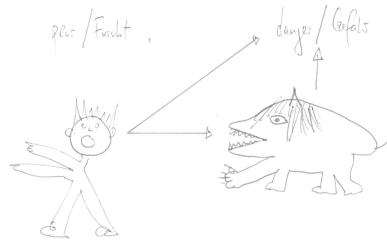


# Representation of Values

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Suppose I am standing in a Roman amphitheatre, about to be eaten by a lion. Looking at the hungry, angry, ferocious lion before me, I note certain characteristics, of me, the lion and the situation, that induce me to believe that the lion is dangerous (to me, in this situation) and also to see it as dangerous. In feeling fear of the lion, the world, and some aspect of it in particular, is presented to me as dangerous. By feeling the fear, not just as a consequence of it, I am motivated to flee – this marks a contrast to the judgement that the lion is dangerous. By feeling the fear, not just as a consequence of it, I am in contact with danger and in a position to acquire the concept of danger – this marks a contrast to the perception of the lion as dangerous.



Aspect-perception involves a curious doubling, or re-duplication, of content. There is, on the one hand, the (supposedly) real danger in front of me facing me in the shape of a ferocious lion; this is the danger my fear is directed towards and intentionally represents. On the other hand, danger is also an aspect of how the world is given to me: (the feeling of) danger is an aspect of my situation, a feature of how *I* am when faced with the lion. Though not much more than a metaphor, representation-as brings out this double aspect: I represent the dangerous lion as dangerous, and thus correctly.

In Aquinas’ theory, perception, the central and paradigmatic case of representation, is the combination of two processes, which together constitute the uptake of form without matter. There is, (i), the **the getting of the (inner) form**: by the application of a representational faculty to something out there in the world, something inner is created (the form of the thing outside in its ‘intentional existence’, ie. a structural property of the brain); by being in such a state, we locate ourselves with respect to things outside of us. There is also, (ii), the **the seeing of the (outer) form**: our brain being in such a state causes us to see the form, ie. to reach out in more or less successful ways to the things we take to be of this form; as a result of this activity, the form out there gets to be seen. It gets to be seen as such-and-such, and in certain ways, in virtue of the way the seeing is done. In different types of representation, the importance of these components varies. In sensation, the first of these components is much more important than the second; the act-aspect is mere awareness, which, as Brentano correctly recognised, is often already contained in the representational state. With imagination, emotion, judging, thinking, and mere supposing – states which do not only have representational properties, but exhibit intentionality as well – the second, mind-to-world

aspect becomes more important. Even with such ‘higher’ forms of cognition, however, the first component never completely disappears: all such mental acts are properly understood as reactions.

Like perception and emotion, belief is a reaction: the representational state is an entertaining of a thought, and the mental act is a type of Stoic assent (in the case of belief; dissent in the case of disbelief). To believe, Augustine says, is ‘cum assensione cogitare’ (de praed. sanct. 2 5). In the same way that thinking, by the ‘affirmative’ mode, gives beliefs, it may, by the ‘interrogative’ mode, give questions, and by the ‘mode of conjecture’, suppositions. What is belief a reaction to? Brentano may help us here, drawing our attention to the possibility that inner representation is containment (i.e., works roughly in the way in which a quotation name represents what it quotes by surrounding it by quotation marks). Quoting *De Anima* III. 2, p. 425, b, 12, he remarks that a doubling of intentional objects is only needed if we individuate them by the representational states, but not if we individuate them (correctly) by the mental acts directed at it:

“...the presentation [Vorstellung] of the sound is connected with the presentation of the presentation of the sound in such a peculiarly intimate way that the former, by obtaining [indem sie besteht], contributes inwardly to the being of the other [innerlich zum Sein der anderen beiträgt].” (bk. 2, ch. 2, §8, 1874: 167)

The resulting picture is the following: There is thinking going on, and some of it is partitioned into a belief of a certain content by an attitude of assent the subject directs at its own mental state. Such a belief, however, is not a representational vehicle in the traditional sense, that allows the subject to represent something. Rather, the belief, as a mental particular (and thus distinguished from the state of believing), is itself produced by (and thus posterior to) the representing of form. The attitude of assent directed at the immanent object is at the same time, and by the same act, a representation of itself as a psychological state, i.e. a belief. It thus projects its own form onto an amorphous mental process of thinking. There is a peculiar interweaving [“eigentümliche Verwebung”, 1874: 167] of the object of inner presentation (the belief) and the presentation itself (the thinking), and both belong to the same act, the believing.

## References

Brentano, Franz, 1874. *Psychologie vom Empirischen Standpunkte*, volume I. Leipzig: Dunker und Humblot. Second edition: ?.