

## The objects of the attitudes. In defence of a non-propositional relational analysis of beliefs

One of the main problems that propositional attitudes raise is how to account for what has been called their opacity: the fact that belief reports which differ at most for having one term replaced by another co-referring one can differ in their truth value. Many different attempts have been suggested to deal with this problem. What most of them share is the idea that the object of the attitude (what the subject believes) is the explicit argument of the attitude verb (what is expressed by the that-clause) and on the ground of this assumption the problem has been that of accounting for opacity in terms of the distinction between what is believed and how it is believed. The way in which the how-part of the story has been accounted for is different: in terms of modes of presentation which are constituents of the proposition expressed (the Fregean strategy), in terms of unarticulated constituents of the proposition expressed (the hidden-indexical strategy), in terms of modes of presentations which are constituents of quasi singular propositions (the overt-indexical strategy) and in terms of the distinction between the semantic content of a belief report (what it says) and what is pragmatically conveyed by an utterance of it (the pragmatic strategy of neo-Russellians). In my view, none of these accounts pass muster in so far as they are unequipped to deal with the most troublesome puzzle about belief reports, namely: Kripke's Paderewski case.

That none of the main theories of propositional attitudes solves the problem of opacity and that this failure has to do with the shared but wrong assumption according to which that-clauses specify belief contents is a point which has already been argued for (see e.g. Bach 1997). But even though it has been claimed that mental contents have to be more specific (more fine-grained) than the that-clauses used to report them, no clear suggestion has been put forward as to how mental contents should be conceived. In my paper I shall address this issue. I shall claim that the sort of contents which are relevant to psychological explanation are structured, personal level, subject-oriented mental representations. Such entities differ from propositions because they are not mind-independent and differ from sub-personal level representations (of the kind made popular by Dretske, Fodor, Millikan) under at least two aspects: (i) they are not two-place relations (a represents b), but three-place relations (a represents b to S, where S ranges over subjects) and (ii) they are posited not on third-person but on first-person ground. I shall try to show that it is precisely the representation-to component which accounts for the opacity of the attitudes and that this is so because it captures the subject's point of view.

The main theses I shall try to defend are (1) that propositions, however they are construed, are unable to adequately account for the opacity of the attitudes; (2) that propositions are not the real objects of the attitudes; (3) that the real object of the attitude is not specified by the that-clause (what the that-clause expresses puts at most a truth-conditional constraint on the real object of the attitude) (4) that the real objects of the attitudes have to be entities suited to account for the subject's point of view; (5) that such entities are precisely personal-level representations (two-faced or Janus-headed entities having both an outward and an inward-looking face).

### Essential bibliography

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