Thinking with and without the Mother

Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei
Goldsmiths College, January 18, 2018
Mary suckling Jesus(?), Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome (III c. CE)
Isis suckling Horus, bronze statue, Egypt (Late Period, 664–332 BCE)
Isis suckling Horus, brass coin, Egypt (reign of Antoninus Pius, 138–161 CE)
Isis suckling Horus, fresco, Karanis, Egypt (IV c. CE)
Mary nursing Jesus, wall painting, Apa Jeremiah monastery, Saqqara, Egypt (VII c. CE)
Madonna Lactans Enthroned, mosaic, Santa Maria Trastevere, Rome, Italy (1290–1310)
Jan Van Eyk, Lucca Madonna, oil on panel (1436)
Alonzo Cano, The Vision of St Bernard, oil on canvas (1650)
La Virgen de la Leche y Buen Parto
What is called thinking? We must guard against the blind urge to snatch at a quick answer in the form of a formula. We must stay with the question. We must pay attention to the way in which the question asks: what is called thinking, what does call for thinking?

"You'll just wait – I'll teach you what we call obedience!" a mother might say to her boy who won't come home. Does she promise him a definition of obedience? No. Or is she going to give him a lecture? No again, if she is a proper mother. Rather, she will convey him what obedience is. Or better, the other way around: she will bring him to obey. Her success will be more lasting the less she scolds him; it will be easier, the more directly she can get him to listen – not just condescend to listen, but listen in such a way that he can no longer stop wanting to do it.

BION’S THEORY OF THINKING

pre-conception

conception  thought

naming  naming

concept
BION’S THEORY OF THINKING

pre-conception

+ realization

+ frustration

conception

thought

naming

naming

concept
BION’S THEORY OF THINKING

pre-conception

+ realization

conception

+ frustration

tolerance of frustration

thought

naming

concept

naming

THINKING
BION’S THEORY OF THINKING

pre-conception

+ realization

conception

+ frustration
tolerance of frustration
evasion of frustration

thought

toughing of realization
evacuation
destruction of realization

bad object

naming

concept

naming

THINKING

PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

BION’s S Theory of Thinking
Ceci n’est pas une pipe.
Ceci n’est pas une pipe.
Ceci n’est pas une pipe.
Le pas au-delà

nrf

GALLIMARD

THE STEP NOT BEYOND

Translation of
LE PAS AU-DELA

MAURICE BLANCHOT

Translated and with an Introduction by
LYCETTE NELSON
Any
Lift a finger
The fuck
a. John doesn’t give me any money.
b. *John gives me any money.
a. John doesn’t give me any money.
b. *John gives me any money.
c. John gives me some money.
a. Mary never lifts a finger.
b. *Mary always lifts a finger.
a. Mary never lifts a finger.
b. *Mary always lifts a finger.
c. Mary always lends a hand.
a. Steve doesn’t know where the fuck his keys are.
b. *Steve knows where the fuck his keys are.
a. Steve doesn’t know where the fuck his keys are.
b. *Steve knows where the fuck his keys are.
c. Steve knows for sure where his keys are.
Negation as verb

a. We want to avoid causing any damage.
b. *We want to cause any damage
Negation as noun

a. There is a lack of anything resembling food.
b. *There is anything resembling food.
Negation as adjective

a. It is **pointless** to teach you anything.
b. *It is useful to teach you anything.*
Negation as adverb

a. I’ve never seen anything like that.
b. *I’ve always seen anything like that.
Negation as preposition

a. You can do that **without** any problem.
b. *You can do that with **any** problem.
Negation as determiner

a. This has no direct effects on anyone.
b. *This has direct effects on anyone.
Negation as complementizer

a. Leave the lights on, *lest anyone* would find themselves lost.

b. *Leave the lights off, so that* anyone would find themselves lost.
Questions

a. Does anyone know where the nearest exit is?
Conditionals

a. If anyone wants to know, give me a ring.
"We are all individuals!" – "I’m not."
Garry Kasparov vs. Deep Blue (Feb. 13, 1996)
AlphaGo vs. Lee Sedol (Mar. 12, 2016)
Learning curve of AlphaGo Zero
AlphaGo Zero’s acquisition of go
AlphaZero’s results in chess, shogi, and go

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<th>White</th>
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<th>Win</th>
<th>Draw</th>
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<td>29</td>
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Algorithmically generated t-shirts on Amazon
"Tay" went from "humans are super cool" to full nazi in <24 hrs and I'm not at all concerned about the future of AI

6:56 AM - Mar 24, 2016

💬 250  🔵 12,761  ❤️ 10,951
Algorithmically generated childrens’ videos on YouTube