

Misplaced Modification and the Illusion of Opacity

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I. Preliminaries

In a number of ground-breaking publications, John Perry has stressed the importance of avoiding a class of fallacies that he and Barwise (1983) formerly called Fallacies of Misplaced Information and that Perry (2001) now prefers to call subject matter fallacies. One commits a subject matter fallacy when one supposes that:

...the content of a statement or belief is wholly constituted by the conditions its truth puts on the subject matter of the statement or belief; that is, the conditions it puts on the objects the words designate or the ideas are of. (Perry 2001)

Avoiding the bewitching influence of subject matter fallacies, Perry has argued, is one key to seeing that two alleged failures of referentialism -- viz., its apparent inability to solve both what Perry calls the co-reference problem and what he calls the no-reference problem -- are really only apparent. The co-reference problem is the problem of explaining how possibly, consistent with referentialism, co-referring expressions may differ in cognitive significance. The no reference problem is the problem of explaining how possibly, consistent with referentialism, names entirely lacking a referent may be cognitively significant at all.

Naïve forms of referentialism maintain that all there is to the meaning, semantic content, or cognitive significance of a name is its property of standing for a certain

object. Referentialism of this sort has a prima facie problem on each of these fronts. The naïve referentialist would seem to be committed to saying that sentences differing only by co-referring names must have the same cognitive significance and that sentence containing names with no reference must be entirely devoid of cognitive significance. By distinguishing what he calls *referential content* from what he calls *reflexive content*, Perry insists that the referentialist can offer satisfying solutions to both the co-reference and no reference problems. The reflexive content of an utterance is, roughly, a proposition about that very utterance and the conditions under which it is true. The referential content of an utterance, on the other hand, is typically a proposition about some *object* -- the object that is the *subject matter* of the relevant utterance. Armed with this distinction, the referentialist can claim that even if there is no difference in referential or subject matter content between two sentences that differ only by the presence of co-referring names, there can still be differences in the reflexive contents of such utterances. And the crucial further claim is that although *what is said* by an utterance is a matter of the referential or subject matter content of the utterance, the *cognitive significance* of an utterance is a matter of its reflexive content.

Perry makes a compelling enough case for the claim that the cognitive significance of an utterance should be explained by appeal to its reflexive content rather than by appeal to referential or subject matter content.¹ In fact, the case he makes is so compelling that one might have expected him to say something similar about apparent failures of substitutivity within propositional attitude contexts. After all, once one conjoins the thesis of referentialism with the notion of a subject matter fallacy, the pieces

for such an approach would seem to be in place already. So, for example, one might begin by conceding that an utterance of:

(1) Jones believes that Hesperus rises in the evening

does not convey the same information, at least not *in toto*, as an utterance of:

(2) Jones believes that Phosphorus rises in the evening.

However, it is open to the referentialist to maintain that the difference in conveyed information has nothing to do with any difference in subject matter or referential content between the two reports. Instead, the referentialist can say that (1) and (2) attribute to Jones exactly the same relation to exactly the same singular proposition. Consequently, (1) and (2), as uttered at a given moment, should either both be true or both be false. To be sure, denying that (1) and (2) may differ in truth value involves a bit of bullet biting. But the strategy Perry applies to the co-reference problem in general is available here as well. He need only insist that despite their shared referential content, (1) and (2) need not convey the same information *in toto*. Some of the information conveyed by an utterance of (1) as opposed to (2) might be thought to be a matter of the *reflexive* content of (1) as opposed to (2). And because of the potential differences in reflexive contents of (1) and (2), there can be conversational contexts in which it is appropriate to utter (1), but inappropriate to utter (2), even though (1) is true when and only when (2) is true. The take home message of such an approach would be to deny that our evident reluctance to utter reports like (1) and (2) interchangeably has anything to do with Fregean reference shifts, Quinean opacity, or any other such subject matter level semantic peculiarities of embedded clauses. Indeed, one might have expected Perry to say that the mistake of many previously extant approaches to attitude statements is to assume that embedding

somehow effects, for good or for ill, the subject matter of the relevant sentence. And one might have expected an avowed referentialist, like Perry, to deny this assumption. To think otherwise, one might have expected Perry to say, is to commit a subject matter fallacy.

In point of fact, Perry once did endorse such views. For example, in Barwise and Perry (1983), we find the following:

But, a Lockean or Fregean might ask, “Does an innocent theory have any right to even *notice* what name is used in an attitude report? It is not the name but the individual referred to which gets into the interpretation of the report, so how can the name be in *any* way relevant, even to the *appropriateness* of the report? (emphasis added)

This objection contains an instance of *the fallacy of misplaced information*. [emphasis added] The change from TULLY to CICERO makes an enormous difference to the information made available by the report, and an innocent theory need not overlook this if it is combined with a relation theory of meaning. Part of the information you can get is the information that someone is called ‘Cicero’, and of course you do not get this information if ‘Tully’ is used instead. This is so even though the interpretation of the report stays the same.

For reasons he has never spelled out in complete detail, however, Perry rather quickly abandoned this approach to attitude statements and became convinced that reports like (1) and (2) can and do differ not just in total information conveyed but in subject matter.

Even in the face of Perry's altered convictions about what attitude reports state, he remained steadfast in both his commitment to referentialism and his commitment to Davidsonian semantic innocence. In collaboration with Mark Crimmins, he sought to reconcile the combination of innocence and referentialism with the essentially Fregean intuition about the attitude statements that he had earlier eschewed -- viz., that propositional attitude statements that differ only by co-referring proper names may, nonetheless, differ in truth value. The key to such a reconciliation is the supposed insight that there is more to an attitude statement than meets either the eye or the ear. The propositions expressed by an attitude report typically contains one or more unarticulated constituents, as Perry calls them, where a constituent of a proposition is unarticulated if it does not correspond to any constituent of the sentence (or utterance thereof) that expresses that proposition. The central thought is that although a device of "direct reference" may retain, when embedded, the semantic role of standing for an object -- thus preserving innocence -- the embedding of such an expression somehow triggers the introduction into the expressed proposition of an unarticulated constituent. Moreover, at least in some contexts, distinct, but co-referring names may trigger the introduction of distinct unarticulated constituents. That is why, despite referentialism and semantic innocence, substitution of co-referring names is not guaranteed to preserve truth value.

In this essay, I take issue with the Perry-Crimmins approach to propositional attitude reports and urge upon Perry a return to the wisdom of his earlier days.² In particular, I shall argue that the proposition strictly, literally expressed by a propositional attitude statement contains no unarticulated constituents. I doubt, in fact, that *any*

proposition literally expressed by *any* sentence or utterance contains unarticulated constituents. However, although I will dwell at some length on some reasons to be skeptical about unarticulated constituents in the general case, my main aim in this essay is to show that even the most intuitively compelling motivations for positing unarticulated constituents in the general case have no force when it comes to propositional attitude statements. Propositional attitude statements simply lack the sort of felt semantic incompleteness to which Perry generally appeals in attempting to motivate the positing of unarticulated constituents. Though I reject the mechanism of unarticulated constituents, I shall argue that there is still a way to put notions and ideas at semantic issue in an attitude report. Moreover, just as Perry desires, that way of doing so is consistent with the conjunction of referentialism and semantic innocence. One merely has to deploy what I have elsewhere called a fulsomely de re ascription. (Taylor 2002, 2003). And I will show that the device of fulsomely de re ascriptions actually provides a less problematic way to capture many of the quite correct insights about beliefs and their ascriptions that lie at the core of Perry's approach. In the end, then, my arguments may constitute less of a refutation of Perry's views than a friendly, if rather far-reaching, amendment to those views.

II. What is an Unarticulated Constituent?

A constituent of a *proposition* is unarticulated when it is not the semantic value of any *syntactic* constituent of the *sentence* or *utterance* that expresses the relevant proposition. It is important to distinguish Perry's claim from the claim that unarticulated constituents are semantic values of "hidden" or "suppressed" constituents of some sort or other. On such approaches, although some propositional constituents would not be

associated with any constituent at the level of surface syntax, they would be associated with syntactic constituents that show up in logical form or in what I have elsewhere called the subsyntactic basement of the lexicon. (Taylor 2003) Such approaches amount to the view that there really are no unarticulated constituents, that a principle of full articulation holds at some level or other. Perry quite explicitly rejects any such view. As he puts it:

...we do not need to first find an expression, hidden in the “deep structure” or somewhere else and then do the semantics of the statement augmented by the hidden expressions. Things are intelligible just as they appear on the surface, and the explanation we might ordinarily give in non-philosophical moments, that we simply understand what the statement is about, is essentially correct. (Perry 1986, pp. 176.)

It is clear what unarticulated constituents are *not*, on Perry’s view. It is a little less clear exactly what they are and why he supposes that there are any of them. On this score, it may help to compare and contrast Perry’s views with other views in the neighborhood. On the one hand, there is implicature approach defended by Kent Bach (1994, 2001a, 2001b). Bach endorses what he has called the Syntactic Correlation Constraint on what is said by (an utterance of) a sentence. According to that constraint, what is strictly, literally said (by an utterance) must correspond to “the elements of [the sentence] their order, and their syntactic character.” At first glance, that constraint may seem quite alien to the spirit of Perry’s approach, since Bach’s constraint fairly directly entails that there can be no unarticulated constituents in what is strictly literally expressed by (the utterance of) a sentence. However, the disagreement between Bach and Perry

may be less deep than it first appears. Bach's approach allows that certain sorts of "enriched" propositions -- that is, propositions containing constituents not correlated with any either explicit or suppressed syntactic constituent of the relevant sentence -- may be "pragmatically imparted," but not strictly expressed by (the uttering of) a sentence. Such propositions are one sort of "implicature," as Bach calls them. Moreover, since Bach allows that a syntactically complete sentence may, nonetheless, be semantically incomplete, the "first" or even only fully truth-evaluable thing pragmatically imparted by an utterance of such a sentence may be an implicature. To be sure, Bach insists that an utterance of a syntactically complete, but semantically incomplete sentence will not strictly literally express the relevant implicature. Implicatures, he maintains, are extra-semantic pragmatic conveyances that go beyond what is strictly literally said in the uttering of a sentence.

The common ground between Bach and Perry is substantial. Both agree, for example, that a syntactically complete sentence, even one with no hidden or suppressed constituents, may be semantically incomplete in the sense that no complete proposition is determined merely by the interaction of its meaning, syntax, and the contextual provision of values for its explicit indexicals and the like. Moreover, both agree that a speaker, in uttering a semantically incomplete sentence, may nonetheless pragmatically impart a complete proposition. The one issue over which Bach and Perry appear to part company concerns what counts as what is strictly literally said by an utterance of a sentence. On Bach's view, the pragmatically imparted implicatures generated by utterances of semantically incomplete sentences are "extra-semantic" and, as such, form no part of what is strictly literally *said* by a speaker in making the relevant utterance. Perry, on the

other hand, holds that the proposition pragmatically imparted by the utterance of a syntactically complete, but semantically incomplete sentence may, nonetheless, be what the speaker strictly literally says in making the relevant utterance. On Perry's view, but not on Bach's, pragmatics can play a role in constituting what is strictly literally said by an utterance, even when the relevant sentence is indexical-free. Bach, on the other hand, seems to want to deny any such role to context and pragmatics in constituting what is said by a speaker in uttering such a sentence.

Since Bach and Perry both agree that it will often be the case that nothing propositionally complete is yielded by the interactions of syntax, lexical meaning, semantic composition rules, and the contextual provision of values for explicit indexicals and demonstratives, it is not unreasonable to think that the real dispute between them, to the extent that there is one, boils down to what may amount to a merely verbal dispute over the proper ownership of the phrase 'what is said.' In particular, the question arises whether what is said by an utterance has, in all cases, to be something fully propositional. Bach evidently thinks that what is said need not be fully propositional, while Perry seems to think that what is said must always be something propositional. Because Bach allows that what is said by an utterance may fall short of a proposition, he has no particular motive to identify the "first" fully propositional content generated in a certain communicative circumstance with what is strictly literally said by the speaker in making the relevant utterance. By contrast, Perry seems at least tacitly to hold that a speaker hasn't yet said anything fully determinate until a determinate propositional content has been generated. Moreover, he seems willing to count whatever goes into generating an, as it were, "initial" proposition a determinant of what is said.

Now I doubt that there is a single intuitive notion of “what is said” against which to measure competing claims of this sort.³ In particular, any merely intuitive notion of what is said is likely to be tied up with notions of samesaying and with the direct and indirect ascriptions of content to utterances in delicate ways difficult to untangle. For example, in some contexts, relative to certain communicative purposes, speakers would seem to count as saying the same thing again just in case their utterances express the same proposition. In others contexts, and relative to other communicative purposes, speakers would seem to count as samesayers just in case what one says about object *a* the other says about object *b*. So, for example, if I say of myself that I am hungry and you say of yourself that you are hungry, there would seem to be a sense in which we say the same thing and a sense in which we say different things. This suggests that on one way of assessing “what is said” by a speaker in making an utterance it may be only complete propositions that count – just as Perry apparently believes -- while on other ways of assessing what is said something less than a complete proposition may do – just as Bach apparently believes. But if that is right, then there may be no settling the apparent dispute between Perry and Bach, once and for all, independently of particular discourse contexts. Indeed, it would not be surprising if a fuller, more systematic exploration of the various ways in which we determine either what counts as what is said by a speaker or when two speakers count as having said the same thing again revealed that our practices fail to add up to anything fully precise and determinate. There may, in fact, be no isolable thing in our ascriptive practices against which we can directly test competing claims of the sort defended by Bach and Perry. Choosing between them may be a matter

of who has the best, most comprehensive, most explanatory overall theory of meaning and communication. On that score, the jury is still out.⁴

Sill, such disagreements as there are between Bach and Perry over what goes into what is said suggests that it may be more natural to assimilate Perry's views to those of radical contextualists like Recanati (2001, 2003a, forthcoming), Sperber and Wilson (1995), Carston (2002), and others. Radical contextualists tend to hold that the gap between semantically incomplete sentence meaning and pragmatically determined utterance content is bridged not by the provision of contextually determined values of either explicit or hidden parameters, but by so-called "primary" pragmatic processes such as free enrichment. Primary pragmatic are supposed to play a role in the very constitution of "what is said." Such processes are supposed to operate antecedently to the determination of a complete propositional content. As such, they are supposed to stand in sharp contrast with so-called secondary pragmatic processes. Secondary pragmatic processes are supposed to operate on an already constituted propositional content to yield something further -- a conversational implicature, an indirect speech act -- as output. One's first thought may be that primary pragmatic processes function mainly to assign contextually determined values for relatively tractable elements of a sentence such as tense, aspect, indexicals, demonstratives, and quantifiers in some relatively systematic and semantically constrained fashion. But the radical contextualist holds that there are primary pragmatic processes that enrich contents to include propositional constituents not tethered to any particular syntactic constituent of the relevant sentence.

The free enrichment of the radical contextualists bears a striking affinity to what Perry (2001) calls “content-supplemental” uses of context. We use context in a content-supplemental way, according to Perry, when context provides propositional constituents “after we have all the words and their meanings identified.” That is, context is used in a content-supplemental way when word meaning, sentence meaning and the contextually determined values of explicit indexicals and demonstratives still do not determine a “complete” content, that is, a content for which the question of truth and falsity meaningfully arises. Consider, for example, the supposed unarticulated location constituent introduced in context by one who utters:

(3) It is raining.

Perry says that:

There is a debate about whether in such cases the ‘logical form’ of a sentence [like (3)] contains an argument place for the place, or does not. Francois Recanati and Jason Stanley have commandeered the term ‘unarticulated constituent’ for the purposes of this debate. (Stanley 2000) Stanley claims that there is such an argument place in logical form, hence that the constituent is articulated; Recanati claims that there is no such place, hence it is not. I think it is a bad idea to use the term ‘unarticulated constituent’ for two different questions, and of course I like my use of it better.

On the issue in question, I am inclined to side with Recanati, I think. I conceive of things in the following way. Relations are ways of classifying

variations and unknowns across phenomena, against a background of factors that are taken as unchanging or otherwise given. The words for relations will be lexicalized in a way that reflects what is taken as varying and unknown, at least in a typical case, or was at the time the words acquired their grammatical properties. So ‘be simultaneous’ has two argument places for events, and none for inertial frames. ‘Rain’ has tense, but no argument place for places. ‘Be successful’ has tense and an argument place for succeeder, but none for standards of success. We use adverbial and prepositional phrases of various sorts to get at additional relevant factors when we need to. In cases where this happens a lot, it will be easy. There are lots of ways to say where it is raining. In cases in which scientific or philosophical discoveries or insights lead to appreciation of unlexicalized factors, we appeal to phrases like ‘relative to’. So events are simultaneous *relative to* inertial frames; the 49ers were unsuccessful last year *relative to* the common standards of success for athletic teams. (Perry 2001)

This passage makes it pretty clear that Perry doesn’t endorse anything like what I earlier called a principle of full articulation. But it also raises, I think, at least as many questions as it answers. To consider just one example, notice that Perry seems to grant that we can often, perhaps always, add explicit, syntactically optional modifiers or adjuncts to “complete” what would otherwise be incomplete. This means that *if* the speaker wants to explicitly *say* where it’s raining, she can do so in a quite straightforward way. She simply adjoins to the verb a modifier that denotes a place. Given that

a speaker may optionally adjoin a modifier and thereby explicitly specify where it is raining, it may seem fair to wonder whether it might not be the case that *whenever* a speaker utters (3) in some context *C* *without* adding an explicit place modifier, she conversationally implicates, by the very failure to add a modifier where one is called for, some proposition to the effect that it is raining at *m*, where *m* is a place denoted by some conversationally relevant modifier or other. The worry is that if we've already got the mechanism of conversational implicature available to explain how someone who utters (3) without a place modifier can, nonetheless, communicate a proposition to the effect that it is raining at a particular place and time, then its not immediately obvious what talk of unarticulated constituents is supposed to add to this essentially Gricean story.

At times, Perry seems to have in mind a view like Recanati's. Recanati holds that conversational implicatures are generated by so-called secondary, rather than by primary pragmatic processes. Clear evidence that Perry has something like this distinction in mind can be found in his rejection of Nathan Salmon's view that apparent failures of substitutivity in propositional attitude contexts are pragmatically generated illusions. By contrast, Perry and Crimmin (1989) claim to assign to pragmatics what they call "a more honorable role." Pragmatic features do not, they claim, "create an illusion, but help to identify the reality the report is about." And they go on to suggest that there are at least two different jobs that the pragmatic factors can perform: the job of determining the truth conditional content of an utterance of a semantically incomplete sentence and the job of generating a conversational implicature.⁵ As they put it:

Last, the move to unarticulated constituents emphasizes the importance of pragmatic facts about language to the study of what seem like purely

semantic issues. In order to express claims, we exploit the tremendous variety of facts, conventions, and circumstances, of which the meanings and referents of our terms form just a part. So it is a mistake to relegate pragmatics to matters of felicity and implicature. In the case of belief reports, it is central to the understanding of truth and content. (Crimmins and Perry pp. 232)

But it is fair to wonder whether Perry has some principled basis for deciding just when pragmatics is performing one rather than the other of these two distinct jobs. About all that Perry ever says by way of defending the view that unarticulated constituents are not pragmatic externalities, as I call them, but ingredients of literal truth-conditional content is that absent those very ingredients the relevant utterance would not say anything strictly truth-evaluable at all. In the case of (3), for example, Perry typically says things like the following:

In this case, I say that the place is an *unarticulated constituent* of the proposition expressed by the utterance. It is a constituent *because, since rain occurs at a time in place, there is no truth evaluable proposition unless a place is supplied.* (emphasis added) It is unarticulated, because there is no morpheme that designates that place. (Perry 2001)

But Perry's reasoning here is not altogether compelling. From the fact that rain occurs at a time in a place, it simply doesn't follow that there is no truth evaluable proposition expressed by an utterance of 'it is raining' unless a place is supplied. To see why consider other indispensable properties of rainings. Whenever it rains, it rains a certain amount and for a certain duration. But we can express a fully determinate proposition by

an utterance of ‘it rained’ without having to specify how much rain fell or over what span of time the rain fell. It is unclear what explanation there is supposed to be, on Perry’s view, of the fact that we must specify *where* it is raining in the case of the present tense ‘it is raining’ if we are to express a complete proposition, but we need not specify how much it rained or for how long it rained in the case of the past tense ‘rained’ in order to express a complete proposition.

One might be tempted to appeal here to Perry’s distinction between argument *roles* of relations and argument *places* of predicates. He puts the distinction this way:

On the way I like to look at things, relations have *argument roles* or parameters. These are to be distinguished from the *argument places* or *variables* that predicates that express the relations may have. My picture of unarticulated constituents is that there are argument roles that are not represented by explicit argument places. We fill the *argument role* which is filled from context. (Perry 2001)

But our current worry is that not every argument role demands contextual filling in, on pain of incompleteness. Perry might – but this is really just a guess -- try to make something like the adjunct/argument distinction, not at the level of predicates but at the level of relations themselves. Armed with that distinction, he could perhaps argue that it’s the arguments and not the mere adjuncts of a relation that must be supplied if the relation is to obtain at all.

This move seems unpromising. For any relation in n arguments with a claim to be the unmodified raining relation, there will be other relations in m arguments, for m distinct from n , that appear to have no lesser claim to being the or at least a raining

relation. Consider the following two examples. There is a relation that holds between a place, a time, and a velocity just in case it is raining at the time, at that place, with that velocity. There is another, less “articulated” relation that holds between a time and a place just in case it is raining at that time at that place. Does one or the other of these relations have more of a claim to being *the* raining relation? Is the former relation merely a modification of the latter? If these questions are supposed to be purely metaphysical questions about relations rather semantic questions about the lexical meaning of verbs, then I confess to not having the foggiest clue how to answer them. I suspect that Perry may not either. The problem is that if Perry is to explain, merely on the basis of the distinction between the argument roles of relations and the argument places of predicates, why this rather than that aspect of a raining requires contextual filling in on pain of semantic incompleteness of an utterance, he owes us answers to such questions.

Perry gets himself tied up in knots, I think, just because he denies that it’s a fact about the verb ‘to rain’ that it demands contextual provision of a place, but not contextual provision of an intensity, amount or duration. That denial is, I think, motivated in part by a mistaken conception of where in syntax the argument places of a predicate may sit. He seems to suppose that where there is no sentence level syntactic constituent and no morpheme, there can be no argument place for a predicate. But there are, I think, reasons to believe that not every to-be-contextually-evaluated argument place is explicitly expressed in the syntax of the sentence. Sometimes, I claim, a to-be-contextually-evaluated argument place hides in what I call the subsyntactic basement of suppressed verbal argument structure. (Taylor 2003) Take Perry’s favorite verb as an example. On the view that I favor, the verb ‘to rain’ has a lexically specified argument place that is

theta-marked **THEME** that takes places as values. My claim is that in the lexicon, rainings are explicitly marked as a kind of change that places undergo. But from the point of view of sentence level syntax, such lexically specified parameters are what I call subconstituents rather than constituents. No constituent of the sentence (3) need serve as an argument place for the verb ‘rain’. Yet, despite the fact that this lexically specified argument place need not be expressed as a sentence level constituent, it makes its presence felt by “demanding,” on pain of semantic incompleteness, to be assigned a contextually supplied value. Thus though Perry is right to say that (3) is missing no syntactically mandatory sentential constituent, it is, nonetheless, semantically incomplete. The semantic incompleteness is manifest to us as a felt inability to evaluate the truth value of an utterance of (3) in the absence of a contextually provided location (or range of locations). This felt need for a contextually provided location has its source in our tacit cognition of the syntactically unexpressed argument place of the verb ‘to rain’.

To be sure, there are many changes that places plausibly undergo that are *not* explicitly marked as such in the sub-syntactic basement of the lexicon. Consider ‘dancing’. It is certainly true that there can’t be a dancing that doesn’t happen somewhere or other. So one might plausibly conclude that a place undergoes a dancing when a dancer dances in that place. But suppose that without saying where Laura danced, a speaker utters:

(4) Laura danced the tango until she could dance no more.

Has the speaker left something out, something required for the semantic completeness of her utterance? The answer seems clearly to be no. One can say something fully

determinate, something fully truth evaluable, by uttering (4) even if context provides no place as the place where the dancing took place. Why does (4) differ from (3) in this regard?

The answer, I suggest, depends not on language independent facts about *relations* but on language dependent facts about *verbs*. ‘To dance’ and ‘to rain’ relate differently to the places where rainings and dancings happen. Unlike ‘to rain’, ‘to dance’ does not stakes out no proprietary claim on the place where a dance happens as the theme or undergoer of the dance. The theme or undergoer of a dancing is the dancer herself. The place where a dancing “takes place” is, from the lexical perspective, derivatively and indirectly associated with the dancing as the place where the *dancer* dances. When Laura is dancing in a place, the place does not undergo the dancing, only Laura does. Of course, she undergoes the dancing *in* a place. But that does not make that very place to be the theme of the dancing. Again, I take this to be a fact about the verb ‘to dance’, not a fact about the dancing as such. It is this fact about the verb, I submit, that explains why, despite the fact that one cannot dance without dancing somewhere or other, a sentence containing ‘to dance’ can be semantically complete, even if the place where dancing happens is not contextually provided. That a dancing must take place somewhere or other is a (mutually known) metaphysical fact about the universe -- a fact that supervenes on the nature of dancing and the structure of space-time. But that metaphysical fact is not explicitly and directly reflected in the lexically specified thematic structure of the verb. To say this is, of course, not to say that the place where a dancer dances is never of conversational relevance to us. It is merely to say that such conversational relevance as the location of a dancing enjoys is not a direct consequence

of lexically generated requirements on thematic/semantic completeness. That is why we use *optional adjuncts* rather than fill a *mandatory argument place* to specify where a dancing takes place.

Things are otherwise with the verb ‘to rain’. The verb itself – in particular, its lexically-specified thematic structure – is the source of the felt need for the contextual provision of a place or range of places where a raining happens. Facts about the lexically specified thematic structure of the verb directly entail that nothing fully propositionally determinate has been expressed by an utterance of a sentence like (3) unless a place is contextually provided. Notice, however, that although ‘to rain’ does demand, as a consequence of its lexically specified thematic structure, that a place be provided, it permits silence about the duration, intensity or amount of the relevant raining.

If my hypothesis is correct, it will be an especially interesting and pressing matter to determine just why ‘to rain’ allows its mandatory theme to go unexpressed by any sentential constituent, even though the verb itself demands the contextual specification of a theme. For many, many verbs their lexically specified argument structured is realized by a suitable array of sentence level constituents. This must surely be the unmarked case. Why should some verbs, like ‘to rain,’ behave any differently? I admit that a fuller defense of my current hypothesis requires a principled answer to this question or a principled way of separating out the marked cases from the unmarked cases. Indeed, it may be thought that the very fact that we can say things like “it rained in Seattle,” but not things like “Seattle rained” shows that the place where it rains is not, after all, lexically marked as the theme of the raining. But this argument turns on a suppressed principle, viz., Thematicity Requires Constituency (TRC). TRC is at least tendentious. I

cannot stop to argue it here, however. I will only say that TRC begs the question against the very possibility of lexically specified, but syntactically suppressed thematic structure. To accept the existence of lexically specified but syntactically suppressed thematic structure is to allow that the lexicon may directly prohibit the possibility of “bare rainings.” It does so by directly specifying both that a raining can’t happen without happening somewhere and, more particularly, by specifying that the place where the raining happens *undergoes* the raining. Moreover, the lexicon may make such direct thematic specifications *without* thereby requiring that the relevant place be the value of an overt and syntactically explicit argument place. Indeed, I suspect, but again will not argue here, that something stronger is true. Not only does ‘to rain’ not *require* its theme to be expressed as the value of an explicit *argument*. It doesn’t even *permit* its theme to be expressed by an explicit argument. It does, however, permit a place to be originally expressed by an *optional adjunct*. I suspect that the prohibition together with the permission explains why ‘it is raining *in Seattle*’ is okay, but ‘Seattle rains’ is not okay. It is as if the theme is “locked” in sub-syntactic basement and can’t be “raised” to the level of a surface theme-argument. Nonetheless, adjuncts can always be freely added. In particular, we can adjoin a phrase that species a place. The crucial further open question for this hypothesis is whether the allowable adjunct can be used to encode as such the thematic information that when it rains in a place the place undergoes the relevant raining.⁶ I suspect that the answer is no, but admit that much further argument is needed to establish the point.

Though I admit that to not having a knock-down argument in favor of the series of hypotheses just outlined, I think they are, nonetheless, plausible enough to suggest that

Perry is probably half-right and half-wrong about the relationship between the argument roles of relations and the argument places of predicates. He is certainly correct to highlight the fact that a predicate may represent a more or less fulsome lexicalization of a relation. Likewise, he is certainly correct to highlight the fact that the indefinite modifiability of predicates via adjuncts gives us one way to accommodate the mismatch between the adicity of a relation and the adicity of the lexicalization of that relation. Perry's mistake, I think, is to suppose that the bare mismatch between predicate and relation itself somehow explains why some argument roles *must* be contextually supplied, on pain of semantic incompleteness, while others need not be. My alternative hypothesis is that it is typically the lexical structure of the verb itself, and not language independent facts about the relation, nor even facts about the mismatch between predicate and relation, that determine what must be supplied and what need not be supplied by context. The verb itself directs its own semantic completion by, as it were, demanding that occupants of certain argument roles, but not others, be supplied in context, sometimes, perhaps, as the value of sentence level constituents, but not always. Indeed, in the kind of cases that motivate Perry's introduction of unarticulated constituents, we have lexically generated demands on thematic completeness not tied to explicit sentence level constituents.⁷

Just why a given relation should be lexicalized via a predicate with certain argument places rather than others, whether they are expressed as sentential constituents or locked in the sub-syntactic basement, will often be shrouded in the pre-history of our ancient conceptions of the way things are. As Perry himself points out, before the advent of relativity theory, our linguistic progenitors took simultaneity to be absolute rather than

relative to an inertial frame. The discovery that our prior lexicalization of a given relation is insufficiently fulsome may sometimes lead to a more fulsome re-lexicalization of the given relation. But such discoveries need not lead to such re-lexicalization. The indefinite modifiability of predicates via adjuncts provides us the wherewithal to compensate for the under-lexicalization of a given predicate in a highly flexible way that need not require more fulsome lexicalization of argument roles.

One final class of cases bears mentioning before we turn to propositional attitude statements. Sometimes a relation or property so rich in known complexity may be lexicalized by a predicate so thin in thematic structure that sentences containing that predicate may seem to us to express nothing determinate enough to count as complete proposition. Consider, for example, the predicate ‘..is red.’ It would seem to be one thing for a table to be red, another thing for dirt to be red, still another thing for a book to be red. Red dirt is dirt that is *through and through* red. On the other hand, the redness of a table would seem to depend on the redness of its upward facing surface and not to depend at all on whether its legs are red or its downward facing surface is red. Indeed, even if the downward-facing surface were entirely red that would not, on its own, suffice for the redness of a table. By contrast, the outside surfaces of the two covers of a book have an equal say in determining when a book is red. Neither the inside surfaces of the covers nor the pages themselves have any say in determining the color of the book. A book is a red book just in case *both* covers of the book are sufficiently red. If just one cover of the book is red, then it is a book with one red cover and one non-red cover, but it is not, it would seem, a red book. Moreover, just *how* red the relevant surface or surfaces must be in order that the object itself count as a red is a contextually variable matter. I

am currently looking at a box of Sun-Maid raisins. No more than half of the total outer surface of the box is red. A large chunk of the outer surface consists of yellow, white and black lettering announcing the product itself and a picture of the sun maid, in all her rural glory, in front of a bright yellow sun, carrying a basket of green grapes. Though she wears a red bonnet, she is mostly dressed in white. The multi-colored surface contains nearly as much red as non-red on it, maybe even slightly more non-red than red.

Nonetheless, there are clearly contexts in which it would be true to say that the box is red. For example, suppose there were another box of raisins that was purple where the Sun-Maid box is red. It would surely be correct to call the Sun-Maid box the red box (of the two) and the other box the purple box (of the two). But there are also contexts in which the multi-colored Sun-Maid box would be insufficiently red to count as a red box.

Imagine, for example, an art project, the first step of which involves painting a box red. It seems pretty intuitively clear that if you painted the box so as to match the distribution of colors on a Sun-Maid box, you would have failed to follow the instruction given.

The foregoing considerations will suggest to the various advocates of unarticulated constituents, free-enrichment, implicatures and the like that a statement of the form:

(5) x is red

is semantically incomplete and must somehow be completed in context. But I want to suggest that instances of (5) aren't so much semantically incomplete but rather what I'll call modificationally neutral. An utterance of (5) makes the weakest possible positive statement about the redness of x . It is not, for that reason alone, semantically incomplete, however. It just that there is no modifier m 'ly such that an utterance of (an instance of

scheme) (5) will be strictly literally equivalent to an utterance of an instance of scheme (6):

(6) *x* is *m*'ly red.

Strictly, literally when a speaker asserts merely that *x* is red, she has asserted neither that *x* is wholly red, nor that *x* is partly red, nor that *x* is just a little bit red, nor that *x* is mostly red. In fact, she has asserted no modification of redness of *x* at all. She has simply asserted that *x* is red. However, because a modificationally neutral assertion of redness is the weakest possible assertion of redness possible, such an assertion would, in typical conversational contexts, be insufficiently informative. But the mutual recognition by speaker and hearer of the uninformativeness of the speaker's modificationally neutral assertion may well generate, by roughly Gricean means of a familiar sort, some more informative, because less modificationally neutral, pragmatic conveyances of one sort or another.

The fact that modificationally neutral assertions are minimally informative, together with the fact that speakers who make such assertions typically convey something more informative and less modificationally neutral, has, I believe, led many to see semantic incompleteness where there is only modificationally neutrality. But the inference from neutrality to incompleteness is fallacious. Indeed, in the spirit of Perry himself, it is worth giving a name to the relevant fallacy. I will say that one commits a fallacy of misplaced modification when one infers from the modificationally neutrality of a sentence to the semantic incompleteness of that sentence. One who commits a fallacy of misplaced modification is liable to believe that sentences with a perfectly determinate, though modificationally neutral semantic contents stand in need of contextual

supplementation, even when there are no explicit or suppressed argument places for context to fix a value for. I suspect that all forms of so-called radical contextualism are founded on fallacies of misplaced modification.

On the other hand, some might claim that apparent semantic incompleteness is *always* really just unappreciated modificational neutrality.⁸ The main benefit of this approach is that it enables one to explain contextual variability in what is communicated by utterances of a given sentence, while eschewing not only unarticulated constituents, but also any suppressed parameters of the sort I posit for verbs like ‘rain’. If this were right, then one could almost certainly defend an old-fashioned Gricean way of marking the semantics/pragmatics divide, on the grounds of elegance and parsimony. Though I have great affinity both for clean and parsimonious theories and for a roughly Gricean approach to the pragmatics/semantics divide, I suspect that things are much messier than paleo-Griceans envision. Many putatively incomplete sentences are, in fact, not incomplete, but complete and modificationally neutral. Failure to appreciate that fact can indeed lead one to posit both unarticulated constituents and hidden parameters where there are only Gricean implicatures, or the like. But I do not think that all instances of apparent incompleteness can be handled in this way. Indeed the pure neutrality approach, as we might call it, faces pretty much the same obstacle, in the end, that bedevils Perry’s unarticulated constituents. It cannot explain why *some* “extra” ingredients seem all but mandatory, while others, though they “enrich” the communicated contents remain *optional*. If all is implicature, why *must* information about place be contextually available before an utterance of (3) is conversationally acceptable, while information about duration or intensity need not be? I do not think the pure neutrality approach has much

of a chance of answering such questions. But since I am not prepared to argue on this front at length in the current essay, I will for the nonce concede that deciding who has the better of this issue is a delicate matter, requiring detailed, construction-by-construction investigation of the marking of thematic roles.

III. Unarticulated Constituents and Belief Reports

Like many others, Perry and Crimmins maintain that at least some attitude ascriptions are what we might call notionally sensitive. In particular, they share the widely endorsed intuition that at least some belief ascriptions somehow put at semantic issue via the mechanism of embedding, the notions, conceptions, ideas, or modes of presentation via which the ascriber putatively cognizes the objects and properties her beliefs are of or about. Strikingly, however, Perry and Crimmins swim against a major current in much earlier thinking about belief reports by maintaining that nothing in either the logical syntax of the sentences with which we typically make belief ascriptions nor in the lexical semantics of the verb ‘believes’ serves to explain why notions and their ilk should be at semantic issue in any belief reports at all. In particular, they posit no Quinean lexical ambiguity for ‘believes,’ no Russellian scope ambiguity, no Fregean reference shifts. In fact, they take pains to state that although a *speaker* typically refers to a notion in making a belief ascription, the speaker’s *words* typically do not refer to any notion.

The thought, of course, is that the notions referred to by the speaker are unarticulated constituents of the proposition the speaker expresses in uttering the relevant sentence. As Crimmins and Perry put it:

...in belief reports an n -ary relation is reported with an n -minus-one place predicate. On our account, the complex relation invoked in belief reports is a four-place relation: an agent believes a proposition at a time relative to a sequence of notions. But there is no argument place in the 'believes' predicate for the sequence of notions. The notions are unarticulated constituents of the content of that report. (Crimmins and Perry, 1989, pp 220)

But certain urgent questions go entirely unasked by Crimmins and Perry. Just why should the utterance of a belief report invoke an unarticulated constituent at all? What is the utterance of a verb with three argument places *doing* expressing a relation in four argument roles? And just why does *that particular* additional argument role get introduced into the content of the relevant assertion? It is hard to know how Crimmins and Perry would answer these questions.

It will help to contrast belief reports with Perry's favored examples of unarticulated constituents. In the standard case, the context must provide a value for an unlexicalized argument role, supposedly, because even after the values of the explicitly lexicalized argument roles are supplied, we still do not have anything semantically complete enough to express a determinate proposition. Perry maintains, that is, that except that a value for the absent argument role is added to the content of an utterance of the relevant sentence, the utterance would not yet express anything for which the question of truth or falsity can even arise. The unlexicalized argument role must be filled if the speaker is to say anything truth evaluable at all. So, for example, if a speaker were simply to utter 'it is raining' without either referring to a particular location or

quantifying over some range of locations, she would not yet have said anything that could be evaluated for its truth or falsity. (And recall, this is not supposed to be a language dependent fact about *verbs* but a language independent fact about relations.).

But the same story does not explain why an unarticulated constituent is demanded in the case of a belief report. Filling what Crimmins and Perry grant are the explicit argument places of the verb 'believes' with a determinate time, agent and proposition already yields, by their own admission, a fully determinate and truth evaluable content – viz., the proposition to the effect that the agent believes the relevant proposition at the relevant time. This content can be evaluated as either true or false, period, without the need to provide some additional argument role for propositional attitude statements, since apparently, the *articulated* constituents relates a believer a time and a proposition. The problem, on Perry and Crimmins view, is not that filling in values for all the explicit argument places still leaves us with no complete content. The problem from their perspective is that we don't yet have the *right* content. But there is simply no obvious reason why, given that some such fully truth-evaluable content is already directly expressed once a time, agent, and proposition are specified, there should be any remaining demand for the provision of an additional, unarticulated constituent. It is especially puzzling why such an additional constituent would make its way into *what is strictly literally said* by the speaker in making the relevant utterance rather than counting as some *extra-semantic pragmatic externality* of that utterance.

I do not mean to deny that, on an occasion, an ascriber may mean to communicate more by the utterance of an attitude report than the proposition that the ascriber believes a certain proposition at a certain time. She may intend, for example, to convey something

about the evidence on the basis of which the ascriber holds the relevant belief. She may intend to communicate something about the degree of conviction with which the ascriber holds the belief. She may even intend to communicate something about the notions or representations via which the ascriber holds the relevant beliefs. It is, of course, perfectly possible for the ascriber to state such further modifications of the ascribed belief by deploying explicit modifiers. We may say, for example, she believes such and such a proposition at such and such a time *with such and such degree of conviction* or *on the basis of such and such evidence*. Nor is it hard to imagine conversational contexts in which an ascriber merely implicates, in a roughly Gricean way, perhaps, without directly stating, that some such modification of the relevant belief obtains. One can even imagine, as Perry and Barwise evidently did at one time, that the mere choice of words used in ascribing the relevant belief itself generates, in certain conversational settings, “external” implications to the effect that a certain modification of the ascribed belief obtains. But none of these possibilities supports the idea that unarticulated constituents are, as it were, agglomerated onto an already complete propositional content.

To be sure, it is open to Crimmins and Perry to argue that the notions via which an agent believes a given proposition at a given time are not merely so many modifications of an ascribed belief among others. Notions, they might say, are intrinsically privileged in such a way that absent either reference to particular notions or the provision of some constraint on notions, nothing truth evaluable is expressed via the utterance of a propositional attitude sentence. Since Crimmins and Perry think that beliefs are literally built out of notions and ideas, motivations for some such privileging of notions may not be all that far to seek within their framework. The real problem,

however, for any such attempt to motivate the indispensability of notions to what is said by a belief ascription is that it puts the metaphysical cart before the semantic horse. It may well be true that beliefs are literally built out of notions and ideas. But it simply doesn't follow from that fact alone that a speaker hasn't yet said anything truth evaluable by an utterance of a belief ascription unless she refers to or 'constrains' the notions that figure as constituents of the ascribed belief. It may also be true, for example, that to have a(n) (explicit) belief is to token a Fodorian sentence in mentalese, but it certainly wouldn't follow from that fact about the nature of beliefs that we haven't said anything truth evaluable in making a belief ascription if we haven't yet specified what sentence or type of sentence the ascriber putatively tokens in a particular episode of believing.

Once again, there seems to be no grounds for the claim that belief report sentences are semantically incomplete and in need of contextual supplementation. We appear to be left with the claim that absent contextual supplementation, such sentences will not express the right sort of intuitively felt semantic content. Now the foregoing considerations are not yet meant to show that belief reports do not invoke unarticulated constituents. They are meant to suggest that Crimmins and Perry have given no reason why utterance of a sentence whose main verb has three argument places should have, as part of its strict literal content, a relation in four argument roles. In place of a tractable explanatory mechanism, we are left with a sort of pragmatic alchemy whose workings are, I submit, quite mysterious.

Though they never take the question up in a direct and systematic way, Crimmins and Perry are not entirely unaware of the need for some explanation of just why and how unarticulated constituents are "called for" by some sentences and not others. But what

they have to say in this regard is insufficient to draw any principled distinction between the garden variety pragmatic externalities of an utterance, externalities that are not part of the strict literal content of the utterance, from the so-called unarticulated constituents of the relevant utterance. We find such comments as the following, for example:

Unarticulated constituency is one example of the incrementality of language. In the circumstances of an utterance, there always is a great deal of common knowledge and mutual explanation that can and must be exploited if communication is to take place. It is the function of the expression uttered to provide just that last bit of information needed by the hearer to ascertain the intended claim, exploiting this rich background. What is obvious in context we do not belabor in syntax – we do not elaborate it.

This is by no means to transgress the intuition of the systematicity of language, which is commonly reflected in principles of compositionality. Since we finite creatures are able to make and understand a potential infinity of claims, there must be systematic features of our statements that explain our infinite abilities in something like a combinatorial fashion – in terms of our more finite abilities to understand the contributions of specific features of statements toward the claims made. But there is no reason to assume that these features of statements must all involve syntactic expressions. It is just as systematic for a form of speech, like a belief report or a report of rain, to *call for* a propositional constituent that meets, say, certain conditions of relevance and salience, as

it is for a form of speech to have a syntactic expression *stand for* a propositional constituent. (Crimmins and Perry, 1989, pp 221.)

It is no doubt true that *communication* presupposes that a shared background of ‘common knowledge and mutual expectation’ is in place. Indeed, I can think of no theorist who would deny this claim. But that universally acknowledged fact does not entail that belief report sentences “call for” the introduction of unarticulated constituents. *All* pragmatically generated content, of any sort whatsoever, presupposes such a background. Knowing how to fruitfully exploit that background is at the very foundation of all communicative competence. But granting that much takes us not one step further toward a justification for the appeal to the quite specific pragmatically generated content that Perry countenances under the rubric of unarticulated constituents.

It may be that Perry originally had in mind more modest explanatory goals than the ones to which I have been holding him here. The goal may have been to explain neither *how* unarticulated constituents get introduced into a content nor to explain what about attitude sentences and their constituents *calls for* the contextual provision of occupiers of additional argument roles. Rather, the aim may have been simply to show that the contents of belief reports do contain such constituents -- however they are introduced and for whatever reason they are demanded. Indeed, what one in fact finds when one looks for explicit arguments on behalf of unarticulated constituents in Crimmins and Perry (1989) are not so much direct arguments for the semantic incompleteness of belief report sentences, but more indirect arguments based on the widely shared intuition that belief ascriptions that differ only by co-referring names may, nonetheless, differ in truth value. The central claim is that the mechanism of

unarticulated constituents enables us to preserve this intuition by explaining how possibly the failure of substitutivity can be reconciled with both direct reference and semantic innocence. We are *never* offered an explanation of just what about a belief sentence either permits or demands the addition to the content of an utterance of that sentence an argument role attached to none of its constituents. And it may just be that the reader was supposed to be content with the thought that explanatory utility of the very idea of an unarticulated constituent is adequately demonstrated by cases of another kind.

IV. On the Modificational Neutrality of Belief Reports

I have nothing principled to say against arguments designed to show how possibly certain apparently conflicting antecedent intuitions can be reconciled. I'm prepared to admit that *if* there were such things as unarticulated constituents in the contents of belief reports that might indeed enable us to reconcile certain apparently competing intuitions, just as Crimmins and Perry allege. But I shall spend the remainder of this section arguing that the standard puzzle cases about belief have been widely misdiagnosed. Almost all currently extant approaches to attitude statements, Crimmins and Perry's included, take the standard puzzle cases to show that in making a belief ascription an ascriber undertakes a commitment to specifying the contents of the ascribee's head in what might be called a notionally sensitive, ascribee-centered way. The ascriber is supposed to undertake a commitment to specify the modes of presentation, concepts or notions under which the ascribee cognizes the objects (and properties) that her beliefs are about. Such an ascription will be true, the widely shared intuition goes, just in case the ascriber specifies either directly or indirectly both what the ascribee believes and how she

believes it. This widely shared supposition has been the basis of a furious search for the mechanism, whatever it is, that explains just *how* an ascriber accomplishes the feat of putting the ascribee's notions at semantic issue in a belief ascription. I shall argue, however, that the search is misguided from the start. Belief ascriptions typically specify the ascribee's predicative commitments, as I call them, and nothing more. In ascribing a belief to another we specify what object or domain of objects the relevant belief is about and what properties the believer takes the relevant objects to have. We typically do not, at least not by the mere mechanism of embedding, either semantically specify or pragmatically implicate the modes of presentations, notions, or conceptions via which the ascribee cognizes the objects and properties relative to which she undertakes the ascribed predicative commitments.

My claim is not that it is impossible to put the ascribee's notions and ideas at semantic issue in a belief report. It is simply that embedding clauses do not do that sort of work. The way to put notions and ideas at semantic issue is via what I have elsewhere called a fulsomely de re ascription. (Taylor 2002) In fulsomely de re ascriptions, the ascriber specifies what objects the ascribee putatively thinks about, what properties and relations the ascribee putatively takes those objects to have, and, at least indirectly, something about the notions or modes of presentation via which those objects are putatively thought about. Such ascriptions characterize the "how" of a belief, not via an embedded clause, but via unembedded modifying clauses. Fulsomely de re ascriptions take many forms. The following is one such form:

7. *a* believes of $n_1 \dots n_n$, of which/whom he thinks ϕ_1 'ly $\dots \phi_n$ 'ly that $\psi(x_1 \dots x_n)$.

where each n_j is a name and each ϕ_j (partially) characterizes, either directly or indirectly, some conception or notion of an object, and each x_j is anaphorically linked to n_j .

Standard issue de re ascriptions of the sort more widely studied by philosophers are what I call truncated de re ascriptions. We get fulsomely de ascriptions from truncated de re ascriptions by adding certain modifying clauses. These modifying clauses are adjuncts rather than arguments, however. So the claim is not that the sentences with which we make garden variety truncated de re ascriptions are in any way syntactically or semantically incomplete or that such sentences are in some way syntactically or semantically ambiguous. Such sentences are merely modificationally neutral in the sense outlined earlier on.⁹

My argument begins with an intuition pump of sorts. Consider Smith, a virulent racist, who refers in his thought and talk to people of African descent via a certain infamous derogatory term that begins with the letter n. I do not share Smith's derogatory attitudes. I assiduously avoid using the relevant term in my own thought and talk. Still, I may have occasion to ascribe to Smith an attitude of derogation towards people of African descent. I want, however, to do so without myself either derogating or endorsing Smith's derogation of people of African descent. If embedding did function to put the notions and conceptions of the ascribee at semantic issue, then it should be possible, it would seem, merely by embedding the offending phrase to say something about Smith's attitude toward people of African descent. And it should be possible to do so without my thereby representing myself as endorsing or adopting the ascribed attitude. It is, after all, the ascribee's notions, and not the ascriber's that are supposed to be put at semantic issue via embedding.

But this prediction is not borne out by the facts. Even an embedded use of the N-word, as in (8) below, would express only the ascriber's own derogation and does nothing to represent the ascribee as holding a derogatory attitude toward people of African descent:

(8) Smith believes that niggers are such and such.

Notice that a standard (truncated) de re ascription like (9) below correctly reports certain aspects of Smith's belief – his predicative commitments – and that it does so without implying any derogation on the ascriber's part. That is, (9) correctly specifies both the objects Smith's belief is about and the properties Smith believes those objects to have:

(9) Smith believes of people of African descent that they are such and such.

But (9) no more represents Smith as derogating people of African descent than (8) does. (9) is, in fact, explicitly silent on the character of Smith's notions of black people. In fact, (8) and (9) would appear to represent *Smith's* attitude toward people of African descent in pretty much the same way. What (8) does do that (9) does not is to express certain evaluative commitments on the ascriber part. But I shall not argue that point at present. It is enough for our current purposes to note that the availability of (9) suggests the hypothesis that, in general, an ascriber can avoid taking on certain evaluative commitments expressed by the ascribee in her use of a derogatory or other expressive-evaluative term by going de re and thereby going silent on the character of the ascribee's notions. Correlatively, an ascriber can make it explicit that an evaluative commitment is her own by simultaneously going silent on the ascribee's notions, while using an expressive-evaluative to express her own evaluative attitudes. Imagine that Smith, the

racist, wants to express his astonishment that Jones does not believe that black people, toward whom Smith, but not Jones holds derogatory and racist attitudes, do not deserve to be rounded up and imprisoned. He might do so via a suitably stressed utterance of the following:

(10) Jones does not believe that niggers deserve to be rounded up and imprisoned.

If Smith wants to be fastidiously explicit about which evaluations are whose, he might utter the following instead:

(11) Jones does not believe of niggers that they deserve to be rounded up and imprisoned.

(11) makes it quite explicit that it is Smith, and not Jones whose notion of black people includes negative and racist evaluations. (11) is, in fact, silent on the character of Jones's notion of black people.

It turns out that there is, after all, a way for an ascriber to have her cake and eat it too, by simultaneously representing the derogatory character of Smith's attitude and inoculating herself from expressing any such attitude. She merely needs to deploy a fulsomely de re ascription in the manner of (12) or (13):

(12) Smith believes of people of African descent, to whom he refers via the infamous N-word, that they are such and such.

(13) Smith believes of people of African descent, of whom he thinks under the title 'Nigger,' that they are such and such.

The additional modifying clauses here indirectly characterize Smith's way of thinking about people of African descent. The offending word itself is not used, though it may be

either described or mentioned. In so describing Smith's mode of derogation, as we might call it, the ascriber thus does not deploy the offending mode in either her own talk or her own thought about people of African descent.

It might be thought that too much is made here of the peculiar behavior of derogatory terms and other expressive-evaluatives. We already know that there are certain very special expressions – indexicals and demonstratives being the paradigm case – that resist embedding. And it may be tempting to think that derogatory and other evaluative expressions are just a different sort of special case and that nothing of general significance for embedding can be gleaned from such examples. I have argued against this view in detail elsewhere. (Taylor 2002, 2003) I have argued that, even in the general case, embedding an expression (in subject place) does not from expressing various sorts of commitments that one otherwise would express using the same expression in an unembedded contexts.¹⁰ For example, even the existential commitments that one would normally express by the use of a definite description typically cannot be escaped merely through the mechanism of embedding.

Though I lack the space to elaborate and defend this last claim in detail, a brief discussion should suffice to convey a rough sense of my arguments. Suppose that Smith, Jones, and Black are working a party as bartenders. They are instructed not to serve anyone who has had too much to drink. There is a man in the corner drinking martinis who has clearly had a great deal to drink. Jones, however, takes the man to be a woman and she takes him to be drinking gimlets rather than martinis. With evident intent of alerting Smith to the man's state, Jones utters:

(14) The woman in the corner drinking gimlets has had too much to drink.

Smith recognizes who Jones has in mind, but she does not realize that Jones has made a mistake until she is about to report Jones's belief to Black. Because Jones thinks of the man in the corner drinking martinis under the description 'the woman in the corner drinking gimlets,' this description may be reasonably thought to partially characterize Jones's notions of the person in the corner. If embedding functioned to put the ascriber's notions at semantic issue, that would seem to suggest that Smith should be able to put Jones's notions of the man in the corner at semantic issue by embedding the description 'the woman in the corner drinking gimlets.' But it is easy to see that this prediction is not borne out by the facts.

Suppose that it is common ground between Smith and Black that there is no woman in the corner drinking gimlets. Now consider:

(15) Jones believes that the woman in the corner drinking gimlets has had too much to drink.

as potentially uttered by Smith to Black. Smith would naturally be taken not merely to ascribe to Jones a commitment to the existence of a gimlet drinking woman in the corner, but also thereby to impute that she herself accepts or endorses the ascribed commitment. Because the existential commitment that she would thereby impute to herself conflicts with what is already common ground between Smith and Black, uttering (15) is a conversationally inappropriate way for Smith to report Jones's belief to Black.

It would be wrong to conclude that by uttering (15) in the setting just imagined, Smith imputes to Jones a commitment to the existence of a gimlet drinking woman. Varying the case ever so slightly shows decisively that Smith has imputed no such commitment to Jones at all. Imagine a scenario in which the person Jones has in mind

and to whom she intends to refer via the description ‘the woman in the corner drinking gimlets’ is, in fact, a woman drinking gimlets. Now suppose that although it is mutually manifest to Smith and Black who Jones has in mind, they, nonetheless, mistakenly take Jones to be mistaken. Though Smith and Black mutually recognize that Jones takes the person in the corner to be a gimlet drinking woman, they take that person to be a martini drinking man. Jones is right; they are wrong; but they are unaware of these facts. Now suppose that Jones utters (14) intending to alert Smith to the drunken reveler. From our better informed perspective, it seems evident that Smith would speak truly if she were to report Jones’s belief to Black via an utterance of (15). That, in fact, is just how we, who are in the know, would report Jones’s belief. (15) is, however, unavailable to Smith as way of reporting Jones’s belief. An utterance of (15) by Smith would quite clearly impute to Smith an existential commitment that she manifestly does not have. The preferred way for Smith to report to Black what Jones believes in the imagined setting is the false (16) rather than the true (15):

(16) Jones believes that the man in the corner drinking martinis has had too much to drink.

By Smith’s use of the description ‘the man in the corner drinking martinis’ in the utterance of (16), she commits herself to the existence of a martini drinking man. She does not thereby ascribe such a commitment to Jones. Indeed, it is common ground between Smith and Black in the imagined setting that Jones mistakenly takes the relevant person not to be a martini drinking man but a gimlet drinking woman. We can even stipulate that it is part of the common ground that Jones takes there to be no martini drinking man in the room at all. Now Smith does, to be sure, ascribe to Jones a

predicative commitment to the effect that a certain person -- the person whom Smith and Black take to be a gimlet drinking woman -- has had too much to drink. But in so ascribing, Smith appears neither to refer to nor to specify nor to describe Jones's notions of the relevant person.

By parity of reasoning, it follows that even where there is doxastic agreement between ascriber and ascribee, the ascribee's notions of those objects are often simply not at semantic issue and cannot be put at semantic issue merely by the mechanism of embedding. When Smith utters (15) as a way of reporting Jones's belief to Black in a context in which Smith, Black, and Jones one and all take the martini drinking man to be a gimlet drinking woman, Smith expresses her own commitment to the existence of a gimlet drinking woman, but she does not thereby succeed in ascribing such a commitment to Jones by that utterance. If the proposition that Jones is committed to the existence of a gimlet drinking woman were not already part of the common ground in the imagined context of doxastic agreement, the mere utterance of (15) by Smith would not increment the common ground to include such a proposition. What Smith ascribes *to Jones* by an utterance of (15) is a predicative commitment to the effect that a certain person has had too much to drink. She does not thereby purport to specify how Jones thinks of the relevant person. By using the embedded description, Smith presents only *herself* to Black as cognizing the relevant object under the description 'the woman in the corner drinking gimlets.' In addition, she offers up that description to Black as a vehicle for Black and Smith to achieve mutual recognition of the object that Jones's belief is about. But she does not thereby use the embedded description to either represent, indirectly specify or refer to Jones's notion of the relevant person. It is not Jones's

notions that are at semantic issue in Smith's ascription but only Jones's predicative commitments.

But notice that the machinery of fulsomely de re ascriptions enables us to ascribe existential commitments across such divides. Suppose, as above, that Smith intends to report Jones's belief about the martini drinking man in the corner to Black. Suppose that Smith intends via her report to, as it were, arm Black for interaction with Jones by making it explicit just how Jones thinks of the martini drinking man. It is, of course, commonly thought that it is via so-called de dicto ascriptions that we arm one another for interaction with the ascribee. But recall that Jones mistakenly takes the martini drinking man to be a gimlet drinking woman. Smith is aware that Jones is confused, but Black is not aware of Jones's confusion. If Smith were to report Jones belief by an utterance of (16), she would correctly and successfully ascribe to Jones a commitment to the effect that a certain person has had too much to drink, but her utterance would convey no information about Jones's confused notions of the relevant person. She would not thereby arm Black for interacting with Jones. Smith needs a way both to ascribe the commitment just mentioned and to convey information about Jones's confused notions, without thereby committing herself to Jones's confusions. She can do no better, I suggest, than to go fulsomely de re. She might, for example, utter something like the following:

(17) Jones believes of the martini drinking man in the corner, whom she mistakes for a gimlet drinking woman, that he has had too much to drink.

In uttering (17), Smith undertakes, and manifestly so, a commitment of her own to the existence of a martini drinking man; she ascribes to Jones a commitment to the

existence of a gimlet drinking woman, without herself thereby undertaking any such commitment; and she ascribes to Jones, also without herself undertaking, a predicative commitment to the effect that a certain person has had too much to drink. In so doing, Smith not only informs Black of Jones's doxastic commitments, but she does so in a manner that arms Black for interaction with Jones by explicitly conveying information about Jones's notions of doxastically relevant objects.

Now consider some belief reports involving embedded names. Suppose that Jones is an inept astronomer who proudly fancies herself the first to realize that Mars and Venus are one and the same planet. Imagine that before her spurious "discovery" Jones is as linguistically competent as the rest of us. Like the rest of us, she uses 'Venus' to refer to Venus and 'Mars' to refer to Mars. Though her spurious discovery no doubt rationally commits her to some serious reconfiguration of her notions of Mars and Venus, it is not obvious that such reconfigurations would ipso facto cause her no longer to be numbered among the linguistically competent. Indeed, linguistically and cognitively speaking, Jones would appear to be no worse off than someone who believes that Hesperus is distinct from Phosphorous. If she is not, then when she makes such bizarre post-discovery statements as:

(18) Mars is, after all, just Venus again.

she is certainly speaking falsely, but she is still speaking, and presumably intends to be speaking English.

Now suppose that Brown recognizes the nature of Jones's confusion and wants to inform Black of something about Jones's beliefs in a situation in which it is common

ground between Black and Brown that Mars and Venus are distinct. For example, imagine that Jones has uttered the following:

(19) I see that Venus is visible tonight.

with evident intent of referring to the currently visible Venus rather than to the not yet visible Mars. It seems intuitively right to say that Jones has expressed a belief to the effect that Venus is currently visible. After all, she sees Venus in the evening sky and correctly uses the name 'Venus' to refer to the very object that she sees. At the same time, since Jones takes that very object to be Mars, it also seems right to say that Jones believes that Mars is visible in the evening sky. After all, Jones would accept both the sentence 'Venus is visible tonight' and the sentence 'Mars is visible tonight'. One's first thought might be to represent what Jones believes by (20):

(20) Jones believes that Venus is visible and that Mars is visible.

But (20) is entirely silent about the character of Jones's confused notions of Mars and Venus. It does not depict, for example, the fact that by Jones's notional lights Mars and Venus are one and the same planet. To see this, just imagine that Brown does, but Black does not know that Jones takes Mars to be identical to Venus. An utterance of (20) would put Black in no position to infer that Jones takes Mars and Venus to be identical.

Once again, the fulsomely *de re* provides a way of depicting the character of Jones's confused notions of Mars and Venus, and a way of doing so without Brown having to own the relevant confusion as her own, as in:

(21) Jones believes of Venus, which she takes to be identical with Mars,
that it is visible tonight.

(22) Jones believes of Mars, which she takes to be identical with Venus,
that it is visible tonight.

One can easily imagine the discourse situations in which one might prefer one of (21) or (22) over, with the choice being driven largely by pragmatic considerations relating to what is foreground or background in the relevant discourse situation.

Consider briefly a slightly different scenario. Suppose that Jones is even more clueless about the planets -- Mars in particular. Sometimes when she sees it, she takes it to be Venus. Other times, she takes it to be Jupiter. Now suppose that on appropriate occasions she utters (23) and then (24), each with the evident intent of referring to Mars:

(23) My how lovely Venus looks this evening.

(24) My look how lovely Jupiter looks this evening.

How should we report the belief expressed by Jones? Our procedures so far may suggest (25) and (26) below:

(25) Jones believes of Mars, which she takes to be Venus, that it looks
lovely this evening.

(26) Jones believes of Mars, which she takes to be Jupiter, that it looks
lovely this evening.

And these do get at something about the truth about Jones's state of mind. But since Jones sometimes takes Mars to be Venus and sometimes takes it to be Jupiter, one may want to know more. One may want to know whether, as it were, in this very episode of believing, Jones is taking Mars to be Venus or taking it to be Jupiter. This we can capture by expanding our ascriptions as follows:

(27) Jones believes of Mars, which in this very episode of believing, she takes to be Venus, that it looks lovely this evening.

(28) Jones believes of Mars, which in this very episode of believing, she takes to be Jupiter, that it looks lovely this evening.

V, The Illusion of Opacity

I want to close this essay by suggesting that it is an illusion, brought on by a failure to perceive their modificational neutrality, that belief contexts block the free substitution of co-referring singular terms. I have argued at length for this sort of conclusion elsewhere – though without explicit appeal to the notion of modificational neutrality. (Taylor 2002, 2003a, 2003b). I will not rehearse those arguments here, except to note that whether co-referring names are intersubstitutable in a given discourse contexts depends entirely on what dialectical constraints are operative between the discourse participants in the relevant contexts. In particular, I have argued elsewhere that there is a default, but overrideable co-reference constraint on propositional attitude ascriptions. The default co-reference constraint is the following:

Default Co-Reference Constraint: If a sentence of the form:

A believes that*n* ...

is dialectically permissible for a player *p* in a dialectical setting *D* at *t* and it is common ground between *p* and her interlocutors that *m* is in the co-reference set of *n* for *A* at *t*, then a sentence of the form:

A believes that ...*m*...

is dialectically permissible for *p* in *D* at *t*

where m is in the co-reference set of n for A at t just in case A accepts the identity sentence $m = n$ at t and acceptance is a certain belief-like attitude held toward *sentences* rather than toward propositions. The default co-reference constraint says that belief ascriptions are defeasibly dialectically sensitive to facts about *ascribee* co-reference sets, rather than to facts about either ascriber co-reference sets or to facts about real world co-reference. When attitude ascriptions are sensitive to facts about ascribee co-reference sets, such ascriptions exhibit many of the hallmarks commonly associated with so-called *de dicto* ascriptions. But two points bear brief emphasis. First, being dialectically sensitive to facts about ascribee co-reference sets is not the same as putting notions, ideas or conceptions at semantic issue. Even when we try to make our ascriptions sensitive to facts about ascribee co-reference sets, we still need not refer, specify, or quantify over the notions or ideas via which the ascribee cognizes the objects that are implicated in her beliefs. Second, there are many dialectical settings in which the default sensitivity of ascriptions to facts about ascribee co-reference sets is overridden in favor of sensitivity to facts about the co-reference sets that are elements of the common ground between speaker and hearer. In such dialectical settings, attitude ascriptions will exhibit many of the hallmarks of what are commonly called *de re* ascriptions. In particular, names that are known or believed by speaker and hearer to co-refer will be freely interchangeable even if there are not known or believed to be co-referring by the ascribee. But the deeper point is that the substitutivity or lack thereof of co-referring names in attitude contexts really does nothing to show that names have any kind of different or additional semantic function within the context of belief ascriptions. Whether names are intersubstitutable in

a given discourse contexts depends entirely on the dialectical standards operative in that particular context. Or so I have argued at length elsewhere.

Let me close this essay by pointing out that the device of fulsomely de re ascriptions, together with the notion of modificational neutrality, provide a satisfying explanation of the case of Miles Hendon. Recall that Perry and Crimmins want to say that although (28) below is false, (29) below is true, even though one and the same boy is referred to by 'he' and 'Edward Tudor'.

(28) Miles Hendon believed that he was of royal blood.

(29) Miles Hendon believed that Edward Tudor was of royal blood.

According to my own analysis (28) and (29) have the same modificationally neutral content. Consequently they are either both true or both false. Of course, whether (28) and (29) are interchangeable in a given discourse context depends on what co-reference set is governing in the relevant context. In discourse contexts in which facts about ascriber co-reference sets govern dialectical permissibility, they need not be interchangeable. In contexts in which facts about common ground co-reference sets govern, they may be.

But we need not stop with the modificationally neutral characterizations offered of Miles's beliefs expressed by (28) and (29). Rather, (30) and (31) below capture further facts about Miles's beliefs, facts that differentiate between two different sorts of episodes of believing the singular proposition that Edward Tudor was of royal blood:

(30) Miles Hendon believed of Edward Tudor, who, in this very episode
of believing [demonstrating the belief he has when Edward is present

and dressed as a pauper] he took to be a pauper, that he was of royal blood.

(31) Miles Hendron believed of Edward Tudor, who, in this very episode of believing [demonstrating an episode of believing involving the deployment of ‘Edward Tudor’ in a thought or talk episode] he took to be the Prince of Wales, that he was of royal blood.

Clearly an utterance of (30) and an utterance of (31) can differ in truth value, even though they may predicate belief in one and the same singular proposition. It may be, for example, that no episode of believing in which Miles takes Edward to be a pauper is also an episode of believing in which she takes Edward to be of royal blood – in which case (30) is false. Nonetheless but some or every episode of believing in which he deploys the name ‘Edward Tudor’ to refer to Edward is an episode in which he takes Edward to be the Prince of Wales – in which case (31) is true.

Now consider the claim expressed by:

(32) Miles Hendron did not believe that he was of royal blood.

where (32) is said with reference to an episode of believing in which Miles takes Edward to be a pauper distinct from Edward. Perry and Crimmins seem to think that in such a scenario (32) expresses something unambiguously true. But this, I think, is a mistake. Miles has two Edward related episodes of believing. In one such episode, he believes that he[Edward] is of royal blood. In the other, he believes that he[Edward] is not of royal blood. These two belief episodes are jointly metaphysically incoherent since they cannot be made jointly true in any metaphysically possible world. There is, however, an unambiguous truth about Miles’s belief. And it is the sort of truth that Perry and

Crimmins wrongly suppose that (32) unambiguously expresses. To state that truth explicitly, we need to resort to explicit quantification over belief episodes as in:

(33) For no belief episode in which Miles takes Edward to be a pauper
does Miles also predicate being of royal blood of Edward.

There may indeed be contexts in which a speaker who utters (32) is really trying to convey what is strictly, literally and unambiguously expressed by (33). Speakers often convey, and intend to convey, something non-literal by literally stating something else. That, I suggest, is more likely to be what is happening in the case imagined by Perry and Crimmins. If so, there is no basis for concluding that an utterance of (32) in the relevant context strictly literally expresses, via the pragmatic alchemy of unarticulated constituents, what (33) expresses in a more fully articulated way.

To be sure, it follows on my account that strictly speaking (32) says something quite strong (and potentially informative). It denies that even the weakest, most modificationally neutral possible belief report about Edward and his bloodline is true of Hendon. Speakers will seldom be in possession of evidence to support any claim so strong. Indeed, one could possess evidence to that effect only if one were in a position to know that there is *no* notion of Edward deployed in *any* episode of believing by Hendon such that in that very episode of believing Hendon predicates being of royal blood of Edward. We are seldom in a position to know such things about even our own belief episodes -- let alone the belief episodes of another. We are typically presented with *particular* episodes of believing, with a given content, without knowing how things are by the ascriber's other episodes of believing that involve the affirmation or denial of that very same content. Consequently, one who utters the strong (32) would typically be

taken to be, and would typically be, engaging in a kind of overstatement. Because of the mutual obviousness of the overstatement an utterance of (32) might indeed pragmatically convey something more like the weaker, more modificationally limited (33). But this possibility provides no basis for supposing that the content of an utterance of the non-quantificational (32) is an unarticulated version of the articulated content of the quantificational (33).

VI. Conclusion

I have objected to a fair number of Perry's views here. Nonetheless, there are certain deep agreements between us. Like Perry, I believe that beliefs are mental particulars, built out of recurring constituents. Moreover, like Perry I believe that our belief ascriptions must sometimes make reference to, quantify over, and partially characterize particular belief episodes and the structure of notion-like elements deployed in those episodes. Since belief episodes with the same propositional contents may differ radically in the recurring constituents therein deployed, belief reports must sometimes do more than specify the propositional contents of belief. About this, Perry is also correct. What I have been objecting to strenuously here, however, are mainly Perry's views about the way the language of belief reports works to achieve these effects. Simple, unmodified belief sentences have no hidden or explicit argument place where a "notional specifier" might go. And contrary to the view defended by Crimmins and Perry, there is no pragmatic mechanism that can magically render the ascriber's notions directly semantically relevant to the literal truth value of any such sentence. Indeed, the real, but underappreciated lesson of Kripke's justly famous puzzle about belief, I claim, is that

embedding does nothing at all to effect the semantic functioning of singular terms. It does not shift their referents; it does not render them non-referential; and it does not cause them to induce unarticulated constituents. Consequently, if we want to explain apparent failures of substitutivity and the like, we had better look elsewhere. Or so I have been arguing.

Endnotes

¹ I do not mean by this remark to fully endorse Perry's argument. For my own approach to the co-reference and no-reference problems see Taylor (2003), especially essays I, II, IV, and VI.

² Indeed, the Barwise-Perry approach seems to me to fit more comfortably than the Crimmin-Perry approach with the more general theoretical framework outlined in Perry's recent work.

³ Bach's own notion of "what is said" is self-consciously pretty far removed from day to day communication. His is a highly theoretical notion quite distant from our intuitions about what is communicated or even our intuitions about direct and indirect ascriptions of content. Consequently, he is unlikely to be moved by complaints of the sort issued here. But then it is fair to wonder just what is supposed to entitle him to his notion of what is said in the first place.

⁴ For an excellent discussion of a variety of issues connected to the notion of what is said, especially the interest-relative and context sensitive nature of direct and indirect characterizations of what is said, see Stojanovic (2003).

⁵ Though Perry's approach to unarticulated constituents has a certain affinity to Recanati's approach, Perry has not to my knowledge endorsed what I regard as the most questionable aspect of Recanati's view. Recanati argues that primary pragmatic processes differ in fundamental psychological character from secondary pragmatic processes. Secondary pragmatic processes, he takes to be conscious and inferential. Primary pragmatic processes, he takes to be subdoxastic and non-inferential. To my knowledge, Perry has nowhere appealed to anything like this sort of processing distinction. In addition, in some explicit remarks about how unarticulated constituents get conveyed to a hearer by a speaker, he seems to suggest that reasoning of the very same sort is involved both in the understanding of conversational implicatures and in the grasping of unarticulated constituents. See, for example, the discussion in Perry (2001), especially pp. 49-50.

⁶ This hypothesis has implications for the so-called binding argument in favor of suppressed constituents. It suggests, in particular, that there is no reason to expect that sub-syntactic argument places will be "bindable" by sentence level quantifiers. If such arguments are restricted to what I am calling the sub-syntactic basement they are, in the sense, "beneath" the reach of quantificational constituents.

⁷ Perry sometimes writes things that suggest some agreement with the approach outlined here. For example, he notices that although the metaphysics of the winning relation requires both a victor and a vanquished, the grammar of ‘won’ does not require we identify the vanquished. By contrast the grammar of ‘beat’ does require that the vanquished be specified. The difference between ‘beat’ and ‘win’ on this score is due not to differences in the metaphysics of the beat relation as compared with the winning relation, but to differences in the fulsomeness of the lexicalization of the relevant relation by the relevant verb. Perry’s point may be that if an argument role of a relation is lexicalized as an argument place of a predicate then it will show up as an explicit sentence-level constituent. I see no reason to believe that this is so. At any rate, it begs the question against the very possibility of what we might call sub-syntactic lexicalization.

⁸ Lepore and Cappellan (2003) come pretty close to endorsing such a view.

⁹ To be sure, there are those who will claim that the distinction between fulsomenely de re and truncated de re ascriptions cannot be exhaustive, since it leaves out so-called de dicto ascriptions. Though there may indeed be something to the de re/de dicto distinction, I have argued at length elsewhere that the fulsomenely de re actually does a great deal of the much of the communicative work that philosophers have wrongly assigned to de dicto reports. Indeed, I have shown that even in conversational contexts in which a de dicto ascription is permissible, it typically merely partially characterizes a reality that can be more fully and informatively characterized by a fulsomenely de re ascription. I lack the space to repeat those arguments here, however.

¹⁰ I add the parenthetical phrase ‘in subject position’ because I have recently come to realize that things work differently for ascribed predications, even predications involving derogatory predicates. If Smith says:

Jones believes *that bitch Sally* is about to get tenure

Smith has herself derogated Sally, but he has not ascribed any derogatory attitude toward Sally to Jones. On the other hand, if Smith says:

Jones believes that Sally *is a bitch*.

Smith has not derogated Sally himself but he has ascribed a derogatory belief about Sally to Jones. This apparent asymmetry between predicates and terms has, I think, to do entirely with the fact that the predicative commitments specified in a belief ascription do purport to attach *entirely to the ascriber*. This is entirely in keeping with my view that belief ascriptions specify nothing but the predicative doxastic commitments putatively undertaken by the ascriber. Just as the commitments normally involved in the use of the

expression in subject position can't be detached from the ascriber, so the commitments normally involved in the use of the expression in predicate position can't be detached from the ascriber. But I lack the space to argue this point in detail here.

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