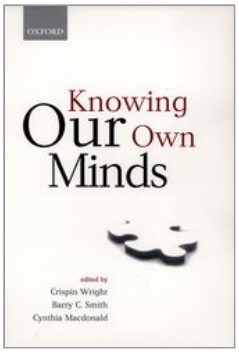

Knowing Our Own Minds
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Reason and the First Person

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Abstract and Keywords

The first part of the paper focuses on the role played in thought and action by possession of the first-person concept. It is argued that only one who possesses the *I* concept is in a position to fully articulate certain fundamental, *a priori* aspects of the concept of reason. A full understanding of the concept of reason requires being inclined to be affected or immediately motivated by reasons—to form, change or confirm beliefs or other attitudes in accordance with them—when those reasons apply to one's own attitudes. The cases where rational evaluations of acts and attitudes rationally motivate immediate implementation of the evaluations to shape the acts and attitudes are distinguished from cases where they do not, by the use of the first-person concept to mark those acts and attitudes as one's own. The second part of the paper examines asymmetries between self-knowledge and knowledge of other minds. The usual view that self-knowledge has an immediate and *a priori* warrant, whereas knowledge of others' minds rests on observation and inference is disputed. A sketch is

given of knowledge of other minds that can be non-inferential and can rest on an intellectual, non-perceptual entitlement. When one seemingly understands an utterance in interlocution, one is *a priori prima facie* entitled to suppose that it comes from a rational source, and because knowledge of other minds can be immediate and epistemically grounded in intellectual, non-empirical entitlements, it is distinguished from self-knowledge not by being necessarily inferential or by being necessarily grounded in perception, but by being in some known contrast with thought known as one's own.

Keywords: a priori entitlement, critical reasoning, first-person concept, knowledge of other minds

A small but persistent tradition in philosophy insists that there is a large divide between knowledge of one's thoughts and attitudes, and knowledge of one's thoughts and attitudes *as* one's own. The introduction of the *I* concept (please allow this convenient barbarism) has been characterized as a misleading, or at any rate momentous, step in need of special argument.[1] Hume complained that he could not find a self when he introspected.[2] He wondered whether 'the self' was simply an evolving (p.244) bundle of sensations and ideas, which he thought he *could* find in introspection. Lichtenberg suggested that Descartes' *cogito* is less certain, or more objectionable, than an impersonal substitute: He recommended that one substitute *a thinking that there are physical objects is occurring* for *I am thinking that there are physical objects*. He wrote:

> We are acquainted only with the existence of our sensations, imaginations, and thoughts. 'Thinking is going on' (*Es denkt*) is what one should say, just as one says, 'Lightning is occurring' (*Es blitzt*). Saying '*Cogito*' is too much, as soon as one translates it as 'I am thinking'. Accepting, postulating, the *I* is a practical requirement.[3]

Some have extrapolated these suggestions to the point of holding that there is something suspect about the use of the *I* concept to indicate an individual. A few have held that it is epistemically and metaphysically appropriate to dispense with the *I* concept altogether.

Lichtenberg's epigrammatic remarks provide a text for my discussion. Let me begin by taking up his emphasis on acquaintance. Lichtenberg is surely right, as was Hume before him, in claiming that what yields a usage for the *I* concept is not an acquaintance with something. We do not seem to 'introspect' a self. A view loosely associated with Hume maintains that since we cannot introspect a self, we should not regard *I* as having a referent. I mention this view only to set it aside. It stems from empiricist dogma so crude as not to merit serious consideration. There is no reason to accord such weight to the notions of acquaintance and looking-within in arbitrating an issue about reference or self-knowledge.

One could advance a less dogmatic point along similar lines, however. Lichtenberg's and Hume's observation that we are not directly acquainted with a self might be combined with the view that we do 'introspect' our thoughts, or at any rate have more immediate access to them. Then 'postulating' an agent (to echo Lichtenberg's words)—an agent in addition to the thought itself—may seem like a significant *step* that might be doubted. The result of forgoing the *I* concept, and making do with impersonal reference to thinking's going on, may seem less subject to doubt than the *cogito* itself.

It is not clear in what sense we 'introspect' thoughts, any more than we do a self. Thoughts present no inner-perceptual resistance (as perceptions of a physical object do); they commonly have no phenomenology. Moreover, the notions of acquaintance and introspection are elusive. They can hardly be taken as firm tools for understanding these matters. Still, we do, sometimes, 'run through' thoughts. In such cases, we seem to (p.245) have some occurrent grasp or understanding of them. There is, as far as I can see, no analogous occurrent grasp of a self. If one were impressed with this difference, one might sympathize with the view that the move from awareness of a current thought to the assumption of a self involves a *step* that is problematic in a way that the awareness of the thought is not.

But there is something misleading about this reasoning. It is entirely external to actual uses of *cogito*-like thoughts. For someone who has the *I* concept, there is no step from

recognition of the occurrence of a thought to the conclusion that there must be a self. There is no step, inference, or postulation at all. There is no identification of a self based on awareness or based on anything. Normally one simply applies the first-person concept immediately, not in *response* to anything. Such applications fall under the rule that the referent is the author of the thought. Given that the first-person concept is applied, there is no possibility of reference failure. And if one's ascription of the thought to oneself is immediate and non-inferential in this way, there is no possibility of misattribution or misidentification of the thinker of the thought.

The claim of differential certainty based on considerations of relative closeness to introspection seems uninteresting. The epistemic issues do not concern missteps within one's cognitive economy. Moreover, the character of the rule that governs reference with the first-person concept suggests that the introspectionist or perceptual model is mistaken. Mastering the first-person concept is sufficient to guarantee that applications will be successful. This suggests that the epistemic warrant associated with applications of the concept comes with mastery of the concept—and is non-empirical. It does not derive from experiences associated with particular applications of the concept. I shall return to this point.

In so far as we are to find a philosophically interesting challenge in Lichtenberg's remarks, I think that we must associate them with issues about the point and commitments of the first-person concept. The challenge is that acquisition of the *I* concept contains some error, or at least is dispensable for cognitive purposes.

Some have held that the first-person concept carries an objectionable commitment to mental substance separable from physical entities. I think this a mistake caused by overreaction to Descartes' claims to derive dualism from mere reflection on the *cogito*. Uses of the *I* concept make no obvious commitment regarding the metaphysical nature of its referent, other than that it be an author of thoughts. Deriving metaphysical implications from this commitment would require further argument, which would have to be evaluated on its merits.

(p.246) But Lichtenberg seems not to be raising a question about the nature of thinkers. He is questioning whether there are thinkers—referents of applications of the first-person concept—at all. Or at any rate, he is questioning whether belief in their existence, via judgements involving application of the first-person concept, stands on an epistemic par with knowledge of the existence of thoughts.

An issue often raised about Descartes' use of the *cogito* is whether one could refer to oneself in the first-person way if one did not have various perceptual experiences that enabled one to individuate oneself, or at least re-identify oneself over time. This question was raised sharply by Kant and has been pressed by Strawson and others in modern times. Sometimes it is inferred that one could not have purely intellectual knowledge of oneself or of one's thoughts as one's own; for self-knowledge inevitably depends on perceptual experience. But to know that certain thoughts are occurring, we seem only to have to think about the matter.

It is surely true that self-knowledge and the mastery of the first-person concept depend on perceptual experience. But it does not follow that reference with the first-person concept, or knowledge of oneself through employment of the first-person concept, rests for its justification on sense experiences. It is important here to distinguish dependence on sense experience for the mastery of concepts—ability dependence—from dependence on sense experience for fixing a reference or for being justified in or entitled to one's judgements. Perhaps understanding any concept—including logical ones—depends on having sense experiences of stable objects. But it does not follow that the reference of all concepts is fixed through sense experience.

The referent of a use of the *I* concept is *not* fixed by sensory experience. It is fixed purely by the rule: the referent is the author of the occurrence of thought containing application of the *I* concept. No perceptual ability to track that author enters into fixing the referent in any given instances.

The role of sensory experience in justification of *cogito*-like judgements is equally indirect. Although the very thinking of

the thoughts depends on having had certain types of sensory experiences, one's epistemic right to accept such judgements does not rest on such experiences. The relevant judgements are not reactive. One does not find oneself in introspection and then make a judgement about what one is thinking. One does not, or need not, connect oneself with some body that one tracks through time and base one's first-person judgement about one's own thoughts on this connection. One simply makes the judgement. One's epistemic right to make it is, at least prima facie, purely intellectual. It does not rest on any warrant given by sense experiences epistemically associated with the judgement.

(p.247) So the dependence of the conceptualized first-person perspective on having some third-person perspective on oneself or on other stable objects is not one that enters into the account of one's epistemic warrant for making such judgements. I think that Descartes was entirely right in his view that many first-person judgements are warranted through no more than their being understood. His being right about this in no way shows that it is coherent to conceive of someone with the *I* concept who takes only the first-person perspective. So Lichtenberg's claim that thoughts involving the first-person concept are epistemically less basic than thoughts (about thoughts) that lack that concept cannot be usefully developed by reflecting on the role of third-person perspectives in enabling us to think about ourselves.

There is, I think, a point about conceptual priority that one *can* usefully associate with Lichtenberg's remarks. They suggest the question of whether the *I* concept could be ‘dispensed with’. On this line, one would employ only propositional attitude concepts impersonally attributed in Lichtenberg's format. Lichtenberg compares the thought *that thinking is going on* (*es denkt*) to the thought *that lightning is striking* (*es blitzt*). A closer grammatical equivalent in English to the German *es denkt* would be *it is thundering* (*es donnert*). What would be lost if one followed Lichtenberg in using only these conceptions?

For the sake of argument I will not take a position on whether it is possible to have the concept of propositional attitudes, or

even to reason critically, yet lack the full first-person concept. (To reason critically in my sense, one must correct, suspend, change attitudes, conceived as such, on the basis of reasons acknowledged as such.) But I think that such beings would be conceptually deficient. They would lack a full conceptual perspective on themselves and their acts. I want to explain the deficiency and indicate what epistemic rights attach to self-attributions of thoughts containing the full first-person concept. I would like to do this without begging questions against Lichtenberg's position. I will develop an answer to Lichtenberg that assumes only what he is surely committed to: that reasoning occurs, and that it is a worthwhile theoretical enterprise to understanding reason and reasoning.

Given this objective, I will neglect other answers to Lichtenberg that I think obvious and sufficient in themselves. For example, I think that the idea of mental states and events without an individual *subject* is incoherent. Thinking requires an agent that thinks. For *persons* who think, the first-person concept makes possible reference to themselves from the perspective most basic to their thinking.

One can take the dependence of mental states on a subject further back ontogenetically. Consider subjects which have phenomenal or intentional states, but which by their nature lack critical reason—and hence, in my (p.248) view, are not persons and are not (or lack) selves. The very existence of perceptual states or sensations—even in the absence of propositional ability—requires a subject, an individual with subjectivity or consciousness. Perceptual systems of lower animals require a subject; and it is clear that those systems have some sort of non-conceptual egocentric sensitivity. Similarly, animals that think but by their nature lack critical reason lack selves; I think that they lack a full first-person concept. Their thinking too requires an individual subject. Animals with propositional attitudes certainly have non-conceptual egocentric sensitivity; perhaps they also have some indexical concept that applies to themselves and that is an ontogenetic predecessor of the full first-person concept. All these beings' mental states require a subject, whose subjectivity is a necessary aspect of their sensations, perceptions, or propositional attitudes (cf. n. 1).

Lichtenberg's format ignores the conceptual requirement that such states and events presuppose an individual subject with a subjective perspective. Egocentric sensitivities or concepts mark this perspective. I think that these truisms are decisive. Pursuing them might carry us further into the nature of persons or selves and into the ontological and ontogenetic roots of the first-person concept.

But my project here is not primarily to determine the nature or ontology of persons or selves, or the range and variety of egocentric sensitivity and conceptualization. It is to answer Lichtenberg's epigrammatic challenge to explicate the cognitive role and epistemic status of the first-person perspective, assuming only things about reason that Lichtenberg is committed to. Thus my argument will not depend on how one views the relation between persons and animals, or between selves and mere subjects. It does not even depend on my view that only beings whose natures make them capable of critical reason can have the full firstperson concept. It depends only on an argument that that concept has a certain necessary and unique role in fully understanding reasoning.

So what does Lichtenberg's format leave out?[4] One deficiency is articulated by Bernard Williams. Williams points out that Lichtenberg's formulation, ‘Thinking is going on’, needs ‘relativization’—intuitively, to a thinker or point of view. For there is a distinction between cases in which we regard thinkings of mutually contradictory propositions (p.249) as indicative of a violation of a law of logic and cases in which we regard them as indicative of disagreement. Similarly, there is a distinction between cases in which a thinking that *p* and a thinking that *q* indicate some normative pressure in the direction of a thinking that *p* and *q*—and cases in which there is no such pressure. The first case in each pair intuitively involves thoughts by a single thinker (at roughly the same time). The second case in each pair involves thoughts by different thinkers, or within different points of view.[5]

These points do force some sort of ‘relativization’. But it is not evident from them alone what the relativization should be. Lichtenberg might still resist use of the *I* concept. He might maintain the impersonality of formulation that he began with.

Derek Parfit has tried to remain true to Lichtenberg's spirit by providing a substitute for the *cogito* that makes explicit use of the notion of a point of view: *In the point of view or life to which this thought belongs, thinking is, in this very thought, going on*.[6]

I will assume that the key element in Lichtenberg's position is captured by this proposal. The key element is a claim that full understanding of reason or cognition can dispense with the first-person concept: the concept has no special epistemic status or cognitive value. It has at most merely 'practical' uses.

I think that this position is untenable. To understand fully the fundamental notions associated with reason, including the notions of reasoning, judgement, change of mind, propositional attitude, point of view, one must have and employ a first-person concept. Indeed, understanding the notion of reason itself—epistemic or practical—requires the first-person concept. I will not prejudge whether one must *have* the *I* concept in order to have these other concepts. Here I will argue that any being that had concepts of propositional attitude, reason, change of mind, (p.250) and so on, but lacked an *I* concept, would be conceptually deficient in the sense that it would lack the conceptual resources to understand fully the most basic necessary and apriori knowable features of the relevant notions. The notions of reason and first-personhood are, at the deepest levels, necessarily and apriori involved in understanding one another.

Reasoning is necessarily governed by evaluative norms that provide standards that count reasoning good or bad—reasonable or unreasonable. But to understand reasons and reasoning fully, it is not enough to understand abstractly that some purported reasons are good and others are bad. For reasons necessarily not only evaluate but have force in forming, changing, confirming attitudes in accord with the reasons. All reasons that thinkers have are *reasons-to*, not merely rational appraisals. But to understand reasons and reasoning, it is also not enough that one understand that rational evaluations should be, and normally (in thinkers) are, associated with some motive or impulse to think or act in

accord with the reason or rational evaluation. One must, further, have and understand this motive or impulse in one's own case, and actually apply reasons as rational evaluations to affect judgement and action—to support a judgement, change an attitude, or engage in action. In other words, fully understanding the concept of reason involves not merely mastering an evaluative system for appraising attitudes or relations between thoughts, and not merely realizing abstractly that in any reasoning such evaluations must be (somehow) associated with a motivating impulse to implement them. It requires mastering and conceptualizing the application of reasons in actual reasoning. And this requires being immediately moved by reasons in reasoning and understanding what it is to be so moved. There are thus applicational, or implementational, and motivational elements in understanding reasons.

These motivational elements are intrinsic to a broad notion of agency. I do not mean by ‘motivational’ to imply some interposition of desire or motive or volition. I mean that to understand reasons one must know how to use reasons, and indeed actually use them, to support or change one's own attitudes in one's own thinking practice. To understand the notion of reason, one must be susceptible to reasons. Reasons must have force for one, and one must be able to appreciate that force. Considerations seen as reasons must have some tendency to affect one's judgements and inferences according to the norms associated with the reasons. And one must recognize that this is so.

Having reasons and having some capacity to be moved by them—to think or otherwise act on account of them—are necessarily connected. The connection is not that everyone who has reasons must at every (p.251) moment have some tendency to be moved by them. One can perhaps imagine schizophrenics or mystics or quietists lacking such a tendency some of the time. But to have reasons one must, I think, have had some tendency to have one's thoughts and attitudes be affected by them. Beings who have reasons must sometimes be in continuing, uncoopted control of some events, in the sense that the events are a direct guided product of the reasoner's central rational powers. Events guided by reasons issuing from

a thinker's uncoopted central rational powers (from the thinker *qua* individual) are acts, as are the guiding events.

So in reasoning, no thinker can be a mere observer of reasons and their effects on reasoning. For having reason requires at some point having some tendency to be affected by reason's power in motivating reasoning. *Understanding* what a reason is, is partly understanding its motive force, as well as its evaluative norms. To understand reason and reasoning, this force must be operative in one's own case; and one must conceptualize its implementation. That is, one must be susceptible to the force and implement normative evaluations in guiding thought and other acts that fall under those evaluations; and (to understand reasoning), one must regard reasons as effective in one's judgements, inferences, and other activity. Doing so amounts to an acknowledgement of one's agency. If one conceptualizes this fully, one recognizes oneself as an agent. Here we see a point about agency that Lichtenberg missed in comparing thinking to lightning's occurring. Thinking is necessarily associated with reasoning—thinking guided by reasons—and reasoning cannot in general be a mere 'going on'. In making inferences, a being is *ipso facto* an agent.

Let me depart from the main line of argument to elaborate these remarks about agency. The relevant effects of reasons are effects on one's judgements, inferences, and other acts. In recognizing the effect of reasons on one's judgements and inferences, one cannot reasonably think of oneself as powerless. Reasons give one reason to make, change, or confirm a judgement or inference. Recognition of a contradiction in one's attitudes gives one reason to change them. Recognition that one's means will not suffice for one's end gives one reason to change one's means or end. To understand reasons, one must understand their force and application in one's reasoning. To understand their force and application one must have some tendency normally to make them effective in forming, changing, or confirming one's attitudes or inferences.

An instance of this sort of point is commonly associated with a view about moral reasons—the view that reasons that are

associated with obligation or with a good must, at least in normal cases and given that the person understands the reasons, be associated with some sort of (p.252) motivation. This view is shared by many who differ over the relation between reason and motivation (whether, for example, the motivation must reside in an independent desire and is a prior condition on a reason, or derives from understanding the reason itself). The point is normally applied to what are commonly called practical reasons. I think that it is embedded in the broader, less restrictive notion of reason, and applies no more to practical reasons and practical agency than to epistemic reasons and epistemic agency. The notions of agency and practice that I am explicating are broader, and I think more fundamental, than the standard notions of action and practical reason.

I return to the main line of argument. Reasons must sometimes provide immediate reason to—must sometimes be rationally applicable to affect an attitude or action—*immediately*. On pain of regress, in actual reasoning one cannot require a premiss or further reason for applying reasons, for implementing rational evaluations. In reasoning, reasons must have force in a way that is obvious and straightway. The rational relevance of reasons to their first implementation within one's thought must be rationally necessary and rationally immediate.

A fully explicit understanding of reason must be capable of marking conceptually the cases in reasoning where evaluating or appraising attitudes or activity under rational norms rationally motivates *immediate* implementation of the evaluations in shaping the attitudes or activity being evaluated. One can evaluate a system of attitudes (in another person or in the abstract) as unreasonable without its being immediately rational for one to change those particular attitudes, or even immediately rational that those attitudes be changed from the perspective in which implementation has to occur. To understand reason one must distinguish conceptually from such cases those cases where particular evaluations immediately rationally require being moved to affect the attitudes or activities being evaluated in accord with the evaluations.

These distinctions are knowable apriori. We can know apriori not only the distinction between evaluation and implementation. We can also know apriori how to conceptualize and recognize instances where implementation is immediately incumbent, and understand wherein these instances are relevantly different from cases where an evaluation of attitudes does not rationally demand immediate implementation of the evaluation on the attitudes being evaluated.

Many thinkers with reasons—many animals, I think—cannot mark the distinction. They lack full understanding of reason. They have not conceptualized what is fundamentally involved in reasoning. Full understanding of reasoning requires a form of thought that marks conceptually those particular attitudes where implementation on those attitudes of (p.253) a rational evaluation of those attitudes is rendered immediately rationally incumbent by the evaluation.

The first-person concept fills this function. Its association with a thought (‘I think . . . ’, ‘I judge . . . ’, ‘I infer . . . ’) marks, makes explicit, the immediate rational relevance of invocation of reasons to rational application, or implementation, and motivation. It both designates the agent of thought and marks the acts and attitudes where a rational evaluation of the act or attitude immediately rationally requires using that evaluation to change or maintain the attitude. Acknowledgement of a reason for or against an act or attitude to which one attaches, or can attach, one of these forms of ‘I think’ makes it immediately rationally incumbent on one to give the reason weight in making the act or attitude accord with it.

Acknowledging, with the *I* concept, that an attitude or act is one's own is acknowledging that rational evaluations of it which one also acknowledges provide immediate (possibly defeasible) reason and rationally immediate motivation to shape the attitude or act in accordance with the evaluation. Unless further evaluations of the attitude must be taken into account, there need be no further intervening reasoning involved for it to be rational to have the reason affect the attitude or act. The first-person concept fixes the locus of responsibility and marks the immediate rational relevance of a

rational evaluation to rational implementation on the attitude being evaluated—to epistemic or practical agency.[7]

First-person concepts, of which the singular is paradigmatic, are, I think, the only ones that fill this function. (I lay aside the plural 'we', though I think this notion deserves reflection.) Let me try to make this claim plausible by considering alternatives.

One can attribute irrationality to a judgement of the form 'It is judged that . . . '. But such an assessment makes explicit no immediate reason to change the commitment being evaluated, for the judgement is not attached to anyone who makes the judgement. The assessment marks no locus of responsibility or power associated with the judgement. One can conclude only that someone has reason to change the judgement.

Judgements in third-person form—like 'She judges that . . . ' and 'Burge judges that . . . '—do identify an author of the judgement. So they do identify a locus of power, responsibility to norms of reason, and rational motive. But these forms cannot mark the immediate rational (p.254) relevance of a rational assessment to modifying or standing by the judgement. Here the notion of *immediacy* is significant. I want to clarify the role of this notion in the account.

As I have noted, reasons enjoin thinking or acting in accordance with them. And anyone who has a reason normally has some motive force for implementing it in thought or action. But there is a further point. Anyone who has a reason that evaluates any act or attitude, no matter who is actor or subject of the attitude, has some rational motive—however attenuated—to affect the act or attitude in accordance with the reason. That is, reason has the *transpersonal function* of presenting true thoughts and guiding thought to truth, regardless of individual perspective or interest. This function is valid for any rational agent. But such a function operates only through the reasoning of individuals. So an individual's assessment of some judgement as irrational carries with it some prima-facie ground not only that it be altered—but some prima-facie ground to alter it, regardless of who the source of judgement is. But when the source is not understood to be

oneself, the reason to implement the evaluation cannot be *immediate*, in at least two respects.

One respect has to do with the person- or system-dependence that attaches to the having of reasons. What may be a reasonable evaluation by person (or system) A of an attitude held by a person (or system) B may not be a reasonable evaluation for B. For example, if A knows something on which the reason is based that B does not know (and has no reflective access to), then A's reasonable evaluation cannot be immediately rationally applicable for B. B would have to acquire the additional background knowledge. Similarly, if A's all-things-considered reasonable evaluation of B's attitude were based on information that B had but which was superseded by knowledge that B had but A lacked, then A's all-things-considered reasonable evaluation of B's attitude could provide no all-things-considered rational motivation for B. Again, the rational applicability of A's rational evaluation of B's attitude would not be immediate. This is a variant of Williams's point, discussed earlier. The fact that it is reasonable for A to make an inference with premisses for which A has good reasons does not immediately imply that it is reasonable for B to make the inference, since B may lack reason to believe one or more of the premisses. Since mismatches in information on which reasons can be based are always possible, no rational evaluation that is not universally self-evident, however reasonable, has rationally immediate application, with consequences for immediate implementation, across persons or across points of view. As long as the attitude is not taken to be one's own, there is always the possibility of a gap, and filling that gap involves a rational step.

(p.255) The second respect in which rational evaluations of attitudes not understood to be one's own are necessarily non-immediate in their implementation has to do with means. When the subject of the evaluated attitude is not understood to be oneself, one can propose to affect the attitude in accordance with the evaluation only non-immediately, by some *means*. One can propose to do so only by force or persuasion. One's power over, and responsibility for, the attitude (or activity) are not direct. So the question of how one is to bring about any alteration must inevitably arise. One cannot simply

alter the thought immediately, with no intervening practical premisses.

In one's own case, these questions do not normally arise. One may ask what element in one's point of view to modify in the face of reasons that count against a thought or an attitude. But, except in special cases, the rational relevance of reasons to implementation is direct, and does not pass through premisses about means.

The special cases are cases in which an attitude is psychologically immovable in the ordinary way, or those in which one sees one's own attitudes as objects, rather than as parts of one's critically rational point of view. One may then have to reason about one's attitudes as if they were those of another person, perhaps even using methods of manipulation on oneself. But then there must be other attitudes and thoughts over which one has immediate power. If there were no such attitudes and thoughts, one would not be a reasoner at all.

So third-person attributions do not mark the immediate rational relevance of rational evaluation to implementation of the evaluation. Even when a third-person attribution is to oneself, the relevance is not rationally immediate. For one could fail to know that the third-person attribution applied to oneself. I could fail to know that I am Burge. And although I do know, the *rational* relevance of reasons to their affecting my attitudes is not conceptually immediate. It must pass through the assumption that I am Burge.

Even third-person attributions that draw on the epistemology of first-person authority do not mark the immediate relevance of reasons to reasoning. For example, the Lichtenberg-like formulation—‘in the point of view or life to which this thought belongs, it is being judged, in this very thought, that . . . ’—does not do so. Such a specification constitutes no acknowledgement of proprietary power over, or responsibility for, the thought, much less a locus of power and responsibility. There is nothing in the content of ‘this very thought’ that ensures that it is one's own and makes for immediacy of rational evaluation to rational implementation. We tend to

presume that *all and only* thoughts referred to that way, and that can be known non-inferentially, *are* one's own. (p.256) But there is no rational necessity that this be so. Even if there were, understanding the necessity would require that one make explicit that such thoughts are necessarily one's own. And doing this would require use of the first-person concept. So any presumption of immediacy associated with such conceptualizations relies on an implicit premiss identify-ing the thoughts as one's own. Lacking such a premiss, the rational relevance of reasons to implementation is not immediate.

Similarly, specifications of oneself like ‘the thinker of this very thought judges that . . . ’ or ‘the agent of the point of view that contains this very thought thinks that . . . ’ do not do so. They do specify a locus of power. But they do not acknowledge proprietary power over, and responsibility for, the thought. They are simply objectively descriptive of the thought's owner. Such specifications express a point of view on oneself from the outside.

The relevance of third-person self-descriptions, and of the Lichtenbergean description of a ‘point of view’, to implementation of rational evaluations is not rationally immediate. They depend on connection to the first-person conception. The premiss that one is the relevant thinker—or that one is the author of the relevant point of view—is necessary for making the description immediately rationally relevant to connecting reasons to their application in reasoning.

Only the acknowledgement of authorship or ownership for thoughts or attitudes makes conceptually explicit the immediate rational connection between rational assessment of those thoughts and the affecting of the attitudes according to the norms of the assessment. Any way of thinking of oneself, or of one's point of view, that does not carry this acknowledgement conceptualizes associated attributed attitudes as objects of thought, but not necessarily and immediately ones to reason with in accordance with the evaluations.

Recognition that a thought is one's own—taking up the subjectivity and proprietary ownership expressed in the first-person concept—is the only basis for conceptually expressing having a rationally immediate and necessary reason to tend a point of view, to make the reasons effective on the attitudes they evaluate. Attributions of attitudes in first-person form instantiate recognition of ownership and power of agency, and of the rationally immediate motive force and implementational encumbency of reasons. Rational activity presupposes a distinctive rational role for the first-person singular concept.

Much of the content of science and mathematics includes no first-person elements. Scientific writing leaves out such elements on principle. Such omission acknowledges the transpersonal function of reason. It also acknowledges the fact that theory and evidence in these disciplines are perspective-independent, in the sense that anyone could have made the same observations or come to the same theory. But the application (p.257) of reasons within such theorizing—indeed, the very notion of reason—nevertheless presupposes the first-person concept. Understanding reason and the objective point of view of science and mathematics is inseparable from taking on and acknowledging explicitly a first-person way of thinking.

The reason why this is so is that reason has an essential relation to reasoning, to the *practice* of being moved by reasons. The practice of reason, not just the form and content of reasons, is inseparable from the nature of reason. Having reason and having a reason are essentially associated with some impetus to think or otherwise act in accordance with reason. Understanding reason requires being inclined to be affected or motivated by reasons—to form, change, or confirm beliefs or other attitudes in accordance with them—when those reasons apply to one's own attitudes. So understanding reason entails some optimism and commitment regarding the possibility and effect of reason in one's thinking. Here Lichtenberg was on to something deep in the last remark of the passage we began with: ‘Accepting, postulating, the *I* is a practical requirement.’ Despite the misleading point about postulation, and despite the fact that Lichtenberg was wrongly thinking of a practical requirement as in some opposition to

epistemic or theoretical requirements, the linkage of the first-person concept with practice is on to a fundamental point.

Let me summarize the main line of argument. To fully understand basic features of the concept of reason, it is not enough to understand the concept in the abstract. It is not enough to understand the evaluation of attitudes or thoughts as being reasonable or unreasonable. And it is not enough to understand, in the abstract, that reasons enjoin and normally motivate thinking or acting in accordance with the normative standards that they set. Fully understanding the concept of reason also requires engaging in reasoning, and understanding basic features of such reasoning. Engaging in reasoning requires implementing reasons or rational evaluations immediately on the attitudes to which the reasons or rational evaluations apply—being moved to think in accordance with one's reasons. Understanding basic features of such reasoning requires understanding such implementation. Fully conceptualizing and understanding such implementation requires an ability to mark conceptually, in actual particular instances, the attitudes or acts for which it is rationally immediate that one's all-things-considered reason or rational evaluation of the attitude or act enjoins shaping it in accord with the reason or rational evaluation. Such understanding requires being able to distinguish those attitudes from attitudes in which one's all-things-considered evaluation of the attitude indicates (as always) that the attitude should be shaped in accordance with the evaluation, but in which this indication (p.258) does not presume to be all-things-considered in the point of view from which the implementation must be carried out. That is the implementational relevance is not rationally immediate: it is subject to further possible rational considerations that bear on the rational appropriateness of its implementation. The first-person concept marks the former set of attitudes. Its use marks those attitudes where the individual's rational evaluation of them carries a rationally immediate incumbency to shape the attitude in accord with the evaluation. Acknowledging them as one's own is acknowledging such responsibility. The first-person concept is the only concept that fills this function in the actual practice of reasoning. So fully understanding the concept of reason, and engaging in

reasoning in the most reflective and articulated way, require having the *I* concept and being able to apply it for this purpose.

I have summarized this argument in a way that brings out that it does not beg the question against Lichtenberg. It assumes only that Lichtenberg is committed to understanding reason and reasoning. The argument shows that the first-person concept is indispensable to a full understanding of reason, including theoretical reason. Given the understanding of agency expressed earlier, and given the fact that thinking presupposes reasoning, the argument yields a corollary—thinking presupposes agency. Each of these points is incompatible with the view I have associated with Lichtenberg.

The argument also undermines the view that the first-person concept is of *merely* practical significance. As I noted, Lichtenberg holds that accepting the first-person concept is a 'practical requirement'. The context suggests that practical requirements are to be distinguished from more 'substantive' requirements that might be relevant to knowledge or reality. But the first-person concept is essential to understanding reasoning of any sort—theoretical or practical. The understanding involved in marking conceptually, through the first-person concept, individual cases where rational evaluation of attitudes rationally requires immediate implementation of the evaluation on the evaluated attitudes is no less theoretical than practical. In fact, a sharp distinction between the theoretical and the practical makes no sense at this level of reflection. Any reasoning necessarily involves agency. Fully understanding all reason and all reasoning requires the first-person concept. So the first-person concept is as relevant to metaphysics and scientific reasoning as it is to 'merely practical' matters.

Thus the role of the first-person concept in understanding reason cannot be taken as 'merely practical' in a way that would undermine the natural idea that uses of the concept *refer*. I have in effect provided an argument, as if one were needed, that such uses do refer: True accounts (p.259) of subject-matters of theoretical importance are committed to

referents for their irreducible singular terms. True accounts of the nature of reasoning are theoretically important and are irreducibly committed to uses of the first-person concept. Uses of the first-person concept constitute uses of a singular term. So in being committed to such accounts, we are committed to referents for uses of the first-person concept.

It is not my purpose to rebut attempts to show that the first-person concept is non-singular, or attempts to challenge the standard view of referential commitment just sketched. I know of no interesting, clear-headed challenges of these sorts to the ordinary view that uses of the firstperson concept refer. To this extent, Descartes and common sense are confirmed.[8] My main purpose, however, has not been to argue reference, but to establish the role of the first-person concept in understanding reason and reasoning.

The first-person concept plays a central role in apriori understanding of reason, agency, and ourselves. I want to say a little about the place I have given understanding in this account. I have not argued that to reason, in the weak sense of making good inferences, one must *have* the first-person concept. I think that animals engage in rudimentary thinking, which (given that it *is* thinking) constitutively occurs in normal cases according to norms of reason. Inferential thinking is caused or guided by reasons, and is explained by their being reasons. But animals lack the first-person concept that interests me. They have some sensitivity to their own points of view, but I think that they lack the conceptualized self-attributions necessary to employ a full-blown first-person concept.

I have not even argued that engaging in *critical* reasoning—the sort that evaluates attitudes as reasonable or unreasonable, and that shapes attitudes according to such evaluations—requires, by necessity, having a first-person concept. I have not argued this because I think the relevant issues need further clarification. In our actual social development, it is of course true that one acquires the first-person concept before or during the development of critical reasoning. The hard issue is whether (p.260) this order is necessary and knowable by apriori reflection. On the other hand, we can certainly

imagine critical reasoning proceeding without explicit *linguistic* expression of a first-person point of view. Whether it is necessary and knowable by apriori reflection that the first-person point of view be *implicitly* conceptualized whenever critical reasoning occurs is the delicate matter that I have left open.

So I have allowed, for the sake of the present argument, that a critical reasoner might lack the full first-person concept. Such a reasoner would conceptualize reasons and attitudes as such, and would be sensitive to cases where attitudes had to be shaped immediately by reasons. But the reasoner could not mark those cases conceptually in the implementation of reasoning.

Critical reasoning is the sort of reasoning that we associate with the nobility of being a person, with science, mathematics, art, practical reasoning, and with rational enquiry of all kinds. So supposing for the sake of argument that such reasoning does not require having the first-person concept, what philosophical significance is there in the argument that one cannot *understand* reason (*a fortiori* critical reason) without that concept?[9]

I want to highlight two types of significance. One stems from the sort of understanding that is involved. The understanding is apriori, and can be derived from reflection on fundamental aspects of the nature and functions of reason. I maintain that every step of the argument which established the role of the first-person concept in fully understanding reason is apriori.

Such understanding can be derived from reflection—on concepts and on actual reasoning. And it is not part of some esoteric theorizing about reason. It normally arises from the most elementary cognitive development in a social setting.[10] Uses of the first-person concept in claiming acts or attitudes as one's own are normal acknowledgements of authorship and responsibility in critical reasoning. They are part of a full expression of what it is to be reasonable. A being that reasoned but lacked a first-person concept would not have conceptualized or rationally expressed a *fundamental* function of reason. Being able to conceptualize, for implementation in

reasoning, the cases where there is a rational demand and motivation immediately to shape evaluated attitudes in accordance with the evaluation is placing under conceptual control one (p.261) of the most basic functions of critical reasoning. Use of the first-person concept is a conceptual expression of one of the central functions of reason.

As a consequence, use of the concept is underwritten by reason. We are entitled to first-person concepts in judgements partly because they are necessary to the fully articulated exercise (as well as understanding) of reason. The first-person concept earns its place in the general nonempirical entitlement to self-attributions of thoughts partly through its constitutive association with a particular fundamental feature of critical reasoning.

Thus I believe that I have provided a rational 'deduction', in Kant's sense, of the first-person concept. I have shown that we have a right to use the concept, a right that is grounded in reason. The steps of this exposition of right are warranted apriori. Moreover, the points that I have made about the dependence of our understanding of reason on practice—actual applications—and on understanding practice suggest a sense in which our apriori understanding of the concept of reason, and of the first-person concept, is not purely 'analytic', in the sense of being grounded in abstract conceptual analysis.[11] Fully understanding the concept of reason requires understanding reasoning. Understanding reasoning requires use and understanding of the first-person concept. The relevant use and understanding resides in conceptualizing an awareness of the rationally immediate applicability of rational evaluations to affecting attitudes *in the actual practice of reason*. Such awareness must be an understanding of actual applications of reasoning. It cannot be obtained from conceptual analysis alone. So the 'deduction' is synthetic by any measure.

(p.262) The second type of significance bears on the role of the first-person concept in conceptualizing rational agency. Part of being a fully rational agent is, in Kant's phrase, to act under an idea or concept of that agency. A being that lacked the first-person concept could be sensitive to the norms of

reason, and might (I am conceding for the sake of argument) even sensitively shape its attitudes according to a *conception* of good and bad reasons and reasoning. But the agent would lack full conceptualization of what it is doing.

More specifically, it could not conceptualize cases in which reasons had immediate rational relevance to implementation of the reasons on the acts or attitudes that they bear on. It could not fully conceptualize its agency and acknowledge its responsibility to rational norms. It would not be 'acting under the idea' of its responsibility or agency. In so far as *full* intellectual (or any other) responsibility requires the capacity to understand the way norms govern agency and the capacity to acknowledge the responsibility, a being that lacked the first-person concept would not be fully responsible intellectually. It would not have a fully realized rational agency. Conceptualized self-consciousness seems a necessary condition for fully responsible agency. Using the first-person concept is necessary to being a fully realized person.

* * *

I want to step back now and consider briefly how this discussion of the role of the first-person concept in reasoning bears on self-knowledge and knowledge of other minds. This is a subject that needs fuller development on another occasion. But a brief sketch may place in a sharper light the preceding discussion.

Elsewhere I have maintained that self-knowledge has a special epistemic status by virtue of its role in critical reasoning. I argued that the nature of critical reasoning requires that some self-knowledge, that which is essential to rational review, must be epistemically different from observation of objects. I maintained that our epistemic entitlement to relevant self-attributions derives, in one sense, from the essential role of such judgements in critical reasoning.[12] The relevant self-knowledge is non-inferential and intellectually grounded. Whatever the details of this account, it is natural to think of self-knowledge as independent of perception of objects for its epistemic warrant.

How does self-knowledge differ from knowledge of other minds? A natural answer contrasts the intellectually grounded character of the relevant self-knowledge with the observationally based character of (p.263) knowledge of other minds. The relevant self-knowledge is epistemically warranted by an immediate intellectual entitlement, one sanctioned by reason and present in a being with the right conceptual equipment as a consequence of his simply thinking normally. By contrast, according to this natural answer, knowledge of other minds is indirect in that it requires an empirical inference from the perceived behaviour of another being—or else it is drawn from complex criteria applied to observed behaviour. In any event, its epistemic warrant rests on perception of behaviour.

It may be that self-knowledge requires as a psychological condition that one have or have had knowledge of other minds. It might even be (though I doubt it) that it is impossible in some more metaphysical sense to know one's own mind without knowing another mind, or the existence of another mind. But, runs this natural reasoning, self-knowledge has an immediacy and non-empirical intellectual epistemic warrant that is not shared by knowledge of others' minds. Its warrant derives from intellection, whereas knowledge of other minds rests on sense-perceptual observation.

I think that the situation is more complicated. Both self-knowledge and knowledge of other minds can, of course, be inferential or perceptually grounded. But in my view both self-knowledge and knowledge of other minds can be epistemically immediate and epistemically grounded in intellectual, non-empirical entitlements. The fundamental epistemic differences between self-knowledge and knowledge of other minds are more subtle. I do not have the space to elaborate and defend my view that knowledge of other minds can be non-inferential and can rest on an intellectual, non-perceptual entitlement. But I will sketch the main line of reasoning.[13]

This sketch is necessary to motivate the point of this concluding section. The point will be this: The role of the first-person concept in reasoning illuminates a common source, as

well as a key difference between self-knowledge and knowledge of other minds.

I think that we can have a non-empirical, apriori epistemic entitlement to knowledge of other minds through our intellectually grounded entitlement to accept our seeming understanding of speech as genuine understanding. We have an apriori entitlement to prima-facie reliance on our seeming understanding of an apparent utterance of content as genuine understanding.

A justification or entitlement is apriori if neither sense experiences (p.264) nor sense-perceptual beliefs are referred to or relied upon to contribute to the justificational force particular to that justification or entitlement. So, roughly, *justifications or entitlements* are apriori if their force derives from intellection, understanding, or the nature of other cognitive or practical capacities. *Knowledge* is apriori if it is grounded in an apriori just-ification or entitlement that suffices to make the knowledge knowledge. This conception of apriority allows that one can know apriori of the existence of particulars—for example, particular mental events—if one's justification or entitlement is intellectual, not sense-perceptual. For example, I think that one knows apriori, in this sense, *cogito*-like thoughts. The argument I will sketch supports the view that one can know with apriori (defeasible) entitlement of the existence of other minds.[14]

Let me emphasize that the issues here have to do with the nature of the epistemic warrant, not the mechanism that makes the knowledge possible. Of course, we need perception to hear or see words. So we need perception to understand speech emanating from another mind. That is *how* we do it. This *is* a difference between knowledge of other minds and knowledge of one's own. For one normally does not need perception to know one's own thoughts. But these points concern the mechanism of knowledge acquisition, not, in my view, the nature of our epistemic warrant—justification or entitlement. I believe that our epistemic entitlement to our understanding of content need not have, and sometimes lacks, a perceptually based element.

We can apprehend the presentation of propositional content in speech by simply understanding it, by thinking the content and understanding it as being presented. This understanding depends causally and psychologically on perception. But that dependence need not be justificational.[15] (p.265) The epistemic entitlement has its force in abstraction from the background dependence on perception. Perception of words, of utterance events, commonly plays an enabling role but not a justificatory role, in our understanding and, indeed, acceptance of intelligible, expressed contents.

I see the matter on partial analogy with the way in which traditional rationalists saw the role of diagrams or symbols in enabling one to apprehend and see the truth of geometrical or mathematical contents.[16] The fact that perceiving something (symbols or utterances) is psychologically necessary to understanding the content is fully compatible with the epistemic warrant's deriving from understanding and being non-empirical, in the sense that the justificational force of the warrant does not derive from perception. In the mathematical case, one's warrant for believing the content derives from genuine understanding of the content alone. In the interlocution case, one's warrant for presuming that one understands derives from one's seeming understanding of an apparent *instantiation*, or *token occurrence*, of content.[17]

Understanding content requires (in normal cases) understanding the attitudinal (e.g. assertive) mode of the content. And understanding attitudinal mode is further inseparable from understanding instantiations, or token occurrences, of content. One's entitlement to rely on one's seeming understanding is fundamentally an entitlement to rely on seeming understanding of instantiations. This is, other things being equal, an intellectual or apriori, defeasible entitlement. Its probity or justificational force as a rational starting-point derives not from experience, but from conceptual understanding. In my view, where perception of physical events functions to provide access to an instantiation (utterance) of content with its attitudinal mode, not to provide information about objects, perception is no more an element in the justification of the understanding (and of beliefs based on the understanding) than memory is an element in the

justification of deductive (p.266) reasoning.[18] The role of perception is to make understanding possible. But the seeming understanding carries justificational force in itself, in abstraction from its genetic reliance on perception.

So seeming understanding provides an apriori prima-facie entitlement to presume genuine understanding of an instantiation of content. But the presumption of the existence of an instantiation (for example, an assertive utterance) of content in explicit propositional form provides an apriori prima-facie entitlement to presume that the event has a rational source. For instantiation of content can be known apriori to be constitutively dependent on a system of rational practices for belief formation and content formation.

There are many difficult issues about the points just made. I will have to leave them in undeveloped form for present purposes. So seeming to understand an instantiation of content, together with its mode, gives one apriori prima-facie ground to presume that it ultimately has a rational source. That is enough to give one apriori prima-facie ground to presume the existence of a rational agent or mind. It seems to me that if the presumption is undefeated and veridical, one will have knowledge of the existence of a mind on the basis of seeming understanding of what is prima facie intelligible.

This presumption need not be the product of an inference, any more than there need be an inference to the existence of oneself in the thinking of *cogito*-like thoughts. Anyone with the requisite conceptual equipment (concepts of thoughts, and first- and third-person pronouns) will be apriori entitled to the presumption of a rational agent both from firstperson thinking of one's thoughts and from understanding of thoughts articulated by others. Indeed, anyone unable to immediately associate an instantiated propositional content with the existence of a rational source—a rational author, agent, or locus of power—would be conceptually deficient in something like the way that someone confined to Lichtenberg's formulations would be conceptually deficient. For a reflective understanding of propositional instantiation of content entails understanding that rational norms associated with uses of content apply to agents, loci of rational power. In the first-

person case, one indicates rational agency with the *I* concept. As I have argued in the main part of this essay, application of that concept marks acknowledgement of intellectual responsibility and agency. Since this acknowledgement expresses a fundamental function of reasoning, we are rationally entitled (p.267) to the application of the concept. What sort of epistemic entitlement do we have for attribution of authorship to *others* when we understand their utterances?

I have argued that when one seemingly understands an utterance in interlocution, one is apriori prima-facie entitled to a belief in the existence of a *rational source*—some agent capable of producing utterances with propositional content and attitudinal force, and responsible for acting under rational norms. For one to be entitled to presume that such a source is *another* agent, one with *another* mind, one must be entitled to presume that it is not oneself. So knowledge of other minds is distinguished from self-knowledge not by being necessarily inferential or by being necessarily grounded in perception, but by being in some known contrast with acknowledgement of an understood instantiation of content as one's own.[19]

The key feature of the first-person concept is that it marks acknowledgement of the immediate relevance of reasons to intellectual practice. In understanding utterances in interlocution, one lacks ground for this acknowledgement. I think that to be critically rational, one must have, and be apriori entitled to, a capacity for a fallible sensitivity as to whether an act associated with a seemingly understood instantiation of content is one's own.

One is also apriori prima-facie entitled to rely on particular applications of this capacity. To be critically rational, one must have, in normal cases, sufficient awareness as to when and whether one is the agent of propositional acts to distinguish instances in which one is committed under rational norms governing thoughts with the relevant attitudinal modality from instances in which one is not. This sensitivity is necessary for the ability to apply reasons straightway. Indeed, it is, as we have seen, a constitutive part of reasoning and understanding reason. So entitlement to it is apriori. If norms of critical reason that indicate how one ought to reason (or otherwise act

reasonably) are to apply to one's mental states, one must have, and be rationally entitled to, awareness of instances where they apply and where they do not. This is to say that one must have some apriori entitled awareness for one's *not* being the agent of relevant instantiations of content, and for one's thereby (p.268) not being rationally committed under rational norms governing the relevant agency.

To know the author of an instantiation of content to be oneself or another, one needs to apply concepts in accordance with the sensitivities discussed above. As indicated before, to be fully responsible to the relevant norms, one needs to be able to act under the idea of the norms. One needs to be able to know and acknowledge one's responsibility. Thus conceptualization of the sensitivities is necessary for being fully responsible to the norms of critical rationality.

These remarks apply to any utterances in interlocution that fall under rational norms—to assertions, to suppositions, to promises, perhaps even to story-tellings. Any understood utterance might be such that one is apriori entitled not to see oneself as its responsible author, relative to whatever rational norms are relevant. Ability to apply the rational norms entails an awareness of differences between reception and initiation. This sort of awareness is fundamental to being a rational agent. Given that one has first- and third-person concepts and the concept of agency, and given that one understands—and is entitled to understand —some particular content instantiations which one is aware of as not being one's own, one's entitlement to this awareness gives one apriori prima-facie entitlement to presume that there is a rational agent other than oneself.[20] One's entitlement to believe in other minds can depend for its justificational force on intellectual understanding of instantiations of intentional content—intellectual ‘experience’—rather than senseperceptual experience.

Let me illustrate these ideas for the case of understanding assertions in interlocution. Suppose that we are apriori prima facie entitled to rely on seeming understanding of events as presentations-as-true, more particularly as assertions (cf. note 17). Of course, one's understanding is compatible with one's

not accepting what is asserted. Unless one accepts an assertion, one is not rationally committed to there being rational support for the assertion, much less rationally committed to defend it. This conceptual space between understanding and acceptance of an actual assertion is one to which a rational agent must be sensitive—and be apriori entitled to be sensitive—if he is to be subject to rational norms governing acceptance. So to be subject to such norms, one must be apriori entitled to a sensitivity that differentiates merely understanding assertions from making assertions. But this is equivalent to a sensitivity to whether the source of an assertion is another or oneself.

(p.269) To articulate another side of this same point: a critically rational being must be able to—and be apriori entitled to—discriminate the sorts of rational warrant that are relevant to acceptance of understood propositional content. In the case of one's own judgements, one must be able to advert to grounds, accessible to one, that would provide some justification. Or else one must (as in perceptual judgements) have access to some mark of one's entitlement (for example, one's experience). But the norms of reason governing *interlocution* allow that one be rational in one's acceptance of an assertion and lack independent epistemic warrant for the proposition accepted. One is not rationally responsible for defence of one's beliefs in the same way as one is for defence of one's autonomous beliefs. One must rely on rational entitlements or justifications (in others) that one lacks. One's acceptance presumes justifications, or entitlements, that one may not oneself have. To be subject to the epistemic norms governing interlocution, one must have and be apriori entitled to awareness of this dependence. This awareness yields apriori entitlement to presume that the agent of an assertion is not oneself.

So one is apriori entitled to awareness of whether or not a commitment associated with a putative assertion is one's own. For to be subject to epistemic norms one must be able to discriminate cases in which one is committed to rational support of the commitment from cases in which one is not. To be rational one must have, and be apriori entitled to, some sense for one's *not* accepting actual assertions. Where one's

seeming understanding of an apparent assertion is accompanied by an awareness that one is not the agent of the assertion, one has an apriori prima-facie ground for presuming that there is another mind, another rational agent.

These entitlements to an understanding of the type of rational commitments that our intellectual activities fall under underwrite a non-inferential ability to discern one's authorship or non-authorship of intellectual (or practical) acts or commitments. We need not *infer* that a rational source of interlocution is another mind. We believe it through understanding an assertion in the third-person attributive way. If one has the requisite conceptual equipment to make explicit third-person attributions of propositional content, one can know immediately in understanding an utterance its being a sign of another person, just as in using the first-person concept in *cogito*-like thoughts, one knows non-inferentially a thought as one's own.

Thus, at the base of rational practice is an awareness of the source of rational agency. We are entitled to a non-inferential belief that there is another agent through the very understanding of utterances in interlocution. Third-person attributions have a source in a rationally (p.270) required and rationally entitled ability to distinguish, at least in normal cases, our own acts and commitments from acts and commitments that are not our own.

We can be mistaken. Something that appears to have a rational source or to be endowed with mind can be random. Something that appears to come from another mind might have its well-spring in our own unconscious. But infallibility is too much to hope for. Our apriori entitlements in these matters are inevitably defeasible.

What Lichtenberg missed is the role of the first-person concept both in designating a source of rational agency and in acknowledging subjection to epistemic norms and power to act under them. The reverse side of this ability to acknowledge the commitments of one's rational agency is an ability to acknowledge sources of commitments other than one's own. One can sometimes do this non-inferentially, on the basis of

intellectual understanding of utterances of content. When this is so, one's ability to recognize and understand other minds is not epistemically grounded in sense experience. It is grounded in understanding content in interlocution, and in an entitlement, underwritten by apriori requirements of rational agency, to recognize one's liabilities and entitlements as a rational agent.[21]

Notes:

(1) By the *I* concept or (ignoring the plural *we* for now) the first-person concept, I intend an indexical concept shared by fully mature language-users by virtue of their mastery and understanding of the term ‘I’, or exact translations thereof. This is only a rough reference-fixing explication. I do not assume (though I think it may be true) that only language-users have the relevant full first-person concept. The main argument of the essay does not depend on any very exact understanding of what is essential to having the concept. But I assume that having what I call the full first-person concept involves having other concepts and conceptual abilities that go beyond mere egocentric awareness—for example, concepts of thought and agency and some re-identification or self-tracking abilities. I believe that autonomous use of the full first-person concept is possible only for persons, and that it applies to entities of a certain important kind—persons or selves, which I take to be by nature (in part) critical reasoners. But the argument of the essay does not depend on, or establish, this view either. Nor does it depend on distinguishing this concept from lower-level egocentric sensitivities or modes of reference (even perhaps egocentric concepts) utilized by animals that are not persons. The argument I shall give only supports the view that necessarily when critical reasoners use the full first-person concept, it fulfils certain functions. I want to start with a notion that is relatively noncommittal from a theoretical point of view and assume that it is familiar. I think it would be a mistake to get into deep issues about ontology of persons, selves, and concepts, or fine-grained issues about concept-individuation, in advance of considering the argument I will offer as applied to a recognizable element in intentional thought contents that is commonly expressed with the word ‘I’. Concepts are elements in intentional thought contents. If

one wants to avoid calling intentional indexical elements in intentional thought contents ‘concepts’, one can find a different terminology. The key assumption is that there is a structural intentional element or aspect of thought that is shared by all thoughts properly expressed using the first-person singular pronoun. I am interested in the role and epistemic status of this element or aspect.

(2) David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I. iv. 6.

(3) G. C. Lichtenberg, *Schriften und Briefe*, ii (Carl Hanser Verlag, 1971), 412, §76.

(4) One relatively minor intuitive deficiency is that there is no self-referentiality or self-verification in Lichtenberg's purported analogies to the *cogito*. Even laying aside issues about the first-person concept, the realization that thinking is going on is different from the realization that it is thundering. The former realization is, or will become on reflection, self-referential, and not subject to illusion or error. This difference could be admitted by Lichtenberg. He could simply understand *thinking is going on* as *thinking is in this very thought going on*.

(5) Bernard Williams, *Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), 95–100. Williams does not pursue the question whether impersonal (thirdperson) specifications might replace the first-person way of specifying a subject that thinks, or even whether the reference must be to an agent. Williams accuses both Lichtenberg and Descartes of failing to provide a basis for individuating minds, and claims that some reference to physical bodies is necessary. In this, he follows Strawson, *Individuals* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959), 93–100.

(6) Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), sects. 81, 88. Parfit goes beyond Williams in developing the questions whether the ‘relativization’ to a mind must specify a person in unreduced terms, and whether the specification must be with the *I* concept. He suggests a negative answer to both questions. He hopes to provide a reductive explanation of what a person is by specifying various sorts of continuity among mental states and events. And he

purports to express the truth of the *cogito* by dispensing with the *I* concept in favour of self-referential demonstratives. The project of giving a reductive description of what persons are is not presently at issue. But the proposal to de-personalize the *cogito* will be the subject of what follows.

(7) John Perry, 'The Problem of the Essential Indexical', Nous, 13 (1979), 3–21, repr. in *The Problem of the Essential Indexical* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), insightfully makes the point that attribution of beliefs involving the first-person indexical is essential to the explanation of certain actions. Perry does not connect the point to fundamental features of reason, or to the broader notion of agency, that includes mental agency, that I have highlighted.

(8) As I noted earlier, I do not think that Cartesian dualism can be inferred from applications of the first-person concept. But I do think that the concept's cognitive role is relevant to metaphysics and epistemology. The argument just sketched helps show why it is mistaken to embrace the strange idea that Lichtenberg's remarks have sometimes inspired—that thinking is best seen (perhaps best seen for 'metaphysical' purposes) as going on without a thinker, or that the first-person concept never literally has a reference. Note that the earlier argument that thinking requires agency also tends to undermine this view, in so far as it is especially hard to conceive of agency without an agent. It is not an accident that Lichtenberg's formulations gravitate to locutions that do not attribute agency. In so far as the first-person concept is necessary to a full understanding of any sort of reason, including theoretical reason, there is no room to see its implications as dispensable or merely practical.

(9) I owe this question to Barry Stroud.

(10) Thus, although it is a delicate question whether critical reasoners metaphysically *must* have the first-person concept, it is certainly normal for critical reasoners to have it; and the concept enters into ordinary understanding of those critical activities that mark their nobility.

(11) I reject any conception of analyticity that claims truth independent of the way 'the world' (or a subject-matter) is.

The notion of analyticity that applies simply to truths of logic plus definitions seems to me harmless if one does not build bad theory into one's understanding of logic or definitions. I am not hostile on principle to the third notion of analyticity—the one associated with analysis of concepts. But I am agnostic about how fruitful or important the notion is. There may be broader and narrower conceptions of such analysis. On the narrower, traditional conception, analysis must take the form of decomposition. On a broader conception, analysis might include any constitutive account of the nature of a concept partly or purely in terms of its relations to others. I am doubtful that there is any clear historical basis for calling truths that are the products of analysis in the broader sense 'analytic'. Conceptual truths that 'go beyond'—or depend on conceptual relations beyond—the putative components of a concept are, I think, traditionally counted synthetic. On the interpretation in terms of the narrower notion of analysis, I think that the conception of analyticity has nowhere near the importance accorded to it by Leibniz or even by Kant. I presume that analyses of either sort, like the truths of logic, are true not only in virtue of the nature of concepts, but in virtue of (presumably necessary) features of the world. Cf. my 'Philosophy of Language and Mind: 1950–1990', *Philosophical Review*, 101 (1992), esp. 3–11.

(12) See my 'Our Entitlement to Self-Knowledge', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 96 (1996), 91–116.

(13) Much of the reasoning that immediately follows is layed out in my 'Content Preservation', *Philosophical Review*, 102 (1993), 457–88.

(14) This conception of apriority is discussed at greater length in ibid. I hope to show elsewhere that the conception is a traditional one, rooted in Kant, despite the fact that apriority was traditionally not associated with defeasibility, and was often not applied to knowledge of events in time (even sometimes the *cogito*). (Kant refused to apply his conception in any of these ways, but I think that this was the upshot of ancillary doctrine, not a direct consequence of his conception of apriority.) I think users of the conception did not always see possible consequences of its use, or were blocked from

accepting such consequences by other doctrines. Earlier in the essay I spoke of apriori reflection. Reflection or understanding is apriori if it rests on an apriori justification or entitlement.

(15) When the understanding is not purely intellectual, it may involve perceptual elements. For example, if to understand what someone is saying in pointing to some observed object, I have to see the object, or have some perceptual or imaginative image of how they are thinking of an object, then the understanding is not purely intellectual. One's general prima-facie entitlement to rely on seeming understanding of apparent utterances of content is always apriori. But instantiation of this entitlement to (seeming) understanding of a particular (apparent) utterance of content is apriori only if the understanding in the particular instance is intellectual. I take it that although such perceptually infected *de re* cases are very widespread, they are not ubiquitous. Utterances in pure mathematics and some empirical generalizations provide examples. What interests me is the very possibility of apriori prima-facie entitlements to believe in the existence of other minds.

(16) In ‘Interlocution, Perception, and Memory’, *Philosophical Studies*, 86 (1997), 21–47, I discuss this analogy, and its partialness, in some detail.

(17) For the sake of my argument about knowledge of other minds, I do not need the claim, which I defend in ‘Content Preservation’ and will allude to later, that we have an apriori prima-facie default entitlement to *accept as true* (particular) seemingly understood apparent *assertions*. All I need for present purposes is that one has an apriori prima-facie entitlement to accept one's seeming understanding of an apparent *utterance*, as genuine understanding of a genuine utterance. Such seeming understanding is to include seeming understanding of the content and mode of use of the utterance (for example, understanding the instantiated content as asserted). One needs seeming understandings of the form: ‘It is asserted that *p*.’ More qualifications to this argument are needed in a full statement.

(18) Cf. ‘Content Preservation’, 476–84. The points in the next paragraph are also argued for in that article. All of these points require more development and support than I have given them.

(19) I do not claim that one develops this other-attribution only *after* one makes self-attributions. The issues here concern the relation between the entitlements. My point does not even entail any priority of entitlement to take agency as one's own over entitlement to take agency as coming from another.

I have moved freely from talk about prima-facie epistemic entitlement to talk about knowledge. I think that entitlement or warrant is the main philosophical issue in a philosophical account of the relevant knowledge. But there are separate issues about knowledge that a full account should address.

(20) I should say that I think that entitlement to an awareness of the type of rational commitments one has obtains in cases other than interlocution—in inference, perception, memory, and so on.

(21) An earlier version of the main part of this essay was given as the fourth of six Locke Lectures at Oxford in 1993 and as the second of two Whitehead Lectures at Harvard in 1994. I have benefited from audience comments on those occasions. I have subsequently benefited from discussions when drafts of the whole paper were given at St Andrews, Berkeley, and New York University, where Tom Nagel presented valuable comments.