Background: Propositional Attitudes

- **Propositional attitudes** are mental states such as belief, hope, doubt, etc., that (at least on standard views) relate individuals to propositions.
- **Attitude reports** are sentences that attribute propositional attitudes. E.g., 'John believes that grenades explode', 'Alice doubts that Justin Bieber is human'.
  - One of the interesting properties of attitude reports is that they seem to create *referentially opaque* contexts (substituting co-refering terms within their scope may change the sentence's truth-value).
    - E.g.: 'Jane believes that George Eliot is male' may be true, while 'Jane believes that Mary Ann Evans is male' is false. But 'George Eliot' and 'Mary Ann Evans' co-refer.
  - These contrast with *transparent* contexts, e.g., the position of 'Jane' in the above sentence, or positions within simple sentences with no operators.
- **Intensional transitive verbs** (ITVs) are verbs such as 'worships' and 'seeks' that take an NP direct object, as in 'Engelbert worships Zeus'. They are used to attribute intentional states that do not appear to be propositional attitudes.
  - For details, see: [http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/intensional-trans-verbs/](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/intensional-trans-verbs/)

De Re vs. De Dicto Modal Claims

- A **de dicto** modal claim is one in which a whole proposition is attributed a modal property (e.g., 'It is contingent that some platypodes swim', or 'Necessarily, every husband is married').
- A **de re** modal claim is one in which an object is attributed a modal property (e.g. 'The Prime Minister might have never been born', or 'Every husband is necessarily married').
  - If some de re modal claims are true, *essentialism* follows: objects have essences at least insofar as they have some properties necessarily (and other properties only contingently).
  - In a de re modal sentence, we have a variable inside the operator's scope that's bound by a quantifier or other term outside that scope. We're quantifying in. E.g.: $\exists x (Px \& \diamond \neg Bx)$
- W.V. Quine famously rejected essentialism and argued that de re modality was nonsense. He imagines a bicycling mathematician and asks: If there's a fact of the matter about whether he is necessarily two-legged or necessarily rational, why does the answer seem to depend on how we describe him?
  - Kripke's reply: It doesn't. That guy himself is obviously contingently two-legged.
- Quine also had more principled reasons for rejecting de re modality. He purported to prove that it is incoherent to quantify into an opaque context. See his “Notes on Existence and Necessity” ([http://www.jstor.org/stable/2017458](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2017458)). The basic (very rough!) idea:
  - Let $S(t)$ be a true sentence containing a term $t$. If $t$ occurs in an opaque context, that means that for some term $t'$ such that $t$ and $t'$ co-refer, $S(t')$ is false. But then in helping determine the truth-values of $S(t)$ and $S(t')$, terms $t$ and $t'$ don't simply contribute the object they refer to. If they did, the truth-value wouldn't differ!
    - To understand this, it might help to imagine $S(\ )$ being a function to truth-values. What are the arguments? Not simply objects, since $t$ and $t'$ would provide the same argument and thus the same value of the function. But the values of the function are different for $t$ and $t'$. So those terms provide different arguments.
  - So what do $t$ and $t'$ contribute? Perhaps modes of presentation of objects, or perhaps their
own linguistic properties, as in quotation (the inside of which is an opaque context).

- The sole semantic function of a variable is to stand for the objects in the domain of quantification. So they can't contribute modes of presentation or anything else. Just objects. So they can't contribute what's needed to determine the truth-value of \( S \).
- For a careful explanation and refutation of this argument, see Kaplan's "Opacity".

From Modal Claims to Propositional Attitudes Reports

- In Q&PA, Quine starts with examples that suggest that we need a de re / de dicto distinction for propositional attitude reports.
  - 'Ralph thinks someone is a spy' is genuinely ambiguous. Does Ralph just think that there are spies, or does he have information that might interest the CIA?
  - Similarly, 'Willard hopes that a neighbour of his will die soon', 'Ralph doubts the Prime Minister will resign', 'Ned assumes everyone is an idiot'.
- The two readings of these reports can be highlighted by paraphrasing slightly. For de re, we in effect move the designator or quantifier outside the description of the attitude's content. E.g.:

  (1) There is someone Ralph believes to be a spy. / Ralph believes of someone that they are a spy. / Someone is such that Ralph believes that they are a spy.

- These de re reports look like they involve quantifying in: \( \exists x (\text{Ralph thinks } x \text{ is a spy}) \).
- For de dicto, we leave all the material inside the description of the attitude's content. E.g.:

  (2) Ralph believes that there are spies. / Ralph believes that there is someone who is a spy.

- A similar ambiguity arises with ITVs.
  - E.g.: 'Quine is looking for a book', 'Alice wants a new Apple product'.
  - Note: Here, it's hard to represent the ambiguity logically. Quine transforms the ITVs into propositional attitudes, e.g. taking 'x wants' to mean 'x wants it to be the case that x has'.
- Question: Does the de re / de dicto distinction between reports line up with two kinds of attitudes? Watch out for sloppy talk here (e.g., 'de re belief' vs. 'de re belief report').
  - How might we understand the distinction between attitudes? Is the distinction exclusive, or are de re attitudes a sub-category of de dicto attitudes?
  - Even if you think de re attitudes aren't reducible, you still might think that not all de re reports report de re attitudes...
  - Irreducibly de re attitudes are sometimes called 'singular thoughts'. Their contents are called 'singular propositions'.
- While Quine rejects de re modal claims, in Q&PA he can't bring himself to reject de re attitude reports. "We are scarcely prepared to sacrifice the relational construction 'There is someone whom Ralph believes to be a spy'." (179) But Quine has worries...

Is there a problem with de re belief reports?

- If the alleged theorem that it's incoherent to quantify into an opaque context were right, we'd need to figure out how to analyze de re belief without quantifying in.
  - This drives the rest of the paper – Quine attempts to analyze de re attitude reports without treating them as quantifying in, thus respecting his alleged theorem.
  - But again, Kaplan shows that the "theorem" is wrong.
- Quine also thinks a problem can be seen more intuitively:
  - Since belief reports are opaque, terms in them must specify not simply what object
someone's belief is about, but something else, e.g. a mode of presentation of the object – the way the believer thinks of the object. But a variable can't do that. So it doesn't make sense to quantify into a belief report.

• The case of Bernard J. Ortcutt is meant to illustrate the problem.
  ○ The man at the beach = the man in a brown hat = Ortcutt.
  ○ Ralph believes that the man in a brown hat is a spy.
  ○ Ralph does not believe that the man at the beach is a spy, but rather believes that the man at the beach is not a spy.
  ○ So, is Ortcutt such that Ralph believes him to be a spy or not?
    □ There should be an answer to this question if quantifying in makes sense:
      ∃x (x=Ortcutt & Ralph believes x is a spy).
  ○ If we say “yes”, for a parallel reason don't we have to say that Ortcutt is such that Ralph does not believe that he is a not a spy? But then we'd contradict ourselves:
    □ ∃x (x=Ortcutt & Ralph believes that x is a spy & ¬ Ralph believes that x is a spy)
    □ Perhaps we don't have to make the “parallel” judgement in the wide-scope negation case, but we at least end up attributing a puzzling pair of beliefs to Ralph:
      ∃x (x=Ortcutt & Ralph believes that x is a spy & Ralph believes that ¬ x is a spy)

Worries about Exportation
• Where 't' is a name or definite description and 't exists' is true, exportation is the movement from (5) to (6):
  (5) S believes that t is F.
  (6) S believes of t that it is F. / S believes t to be F. / t is believed by S to be F.

• The thesis of unrestricted exportation (UE) is that (5) entails (6). I.e., exportation is always valid.
  ○ Note UE does not commit you to the inference from 'Ralph does not believe that the man at the beach is a spy' to 'The man at the beach is not believed by Ralph to be a spy'. We're dealing only with positive belief reports. (Though F could be negative, e.g. 'not a spy'.)
• The question of whether UE is correct is an sub-question of the more general question: What's the relationship between de dicto and de re attitude reports?
• Quine's worry above can be seen as a worry for UE. We might want to avoid having to say that
  ∃x (x=Ortcutt & Ralph believes that x is a spy & Ralph believes that ¬ x is a spy).
• Kripke has another worry: UE would prevent us from capturing the de re / de dicto distinction, because it will result in (2) yielding (1) when it shouldn't.
  ○ Suppose S correctly believes that there are spies (de dicto). Now, S can conclude from the armchair that the tallest spy is a spy (de dicto). By UE, S believes the tallest spy to be a spy (de re). It follows that there is someone S believes to be a spy. Bad result!
• A number of philosophers have tried to defend this consequence, e.g. Dennett, Sosa. They say the de re reports really do follow from the de dicto reports (together with minimal assumptions about the believer).
  ○ They try to explain away the data as merely pragmatic. More on this below.
• Kripke's more “sweeping” worry:
  ○ Suppose Ralph falsely believes that p.
  ○ Now let G be the complex property of being either [identical with the tallest spy and such that p] or [identical with the Eiffel Tower and such that not-p].
  ○ If Ralph believes that the tallest spy is a spy, then he can infer (falsely) that the G is a spy. (He'll think that the G is whatever is identical with the tallest spy and is such that p – and
that's just the tallest spy!)  
◦ Now, by UE, it follows that the G is believed by Ralph to be a spy.  
◦ But the G is the Eiffel Tower (since it's not true that \( p \), nothing satisfies the first disjunct of G, so whatever is G is whatever satisfies the second disjunct).  
  - Now Kripke assumes that since 'the G' is outside the description of the attitude's content in the de re report, it occurs in a transparent context. So we can substitute any co-referring term for 'the G', e.g. 'the Eiffel Tower'.  
◦ So the Eiffel Tower is believed by Ralph to be a spy. Bad result!

The pragmatic wastebasket

• Proponents of UE: If Jane merely believes that there are spies and then infers that the shortest spy is a spy, it's true to say 'There's someone Jane believes to be a spy'. It only sounds bad for pragmatic reasons.  
• Kripke: You can't just consign phenomena to the pragmatic wastebasket without good reason. So what are the pragmatic principles that are meant to do the explanatory work here?  
  - Example of a pragmatic principle: Making an utterance that is weaker than what would be conversationally appropriate will suggest that the stronger statement isn't true.  
  - But this principle can't be the one at work in the Jane case. The de re report doesn't seem inappropriately weak, and there isn't any suggested falsity of a stronger statement.

• Kripke argues that the inappropriateness in the Jane case isn't simply pragmatic, because it's correct to explicitly deny that there's someone Jane believes to be a spy.  
  - Someone could propose that the denial is pragmatically OK but false, but that proposal would require yet more support. The appropriateness of the denial isn't predicted by the inappropriateness of original assertion.  
  - That \( p \) is conversationally inappropriate doesn't imply that not-\( p \) will be appropriate.  
  - Example from Grice: In normal lighting and circumstances, it's inappropriate to say of a red thing 'That looks red'. But it's not appropriate to say that 'That doesn't look red'!  
  - Dennett proposes (roughly) that the denial is appropriate because the original report is true only for somewhat trivial reasons.  
  - Kripke's reply: This isn't a real principle. If it's for trivial reasons that Jane believes that fish swim, it's not thereby appropriate to say that Jane doesn't believe fish swim.

• Another of Kripke's points against the proponent of UE is that there's a connection between the truth-values of de re reports and the extensions of predicates like 'suspect'. E.g., suppose the police are investigating only three people (a, b, and c) for Smith's murder, but they're completely on the wrong track. Smith's murderer is actually d. Intuitively, 'The police have three suspects' is true. But if UE is right, Smith's murderer is believed by the police to be the perpetrator. So on that view, won't it wrongly come out that the police have four suspects?
  - I'm not sure I've spelled out this objection precisely as Kripke intended it. Think about whether you can improve on the above.

• If Kripke's right, there are some restrictions on exportation. What might they be? He says, "when a speaker's use of a term makes him sufficiently en rapport with its object, it is exportable; this, however, does not say all that much".  
  - Compare Kaplan's view in "Quantifying In".
Some questions to think about as you read (and if you'd like, to blog about)

- Does the paraphrase strategy work in every case where there's a de re / de dicto distinction involving an ITV? Explain.
- Why isn't there a de re / de dicto distinction for some ITVs, e.g., 'worships'? Is it due to something about the nature of worshipping, or something more linguistic?
- Are there any interesting points of disanalogy between the ways we draw the de re / de dicto distinction for modals and attitudes?
- What do you think about Quine's explanation of de re attitude reports? Does his strategy succeed? Are you sympathetic to his postulation of lexical ambiguities in attitude verbs?
- Since Quine gives an analysis of de re belief that's meant to avoid the problem his “theorem” poses, could he have used the same strategy to come up with an analysis of de re modality?
- Kripke writes that “the assumption of unrestricted exportation does not obviously collapse Quine's distinction between the two readings of 'I want a sloop'”. Why not? What's the difference between this and the belief case?
- Evaluate the suggestion from Kripke's opponent in fn 25 and Kripke's reply.
- In your view, which de re attitude reports about Ralph's beliefs are true? Which are false?
- Can you come up with a pragmatic principle that can defend UE from Kripke's worry above (where I've written 'Kripke has another worry')? What about the “more sweeping worry”?
- Is 't' really in a transparent context as it occurs in a de re report of the form 't is believed by x to be F'? What are the reasons for your answer? Give examples of your own to support your view.
- In your view, what (if any) are the restrictions on exportation?
- Explain what the toy duck fallacy is as precisely as you can. Can you give some examples of your own?