

# Remembering, Imagining, and De Se, Revisited

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# Introduction

## Imagining the Unconceived

*Phil. How say you, Hylas, can you see a thing which is at the same time unseen?*

*Hyl. No, that were a contradiction.*

*Phil. Is it not as great a contradiction to talk of conceiving a thing which is unconceived?*

*Hyl. It is.*

*Phil. The tree or house therefore which you think of is conceived by you?*

*Hyl. How should it be otherwise?*

*Phil. And what is conceived is surely in the mind?*

*Hyl. Without question, that which is conceived is in the mind.*

## Imagining the Unconceived

*Phil. How then came you to say, you conceived a house or tree existing independent and out of all minds whatsoever?  
Hyl. That was I own an oversight; but stay, let me consider what led me into it. It is a pleasant mistake enough. As I was thinking of a tree in a solitary place, where no one was present to see it, methought that was to conceive a tree as existing unperceived or unthought of; not considering that I myself conceived it all the while. But now I plainly see that all I can do is to frame ideas in my own mind.  
(1st Dialogue Between Hylas and Philonous)*

# Berkeley's Question

- ▶ Can we imagine something unconceived of, unseen?
  - ▶ B: No, because in imagining it, one's own imagined perspective intrudes
- ▶ A natural reply (Williams, 1973): we are confusing two selves
  - ▶ **self as constituent**: existent (bodily) counterpart immanent in the scene
  - ▶ **self as evaluative circumstance**: the self exists only to undergird the imaginative scene setting (cf. theatrical spectator)
- ▶ (This issue persists....Walton 1990; Peacocke 1985; Campbell 1999)

# A Salient Issue

- ▶ What sorts of selves/perspectives are encoded in the representations of attitudes?
  - ▶ Who knows, really? Not me.

# More Modestly

- ▶ What sorts of selves/perspectives are encoded in the representations of (linguistic) attitude ascriptions?
  - ▶ *de se* with PRO [obligatorily controlled in attitude complement]
- (1) John<sub>i</sub> claimed PRO<sub>i</sub> to be rich.
- (2) John ordered Bill<sub>i</sub> PRO<sub>i</sub> to leave.

# Going more fine-grained

- ▶ Lots of Self Types out there
  - ▶ self as constituent (Recanati, 2007)
  - ▶ self as circumstance (Recanati, 2007)
  - ▶ experiential: from an embodied perspective (Vendler, 1982; Walton, 1990)
  - ▶ thematic: self as thematic role (Higginbotham, 2003, 2012)
  - ▶ arbitrary: self as arbitrary individual (Higginbotham, 2012)
  - ▶ Cartesian: self as Cartesian ego (Williams, 1973)
  - ▶ doxastic: self as believer (Stephenson, 2007)
- ▶ Which are grammatically active?
  - ▶ My hope: No special notion of *de se* beyond “that’s me”



## Two Asymmetries

- ▶ **Awareness At Memory Encoding Time** (Higginbotham, 2003)

(3) John remembers {himself, PRO} delivering a speech to the salesman.

- ▶ **Inside vs. Outside** (Vendler, 1982)

(4) Just imagine {yourself, PRO} swimming in that water.

- ▶ I claim these follow from either:

- ▶ what it means to be *de se* wrt a particular attitude
- ▶ general pragmatic inferences

# Kinds of Selves

# Immunity to Error through Misidentification

- ▶ Wittgenstein on nociception:

*The cases of the first category involve the recognition of a particular person, and there is in these cases the possibility of an error, or as I should rather put it: The possibility of an error has been provided for. It is possible that, say in an accident, I should feel a pain in my arm, see a broken arm at my side, and think it is mine, when really it is my neighbour's. ... On the other hand, there is no question of recognizing a person when I say I have toothache. To ask "are you sure that it's you who have pains?" would be nonsensical ... as it is to moan with pain by mistake, having mistaken someone else for me. (Blue & Brown Books, pp. 66-7)*

- ▶ Lesson: nociception and expressives are *Immune to Error through Misidentification*

# Immunity to Error through Misidentification

- ▶ Immunity to Error through \_\_\_\_ : When  $A$  is in cognitive state  $S$  and the state is *in error*, the source of the error cannot be \_\_\_\_.
- ▶ Immunity to Error through Misidentification (IEM):  $A$ 's errors cannot be due to thoughts about the identity of a participant in  $S$ . (Shoemaker, 1963)

## (5) Susceptibility to Error Through MisID

That person is smiling.

Eric is that person.

---

Eric is smiling.

- ▶ IEM:  $S$  cannot be the result of substitution under contingent doxastic identity.

# Identification Free $S$

- ▶ If there is no identification in the representation of  $S$ , it is IEM (trivially).
  - ▶ sensory experiences
  - ▶ proprioception
  - ▶ nociception
  - ▶ interoception
- ▶ **implicit self**: “subject serves as a **circumstance for evaluation for content**, rather than being a constituent of it.” (Recanati, 2007)

# Reflected *S*

- ▶ These have no *I* perforce. Whence ‘I am in pain’?
  - ▶ **explicit self**: subject as constituent of thought. (Recanati, 2007)
  - ▶ **reflection**: conscious ability to make explicit what is implicit
- (6) implicit: pain perceptual representation
- (7) explicit:  $\lambda c \lambda i . hurt'(SPKR(c))(i)$

# Reflected $S$

- ▶ Is reflection IEM?
- ▶ Not so fast. What does  $hurt'(x)$  mean?
  - ▶  $x$  feels pain
  - ▶  $x$  has been *bodily affected*
- ▶ Wittgenstein: only psychological states will be IEM

psychological state  
physical state

# Reflected $S$

- ▶ Is reflection IEM?
  - ▶ Evans, Recanati: yes
  - ▶ Shoemaker: only w/ psychological states
  - ▶ Peacocke, Pryor, Coliva: sort of
  - ▶ Wittgenstein: invalid question



# Shoemaker vs. Evans

- ▶ Shoemaker: reflection in general is only contingently IEM
  - ▶ **Quasi-memory**: Memory state  $M$  that is the result of perceptual transplant.
  - ▶ Similarly, quasi-perception and quasi-proprioception
- ▶ Evans: Different inferential patterns
  - ▶ truly susceptible: id statement bridges  $x$  to self.
  - ▶ quasi-states: id statement bridges self-ascriptions 'I might  $P$ ' and 'I  $P$ '.

## Coliva's middle path

- ▶ Coliva (2006): two types of IEM, depending on where the id statement lives inferentially
  - ▶ **rational ground** : part of A's justification for the inference
  - ▶ **unconscious assumption** : A would withdraw inference if assumption were invalidated
- ▶ Whether or not a state is (rational ground) IEM thus depends on whether the certainty of the identificational component is taken for granted.

## Psychological states

- ▶ Shoemaker: All truly psychological states are *necessarily* IEM (because they are entirely in the head).

(8) hunger percept

(9) I feel hungry.

psychological state

(10) I am hungry (in need of nourishment).

physical state

*“The only reason we can give in favor of this claim is that being introspectively aware of a given thought amounts to being aware of the fact that one oneself is thinking that thought.” (Coliva, 2012)*

- ▶ Campbell (2002) argues that schizophrenic ‘thought insertion’ argues against this.

# Summary

- ▶ Four kinds of “*de se*” thoughts:

	explicit?	aware?	IEM
sensory/perceptual reps.	N	N	necessarily
reflections of <i>se/pe</i> reps.	Y	Y	Y
reflections of bodily states	Y	Y	contingent
inferential <i>de se</i>	Y	Y	N

## Getting back to language...

- ▶ Recanati (2007): PRO is linked reflection (hence IEM)
- (11) I awaken after a car crash, see a broken arm. I want this person to go to the hospital. I later determine that I am that person.
- (12) I wanted {myself, PRO} to go to the hospital.
- ▶ This is not the greatest evidentiary basis...

## Testing with doxastics

- ▶ We want to test with cases where substitution is a valid operation
- (13) *Ron Paul reads a report that the more honest politician won the election. Paul believes he is the more honest politician. Paul expects to have won the election.*
- ▶ Assume with the speech report *claim*, assuming that Paul's speech acts are taken to be simultaneous commitments in a discourse.
- (14) *Ron Paul says in separate utterances “The more honest politician won.” and “I am more honest than my opponent.” Paul claims to have won the election.*

## Testing with doxastics

- ▶ Italian *credere* allows subject control

(15) Ron credeva di essere stato eletto Presidente  
Ron believe-PERF C be been elected president  
'Ron believed that he<sub>dese</sub> was elected President.'

(16) *John wakes up after a car crash, cannot feel his arm, looks over and sees an arm bent unnaturally. He comes to the conclusion "My arm is broken."*

Gianni credeva di avere uno braccio rotto  
John believe-PERF C have one.Msg arm.Msg broken.Msg  
'John believed that he<sub>dese</sub> had a broken arm.'

# PRO and IEM

- ▶ Not a necessary connection.
- ▶ Methodologically, we should be very careful about our generalizations from subject control in English.



## Our list again

- ▶ We have now encountered the first three of these:
  - ▶ self as constituent (Recanati, 2007)
  - ▶ self as circumstance (Recanati, 2007)
  - ▶ experiential: from an embodied perspective (Vendler, 1982; Walton, 1990)
  - ▶ thematic: self as thematic role (Higginbotham, 2003, 2012)
  - ▶ arbitrary: self as arbitrary individual (Higginbotham, 2012)
  - ▶ Cartesian: self as Cartesian ego (Williams, 1973)
  - ▶ doxastic: self as believer (Stephenson, 2007)
- ▶ The next two will figure in remembering, the remainder in imagining.

# Remembering

## The Puzzle, once more

- ▶ PRO in (17) incompatible with an inferential self-identification scenario (e.g., a recording, testimony of another party) coupled with the memory of someone delivering the speech.  
(Higginbotham, 2003)

(17) John remembers {himself, PRO} delivering a speech to the salesman.

- ▶ Not due to veridicality (substitute *has a false memory of*)
- ▶ A reasonable intuition: memory involves experiential *de se* .

# Higginbotham's proposal

- ▶ Two kinds of *de se*
  - ▶ inferential *de se*
  - ▶ thematic *de se* : thoughts/actions constituted by an explicit reflexive component, based on thematic information about the attitude itself (captures IEM)
  - ▶ thematic *de se* is the province of PRO

(18)  $expect'(j, e, \lambda w \lambda e. win'(s(e), w))$

- ▶ Memory involves simultaneous reference to both the memory event (e) and content event (e')

(19)  $remember(I, e, \lambda w \lambda e' deliver'(s(e) \wedge s(e'), e'))$

- ▶ This LF cannot be generated from via inferential *de se* .
- ▶ We can thus distinguish experiential and inferential *de se* at LF.

# Comments

- ▶ PRO is not banned from inferential *de se*
- ▶ The idea that memory involves experiential *de se* seems completely reasonable
- ▶ Suggestion: it is the attitudes that make these dictates
  - ▶ Doxastics permit inferential *de se*
  - ▶ Mnemonics don't
  - ▶ Bouletics don't

(20) {I want the winner to donate \$100.; I am the winner}  $\not\equiv$  I want to donate \$100.

## Why no Inferential Bouletic *de se* ?

- ▶ Propositions in the bouletic base are not necessarily consistent, and ordered by preference (Farkas, 1985; Stalnaker, 1984; Heim, 1992; Villalta, 2000)
- ▶ There is no “bouletic set” of deduced desires – bouletics do not admit the formation of new wants under substitution
- ▶ Identification with a *de re* want does not yield a *de se* want.
- ▶ For overt pronouns, the desire involves *de re* interpretation of the pronoun
- ▶ Doxastics do admit formation of new beliefs in virtue of identificational statements, hence the difference

## Why no Inferential Mnemonic *de se* ?

- ▶ Same as bouletics: one cannot construct new memories in virtue of old memories and additional facts.
    - ▶ potential counterexamples: involve material read *de re*
    - ▶ PRO cannot be read *de re*
- (21) I remember visiting San Francisco [*qua* city with trolley cars] and not knowing where I was.

## Inferential Mnemonics??

- ▶ Maybe we are too hasty...
- (22) John remembered winning. (H. Cappelen & J. Dever, p.c.)
  - (23) John remembered making a mess.
  - (24) David remembered being on fire.
- 
- ▶ If we assume these are all *de re* ascriptions of the VP, why can't we do the same for the original example?
- (25) John remembers delivering a speech to the salesman.



# The Curse of Psychological Predicates

- ▶ All of the counterexamples are still from the inside
  - ▶ you are still remembering the events in the way you should if they happened to you
- (26) John remembered what it was like to {win, make that mess, be on fire}.
  - ▶ the key difference: what it is like to be in a reflected psychological state is to be aware of that state
  - ▶ no such requirement for narrow perceptual states and non-psychological predications

# The Curse of Psychological Predicates

- (27) John remembered
- a. telling Mary to leave.
  - b. thinking that it was raining.
  - c. thinking dark thoughts.
  - d. feeling trusted.
  - e. saying oops. (Eric McCready, p.c.)
  - f. being cold.

# Upshot

- ▶ We have a relatively naive theory of memory that explains the puzzle
- ▶ This naive theory seems false
- ▶ Suggestion: the mnemonic attitudes constrain *de re* acquaintance to be via experiential *de se*

(28) John remembers making a mess.

- a. John remembers  $P(\text{PRO})$ , where
- b.  $P$  must be experiential
- c.  $P$  is a making a mess experience

# Imagining

## Inside and Out

*We are looking down upon the ocean from a cliff. The water is rough and cold, yet there are some swimmers riding the waves. “Just imagine swimming in that water” says my friend, and I know what to do. ‘Brr!’ I say as I imagine the cold, the salty taste, the tug of the current, and so forth. Had he said “Just imagine yourself swimming in that water” I could comply in another way to: by picturing myself being tossed about, a scrawny body bobbing up and down in the foamy waste.” (Vendler, 1982, p. 161)*

# Inside and Out

- ▶ inside: experiential *de se*

*[It is] a form of self-imagining characteristically described as imagining doing or experiencing something (or being a certain way), as opposed to imagining merely that one does or experiences something or possesses a certain property (Walton, 1990).*

- ▶ outside: not necessarily non-experiential, but not tied to the awareness of the event participant
- ▶ Vendler's observation: these correlate with grammatical form

(29) Just imagine swimming in that water. experiential only

(30) Just imagine yourself swimming in that water. experiential or  
imagistic

# Cartesian and Arbitrary self

- ▶ **Cartesian self** (Williams, 1973): a pure ego, “no body, past, or character”

(31) Imagine being Napoleon.

- ▶ **arbitrary self** (James Higginbotham, p.c.): identification with an arbitrary individual

(32) I imagined being afraid of myself.

# Some foundational questions

- ▶ What is the role of perspective in imagination?
- ▶ What faculties are recruitable for imagination?
- ▶ Is the attitude of imagination constrained?
  - ▶ Are there impossible imaginations?
  - ▶ Are there incorrect imaginations?
- ▶ What is the content of imaginative attitudes?



## Faculties recruited

- ▶ not only imagistic

(33) John imagined {petting the cat, feeling hungry}.

- ▶ not only experientially grounded

(34) Imagine giving up all you have for love. (White, 1990)

(35) Imagine being descended from an infamous outlaw (Walton, 1990).

## Not necessarily experiential

*Imagining de se is not always imagining from the inside....When Gregory imagines playing in a major league baseball game and hitting a home run, he may imagine this from the inside, imagine feeling in his hands the shock of the bat connecting with the ball, and so on. But suppose he imagines hitting the home run from the perspective of a spectator in the stands. He visualizes the scene from that point of view, and his imagination of the field includes Gregory as he slams the ball over the center field fence and rounds the bases. (Walton, 1990, p. 31)*

## Death and ghosts

- ▶ Death and unconsciousness do not block these forms
- (36) Mary imagined being buried, unconscious, under a pile of snow inches away from the rescue team.
- (37) John imagined being mourned only by his poodles after a violent death.
- (38) Ronald imagined receiving an elaborate posthumous centenary celebration.
- (39) George imagined never having existed.
- (40) Imagine being considered one of the most important theorists after you die.
  
- ▶ Suggestive that even under imagination PRO is not linked to experiential *de se*

## ...but there are preferences

- ▶ There are lexical preferences for **self-action** predicates (Rooryck and Wyngaerd., 1998) and psychological predicates
- (41) Imagine {dressing for the party, frowning, waking up, being cold, thinking that it would rain}.
- (42) Imagine {entering the party, crying, falling asleep, being tall, indicating that it would rain}.
- ▶ There are thematic preferences for agents and experiencers
- (43) Imagine {being dressed for the party, seeming confused, looking jealous, being awoken, annoying your mother}.
- ▶ There are syntactic preferences (i.e., PRO's preference for experiential readings)

# Syntactic preferences

- ▶ The overt pronominal alternative is structurally ambiguous

(44) John saw Bill running down the hill and Mary saw {him, it} too.

(45) John imagined Bill running down the hill and Mary imagined {him, it} too.

(46) a. [<sub>DP</sub> -ing [<sub>TP</sub> Bill run down the hill]]                      ACCing gerund  
b. [<sub>DP</sub> Bill [<sub>CP</sub> PRO running down the hill]]                      adjunct modifier

## Syntactic preferences

- ▶ Rejected parses linger in working memory (Christianson et al., 2001)
- (47)
- While Anna dressed the baby that was small and cute spit up on the bed.
  - While Anna dressed, the baby that was small and cute spit up on the bed.
  - Did Anna dress the baby? 57% Y w/o comma, 11% with
- ▶ The overt proform gives rise to three potential parses, two of which are arguably non-experiential.

# Lexical and thematic preferences

- ▶ Similar to mnemonics: psychological predicates are preferentially inside (even perceptual reports)
- ▶ Self-action: actions canonically construed from the agent's perspective
- ▶ Agency: we seek to identify with the agentive perspective
- ▶ **A defeasible interpretive principle:** We attempt to maximize identification in *de se*, barring impossibility

# Cartesian and Arbitrary self

- ▶ Cartesian self (Williams, 1973): a pure ego, “no body, past, or character”

(48) Imagine being Napoleon.

- ▶ arbitrary self (James Higginbotham, p.c.): identification with an arbitrary individual

(49) I imagined being afraid of myself.



# The content of imagination

- ▶ Imagination is a form of counterfactual belief revision
- ▶ Its content is therefore a novel doxastic state
- ▶ Imagination attribution picks out one counterfactual novel belief from the set that is actually updated

(50) John imagined that it was raining.

$DOX_{j,i^*} * C$

$\lambda i.rain'(i) \in C$

content

condition on C

# Imaginative Projects

- ▶ Two imaginers imagine killing the Prime Minister:
  - ▶ One deliberately imagines the P.M. is Lord Salisbury
  - ▶ Other mistakenly believes Salisbury is the P.M.
- ▶ Williams (1973): Experiential/perceptual contents are identical, but have distinct **imaginative projects**
- ▶ Imagination is highly contextual
  - ▶ Without knowing the imaginative project, we cannot truly understand the content of imagination

# The Thinnest Selves

(51) Imagine being Napoleon.

(52) I imagined being afraid of myself.

▶ These are just end-points on a cline of counterfactual stabilities

(53) a. Imagine being the U.S. president surveying the Gulf oil spill. What would you do?

b. Imagine being Obama, surveying the Gulf oil spill. Your slowness to react would come from your desire to assimilate all the facts, no?

c. Imagine being Obama, surveying the Gulf oil spill. I think that you'd react a bit more quickly than he did, no?

# Some foundational questions

- ▶ What is the role of perspective in imagination?  
**part of the attitude, but not grammatically encoded**
- ▶ What faculties are recruitable for imagination? **all(?)**
- ▶ Is the attitude of imagination constrained?
  - ▶ Are there impossible imaginations? **metaphysically no**
  - ▶ Are there incorrect imaginations? **contextually yes**
- ▶ What is the content of imaginative attitudes?  
**the result of counterfactual update**

# Summing Up

# Some negative conclusions

- ▶ PRO itself is not the signature of
  - ▶ experiential *de se*
  - ▶ IEM
  - ▶ thin particulars of the self
- ▶ attitudes may supplement *de se* with their own requirements (memory does so)
  - ▶ problem: general tendency to experiential *de se* , subject to complex variations
  - ▶ consequence: be very careful when making definitive claims

# Open areas

- ▶ The source of our preference for experiential *de se*
- ▶ An adequate theory of *de re* for the “inferential” *de se* memories

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