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## RELATIONAL BELIEF REPORTS

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In his classic article ‘Quantifiers and propositional attitudes’ (1956), Quine made a distinction between “two senses of believing”, as he then put it: the notional and the relational sense. That is both a distinction between two readings of belief sentences, and a distinction between two types of belief. The distinction is very intuitive, but it faces difficulties. In later writings Quine expressed skepticism toward the distinction, and eventually gave it up (Quine, 1977, p. 10).

Contrary to Quine I think the distinction can be made good sense of, provided we give up Quine’s view that belief sentences in general are ambiguous between the relational and the notional reading. In this paper, I argue that:

- (i) The distinction between relational and notional belief reports corresponds to a distinction between two types of reported belief: singular and general.
- (ii) When the content sentence in the report contains a (genuine) singular term, the reported belief can only be singular, hence the report itself can only be relational.
- (iii) The relational/notional *ambiguity* is a matter of scope and concerns only belief sentences with descriptions or quantifiers.
- (iv) Belief sentences with singular terms are ambiguous between a transparent and an opaque reading, but that ambiguity is distinct from, indeed orthogonal to, the relational/notional distinction.

### 1. SINGULAR AND GENERAL BELIEFS

Some beliefs are purely general, others are singular and involve particular objects. As an example of a general belief, we have the



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belief that there are spies, or the belief that all swans are black. As Frege put it, those beliefs are about concepts if they are about anything at all: the first is the belief that the concept ‘spy’ is satisfied by at least one object, the second is the belief that whatever satisfies the concept ‘swan’ satisfies the concept ‘black’. But the belief that Quine was a student of Carnap is a belief about two individual objects: Quine and Carnap. Of this belief we can say: There is an  $x$  and there is a  $y$  such that the belief is true iff  $x$  was a student of  $y$ . We cannot say anything similar concerning the belief that there are spies: there is no individual object  $x$  such that that belief is true iff  $x$  satisfies a given predicate.

The criterion of singularity I have just used can be stated as follows:

- (1) A belief (or a statement) is singular iff:  
 There is an  $x$  such that the belief (or the statement) is true  
 iff ...  $x$  ...

Both Forbes and Quine have strongly objected to that criterion, so I must respond briefly to their criticisms before proceeding.<sup>1</sup>

Forbes objects that the criterion is too weak. “If all we require is the same truth-value on the two sides of the ‘iff’ every true belief is singular since ...  $x$  ... can just be  $x = x$ ” (Forbes, personal communication). But the second line in the criterion (‘There is an  $x$  such that ...’) must be understood as characterizing the *intuitive truth-conditions* of singular statements or beliefs. Now even if ‘Cicero was bald’ happens to be a true statement, expressing a true belief, that belief is not, intuitively, true iff Forbes is Forbes.

Quine objects that “if this is just meant to require that the belief contain some singular term, represented here by ‘ $x$ ’, then ‘the shortest spy’ is not excluded” (Quine, 2000: 429). But a descriptive belief concerning ‘the shortest spy’ would not count as singular by Criterion (1) unless we use the description referentially (see below). If Robert Sleight believes or asserts that ‘the shortest spy is  $F$ ’, we cannot say that there is an object  $x$  such that Sleight’s belief or statement is true iff  $x$  satisfies  $G$ , whichever predicate we put in place of the schematic letter ‘ $G$ ’. In particular, we cannot say that a certain person, namely Helen (who happens to be the shortest spy), is such that Sleight’s belief is true iff *she* is  $F$ . The condition ‘being the

shortest spy' must also be satisfied by her. Nor can we say that Helen is such that the belief is true iff she is both F and the shortest spy. Intuitively, *any* person's being F and the shortest spy – be it Helen or anybody else – would suffice to make the belief true. So the belief is not, intuitively, true *if and only if* Helen has those properties.

When a belief meets Criterion (1), the believer believes something *about* some individual, namely that individual x such that the belief is, intuitively, true iff . . . x . . . The relation of 'believing about' descends from more basic, informational relations such as the relations of perceiving, of remembering or of hearing about. All these relations are genuine *relations*. If John perceives, remembers, or hears about the table, there is something which he sees, remembers or hears about. Similarly, if John believes something about Peter, there is someone his belief is about. Singular belief is based on, or grounded in, the basic informational relations from which it inherits its relational character. To have a thought about a particular object, one must be '*en rapport* with' the thing through perception, memory or communication. Pure thinking does not suffice. Thus inferring that there is a shortest spy does not put one in a position to entertain a singular belief about the shortest spy, in the relevant sense.

In terms of this distinction between singular and general beliefs, well-documented and elaborated in the philosophy of mind (see e.g. Evans, 1982), I suggest that we define a relational belief report simply as one that reports the having of a singular belief; and a notional belief report as one that reports the having of a general belief.

## 2. SCOPE AMBIGUITIES IN ATTITUDE CONTEXTS

How do we know whether a given sentence reports a singular or a general belief? Can we tell from the form of the sentence, or is each belief sentence ambiguous between the two readings? Quine opts for the latter view. He thinks that a standard belief sentence like 'Ralph believes that Ortcutt is a spy' is *ambiguous* between the relational and the notional reading. The relational reading can be forced by 'exporting' the singular term: 'Ralph believes *of Ortcutt* that he is a spy'. When exportation is thus possible, existential generalization is also possible: if Ralph believes that Ortcutt is a spy, in the 'export-

able' sense (that is, if he believes of Ortcutt that he is a spy), then there is someone Ralph's belief is about.

Even though Quine's claim concerning the ambiguity of belief sentences between the relational and the notional reading has been very popular, I think that it rests, in part, on a confusion; a confusion which is, again in part, responsible for Quine's despair of the distinction. In the next section I will argue that standard belief sentences such as 'x Vs that p', where the embedded sentence contains a singular term, are not ambiguous between the relational and the notional reading. That ambiguity arises only when the embedded sentence contains a quantified or descriptive phrase.

The distinction between genuine singular terms and descriptive or quantified phrases such as 'some man', 'a man', 'no man' or 'the man' goes back to Russell (1905). While Russell wanted to restrict the class of 'logically proper names' (as he called genuine singular terms) to only a couple of natural language devices, contemporary semanticists consider ordinary proper names and demonstratives, in general, as genuine singular terms. *Qua* genuine singular terms, they are purely referential, in the sense that statements involving them are bound to be 'singular' by Criterion (1) (Recanati, 1993). Definite and even indefinite descriptions can also be *used* purely referentially, according to some authors at least (Donnellan, 1966; Chastain, 1975); but the purely referential use of descriptions is not their normal semantic function, while it is the normal semantic function of genuine singular terms. Be that as it may, what I have to say about the behaviour of genuine singular terms in belief contexts will automatically apply to descriptions on their referential use, if they have one. So I will put referential descriptions aside and consider only what Evans called the 'pure' uses of definite descriptions, that is, their non-referential uses.

As Russell pointed out in the above-mentioned paper, definite descriptions are very much like quantified phrases. Like them, they serve to make general statements. If John believes or asserts 'The winner will be rich', we cannot say that there is an object x such that John's belief or statement is true iff ...x ..., for the reason which I gave in the previous section (in reply to Quine's objection): we cannot say that a certain person, namely the winner, is such that John's belief is true iff *she* will be rich; the condition 'being the

winner' must also be satisfied by her. Nor can we say that a certain person is such that the belief is true iff she is both rich and the winner. *Any* person's being rich and the winner will make the belief true.

Definite descriptions are similar to quantified phrases in another respect: like them, they induce scope ambiguities in complex sentences containing an intensional operator. Thus there are two readings for sentences such as (2) or (3):

- (2) Someone will be in danger
- (3) The President will be in danger

(2) says either that someone is such that she will be in danger, or that it will be the case that someone is in danger. The two readings can be represented as follows:

- (2a)  $(\exists x)$  (it will be the case that (x is in danger))
- (2b) It will be the case that  $((\exists x)$  (x is in danger))

The same duality of readings can be discerned in the case of (3). (3) says either that the President is such that he will be in danger, or that it will be the case that: the President is in danger. On the second reading it is the fate of a future president which is at issue, while on the first reading the sentence concerns the present president. Again, the two readings can be represented in terms of relative scope:

- (3a)  $(\iota x \text{ President } x)$  (it will be the case that (x is in danger))
- (3b) It will be the case that  $((\iota x \text{ President } x)$  (x is in danger))

In (2a) and (3a), the quantifier or descriptive phrase is given wide scope; thus it seems to reach into the intensional context created by the operator 'it will be the case that'. But, as Kaplan (1968, 1986) and Quine (1977) pointed out, (3a) and (2a) need not be construed as actually violating Quine's prohibition of quantification into intensional contexts. The intensional operator 'it will be the case that', or 'will-be' for short, can be construed in such a way that in (2a) and (3a) it governs only the predicate 'in danger'; while it governs the whole sentence 'someone is in danger' or 'the President is in danger' in (2b) and (3b). That can be made notationally explicit in the manner of Quine (1977):

- (2a')  $(\exists x)$  (will-be(in-danger) x)  
 (2b') Will-be  $((\exists x)$  (in-danger x))  
 (3a')  $(\iota x$  President x) (will-be(in-danger) x)  
 (3b') Will-be  $((\iota x$  President x) (in-danger x))

In (2a') and (3a') 'will-be' is understood as a predicate functor making a new predicate, 'will be in danger', out of the original predicate 'in danger'. The quantified variable thus falls outside the scope of the intensional operator. When the operator is given wide scope, as in (2b') and (3b'), it is understood as governing the whole sentence (including the quantifier and the variable). The quantified variable now falls within the scope of the operator, but, as Quine says, the sentence "exhibits only a quantification *within* the [intensional] context, not a quantification *into* it" (1956, p. 188).

Before proceeding, let us note that genuine singular terms give rise to no such scope ambiguities: they are, as Geach once put it, "essentially scopeless" (Geach, 1972, p. 117). Thus sentence (4) is not ambiguous, contrary to (2) or (3); there is no truth-conditional difference between (4a) and (4b), as there was between (2a) and (2b) or between (3a) and (3b). According to Arthur Prior (1971), the equivalence between forms like (4a) and (4b) is the distinguishing characteristic of genuine singular terms:

- (4) Cicero will be in danger  
 (4a) Will-be (in-danger Cicero)  
 (4b) Will-be(in-danger) Cicero

It is time to introduce belief sentences. Belief sentences with descriptive or quantified phrases are ambiguous in a way that exactly parallels the ambiguities we have just observed in temporal sentences with descriptive or quantified phrases. Thus (5) is ambiguous like (2), and (6) is ambiguous like (3):

- (5) John believes that someone is F  
 (5a) Someone is such that John believes him to be F  
 $(\exists x)(B_j(F)x)$   
 (5b) John believes that: someone is F  
 $B_j((\exists x)(Fx))$

- (6) John believes that the President is in danger
- (6a) The President is such that John believes him to be in danger  
 $(\iota x \text{ President } x)(B_j(\text{in-danger } x))$
- (6b) John believes that: the President is in danger  
 $B_j((\iota x \text{ President } x)(\text{in-danger } x))$

The quantification is endorsed by the speaker in (5a), while it is ascribed to the believer in (5b). Similarly, the description is endorsed by the speaker in (6a), while it is ascribed to the believer in (6b).

Note that in (6a) the description can be read attributively even though it takes wide scope (Kripke, 1977, p. 258). The speaker says that the President, whoever he is, is such that John believes him to be in danger. The description does not behave like a singular term here; it does not contribute an object. Still the *ascribed* belief is singular: the speaker says that there is a particular object such that the believer believes something of that object.

To sum up, when the quantified phrase or the description takes wide scope, belief reports like (5) and (6) have their relational reading: the belief they report is singular, even though the object the belief is about is only described in general terms.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, when the descriptive or quantified phrase takes narrow scope, the belief report is understood notionally. The believer is said to believe that there is an object  $x$  with such and such properties; that does not entail that there actually is an object  $y$  such that the believer believes that of  $y$ . Whatever quantification there is is strictly internal to the ascribed content; it is not endorsed by the speaker.

### 3. SINGULAR TERMS IN BELIEF SENTENCES

So far, Quine's claim concerning the ambiguity of belief sentences has been vindicated. But quantified phrases and definite descriptions are not genuine singular terms. As soon as what occurs in the embedded sentence is a genuine singular term (or a referential description), the scope ambiguity vanishes, along with the distinction between the notional and the relational reading of the belief report.

Since a singular term is purely referential (unless it is used deviantly), a statement in which it occurs is bound to be singular. That is true not only of a simple statement such as ‘Cicero is in danger’, but also of a complex statement such as ‘John believes that Cicero is in danger’. The former is about the individual Cicero; the latter is about two individuals, John and Cicero. It follows that exportation is always licensed when the embedded sentence contains a genuine singular term.<sup>3</sup> From:

(7) John believes that  $t$  is  $F$

we can always go to

(8) John believes of  $t$  that it is  $F$

and, through existential generalization, to

(9)  $(\exists x)(B_j(F)x)$

That means that the ascribed belief is always singular when the belief report contains a singular term. ‘Notional’ readings are thus ruled out: only relational readings are available.

What I have just said, of course, presupposes that genuine singular terms are used normally (non-deviantly) in attitude contexts. That is, I am assuming what Davidson (1968) and Barwise and Perry (1981) call ‘semantic innocence’; and correlatively rejecting the notion that singular terms in attitude contexts refer to something different from their usual referent (Frege) or behave somewhat deviantly, as they do when they occur autonomously (Quine). I take singular terms to be purely referential, in all their non-deviant occurrences; and I assume that their occurrences in attitude contexts are non-deviant.

The picture I am advocating is highly controversial, of course; but at least it is neat. It is organized around two main distinctions:

- (i) The embedded sentence in a belief report contains either a singular term, or a quantified/descriptive phrase.
- (ii) A quantified/descriptive phrase can be given either wide scope or narrow scope vis-a-vis the epistemic operator.



TABLE I

Belief sentence with	Expressed belief	Ascribed belief	
Genuine singular term	Singular	Singular	} Relational report
Quantified or descriptive phrase taking wide scope	General	Singular	
Quantified or descriptive phrase taking narrow scope	General	General	} Notional report

Thus there are three possibilities: what occurs in the embedded sentence can be a singular term, a quantified/descriptive phrase with narrow scope, or a quantified/descriptive phrase with wide scope (Table I). The belief report counts as *relational* if, and only if, the embedded sentence contains either a singular term or a quantified/descriptive phrase with wide scope. Note that there remains a difference between the two types of case. When using a singular term, the speaker herself makes a singular statement about the individual object the belief is about. When using a descriptive/quantified phrase with wide scope, the speaker ascribes a singular belief, but she does not herself express a singular belief, or make a singular statement, about the individual object the ascribed belief is about.

At this point two main objections spring to mind:

- If the above theory were correct, it would be always be possible to infer from ‘John believes that t is F’ that there is an x John believes to be F. But what about statements like (10)?

(10) My three-years-old son believes that Santa Claus will come tonight

Since Santa Claus does not exist, there is no individual to whom my son is related in the manner required for singular belief. Hence from (10) we cannot infer ‘There is an x such that my son believes that x will come tonight’. That is a counterexample to the theory.

- I claim that belief sentences with singular terms are not ambiguous, in contrast to belief sentences with quantifiers. But

they are: the name can be either endorsed by the speaker as his own way of referring to whatever the belief is about, or ascribed to the believer. That is the same old *de re/de dicto* ambiguity which we have observed in the case of belief sentences with quantifiers.

The second objection is especially important; it is the main obstacle on the road to accepting the view I have just sketched. In the next section, I will argue that it rests on a confusion. Belief sentences with singular terms are indeed ambiguous between a ‘transparent’ and an ‘opaque’ reading, but that ambiguity is *distinct from*, indeed orthogonal to, the relational/notional ambiguity we have been considering so far. When the two ambiguities are confused under a singular heading (the so-called ‘*de re/de dicto*’ distinction), the situation becomes intractable and leads one to despair. Once the ambiguities are kept apart, however, the apparently intractable problems (e.g. the ‘problem of exportation’) disappear.

As for the first objection, it can be rebutted as follows. The reason why we can’t infer ‘ $(\exists x)$  (my son believes that  $x$  will come tonight)’ from ‘My son believes that Santa Claus will come tonight’ is the same reason why we can’t infer (12) from (11).

(11) Santa Claus lives in the sky

(12)  $(\exists x)$  ( $x$  lives in the sky)

So the objection is not a specific objection to the view that genuine singular terms behave as such in belief reports; rather, it is an objection to the view that fictional names such as ‘Santa Claus’ *are* genuine singular terms, subject to ordinary logical principles. Since that problem is a general problem, it is not incumbent on the attitude theorist to solve it.

There is, however, an important difference between a fictional statement like (11) and a statement like ‘My son believes that Santa Claus will come tonight’ or ‘In the story Santa Claus lives in the sky’ (‘metafictive’ statements, as Currie [1990] aptly calls them). The author of a fictional statement does not really make assertions, but only pretends to do so. Thus in (11) she only pretends to say of a certain person that he lives in the sky.<sup>4</sup> Since that it so, the failure of existential generalization is unproblematic. (12) cannot really be inferred, because (11) was not really asserted. (Within the

pretense, however, the inference goes through: the speaker pretends to be committed to (12), by pretending to assert (11).) In contrast, it seems that metafictional statements are serious and evaluable as true or false (Lewis, 1978). Hence it is not obvious that the failure of existential generalization has the same source in both cases.

Despite what I have just said, it can be maintained that the author of a metafictional statement such as 'In the story, Santa Claus lives in the sky' is also pretending: she pretends to assert of someone that the story says he lives in the sky. Similarly for (10): the speaker pretends to assert of a given individual that her son believes he will come tonight (McDowell, 1977, p. 127). In neither case does the speaker really make that assertion, as there is no individual the story (or the child's belief) is about. By pretending to do so, however, the speaker communicates something true about the story or about the child's belief – something which could be communicated literally only by means of a lengthy and cumbersome paraphrase (Walton, 1990, pp. 396ff; Crimmins, 1998; see also Forbes, 1996 for discussion of related issues).

A lot more needs to be said to flesh out this proposal. One must detail the mechanism of 'semantic pretense' through which one can, in a more or less conventional manner, convey true things by pretending to say other things. One must also show how fictional statements like (11) can be distinguished from metafictional statements in which, intuitively at least, it seems that a genuine (and true) assertion is made. If pretense is involved in both cases, it is not quite the same sort of pretense; the theory owes an account of how the two kinds connect up with each other (Recanati forthcoming). I do not intend to go into those complex issues here. It is sufficient to have pointed out that a promising research programme exists to solve precisely the sort of problem that (10) raises, in a way which is consistent with the theory I have expounded concerning the behaviour of singular terms in attitude contexts. Should that particular programme fail, the theory would not be in the least threatened: for the alternative programmes I know of for dealing with fictional names and metafictional statements within a direct-reference framework are also compatible with the theory.

4. THE AMBIGUITY OF THE *DE RE/DE DICTO* DISTINCTION

In Section 2 I glossed the relational/notional distinction in terms of the points of view involved. I said that the description (or the quantification) is ‘endorsed by the speaker’ in relational readings, while it is ‘ascribed to the believer’ in the notional reading. Now it seems that – contrary to what I claimed – exactly the same distinction can be made with respect to belief sentences containing singular terms instead of descriptions or quantifiers. Thus (13) can be understood in two ways.

(13) Ralph believes that Cicero denounced Catiline

On the transparent interpretation, Ralph is said to have a belief concerning the individual Cicero. Since Cicero is Tully, (13) can be rephrased as (14):

(14) Ralph believes that Tully denounced Catiline

The transparent reading of sentences like (13) is often rendered by appealing to the exported form, as in (15):

(15) Ralph believes of Cicero that he denounced Catiline

But there is another interpretation of (13) and (14), an interpretation in which they are not equivalent and cannot be rendered as (15). This is the ‘opaque’ interpretation. On that interpretation, Ralph is said by (13) to have a belief such that he would assent to ‘Cicero denounced Catiline’, but not necessarily to ‘Tully denounced Catiline’. On the opaque interpretation, the use of the name ‘Cicero’ (rather than ‘Tully’) to refer to Cicero is *ascribed to the believer*. On the transparent reading, the choice of the name is up to the speaker and does not reflect the believer’s usage; that is why replacement of ‘Cicero’ by ‘Tully’ in (13) on the transparent interpretation does not induce a change in the ascribed belief.

Quine and many philosophers and linguists after him have jumped to the conclusion that a single distinction applies to belief sentences whether they contain singular terms or descriptive/quantified phrases. They have equated the relational/notional distinction

talked about in previous sections and the transparent/opaque distinction I have just introduced for belief sentences with singular terms. Both are viewed as instances of the so-called ‘*de re/de dicto*’ distinction. The exported form (15) is the mark of the *de re*. Belief sentences on the *de dicto* (opaque, notional) reading resist exportation, because the epistemic operator takes wide scope – it governs the embedded sentence in its entirety. On the *de re* reading, the epistemic operator takes narrow scope and governs only the predicate: the subject expression, be it quantificational or referential, is endorsed by the speaker without being ascribed to the believer.

But there is a clear difference between the two distinctions – the relational/notional distinction, and the transparent/opaque distinction. Consider the notional reading of a belief sentence. In such a case the believer is said to believe that there is an object *x* with such and such properties; that does not entail that there actually is an object *y* such that the believer believes that of *y*. Whatever quantification there is, is strictly internal to the ascribed belief; it is not endorsed by the speaker. But *even on the opaque reading of a belief sentence in which a singular term occurs, reference is made to some particular individual* (Loar, 1972). Thus the speaker who utters (13) on its opaque reading is committed to there being an individual *x*, such that Ralph’s belief concerns *x* and is true iff ...*x* ... To be sure, the belief which is ascribed to Ralph on the opaque reading of (13) is not merely the belief that that individual denounced Catiline; that would correspond to the transparent reading of (13). On the opaque reading, Ralph is ascribed the belief that: *Cicero* denounced Catiline. *Cicero* is thought of by Ralph not only as having denounced Catiline, but also *as Cicero*. Yet that feature of opacity is compatible with the relational character of the belief report, that is, with the fact that the speaker himself refers to *Cicero* as the object the ascribed belief is about. We can represent the opaque reading of (13) as follows:

- (16) Ralph believes of Cicero, thought of as ‘Cicero’, that he denounced Catiline

The apposition ‘thought of as *Cicero*’ is sufficient to distinguish the opaque reading from the transparent reading. Both readings are relational: in both cases Ralph believes something of Cicero, and the

speaker himself refers to Cicero as what Ralph's belief is about. In the opaque reading, however, the name has a dual role: it serves not only to refer to the object the ascribed belief is about, but also tells us something about how the believer thinks of that object. As Brian Loar pointed out, this dual role is reminiscent of that of 'Giorgione' in Quine's famous example (Loar, 1972, p. 51).

The non-equivalence of (13) and (14) on their opaque readings is clearly compatible with the relational character of those readings. In the same way in which (13), on its opaque reading, is rendered as (16), the opaque reading of (14) can be rendered as (17):

- (17) Ralph believes of Cicero, thought of as 'Tully', that he denounced Catiline

The name 'Tully' in (14) refers to Cicero even on the opaque reading. The speaker is therefore committed to there being an individual, namely Cicero (= Tully), such that Ralph believes of that individual, thought of as 'Tully', that he denounced Catiline. There is no such existential implication when a belief report (with a descriptive or quantified phrase) is understood notionally.

As we can see, the contrast between cases in which something is ascribed to the believer and cases in which it is endorsed by the speaker is not drawn in quite the same way for the two distinctions. On the notional reading of a belief sentence with a descriptive/quantified phrase, the quantification is ascribed to the believer *without* being endorsed by the speaker; but the reference to the object of belief, and the existential commitment that goes with it, is *both* ascribed to the believer *and* endorsed by the speaker on the opaque reading of a singular belief sentence. The relational/notional distinction articulates a simple contrast between the point of view of the speaker and the point of view of the believer; while the transparent/opaque distinction articulates a quite different contrast, between the point of view of the sole speaker and the point of view of *both* the speaker and the believer. As far as the respective points of view of the speaker and the believer are concerned, opaque readings are thus essentially 'cumulative'.

Far from being identical to the relational/notional distinction, the transparent/opaque distinction illustrated by the two readings of (13) turns out to be a distinction between two sorts of *relational*

reading. Hence there is no incompatibility between the claim that belief sentences with singular terms can only be understood relationally, and the observation that they have both a transparent and an opaque reading. Yet, precisely because belief reports with genuine singular terms cannot be interpreted notionally, but only relationally, it has seemed to many that a single distinction applies indifferently to all belief sentences: just as belief sentences with descriptive/quantified phrases can be interpreted relationally or notionally, belief sentences with singular terms can be interpreted transparently or opaquely. To dispell that illusion, one has only to notice that belief sentences with descriptive/quantified phrases are subject to *both* ambiguities. They can be interpreted notionally or relationally; and when relational, they can be interpreted transparently or opaquely. Loar gives the following example of a belief sentence with a quantified phrase which is naturally given a relational yet opaque interpretation:

(18) Ralph believes that a certain cabinet member is a spy

This does not mean that Ralph has a general belief to the effect that some cabinet member or other is a spy. As the phrase ‘a certain’ is meant to indicate, there is a particular cabinet member Ralph’s belief is about. The belief report, therefore, is relational. However, Loar (1972, p. 54) points out that (18)

will often be taken to imply more than

(19)  $(\exists y) (y \text{ is a cabinet member} \ \& \ B(\text{Ralph, “x is a spy”}, y))$

Ralph, we may suppose, believes it of the fellow under a certain description; that is,

(20)  $(\exists y) (y \text{ is a cabinet member} \ \& \ B(\text{Ralph, “x is a cabinet member and x is a spy”}, y))$

Loar’s rendition of (18) as (20) nicely captures the cumulative aspect of opaque readings. Both the speaker and the believer view the person the belief is about as a cabinet member. As Loar pointed out (1972, p. 54), in a framework such as Quine’s, in which the two distinctions are conflated under a single heading, one cannot account for belief reports which, like (18), are both relational and opaque.<sup>5</sup> ‘Relational’ entails ‘transparent’, for Quine and his followers. For

that reason also, examples like (13) and (14), on their ‘opaque’ interpretation (corresponding to [16] and [17]), will have to be considered ‘notional’, while they are clearly relational. Given the extreme confusion that results, it is only natural that Quine eventually gave up the distinction as hopeless. It *is* hopeless, considered as a single distinction covering all the cases.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Forbes’s and Quine’s reactions were directed to a first version of this material, presented in the middle section of my paper ‘Opacity and the Attitudes’, in A. Orenstein and P. Kotatko (eds), *Knowledge, Language and Logic: Questions for Quine*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000: 367–406. I am grateful to Kluwer Academic Publishers for their permission to use that material again.

<sup>2</sup> “If we say that there is someone of whom Othello believes that she is unfaithful, while we do not thereby put *ourselves* into any relation with anyone except Othello, we do thereby say that there is someone with whom *he* stands in the relation of believing her unfaithful” (Prior, 1971, p. 135).

<sup>3</sup> In 1956 Quine said that exportation – the step from ‘*a* believes that *t* is *F*’ to ‘*a* believes of *t* that it is *F*’ – “should doubtless be viewed in general as implicative” (Quine, 1956, p. 190). Afterwards he was moved by the Sleigh/Kaplan example of the shortest spy (Sleigh, 1968; Kaplan, 1968): if exportation is valid, then we can go from ‘John believes that the shortest spy is a spy’ to ‘ $(\exists x)$  (John believes *x* is a spy)’, via ‘John believes of the shortest spy that he is a spy’; but if that is accepted, an obviously notional belief report is treated as if it were relational. As Quine concludes, “we must find against exportation” (Quine, 1977, p. 9). Indeed, insofar as exportation opens the way for existential generalization, it is clear that exportability must be restricted to those cases in which the relational reading is intuitively appropriate. It cannot be treated as generally permissible.

Still, I think Quine was right in the first place: exportation *is* generally valid, provided *t* is a genuine singular term. In the Sleigh/Kaplan example, it isn’t. Of course, exportation also works when *t*, though not a singular term, is given scope over the epistemic operator. But that is not the case in the Sleigh/Kaplan example either. In the Sleigh/Kaplan example Ralph is said to believe this: ‘The shortest spy is a spy’; he is not said to believe, of some particular individual known to him (and described by the speaker as ‘the shortest spy’), that she is a spy.

<sup>4</sup> (11) can also be interpreted as short for ‘In the story, Santa Claus lives in the sky’ (Lewis, 1978). On that interpretation (11) is a metafictive statement, like (10).

<sup>5</sup> I said earlier that the two distinctions are *orthogonal*. As Graeme Forbes noticed, that entails not only that some reports are both relational and opaque, but also that some are both notional and transparent. Forbes objects that “notional transparent examples . . . will be tough to find if what makes them notional is that



the subject's ways of thinking are adverted to" (Forbes, personal communication). But what defines a report as notional is not the fact that the believer's ways of thinking are adverted to (*that* characterizes opacity), but the fact that the reported belief is general rather than singular. An example of a notional-transparent report would be: 'James believes that the shortest oculist is shorter than the shortest spy', in a situation in which (i) the reported belief is clearly general (James is not acquainted with the shortest oculist), and (ii) the noun 'oculist' is known to be unknown to James, who only uses 'eye-doctor'.

To be sure, it is part of the standard notion of a 'notional' belief report, inherited from Quine, that the believer's ways of thinking are adverted to. If I am right, however, 'notional' in *that* sense cannot be opposed to 'relational'.

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