this information one can then construct an information-based conception of an object, which may or may not be 'well-grounded', i.e. it may or may not be about the object from which the information derives. If the information from the object is garbled or distorted in any way, or if no object is perceived as in a case of hallucination, then the information-based conception will not be about any object at all, and the subject will have a mock thought when trying to employ the information-based conception in thought. What happens in this case is that the information-based conception identifies either no object at all or a different object than the object we would arrive at by tracing the causal route through which the information was received. In order to have an information-based thought, the causal route and the information-based conception's identification must arrive at the same object. This happens, Evans thinks, if the information on the basis of which the information-based conception is constructed is correct about the perceived object. In that case, the information-based conception is about the object from which the information derives, and the subject will have an object-dependent thought when employing the information-based conception in thought.

There are two explanatory gaps in this picture, I think. Firstly, what makes an information-based thought be about the object from which the information derives? The information is *of* an object, in a causal sense. But the information-based thought is supposed to be *about* the object that is the source of the information, and, moreover, be about it in the strong object-dependent way that both Evans and McDowell envisage for object-dependent thought, of which information-based thought is an instance. This strong form of aboutness is to exclude that the thought is about some other object of which the general perceptual content also holds true. But Evans's picture contains no explanation as to why the information-based conception identifies the object from which the information derives, and not some other object of which the same general content holds true. Secondly, what is the process by which an information-based conception is constructed on the basis of nonconceptual content? Evans's picture does not specify the nature of perception's enabling of thought. But if one is taken in by the puzzle McDowell presents as to how something so different from thought as perception can enable thought, one would like an explanation of this process.

Dickie presents an account of acquaintance that can be regarded as an improvement on Evans's account in that she seeks to fill the two explanatory gaps mentioned. Let us consider her view.

4.2   *Dickie and acquaintance*

Dickie's project in her chapter 'We are Acquainted with Ordinary Things' (2010) is to 'show how recent empirical results about perception can be used to provide an account of acquaintance with ordinary objects' (ibid., p. 214). The account Dickie is interested to provide is an account of how acquaintance works, and she thinks the empirical results are the key to accounting for its mechanism. By 'acquaintance', Dickie means the following:

> A subject, S, is 'acquainted' with an object, *o*, iff S is in a position to think about *o* in virtue of a perceptual link with *o* and without the use of any conceptual or descriptive intermediary. (Ibid., p. 213.)

Dickie's definition thus coincides with my definition at the outset in that she holds it to be a relation, or 'link', that enables such thought about an object, where this

relation is direct in the sense that it does not rest on knowledge of truths about the object, i.e. descriptive or conceptual knowledge. Moreover, as her title reveals, she thinks that the object one is acquainted with is not a mind-dependent object like a sense-datum, but rather an ordinary material object. By contrast to my definition at the outset, however, she restricts the acquaintance-relation to *perceptual* links. When Dickie speaks of acquaintance with an object as enabling 'acquaintance-based' thought, she thus means the same as I mean by 'demonstrative thought' (except for her restriction of acquaintance to perception), namely the fundamental kind of thought that acquaintance enables.

In order to present Dickie's account of acquaintance, it is necessary to first briefly introduce the empirical results on which her account is based. In general, the results in question are results from psychology which show that in 'early vision', i.e. a stage of visual processing that does not involve the subject's beliefs, our pre-conceptual processing divides the world into objects, rather than properties or locations of objects. Dickie mentions three types of experiments that show this. I will present a very brief outline of each type of experiment. I set aside discussion of the detail of these experiments, as well as any criticism that may be put forward as to the interpretation of their results. In particular, I take no argument with the way in which some psychologists regard these experiment types as showing that early vision divides the world into objects.

The first type of experiment Dickie mentions is 'automatic spread of attention' experiments. In one typical such experiment, subjects are presented with two rectangles placed vertically next to one another so that the distance between them is the same as their length. The top region of one of the rectangles is primed, using a brightening of the contour (region A in figure 1). Immediately after, there is a gradual change either in the bottom region of the same rectangle (B) or the top region of the other rectangle (C), i.e. in one of two regions that are equidistant to the primed region. What psychologists find when running this experiment is that subjects are faster at detecting the gradual change when it happens in the region that belongs within the rectangle that is primed (i.e. in region B in figure 1). The piece of reasoning that psychologists add to this result is that, if attention is directed at objects rather than regions of space, it should be easier for subjects to detect properties in the

object to which they are attending than in objects lying in the same region of space.[65] For this reason, they take spread of attention experiments to show that at an early stage of visual processing, and prior to conceptualisation, attention is directed at objects, not regions of space. So, this type of experiment shows, as Dickie emphasises, that early vision divides the scene into objects.[66]
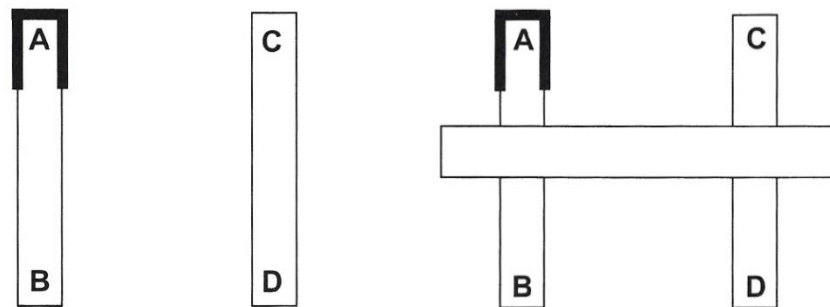
Figure 1: Spread of attention.(Source: Pylyshyn 2003, p. 186.)

Secondly, Dickie mentions 'amodal completion' cases. In general, amodal completion is the phenomenon that partially occluded figures are not treated by the visual system as fragments of figures but rather as whole figures that are partially occluded. The sort of experiment Dickie outlines is one where subjects are asked to locate a shape on a screen of surrounding shapes. For instance, one might be asked to identify this shape:
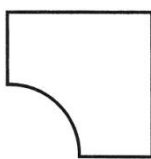
in a display like this (see the next page):

---

[65] See Palmer (1999, p. 547) for the application of this reasoning in the original and slightly different spread of attention experiment conducted by Duncan in 1984.

[66] For a more detailed overview of spread of attention experiments, see Pylyshyn (2003, pp. 182-187) or Palmer (1999, pp. 547-548). Moore, Yantis, and Vaughan (1998) found that the experiment delivers the same result also when objects are partially occluded, as in the left display in figure 1.
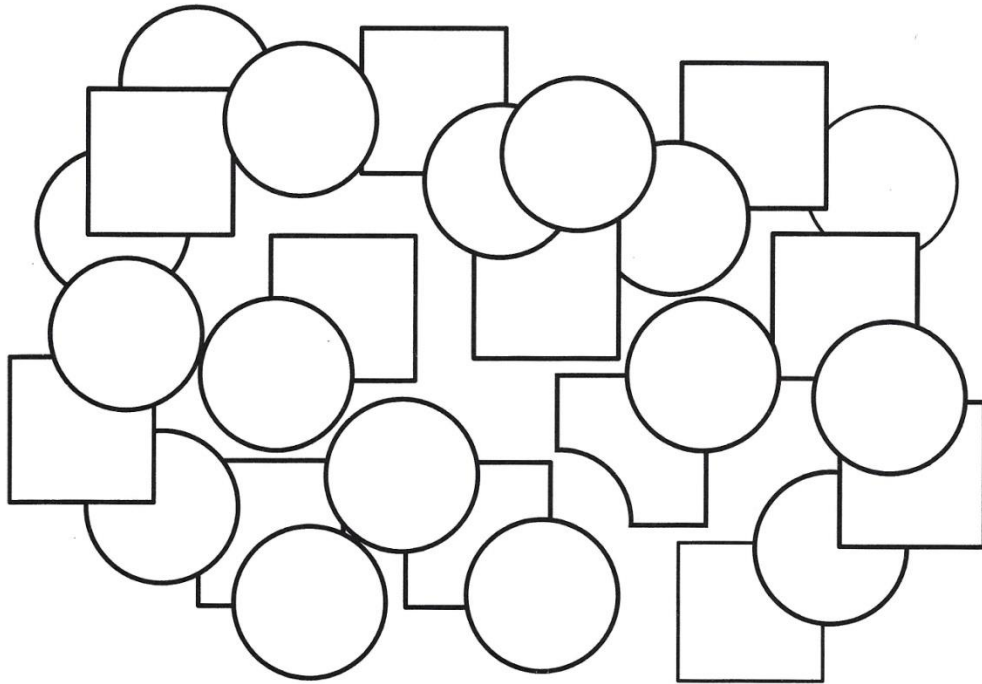
Figure 2: Amodal completion. (Source: Pylyshyn 2003, p. 11).

Subjects are quick to identify one such shape in this display, despite the fact that it is partially occluded, and despite the fact that there is another instance of the shape in the display that is *not* occluded but is 'completed' as a square by the adjacent circle. This sort of effect is insensitive to knowledge, expectations and even learning. Thus, there seem to be some principles in accordance with which the visual system completes an occluded figure in one way rather than another, ignoring what the subject knows to be true.[67] This means that the completion into objects must take place in early vision, i.e. before any beliefs are involved in the visual process. Also this experiment, therefore, supports the conclusion that the scene is divided into objects in early vision.

Thirdly, Dickie mentions the phenomenon called 'multiple-object-tracking'. In a typical multiple-object-tracking experiment, a screen with eight identical objects is displayed (screen 1 in figure 3). A subset of these objects is then flashed briefly, indicating to the subject the instruction that these are the objects that he or she is asked to try to keep track of (screen 2). Then the objects move randomly for about

---

[67] See Kanizsa (1985; 1969). It is curious, as these experiments show, that the principles governing the completion into objects do not always select the simplest figure.

ten seconds (screen 3). When the movement stops, the subjects are asked to indicate where the objects that were flashed are now positioned (screen 4). What is found is that in these experiments subjects are as good at keeping track of the movement of two, three, four, or five dots as they are at keeping track of one, provided the dots move in object-like ways, e.g. have continuous paths and continuous existence.
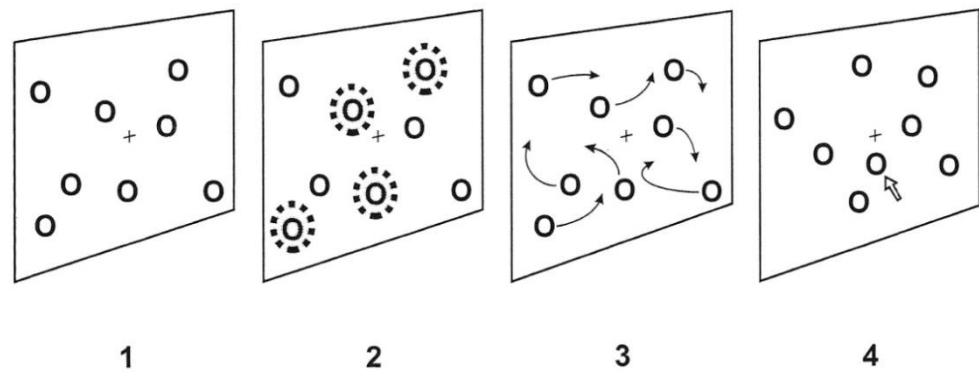

Figure 3: A multiple-object-tracking task. (Source: Pylyshyn 2003, p. 223.)

One question that has puzzled many scientists about multiple-object-tracking is how subjects are able to keep track of the objects.[68] For Dickie, however, the important point is that, whatever the particular mechanism is, it must be pre-conceptual processing that is involved in keeping track of the objects. The point, roughly, is that if conceptual processing were involved, it would be expected that keeping track of one object is easier than keeping track of two, and that keeping track of two is easier than keeping track of three, and so on. But this is not what is found. Subjects are just as good at keeping track of one object as they are at keeping track of two, three, four or five objects. Again, therefore, we have here a type of experiment showing that pre-conceptual processing or early vision divides the scene into objects.

In conclusion, we see that there are at least three kinds of experiments showing that attention is object-based in early vision. The question now is how this result may help to enlighten our understanding of acquaintance. It is clear that the result in question tells us something about how perception operates. More specifically, it tells us something about how perception operates prior to its involvement with thought. Still, it is far from straightforward how the results might

---

[68] For discussion, see Pylyshyn (2003, pp. 223-227), who also provides a general description of multiple-object-tracking experiments.

have any implications on the operation of thought, or that it might explain how perception makes demonstrative thought possible. Dickie, however, has an idea as to how this might be. It seems to me that her idea is best presented as a response to two obstacles she notes to treating the empirical evidence as having implications for the possibilities for thought.

The major obstacle, Dickie seems to think, is that the notion of a 'visual object' employed by psychologists in the sorts of experiments outlined is not the philosopher's conception of an 'ordinary object'. A visual object is a term used by psychologists to refer to elements or units in the visual field. Pylyshyn writes that the term is deliberately left ambiguous and that its only fixed property is that a visual object endures over changes in its location. He writes: 'In particular, it is left open whether what is being referred to are enduring physical objects, proximal visual patterns, or other spatially local properties' (Pylyshyn 2003, p. 173, n. 2). Dickie thinks that if the empirical results are to have any bearing on possibilities for thought, it must be shown that the psychologist's notion of a visual object has something in common with the philosopher's notion of an ordinary material object, where the latter, she asserts, is 'the class of objects that most of our thought about the external world concern' (Dickie 2010, p. 222). Only if there is something in common, her idea seems to be, can there be a relevant correspondence between the empirical results and thought; otherwise it is not clear if the empirical results concern perception of the same sorts of things as those we think about.

It is surprising, I think, that Dickie should find this to be the major obstacle to treating the empirical results as relevant to possibilities for thought. This is surprising not just because the second obstacle Dicike mentions, and to which we shall attend below, seems to be much more significant. It is surprising because it is far from obvious that we cannot think in a demonstrative way about such things as what psychologists call 'visual objects'. In limiting the scope to thought about ordinary material objects, Dickie means to rule out singular thoughts about the following sorts of things: 'dots on screens; vertices of geometrical shapes; shadows; parts of physical objects; ripples on water; patches of reflected light' (ibid., p. 221). But why can we not be acquainted with and have demonstrative thoughts about, for instance, a shadow? In fact, why suppose that 'the class of objects that most of our thoughts about the external world concern' is the class of ordinary material objects? In any case, even if she should be right that *most* of our thoughts about the external world

are about ordinary material objects, this does not constitute a reason for excluding thoughts about shadows, dots on screens, etc. from being demonstratively thought about. To limit the scope of her inquiry to acquaintance with ordinary things seems arbitrary given the richer notion of acquaintance that the empirical results could provide for and which there is no prima facie reason to exclude.[69]

In any case, in order to understand Dickie's account of acquaintance, we need to have in view the way in which she thinks the obstacle presented above can be overcome. It can be overcome, she thinks, if we introduce what she calls the 'Modal Commitment Principle' (MCP). Simplifying somewhat, the MCP says that a mental file (which we may think of as a mode of presentation of an object) is about an object only if the properties of the file are restricted to develop in a way that matches the properties of the type of object in question (ibid., p. 226). Dickie's idea is that there is a 'match between deployment of representation and nature of thing represented that seems constitutive of representation' (ibid., p. 228). She envisages that a 'Governing Conception' is responsible for making this match hold. A Governing Conception is a rationally driven operation on a mental file, which is responsible for updating and adjustment of the information in the file. In acquaintance-based thought, the file's Governing Conception comes about through a perceptual link with an object, in such a way (as I will elaborate on below) that the information in the file is restricted to develop in a way that matches the properties of an ordinary material object.

Now, as we saw above, the empirical results to which Dickie appeals show that if visual objects, for instance, reappear and disappear, then we cannot track them. In general, as Dickie puts it: 'We cannot track 'things' whose spatio-temporal paths are discontinuous; which move in ways which do not maintain stable relations

---

[69] It seems that Dickie's reason for excluding some visual objects as objects of acquaintance stems from the problems she thinks illusions of such thoughts come up against. She mentions cases where one mistakes a shadow for being a physical object and where one consequently takes oneself to be thinking about a physical object (see ibid. pp. 237-242). But it is not clear why the possibility of such cases should preclude demonstrative thoughts about shadows when the subject is perfectly well aware that it is a shadow they are thinking about. Moreover, as we know from earlier chapters, one can also in a case where it perceptually seems to the subject that he or she is confronted with a physical object hold that there is no cognitive appearance to that effect, and hence avoid the idea that there are illusions of thoughts in such cases.

between parts; or which undergo qualitative change which cannot be factored as change in properties of causally unified things' (ibid., p. 232-233). In short, we cannot track things that violate the ways in which ordinary material objects can move. If there is violation of this, 'attentional channels are closed down', Dickie writes (ibid., p. 233).[70] In light of this, Dickie suggests that in order to overcome the obstacle that there is a gap between the psychologist's visual objects and the philosopher's ordinary material object we should focus on what is in common between attention to visual objects and mental files for ordinary material objects, namely that both attention in early vision and mental files track things that have features which could belong to an ordinary material object.

When this first and major obstacle is removed, Dickie envisages that we can conceive of the mechanism of acquaintance as a two-step process. First, the subject attends to an object in early vision and receives perceptual content from it; as Dickie puts it, echoing the way psychologists put it, we receive features from the object through the attentional channel. What is important is that, since the visual object is behaving like an ordinary material object, the features received will be features that could all belong to an ordinary material object; the features have what she calls 'ordinary object structure'. Now, in the second step of the process, having received these features, we can construct a mental file whose Governing Conception is based on a perceptual link with the visual object. This means that the information in the file will be restricted to develop in a way that matches the properties of an ordinary material object. But, as the constraint on aboutness, the MCP, says, the file will only be about the visual object if the properties of the file are restricted to develop in a way that matches the properties of the type of visual object in question. Thus, if he visual object is, for instance, a shadow, then the MCP will not be met, since there will be a mismatch between the category of the object that the properties of the file are restricted to developing in accordance with (i.e. the category of ordinary material objects) and the category of the visual object (i.e. the category of shadows).

It is readily observed that this two-step picture of the mechanism of acquaintance has similarities to Evans's picture. Also Evans envisages that a mental

---

[70] A 'channel' is a term for 'distinguishable properties of a class of signals' (Pylyshyn 2003, p. 164). Attentional channels are, in order words, filtering mechanisms special to attention. The criteria Dickie mentions specify the filters.

representation is formed on the basis of perceptual content, and that there must be a match between what the perceptual content derives from and what the mental representation identifies in order for there to be a demonstrative thought. I remarked above, however, that Evans lacks an explanation as to why the information-based conception identifies the object from which the information derives, and not some other object of which the same general content holds true. Dickie has an explanation of this in her account. In fact, Dickie excludes accounts like Evans's at the very outset of her chapter, for she assumes that an account of acquaintance with objects rather than with properties can only be provided if experience presents us with objects rather than with properties. This excludes holding that the content of perception is general, as Evans does. The background for this exclusion only becomes clear later, when Dickie declares that she is 'assuming that an attentional link is sufficient to fix reference as long as the MCP is met' (ibid., p. 234). This makes it clear that overcoming the obstacle of finding a common core to the philosopher's notion of an ordinary material object and the psychologist's notion of a visual object is important because one can then conceive of attention in early vision as fixing which object the perceptual content is about, and thus also fixing which object the mental representation constructed on the basis of the perceptual content is about. Evans's view is a nonstarter, then, because the perceptual content is not about a specific object; it is general rather than singular. So, in order to improve Evans's view, we may adopt Dickie's suggestion that attention to an object is what makes both the perceptual content and the mental representation constructed on the basis of it be about the specific object attended to, rather than some other object that is qualitatively identical to it.

This deals with the first of the two explanatory gaps I identified in Evans's view. The second gap, the challenge to specify what the process is by which an information-based conception is constructed on the basis of nonconceptual content, is something also Dickie seeks to elaborate on in her response to a second obstacle to treating the empirical results about perception as relevant to an account of acquaintance. She presents the obstacle as follows:

> A parcel of features being delivered through an attentional channel is not yet a file of beliefs. In talking about what is delivered through attentional channels *we are talking about the contents of experiences, not the contents of thoughts*. (Dickie 2010, p. 233 my emphasis.)

The point is that an empirical result concerning perceptual experience cannot automatically be taken to deliver any conclusion about possibilities for thought. There is a gap to be bridged between the scientific results about perceptual experience and the account that these results can be exploited to provide as to how demonstrative thought is made possible by perception. If Dickie conceived of perceptual content as conceptual, there would be no obstacle here. But, like Evans, she seems to think that perceptual content is nonconceptual. So, what must be explained is how an empirical result about the nature of perceptual, nonconceptual content matters to the formation of a conceptual content.

I wholeheartedly agree with Dickie about the nature of this obstacle. It seems to be essentially the same obstacle as that which we above saw McDowell wants to overcome by insisting that the content of thought is conceptual. However, what Dickie suggests should be added in order to overcome the obstacle and to bridge the gap between the empirical results about perception and thought is, in my view, not convincing. She suggests that the bridge that is needed is that the subject 'forms a mental file by taking what is delivered in experience at face value'. This, she explains, will make the information in the mental file have 'ordinary object structure', i.e. the information will be such that it could all be true of a single ordinary material object. Following immediately after the presentation of the obstacle rendered in the passage above, she explains how to overcome it as follows:

> But now consider a file of beliefs which is formed by taking a parcel of features delivered through an attentional channel at face value. The parcel of features will have ordinary object structure. So the file of beliefs will have ordinary object structure too: if I take a parcel of features which could (categorically) all belong to a single ordinary object and form a file which contains just the information corresponding to these features, the resulting file will contain information which could (categorically) all be true of a single ordinary object. (Ibid., p. 233.)

It seems that what Dickie means by saying that a parcel of features delivered through an attentional channel is taken at 'face value' is that what is given in early vision is accepted without question as an object for a mental file to be about. Her idea seems to be that our tracking of objects in thought happens by deference to the tracking of

objects that occurs in early vision. We form a mental file without even raising the question as to whether to suspend judgement about what is given in early vision.

Note, however, that it is unlikely that the question as to whether to suspend judgement about what is given in early vision is a question that even *could* be raised. All of the processes Dickie talks about occur at a pre-conceptual and pre-doxastic level, without any intervention by oneself as an agent. Hence, whether or not to take at face value what is delivered in early vision can hardly be something that is as much as a possible subject of deliberation. In this light, taking at face value what is delivered in early vision seems sooner to be a claim about how our perceptual and cognitive systems must interact, than a claim about what we, as agents in control of our actions, do. And as such, I think, there cannot be much more to Dickie's claim than that the cognitive system is able to make use of the mechanism for aboutness that, as vision science tells us, is at work in early vision; namely a 'reference mechanism' that Zenon Pylyshyn (2003) labels a visual index or finger of instantiation (FINST).[71] This mechanism is defined as the mechanism for keeping track of something that behaves like an ordinary material object would. My point is that since Dickie's claim about how cognition 'takes at face value' what is given in perception must be a claim about how the cognitive and the perceptual system interact, her claim cannot be taken literally. For the cognitive system is not an agent who can take something at face value or intend to behave in a certain way. I thus think her claims are reduced to an idea that what makes perceptual content be about a specific object is also what makes the mental file be a file for that object. When thus reduced, we are left with no account as to how the mechanism that is responsible for the perceptual content's aboutness becomes available to the cognitive system; we simply have a claim that it does. In this regard, it is not clear that her proposal is explanatory superior to McDowell's 'insistence' that perception and thought have the same type of content. Dickie's corresponding insistence is that the mechanism that makes perceptual content be about an object is, as she puts it, 'inherited' from perception in the form of a Governing Conception that makes the file be about the same object (Dickie 2010, p. 235).

---

[71] While Pylyshyn speaks of FINSTs as 'reference mechanisms', what he has in mind seems to be a mechanism for intentionality. So, the idea seems to be that FINSTs are mechanisms that make perceptual content be about a specific object, rather than about something with such and such properties.

Thus, what I think prevents Dickie's account from constituting an explanation as to how perception enables demonstrative thought is that what she seems to intend as a claim about what a subject does – to take something at face value – cannot amount to anything but a claim that there *is* a certain connection between perception and thought. The same point can be made with respect to the following passage, where Dickie seeks to account for how mental files retain their ordinary object structure when they are employed in cognition:

> And now suppose that I *intend* my deployment of the file to be experientially governed: I *intend* to maintain the file in a way which matches the structure that is already there in my experience. Then conceptual thoughts involving the file (for example, thoughts about how the object might develop across time and how it might relate to other objects) will also be constrained by ordinary object structure. (Ibid., my emphasis.)

The idea is that our use of mental files is usually (or perhaps ideally) such that nothing is added or changed about the way in which mental files are about their objects. Once again, the talk of 'intention' in this passage must, similarly to the talk of taking what is given in early vision at face value, be understood as a description of how cognition is claimed to work, and not as a description of how subjects, as agents, intentionally conduct their mental activity. But then this account amounts to little more than the claim that thoughts in which mental files are employed *do* involve the same mechanism for aboutness as that characteristic of perceptual content in early vision.

While there may be nothing incorrect about the claim that the mechanism for aboutness at work in early vision is somehow taken up in demonstrative thought, I do not think this claim constitutes a satisfactory way of overcoming the obstacle that Dickie presents it as overcoming. The second obstacle was to account for how there on the basis of the nonconceptual content of perception can be formed a demonstrative or acquaintance-based thought. What Dickie presents, I have suggested, is in effect a claim that the mechanism for aboutness is taken up in demonstrative thought. As in the case of McDowell's view, it is clear that if Dickie's claim is accepted, it would be *intelligible* how perception can enable demonstrative thought; it would do so by providing the mechanism for aboutness. However, if one is puzzled by how perception can enable demonstrative thought, Dickie's claim does not solve the puzzle. Or, if it is considered to solve the puzzle, it would seem

inconsequential to be dissatisfied with McDowell's claim as an account of how perception enables demonstrative thought. So, in conclusion, I think Dickie's account has an analogous explanatory gap to what I identified as the second explanatory gap in Evans's account. Both accounts lack an explanation as to how there on the basis of perceptual, nonconceptual content can be constructed a mental representation that non-descriptively identifies the perceived object.[72]

It is worth noting that Pylyshyn (2003), who is one of the main contributors to the psychological research to which Dickie refers, remarks that all there can be a basis for concluding about the connection between perception and demonstrative thought is that there is a similarity in function between their mechanisms for aboutness. Following on from a discussion of John Perry's (1979) point that there is an essential indexicality to some thoughts, such as thoughts that connect one's topographical knowledge of an area with one's perceptual knowledge of a scene, Pylyshyn concludes as follows.

> What all this means is that the cognitive representation of a visual scene must contain something more than descriptive information in order that it may refer to individual objects. What we need is what natural language provides in part when it uses names (or labels) that uniquely pick out particular individuals, or when it embraces demonstratives, terms like "this" or "that". With such a mechanism we can refer to particular individuals, and in so doing, we can elaborate descriptions while ensuring that we continue to describe the same thing. And we can also keep track of a particular individual object, as the same object, even while it changes its properties and moves in an unpredictable way. This latter requirement should now make it clear that the function we need is precisely what was postulated in the theory of visual indexes. According to the theory, visual indexes realize the equivalent of a direct reference, much like a demonstrative, within the visual system. (Pylyshyn 2003, pp. 254-255.)

As aforementioned, keeping track of an object through unpredictable changes in its properties and its movement is precisely what is done by the visual indexes or fingers of instantiation (FINSTs) that Pylyshyn postulates for explaining the function of some forms of perception. His point in this passage is that it seems as if the same

---

[72] Given acceptance of the idea that the content of singular thought is object-dependent, this does in my view constitute a reason to reject Evans's view that the content of perceptual experience is general: It looks hard to explain how perception can facilitate demonstrative thought if this view of perceptual content is assumed.

mechanism that is at work in certain forms of cognition as what is also at work in perception, i.e. FINST. Following the passage rendered, he further supports the claim by referring to experiments that show that there is this correspondence. Pylyshyn never claims, however, that the mechanism for identifying and keeping track of objects in perception is taken up in cognition. He only claims that the mechanisms are of the same type, but not that they are numerically the same, which is, I suggested, what Dickie's idea reduces to.

What is in my view the main explanatory advantage of Dickie's account is her idea about what makes perceptual content be about a specific object, namely that the subject is attending to the object in question. Dickie does not elaborate much on this idea. However, a similar idea about the role of attention is defended and elaborated by Campbell (2002). Rather than conceiving of a two-step process, in which a mental representation is constructed on the basis of perceptual content, Campbell envisages that attention enables demonstrative thought directly, without going via the content of perception. Considering his view will point us to a way of conceiving of how perception enables demonstrative thought that is independent of one's view as to whether perception has content and what the nature of the content of perception is.

4.3   Campbell and conscious attention

A central theme in Campbell's *Reference and Consciousness* (2002) is his concern with how 'knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative' can be explained by an account of perceptual experience. More specifically, his concern is to show that *only his* account of perceptual experience can play such an explanatory role. On the face of it, one might have thought that to possess knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative is to know the object that the demonstrative refers to, either by knowing things about it or by perceiving it. But Campbell does not think that any sort of knowledge of an object will qualify as knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative. The sort of knowledge he has in mind is knowledge that would put a subject in a position to understand uses of the demonstrative. Therefore, given that understanding a use of a demonstrative involves having a thought, knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative would put a subject in a position to entertain a thought expressible by the use of a demonstrative. And on Campbell's view, such thoughts

are typically what I have called 'demonstrative thoughts'; they are the fundamental kind of thought that is enabled by acquaintance. Hence, explaining how perception provides knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative is equivalent to explaining how perception enables demonstrative thoughts. In other words, Campbell is concerned with the very same explanatory project as that we are currently pursuing. Let us therefore consider how Campbell thinks his account of perceptual experience can explain the possibility of having a demonstrative thought.

Campbell builds his account around the claim that in order to understand reference to a perceived object by means of a demonstrative, the subject needs to be *consciously attending* to the object in question. 'Conscious attention' is in his discussion a term from psychology which is associated with certain perceptual phenomena, such as directing one's gaze, filtering out perceptual information, focussing.[73] The way in which perception enables demonstrative thought, or provides knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative, is in Campbell's view that perception involves the necessary condition for such thought and such knowledge, namely conscious attention. In order to substantiate this idea, the appropriate thing to do would clearly be to argue for the central claim that knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative, and the entertaining of a demonstrative thought, requires conscious attention. And this is precisely what Campbell does.

In order to motivate his central claim that demonstrative thought requires conscious attention, Campbell starts with consideration of examples. He builds on G. E. Moore's claim that, for a sentence containing a demonstrative, 'the prop[osition] is not understood until the thing in question is seen' (Moore 1986, p. 158). Following Moore, Campbell claims that one does not understand the demonstrative 'that building' even if one knows many true descriptions of the building ('the building with a golden roof', 'the building you are looking at'). One needs to *see* the building to understand the demonstrative 'that building'. What Campbell adds to Moore's claim is that only if perception involves conscious attention to the perceived object can it serve to make possible demonstrative thought. Not only must one's perceptual system be sensitive to the building if one is to think demonstratively about it; one must consciously attend to it:

---

[73] For an overview, see Pylyshyn (2003), chapter four.

As I look over the scene, it is not enough that the gold-domed building be there somewhere in my visual field. I must separate it visually, as figure from ground, I must visually discriminate it from its surroundings. I have to attend to it. (Campbell 2002, p. 25.)

Campbell clearly regards his claim that conscious attention is required for demonstrative thought as an addition to Moore's claim that visual perception is required for demonstrative thought. But, as I will argue, Campbell's claim can be ridded of Moore's emphasis on vision, and we can extract only what Campbell regards himself as adding to Moore's claim: We can conceive of a form of non-visual attention as enabling demonstrative thought. Before I turn to this, however, let us get Campbell's account into view, first of all by looking at his defence for accepting that conscious attention, rather than merely having the object in one's visual field, is required for knowledge of reference.

Campbell's defence starts with the point that conscious attention is 'what causes and justifies the use of particular procedures for verifying and finding the implications of propositions containing the demonstrative' (ibid., p. 26). Verifying and finding the implications of propositions is, in general, part of what it is to understand propositions, according to Campbell (see ibid., pp. 22-25). More specifically with regard to demonstrative thought, he thinks that in order to verify a proposition containing a demonstrative we need to look and see if, for instance, one thing is indeed enclosed by another thing. Campbell further emphasises that the visual skill required for doing this is a skill that involves conscious attention. The visual skill in question is the ability involved in experiencing 'the categorical object itself'. So, his claim that knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative requires conscious attention amounts to the claim that such knowledge requires experiencing 'the categorical object itself'. In this form, his account of the explanatory role of experience is, in short, the following:

The reason why experience of the object can provide knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative is … that it is experience of the object that provides you with your conception of the categorical object itself. (Ibid., p. 138.)

In order to get clear on why Campbell thinks conscious attention is required for demonstrative thought, we thus need to get clear on why he thinks experience of the categorical is required for it.

It is not entirely straightforward to appreciate what Campbell means by experience of the categorical object itself. What is evident is that such experience is a way of relating to an object, which contrasts with the way of relating to that object in an 'experience of the dispositional'. Campbell central example in accounting for experience of the categorical concerns experience of shape properties, rather than experience of categorical objects. He contrasts seeing the roundness of an object, which would be an experience of the categorical shape property of the object, with seeing something that has the potential to roll, which would be an experience of the dispositional shape property of the object. It is important to Campbell that seeing the categorical shape property is to see the *reason* for why the ball rolls. We do not see this when the dispositional properties of an object are experienced; in that case, we only see that the ball rolls or will roll in certain circumstances.

Campbell suggests that there is an analogous distinction between two ways of perceptually relating to the object, rather than its properties:

> Experience of shape properties is what explains knowledge of what the shape property is. It is experience of the shape that confronts us with the categorical property, and thereby explains our grasp of the concept of shape as categorical. (…) I want to propose that there is similarly a sense in which experience of the object confronts you with the identity of the categorical thing itself. (Ibid., p. 139.)

Campbell gives several examples of what he means by being confronted with the identity of the categorical thing itself. One particularly illuminating example, I think, is his description of how one may be confronted with the identity of a desk that one carved one's initials into during one's schooldays. He writes:

> Suppose that while at school you carve your initials on a desk. When you revisit years later, there they still are. In this case, the identity of the object over time seems to be the categorical ground of its potentiality to sustain this kind of marking interaction. (Ibid., p. 140.)

Among other examples of experience of the categorical object itself, Campbell mentions that it may consist in the awareness of that which stays constant through

changes in the object's properties over time, or of that which is the origin of various correlated effects that the object has (see ibid., pp. 140-145). By contrast, I take it that experiencing the dispositional object would be to be aware of how the object as such will behave; for instance, that it is the sort of thing that moves in continuous paths, as is one of the features of ordinary material objects that Dickie mentions.

In my view, Campbell seems to be targeting something important about demonstrative thought in his discussion of experience of the categorical, with his emphasis on the awareness on the categorical identity of an object. I think he is right that awareness of the identity of the object enables demonstrative thought about it. But I think he is wrong to suppose that the awareness in question must be essentially perceptual, i.e. that it must be conscious attention. It is not clear to me that the awareness of the identity of an object that Campbell characterises as being involved in experience of the categorical object itself is an awareness essentially tied to perception. Consider again Campbell's example above about the gold-domed building in one's visual field. Campbell's claim is that, in order to think about this building demonstratively, one 'must separate it visually, as figure from ground', or, again, that one 'must visually discriminate it from its surroundings' (ibid., p. 25). But why is *visual* discrimination or *visual* separation key? We may grant that we are indeed able to visually discriminate the building from its surroundings when thinking demonstratively about it. Nevertheless, the visual discrimination may be due to an awareness of the identity of the object that is non-perceptual. In other words, the idea is that the visual discrimination is not a necessary precondition for demonstrative thought, but rather a product of a certain type of awareness that is required for demonstrative thought, as well as for visual discrimination.

In order to substantiate this suggestion, I will consider some other than perceptual ways in which one can discriminate an object and, as I argue, have a demonstrative thought about it. In this, I follow the same method as Campbell uses to explain and defend his view that experience of the categorical is required for demonstrative thought. The aim is to show that there is a striking similarity between Campbell's description of what is involved in experience of the categorical and my descriptions of what is involved in non-perceptual awareness of objects.

Consider first an anaphoric use of a demonstrative, for instance my utterance of 'That building' when I mean, not a building I can point to, but rather a building we have been talking about yesterday. This anaphoric use of a demonstrative is usually

not considered to be expressive of a demonstrative thought that, according to acquaintance-theorists, is enabled by acquaintance. But I think it could be. Suppose that two architects are planning to construct a building, and that they yesterday talked about it in great detail, and perhaps made some preliminary sketches. When they return the next day and one of them asks the other 'So, you know that building? Do you believe it will ever get built?', I think he or she is expressing a demonstrative thought. It is a demonstrative thought about a 'conversational object'.[74] This is so, I think, not so much because of the detail of the architects' conversation yesterday, as that it was a specific object that they had in mind and that they changed their mind about how should be constructed, e.g. whether *it* should have 78 or 77 windows. They did not change their mind about which properties should be included in a bundle of properties. Or so I think. Let me however mention some other examples of demonstrative thoughts that may help to convince further.

Suppose that one is listening to someone talking about an idea in physics and where it suddenly occurs to one: 'Aha! *That* is the idea that is being talked about! It's Newton's second law'. There is at this moment a transition where one recognises the idea. It seems to me that from that moment, one can think demonstratively about the idea itself, whereas one before the transition only was thinking about some law that has all of the properties the speaker attributes to it. Similarly to how Campbell argues that it is the categorical object itself that confronts one when one recognises the marks on one's old school desk, I think it is the categorical object itself (where 'object' here is to be taken in a wide sense) that confronts one when one recognises what is being said about Newton's second law. That idea itself is recognised, and not merely truths about it.

Another example would be a case where one has been reading a philosophy paper and one has been reading it very carefully, not just skimmed it or fallen half asleep while reading. As a result, one has come to understand and gain access to its content. It seems to me that one is then in a position to understand utterances about 'That content' in a way that other people, who have only skimmed the paper, cannot. They can only think of the content as what they can gain access to if they pay close

---

[74] What I mean by a 'conversational object' is something that is an object for someone. A necessary ground for its existence is a subject's awareness of it, but its existence is also grounded in in events and facts. In chapter two, I explained this idea with respect to a specific kind of conversational object, namely a hallucinatory apple.

attention to a text that is, let us say, located on a piece of paper in their office. By contrast, when one has read it very carefully, one can think of the content itself. Similarly to how Campbell says that conscious attention is required for justifying and finding the implications of demonstrative thoughts, I think the awareness of the content itself is required for justifying and finding the implications of demonstrative thoughts about the content.

Yet another type of example would be cases involving dreams. Suppose that John has had a dream about a fantastic building and that, being an architect, he is quite obsessed with it and talks much about it. I think John is able to think about that building in a way that others, who have not dreamt about it, do not. They only understand his reference to 'that building' by knowing that it is the one he dreamt of last night (although they can, I think, come to think demonstratively about it, in an analogous way to how the architects in my first example do, if they engage in sufficient conversation about it). The intuition I am pushing here is similar to Mark Sainsbury's (2009, pp. 126-127) insight that there can be nonrelational but specific readings of 'x Vs a G', where V is an intensional verb. Sainsbury reflects on Quine's (1956) example of a sloop, the Mary Jane, that has been commissioned but that is never built. Sainsbury explains that we may envisage a person, Jack, who desires the Mary Jane, and where he in doing so has a desire that cannot be satisfied, since he desires a specific sloop, and not merely relief from slooplessness. For Sainsbury, who is concerned with fiction, the main point of this example is that specificity does not require existence. By contrast, while I think Sainsbury is right that there is no sloop to relate to, it is important for my purposes is that there is something that Jack relates to. This is not a non-existent sloop, but rather a merely commissioned sloop, which I think falls under the broader ontological category of what I above called a 'conversational object'. This is not to say that Jack desires a conversational object, but only that by relating to a conversational object he has a desire for a specific sloop. Let me change to a different example in order to support this claim and explain why it is important for present purposes.

Suppose that one is suffering from a recurring nightmare, and that talking to one's psychologist one says 'I had that dream again'. One does not refer to the episode of dreaming, but to the dream itself, the dream that recurs night after night. As emphasised above, the psychologist may not understand the thought one expresses as a demonstrative thought; perhaps he or she instead understands it as

being about whatever dream this patient keeps having. If so, one has an awareness of the dream itself that the psychologist lacks. One way of being aware of the dream, I think, is to recall it. Here I do not have in mind the sort of recollection described by Campbell (2002, pp. 180-187) as 'decentring'. This is a two-level process, in which one first imagines oneself in the position where one had the dream and then, from that perspective, recalls the dream. Rather, my idea is that as one goes through the day the dream keeps bothering one, and when it so bothers one, one is aware of it directly. It is not that one goes around all day imagining that one is having the dream. Rather, the dream bothers one. But if it bothers one, then there is something one relates to, namely the dream. This is not the episode of dreaming, but the dream itself. In Campbell's terminology, the dream itself is the categorical ground for its potentiality to sustain the feeling of terror on the subject. Similarly, in the example about the sloop, I think one can have demonstrative thoughts about things such as conversational objects and dreams, and that these things stand in complicated relations to events, facts and physical objects, e.g. the episode of dreaming.

Let me mention one final example in order to return to the role of perception in what I have explained as non-perceptual awareness of an object. Consider a case where we recognise an IKEA cup on the table and we refer to 'that cup'. The cup is from IKEA's 2005 edition, and here it is in the green version. What we understand by reference to 'that cup', when we recognise it so, is not the particular physical object on the table. Rather we understand it as a reference to the type of cup that IKEA started making in 2005. Also this, it seems to me, is to understand a demonstrative thought. In fact, the example seems similar to Campbell's example of attending to categorical shape properties, like roundness. The characteristic shape of the cup that we recognise is, I think, a categorical shape property, but it is a much "narrower" property than roundness. Whether this shape property is perceived or if it is conceived, envisaged, or abstracted on the basis of the perceived physical object, does not matter much to the possibility of thinking demonstratively about it. What matters is that one is aware of the object itself, be it a content, a conversational object, a dream, an object in a dream, or a shape property.

What I have been trying to show is that in the examples mentioned we do have what Campbell calls a 'conception of the categorical object itself', although the object in question is not perceived, and perhaps not even perceivable. So, insofar as there is a common phenomenon at work both in the cases Campbell mentions, where

an object is perceived, and in the examples I have mentioned, where an object is envisaged, dreamt about, recalled, and so on, the awareness of a categorical object cannot be tied essentially to perception, just like it cannot be tied essentially to envisaging, dreaming, recalling, and so on. Instead, I think we should conceive of awareness as being an element in perception, as well as in these other phenomena. Perception and visual discrimination requires awareness, and demonstrative thought requires awareness too. This makes it clear why one may be led to think, as Campbell does, that perceptual experience enables demonstrative thought and knowledge of reference; one might think that awareness occurs only with perception and that perception in this way enables demonstrative thought. But when we consider the wider range of cases wherein awareness enables demonstrative thought, as I have indicated above, we may appreciate that what enables demonstrative thought is not perception, but rather an awareness of the object that is also involved in perception, among other things.

4.4   Conclusion

Let me summarise the discussion. On McDowell's, Evans's and Dickie's views, demonstrative thought about a perceived object is enabled by the content of perception. McDowell has a straightforward but non-explanatory account: Perception has demonstrative thought content. By contrast, Evans and Dickie seek to explain how conceptual content can be constructed on the basis of nonconceptual content. I argued that, although Dickie's account can seal one of the explanatory gaps in Evans's account, it does not succeed in explaining how conceptual content is constructed on the basis of nonconceptual content. Campbell's account, however, avoids the difficulty of accounting for any such process of construction of conceptual from nonconceptual content. His account of acquaintance, although it like McDowell's, Evans's and Dickie's accounts takes acquaintance to be provided by perception, does not involve the idea that the content of perception enables demonstrative thought. Rather, he thinks there is something else about perception that enables demonstrative thought. His view, therefore, is independent of any view as to whether perception has content and what kind of content it has. This independence is characteristic also of the suggestion I have made by adjusting Campbell's view. But my suggestion centrally differs from Campbell's in its

structure. While Campbell holds that perceptual awareness enables demonstrative thought, I hold that non-perceptual awareness enables both perception and demonstrative thought. My suggestion also differs from Campbell's in its scope: As I have indicated by means of examples, the range of objects of which one can be aware is broader than the range of perceivable objects.

I would like to emphasise that my adjusted and extended version of Campbell's view is an acquaintance view, like the other views discussed (with the possible exception of McDowell's view). On my view, acquaintance is tied neither to perception nor to something essentially perceptual such as conscious attention. But the view preserves Russell's intuition that a direct relation to an object, which need not involve knowledge of truths about the object, is required for a fundamental kind of thought, namely the sort of thought I have referred to as 'demonstrative thought' throughout this chapter.

The outlined view of acquaintance coheres well with the revision of Evans's and McDowell's view of singular thought that I have been moving towards in earlier chapters. In chapter two, I mentioned a weakened version of what Evans calls 'Russell's principle', which is a principle that puts down a constraint on acquaintance. The weakened version consisted in claiming that, rather than knowing which object the thought is about, it is believing in the existence of the object the thought is about that is required for having a singular thought. I labelled this idea 'Belief-Dependence'. The view of acquaintance developed in this chapter is a broader version of the same idea. Believing in the existence of an object involves awareness of the object. I have suggested in this chapter that awareness may also be involved in perception, recognition, recollection, envisaging, and dreaming.

That awareness is required for singular thought also fits well with the idea of object-directed intentionality discussed in chapter three. In brief, the fit this this: In order to direct one's mind towards an object, as one does when having an object-dependent thought, one must be aware of it. However, awareness cannot here be understood as obtaining prior to the mind's directedness. As I have mentioned, many of the objects that on my view can be thought about in the object-dependent manner are ones that a subject necessarily is aware of. Their existence is grounded in the subject's mental episode of directing his or her mind towards the object (as well as in other events and facts). So, the picture I have in mind here is circular: Neither awareness nor directedness is temporally prior to the other. In directing one's mind

towards something in particular one may in some cases, for instance in mock thought scenarios, be aware of an object whose existence in part is due to one's awareness of it.

5

Transparency

This chapter will consider the question: What objections can there be to eliminating the possibility of illusions of object-dependent thought from Evans's and McDowell's view of singular thought? In the previous chapters, we have seen some reasons for such elimination. Rejecting illusions would alleviate the problems with accounting for the idea that it can seem to a subject that or she is having an object-dependent thought even if this is not the case, as discussed in chapter one. A rejection of illusions is also motivated by chapter two's observation that the subject will not interpret his or her own utterance, made in order to express what is taken to be his or her thought, in such a way that this utterance is an expression of that thought. This explains why attributing an illusion of thought to the subject may seem tempting, although it is revealed to be uncalled for if one distinguishes clearly between communication and thought.

Furthermore, we have seen that elimination of illusions of object-dependent thought from Evans's and McDowell's view is not only motivated, but also feasible. In order to accomplish such elimination, I suggested in chapter three that McDowell's idea about directedness towards the mind-independent world can be understood as consisting in a mental episode that involves "mental attention" to what through introspection is indistinguishable from a perceivable object, but what is, in a mock thought scenario, in fact an object that existentially depends on that mental episode. This involves extending the range of types of object about which there can be object-dependent thoughts. In chapter four, I argued that we can be acquainted with the types of object in this extended range.

It should be emphasised that also the suggested revision of Evans's and McDowell's view remains an *externalist* view of singular thought. The most widespread definition of externalism about mental content is that facts about the subject's environment are relevant to the individuation of the subject's mental contents.[75] In the literature, the environmental facts discussed are typically those that

---

[75] See Deutsch and Lau's (2002) and Parent's (2013) articles in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. See also e.g. Burge (1988, p. 650), Boghossian (1998, p. 199), Macdonald (1998, p. 123), Recanati (2007, p. 9), Sullivan (2010, p. 249). A fact about the subject's environment is often

differ between Earth and Twin-Earth.[76] As Paul Boghossian (1998, p. 280) notes, Evans's and McDowell's view is a special form of externalism, thus defined. The view is not just that mental content is individuated by objects in the environment, in which case the content can exist without the object existing. Evans and McDowell exclude this possibility by taking mental content to depend on the existence of an object. My revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view follows their original view in this respect, and hence also the revised view is an externalist view, given the widespread definition. The difference to Evans's and McDowell's original view in this regard is only that, in mock thought scenarios, the object on which the singular thought-content depends will, in turn, depend on the "mental attention" involved in the singular thought-episode. This does not mean that the object on which the singular thought-content depends in a mock thought scenario is not an object in the subject's environment, for the object's existence also depends on environmental facts (e.g. facts about the physical arrangements that generate the perceptual hallucinatory experience).

It is useful to observe that Katalin Farkas (2003, 2008) suggests defining externalism in an alternative way, namely as the view 'that contents could be different even if appearances were the same; that content depends on factors external to the subject's point of view' (2008, p. 82). Do the original and the revised versions of Evans's and McDowell's view qualify as externalist views on this definition? The reply is not straightforward. Farkas notes that McDowell's view is externalist on her definition, because he allows that one can be in error about the content of one's mind (Farkas 2003, p. 205); it can appear that one entertains a singular thought although one in fact does not. So, McDowell holds an externalist view, because he holds that contents could be different even if appearances were the same. But there is also a sense in which McDowell holds that appearances differ if contents do. As we saw in the discussion of McDowell's reply to Blackburn in chapter three, the fact that there is no object to think about in a mock thought scenario is not a 'factor external to the subject's point of view' on McDowell's view, as the second part of Farkas's definition requires. Rather, the fact that there is no object to think about makes a

---

understood as a fact external to the subject's skin. This understanding, and the widespread definition, is criticised by Farkas (2003). Although I agree with her criticism, I will assume this definition here, because it dominates the literature that I will discuss.

[76] For a brief outline of the Twin-Earth thought experiment, see section 3.5 above.

difference to subjectivity and to how things cognitively appear, according to McDowell: The difference is that there is no content that appears to one. Thus, by contrast to what we are led to conclude on the basis of McDowell's idea that one can be in error about the content of one's mind, the difference in content between a mock thought scenario and a case of object-dependent thought comes together with a difference, and not identity, in appearances. This makes it look like McDowell's view is *not* an externalist view on Farkas's definition. Now, on the revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view the claim about error is eliminated, while McDowell's idea about appearances is maintained. That is, it is maintained that whether there is an object to think about – or, rather, *which* object there is to think about, given that there are no mere appearances – makes a difference to the appearance that one is having a singular thought. So, as with the latter perspective on classification of McDowell's view, a difference in thought-content comes with a difference in appearance too. Hence, the revised view does *not* qualify as an externalist view on Farkas's definition.

In the present chapter, I will work with the widespread definition of externalism. I will focus on what might be thought to be a problem for the revision of Evans's and McDowell's view that I recommend, in light of the fact that it seeks to combine an externalist view of singular thought with a view that there are no illusions of singular thought. The claim that there are no illusions of singular thought can be turned into a positive thesis, as follows:

(Transparency)   For every singular thought, α, that it seems to a subject, t, that he or she is entertaining, it is the case that t entertains α.

For all α, for all t (tS[tEα] → tEα).

Transparency is intended as a claim that the way our thought seems to us is how it is. I will consider two problems that might be thought to arise with regard to the combination of Transparency with an externalist view of singular thought. The first problem arises in relation to a potential independent reason for rejecting Transparency, namely that it may be subject to Timothy Williamson's (2000) argument against a similar thesis called 'Luminosity'. This is discussed in part one. In part two, Transparency is contrasted with a thesis about mental contents more generally, namely the thesis often referred to as 'Privileged Self-Knowledge', which

is a thesis that has repeatedly been argued to be incompatible with an externalist view of mental content. I also briefly consider the issue of incompatibility from the standpoint of Farkas's definition of externalism.

5.1 Transparency and Luminosity

According to Williamson, knowledge is, merely, a factive state of mind, which is to say that the kind of mental states that constitute knowledge are states such that, when one is in them, one has an attitude that, necessarily, one has only if it is true (Williamson 1995, 2000). Knowing that p involves, necessarily, that the fact that p is obtaining. Williamson's view of knowledge is similar to Evans's and McDowell's view of singular thought in that, on both views, knowing or thinking singularly has a nature that is special only to it and is not shared with mental states or events that are introspectively indistinguishable from it. Similarly to how McDowell rejects a two-component view of singular thought, Williamson rejects a two-component view of knowledge, according to which knowledge divides into a belief component and a component that has to do with external conditions. Also the revision of Evans's and McDowell's view that I recommend is a view according to which singular thought has its own fundamental nature. But the revised view differs from Evans's and McDowell's original view in not allowing for mental events that are introspectively indistinguishable from the entertaining of singular thoughts and that are yet not singular thoughts. The exclusion of this possibility is stated in Transparency.

Williamson argues that a thesis similar to Transparency, a thesis he labels 'Luminosity', is *not* part of his view. He presents a very convincing argument against it. Thus, we should examine whether a similar argument can be constructed against Transparency, such that we, in this light, have reason to retain Evans's and McDowell's idea that there can be illusions of singular thought.

Before we consider Luminosity, it should be mentioned that Williamson thinks his view is incompatible not only with Luminosity, but also with the following more general thesis, which he labels 'Transparency', but which I will refer to as 'K-Transparency' to distinguish it from my Transparency thesis.

(K-Transparency)   For every mental state, s, whenever one is suitably alert and conceptually sophisticated, one is in a position to know whether one is in s.[77]

For all s, for all t (At ∧ Ct → (tK(tIs) ∨ tK(⌐ tIs))).

Concentrating for the moment on Williamson's view that knowledge is a state of mind, we can see that the two following possibilities are rejected by K-Transparency. It is rejected that (i) if one *is* in a mental state of knowing, then one can fail to be in a position to know that; and it is rejected that (ii) if one *is not* in a mental state of knowing, then one can fail to be in a position to know that. Correspondingly, two kinds of illusions of knowledge are rejected: (1) that it seems to one that one knows that one *is* in state S and one *is not*, and (2) that it seems to one that one knows that one *is not* in state S and one *is*.

By contrast, Transparency is only concerned with the analogous positive case for singular thought, i.e. the case where it seems to one that one is having a singular thought. It is for this reason that Transparency is more similar to what Williamson formulates as the Luminosity thesis, which is also only concerned with the positive case and which constitutes a rejection of the first kind of illusion of knowledge.[78]

(Luminosity) For every mental state, s, if a subject, t, is in s, then t is in a position to know that t is in s.[79]

For all s, for all t (tIs → tK(tIs)).

In brief, Williamson's argument against Luminosity runs as follows (see Williamson 2000, pp. 96-98). One morning, one wakes up feeling cold and one is in a state of knowing that one feels cold. One then slowly warms up, so that, by noon,

---

[77] See Williamson 1995, p. 535.

[78] Another obvious difference between Luminosity and Transparency on the one hand and K-Transparency on the other hand, is that K-Transparency contains an extra clause, namely the requirement that the subject be suitably alert and conceptually sophisticated.

[79] Williamson's formulation of Luminosity reads: 'For every case c, if in α C obtains, then in α one is in a position to know that C obtains' (Williamson 2000, p. 95). In order to make it clearer how this thesis parallels one half of K-Transparency, I take the liberty of reformulating it so as to concern states of knowledge specifically, and not conditions in general and cases where they obtain.

one feels warm. The problem is, Williamson argues, that if both Luminosity and an idea about reliability of knowledge are accepted, then one never gets out of the state of knowing that one feels cold, which constitutes the state of one's knowledge at the break of dawn. In order to see how this problem arises, we apply Luminosity to each millisecond, i, of the process of warming up, where $0 \leq i \leq n$, and n is the time at noon:

Luminosity-at-i: $\qquad$ $C_{t=i} \rightarrow K(C_{t=i})$

$\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad$ (If one feels cold at i then one knows that one feels cold at i.)

To this, we add the idea about reliability. The idea here is that if one knows that one feels cold at i, then one must feel almost equally confident that one feels cold a millisecond later. This confidence would be reliably based, Williamson thinks, only if one in fact is cold. So, we have:

Reliability: $\qquad\qquad$ $K(C_{t=i}) \rightarrow C_{t=i+1}$

$\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad$ (If one knows that one feels cold at i, then one feels cold at $i+1$.)

Williamson's argument then proceeds by applying these principles in turn at each stage of the process, in the following way:

At $t=0$:	$C_{t=0}$	One feels cold at dawn. (Initial state.)
	$K(C_{t=0})$	One knows that one feels cold at dawn. (By Luminosity-at-i).
At $t=1$:	$C_{t=1}$	One feels cold at the next millisecond. (By Reliability.)
	$K(C_{t=1})$	One knows that one feels cold at the next millisecond $t=1$. (By Luminosity-at-i.)
… and so on until:		
At $t=n$:	$C_{t=n}$	One feels cold at noon. (By Reliability.)

Since it is false, as the final sentence of the argument says, that one feels cold at noon, and given that Reliability is true, we must therefore reject Luminosity.

In order to construct an analogue of this argument against the Transparency thesis, we need an example of a continuum of singular thoughts that parallels the continuum of states ranging from knowing that one feels cold to knowing that one feels warm. We need an example where the object that is thought about gradually disappears, so that one at the initial stage is thinking about one entity and at the final stage thinking about something else, or nothing at all, and where the intermediary stages are indeterminate in this regard. On an externalist view, the initial singular thought and the final singular thought (or absence of it, if one adheres to Evans's and McDowell's view) will be different thoughts. Let us try to run with the example of singular thoughts about a heap of sand that gradually diminishes into nothing as its grains of sand are blown away by the wind from dawn until noon. It is clear that we can apply Transparency to this example in an analogous way to how Luminosity is applied in Williamson's argument. For each millisecond, i, from dawn until noon, where $0 \leq i \leq n$, we have:

Transparency-at-i: For every i, if it seems to a thinker, t, that t is entertaining the singular thought 'That heap is F' at i, then t is entertaining that singular thought at i.

$tE\alpha_i \rightarrow tS[tE\alpha_i]$.

We would also need to find an analogue of Reliability. It is clear what such an analogue would need to do. It would need to function such that it from the premise that one is entertaining a given singular thought at i can be concluded that it seems to one that one entertains that thought at the next millisecond. Hence we can attempt the following:

Cognitive-appearance-at-i+1:   For every i, if one is entertaining the singular thought 'That heap is F' at i, then it seems to one that one is entertaining the same singular thought at i+1.

$tE\alpha_i \rightarrow tS[tE\alpha_{i+1}]$.

If we accept these two principles, it is clear that, if we start with the premise that it seems to one that one is entertaining the thought that the heap is F at $t=0$, we can generate an analogous regress to the one in Williamson's argument, by alternating between applying Transparency-at-i and Cognitive-appearance-at-$i+1$, to arrive at the conclusion that, at $t=n$, it seems to one that one is entertaining the same thought as at t=0. However, according to the revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view (as well as on their version) a thought that the heap is F is sensitive to the nature and existence of the heap. This means that if there can be an argument to show that it at $t=n$ seems to one that one entertains the same singular thought as at t=0, then one must reject one or more of the following ideas: the externalist view that singular thought is object-dependent, Transparency, or Cognitive-appearance-at-$i+1$.

The question is whether Cognitive-appearance-at-$i+1$ is true. Williamson's reason for thinking that we should accept that the analogous principle is, as aforementioned, his view concerning what is required in order for knowledge to be reliable. For knowledge to be reliable, he argues, one must avoid false belief in sufficiently similar cases to the ones wherein one knows. In his example, the heating up process is so slow that the situation a millisecond later *is* sufficiently similar to the situation a millisecond earlier. For one's confidence to be reliably based, the subject's belief, at the next millisecond, that he feels cold must therefore be true.

As far as I can understand, however, there is no good reason to accept Cognitive-apperance-at-$i+1$. The reasoning in favour of it that parallels Williamson's reasoning in favour of Reliability would be as follows. If there is a circumstance in which one has a singular thought, α, about some object, O, then it must at least *seem* to one that one entertains α in a sufficiently similar circumstance – if O is before one, say, or, perhaps, if it merely appears to be before one due to a non-veridical perceptual experience. But even if one has entertained a certain thought about an object in one circumstance, there is, as far as I can understand, nothing about this that demands that it seems to one that one entertains that thought about that object in a similar circumstance. If cognition were a matter of habit, it could be plausible to claim that if a certain thought had been entertained in a certain circumstance, then in similar circumstances there would at least be the cognitive appearance of this thought. Having thought something in one circumstance, one would start the habit of

thinking, or at the very least seeming to think, that thought in a similar circumstance. My sense, however, is that cognition is not habitual or normative in this way.

Thus, if I am right that Cognitive-apperance-at-$i+1$ is not a plausible principle, there can be constructed no analogue to Williamson's argument against Luminosity with respect to Transparency. So, Transparency can be accepted, even if Luminosity is not.

5.2   *Transparency and Privileged Self-Knowledge*

There is also a second problem one might think arises with regard to my suggestion to combine Transparency with Evans's and McDowell's externalist view of singular thought. In the debate about content externalism, it has repeatedly been argued that a thesis called 'Privileged Self-Knowledge', which is similar to Transparency, conflicts with externalist intuitions.[80] Is there analogous reason to suppose that Transparency conflicts with externalist intuitions?

By 'Privileged Self-Knowledge', I understand the following thesis:

(Privileged Self-Knowledge)   A subject is able to know, in a privileged way, what his or her thought is.

For all α, for all t ($tE\alpha \rightarrow tK_p(tE\alpha)$).

The significance of this thesis depends on what one understands by 'in a privileged way'. In the literature, Privileged Self-Knowledge (hereafter PSK) is often understood to concern a priori knowledge, e.g. knowledge obtained without the benefit of empirical investigation (Boghossian 1998, p. 198, Brown 2000, p. 115, McKinsey 1991, p. 9), or knowledge obtained 'from the armchair' without using the five senses (Parent 2013). If a priori knowledge is in question in PSK, however, it needs to be distinguished from, e.g., mathematical knowledge, which is clearly not the privilege of one subject. Thus, it should be added that two central features of self-knowledge are *immediacy* and *authority*, which can be summarised as follows: 'Not only do you know differently from others what you think, hope, and feel; you are also (defeasibly) regarded as knowing *best*' (McDonald, Smith and Wright 1998, pp.

---

[80] See for instance Boghossian (1998), McKinsey (1991). For an argument that Privileged Self-Knowledge is compatible with externalism, see for instance Burge (1988).

1-2, original emphasis).[81] In the following, I will take PSK to concern knowledge that has these two features, and I set aside the question as to whether such knowledge is a priori.[82]

The general reason as to why content externalism is often considered to be incompatible with PSK is that if mental contents are individuated by objects in the environment of the subject, as the widespread definition of content externalism says, then there could be facts about our mental contents that we do *not* know in a privileged way. For there are clearly facts about the environment that we do not know in a privileged way. Hence, PSK cannot generally be true if content externalism is true.[83]

Whether or not this problem also arises for a combination of Transparency with an externalist view of singular thought depends on how we read Transparency. In particular, it depends on how we understand the idea that it seems to one that one has a certain thought. The idea might be understood as a claim that one has a special kind of access to one's thought-content that is different from anyone else's access to it. But, unlike the privileged access to one's thought that is in question in PSK, it is doubtful, I think, that it seeming to one that one has a certain thought involves that one's access to this thought is superior to everyone else's access to it, i.e. that such access has the feature of being authoritative.

However, for the sake of further argument, I propose to regard the cognitive appearance involved in Transparency, i.e. the appearance that one has a singular thought, as a claim that one knows one's thought in a privileged way. If it is regarded thus, Transparency and PSK may be considered mirror-image claims, in the following way. Transparency, on this reading, says that if one knows in the privileged way that one entertains a certain thought, then one entertains that thought. Conversely, PSK says that, if one entertains a certain thought, then one is able to

---

[81] These authors also mention 'salience' as a feature of self-knowledge: If one has a certain thought, then it is to be expected that one will know it. PSK, as formulated above, captures this feature in terms of the subject's ability to know, rather than in terms of an expectation that the subject will know.

[82] For discussion of various ways of understanding PSK as concerning a priori knowledge, and arguments as to how these notions interact with McKinsey's (1991) reductio for incompatibilism of externalism and PSK, see Miller (1997) and Nuccetelli (1999).

[83] Farkas (2003, p. 199) argues that also internalism is incompatible with PSK if externalism and internalism are defined in the widespread way accepted in this chapter.

know in the privileged way that one is entertaining that thought.[84] Read in this way, one might think that both Transparency and PSK are incompatible with an externalist view of mental content, in that both involve the claim that one can know what one's thought is in a privileged way. This may be argued to conflict with externalism, since there with externalism arises the possibility that there may be facts one cannot know about one's thought in a privileged way, namely facts about how the thought relates to the environment. However, the conflict is only problematic, I think, if what one knows in a privileged way about one's thought differs from the externalist facts about it. My intention, as I will explain, is that Transparency should be read in a way such that this sort of conflict does not arise.

The idea that the cognitive appearances involved in Transparency are pieces of privileged knowledge can be understood in a McDowellian way. In chapter three, I emphasised that McDowell thinks that, despite being introspectively indistinguishable to the subject, the appearance of thought in a case of mock thought and the appearance of thought in a case of genuine singular thought differ in their nature. The idea, as I put it, is that the first is a case of it appearing to one that one has a singular thought, and the second a case of it merely appearing to one that one has a singular thought. The former involves that a thought-content appears to one, whereas the latter does not. Due to the possibility of the latter deceptive appearances, McDowell's view cannot guard against a problematic conflict between what is known in a privileged way about one's thought and the externalist facts about one's thought. On the revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view, by contrast, the difference between the cognitive appearances in two sorts of case is a difference between two different thought-contents appearing to one. Neither appearance is deceptive. In the present context of discussion of Twin-Earth scenarios, this opens the following possibility. Observe that what would create a problem for Transparency is if it seems to an Earthling who is unknowingly transferred to Twin-Earth that he or she is thinking about water, although, as a matter of externalist fact, he or she is thinking about twater. But the claim that it seems to the Earthling that he or she is thinking about water is resisted on the revised view. As the McDowellian

---

[84] Alston (1971) describes mirror-image claims like these as different modes, or opposite structures, of privileged access. His notions of 'infallibility' and 'indubitability' structurally correspond to Transparency on this reading, and his notions of 'omniscience' and 'incorrigibility' correspond to PSK.

point above makes clear, the claim that a situation is cognitively indiscriminable from another does not imply that the cognitive appearances involved are the same. Instead we may hold, as the revised view involves, that different thought-contents appear on each planet, i.e. a content about water on Earth and a content about twater on Twin-Earth. While the internal components of the appearances are the same, the external components, which state an 'interpretational' fact about how things appear, differ (for my use of the notion of an 'interpretational' fact, see chapter one). This facilitates the following verdict about the Earthling who is transferred to Twin-Earth: Although the Earthling cannot discriminate his or her cognitive situation from a situation where *water* is thought about, it seems to the Earthling that he or she is thinking about *twater*.

If we understand Transparency as involving this conception of appearances of thought, i.e. the conception that they are not deceptive and that it is the corresponding thought that appears to one in them, we can avoid the sort of conflict between Transparency and an externalist view of content that PSK often has been considered to produce if combined with externalism. When the Earthling discovers, through chemical analysis, that there is twater before him or her, he or she does not come to know something that *contradicts* what he or she previously knew in a privileged way about the thoughts he or she has been entertaining since the transportation from Earth to Twin-Earth (or, since a time after the transportation, if slow-switching is prevalent[85]). Rather, he or she comes to know in a new way, i.e. an empirical way, the same fact about the nature of the cognitive appearances and the thoughts he or she has been having. Admittedly, the subject will not claim to have known all along that he or she was thinking about twater on Twin-Earth. Still, that is how things cognitively appeared to him or her. The reason as to why the subject will not claim to have known this, I think, is the subject's confusion, described in chapter two, with regard to how his or her own utterances should be interpreted in order to express the thought that he or she has in a mock thought scenario. Due to this confusion, how things cognitively appear is easily miscommunicated, and easily misinterpreted even by the subject.

As an end to this section, we may observe that also if we define externalism in Farkas's way, as described at the beginning of the chapter, Transparency avoids

---

[85] For discussion of slow-switching, see for instance Ludlow (1995).

conflict with the revised view. This, one might think, is not surprising, given that the revised view qualifies as an internalist view on Farkas's definition. In any case, it is worth taking note of how my explanation as to how Transparency avoids conflict with externalism, defined in the widespread way, turns out if we assume Farkas's definition. Interestingly, my explanation in many ways resembles Farkas's explanation as to how internalism, on her definition, avoids conflict with PSK. As noted at the outset of this chapter, Farkas defines externalism as the view that two mental contents can appear the same from the subject's point of view although they in fact differ, and she defines internalism as the denial of this possibility. Farkas explains that, since what is known in the privileged way 'extends only as far as things are subjectively distinguishable, that is, distinguishable from the subject's point of view' (Farkas 2003, p. 203), PSK conflicts with externalism. For PSK is a claim that mental content is best known by the subject, whereas externalism has the consequence that the facts about mental content that are not distinguishable from the subject's point of view may be better known by someone else. Internalism avoids this conflict, Farkas explains, because it involves that only what is distinguishable from the subject's point of view makes a difference to mental content. Now, my explanation differs from Farkas's explanation as to how internalism avoids conflict with PSK with regard to which facts are accessed from the subject's point of view. Following McDowell, I have suggested that how things appear from the subject's point of view includes other facts than those that are distinguishable by the subject. It includes, for instance, the 'interpretational' fact that a thought-content about twater, rather than a thought-content about water, appears to one. Thus, the range of facts that, according to the revised view, are accessed from the subject's point of view spans wider than range of the facts that Farkas envisages are thus accessed. Despite this difference, however, my explanation is analogous to Farkas's explanation of the compatibility of internalism and PSK. Analogously to her explanation, I have explained that a problematic conflict, namely the potential conflict between Transparency and the revised view, is avoided because the facts that matter to the individuation of mental content according to the revised view coincide with the facts accessed from the subject's point of view.

5.3   Conclusion

In conclusion, I think Transparency is not subject to two of the central problems with which other similar theses have been argued to be confronted. Firstly, it is unlikely that an analogous argument to Williamsons' argument against Luminosity can be presented for it, because it is unlikely that there is a feature of singular thought analogous to the reliability of knowledge. Secondly, given the McDowellian conception of the claim that it seems to one that one entertains a certain singular thought, Transparency is compatible with the revised version of Evans's and McDowell's view. There is no incompatibility, because the 'interpretational' or externalist fact that one has a thought about a certain object is reflected in the cognitive appearance, and thus there is no conflict between what one's mental content appears to be and what one's mental content in fact is. At least as far as the two potential problems here discussed are concerned, then, there is no obstacle to combining an externalist view of mental content, defined in the widespread sense, with acceptance of Transparency. One can avoid illusions of singular thought while still maintaining that singular thought-content is externalistically individuated in the sense that it existentially depends on an object in the mind-independent world.

Let me end with a summary of where my disagreement with Evans and McDowell lies. As noted in chapter two, I agree with Evans and McDowell on the point that the subject in a mock thought scenario can be interpreted as *expressing* a mock thought, which is to say that the subject is interpreted as expressing no thought at all. In particular, the subject himself or herself is likely to interpret his or her own utterance in this way, if the subject makes an utterance intended to express what is taken to be his or her thought in a mock thought scenario. But this interpretation is not a good guide to how things cognitively appear in a mock thought scenario, nor to how things cognitively are. Thus, I disagree with Evans's and McDowell's verdict that the subject has no thought in a mock thought scenario and suffers a cognitive illusion. As I explained in chapter three, the revised view I recommend is, by contrast to Evans's and McDowell's original view, a two-component view of content, which, in addition to Evans's and McDowell's notion of singular thought-content, recognises a notion of content as what is common between similar episodes of thought. It also includes the notion of a singular thought-episode. These two differences facilitate explaining what happens in a mock thought scenario as follows:

When the subject does what, in the internal component of the description of the thought-episode, is described as directing his or her mind towards something indistinguishable from, e.g. a perceived object, there arises an entity which in part depends on this mental activity for its existence, i.e. an entity of the type I called a 'conversational object'. Thus, the revised view acknowledges object-dependent thought-contents about a wider range of objects than Evans's and McDowell's original view. Correspondingly, as explained in chapter four, while the revised view remains an acquaintance view of singular thought, it acknowledges acquaintance with a wider range of objects than what both Evans's and McDowell's contrasting views of acquaintance make room for. Moreover, by contrast to both of their views of acquaintance, the revised view rejects the claim that perceptual content enables singular thought. Rather, the revised view asserts that awareness of an object, which is involved in perception but not unique to it, enables singular thought about that object.

References

Alston, W. 1971. 'Varieties of Privileged Access'. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8(3): pp. 223-241.

Azzouni, J. 2011. 'Singular Thoughts (Objects-Directed Thoughts)'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, *Supplementary* Volume 85: pp. 45-61.

Bach, K. 1987. *Thought and Reference*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bach, K. 2010. 'Getting a Thing into a Thought'. In Jeshion 2010a.

Bayne, T. and Montague, M. (eds.) 2011. *Cognitive Phenomenology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bell, D. 1988. 'Phenomenology, Solipsism and Egocentric Thought'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume*, 62: pp. 45-60.

Bell, D. 1990. 'How Russellian was Frege?'. *Mind* 99(394): pp. 267-277.

Blackburn, S. 1984. *Spreading the Word. Groundings in the Philosophy of Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Boghossian, P. A. 1998. 'What the Externalist Can Know A Priori'. *Philosophical Issues* 9: pp. 197-211.

Broughton, J. 2002. *Descartes's Method of Doubt*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Brown, J. 2000. 'Reliabilism, Knowledge, and Mental Content'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 100: pp. 115-135.

Burge, T. 1979. 'Individualism and the Mental'. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 4(1): pp. 73-121.

Burge, T. 1988. 'Individualism and Self-Knowledge'. *Journal of Philosophy* 85: pp. 649-63.

Burnyeat, M. F. 1982. 'Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes Saw and Berkeley Missed'. In G. Vesey (ed.) *Idealism – Past and Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Burnyeat, M. F. 1984. 'The sceptic in his time and place'. In R. Rorty, J. B. Schneewind and Q. Skinner (eds.) *Philosophy in History. Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Campbell, J. 2002. *Reference and Consciousness*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cappelen, H. 2008. 'The Creative Interpreter: Content Relativism and Assertion'. *Noûs* 42(1): pp. 23-46.

Carruthers, P. 1987. 'Russellian Thoughts'. *Mind* 96(381): pp. 18-35.

Chalmers, D. 2006. 'Perception and the Fall from Eden'. In T. S. Gendler and J. Hawthorne (eds.) *Perceptual Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Crane, T. 2011. 'The Singularity of Singular Thought'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volume 85: pp. 21-43.

Crane, T. 2013. *The Objects of Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Davidson, D. 1984. 'On Saying That'. In *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Diamond, C. 2000. 'Ethics, Imagination and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*'. In A. Crary and R. Read (eds.) *The New Wittgenstein*. London: Routledge.

Dickie, I. 2010. 'We are Acquainted with Ordinary Things'. In Jeshion 2010a.

Dennett, D. 1983. 'Beyond Belief'. In A. Woodfield (ed.) *Thought and Object*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Donnellan, K. 1966. 'Reference and Definite Descriptions'. *The Philosophical Review* 75(3): pp. 281-304.

Donnellan, K. 1970. 'Proper Names and Identifying Descriptions'. *Synthese* 21(3/4): pp. 335-358.

Donnellan, K. 1974. 'Speaking of Nothing'. *Philosophical Review* 83(1): pp. 3-31.

Donnellan, K. 1979. 'The Contingent A Priori and Rigid Designators'. In P. French, T. Uehling, and H. Wettstein (eds.) *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Descartes, R. 1996[1641]. *Meditations on First Philosophy. With Selections from the Objections and Replies*. J. Cottingham (ed., transl.). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Deutsch, M. and J. Lau. 2002. 'Externalism about Mental Content'. In E. N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosopshy* (2014 edition), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/content-externalism/>.

Evans, G. 1982. *The Varieties of Reference*. J. McDowell (ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Farkas, K. 2003. 'What is Externalism?'. *Philosophical Studies* 112(3): pp. 187-208.

Farkas, K. 2008. *The Subject's Point of View*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Frege, G. 1979. *Posthumous Writings*. H. Hermes, F. Kambartel and F. Kaulbach (eds.), P. Long and R. White (transl.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Frege, G. 1997. *The Frege Reader*. M. Beaney (ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.

García-Carpintero, M. 2010. 'Fictional Singular Imaginings'. In Jeshion 2010a.

Grice, 1961. 'The Causal Theory of Perception'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volume 35: pp. 121-152.

Goldman, A. 1976. 'Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge'. *Journal of Philosophy* 73: pp. 771-791.

Hawthorne, J. and Manley, D. 2012. *The Reference Book*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Heidegger, M. 1997 [1971]. 'The origin of the work of art'. Reprinted in D. E. Cooper (ed.) *Aesthetics: The Classic Readings*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Horgan, T. and Tienson, J.. 2002. 'The Intentionality of Phenomenology and the Phenomenology of Intentionality'. In D. Chalmers (ed.) *Philosophy of Mind: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ingarden, R. 1973 [1927]. *The Literary Work of Art: An Investigation on Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature with an Appendix on the Functions of Language in the Theatre*. G. Grabowicz (transl.). Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Jeshion, R. (ed.) 2010a. *New Essays on Singular Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Jeshion, R. 2010b. 'Singular Thought: Acquaintance, Semantic Instrumentalism, and Cognitivism'. In Jeshion 2010a.

Kaplan, D. 1978. 'Dthat'. *Syntax and Semantics* 9:pp. 221-243.

Kaplan, D. 1989. 'Demonstratives'. In J. Almog, J. Perry, H. Wettstein (eds.) *Themes from Kaplan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kripke, S. A. 1980. *Naming and Necessity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Lewis, D. 1979. 'Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*'. *Philosophical Review*, 88: pp. 513–543.

Ludlow, P. 1995. 'Externalism, Self-Knowledge, and the Prevalence of Slow Switching'. *Analysis* 55(1): pp. 45-49.

Macdonald, C., Smith, B. C., and C. Wright (eds.). 1998. *Knowing Our Own Minds*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Macdonald, C. 1998. 'Externalism and Authoritative Self-Knowledge'. In Macdonald, Smith and Wright 1998.

Martin, M. G. F. 2002. 'Particular Thoughts & Singular Thought'. In A. O'Hear (ed.) *Logic, Thought, and Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Martin, M. G. F. 2006. 'On Being Alienated'. In T. S. Gendler and J. Hawthorne (eds.) *Perceptual Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press.

McDowell, J. 1977. 'On the Sense and Reference of a Proper Name'. *Mind* 86(342): pp. 159-185).

McDowell, J. 1982. 'Truth-Value Gaps'. L. J. Cohen, J. Los, H. Feiffer, K.-P. Podewski (eds.) *Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science IV: Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science*. Warszawa: Polish Scientific Publishers.

McDowell, J. 1984. '*De Re* Senses'. *The Philosophical Quarterly* 34(136): pp. 283-294.

McDowell, J. 1986. 'Singular Thought and the Extent of Inner Space'. In P. Pettit and J. McDowell (eds.) *Subject, Thought, and Context*. New York: Oxford University Press.

McDowell, J. 1994. *Mind and World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

McGinn, C. 1982. 'The structure of content'. In A. Woodfield (ed.) *Thought and Object. Essays on Intentionality*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

McKinsey, M. 1991. 'Anti-individualism and privileged access'. *Analysis* 51: pp. 9-16.

Mele, A. 2009. 'Mental Action: A Case Study'. In L. O'Brien and M. Soteriou (eds.) *Mental Actions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Miller, R. W. 1997. 'Externalist Self-Knowledge and the Scope of the A Priori'. *Analysis* 57(1): pp. 67-75.

Moore, G. E. 1962. *The Commonplace Book 1919-1953*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Moore, C., Yantis, S., and Vaughan, B. 1998. 'Object-based visual selection: Evidence from perceptual completion'. *Psychological Science* 9: pp. 104-110.

Noonan, H. W. 1993. 'Object-Dependent Thoughts: A Case of Superficial Necessity but Deep Contingency?'. In J. Heil and A. Mele (eds.) *Mental Causation*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nuccetelli, S. 1999. 'What Anti-Individualists Cannot Know A Priori'. *Analysis* 59(1): pp. 48-51.

O'Brien, L. 2009. 'Mental Actions and the No-Content Problem'. In L. O'Brien and M. Soteriou (eds.) *Mental Actions*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Palmer, S. E. 1999. *Vision Science. Photons to Phenomenology*. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.

Parent, T. 2013. 'Externalism and Self-Knowledge'. In E. N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosopshy* (2014 edition), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/self-knowledge-externalism/>.

Peacocke, C. 2001. 'Does Perception have a Nonconceptual Content?' *The Journal of Philosophy* 98(5): pp. 239-264.

Peacocke, C. 1981. 'Demonstrative Thought and Psychological Explanation'. *Synthese* 49(2): pp. 187-217.

Pendlebury, M. 1988. 'Russellian Thoughts'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 48(4): pp. 669-682.

Perry, J. 1977. 'Frege on Demonstratives'. *Philosophical Review* 86(4): pp. 474-497.

Perry, J. 1979. 'The Problem of the Essential Indexical'. *Nous* 13: pp. 3-20.

Perry, J. 1980. 'A Problem about Continued Belief'. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 62(4): pp. 317-322.

Prior, A. N. 1971. *Objects of Thought*. P. T. Geach and A. J. P. Kenny (eds.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Putnam, H. 1975. 'The Meaning of "Meaning"'. In *Mind, Language and Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pylyshyn, Z. 2003. *Seeing and Visualizing*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Quine, V. W. O. 1956. 'Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes'. *Journal of Philosophy* 53: pp. 177-187.

Quine, V. W. O. 1960. *Word and Object*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Quine, W. V. O. 1966. 'Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes'. In *Ways of Paradox*. New York: Random House.

Recanati, F. 1993. *Direct Reference*: *From Language to Thought*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Recanati, F. 2010. 'Singular Thought: In Defence of Acquaintance'. In Jeshion 2010a.

Recanati, F. 2012. *Mental Files*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Russell, B. 2001 [1905]. 'On Denoting' In A. P. Martinich (ed.) *The Philosophy of Language*, fourth edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Russell, B. 1911. 'Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 11: pp. 108-128.

Russell, B. 1980 [1912]. *The Problems of Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Russell, B. 1984 [1913]. 'Theory of Knowledge'. In E. Ramsden Eames and K. Blackwell (eds.) *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell. Vol. 7. Theory of Knoweldge. The 1913 Manuscript*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Sainsbury, R. M. 2005 *Reference Without Referents*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sainsbury, R. M. 2010a. *Fiction and Fictionalism*. London: Routledge.

Sainsbury, R. M. 2010b. 'Intentionality Without Exotica'. In Jeshion 2010a.

Sainsbury, R. M. and M. Tye. 2012. *Seven Puzzles of Thought and How to Solve Them: An Originalist Theory of Concepts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Salmon, N. 1986. *Frege's Puzzle*. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press/Bradford Books.

Salmon, N. 1987. 'How to Measure the Standard Meter'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 88: 193-217.

Salmon, N. 2004. 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly'. In M. Reimer and A. Bezuidenhout (eds.) *Descriptions and Beyond*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Salmon, N. 2010. 'Three Perspectives on *Quantifying In*'. In Jeshion 2010a.

Schellenberg, S. 2010. 'The Particularity and Phenomenology of Perceptual Experience'. *Philosophical Studies* 149: pp. 19-48.

Searle, J. R. 1983. *Intentionality. An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Schiffer, S. 1978. 'The Basis of Reference'. *Erkenntnis* 13(1): pp. 171-206.

Segal, G. 1989. 'Return of the Individual'. *Mind* 89(389): pp. 39-57.

Siegel, S. 2010. *The Contents of Visual Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Siewert, C. P. 1998. *The Significance of Consciousness*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Soteriou, M. 2000. 'The Particularity of Experience'. *European Journal of Philosophy* 8(2): pp. 173-189.

Stalnaker, R. 1978. 'Assertion'. *Syntax and Semantics* 9: pp. 315–332.

Strawson, G. 2003. 'Mental Ballistics or the Involuntariness of Spontaneity'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 103: pp. 227-256.

Stroud, B. 1984. *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sullivan, A. 2010. 'Millian Externalism'. In Jeshion 2010a.

Taylor, K. A. 2010. 'On Singularity'. In Jeshion 2010a.

Textor, M. 2010. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Frege on Sense and Reference*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Thomasson, A. L. 1999. *Fiction and Metaphysics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Van Invagen, P. 1977. 'Creatures of Fiction'. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 14(4): pp. 299-308.

Voltolini, A. 2006. *How Ficta Follow Fiction*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Walton, K. 1990. *Mimesis as Make-Believe. On the Foundations of the Representational Arts.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Williams, B. A. O. 1973. 'Deciding to Believe'. In *Problems of the Self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Williamson, T. 1995. 'Is Knowing a State of Mind?'. *Mind* 104(415): pp. 533-565.

Williamson, T. 2000. *Knowledge and Its Limits*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Williamson, T. 2007. *The Philosophy of Philosophy*. Malden, MA.: Blackwell.

Wright, C. 2002. '(Anti-)Sceptics Simple and Subtle: G. E. Moore and John McDowell'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 65(2): pp. 330-348.