WHAT IS PRESENT TO THE MIND?

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There is a sense in which anything we think about is, while we are thinking about it, before the mind. But there is another sense, well known to philosophers, in which only some of the things we can think about are said to be before the mind. These are things supposed to be so directly before the mind that it is impossible to misidentify them; in this they differ from ordinary physical objects. We cannot think that they exist when they do not; and if we think they exist, they do. It is things of this second sort I want to discuss.

It is things of this second sort, for example, that are the objects, so called, of desires, beliefs, intentions, worries and hopes; they are the propositions to which we have the various attitudes, the thoughts (as Frege named them) which our sentences express. We must also include, of course, the constituents of propositions, such things as properties, relations, functions, and so forth.

Many of the objects I have mentioned have a special relation to the mind; it is only through the mind that we can know them. Since they are abstract, they cannot be accessed by the senses. They have no causal powers, and so cannot act on, or be acted on by, our minds, our brains, or us.

This raises the question what sort of relations we or our minds are thought to have to these objects when we say they are before the mind. We have many words to express our relations to propositions: we grasp them when we understand a sentence, we entertain them, reject them, wish they were true, hope they aren’t, intend to make them true, or are certain they aren’t. But what sort of relations are these? They sound like psychological relations, as if there were some sort of mental transaction between us and these entities. But what kind of business can be transacted with an abstract object?
The propositional objects of the mind, and their constituents, are supposed, then, to have these two properties: they identify, or help identify, a thought by giving its content; and they constitute an essential aspect of the psychology of the thought by being grasped or otherwise known by the person with the thought. The problem is to understand this psychological relation. Here is the main difficulty. I take for granted that for the most part we do know what we think (and want and intend, etc.), even though there are departures from total self-knowledge. But if a thought is constituted the thought it is by the mind's knowledge of the identifying object, then someone knows what thought she is thinking only if she knows which object is in her mind. Yet there seems to be no clear meaning to the idea of knowing which object one has in mind. The trouble is that ignorance of even one property of an object can, under appropriate circumstances, count as not knowing which object it is. This is the reason philosophers who have wanted to found knowledge on infallible identification of objects have sought objects that, like Hume's impressions and ideas, "Are what they seem and seem what they are" — that is, have all and only the properties we think they have. Alas, there are no such objects. Every object has an infinity of logical independent properties, even those objects, like numbers, all of whose "essential" properties we specify.¹

Recent discussion of de re belief brings out the point. If we agree with Russell that a person cannot form a judgment about an object

1. Michael Dummett describes this feature of Fregean "senses": "...A sense cannot have any features not descernable by reflection on or deduction from what is involved in expressing or in grasping it. Only that belongs to the sense of an expression which is relevant to the determination of the truth value of the sentence in which it occurs; if we fail to grasp some features of its contribution to the truth-conditions of certain sentences, then we fail fully to grasp its sense, while, on the other hand, any aspect of its meaning that does not bear on the truth-conditions of the sentences containing it is no part of its sense. It cannot be, therefore, that the sense has all sorts of other features not detectable by us...A thought is transparent in the sense that, if you grasp it, you thereby know everything to be known about it as it is in itself". The Interpretation of Frege's Philosophy, Duckworth, 1981, p. 50. Dummett limits the features of senses we cannot fail to detect to their "internal properties", but it is not clear on what principle such properties are to be told from others.
unless he knows which object it is, or (to put it another way that Russell favored) it is an object with which the person is acquainted, and that this demands, in the case of propositions, that this special relation hold between the judge and each part of the proposition judged, then there is a special problem about attitudes like the following: There is a recipe for making corn bread that Joan believes is easy. The truth of this attribution not only demands that there be a recipe for making corn bread, but it also seems to require that Joan know which recipe it is — or be somehow acquainted with it. When Quine first emphasized the distinction between de re and de dicto belief sentences in modern terms, he was inclined to see de re reference as an island of clarity in the opaque sea of intensionality. Subsequent developments led to a change of mind. In “Intensions Revisited” he wrote, “The notion of knowing or believing who or what someone or something is, is utterly dependent on context.” What led to the change of mind was the difficulty in explaining the relation between a person and an object that would justify the claim that the person knew which object it was. A number of attempts had been made to clarify the relation: Føllesdal declared only “genuine” names could enter into it; Kripke spoke of “rigid designators”; David Kaplan called the elect names “vivid”. Gareth Evans studied the problem in depth; he thought, with others, that the only psychological relation that could count as providing the requisite sort of “fundamental identification” of an object was demonstrative identification. In such a case alone one could say that the object was part of the proposition entertained. Following Russell, Evans concluded that when a person thinks he is entertaining a singular thought, but is using a non-referring name, there is no proposition for him to contemplate, and therefore no thought that he has. If he uses a sentence containing a non-referring name, he

expresses no thought. If, like me, you have trouble feeling confidence in the criteria for genuine cases of "fundamental identification", you will appreciate why Russell limited such cases to situations in which the mind is directly acquainted with its objects, something he thought was possible only with sense data (and perhaps with oneself).

What lies behind these attempts to characterize the special relation between the mind and its objects is, I think, the Cartesian drive to identify a sort of knowledge which is guaranteed against failure. If this search is combined with the assumption that all knowledge consists in the mind being in psychological contact with an object, then objects must be found about which error is impossible — objects that must be what they seem.

There simply are no such objects. Not even appearances are everything we think they are. Nor can the "aspects" of sense data, if they really are objects, be protected from one or another sort of misidentification. The reason Quine is right in thinking we cannot pick out "the" relation that constitutes knowing which object some object is is simply that any property of an object may, under suitable conditions, be considered the relevant identifier.

I have dwelt briefly on the problem as it has been studied in relation to proper names because it is there that philosophers seem to have come closest to appreciating the nature of the difficulty. But if my diagnosis is correct, the problem really has nothing special to do with proper names; it is a perfectly general problem about the objects of the mind. If the mind can think only by getting into the right relation to some object which it can for certain distinguish from all others, then thought is impossible. If a mind can know what it thinks only by flawlessly identifying the objects before it, then we must very often not know what we think.

Why, if they make so much trouble, do we suppose there are propositional objects of thought? Well, for one thing we certainly talk as if thoughts were entities; we think deep thoughts, share thoughts, discard and embrace beliefs, entertain, consider, reflect on, contemplate ideas and propositions — one could go on for a long time. These are the sort of remarks we have been taught, with reason, to view with ontological suspicion. But it is much harder to
take lightly the problem we get into when we attempt to give a systematic account of what certain sentences mean — the ones we use to attribute thoughts to thinkers. For it is difficult to see how ordinary sentences like “Paul believes that the Koh-i-noor diamond is one of the crown jewels”, can be analyzed except as relating Paul to some entity picked out by the phrase “that the Koh-i-noor diamond is one of the crown jewels”, or perhaps by the sentence “the Koh-i-noor diamond is one of the crown jewels”. Plenty of attempts have been made to avoid taking “believes” as a relational term, that is, as relating two objects, a believer and something else, but none of these attempts is, as far as I know, successful.

One proposal is to treat the rest of the sentence after “believes” as a complex adverb. The reading might be something like: “Paul believes in a that-the-Koh-i-noor-diamond-is-one-of-the-crown-jewels fashion”. But this is an unsatisfactory suggestion, since no one has any idea how to derive the meaning of such an adverbial modifier from the meanings of the constituent words. Yet it is intuitively obvious that we understand the sentences that follow the “that” in belief sentences because we understand the constituent words. If the meanings of such contained sentences (which give the “contents” of propositional attitudes) are not constructed from the meanings of their parts, they must have to be learned independently — as if they were new, often very long, words. It seems clear that this is a wrong idea, and probably an impossible one, since any declarative sentence can feature as a content-sentence, and there is an unlimited, and so unlearnable, totality of these.

Other suggestions among similar lines have been made fairly often, but no one has ever shown how to implement such suggestions by incorporating them in a developed semantic theory. The governing principle seems clear: apart from sentences, whenever

5. For a discussion of a number of attempts to eliminate the ontological commitment to “objects of thought” in the analysis of belief sentences, and other sentences that attribute propositional attitudes, see my “On Saying That” in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, Oxford University Press 1985.
we recognize a grammatical category to which we must assign an infinity of expressions, ontology is required. There must be an infinity of objects that can be referred to either indexically or by means of descriptions; these are the two devices available for allowing a finite vocabulary cope with any of a potential infinity of objects. Objects allow us to manage adjectives; events do the same for at least some adverbs. Numbers do the job when we want to measure.

There is, then, no alternative to taking belief sentences as relational, and therefore no alternative to taking the content sentence ("The Koh-i-noor diamond is one of the crown jewels") plus, perhaps, the word "that" when it is present, as a singular term which, by referring to an appropriate entity, specifies the relevant belief.\(^6\)

Apparently we have a dilemma. On the one hand there is the fact that to have a belief or other propositional attitude is to be related to an object of some sort; on the other hand there is the fact that there seems to be no satisfactory account of the psychological relation a person must be in to the appropriate object in order to have the attitude. The difficulty in giving such an account hinges on the idea that since a person generally knows what he thinks, he must be directly acquainted with, or be able in some special way to identify or individuate, the object or objects that define (give the contents of) his thought.

If we rid ourselves of preconceptions, I think it is easy to see where we have gone wrong. It does not follow, from the facts that a thinker knows what he thinks and that what he thinks can be fixed by relating him to a certain object, that the thinker is acquainted with, or indeed knows anything at all about the object. It does not even follow that the thinker knows about any object at all. Someone who attributes a thought to another must, I have argued, relate that

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6. Stephen Schiffer quite rightly emphasizes that the possibility of "compositional semantics" (the idea that the meanings of complex expressions must be seen as a function of the meanings of the expressions of which they are composed) depends crucially on the relational analysis of sentences that are used to attribute attitudes. He despairs of finding a satisfactory analysis for reasons I do not share, and so abandons hope for a compositional semantics. Stephen Schiffer, *Remnants of Meaning*, MIT Press 1987.
other to some object, and so the attributer must, of course, identify an appropriate object, either by pointing to it or by describing it. But there is no reason why the attributer must stand in any special relation to the identifying object; all he has to do is refer to it in the way he refers to anything else.

We specify the subjective state of the thinker by relating him to an object, but there is no reason to say that this object itself has a subjective status, that it is "known" by the thinker, or is "before the mind" of the thinker. This consequence was already implicit in some analyses of sentences about propositional attitudes, for example the suggestion once entertained by Carnap, and discussed by Quine, that belief sentences be taken to relate a believer to a sentence of the attributer. Thus Quine, who holds that a cat can have a belief, points out that there is no reason to suppose a cat is acquainted with the sentence "Food's on" just because it can correctly be said that the cat believes that food's on. For those who doubt that cats have propositional attitudes, the same point can be made by remarking that we may identify a belief of Sebastian's by saying he believes that Naples is north of San Francisco, though he doesn't know a word of English. My point here isn't that belief sentences relate believers to sentences, but that this familiar proposal assumes that the objects used to identify a belief may not be within the ken of the believer. Once we grant this possibility, we are free to divorce the semantic need for content-specifying objects from the idea that there must be any objects at all with which someone who has an attitude is in psychic touch.

Here is an analogy: consider weight. Some things weigh more than others; some things weigh nothing; occasionally two things weigh the same. One thing may weigh twice what another does. These relations among objects are what we wish to report when we assign weights to them. Introducing a standard does not alter the situation. Thus a monetary pound in the time of William the First weighed the same as 12 ounces; it took 20 pennies to weigh an ounce; and a penny weighed the same as 12 grains of wheat taken from the middle of the ear. Thus a pound weighed the same as 7680 grains of wheat. All that we wish to say about how much things weigh can be put in terms of these comparisons: for example, the
Koh-i-noor diamond in its present condition weighs about the same as 15 1/3 pennies, or 490 grains of wheat.

All these comparisons can be tedious, and in any case we make the relevant comparisons perspicuously by using numbers. So the convenient thing is to settle on a way of representing the relations among objects with respect to weight by using numbers directly. Thus we say the Koh-i-noor diamond weighs 109 carats or 345 grams. But talk of this sort does not require us to include carats or grams in our ontology. The only objects we need are the numbers and the things that have weight. To say the weight in carats of the Koh-i-noor diamond is 109 does not commit us to weights as objects: it is just to assign the number 109 to the diamond as a way of relating it to other objects on the carat scale.

Seen this way, talk of how much things weigh is relational: it relates objects to numbers, and so to one another. But no one supposes the numbers are in any sense intrinsic to the objects that have weight, or are somehow "part" of them. What are basic are certain relations among objects; we conveniently keep track of these relations by assigning numbers to the objects, and remembering how the relations among the objects are reflected in the numbers.

One important aspect of numerical measurement is that only some of the properties of numbers are relevant to their use in reporting relative weights. Thus it is relevant that whatever numbers we use to keep track of weights preserve ratios: if one thing weighs twice as many grams as another, it must also weigh twice as many pounds. On the other hand, the absolute size of the number is irrelevant: measurement in pounds, grains of wheat, and grams yield different numbers, but the same relative weights when compared to other objects.

7. A comparison between how we attribute beliefs and numerical measurement has been made by Paul Churchland, *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind*, Cambridge University Press 1979, p. 105. But he makes the mistake of supposing we can take a phrase like "345 grams" in "The Koh-i-noor diamond weighs 345 grams" as an adverb of "weighs", and thus get rid of the ontological problem (he would say the same about the sentence that follows "believes"). But as we have seen, this suggestion cannot be supported by a serious semantics.
The analogy with beliefs is this. Just as in measuring weight we need a collection of entities which have a structure in which we can reflect the relations between weighty objects, so in attributing states of belief (and other propositional attitudes) we need a collection of entities related in ways that will allow us to keep track of the relevant properties of the various psychological states.

In thinking and talking of the weights of physical objects we do not need to suppose there are such things as weights for objects to have. Similarly in thinking and talking about the beliefs of people we needn’t suppose there are such entities as beliefs. Nor do we have to invent objects to serve as the “objects of belief” or what is before the mind, or in the brain.

For the entities we mention to help specify a state of mind do not have to play any psychological or epistemological role at all, just as numbers play no physical role. As a consequence, there is no reason to conclude, from the thinker’s lack of knowledge of the entities we use to track his thoughts, that he may not know what he thinks.

The suggestion I am proposing about the nature of the propositional attitudes applies directly to a problem that has troubled a number of philosophers in recent years. There are convincing arguments to show that the correct determination of the contents of beliefs (and meanings and other propositional attitudes) depends in part on causal connections between the believer and events and objects in the world of which he may be ignorant.

A standard example is Putnam’s twin earth case. We are invited to imagine, I’m sure you will remember, that there is a twin to our Earth which is, in all immediately discernible respects, identical with our Earth. On it is my doppelgänger, molecule for molecule the same, having been exposed to the same conditioning, and having exactly the same linguistic dispositions. Yet one of us believes it is water he sees before him (me) when the other believes it is twater. The explanation is that where there is water on the Earth there is twater on Twearth, though no one has yet detected the difference. Since there is no inner, or psychological difference between me and my twin, neither of us has any reason to say he believes one thing rather than the other. Therefore neither of us knows what he be-
lieves. (I don’t know whether I believe this is water or twater.) So there may be, and perhaps always are, non-subjective factors, factors unknown to the thinker, which decide what the “object of thought” is. If the identity of the “object of thought” is partly dependent on factors of which the person who has the thought is ignorant, doesn’t it follow that the person may not know what he thinks?

The answer is that it doesn’t follow. It would follow if the object used to identify my thought were something I had to be able to discriminate in order to know what I think. But this is the assumption we have abandoned. What I see before me I believe to be water; I am in no danger of thinking it is twater, since I do not know what twater is. I also believe I think I am seeing water, and in this I am right, even though it may not be water but twater. I know I think it is water I am seeing because I know that I believe this stuff I am looking at has the same structure (whatever that may be) as the stuff in whose presence I learned to use the word water. And that is the stuff I mean by my word “water”. Of course if I were my twin on Twearth, I would refer to twater by my word “water” — and that would then be what I believed was before me. If in our sleep my twin and I were to be exchanged, I would mistakenly think it was water before me when it was twater. But neither of us would be wrong about what he thought. The possibility of error, or of failure to distinguish one’s own state of mind due solely to the external elements that help determine that state of mind, is intelligible only on the supposition that having a thought requires a special psychological relation to the object used to identify the state of mind.8

The point of this exercise may surprise us. It is that subjective states are not supervenient on the state of the brain or nervous system: two people may be in the same physical state and yet be in different psychological states. This does not mean, of course, that mental states are not supervenient on physical states, for there must be a physical difference somewhere if psychological states are dif-

8. For further discussion of this point, see my “Knowing One’s Own Mind”, Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association, 1987, pp. 441-458.
ferent. The physical difference may not be in the person; like the difference between water and twater, it may be (we are supposing) elsewhere.

Many philosophers faced with this result have decided that beliefs and other so-called propositional attitudes, as we usually identify them, are not quite as subjective as they are supposed to be. Thus Fodor, in recommending "methodological solipsism" to the psychologist, thinks he is recommending that the psychologist deal with truly subjective states, states whose identities are determined only by what is in the head. David Kaplan and Daniel Dennett have made similar suggestions.

Stich's idea is along the same lines, but more revolutionary, since he thinks we must give up folk psychology entirely if we want a serious science of human behavior. I agree that the concepts of belief, desire, intention and the like are not suited to a science like the physical sciences; and I agree that one of the reasons is that mental states are partly identified on the basis of their causes and effects. But the same is true of human behavior — namely actions — so I see no chance of a more scientific explanation of it.

But whatever we think about the scientific future of folk psychology, there is no good reason for claiming that beliefs and the other propositional attitudes are not truly subjective states. We have discovered no reason for saying that thinkers don't generally know what they think, or that there isn't always a presumption in favor of their being right when they disagree with others about what is on their minds. And this seems to be as good a test of subjectivity as we have.

I am aware that there are two points (at least) that I have left hanging, and I shall devote a last few minutes to them. The two points are these.

First, I have not said anything about what the objects are to which we refer when we want to specify what someone believes. And, second, I have argued that the discovery that what is believed is partly settled by facts of which the believer may be ignorant does not show he doesn't know what he believes. But this is only a negative point; it does not even hint at why there is a presumption —
usually correct — that he does know. These two points are closely related.

First, what are the objects we name or describe in order to characterize states of mind? Well what do we say? We say things like “Paul believes the Koh-i-noor diamond is one of the crown jewels.” The words “believes that the Koh-i-noor diamond is one of the crown jewels” characterize Paul’s state of mind. The relational word is “believes”, and what follows names the object — not of thought, I have insisted — but the object which in some regular way indicates Paul’s state of mind. I have in the past suggested that we take the word “that” in such sentences as a demonstrative that picks out or refers to the next utterance of the speaker who is doing the attributing. The following gives the idea: Paul believes what I would believe if I were sincerely to assert what I say next.

The Koh-i-noor diamond is one of the crown jewels.

Since I am not trying to make subtle semantic points, you may take either my actual utterance, with its time and place, as the object; or the sentence of which it is an utterance (relativized to a time and a speaker). If you wish, you even may take the object to be a proposition. Since utterances, sentences and propositions are so closely related, the chances are if one choice will serve, the others can be made to. But utterances have certain prima facie advantages, since they are non-abstract, and so come with a speaker, a time, and a context attached. So I will assume we have settled on utterances, the very utterances that are produced in attributing attitudes, as the objects that serve to individuate and identify the various states of mind.

Such objects serve very well in their role of characterizing states of mind. There certainly are as many different utterances (or potential utterances) at our disposal as there are states of mind we are able to distinguish in attributing them — more, in fact. Even the special difficulties having to do with demonstrative or indexical expressions are not insoluble if we give up the idea that we are trying to identify objects with which those who have attitudes are in touch.
Utterances are related to each other in much the same way beliefs are: by relations of entailment and evidential support. Utterances like beliefs, are true and false (or, if one prefers, are utterances of sentences that are true or false). Indeed, aside from complications due to indexical elements, we identify a belief by uttering a sentence that has the same truth conditions as the belief it is used to identify. Nor is any of this surprising since we often express our beliefs by uttering sentences with the truth conditions of the belief we are expressing.

At this point you may think I am coming dangerously close to restoring the very theory that made all the trouble in the first place. For why not go on to say that since utterances determine meanings, and it is meanings that match up one to one with belief states, the objects we are naming by way of our utterances of sentences are, when we are attributing beliefs, the meanings of sentences, that is, propositions. This would fix it so that when a Frenchman attributed the same state of mind to Paul as I did, we would both be naming the same object: this would not be the case on the theory I was just considering, for the Frenchman’s relevant sentence was not mine.

Actually I have only marginal objections in the present context to taking this step, for it is not the step that makes the trouble. (It may make some other kind of trouble, meanings and propositions being the tricky things they are.) For the trouble came from the identification of the object that the mind “knows” or is “acquainted with” — an “object of thought”. If we avoid this identification, we can stay out of the difficulties I have been exploring. But if we avoid this identification, neither do we gain anything by the steps from utterances to sentences to meanings of propositions. So as a help in keeping my main point in mind, it is well to stick to utterances. Then there will then be no danger of supposing that in general the believer is acquainted with the objects used to characterize his states of mind. It should not bother us that the Frenchman and I use different utterances to characterize the same state of Paul’s mind: this is like measuring weight in carats or ounces: different sets of numbers do the same work.

This last point directs our attention to a larger issue. When we use numbers to keep track of the relations among weights and
lengths and temperatures we are not apt to respond to the fact that different sets of numbers do as well as others in keeping track of all that is relevant empirically by complaining that weights or lengths or temperatures are not "real". We know there is no contradiction between the temperature of air being 32 fahrenheit and 0 celsius; there is nothing in this "relativism" to show that the properties being measured are not "real". Curiously, though, this conclusion has repeatedly been drawn. John Searle, for example, finds it incomprehensible that either of two quite different interpretations might correctly be put on the same thought (or utterance) of a person.9 Yet in the light of the considerations put forward here, this comes to no more than the recognition that more than one set of one person's utterances might be equally successful in capturing the contents of someone else's thoughts or speech. Just as numbers can capture all the empirically significant relations among weights or temperatures in infinitely many different ways, so one person's utterance can capture all the significant features of another person's thoughts and speech in different ways. This fact does not challenge the "reality" of the attitudes or meanings thus variously reported. Jerry Fodor is another philosopher who thinks that holism, of the indeterminacy of translation that is associated with it, threatens realism with respect to the propositional attitudes.10 This is the same mistake. Indeterminacy of translation means that different sets or utterances (or sentences, as Quine has it) do equally well in interpreting a speaker's language (or thoughts); this does not suggest that the states of mind of the speaker or thinker thus captured are somehow vague or unreal. Holism maintains that the contents of speech and thought depend on the relations among meanings and among thoughts. But again there is nothing in this claim to threaten the reality of the states that are related in these ways. The threat to the reality of thoughts and meanings that Searle and Fodor think they detect is in fact a quite different threat, a threat to the assumption that the entities used to identify thoughts and meanings are somehow "grasped" by the mind, and so, if the entities are differ-

ent, the thoughts themselves must be different. It is as if the "difference" between being a yard long and 36 inches long in a yardstick were a difference in the yardstick itself.

I now come to the last question: given that a correct view of the way in which the "objects of thought" determine the identity of the various states of mind does not threaten first person authority, what accounts for that authority?

One difficulty was created by grammar and false inferences from it, which led to the idea of an inner object known in a privileged way. This obstacle was removed by showing that there was no reason to suppose there are such objects. A second difficulty sprang from the conviction that the truly subjective — that of which the person has privileged knowledge — can owe none of its subjective quality to connections with the outside world. Here I argued that though an interpreter must, if he is to get things right, look to relations between the mind he is interpreting and its environment, this does not pre-judge the self-knowledge of the knower.

Having removed the obstacles, there is little left to say about how we know what we think. In the interesting, and originally puzzling cases, there is no way we know — for there is no evidence to be sought, no inner object to be scrutinized, no competing hypothesis to be weighed.

The point comes out if we consider this situation: suppose I say — "I believe the Koh-i-noor diamond is a crown jewel". Or don’t just suppose it, for I do say this. And suppose, as is the case, that I know what the words I have just uttered mean, and that I am making a sincere assertion. Then it follows that I know what I believe, but it does not follow that you know. The reason is simple: you may not know what I mean. Your knowledge of what my words mean has to be based on evidence and inference: you probably assume you have it right, and you probably do. Nevertheless it is an hypothesis. Of course, I may not know what I mean by those words either. But there is a presumption that I do, since it does not make sense to suppose I am generally mistaken about what my words mean; the presumption that I am not generally mistaken about what I mean is essential to my having a language — to my being interpretable at all. To appeal to a familiar, though often misunderstood, point: I can
do no better, in stating the truth conditions for my utterance of the sentence “The Koh-i-noor diamond is a crown jewel” than to say it is true if and only if the Koh-i-noor diamond is a crown jewel. But for you this is an empirical claim, though probably a true one.¹¹

According to Dummett, Brentano “...refused to admit that a mental act...had any inner object distinct from the external one, namely a mental representation...by which the external object was presented to the mind.”¹² Dummett points out that this leaves Brentano with the problem of thoughts (or apparent thoughts) about objects that don’t exist, a problem, Dummett remarks, Brentano “did not succeed in resolving.” But the problem is easily solved if we give up the idea that there are inner objects or mental representations in the required sense. There is no need to suppose that if there are no such inner objects only outer objects remain to help us identify the various states of mind. The simple fact is that we have the resources needed to identify states of mind, even if those states of mind are, as we like to say, directed to non-existent objects, for we can do this without supposing there are any objects whatever “before the mind.”

¹¹ For a more detailed discussion of the argument in this paragraph, see my “First Person Authority”, *Dialectica* 38 (1984), pp. 101-111.