Glossary of Terms
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Beliefs, Thoughts

    When I talk about "a belief" or "a thought," I am talking about *a mental event,* or sometimes about *a type* of mental event. There are mental properties, like believing that Blackie is a horse. My having that property is one mental event; your having it is another. Events of this sort, where the agent isn't (or at least doesn't need to be) undergoing any change, I call "states." My state and your state both belong to a single event- or state-type: they are both events in which *x* believes that Blackie is a horse. That is one type of belief. Or, as I will also say, "that is one belief you can have."

    Sometimes people use "a belief" to refer to the proposition or content you believe. I won't talk that way. If I want to refer to the content you believe, I'll say "the content you believe."

    Sometimes people use "a belief" to refer to a sentence in your language of thought, or to some other representation in your brain. I won't talk that way either. It may turn out that some beliefs *are realized or constituted by* having representations in your brain. But I'll use "a belief" to refer to the event or state of having the believing-property, not to the brain-representation in virtue of having which you're in that state.

The Content of Your Sentence

    [Need to say more…]

    This is the proposition that you assert when you use that sentence assertorically. (If there is more than one such proposition, then the sentence's content will be whatever is in common to the assertions of everyone who understands the sentence the same way you do.)

    Implicatures and Presuppositions don't count as part of the content of your sentence.

    There are different views about what propositions are. On some views, they're just intensions or sets of possible worlds. On some views, they have logical structure. On some views, they're composed out of Fregean senses, instead of objects and properties.

Content of the Belief You Express with a Sentence

    [Need to say more…]

    Let's pretend there is only one belief you express with a sentence. By "the content" of that belief, I mean those of the belief's representational properties that are essential to it.

    On most views, this will be a proposition.

    On other views, it will be a property. (E.g., on Lewis and Chisholm's accounts of *de se* belief, when I believe *I am on fire,* the content of my belief is the property of being on fire.)

On still other views, it will be an unsaturated Fregean sense, i.e., a mode of presentation of a property. (E.g., on Burge's account of *de re* belief, when I believe of some apple that it is red, the content of my belief doesn't include the apple. It just includes the sense of the "___ is red" bit.)

For some of our discussion, it's useful to have a notion that takes no stand on those debates. That's how I'll use "content."

On my usage, a belief's content has to be *essential* to that belief… Some philosophers would say about the apple example: my belief represents some particular apple, but other people could have *the same belief*, and their belief be about a different apple. Some philosophers would say that the beliefs we express with "water" represent H_2O, but our doppelgängers on Twin Earth have *the same beliefs*, and their beliefs represent XYZ.

Wide Content

A content counts as "wide" just in case you're only able to have thoughts with that content because you inhabit environments of certain sorts. Doppelgängers in different environments will have thoughts with different contents (or will fail to have contentful thoughts at all).

"Narrow Content"

Some philosophers who argue for "Narrow Content" are arguing that our thoughts have content properties of the sort I've described, that aren't wide.

But not all. Some philosophers have a broader understanding of "Narrow Content," such that it *doesn't* really have to be a content, in my sense of "content." It just has to be some *narrow property* of the belief—a property also had by the beliefs of all my doppelgängers—that fills some explanatory role. The explanatory role is different in different discussions. It might be:

(i) being the proximate psychological explanation of your behavior

(ii) being properties you can know your thought to have by introspective reflection alone

(iii) being properties that an object or kind has to satisfy, in order to count as the object or kind you're thinking about

(iv) explaining your vulnerability to Hesperus/Phosphorus-type cases

…or some combination of these.

Externalism

The view that some of our thoughts have wide contents.

Strong Externalism

The view that some of our thoughts have wide contents, and they don't *all of them also* have narrow properties that are able to fill the explanatory role of "narrow content."

(There are also stronger claims that one can make, e.g., that all of our thoughts have wide content. Or that no thought with wide content can also have narrow properties that are able to play the "narrow content"-role. These claims go beyond what I'm calling "Strong Externalism.")

A Reference-*Making* Fact
A fact that makes it the case that your words/thoughts have the referential or content properties they have.

A *Reference-Fixing Description* or *Condition*
This is a set of properties to which you give a certain kind of referential authority: you stipulate that your word or thought is to be about whatever is the unique exemplifier of those properties.
Reference-fixing is just *one way among many* for it to be made the case that your word refers to what it does. If you see a boy and form the intention to call him "Dexter," that seems to be a *different way* to make it the case that your word refers to a thing. If you start talking to your friends about Dexter, and they pick up the name from you, their words seem to get their reference partly in virtue of *still further* reference-making facts. In these cases, there are facts that *make* the words refer to what they do, but no one is using a reference-fixing description.
Suppose someone *does* introduce a name with a reference-fixing description. Then he passes the name onto you. You merely defer in your usage to the first guy; you don't yourself stipulate that the word is to refer to whatever is the unique satisfier of some condition. Here again, there are facts that *make* your word refer to what it does—facts that involve *someone else's* reference-fixing—but the word does not *for you* count as having its reference fixed by any description.
(Later we'll see some philosophers arguing that these cases of ostension and deference should really be reduced to cases of reference-fixing. That is a substantive claim that requires argument. *The concept* of a reference-fixing description should not be confused with the more general concept of what facts *make it the case that* your word refers as it does.)

Stereotype
A word's stereotype is the body of descriptive information you have to "associate" with the word, in order to count as competent with that word. For example, the stereotype of "tiger" might include the property of having stripes; the stereotype of "lemon" might include the properties of having a yellow peel, a tart taste, and so on. A newcomer who hasn't learned these associations won't understand these words in the same way that we understand them. (Of course he may be able to talk about tigers and lemons using *other* words.)
I'm not sure what exactly it means to "associate" properties with a word. On the most natural interpretation, this would amount to believing that the term's referent has

those properties. But there may be other weaker interpretations of "associating" that are also viable.

For some words, like "lemon," we do have robust stereotypes. For many other words we do not. (E.g., consider Putnam's "elm/beech" example. Putnam is a competent user of these terms, yet he associates only very rough descriptive information with each.)

"Prototype theories" of concepts may be getting at a similar notion at the mental level.

Important to realize that the information contained in a stereotype need not be uniquely identifying (there may be a number of fruits with yellow peels and a tart taste), and need not be accurate (lemons would still be lemons, even if it turned out that their peels only falsely appeared to be yellow). So stereotypical information need not play a *reference-fixing* role. A reference-fixing condition *does* have to be uniquely satisfied by an object, for that object to count as the term's referent.

Intension

In contemporary lingo, an expression's intension is a function from possible worlds w to its extension with respect to that w. No problem, right?

Wait. We find Putnam saying that Twin Earth experiments show that words can have the same intension but different extensions—even with respect to the same possible world! That just doesn't make any sense, on the contemporary understanding of "intension."

We have to realize that in the past, not everybody used this word in the same way. Some philosophers, like Carnap, used it in the contemporary sense. But there were other uses, as well. On one older use, "intension" meant something like "meaning." To say that two words had the same intension-in-that-sense was to say that the two words were synonymous.

On another older use, "intension" meant something like "the descriptive properties you associate with the term."

These different uses are connected in that some philosophers have thought that intensions-in-the-associated-descriptive-properties-sense could serve as meanings; and some philosophers (like Carnap) thought that intensions-in-the-function-from-worlds-to-extensions-sense could serve as meanings.

Putnam is using "intension" in the associated-descriptive-properties-sense. When he says that words can have the same intension but different extension, he means that words can differ in extension even though we associate all the same descriptive properties with them. E.g., his words "elm" and "beech," or my word "water" and my doppelgängers's word "water." Putnam thinks that the meanings of these words is a composite out of some associated properties (what he calls the word's stereotype) and the word's extension. So he doesn't think that the words have the same meaning. Nor does he think that they have the same function from worlds to extensions. When he says that they have the same intension, he means only that they have the same associated descriptive properties.

Rigid, *De jure* Rigid, Millian, etc.

A term refers to o **rigidly** iff it refers to o with respect to every possible world in which o exists, and never refers to any object distinct from o. (A term is "**obstinately rigid**" iff it also refers to o with respect to worlds where o doesn't exist.)

Whether a term is rigid is just a matter of what its extension is, with respect to different worlds. That is, it's a matter of what kind of intension it has (in the contemporary, function-from-worlds-to-extension-sense of "intension"). So it's possible for a term to have a descriptive *content*, and yet still be rigid—so long as it has the right kind of intension. Let "Primey" refer to the smallest prime, and suppose it has a descriptive content: when you say "Primey is so-and-so," you're asserting something about the properties of being prime, being smaller than other primes, etc. Now, because of the nature of those properties, whatever is the referent of "Primey" with respect to this world will also be its referent with respect to every other world, as well. So "Primey" is a rigid designator.

The notion of a *de jure* **rigid** designator is more restrictive. For any rigid term, ask yourself, "*Why* does this term refer to the same thing with respect to every world (where that thing exists, etc.)?" If the answer is:

> "Because it's part of the linguistic stipulations that give the term its semantic properties that it should do so."

then the term counts as a *de jure* rigid designator. If the answer is:

> "Because the term is stipulated to pick out whatever meets a certain condition, and it's in the nature of that condition that nothing else can meet it."

then the term counts as being merely *de facto* **rigid**. (It's not always clear how to apply this test.)

A term counts as **Millian** if its semantic content is just the object it refers to (with respect to the actual world).

If a term is Millian, then it will also be *de jure* rigid. But not vice versa. A term can be *de jure* rigid without being Millian. For instance, suppose I introduce "Superman" in the following way. I stipulate that this term will refer to whoever it is that actually meets some condition (the guy who's faster than a speeding bullet, etc.); and that it will refer to the same object with respect to every world. (So now the term is guaranteed to be rigid, just by my linguistic stipulation. It's *de jure* rigid.) But I haven't yet said that the term's content is just that object. Perhaps the term's content will be an ordered pair of that guy and some property, e.g., the property of being able to fly. The property needn't play any role in determining what the term's referent is. But it's there in the content nonetheless. So "Superman" doesn't have the same content as "Clark Kent," even though they rigidly designate the same person.

Some authors talk about "directly referential" terms. That expression has a variety of uses. Sometimes it means what I've called "*de jure* rigid." Sometimes it means what I've called "Millian." Sometimes it means something else.

General vs. Object-Dependent vs. Russellian Propositions

A proposition P is **object-dependent** iff there's some object o that could fail to exist, but it's a metaphysical requirement, for being able to think or entertain P, that o

exist. (On some accounts, when o doesn't exist, P doesn't exist either. On other accounts, P might still exist, but it can no longer be thought or entertained.)

A proposition is **general** just in case it's not object-dependent.

One popular model of object-dependent propositions construes them as built out of objects and properties. We'll call a proposition of this sort a **Russellian proposition**. Sentences involving only Millian terms express Russellian propositions.

It's controversial whether object-dependent propositions are always Russellian. Some philosophers (e.g. Evans and McDowell) believe in object-dependent propositions that are more fine-grained than Russellian propositions. On their view, the proposition expressed by "Superman wears blue" is object-dependent; it can't be entertained in worlds where Superman doesn't exist. But it's not the same proposition as is expressed by "Clark Kent wears blue."

Some authors talk about "singular propositions." Usually this means the same as what I've called a "Russellian proposition." But I've seen some philosophers use it to mean "a proposition that's object-dependent, i.e., not general." On the latter usage, it's controversial whether singular propositions are Russellian.

De dicto vs. *De re*

The use of these expressions in philosophy of mind is a real mess. Here's the best I can do to tidy up.

First of all, we can distinguish between different kinds of *belief-ascription*. Consider the following three belief-ascriptions:
  (i)   Lex believes that no man can fly.
  (ii)   Lois believes that Superman can fly.
  (iii)   Superman (aka Clark) is believed by Lois to fly.
Theorists will agree that (i) ascribes belief in a general, non-object-dependent proposition. There's no person that ascription requires to exist, other than the subject of belief. Any ascription like that counts as a *de dicto* ascription.

Theorists will also agree about the ascription in (iii). This ascription requires Superman to exist, and it permits substitution of "Clark" or any other co-referring term for "Superman." Any ascription like (iii) in those respects counts as a *de re* ascription.

Theorists disagree about ascriptions like (ii). On some views, these ascriptions work just like ascription (iii). E.g., if you think that (ii) ascribes belief in a Russellian proposition, you'll regard (ii) as working just like (iii). For those theorists, (ii) is another *de re* ascription.

On other views, (ii) works differently than (iii), in that it does not permit substitution of co-referring terms for "Superman." That is, (ii) could be true, but:
  (ii*)   Lois believes that Clark can fly.
be false. For these theorists, (ii) counts as a *de dicto* ascription.

There's also a use of "*de dicto*" and "*de re*" to distinguish different kinds of *belief*. Some theorists just use "you have a *de re* belief" interchangeably with "you are such that a *de re* belief-ascription is true of you." But other theorists have more specific understandings of what it is to have a *de re* belief. Here's the best way to make sense of their usage.

Take a belief B. Theorists who think that the content of B is a general, non-object-dependent proposition will say that B is a general or *de dicto* belief.

Theorists who think that the content of B is an object-dependent proposition will say that B is a *de re* belief. Some of these theorists will think that B's content is object-dependent but not Russellian. They'll distinguish between the object-dependent proposition that Superman can fly and the object-dependent proposition that Clark can fly. For these theorists, a belief-ascription like (ii) will be a *de dicto* ascription of a *de re* belief. So the question whether the ascription is *de dicto* or *de re* can come apart from the question whether the belief ascribed is.

These questions may also come apart in the other direction. There's a class of examples where people seem to be using *de re* ascriptions to ascribe *de dicto* beliefs. For example, suppose Prof. Gullible is teaching a class of 400 students, and suppose he has the general belief that all his students are honest. (He doesn't know the students individually; they're just a sea of 400 faces.) We know all of that. If Stew is one of the students in the class, we might say to him, "You're thought to be honest by the Professor." This looks like a *de re* ascription, but we know that the Professor doesn't have a *de re* belief about Stew. He only has the general belief that all his students are honest.

Suppose one day the Professor loses his wallet. We believe that the wallet was stolen by a student (though we don't know who did it). But the Professor remains convinced that all his students are honest. We might say, in frustration, "Professor Gullible even thinks that the student who stole his wallet is honest." This looks like it has to be a *de re* ascription, as well. "The student who stole the wallet" is just *our* way of describing the student; the Professor doesn't think that there's anybody who's both a thief and honest. So here too it looks like we have a *de re* ascription; though we know that the Professor doesn't have any corresponding *de re* beliefs. He only has the general belief that all his students are honest.

Commonly, theorists who employ the notion of *de re* belief think that for you to have a *de re* belief about o, you have to stand in some intimate cognitive relation to o: e.g., you have to have perceived o, or at least to have talked to someone who perceived o. At a minimum, o has to have had some causal influence on you. It has to be in your past light-cone. (Other theorists are more liberal about what it takes to have *de re* beliefs about o.)

Some theorists agree there is an interesting class of beliefs that involve these intimate cognitive relations with objects. They'll call them "*de re* beliefs." However, they think we can analyze these beliefs without making us believe any object-dependent propositions. (I have people like Burge and Lewis and Chisholm in mind here.)

See? I told you it was a mess.