

## SINGULAR PROPOSITIONS AND MODES OF PRESENTATION<sup>1</sup>

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1. Recently a growing number of philosophers have either explicitly endorsed or been strongly sympathetic to some version of a directly referential, or Millian, semantics for ascriptions of propositional attitudes.<sup>2</sup> It is not difficult to be attracted by the Millian view. On the one hand, rival views such as Davidson's paratactic account or Frege's cognitive account seem to face formidable difficulties. On the other, there are phenomena which are nicely accounted for by the Millian view. For instance, it deals rather well with so-called *de re* reports of attitudes; and it provides us with a convincing explanation of why, in a certain range of cases, substitutivity of co-referential terms within attitude constructions seems to be irresistible.

The aim of this paper is to survey a number of features which are constitutive of the Millian account of attitude-ascription and which I take to be irremediably defective. The features in question, some of which have not been fully appreciated, relate mainly to the failure of that account to accommodate certain fundamental aspects of our ordinary practise of attitude attribution. I take it that one's definitive method of assessment of a given semantical theory consists in checking out whether or not the theory is able to accommodate our pre-theoretical linguistic intuitions; to use Keith Donnellan's phrase (Donnellan 1990, 204), such intuitions are the bottom line in philosophical argumentation about language. And I argue that the Millian appeal to modes of presentation taken both as semantically irrelevant and external to the singular contents believed, known, etc., as well as the associated pragmatic strategy employed to discard our ground-floor judgements, are insufficient to palliate the manifest implausibility of a number of Millian

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<sup>2</sup> See Soames 1987, Perry 1979, Salmon 1990, and Kaplan 1988. Kripke 1979 and Donnellan 1990 are sympathetic to the Millian view.

descriptions of our attitudes, especially descriptions of our second-order attitudes.

Maybe, as Saul Kripke has claimed (Kripke 1979), our intuitions about belief and belief-ascription are not, in general, as solid as one might expect; and maybe there are cases concerning which they are likely to break down. But there are also clear-cut cases, cases concerning which our intuitions are perfectly in order; and it is against such cases that I think one should test the Millian view and eventually reject it. It is true that the main alternative to Millianism, the Fregean view, has problems of its own; but, by treating a belief-ascription containing a simple singular term in the ‘that’-clause as conveying semantically relevant information, not only about the object the belief is about, but also about a particular mode of presentation under which the believer takes the object, such an account has at least the significant advantage of blocking from the outset any counter-intuitive descriptions of the envisaged sort.

2. The central tenet of the Millian theory of propositional attitudes is the claim that, in a certain range of cases, the contents of such states of mind as believing, knowing, desiring, hoping, etc., are to be identified with so-called singular or neo-Russellian propositions.<sup>3</sup>

On such a view, one should construe an attitude-report of the form ‘*s* *A*’s that *p*’ — where *s* is replaceable by a term standing for a subject, *A*’s by an attitude verb (e.g. ‘thinks’), and *p* by a sentence containing at least one (used) occurrence of a logically simple designator (e.g. a proper name) — as expressing a relation, the relation denoted by the verb, which holds between a subject and a singular proposition, the singular proposition denoted by the ‘that’-clause. Singular propositions are structured and abstract (i.e. mind- and language-independent) entities some constituent parts of which consist in, and only in, particular objects (typically, public items in the environment); such objects are those which could be referred to by directly referential designators occurring in sentences which might be used to express (relative to given contexts) the singular propositions. Thus, the singular proposition that London is ugly, which is the semantic content assigned to utterances (in given contexts) of sentences such as ‘London is ugly’ and ‘This (pointing at London) is ugly’, has been usually thought of as something like

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Salmon 1986 and Soames 1987.

an ordered pair consisting of an object, the city of London itself, and a property, the property of being ugly.

3. In fact, and *inter alia* with a view to complying with certain rationality principles, most Millian theorists take the relation denoted by the attitude verb as being necessarily mediated by some such entities as **guises, ways of apprehending, roles, vehicles** (in some language), or **modes of presentation**, under which singular propositions are grasped by subjects; the attitude should thus be seen as a three-termed relation, holding between a subject, a singular proposition, and some mode of presentation (guise, vehicle, etc.) of it.

Take as a paradigmatic example the sentence

(1) Pierre believes that London is ugly.

Millian truth-conditions for this report could be laid down as follows:<sup>4</sup>

(M) (1) is true if and only if there is a mode of presentation **m** which presents the singular proposition <London, Ugliness> to Pierre and he stands in the Believing relationship to this proposition under **m**.

Call such a ternary relation the BEL relation, and take it as something like accepting, or being disposed to accept, a singular proposition under a mode. On the Millian view, the following two general features are then assigned to modes of presentation: (i) their externality with respect to propositional content; (ii) their semantic irrelevance (I shall come back to this later).

4. It is essential to Millianism that the posited modes of presentation do not enter into the believed contents. And it is important to distinguish between the Millian view and certain (actual or merely possible) views on which a rather similar conceptual apparatus happens to be employed; in what follows I give a crude outline of three such views. For purposes of comparison, I assume that the specification of truth-conditions for a belief-report of the intended kind in terms of an existential quantification over modes is held constant across the different types of account. And, for the same purposes, I

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Salmon 1990

introduce all the views by reference to the notion of a singular proposition: for some of them some other notion, e.g. the notion of a possible state of affairs, might be more appropriate.

First, notice that a different proposal would emerge if one gave truth-conditions for report (1) (and reports of the same kind) along the following lines:

(H) (1) is true iff there is a mode of presentation **m** which presents <London, Ugliness> to Pierre and he stands in the Believing relationship to the proposition <<London, Ugliness>, **m**>.

Here the object of belief would not be identified with a singular proposition, but with a more complex (and hybrid) proposition consisting in a singular proposition taken together with a mode of presentation of it; assuming some form of compositionality for propositional modes, one might view such a proposition as containing some mode of presentation of London (relative to Pierre) and some mode of presentation of Ugliness (relative to Pierre)<sup>5</sup>. Accordingly, in (H) the Believing relationship would not be the Millian BEL relation, but some other two-termed relation. And, under this proposal, the Millian claim would not be preserved that the 'that'-clause in (1) is a singular term referring to a fully specified proposition. It is sometimes argued that, as a result, the proposal would be in trouble to validate seemingly legitimate transitions such as e.g. the one from 'Pierre believes that London is ugly' and 'Paul believes that London is ugly' to 'There is something which Pierre and Paul both believe'.

However, in spite of the noted differences, one should remark that the truth-conditions given by such an account would be extensionally equivalent to Millian truth-conditions, in the sense that (H) would yield the same assignments of truth-values to belief reports of the envisaged sort as those generated by (M); in particular, substitutivity *salva veritate* of co-referential names within the embedded sentences of belief-attributions would still be invariably allowed. Therefore, the mere insertion of modes of presentation into propositional content would not be sufficient to guarantee possible

<sup>5</sup> Thus, one could also formulate (H) as follows: (1) is true iff there are modes **m** and **m'** such that **m** and **m'** present London and Ugliness (respectively) to Pierre and he stands in the Believing relationship to the proposition <<London, **m**>, <Ugliness, **m'**>>.

failures of substitutivity<sup>6</sup>. On the view represented in (H), the following two general features are then assigned to modes: (i) their internality with respect to propositional content; (ii) their semantic irrelevance: whatever the mode is, as long as it satisfies the sort of conditions stated on the right-hand side of (H), its mere availability will ensure the truth of the belief-attribution.

Secondly, if one still wished to preserve the general form taken by the analyses (M) and (H) (i.e. existential quantification over modes), and in my view there are good reasons to do so, then a radically distinct type of account could be obtained by claiming that not every mode under which a believer is acquainted with a singular proposition will do, and by imposing certain additional restrictions on the quantified modes. Thus, one might want to give truth-conditions for reports such as (1) in the following way:

(F) (1) is true iff there is a **suitable** mode of presentation **m** which presents <London, Ugliness> to Pierre and he stands in the Believing relationship to the proposition <<London, Ugliness>, **m**>.

There are several ways in which the notion of a suitable propositional mode might be fleshed out. Here is a sketch of one way to do it. Suppose that one finds plausible the idea that the actual sentence the ascriber uses in making her ascription, and hence (in our case) the actual name involved, must play some semantically relevant role. Then one might take a suitable propositional mode of presentation to be one the specification of which is to be (partially) given by reference to a sentence matching (in a sense to be specified) the actual sentence employed in the ‘that’-clause of the belief-ascription (e.g. ‘London is ugly’); and, assuming compositionality for propositional modes, one might take a suitable singular mode of presentation to be one the specification of which is to be (partially) given by reference to a name matching (in a sense to be specified) the actual name employed in the ‘that’-clause of the belief-ascription (e.g. ‘London’). This would not be necessarily incompatible with the idea that modes should be regarded as being also determined by contextual factors, or by factors of other kinds.

It turns out that truth-conditions of the above sort would not be extensionally equivalent to truth-conditions of the sort proposed in either of the foregoing types of account, in the sense that it would be possible for (F) to

<sup>6</sup> And I guess it would not be necessary either; see below.

generate assignments of truth-values to given belief-ascriptions which would differ from those generated by (M) or (H); in particular, failures of substitutivity of co-referential names might well be forthcoming under (F)<sup>7</sup>. Hence, there seem to be no reasons why a Fregean, or a neo-Fregean, theorist should not (under certain circumstances) subscribe to the view just outlined. However, it would depart from Frege's original views in a number of respects, e.g. Frege's claim that the embedded sentence in (1) refers to a fully specified proposition or thought would not be preserved. Thus, at first sight, the objections raised against (H) concerning its inability to account for the intuitive validity of certain inferences would equally apply to (F). On the view represented in (F), the following two general features are then assigned to modes: (i) their internality with respect to propositional content; (ii) their semantic relevance: the truth-value of a belief-report is taken to be sensitive to the appropriateness of certain modes, not only to their sheer existence.

Thirdly, if one stuck to the Millian style of analysis and in addition imposed constraints of the preceding sort on modes (or similar ones), then one might end up with an account on which the objects of belief would be exhausted by singular propositions and on which interchangeability of co-referential names within belief constructions might not be the case<sup>8</sup>. Accordingly, truth-conditions for (1) might be given as follows:

(E) (1) is true iff there is a suitable mode of presentation **m** which presents the singular proposition <London, Ugliness> to Pierre and he stands in the Believing relationship to this proposition under **m**.

Nevertheless, the posited modes of presentation would become semantically relevant: belief ascriptions of the intended kind would convey specific information about modes which would be needed to evaluate them. In any case, it follows that the mere insertion of modes of presentation into propositional content would not be necessary to guarantee possible failures of substitutivity (though one might have independent reasons to prefer internal modes, of course). On the view represented in (E), the following two features are then assigned to modes: (i) their externality with respect to propositional content; (ii) their semantic relevance. Hence, in general, it seems

<sup>7</sup> In Branquinho 1990 I argue on similar grounds that the Millian account and an account which is akin to (F) cannot be taken as notational variants of one another.

<sup>8</sup> Fodor 1990 seems to propose a view on which these two claims are combined.

that the issue of substitutivity has more to do with the semantic relevance or irrelevance of modes than with their external or internal position in relation to propositional content.

5. Going back to the Millian view, let me now delineate what I take to be its most serious drawbacks. Most of the objections raised below would also apply to the account represented in (H) above, but not to accounts (F) and (E); thus, their proper target should be seen as the claim that modes are semantically irrelevant, not the claim that modes are external to content. I shall continue to focus on ascriptions whose embedded sentences contain proper names, and always assume that those ascriptions are given their so-called *de dicto* readings.

Take once more the well-worn story about the ancient astronomer — call him ‘Ptolemy’ — who was unaware of the fact that Hesperus, which he identified as a certain star observed at dusk in the eastern sky, is the same celestial body as Phosphorus, which he identified as a certain planet observed at dawn in the western sky. To begin with, the Millian account entails the truth (relative to Ptolemy’s case) of

(2) Ptolemy believes that Hesperus is not Hesperus.

The ‘that’-clause in (2) refers to the same singular proposition, viz. <<Hesperus, Phosphorus>, Non-Identity>, as the embedded sentence in

(3) Ptolemy believes that Hesperus is not Phosphorus.

Hence, (2) and (3) are assigned the same Millian truth-conditions; assuming that these are fulfilled in the case of (3), it follows that they will also be fulfilled in the case of (2). Naturally, there is the notorious problem that Millianism also entails the truth of ‘Ptolemy believes that Hesperus is Phosphorus’; yet, supposing that implausibility is something which may come in degrees, I have picked out (2) because I take its degree of implausibility to be higher than that of the latter report.

There are several (actual or merely possible) proposals about the identity and nature of the entities which are to serve as modes of presentation of singular propositions. However, for the purposes at hand, one may safely suppose that they are specifiable, at least partially, by means of interpreted

sentences belonging to some language, e.g. the believer's public language or her "language of thought". Thus, roughly, (3) is true because (one may assume) Ptolemy would be disposed to accept the above singular proposition if it were presented to him through the sentence 'Hesperus is not Phosphorus' (or some counterpart of it in Ptolemy's language, or some appropriate sentence in his "language of thought"). The availability of such a mode then guarantees the truth of report (2). Notice that, on most construals of modes (including the one above), it is very likely that (2) and (3) would equally be evaluated as true under account (H), whereas the former report would be assigned the opposite truth-value under accounts (F) and (E).

Now that result is at odds with the intuition most of us have to the effect that (2), whose embedded sentence is a surface form contradiction, is patently false (and (3) clearly true). Millian theorists have usually replied to this objection by claiming that, though (in some sense) misleading or inappropriate, report (2) is in fact true. And they have tried to explain away that intuition by using considerations which fall within the pragmatics of attitude-ascription. Thus, one is supposed to make a sharp distinction between the following two things. On the one hand, what is asserted by a belief-report, or what is semantically contained in it: its Millian truth-conditions (as given before); on the other, what is pragmatically imparted or suggested by it: e.g. that, in order for the report to be appropriate, its embedded sentence, which picks out a certain singular proposition, should match (in some sense) the sentence used in specifying the particular mode of presentation under which the believer would agree to that proposition. In other words, modes are only pragmatically relevant. Hence, in spite of being literally true (its truth-conditions are satisfied), (2) is misleading: the suggested mode is the wrong one; whereas (3) is both true and appropriate: the suggested mode is the right one.

I doubt whether the pragmatic strategy, backed up by a framework of modes, would succeed in dispelling in a satisfactory way our strongly entrenched intuition that (2) is just false, and not only misleading. And if one switches from belief-ascriptions to (say) reports of sayings then, assuming that the Millian account also applies to the latter, the intuitive implausibility of the Millian verdicts becomes even more apparent. Suppose that Ptolemy, in the context of his story, comes to utter a token of the sentence 'Hesperus

is not Phosphorus' (or the equivalent in his language)<sup>9</sup>. Then it seems that Millianism would allow us to report this in indirect discourse as follows:

(4) Ptolemy said that Hesperus is not Hesperus;

and (4) appears to be both wholly inappropriate and literally false in the light of our ordinary standards. It might be replied that reports of sayings belong in a different (semantic) category since, unlike reports of belief, they should be viewed as introducing quotational contexts; hence the Millian view would not extend to them. Yet, the validity of inferences such as e.g. 'Paul believes everything Pierre says. Pierre said that London is ugly. Therefore, Paul believes that London is ugly' strongly suggests that objects of sayings and objects of belief are of the same kind; and if singular propositions are to serve as the latter (in some cases), then they should serve as the former (in those cases).

6. By entailing the truth of attributions like (2), the Millian theory entails the possibility of our attributing to an *ex hypothesi* fully rational and logical, but not omniscient, subject a belief in a self-contradiction; or, better, a belief in a logical impossibility, viz. the negation of a logical truth. True, such a logical impossibility would be believed under a mode specifiable by means of (some appropriate translation of) a sentence, 'Hesperus is not Phosphorus', which is not the negation of a logically true sentence. However, I take it that this is insufficient to attenuate the counter-intuitiveness of that consequence of Millianism. Indeed, such a result would not be completely unreasonable, one might concede, only if the subject could not be — or could not be reported as being — in a position to be aware of the fact that she believes a self-contradictory proposition. The problem is that it seems that the Millian view also entails that it is possible for a rational subject who is described as believing a self-contradiction to realize, or to be reported as realizing, that she believes the self-contradiction in question. In effect, assuming that Ptolemy is minimally competent in attributing beliefs (to others and to himself), assuming that the Millian account generalizes to iterated attitudes, and granting the truth of (2), the following might well be true:

<sup>9</sup> For convenience, I henceforth assume that Ptolemy's language is English.

(5) Ptolemy knows that he believes that Hesperus is not Hesperus.

One could suppose that Ptolemy would stand in the epistemic analogue of the BEL relation, which one might call the KNOW relation, to the neo-Russellian proposition that he believes that Hesperus is not Hesperus; there could be a mode, e.g. (roughly) ‘I believe that Hesperus is not Phosphorus’, by means of which he would be familiar with that proposition and under which he would stand in KNOW to it. Moreover, I guess that Millianism would even entitle us to assert that Ptolemy knows (5), and that he knows that he knows (5), and so on.

Given that they would count ascription (2) as false (with respect to Ptolemy’s story), accounts (F) and (E) would entail the falsity of (5), on the uncontroversial assumption that knowledge is factive. As to the issue of whether or not account (H) would entail the truth of (2), it would depend upon the way such a view would handle iterated attitudes, though I think an affirmative answer might be plausibly given.

On the other hand, suppose that Ptolemy has some expertise in elementary logic and semantics; and, in particular, that he has the concept of a self-inconsistent proposition. Then Millianism would presumably allow us to assert that Ptolemy knows that the proposition that Hesperus is not Hesperus is self-inconsistent; again, there could be a mode, e.g. ‘The proposition that Hesperus is not Hesperus is self-inconsistent’, by means of which he would ex hypothesi be familiar with that proposition and under which he would stand in the KNOW relation to it. (And the existence of such a mode would also warrant the claim that Ptolemy knows that the proposition that Hesperus is not Phosphorus is a self-inconsistent proposition.)

Notice that although the Millian account entails, on the one hand, that Ptolemy knows that he believes the proposition that Hesperus is not Hesperus and, on the other, that he knows that this proposition is self-inconsistent, it does not entail that he knows the following proposition: that the proposition that Hesperus is not Hesperus is both self-inconsistent and believed by him.

True, what Ptolemy is ignorant of is the metalinguistic proposition that the sentence ‘Hesperus is not Phosphorus’ expresses (in English) a self-inconsistent proposition; and this happens to be the sentence used to specify the propositional mode under which he believes, and knows that he believes, the self-inconsistency that Hesperus is not Hesperus. Still, I think that results

of this sort strongly militate against the intuitive tenability of the Millian account. Indeed, one might take the following principle as imposing a plausible minimal constraint on the notion of rationality: if a subject  $s$  is rational then, if  $s$  knows (at a time  $t$ ) that  $s$  believes (at  $t$ ) the proposition that  $p$  and  $s$  knows (at  $t$ ) that the proposition that  $p$  is self-inconsistent, then  $s$  will cease (at  $t$ ) to believe the proposition that  $p$ . It seems that this principle is violated by the Millian theory; letting the proposition that  $p$  be the proposition that Hesperus is not Hesperus, all the conditions stated in the antecedent are apparently fulfilled in Ptolemy's case. Yet, according to Millianism, Ptolemy continues to have (at  $t$ ) the belief that Hesperus is not Hesperus. Note that describing him as being in a position to drop on some occasion this belief is something such a view would prevent us from doing (as long as he remains ignorant about the evening star and the morning star). True, he also withholds belief (at  $t$ ) from the proposition in question, and disbelieves it (believes its negation) as well; but this is something which he has done all along. And I doubt that some relativization of the rationality principle to modes of presentation, e.g. by introducing the requirement that (in some cases) the proposition that  $p$  be grasped by  $s$  under the same mode throughout the antecedent, would be enough to remove or reduce the implausibility of the Millian descriptions.

7. On top of this, another objectionable trait of the Millian view which emerges from the preceding considerations is that its descriptions happen to credit thinkers with a wildly large proportion of self-knowledge, knowledge about their own mental states.

One might think that Millian modes of presentation are originally intended as constituting a sort of veil interposed between thinkers and singular propositions entertained by them, blocking their cognitive access to these. Nonetheless, the Millian descriptions appear to equip thinkers with (semantically) inappropriate pieces of knowledge, not only about their own attitudes towards singular propositions, but also about the identity of such propositions.

For instance, if Ptolemy were a Millian theorist he could be truly reported as knowing that the singular proposition that Hesperus is Hesperus is the singular proposition that Hesperus is Phosphorus; and he could also be truly reported as believing (on the same occasion) a non-identity about those singular propositions.

In general, let **a** and **b** be proper names and let a term of the form ‘The singular proposition that...**b**...’ result from a term of the form ‘The singular proposition that...**a**...’ by replacing one or more occurrences of **a** with **b** throughout. Then, assuming the subject **s** to have the concept of a singular proposition, to have mastered the names involved (or counterparts in her language)<sup>10</sup>, and to have thought about the relevant identity, the following necessarily holds (whether or not **s** knows **a** and **b** to be co-referential names): If the singular proposition that...**a**... is the singular proposition that...**b**..., then **s** knows that the singular proposition that...**a**... is the singular proposition that...**b**... (and knows that she knows this), while **s** might believe at the same time that these singular propositions are distinct (and know that she believes this). (Note that if the non-identity of the propositions in question were assumed, then a similar result would not follow.)

The range of relevant propositions which turn out to be opaque to Millian thinkers seems to be restricted to some metalinguistic propositions in which certain relations between sentential modes and singular propositions are asserted. For example, although Ptolemy knows that he believes the singular proposition that Hesperus is not Hesperus, and although he also knows that the sentence ‘Hesperus is not Phosphorus’ expresses that singular proposition, he does not believe, and hence does not know that he believes, the proposition that that sentence and the sentence ‘Hesperus is not Hesperus’ both express that singular proposition.

8. A different sort of highly counter-intuitive consequence of the Millian view is that it licenses attributions of beliefs whose contents are specified by using names which are not available in the linguistic repertoire of the believer, or which are not the counterparts of any names in the believer’s idiolect (if the language of the ascriber differs from the language of the believer)<sup>11</sup>. Thus, one would be entitled to ascribe to Ptolemy a number of beliefs expressed using our name for both Hesperus and Phosphorus, viz. ‘Venus’, a name whose introduction into the language was presumably a result of the astronomical discovery that the evening star and the morning

<sup>10</sup> In some cases it would be enough for her to master just one of the names involved; see below.

<sup>11</sup> This has been noticed by Donnellan in his article 1990, 204, footnote 4.

star are one and the same planet. In effect, the following would come out as true:

(6) Ptolemy believes that Venus is a planet.

But it just seems to be wrong that any belief-ascription of such a sort, containing 'Venus' in the 'that'-clause, could be true of Ptolemy. Rather, we would be inclined to take reports such as (6) as false and hence to take reports such as

(7) Ptolemy fails to believe that Venus is a planet;

as true (of course, (7) would be deemed false by the Millian theorist). By assuming the semantic relevance of modes, accounts (F) and (E) would have the resources to ratify these intuitions.

To take another kind of case, consider the following story. As a matter of fact, the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa availed himself of a number of heteronyms; besides writing some pieces under the name 'Fernando Pessoa', he wrote others under names such as 'Álvaro de Campos' and 'Ricardo Reis'. Contrary to what Pessoa himself seemed to have in mind, assume that such names refer to him, and not to certain fictional characters created by him; thus, 'Pessoa', 'Campos' and 'Reis' are supposed to be co-referential names (in Portuguese). Now it turns out that Carneiro, a neighbour and friend of Pessoa, masters the names 'Pessoa' and 'Campos' and uses them in the standard way, but is unaware that they are co-referential and wrongly thinks that Campos is a different, and more vulgar, poet. Suppose also that Carneiro is not at all familiar with the name 'Ricardo Reis'. Then, besides entailing intolerable reports such as 'Carneiro knows that Campos lives nearby' and 'Carneiro thinks that Pessoa's poetry is much better than Pessoa's poetry', the Millian view would entitle us to attribute to Carneiro a number of beliefs expressed using 'Ricardo Reis', a name which ex hypothesi he does not even understand.<sup>12</sup> It would allow us to assert:

(8) Carneiro believes that Pessoa is Reis

<sup>12</sup> I do not mean to imply that this would be invariably wrong. Indeed, there are cases in which it would be right to do so; e.g. one might correctly attribute to some ancient Persian a belief expressed by using the name 'Babylon' in the embedded sentence.

(9) Carneiro believes that Reis is a poet;

propositional modes such as e.g. ‘Campos é (is) Campos’ and ‘Campos é um poeta (is a poet)’ (respectively) would do the job. Again, this appears to be highly dubious in the light of our ordinary standards.

In general, if a given object may be picked out by a number of names in a language, and if it happens that just one of those names is available to a given speaker, then it follows from Millianism that a large number of beliefs whose contents are specifiable by means of any of the remaining names would be correctly attributable to the speaker. It seems to me that this result, which flows from the claim that modes do not play any semantically relevant role, collides with central principles governing our practise of attitude-attribution.

9. Finally, let me point out very briefly that there are important aspects of our mental and cognitive lives, namely aspects involving the dynamics of belief (and other attitudes) and the functional role of belief (and other attitudes), that the Millian approach would be in principle unable to accommodate in a satisfactory way<sup>13</sup>.

Concerning the former aspects, it turns out that a number of perfectly admissible transitions from old doxastic states to new doxastic states, taking place in a given subject throughout a certain period of time, would be left unexplained in the light of Millianism. One could surely introduce a situation in which Carneiro, on the basis of new evidence, changes his mind at a time  $t'$  about his belief, held at an earlier time  $t$ , that Pessoa is not Campos; at  $t'$  he might come to withhold belief from the non-identity, or he might come to disbelieve that Pessoa is not Campos (i.e. to believe that Pessoa and Campos are after all one and the same person). Yet, as already noticed, one could not make sense of these and other possible transitions on the basis of the Millian theory. For such a theory would yield the consequence that Carneiro has always, i.e. at any time between  $t$  and  $t'$ , withheld belief from the proposition that Pessoa is not Campos, as well as the consequence that Carneiro has always disbelieved the proposition that Pessoa is not Campos.

<sup>13</sup> The inadequacy of the Millian theory to cope with the phenomena in question is shown in Baker 1982.

Perhaps one could after all describe the situation by means of Millian terminology in the following way. One could say that at **t** Carneiro comes to withhold belief from the proposition that Pessoa is not Campos under the mode ‘Pessoa não é (is not) Campos’; and this is indeed something he has never done before. Similarly, one could say that at **t** Carneiro comes to disbelieve the proposition that Pessoa is not Campos under the mode ‘Pessoa não é (is not) Campos’; and this is indeed something he has never done before. But these would be different, more complex, mental states (if they are mental states at all). One thing is the mental state in which a subject is when he believes *simpliciter*, or disbelieves *simpliciter*, or withholds belief *simpliciter* from, a given proposition; another is the (putative) mental state in which she is when she believes under a particular mode, or disbelieves under a particular mode, or withholds belief under a particular mode from, that proposition. Presumably, the Millian theorist would not want to treat locutions of the former kind as being analysable in terms of locutions of the latter kind. Take the ascription ‘Carneiro disbelieves that Pessoa is Campos’. Suppose that, besides thinking that ‘Campos’ and ‘Pessoa’ are not co-referential names, he now thinks that ‘Reis’ and ‘Pessoa’ are not co-referential either. Which one of the following ascriptions would give us the right analysis for the above report? ‘Carneiro disbelieves that Pessoa is Campos under ‘Pessoa não é Campos’? Or ‘Carneiro disbelieves that Pessoa is Campos under ‘Pessoa não é Reis’? Or ‘Carneiro disbelieves that Pessoa is Campos under ‘Campos não é Reis’? It seems to me that picking out a particular sentential mode, e.g. the mode mentioned in the first report above, as the preferred one would be tantamount to admitting the semantic relevance of modes.

Moreover, on the Millian view a host of seemingly unexpected new attitudes towards a given proposition would become attributable to a subject merely on the basis of her *entertaining* the proposition. Suppose that on a given occasion Carneiro is reading a logic textbook and thinking about instances of those propositions which are expressible by means of sentences of the form ‘**a** is **b**’ (where **a** and **b** are names); and that he comes thereby to entertain in thought the proposition that Pessoa is Campos. Then, just on the basis of his assent to any sentence which is a logical consequence of the Law of Reflexivity of Identity, it would follow that he believes (on that occasion) that Pessoa is Campos, and that he knows (on that occasion) that Pessoa is Campos.

As to the latter aspects, it is also very unlikely that the Millian theory could adequately account for the functional role of mental states whose contents are specifiable with the help of proper names (or other syntactically simple singular terms).

The functional role of (say) a particular belief has been usually thought of as that property of the belief which consists in its relations to other mental states, as well as to environmental input and to behaviour, including linguistic behaviour. Now there are good reasons to suppose that, for instance, the functional role played in Carneiro's life by the belief that Campos lives nearby would be substantially different from the one played in his life by the belief that Pessoa lives nearby. The latter belief, taken together with Carneiro's belief that Pessoa is a great poet and his desire to meet Pessoa, would probably lead him to visit Pessoa; whereas, given *inter alia* his negative assessment of Campos's poetry, the former would very unlikely have such causal consequences.

Therefore, on the assumption that functional roles are properties of beliefs, those particular beliefs would have to be distinguished from one another. However, on the Millian account, the beliefs in question would be one and the same. They would be assigned the same neo-Russellian proposition as their particular content; and there is no more to the identity of a belief than that: on the Millian view, singular terms such as 'The belief that Pessoa lives nearby' and 'The belief that Campos lives nearby' are counted as synonymous. Maybe this sort of difficulty could be overcome by bringing ways of believing, or propositional modes, into the picture and by using them to account in some way for functional role. But I cannot see how, given its semantic irrelevance, the mode under which one has a particular belief towards a given proposition could be a property of the belief.

On the other hand, one might be inclined to hold the strongest, and more controversial, view that the functional role of a mental state is a property of the state which should be located in the content assigned to the state; in other words, one might claim that functional role supervenes on content. Thus, one would also discriminate between (say) Carneiro's belief that Pessoa lives nearby and his belief that Campos lives nearby, but on the basis of our assigning distinct contents to these beliefs. This proposal would be incompatible, not only with the Millian account, but also with the view represented in (E), whether such a view would take functional role as a property of external but semantically relevant modes, or else as some auton-

omous property of mental states. Of course, the proposal could be easily harmonised with the account represented in (F).

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