"Insofar as" in Descartes' Definition of Thought

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1. A Problem with Descartes' Definition of Thought

In *Principia Philosophiae* I 9, Descartes defines "thought" as follows:

"By the name 'thought' I understand all that which happens in us such that we are conscious of it, insofar as there is consciousness of it in us"[1].

According to this definition, thought is one of the things that happen in us. I take it that this simply means that thought belongs to the wider class of things that (a) take time and (b) involve us as an agent or patient[2]. This class includes our thoughts and intentional actions, but arguably also such things as respiration and headaches. According to the definition, thought differs from all other members in this class in that we are conscious of it. Should anything happen in us of which we are not conscious, it will not be a thought. Further, if we are conscious of something that is happening in us, what happens in us is a thought only insofar as we are conscious of it. This puts considerable weight on two things: the notion of consciousness and the phrase "insofar as" (quatenus). In this paper I will focus on "insofar as"[3]. Before I do so, however, a few things need to be said about consciousness[4].

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1   "Cogitationis nomine, intelligo illa omnia, quae nobis consciis in nobis fiunt, quatenus eorum in nobis conscientia est" (AT VIIIA, 7,20-22). This reference is to Descartes: *Œuvres Complètes*. Ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, Paris 1996, vol. VIII, first part, page 7, lines 20-22. Other references of this form are to be read accordingly.

2   "In us" cannot simply mean "in our minds", since the mind will be defined as the thinking thing, and this requires an independently defined notion of thought.

3   Descartes offers an alternative definition in the "Second Replies" (AT VII, 160,6-7): "Cogitationis nomine complector illud omne quod sic in nobis est, ut eius immediate conscii simus". Cf. my *Conscientia bei Descartes*, Freiburg 2004, pp. 44-55. Like the quatenus clause, "immediate" serves to distinguish sensations and voluntary movements, which are also bodily, from thoughts proper (AT VII, 160,10-13; VIIIA 7,22-8,2). The quatenus clause is more telling, however, because it makes the relevant distinction one between different respects. This is why I focus on the definition from *Principia* I 9.

4   For a more detailed discussion, see my "Cartesian Conscientia", in: *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 15 (2007), pp. 456-466; and *Conscientia bei Descartes*, ch. 2. See also R. McRae: "Descartes' Definition of Thought", in: R. J. Butler (ed.): *Cartesian Studies*, London 1972, pp. 55-70; J. Cottingham: "Descartes on 'Thought'", in: *The Philosophical*

The problem with consciousness is that it must satisfy the following four constraints: First, it is a defining feature of thought. Our activity is thought only if, because, and insofar as we are conscious of it. Second, the subject of consciousness is the subject of thinking, so that consciousness is always an activity or attribute of a thinker, not an attribute of what she does. Descartes consistently uses the term in this way. Third, for all we know beyond doubt, the thinking thing does nothing but think. Any activity that belongs to the thinking thing proper can only be an instance of thought. Finally, the consciousness that defines thought has an actual, particular object. This follows from the definition of thought, assuming that "what happens in us" refers to a particular instance, rather than a generic kind of happening[5].

The final constraint implies that the consciousness that defines thought is not a capacity or disposition. The proper object of a capacity or a disposition would not be one actual instance but a possible range of such instances. Consciousness, however, has a particular object, so it must also be something particular. Together with the second and third constraint, this implies that consciousness can only be an instance of thought. In particular, the second constraint rules out an adverbial reading, according to which consciousness would be some kind of attribute of all our thoughts.

Yet the kind of consciousness that defines thought cannot be a further thought in addition to the one it is about. For one thing, all thought must be the object of consciousness. If consciousness were an additional thought, an infinite regress would result[6]. For another, Descartes denies that in order to be conscious of a thought, one must entertain a further thought about this thought[7].

If consciousness belongs to the thinking thing and has an actual thought as its object, but is not a further thought in addition to the one it is about, there is only one thing it can be. In some sense, it must be a thought that is about itself, so that it is not numerically distinct from the thought it is about[8]. One might

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Quarterly 28 (1978), pp. 208-214; D. Radner: "Thought and Consciousness in Descartes", in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 26 (1988), pp. 439-452; and V. Lähteenmäki: "Orders of Consciousness and Forms of Reflexivity in Descartes", in: S. Heinämaa et al. (eds.): *Consciousness. From Perception to Reflection in the History of Philosophy*, Dordrecht 2007, pp. 177-201.

5   It also follows from what Descartes says in the "Fourth Replies" (AT VII, 232,5-7 and 246,22-247,2).

6   Cf. Hobbes in the "Third Objections" (AT VII, 173,25-26). The regress may be avoided by postulating a circle, so that for two distinct thoughts T1 and T2, T1 is about T2 and T2 is about T1. But this seems no less absurd.

7   "Seventh Objections and Replies" (AT VII, 559,14-16). Cf. F. and E. Michael: "Two Early-Modern Concepts of Mind: Reflecting Substance and Thinking Substance", in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 27 (1989).

8   Cf. C. Barth: "Bewusstsein bei Descartes", in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 93 (2011), pp. 162-194. Barth argues that a thought and our consciousness of it must have the same content. This may be true, but it is not required by the above; they only need to be the same in number.

say, with Harry Frankfurt, that all thoughts are immanently reflexive[9]. Or, with Daisie Radner: "There is only one act, the act of thinking of x, which has x as its primary object and itself as its secondary object"[10]. Given the third constraint, however, this needs to be put with some care. Since consciousness is an activity of the thinker rather than an attribute of her thought, we should not say that a thought is conscious of itself. Rather, there must be two relations between a thinker and her thought. She must (1) entertain the thought and (2) think of this thought by means of this very thought.

All this is rather mystifying. Why should one distinguish between thought and consciousness, only to conclude that they are not numerically distinct? Also, if a thought and our consciousness of it are really the same thing, it does not seem to make any sense to define one as the object of the other. This seems to amount to defining a thing by itself. This is the situation I wish to shed light on by considering the logic and semantics of the phrase "insofar as".

2. Quatenus

"Insofar as" (quatenus) plays an important role in many key passages in Descartes. For instance, his argument for the existence of God in the "Third Meditation" rests on a distinction between ideas insofar as they are modes of thought and the same ideas insofar as they represent a specific object[11]. Also, his theodicy in the "Fourth Meditation" involves the claim that nothing is defective insofar as it depends on God and that mistakes, insofar as they are mistakes, are nothing real[12]. Further, he distinguishes himself, insofar as he is a thinking thing, from himself, insofar as he consists of body and mind, and from his body insofar as it is nothing but extended[13].

In order to understand Descartes, it is thus in any case important to understand how "insofar as" works. This is a difficult topic, and I shall not try to develop a general theory here. There are several phrases that serve vaguely the same purpose as quatenus (e. g. qua, secundum quod, inquantum). Much of the literature that I am going to use is concerned with qua ("as") rather than quatenus ("insofar as"). But every statement with qua can be translated into one with quatenus. Note that there are two options: "A is B qua C" may mean either (i) "A is B quatenus A is C" or (ii) "A is B quatenus B is C". Therefore, qua is ambiguous in a way in which quatenus is not. I will often use the more convenient "A is B qua C", but only as an abbreviation for (i). That is, I define "A is B qua C" as "A is B quatenus A is C".

I will be concerned with instances of the following general pattern:

9   H. Frankfurt: *The Importance of What We Care About*, Cambridge 1997, p. 162.
10   D. Radner: "Thought and Consciousness in Descartes", in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 26 (1988), p. 446.
11   AT VII, 40,5-12; AT VIIIA, 11,5-11; cf. AT VII, 102,20-24 and 161,5.
12   AT VII, 60,6-10 & 29; AT VII, 190,1-2.
13   AT VII, 50,27-8; AT VII, 81,24-5; AT VII, 78,15-20.

(SPQ)   S is P quatenus S is Q   (= S is P qua Q).

All this is only quasi-formal. I generally use a mix of English, Latin, and propositional logic for syncategorematic expressions and capital letters as place-holders for categorematic expressions. A, B, and C are used as quasi-variables (they do not stand for ranges of individuals but are mere placeholders for expressions). Other letters will function as quasi-constants: When I speak of S, P, and Q in the following, I will always mean the subject term S, the predicate term P, and the qualifier Q in statements of the form (SPQ). Further, when I apply the general analysis of (SPQ) to Descartes' definition of thought, I will use the letters T, H, and C with a constant meaning: T := "a thought", H := "something happening in us", C := "an object of consciousness". Thus "What happens in us is a thought insofar as it is an object of consciousness" is the following instance of (SPQ): "H is T quatenus H is C".

All these quasi-variables and -constants are taken to belong to the same category. They are all placeholders for noun phrases (or determiner phrases, if you prefer). For instance, S = "Barack Obama", P = "the commander in chief", Q = "the president of the United States". They do not stand in for predicates in the sense of the predicate calculus.

In addition to this "term logic", I will occasionally need to use fragments of predicate logic. When I do so, I use F and G as predicate symbols.

Note that although I am not aiming at a general theory of quatenus, my discussion will be a bit more general than required. When we try to understand Descartes' definition of thought, we are not actually interested in the statement "H is T qua C", but rather in the definition "T := H qua C." This will turn out to be of some importance.

I will discuss three possible strategies for parsing (SPQ) in terms of simpler statements. First, one may reduce (SPQ) to a single sentence of the form "A is B" by treating "P qua Q" as a single predicate term: "S is [P qua Q]". I will call this the predicate strategy. Second, one may do the same by qualifying the subject term, of which P is predicated: "[S qua Q] is P". This I will call the subject strategy. The first two strategies force instances of (SPQ) into a simpler structure by eliminating logical complexity. The third strategy, which I will refer to as the exposition strategy, proceeds by analyzing (SPQ) as a conjunction of several simpler sentences. If successful, it will preserve logical complexity[14].

Before considering each of these strategies in turn, let me point out a feature that any of them had better preserve: Whatever quatenus is, it is not an extensional, truth functional connective (or operator, for that matter). Rather, sentences with quatenus involve contexts that are referentially opaque with re-

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14 D. Baxter: "Many-One Identity," in: *Philosophical Papers* 17 (1988), pp. 204-205, suggests a further strategy, according to which "insofar as" qualifies the copula: "S [is-qua-Q] P". As a consequence, S may be P in some way, but not be P in some other way. For yet another strategy, see note 29.

spect to truth[15]. Let me explain. The context occupied by S is fully referentially transparent[16]:

$$S1 = S2 \quad => \quad (S1 \text{ is } P \text{ qua } Q \quad <=> \quad S2 \text{ is } P \text{ qua } Q).$$

If Barack Obama is the husband of Michelle Obama, both are the commander in chief insofar as they are the president of the United States. P and Q, however, are quite opaque. (Here and in the following, "A is opaque" is short for "the context occupied by A is referentially opaque".) Note that the predicate term in a categorical sentence is usually referentially opaque with respect to meaning[17]. For instance, saying of Barack Obama that he is the husband of Michelle Obama is not the same as saying of him that he is the president of the United States, even though both statements are true. In addition to this opacity with respect to meaning, quatenus introduces opacity with respect to truth. Consider "Obama is the commander in chief insofar as he is the president of the United States". This is true, and it is not only something different to say that Obama is the husband of Michelle Obama insofar as he is the president of the United States; it is simply not true. Therefore, in (SPQ), the predicate term P cannot be replaced by a coreferential term salva veritate. The same goes for the qualifier Q. Thus in (SPQ), P and Q are referentially opaque with respect to both meaning and truth. As a rule:

$$P1 = P2 \quad \neq> \quad (S \text{ is } P1 \text{ qua } Q \quad <=> \quad S \text{ is } P2 \text{ qua } Q),$$
$$Q1 = Q2 \quad \neq> \quad (S \text{ is } P \quad \text{qua } Q1 <=> \quad S \text{ is } P \text{ qua } Q2).$$

There will therefore be two main criteria for evaluating readings of (SPQ). First, they will have to be applicable to Descartes: they will have to explain how definitions of the form "P := S qua Q" work, and they will have to fit the way Descartes talks and reasons. Second, they will have to preserve the referential opacity of P and Q.

3. The Predicate Strategy: "S is [P qua Q]"

Aristotle seems to recommend the predicate strategy. In *Prior Analytics* I 38 he discusses cases such as the following: Justice is known qua good, the goat stag is known qua non-existing, man is perishable qua perceptible[18]. His aim is to construct a syllogism of the first figure from which these follow as conclusions, and he argues that in any such syllogism, Q should be attached to the major term (i. e. to the predicate of the first premise). That is, a syllogism (of the first figure) to a conclusion of the form (SPQ) must have the form:

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15 Cf. J. Moravcsik: "Aristotle on Adequate Explanations", in: *Synthese* 28 (1974), p. 13.
16 Philip Keller thinks that S is opaque (*Qua qua qua*, unpublished manuscript, 2004, p. 6). I disagree.
17 Cf. K. Donnellan: "Reference and Definite Descriptions", in: *The Philosophical Review* 75 (1966), p. 285.
18 Aristotle: *Prior Analytics* I 38, 49a12-25.

> M is [P qua Q],
> S is M,
> Therefore, S is [P qua Q].

It is fairly clear why this should be so. Syllogisms consist of sentences with two terms (such as "A is B" or "all As are not B"), so we need to attach the qualifier to one of the terms. However, if Q would belong to the middle term M, it would not at all occur in the conclusion. Further, the goat stag example makes clear that Q cannot go with the minor term S. For when Aristotle says that a goat stag is known qua non-existent, he means that it is known not to exist, not that it is something that does not exist but is known nonetheless[19]. But when we attach "qua non-existent" to the minor term S, the resulting syllogism would state that the non-existing goat stag [S qua Q] is something M, and that M is known. This is not what we want. The only remaining option is to attach Q to the major term P.

This is, incidentally, also the best way of understanding Aristotle's characterization of metaphysics as a study of being qua being. He does not mean that metaphysics studies a qualified object, being-qua-being, but that it studies all beings in a certain way, namely by focusing on their being[20]. As Jonathan Barnes puts it, "being qua being" is no more an object of study than "Aristotle slowly" is an object of reading[21]. This is actually a helpful comparison. When considered as part of a predicate, qualifiers are indeed on a par with predicate modifiers, such as adverbs (e. g. "slowly") and attributive adjectives (e. g. "good")[22]. And according to at least some plausible accounts, these are best represented as operators that turn a predicate $F(\ldots)$ into a complex predicate $\mu(F(\ldots))$, so that "John is reading Aristotle slowly" is parsed, in predicate logic, as slowly(Reading(John, Aristotle)), and "John is a good cobbler" as good(Cobbler(John))[23]. By analogy, "… is P qua Q" may be treated as the complex predicate $\mu(F(\ldots))$, where $F(\ldots)$ is the predicate "… is P" and μ the predicate modifier "qua Q".

The point of this procedure is to capture the difference between "John is a blond man", which implies that John is a man and that John is blond, and "John is a good cobbler", which does not imply that John is a cobbler and that John is good. (John might be a good cobbler without being a good person). When the latter is formalized as good(Cobbler(John)), no such inference can be drawn. For,

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19 Cf. *Posterior Analytics* II 7, 92b7-8: We cannot even know what a goat stag is.
20 Cf. J. G. Stevenson: "Being 'qua' Being", in: *Apeiron* 9 (1975), pp. 46-47; against P. Merlan: "Ὄν ᾗ ὄν und πρώτη οὐσία: Postskript zu einer Besprechung", in: *Philosophische Rundschau* 7 (1959), p. 152.
21 J. Barnes: "Metaphysics", in: J. Barnes (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, Cambridge 1995, p. 70.
22 For attributive adjectives, see P. T. Geach: "Good and Evil", in: *Analysis* 17 (1956), p. 33; and T. Parsons: "Some Problems Concerning the Logic of Grammatical Modifiers", in: *Synthese* 21 (1970), p. 322.
23 Cf. R. Clark: "Concerning the Logic of Predicate Modifiers", in: *Noûs* 4 (1970), p. 320; and T. Parsons (see note 22), p. 325.

from the perspective of predicate logic, the predicates Cobbler(…), Good(…) and good(Cobbler(…)) are as different as any other three predicates.

This, however, also means that in the absence of further inference rules, one cannot conclude that John is a cobbler, given that he is a good cobbler. This looks like a disadvantage of the predicate strategy[24], but it is difficult to change. It will not do to introduce inference rules to the effect that whenever a modified predicate applies to a thing, the unmodified version also does so (such as: for every x, F, μ: μ(F(x)) => F(x)). For although this inference secundum quid ad simpliciter[25] is appropriate in many cases, there are also many modifiers for which it would yield false results[26]. For instance, that John is supposedly reading does not imply that he is reading. Aristotle's goat stag example is a case in point: That the goat stag is known qua non-existent does not imply that it is known. So there are standard modifiers, for which the inference secundum quid ad simpliciter is valid, and non-standard modifiers, for which it is not[27]. If we are uncertain whether a given modifier is standard, we cannot simply separate it from the predicate. So the predicate [P qua Q] remains unanalyzed[28].

This is bad news. For recall that we want to understand the statement "H is T qua C" in order to make sense of the definition "T := H qua C". Now the predicate strategy would have us attach the qualifier C to the predicate T. For the statement, this yields something like "H is [T qua C]". However, in order to even state the definition, "T := H qua C", we must shift T, but not C, to the left side of the equation. We cannot actually leave it attached to the predicate. Even worse, it is not clear whether the qualifier "qua object of consciousness" is standard. It may very well be on a par with the predicate modifier "in their dreams", and thus be non-standard. But if C were non-standard, T could not be separated from C, and there would be no way of turning the statement into the

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24 Cf. Z. G. Szabó: "On Qualification", in: *Philosophical Perspectives* 17 (2003), p. 392.

25 For the inference secundum quid ad simpliciter, see A. Bäck: *On Reduplication*, Leiden 1996, ch. VII and passim.

26 Geach (see note 22) calls such modifiers "alienans" (p. 33). Parsons (see note 22) distinguishes between "non-standard modifiers", for which $\mu(F(x)) \neq> F(x)$, and "alienating modifiers" (cf. p. 323), for which $\mu(F(x)) => \text{non-}F(x)$. Cf. Parsons (see note 22), p. 323; "Modifiers and Quantifiers in Natural Language", in: *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, *Suppl.* VI (1980), p. 39. R. Chisholm speaks of "pseudo-adverbial expressions", suggesting that non-standard modifiers aren't really modifiers; see "States of Affairs Again", in: *Noûs* 5 (1971), pp. 181-182.

27 Clark (see note 23) distinguishes several kinds of non-standard modifiers (p. 329); to which one might add diminishing modifiers (such as "with respect to his hair"; cf. Albertus Magnus, "De Sophisticos Elenchos" I III 6, in: *Opera Omnia*, ed. A. Borgnet, vol. 2, Paris 1890, p. 567). Once a distinction between standard and non-standard modifiers and qualifiers is in place, one may treat the standard cases as Davidson does in "The Logical Form of Action Sentences" (in: *Essays on Actions and Events*, Oxford 2001) and the others as Parson does in "Modifiers and Quantifiers in Natural Language". This is actually what Parson proposes. Davidson, by the way, deliberately ignores attributive modifiers ("Adverbs of Action", in: *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 303).

28 Cf. Bäck (see note 25), p. 517; Szabó (see note 24), p. 392.

definition. Thus, given our specific aim, we have no use for the predicate strategy[29]. Let us therefore turn to the subject strategy.

4. The Subject Strategy: "[S quatenus S is Q] is P"

One way of implementing the subject strategy is to treat the qualifier as a modifier of the subject term. This can be done by treating quatenus as an operator that takes two terms, S and Q, and yields the complex subject term [S qua Q]. Then, P may be predicated of the resulting complex term: "[S qua Q] is P".

Now recall that in SPQ, the qualifier Q is opaque. Therefore, [S qua Q] will, as a whole, not be referentially transparent[30]. It will be partly transparent, partly opaque. Peter Herbst calls such constructs Q-intensional[31].

Q-intensionality concerns the internal structure of qualified subject terms. From the perspective of both standard predicate logic and traditional term logic, however, qualified subject terms are as unstructured as any other subject term. We therefore need to provisionally treat S and [S qua Q] as two different subject terms. We have no guarantee that one may be replaced by the other salva veritate. Indeed, for all we know, they might refer to two distinct items. Seen in this way, there is nothing to stop Kit Fine from postulating that whenever S is P qua Q, there is a qua-object S-qua-Q, which is not identical with S[32].

The question of whether S and [S qua Q] are two distinct things is important because it is tempting to read Descartes in this way. Recall that he speaks of himself insofar as he is a thinking thing, as opposed to himself insofar as he consists of a mind and a body[33]. Also, he argues in the "Sixth Meditation" that since we can think of bodies and minds in clear and distinct terms, God

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29 This also goes against another possible strategy. Anscombe suggests in passing that (SPQ) behaves in the same way as "Socrates is taller than Theaetetus" ("Under a Description", in: *Collected Philosophical Papers*, Vol. II, Oxford 1981, p. 208). As a general strategy, this would amount to reading "S is P qua Q" as R(s,q), where R(…,---) is the relational predicate "… is P qua ---", and s and q are two suitable constants. Again, this would make it very difficult to bring P to one side of the equation.

30 As a consequence, "[r]eduplicatio considered as an operation on a name, has the effect that not only the Bedeutung is taken into account, but also the Sinn of the name"; I. Angelelli: "On Identity and Interchangeability in Leibniz and Frege", in: *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* 8 (1967), p. 96.

31 P. Herbst: "Fact, Form, and Intensionality", in: R. Brown (ed.): *Contemporary Philosophy in Australia*, London 1969, p. 83; cf. A. Baier: "The Intentionality of Intentions", in: *Review of Metaphysics* 30 (1977), p. 407. Herbst is concerned with qualified objects of intentional attitudes, as in "A admires [B qua dancer]"; Baier with intentional agency: "A performs [B qua pirouette]". Both of them emphasize that we may freely substitute coreferential terms for B salva veritate, but not for "dancer" or "pirouette".

32 K. Fine: "Actions, Events, and Things", in: W. Leinfellner et al. (ed.): *Sprache und Ontologie. Akten des 6. Internationalen Wittgenstein Symposiums*, Vienna 1982, p. 100. The difference between S and S qua Q seems to be a difference in number, so that they are two things, but Fine does not explicitly draw this conclusion.

33 AT VII, 50,27-8; AT VII, 81,24-5.

is capable of rendering them numerically distinct. Therefore, Descartes seems to assume that in general, S and [S qua Q] are numerically distinct. Let us see whether he actually does so.

Descartes' understanding of how quatenus works must have been deeply rooted in the Aristotelian tradition, and there are certain passages in Aristotle that suggest that he admits of something very much like Fine's qua-objects. Gareth Matthews, for instance, attributes the following "Principle of Existential Addition" to Aristotle, and I think he is right: "[I]f Socrates is seated, then there exists such a thing as seated Socrates"[34]. Thus for Aristotle, Socrates and [Socrates qua seated] are different things. (They come to exist at different times.) Note, however, that Aristotle does not conclude from this that Socrates and seated Socrates differ in number[35]. Socrates and seated Socrates are in fact numerically the same human being. When we count humans, we do not count both of them. Still, they differ in being, because being Socrates is not the same as being seated[36]. So even though Aristotle admits of qualified beings, such as the seated Socrates, he does not treat them as separate substances[37]. They belong to categories other than substance; the seated Socrates presumably belongs to the category of posture ($\varkappa\varepsilon\hat{\iota}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$)[38]. Therefore, Socrates qua seated is not a further thing in addition to Socrates, although they differ in being. Fine cannot even represent anything like this, because he uses an impoverished symbolism. He has only one sign for sameness, and this sign stands for strict identity. He cannot (and does not wish to) express the idea that two things differ in being but are the same in number.

Aristotle's distinction between sameness in being and sameness in number is certainly not unproblematic. It is generally assumed that if A and B are the same in number, there can be no qualitative or even modal distinction between A and B. This is sometimes referred to as Leibniz's law. If this law applied to Socrates and seated Socrates, there could be no difference whatsoever between the two[39]. Now it is interesting to note that on occasion, Leibniz himself exempts qualified beings from his law. At any rate, he sometimes explicitly restricts the principle that if A = B, A may always be substituted for B, to propositions that do not involve quatenus[40]. So Leibniz himself would probably not say that if S and [S qua Q] are the same in number, they must also have the same modal properties.

34 G. Matthews: "On How to Take Aristotle's Kooky Objects Seriously". Presented at the Pacific Division Meeting of the APA, Portland 1992, pp. 3-4.

35 Cf. also Aristotle: *Metaphysics* M 3 (1077b22-27): that one can study changing things only insofar as they change does not imply that there are separate things that are nothing but changing.

36 Cf. Aristotle: *Topics* V 6 (133b31-36).

37 Aristotle: *Sophistical Refutations* 22 (179a1-5). Aristotle says that qualified beings are not "this" ($\tau\acute{o}\delta\varepsilon$ $\tau\iota$) but rather "such" ($\tau o\iota\acute{o}\nu\delta\varepsilon$). Cf. J. Kung: "Aristotle on Thises, Suches and the Third Man Argument", in: *Phronesis* 26 (1981), pp. 207-247.

38 Aristotle: *Categories* 4 (2a2-3).

39 Fine's argument in "The Non-Identity of a Material Thing and Its Matter" firmly rests on this principle.

40 "Principium Scientiae Humanae", A VI, 4A, 672 (N. 157); "Specimina Calculi Rationalis", A VI, 4A, 810 (N. 171_2). See Angelelli (see note 30), p. 95; H. Burkhardt: "Anmerkungen

Besides, even if one were to insist on applying Leibniz' law to qualified be-ings, there would still be ways of maintaining a distinction between sameness in number and sameness in being. For sameness is not identity. Numerical sameness might be taken to only concern the actual world, so that differences in being can be expressed by distinguishing different sets of counterparts of the same actual thing in different possible worlds[41]. Or, in the absence of such heavy modal machinery, one might claim that differences in being are fictional, as it were, resulting from what Kroon calls "constitutive pretence"[42]. One way or another, I think that the distinction between sameness in being and sameness in number can be maintained even while fully accepting Leibniz's law. My preferred solu-tion, however, is to follow Leibniz and make an exception.

Now for Descartes. That we can have two clear and distinct ideas, one of S and another one of [S qua Q], merely shows that S and [S qua Q] differ in being. This does not in itself imply that S and [S qua Q] differ in number. Therefore, the mere fact that we have two distinct ideas, one of ourselves qua thinking things and the other of ourselves qua bodily things, does not in itself imply that mind and body differ in number.

Descartes is actually well aware that no such numerical distinction may be presumed in the context of the "Second Meditation". In a letter to Clerselier, he writes that when he says that the mind knows itself praecise tantum as a think-ing thing, he does not take this to show that it is nothing but a thinking thing[43]. At this stage, all he can say is that the mind knows itself in a clearly delimited way. Here Descartes does what Aristotle recommends in *Prior Analytics* I 38: He refers to the mind, not as a qualified object of knowledge, but as something that is known in a qualified manner. In the context of the "Second Meditation", he leaves open whether the mind admits of true descriptions other than "think-ing thing".

Moreover, even that God is capable of eventually separating the thinking thing from everything else need not imply that it is in fact numerically distinct from the human being who thinks; for that God can separate the two does not mean that he has always already done so. All it means is that the human qua thinker may eventually survive the death of the human qua bodily being.

Thus Descartes does not generally assume that whenever we have clear and distinct ideas of S and [S qua Q], the two differ in number. He eventually

zur Logik, Ontologie und Semantik bei Leibniz", in: *Studia Leibnitiana* VI/1 (1974), p. 50; M. Mugnai: "Intensionale Kontexte und 'Termini Reduplicativi' in der Grammatica Rationis von Leibniz", in: *Studia Leibnitiana*, *Sonderheft* 8 (1979).

41 D. K. Lewis: "Things qua Truthmakers", in: H. Lillehammer and G. Rodriguez-Pereyra (eds.): *Real Metaphysics*, London 2003, p. 30.

42 F. Kroon: "The Semantics of 'Things in Themselves': A Deflationary Account", in: *The Philosophical Quarterly* 51 (2001), p. 171.

43 Descartes: Letter to Clerselier, January 12th, 1646, AT IX, 214,7-215,14. Cf. J. Cotting-ham: "Cartesian Dualism: Theology, Metaphysics, and Science", in: Cottingham (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*, Cambridge 1992, p. 243. See also M. Rozemond: *Descartes' Dualism*, Cambridge (USA) 1998, p. 12.

ends up with the conclusion that mind and body will be rendered numerically distinct, but he does not think that this is a matter of logic. In order to introduce this numerical distinction, he needs the assistance of God.

The same should apply, mutatis mutandis, to the definition of thought. By his own standards, Descartes should not take it to imply that there is a numerically distinct qua-happening [H qua C], something that is merely an object of consciousness and nothing else. And in this case, he does not even claim that God will eventually render thought distinct from everything else that happens in us.

It is now time to assess the subject strategy. One reason against it is that it eliminates logical complexity, and thus conceals inferential relations, of which Descartes seems to be aware. Descartes would probably grant that if a thought is what happens in us qua object of consciousness, it is also an object of consciousness and something that happens in us. He also seems to realize that [S qua Q] is Q-intensional, at least for the case where S := "human being" and Q := "thinking thing". All this gets lost when we treat the subject term as unstructured, as the subject strategy suggests. In order to reveal the internal structure of [S qua Q], we would have to add inference rules and postulates, but this is as difficult as with the predicate strategy. We still have no guarantee that "qua object of consciousness" is a standard modifier.

The other argument against the predicate strategy does not apply here. The subject strategy does clearly separate T from the rest: It turns "What happens in us is a thought qua object of consciousness" into "[H qua C] is T", which may easily be transformed into Descartes' definition of thought: "T := [H qua C]".

Zoltán Szabó argues that the subject strategy is generally inadequate for different reasons. He points out that if "John qua judge", for instance, were a proper noun phrase (Szabó prefers "determiner phrase"), one should be able to form sentences such as "[John qua judge] and Bill are corrupt" and "[John qua judge]'s reputation is excellent", and one should be able to answer the question "Who did this?" by "John qua judge". This, however, is not the case. Also, it seems that qualifiers cannot be iterated (as in "[[S qua Q1] qua Q2]"); but if they were modifiers of the subject term (or, for that matter, the predicate or the entire sentence), they should[44]. Therefore, the subject strategy does not fit English grammar.

I do not think that any of this shows the subject strategy to be mistaken, rather than insufficient. Given our present target, the actual grammar of English need not trouble us much, and the only remaining issue is that we would like to know more about the internal structure of [S qua Q]. This could be achieved by introducing some kind of logic for complex terms. However, if we are going into this, we might as well consider the exposition strategy.

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44   Szabó (see note 24), pp. 391-392.

5. The Exposition Strategy

In case the exposition strategy requires further motivation, note that "S is P qua Q" should in any case imply "S is Q". Conversely, whenever S is Q, one may speak of S qua Q. This strongly suggests that the simple statement "S is Q" is among the truth conditions of "S is P qua Q". Which gives us the beginning of an analysis:

(*)   S is P qua Q = S is Q & … .

We are now looking for further truth conditions that may be added to (*) in order to capture the full meaning of (SPQ). This is what I call the exposition strategy, in reference to the medieval tradition, which treated SPQ as a propositio exponibilis; that is, as a proposition "whose sense was obscure because of a sign which it contained, and which therefore needed to be expounded by means of a clearer, better-known proposition which was equivalent to it"[45]. There are, of course, many possible ways of expounding quatenus propositions. Traditional treatises "De exponibilibus" distinguish between adverbial, specificative, and reduplicative uses of quatenus[46]. I think we can safely ignore the first two by now. The adverbial quatenus is taken to belong to the predicate, and it would have to be parsed according to the predicate strategy. We cannot do this here. The specificative quatenus changes the reference of the subject term (as in "Socrates is white with respect to his hair"), so that S and [S qua Q] refer to two manifestly distinct things[47]. As we have seen, however, Descartes does not take the distinctness of S and [S qua Q] to be a matter of logical form. This leaves us with the reduplicative quatenus. It is called reduplicative because here, the terms S and Q are taken to refer to the same thing, so that (SPQ) contains two references to the subject of predication.

Allan Bäck generally treats reduplicative qua propositions as condensed syllogisms[48]:

(B)   S is P qua Q   <=>
S is Q and there is some relevant connection between Q and P.

Bäck distinguishes many different versions of (B), according to different possible connections between Q and P. We can further reduce the number of options by appealing to the opacity requirement. Consider the following proposal:

(ALL)   S is P qua Q   <=>   S is Q and all Qs are P[49].

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45   E. J. Ashworth: "The Doctrine of Exponibilia in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries", in: *Vivarium* 12 (1974), p. 138.
46   Ashworth (see note 45), p. 159.
47   Cf. Bäck (see note 25), ch. 3 (Bäck calls the specificative qua "accidental").
48   Cf. Bäck (see note 25), p. 24.
49   Cf. Bäck (see note 25), p. 509.

The problem with this is that all contexts on the right hand side of the equivalence are transparent. However, we want P and Q on the left hand side to be opaque. Therefore, (ALL) is inadequate according to our criteria. More promising is the following:

(C)   S is P qua Q   <=>   S is Q and being Q is a cause of being P[50].

I will call (C) the causal exposition. I think that for our limited purposes, it is the winner. Arguably, causal statements introduce referential opacity[51], so that we now have enough opacity on the right hand side. We even have it for the right reason, for intuitively, P and Q are opaque in (SPQ) because the claim that S is P is justified by reference to its being Q. And whenever one justifies one thing by another one, it matters how one refers to both[52]. Now if we understand "cause" in a sufficiently broad sense, including formal and final causes, we may assume that for every justificatory link, there is some kind of causal link. In our case, where quatenus occurs in a definition, we are probably dealing with some kind of formal cause[53].

Let me point out that I do not generally recommend the causal exposition strategy as stated. It involves the assumption that whenever S is P qua Q, there is some general connection between being Q and being P. But if the goat stag example is still a case in point, it refutes this assumption. That the goat stag is known qua non-existent does not imply that there is a general connection between being non-existent and being known[54]. One might think that qualified knowledge is a special case, but there are similar cases that do not involve any intentional attitudes. For instance, it makes perfect sense to say that George W. Bush was a miserable failure qua president of the United States, without assuming any general connection between being a president of the United States and being a failure. However, for a discussion of Descartes' definition of thought it is fine to suppose that there is a general connection between being the object of consciousness and being a thought.

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50 Cf. Bäck (see note 25), pp. 217-229 (Peter of Spain); pp. 247-248 (Ockham); pp. 393-394 (early modern Logicians); p. 454 (Leibniz); and p. 511 (himself). Bäck parses the causal quatenus as "S is Q and being Q entails being P". Cf. also M. Fisk: *Nature and Necessity*, Bloomington 1973, p. 48: "An F, or this F, qua F is G if and only if necessarily an F, or this F, is G". I do not think that causal links should be reduced to entailment.

51 Cf. E. Anscombe: "Causality and Extensionality", in: *Collected Philosophical Papers* (see note 29).

52 A. Maunu: "Indiscernibility of Identicals and Substitutivity in Leibniz", in: *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 19 (2002), p. 375, argues that this is why Leibniz' principle of substitutivity fails for sentences with quatenus.

53 The definition of a thing states its formal cause: cf. Aristotle: *Physics* II 3 (194b26-29); together with *Metaphysics* Z 4 (1030a6-7) and *Posterior Analytics* II 11 (94a34-35). It is also interesting to note that Martin Bresser claims, in spatiotemporal proximity to Descartes, that our conscientia of a moral action is in some sense its formal cause. Cf. M. Bresser: *De conscientia* libri VI, Antwerp 1638, I 16 § 145, p. 68; II 6 § 42, p. 157.

54 Bäck does not see a problem here, but he notes that according to his analysis "Justice is good qua good" would be true, whereas Aristotle says it is false. See Bäck (see note 25), p. 26.

6. The Difference Between Thought and Consciousness

Read according to the causal exposition strategy, Descartes tells us that consciousness causes thoughts to be what they are, presumably in the way of a formal cause. Put differently, he maintains that the application of the label "thought" to something happening in us is explained or justified by its being the object of consciousness. After all the effort we have spent on the different strategies, this might look like a rather meager result. But we have gained much more than a simple recipe for parsing certain sentences with quatenus. Let me summarize what else we have learned.

First, quatenus creates referentially opaque contexts. In (SPQ), we cannot replace P and Q by arbitrary coreferential expressions salva veritate. S, in contrast, remains fully referentially opaque. The causal exposition explains why this is so: When S is P qua Q, being Q is a cause of being P, and this introduces opacity.

Second, we should always be aware of the possibility that "S is P qua Q" may not imply "S is P". The inference secundum quid ad simpliciter is only permitted for standard qualifiers, and "qua object of consciousness" may well be non-standard.

Third, we have noted that Descartes does not simply assume that as a matter of logic, S and [S qua Q] are numerically distinct. Even if S and [S qua Q] differ in being, this does not show that they differ in number. All it shows is that God may eventually render them distinct; but God can render anything any way he likes.

All this will be useful for answering our initial question: If thought and consciousness are the same, how can one of them have the other as its object, and how can one be defined by reference to the other? The key fact to note is that the in the definition of thought, the definiens is one of the terms that are referentially opaque. This makes for some odd behavior. In particular, not everything that is in fact the same (in number) as a thought will also fall under the definition of thought. It will fall under this definition only insofar as it is the object of consciousness, and not insofar as it is anything else.

In the beginning, I have said that in some sense, all thoughts must be about themselves. We know by now that this needs to be put with more care: They are all the object of something that is numerically identical with them. Strictly speaking, thoughts are not qua thoughts about themselves. Insofar as they are consciousness, they are not the object of consciousness, and thus not a thought; and insofar as they are thoughts, they are not consciousness but its object.

Further, we can now understand how Descartes may define thought by reference to consciousness. An analogy might help. Being a doctor is not the same as being a patient, even in the case of a doctor who treats himself[55]. This would remain true even if as a matter of fact, all doctors incessantly and exclusively treated themselves. Even if this were the case, patients and doctors would still differ in being, and therefore also differ in definition. And whenever two things

55   Cf. Aristotle: *Physics* II 1 (192b23-27).

differ in definition, defining one in terms of the other does not constitute a circle. The same is true for thought and consciousness. Even in a world in which all our thoughts are the same in number as our consciousness of them, which appears to be Descartes' world, one may define thought in terms of consciousness.

I have also said, in the beginning, that everything that happens in the thinking thing must be an instance of thinking. This remains true, but only as a claim about numerical sameness. Everything that happens in us must be the same in number as a thought. This does not imply that everything that happens in the thinking thing is nothing but a thought. There may be true descriptions of it that are not descriptions of it as thought. Descartes sometimes admits that there are respects in which we are not conscious of everything that happens in us[56]. If this is true, there are respects in which what happens in a thinker is not a thought. Some things that happen in thinkers may then be more than thoughts. They will still be thoughts insofar as we are conscious of them, but they may be something other insofar as we are not conscious of them. In fact, since thought and consciousness differ in being, every thought must be more than a thought. In addition to being a thought, it must also be consciousness.

This explains why Descartes does not assume that God will eventually render thought numerically distinct from all else. For, if God were to separate thought qua thought from all the rest, i. e. from everything that differs from it in being, he would also have to separate thought from consciousness. Without consciousness, however, there would be no object of consciousness, and thus nothing that satisfies the definition of thought.

Now if thought must always be more than thought (namely consciousness), it should also follow that the thinking thing must be more than merely a thinking thing. Descartes may see no reason why thinkers need to have bodies, but there are compelling reasons, even for Descartes, why every thinker must be more than merely a thinking thing. Every thinker must also be a conscious thing, and thinking and consciousness are not the same (in being). I suspect that this is one of the reasons why Descartes maintains that the existence of a thinking thing implies the existence of God. This is, after all, one way of saying that if there is a thinking thing, there must be more than a thinking thing[57].

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56 To Mersenne, 3 December 1640 (AT III, 249,4-5); *Discours* III (AT VI, 23,21-24); *Meditations*, "Fourth Replies" (AT VII, 219,17-20).

57 To be sure, that the thinking thing must be more than thinking does not simply imply that in addition to every finite thinking thing, there must be a perfect thinking thing (i. e. God). I believe that this can be shown, however, given further assumptions about the nature of consciousness. Roughly, to be conscious of a thought is to subject it to standards such as truth, adequacy, or consistency. Descartes assumes that if such standards apply, there must be something that fully satisfies them. This would be the perfect thinking thing. But this, of course, is only a very imperfect sketch of an argument.