

Invisible

Something is invisible if you can't see it. In the Credo of the Catholic Mass the ancient text asserts that God is the 'creator of all things visible and invisible.' What are invisible things? Are they thoughts? Are they words that are heard but not seen? Are they all the things in the world—like kids playing on Avenida Espinosa in Buenos Aires—which I cannot see? Are those things, which are real but not visible to me, invisible too? And if they are visible, why can't I see them?

Examples

1 The invisibility of ideas

Ideas may seem to be invisible but they have an effect in the world. Or *are* ideas invisible? Analyze an example. The idea that mankind might be able to fly sprang from the mind of Leonardo da Vinci, whose observations of bats and birds suggested the possibility of human flight; he was forever sketching possible flying machines. What then is the meaning of 'sprang from' the mind of Leonardo da Vinci? Was there anything we would call an idea (of flight) in Leonardo's mind, *before* he observed animal behavior and conceived of its possibilities? Or were Leonardo's observation and conception themselves the idea of flight, and was the idea of flight accordingly not (exactly) invisible? May not ideas best be considered action springboards which we attribute to mind? Ideas would thus be invisible in the sense that my essential being here is invisible, but not in the sense of impossible to envision.

2 The invisibility of music

There are two musics, the score of a piece of music, and the music itself, which the score encodes. The former is invisible, the latter visible. Would we say that the score makes the music visible? Take Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*. That genius was able, it seems, to conceive an entire piece of music, whole, in his head; that is, without 'scoring' it as he went along composing it. Was the music invisible as he created it? Or was it a visible fabric awaiting scoring? In his 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' Keats writes that 'heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter...' He was referring to painted figures on an ancient Greek vase; he urges the pipe-playing revelers to continue their playing, as though the soundless sounds of their playing were the sweetest music. Are those unheard sounds like the invisible score Mozart 'sees'?