

XVIII PROPOSITIONAL ATTITUDES: KRIPKE

Millian v. Fregean Accounts

According to the Millian account, the semantic value of a name is just its referent, and so substitution of coreferential terms would maintain not just truth value but also meaning. In *Naming and Necessity* Kripke suggested a Millian account of names that occur in extensional contexts and within modal operators. (Note that some—e.g. Michael Devitt—held him to be proposing a causal account, according to which the causal chain is part of the meaning of the name: same referent + different causal chain = different meaning; Kripke's comments here suggest that that interpretation is mistaken). But Kripke himself seemed to reject Millianism about names in propositional attitude contexts: he held that Hesperus is Hesperus can be known *a priori*, but Hesperus is Phosphorous cannot; that surely entails that knowing that Hesperus is Hesperus is not the same as knowing the Hesperus is Phosphorous; and so that names are not Millian within knowledge ascriptions.

That might suggest that the Fregean theory is correct for propositional attitude contexts, even if it is wrong elsewhere. But as Kripke points out, there are difficulties in thinking that it will solve all of our problems

(i) Do we go for community wide senses or idiolectic senses? The former don't seem fine grained enough; the latter give rise to all kinds of problem ('Everyone knows that Aristotle was a philosopher')

(ii) Iterated attitudes seem to provide substitution problems even for synonyms:
Assumption: 'attorney' is synonymous with 'lawyer' (if you doubt that, substitute two terms that you do think are synonymous). Then contrast:

Whoever believes that attorneys are wealthy believes that attorneys are wealthy
Whoever believes that attorneys are wealthy believes that lawyers are wealthy

Mary doubts that whoever believes the attorneys are wealthy believes that attorneys are wealthy
Mary doubts that whoever believes the attorneys are wealthy believes that lawyers are wealthy

However, Kripke isn't trying to refute the Fregean account directly. Rather he is trying to show that problems about belief (and—or?—about belief ascription) arise without invoking any Millian principle of substitution. The upshot is that puzzles about belief cannot by themselves be used against the Millian account; or at least, not until we find out just what is generating the puzzle in each case.

Pierre

Disquotation principle, D: If a normal English speaker, on reflection, sincerely assents to 'p', then he believes that p.

Strengthened disquotation principle, SD: A normal English speaker who is not reticent will be disposed to sincere reflective assent to 'p' if and only if he believes that p.

Translation principle, T: If a sentence of one language expressed a truth in that language, then any translation of it into any other language also expressed a truth (in that other language).

By D and T, (i) Pierre believes that London is pretty and believes that London is not pretty.
By SD and T, (ii) Pierre believes that London is pretty and does not believe that London is pretty.

Some responses:

(i) is false because Pierre doesn't really understand 'London' (or 'Londres'); but then nor do very many other speakers. (We risk raising the standard so high that many don't fall under it). Similar problems arise if we accept that he knew what the terms meant, but deny that he had the relevant beliefs. (Though might we deny that he believes both? Compare what we'd say about a recognitional capacity.)

(i) is true, since Pierre believes a contradiction. But there is no logical mistake that he makes.

(i) is false because 'London' isn't really a translation of 'Londres' (Again we risk raising the standard too high, and making the translation principle trivial.)

Peter

Now we don't even need the translation principle (or at least, all we need is a homophonic translation principle).

Naïve Theorist

Naïve theorists (most notably Nathan Salmon and Scott Soames) conclude that names are Millian even within belief contexts. They explain the apparent unacceptability of many coreferential substitutions by means of pragmatic rules on what a good ascription would be like (basically: keep the words as close to the original as you can); deviating from these rules by making unwarranted substitutions gives rise to ascriptions that are strictly true, but pragmatically unacceptable.

Presupposition

Should we be able to 'answer the original question' as Kripke insists? Compare someone who insisted to an innocent: 'Have you stopped beating your wife or not? Yes or No? Answer the question!' If that is the correct diagnosis, what are the presuppositions of our belief ascribing practice?