

What is wrong with Baldy? Radical non-referring view of “I”

Eylem Özaltun

Koç University

eylemozaltun@gmail.com



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Abstract

That the study of the first-person reports of intentional actions, happenings, thoughts, and sensations as revealing the structure of self-consciousness was a central theme of Anscombe's work in philosophy of mind has not been sufficiently registered in the literature. I aim to show that this theme animated many of her works throughout her writing career and her “The First Person” (1974) can be best understood as one of these works and in the light of others.

Keywords: Anscombe; first-person pronoun; self-consciousness; reference

Resum. *Quin problema hi ha amb “Baldy”? Un enfocament no referencial radical de “jo”*

Que l'estudi dels informes de primera persona d'accions intencionals, esdeveniments, pensaments i sensacions com a reveladors de l'estructura de l'autoconsciència va ser un tema central del treball d'Anscombe en filosofia de la ment és quelcom que no ha estat prou considerat en la literatura sobre el tema. El meu objectiu és mostrar que aquest tema va animar moltes de les seves obres al llarg de la seva carrera com a filòsofa i que el seu «The first person» (1974) pot entendre's millor com una d'aquestes obres i tenint-ne en compte d'altres.

Paraules clau: Anscombe; pronom de primera persona; autoconsciència; referència

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The thinking, presenting subject; there is no such thing.

Tractatus 5.631

Introduction

In “The First Person” (from now on “TFP”), as the title makes no secret, Anscombe discusses some of the peculiar features of the first-person pronoun. She defends a, notoriously false according to many commentators,¹ view that “I” does not refer. Even for the most sympathetic readers of Anscombe who find many insights in TFP,² the conclusion is at best a confusion or a reflection of her special, narrow use of the notion of reference. The commentators mostly focus on two arguments they take Anscombe to give to establish this conclusion and show that they are not good arguments. I will call them “Argument from Immunity to Error Through Misidentification” and “Anti-Cartesian Argument”. If we see TFP as part of a project of understanding self-consciousness and its structural distinctness from consciousness, and “I”’s role in expressing self-consciousness and its peculiarities as revealing the structure of the thoughts it is used to express as the main subject of TFP, this change of focus will provide a much better reading of TFP. According to this reading, the passages on which the commentators based their arguments will gain a different significance and turn out not to be intended as direct arguments for her claim that “I” does not refer. And once we understand what is at stake in her insistence that “I” does not refer in the light of her other works, the conclusion will start to look much more palatable, too. In what follows I will motivate such a reading.

But first let me briefly mention these two arguments that are attributed to Anscombe and how they are dismissed in the literature. For some thoughts of the form A is B, my way of knowing that something is B leaves no room for a mistake in identifying what is B. Hence if I know through this way that something is B then I am entitled to the thought that A is B. Hence my thought A is B is *immune to error through misidentification*³ of whatever is this thing which is B. Anscombe observes in TFP that the judgments of the form “I am B” have such immunity. In first-person judgments one does not identify the object she is among other objects, and since there is no identification, there is no room for misidentification. As she puts the point: “Getting hold of the wrong object *is* excluded...”⁴ The commentators take Anscombe to conclude from this that “I” cannot be a referring expression as she holds that

1. Inwagen (2001), Evans (1982), Peacocke (2008).
2. McDowell (1998), Campbell (2012), Stainton (2019).
3. This is a term coined by Shoemaker (1968). Neither Anscombe nor Wittgenstein used this term to make their respective points. The term “The immunity to error through misidentification” (from now on IETM) became the common currency in the discussions of both Wittgenstein’s and Anscombe’s views on this issue. For brevity’s sake I will use it as well.
4. Anscombe (1975: 32).

there can be no reference without identification. This is what I call Argument from IETM. The standard objection to this argument is to mention indexicals and thereby show the possibility of a form of reference which is identification-free. So the objection reveals Anscombe's mistake: She fails to notice the forms of reference which are identification-free.

The Anti-Cartesian Argument is a *modus tollens*. Anscombe's intricate exposition has been summarized as an argument with two premises: 1. If "I" refers, then it must refer to Cartesian Ego. 2. Cartesian Ego is not suitable as the referent of "I".⁵ Therefore, "I" does not refer. As Anscombe herself notes,⁶ the rejection of the idea of a Cartesian Ego is extremely common among analytic philosophers. So the objections mainly target Premise 1. The way to reject Premise 1 is to find ways in which "I" can refer to a living human being, or a person in the forensic sense. John McDowell's version which uses an idea from P.F. Strawson is the most insightful one of this type of objection that I came across. He takes Anscombe to assume that when there is an I-thought, the object to which "I" refers must be identifiable within the way in which the subject entertains this thought. Hence Premise 1 would be true only on "the assumption that a referring role for "I" would need to be fully accountable for within [the thinker's] stream of consciousness."⁷ But the thinker's grasp of the use of "I" requires her to appreciate that she is also an object among others, available in the public realm – which is a fact to which I will also appeal below to account for the communicative uses of "I". As long as the link between the stream of consciousness and the thinker's thoughts about the object she is not severed, we can exploit the tools for identifying that object to settle the referent of the identification-free thoughts. Hence the question "who am I?" need not be settled within the stream of consciousness. But if that is so, "I" can refer to an ordinary object, and not necessarily to Cartesian Ego. That is, we can reject Premise 1.

I will not tackle these objections head-on, but rather try to show that Anscombe did not take the premises of the above-mentioned arguments as conclusive reasons for her claim that "I" does not refer. These remarks should not be taken as conclusive arguments to that end. What makes the use of "I" the subject of inquiry for Anscombe is its unique role: expression of self-consciousness. In so far as "I" expresses self-consciousness, it cannot be expressing a thought about an object. This is the claim I take her to be defending in TFP. Self-conscious thought is not object-directed thought, that is self-consciousness is not a species of consciousness-of. She argues for this claim in two steps.

5. Why is Cartesian Ego not a suitable referent for "I"? Some commentators, Descombes for example, took Anscombe to maintain that Cartesian Ego does not exist. The text shows that this cannot be Anscombe's reason: "If the principle of human rational life in E.A. is a soul (which perhaps can survive E.A., perhaps again animate E.A.) *that* is not the reference of "I"." (Anscombe, 1975: 35) Since the commentators that take Anscombe to give an anti-cartesian argument here do not focus on this premise, I will not say more on this here. We will come back to this below when we discuss Anscombe's metaphysician.
6. Anscombe (1979: 3).
7. McDowell (1998: 192).

When we take “I” as nothing but a name that everyone uses for herself, we cannot make sense of its role as expression of self-consciousness. That is, a special form of referring is not what makes “I” an expression of self-consciousness. This is the first step and the point of the A-users example. Moreover, even if we use a characteristically referring expression to express self-consciousness, in so far as it is an expression of self-consciousness it must be expressing a thought which is subjectless. This is the second step and the point of the Baldy example. Hence for Anscombe an expression cannot play the roles of referring and expressing self-consciousness at the same time. If we do not see this, we end up in a false view of what self-consciousness is. If I am right that this is the main axis of her paper, then we should not take any of her remarks as giving arguments for her claim “I” does not refer independent of “I”’s role as an expression of self-consciousness. Whether an expression of self-consciousness can play this role while referring is the question she answers negatively.

My reading takes A-users and Baldy examples as central. Just as in *Intention*,⁸ Anscombe relies at least as heavily on examples to make her points as on the explicitly argumentative parts of her text. Although some pay attention to these parts of the text, these two examples and especially Baldy have not received much scrutiny, to say the least. In Part I, I will focus on the Baldy example and try to get clear on an essential expression Anscombe uses to characterize self-conscious thought: “unmediated agent-or-patient conceptions of actions, happenings, and states”. In Part II, I will draw on her other writings, namely “The Subjectivity of Sensation” (1976) and *An Introduction to Wittgenstein’s Tractatus* (1959) to make good on my claims and provide the larger philosophical context in which the discussion of “I” as the expression of self-consciousness should be taken.

Part I: Baldy

There is a mistake that it is very easy to make here. It is that of supposing that the difference of self-consciousness, the difference that I have tried to bring before your minds as that between “I”-users and “A”-users, is a private experience. That there is this asymmetry about “I”: for the hearer or reader it is in principle no different from “A”; for the speaker or thinker, the “I”-saying subject, it is different. Now this is not so: the difference between “I”-users and “A”-users would be perceptible to observers. To bring this out, consider the following story from William James. James, who insisted (rightly, if I am right) that consciousness is quite distinct from self-consciousness, reproduces an instructive letter from a friend: “We were driving...in a wagonette; the door flew open and X, alias ‘Baldy’, fell out on the road. We pulled up at once, then he said ‘Did anyone fall out?’ or ‘Who fell out?’ – I do not exactly remember the words. When told that Baldy fell out he said ‘Did Baldy fall out? Poor Baldy!’”

8. See Özeltun (2016) on how Anscombe uses examples in stating her views via the Builders example from *Intention*.

If we met people who were A-users and had no other way of speaking of themselves, we would notice it quite quickly, just as his companions noticed what was wrong with Baldy. It was not that he used his own name. That came afterwards. What instigated someone to give information to him in the form "Baldy fell out" was, I suppose, his behavior already showed the lapse of self-consciousness, as James called it. He had just fallen out the carriage, he was conscious, and had the idea that someone had fallen out of the carriage – or he knew that someone had, but wondered who! That was the indication how things were with him.

Even if they had spoken a language without the word "I", even if they had had one without any first-person inflexion, but everybody used his own name in his expressions of self-consciousness, even so, Baldy's conduct would have had just the same significance. It wasn't that he used "Baldy" and not "I" in what he said. *It was that his thought of the happening, falling out of the carriage, was one for which he looked for a subject, his grasp of it one which required a subject.* And that could be explained even if we did not have "I" or distinct first-person inflexions. He did not have what I call 'unmediated agent-or-patient conceptions of actions, happenings, and states'. These conceptions are subjectless. That is, they do not involve what is understood by a predicate with a distinctly conceived subject. The (deeply rooted) grammatical illusion of a subject is what generates all the errors which we have been considering. (Anscombe, 1975: 36; emphases are mine)

This is the very last section of TFP. As we see in the very last paragraph, Anscombe diagnoses what is wrong with Baldy as follows: He does not have unmediated patient conception of his own fall. If he had such conception it would be subjectless. What does "subjectless" mean here? As she defines it, his subjectless conception of the fall would not involve what is understood by the predicate "fall" with a distinctly conceived subject. Now everything hinges on what we take the import of the phrase "distinctly conceived subject" to be. If we go with the pervasive analysis of first-person thought via IETM, this could mean that in using the predicate the thinker does not need to conceive separately the subject of predication to which this predicate is now applied. So, in addition to the predicate use, there is no distinct act of identifying the subject of predication. In conceiving the fall, the subject that falls is already conceived. Nonetheless, there is a subject conceived. This is the take on unmediated conceptions we find in McDowell, for example:

We must indeed insist that the conceptions exclude looking for a subject, if we are to keep our hold on what is special about the first-person. But even so, we can suppose that the conceptions require to be predicated of a subject: particular person each of us refers to by "I". (McDowell, 1998: 193)

But, as McDowell also rightly observes, Anscombe's text calls for a different reading and this reading leads to a bolder claim: In unmediated conceptions there is no subject being conceived, that is, there is no subject of predication at all. These predications are not conceptions of a subject as being so and so; what is understood by the predicate is not that a distinct

subject is so and so. So it is not that a subject is being predicated albeit without an act of identification. It is not, as it were, that there was no need of identification because the subject was already identified in the predicate use. Rather, in these conceptions no subject has been identified. There is no connection to the distinctively conceived subject being made, because there is no subject conceived in these conceptions.

In unmediated conceiving of actions, happenings, and states, one does not attribute them to a subject. Hence this is not an attributive use of predicates. Here there is no conception of a subject to whom these actions, happenings and states are attributed. In this non-attributive use of predicates we represent actions, happenings, and states differently, and in these representations there is no room for subject. It is because these actions, happenings and states are not represented as actions of/happenings to/states of an object. These representations are not object-directed: they are not representations of an object who acts, to whom something happens, or who has certain states. (Here I use object as a very general term for anything that has an enduring unity over time: it can be human beings, tables, chairs, selves, souls, egos, babies, animals, etc.)

Since it is not an object-directed representation, the one who has such a conception would not ask “who?”. But this is not because, as the IETM interpretation would have it, one must already know who, and since one knows who without identification, there is already an error-proof/guaranteed reference to someone. Anscombe’s point is *not* that this question is redundant. One would not ask “who?” because the question has no application at all. She writes, as I quoted above, that Baldy’s conduct shows a lapse of self-consciousness because “...his thought of the happening, falling out of the carriage was one for which he looked for a subject, his grasp of it one which required a subject.” As I read it the problem here is *not* that Baldy should not have looked for a subject because he should already know who, but that he has a conception of the event, the falling out, which has room for such a question in the first place. That is, I take it, even if he knew he is the one who fell via a conception of this fall that requires a subject, such a conception of the fall would not be an unmediated conception of this happening. The difference between mediated and unmediated conceptions of the fall is not the way in which the subject knows who fell. A self-conscious fall is *not* a fall in which the subject comes to know who fell in a special way. The problem with Baldy is *not* that he did not know who fell in that special way, but that he could ask “who?” at all. Anscombe’s unmediated conceptions, then, are not just unmediated by identification of subject, but unmediated by any representation of subject.⁹

9. As I said above, McDowell also observes that it is in the latter sense Anscombe takes these conceptions to be unmediated. But he thinks that she comes to the latter by mistakenly equating the former with the latter. He rightly points out that one does not single out a subject in unmediated conceptions establishes that there is no identification, but not that there is no subject of predication. However, I do not think Anscombe fails to distinguish these two conceptions of “unmediated”.

But suppose, unlike Baldy, I have unmediated conception of my fall. In what sense is the who-question not applicable here? Surely you could ask "Who fell out?" and, having unmediated conception of this fall, I would reply "I". Am I, on behalf of Anscombe, denying this in saying that for the unmediated conceptions the who-question has no application at all?¹⁰ I am not. Having unmediated conceptions of actions, happenings and states I can answer who-questions regarding these actions, happenings, and states with "I" if I want to answer them truthfully. So I can understand who-questions raised by others regarding these actions, happenings, and states because as an adult user of English I also understand that your mediated conception of these actions, happenings, and states admits this question: your consciousness of them is in the form of consciousness of actions, happenings, and states of *an object* and you might wonder who that object is. I can settle your questions with "I". Only my unmediated conceptions do not admit the question. My understanding that I am an object to others and I can be an object to myself, does not require my unmediated conceptions of actions, happenings, and states to be conceptions of an object within these unmediated conceptions. From self-consciousness I can settle some questions that arise in someone else's consciousness of my actions and states. This does not mean that the same questions would be applicable within self-consciousness.

Anscombe says that she is using the Baldy example from William James to make a point James also makes: self-consciousness is distinct from consciousness. Baldy is conscious of the fall while he is not self-conscious. James' point seems to be that these two states can come apart: self-consciousness is not required for consciousness.¹¹ But in Anscombe the distinction is not just that we can have one without the other (though both the Baldy and A-users examples make this point as well). According to Anscombe self-consciousness and consciousness provide *structurally distinct representations*. In insisting that unmediated conceptions are subjectless she is rejecting the accounts which try to capture the distinctness of self-consciousness from consciousness while keeping the structure of these representations the same. For these views all consciousness would be consciousness of an object (used in a broad sense). Self-consciousness would

10. I am grateful to Lucy Campbell for pressing this question and the discussion.

11. See James (1890 VI p. 273). In the passages surrounding the Baldy example James talks about a special sense of objectivity we find where there is lapse of subjectivity. By citing examples of various representations of objects where the representing subject is not represented in the representations, he is rejecting a view he attributes to many, but originally Kant: "...that the reflective consciousness of the self is essential to the cognitive function of the thought...a thought, in order to know a thing at all, must expressly distinguish between the thing and its own self." Here the criticism is quite general and not confined to first-person thought. He is talking about apperception and rejects it as the condition of consciousness of objects in general. The interesting thing here is that James takes apperception to imply that I exist and to be a thought about the thinker herself. He cites the Baldy case to show that when there is consciousness without self-consciousness we can see that "I exist" is not implied but additional to what is given in the content of consciousness. There is nothing about the structure of first-person thought in particular in these passages.

be a species of *consciousness of*. It would still be a consciousness of something being so and so but the way in which the object of consciousness – the subject of predication – is conceived would be special.

She considers such a view just before she introduces the Baldy parable. She says that it is tempting to think that the difference is a private experience. She might have Frege in mind here, but anyone who speaks of “knowledge from inside” these days would also be in this camp. According to this tempting view, in self-conscious thought one is presented to oneself in a special way. We cannot share this special way, but we can communicate what is given by that special way, since what is given is still a consciousness of the object the subject is. Since the representations provided by this special experience and the representations of the same person by herself or others via observation are structurally the same, one might think that from the hearer’s perspective there would be no difference as to whether the speaker is expressing conscious or self-conscious thought. Both A-users and Baldy parables are meant to show that this is not so: the difference *is* noticeable by the hearer.

If we met people who were A-users and had no other way of speaking of themselves, we would notice it quite quickly, just as his companions noticed what was wrong with Baldy. It was not that he used his own name...

Even if they had spoken a language without the word “I”, even if they had had one without any first-person inflexion, but everybody used his own name in his expression of self-consciousness, even so Baldy’s conduct would have had just the same significance. (Anscombe, 1975: 36)

But of course that there is a noticeable difference is not enough to show that the difference is in the structure of the respective representations. Only in the Baldy parable do we have a clear statement of the structural difference: conscious representations have a subject of predication and self-conscious representations do not. This structural difference in thought is not apparent since the sentences we use to express both forms of representation have the same subject-predicate structure. The grammatical structure of the sentences in which we express self-consciousness covers up this important structural difference between conscious and self-conscious representations. And with this thought Anscombe ends *TFP*: “The (deeply rooted) grammatical illusion of a subject is what generates all the errors which we have been considering.”

Part II: The Subject of Sensations

This mistaken view of the structure of self-consciousness is of a piece with the mistaken view of our subjectivity in action, sensation, and thought. *TFP* ends with her diagnosis of the structural distinctiveness of self-conscious thought. The significance of this point for the objectivity of observation statements is exposed in another paper Anscombe wrote a year later.

In “The Subjectivity of Sensation” Anscombe claims that if there is a subject in the first-person reports of what is known by observation, then we

cannot detach what is observed from a particular observer and we cannot have objective representation of how things are. If "I" in first-person reports refers to a particular observer, then the content of the observation statement would be contaminated with this particularity. Hence the price we will pay for holding on to the wrong conception of the structure of I-sentences is the loss of objectivity of observation statements. In light of Anscombe's worry about the objectivity of sensation reports, it becomes clear that her infamous claim that "I" does not refer cannot be dismissed as a peculiar narrow-mindedness about the notion of reference¹² or a confusion of epistemology with semantics.¹³ Whether the observer represents herself with or without identification is irrelevant here, and so is what notion of reference one adopts. If the observer's representation of herself is essentially involved in her sensory reports, however this representation might be achieved, it would have the same detrimental consequence for the objectivity of the report. Hence we cannot domesticate Anscombe's infamous claim that "I" does not refer by some deflated notion of reference.¹⁴ Now let us look at how Anscombe argues in "The Subjectivity of Sensation":

There remains a certain conception of 'subjectivity' to which I have made a passing reference. I spoke of the way 'the subject' is thought to enter essentially into the sensory. The doctor, we said, may say "The reds match", but the explicit statement of the case is "I see these reds to match". If so, then a Platonic argument may force it on us that the 'objective', in the sense of what is the case regardless of an observer, is never sensed, but is always inference or construction from the sensorily given cues. What is given is always a product of the encounter of subject and object and so properly belongs to the encounter and the moment at which it occurs. This would be destructive of the idea of observation. If something is correct observation, we ought to be able to detach what is observed from the statement of the observer's perception of it, and simply say it was so.

Now it is perfectly true to say that the explicit statement of the case is "I see these reds to match", and if "I" is a name of something involved in this, it is difficult to see how the detachment could ever be justified. (Anscombe, 1976: 54)

Anscombe's thought here is that that we can move from "I see these reds to match" to "These reds match" shows that "I" cannot be the name of a particular subject. Or in the language of TFP, here "I see" must be expressing the

12. Evans (1982), McDowell (1998).

13. O'Brien (1994).

14. See Botterel and Stainton (2018), and Stainton (2019). They are right of course in that for Anscombe "I" is not an expletive like 'it' in 'It is raining'. However, this is not the only way in which one can conclude that, as they put it, 'I' must be radically non-referring. They give a reading of TFP that attributes to Anscombe the view that "I" has a deflated reference. However, nothing less than a radical non-referring "I" view would serve Anscombe's purpose. In fact, Stainton himself mentions that the Baldy passages poses a challenge to his reading.

doctor's unmediated conception of her sensory state of seeing that reds match. The doctor is in a self-conscious sensory state of seeing which is her consciousness of matching reds. For her consciousness of matching reds to be an objective representation that the reds match, her representation of the sensory state that provides this content should not be a representation of herself-as-representing-that-the-reds-match. A representation of a certain subject, oneself or another, as seeing that something is the case, cannot be a direct representation of something being the case. When someone, I or otherwise, is attributed a sensory experience, nothing about what the reality is like has been said yet. If "I see these red match" is an expression of a conception of sensory state as mediated by representation of oneself as seeing these reds match, then one can only infer that the reds match by something like the inference to the best explanation of one's own sensory states. Hence, if "I see these reds to match" will be the expression of a direct objective judgment that these reds match, then this sensory judgment cannot be a judgment about the sensory experience of a particular subject.

This is not to deny that whenever there is a sensory experience there is a subject of this experience. However, in order for the thought to be objective, what is thought through this experience should not be contaminated with the representation of that subject. In "I see these reds to match" no reference to a particular subject has been made. Here "I see" specifies that "these reds match" is a perceptual judgment; that it is a seeing-that. But perceptual judgments are not statements about the sensory experiences of a particular subject, not even one's own. Otherwise they cannot be objective judgments about how things are.

Here we can see the full force of the claim that the who-question is not applicable to the first-person reports of sensory judgments. When the question is applicable, these reports cannot express objective content. Although not explicitly mentioned in TFP, this point about the possibility of the objective content is the source and main motivation of the infamous claim that "I" does not refer, and reading TFP in this light will demystify her insistence on the radically non-referring view. This would also explain why Anscombe in "The Subjectivity of Sensation", right after the above cited passages, gives a two-page recapitulation of TFP. Here she recalls the position of the insensitive logician character we find in TFP: "I" is a proper name, albeit of a rather special sort". Then, just as she does in TFP, she contrasts this position with the more sensitive metaphysician's philosophical idea of "the subject", and ends the paper by rejecting both views as inadequate in capturing the essentially first-person character of sensation reports:

While we must reject the 'insensitive logician's view of "I", nevertheless this opposite one is no better. The essentially first-person character of the sensory report must be granted, but it does not introduce any such thing as 'the subject' conceived to be. It does not introduce any *thing* at all, precisely because "I" is not any kind of name. (Anscombe, 1976: 56; emphasis is original)

When we appreciate that the main motivation for the non-referring view is the problem of objectivity of thought, we can also see why only the logician is deemed insensitive, although the metaphysician's view is also rejected. To what exactly is the logician insensitive? The logician is missing what is special about the "I" of the Cogito. One such logician is Saul Kripke. Anscombe criticizes him in TFP (p. 21) for not seeing the essentially first-personal nature of the Cogito argument. The logician is taken to be Arthur Prior in the literature,¹⁵ but I think it is meant to be the name of a type: someone who does not see the truth behind the philosophical idea of subject and misses what is puzzling about the "I" of the Cogito. In dismissing the logician she is also emphasizing what is true in the philosophical idea of 'the subject':

We may put it like this: there is no path from "I" to the person whereby he connects it with an object (the person that he is) which it names. This is the principal root of the philosophic idea of 'the subject' – that "I" does not stand for any object, not for anything presented. Or, as Berkeley put it, there is no 'idea' of the self." (Anscombe, 1976: 55)

So the debate is as follows: the logician thinks that "I" is the representation of an ordinary object but this representation is not a presentation. The metaphysician on the other hand insists that "I" does not represent anything that can be presented. So "I" cannot be a name of some ordinary object. In that, Anscombe agrees with the metaphysician. But does "I" represent something else – something that in principle cannot be presented but to which all presentations are made – as Anscombe puts it, not an ordinary sort of object but an extraordinary one? Anscombe mentions the move of metaphysician from the thought that "I" stands for no ordinary object to the thought that "I" stands for an extra-ordinary object disapprovingly but nevertheless with sympathy. She uses the phrase "it is difficult to avoid the idea..." to introduce this move in order to emphasize its natural appeal. The logician, on the other hand, gets no sympathy and is called "insensitive". He gets no sympathy because he does not appreciate the genuine difficulty in accounting for the "I" of the Cogito, that is, for objective representation in general to be possible, "I" cannot be the name of something presented.

It seems to me most of the literature on TFP is also insensitive to this difficulty with which Anscombe was occupied long before and after she wrote TFP. The radically non-referring view of TFP must be seen as part of her ongoing investigation of subjective and objective aspects of experience which comes up in her writings predating TFP and postdating "The Subjectivity of Sensation." In *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (1959, p. 166) she writes:

It is fairly natural thought that 'where there is consciousness, there is an I'; but this raises immediate questions about 'consciousness', and about the legitimacy of speaking of 'an I'.

15. See, for example, Descombes (2010).

Notice how similar this is to what we have seen above in “The Subjectivity of Sensation” – to wit: “where there is sensory experience there is a subject of experience, and it raises issues about the content of those experiences” – and she had written this seventeen years earlier!

Already in 1959, then, Anscombe concludes that it is illegitimate to talk of *an* I, because for consciousness to represent the world as it is, this I which must be there whenever there is consciousness cannot have any particular attributes, hence it cannot be *an* I among many. In speaking of the contents of consciousness, with the use of “I” we add nothing to the contents of consciousness. Rather “I” is used to say something about *how the contents of consciousness are considered*: one does not come to know these contents by mediation of verbal and non-verbal behavior of oneself or others. One knows “from inside”. But we need to be careful with this spatial metaphor: from inside is not a particular point of view I can take towards the contents of my consciousness. To warn us against interpreting “from inside” this way Anscombe writes: “But there is no other *point of view*.”¹⁶ So in considering these contents from inside I do not represent the contents of consciousness from a particular point of view as opposed to some other point of view. The use of “I” is not meant to represent a particular, perhaps privileged or somehow special, point of view, but the direct availability of these contents and consequently the direct availability of the world. Particular points of view would be represented by mediation of the representations of the particularities (location, perspective, position, etc.) of representing subjects. By contrast, “from inside” is used to specify a representation such that in its content there is no room for the particularities of the subject: *from inside one does not see the subject, but just what the subject sees*. From inside, the subject has unmediated conception of her sensory states, that is, these conceptions are not contaminated with the representation of the subject. It is in this sense these conceptions of those states are subjectless and that is why these states provide objective representations of the world.

But the ‘I’ of this way of talking is not something that can be found as a mind or soul, a subject of consciousness, one among others; there is no such thing to be ‘found’ as the subject of consciousness in this sense. All that can be found is what consciousness is of, the contents of consciousness...the world described by this language is just the real world... (Anscombe, 1959: 168)

But then it is also not legitimate to talk about *the* I. As all that can be found is the content of consciousness. Hence, we can see that the condition of my representations to be directly of the world as it is, is what makes the talk of *an* I illegitimate: from inside is not from a particular point of view. If “I” is something, whatever kind of thing that is, it would be one among, at least possibly, many. A representation of someone among many would not have a direct claim to reality.

16. Anscombe (1959: 166; emphasis is original).

Conclusion

We do not have linguistic structures to specifically express consciously being in a state or consciously being a patient or agent of an event, rather than being conscious of someone (oneself or another) being in a state or being an agent or patient of an event. We use "I" to express the former in the linguistic forms that reflect the structure of the latter. When we do not see that and take the linguistic form to reflect the form of self-consciousness, we mistake self-consciousness to be a form of consciousness-of-an-object (ordinary or extraordinary). In characterizing self-consciousness as "having unmediated agent-patient conceptions of states and events" Anscombe points to the structure of self-consciousness as distinct from the consciousness of an object. "Unmediatedness" is not to be understood as criterionless identification of the object of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is not an object-directed representation, it is not a consciousness-of, so it is not mediated by a representation of an object, and it is in this sense unmediated. In having a representation of his own fall that requires a subject, that is, a representation that admits the question "who?", Baldy's awareness of this fall is a consciousness-of; his conception of his fall is a mediated one. Even if he expresses this conception with "I" instead of "Baldy" or "someone", it would not be an expression of self-consciousness. His use of "I" would still stand for an object that fell, like a wolf in sheep's clothing. The use of "I" is the mark of self-consciousness when we use it to express unmediated conceptions, and such a conception of this fall is exactly what Baldy is lacking.

What Baldy lacks is essential to our subjectivity. It is the kind of subjectivity whose vehicles are subjectless; the kind of subjectivity that makes objective representation possible. The subject of action, thought and sensation is not an ordinary object, such as a human being, but not a special object either, such as self, soul, ego, etc.; it is not an object. The difficulty of having a conception of our subjectivity which is not falling under one of these two horns is the difficulty of having a non-reductive account of self-consciousness without giving up what is true in naïve realism. Since "Self-consciousness is not...nonsense. It is something real, though as yet unexplained, which "I"-users have...",¹⁷ Anscombe is facing this difficulty by inquiring into the peculiarities of "I" as the expression of self-consciousness, over the course of several works, one of which is TFP. We can do justice to TFP only if we keep this context in view.¹⁸

17. Anscombe (1975: 26).

18. I conducted most of the research that informed this paper during my research leaves when I visited Warwick Mind and Action Research Center. I presented earlier versions of these ideas there in two different talks, first in 2017 and later in 2019. I would like to thank everyone in the audience for their invaluable input. I especially benefitted from the discussions with Johannes Roessler, Hemdat Lerman, Lucy Campbell and Naomi Eilan. I also would like express my gratitude to Hemdat Lerman and Sofia Miguens for unceasing support and encouragement.

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Eylem Özaltun is an assistant professor of philosophy at Koç University in Istanbul. She works on philosophy of mind with a focus on action because (as O'Shaughnessy puts it) the phenomenon of bodily action set in a public and physical environment is a particularly appropriate place to study the mind in this materialistic age. The paper that appears in this issue is part of her current research project that investigates self-consciousness both in action and perception and the use of the first-person pronoun in expressing such consciousness. In this investigation she focuses on Kant, Frege, Wittgenstein and Anscombe. She critiques how we study self-consciousness in contemporary analytic philosophy under the influence of the Evans/Strawson approach: by studying the special way in which the subject knows about the object she is. She aims to reject this widespread approach to self-consciousness. Instead, she proposes to study self-consciousness as the nature of a thinker who can make objective judgments in general. Hence, she focuses not exclusively on self-knowledge but on the possibility of objective judgment in general.

Eylem Özaltun és professora assistent de filosofia a la Universitat de Koç a Istanbul. Treballa en filosofia de la ment amb un enfocament en l'acció perquè (com ho expressa O'Shaughnessy) el fenomen de l'acció corporal en un entorn públic i físic és particularment el lloc apropiat per estudiar la ment en aquesta era materialista. L'article que apareix en aquest número és part del seu actual projecte de recerca, que estudia l'autoconsciència tant en l'acció com en la percepció i l'ús del pronom de primera persona per expressar tal consciència. Aquesta recerca se centra en Kant, Frege, Wittgenstein i Anscombe. Critica com estudiem l'autoconsciència en la filosofia analítica contemporània sota la influència d'Evans i Strawson: estudiant la forma especial en què el subjecte sap sobre l'objecte que és. El seu objectiu és rebutjar aquest enfocament generalitzat de l'autoconsciència. En canvi, proposa estudiar l'autoconsciència com la naturalesa d'un pensador que pot emetre judicis objectius en general. Per tant, se centra no exclusivament en l'autoconeixement sinó també en la possibilitat d'un judici objectiu en general.
