On Sense and Direct Reference*

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Abstract

Millianism and Fregeanism agree that a sentence that contains a name expresses a structured proposition but disagree about whether that proposition contains the object that the name refers to (Millianism) or rather a mode of presentation of that object (Fregeanism). Various problems – about simple sentences, propositional-attitude ascriptions, and sentences that contain empty names – beset each view. To solve these problems, Millianism can appeal to modes of presentation, and Fregeanism can appeal to objects. But this raises a further problem: namely, to explain why the proposition expressed by a sentence that contains a name matters in some cases but not in others.

1. Millianism and Fregeanism

There is a connection between language and the world. For example, we can use sentences to say things about the world. There is also a connection between language and thought. For example, we can use sentences to express things that we think. These two connections suggest two broad pictures about how language gets its content, about how sentences can be used to say the things and express the thoughts that they are used to do. The first picture focuses on the connection between language and the world. According to this first picture, language gets its content directly from the world: it is the objects, properties, and relations in the world that determine what the content of language is. The second picture, by contrast, focuses on the connection between language and thought. According to this second picture, language gets its content from thought: it is the things that we think that determine what the content of language is. It is natural to think of two competing views in the philosophy of language – namely, Millianism and Fregeanism – as being developments of these two contrasting pictures.

Millianism and Fregeanism agree that sentences express – that is, semantically express – propositions, where propositions are abstract objects that are the primary bearers of truth-values and that are the objects of attitudes such as believing and asserting.[1] Millianism and Fregeanism also agree that propositions are structured. This means that the proposition expressed by

(1) Cary is debonair.

– for example – can be represented as the ordered pair <C, *being debonair*>, where C is something that corresponds to "Cary."[2]

But Millianism and Fregeanism disagree about the propositions expressed by sentences that contain names.[3] According to Millianism, sentences that contain names express singular propositions (if they express any propositions at all). This means that, in the proposition expressed by (1), C is Cary himself. According to Millianism, the proposition expressed by (1) can thus be represented as <Cary, *being debonair*>. This captures the idea that it is entities in the world – for example, Cary – that determine what the content of language is.[4] By contrast, Fregeanism denies that sentences that contain names express singular propositions. According to Fregeanism, in the proposition expressed by (1) C is not Cary himself; rather, C is a mode of presentation of Cary, $MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, something that is a way of thinking about Cary or that captures an agent's perspective on Cary. According to Fregeanism, the proposition expressed by (1) can thus be represented as <$MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, *being debonair*>. This captures the idea that it is what we think that determines what the content of language is.[5]

Different versions of Fregeanism disagree about what modes of presentation are. On the one hand, according to Fregean Descriptivism modes of presentation are descriptive: that is, they pick out objects by describing them as having certain properties. As a result, according to Fregean Descriptivism a sentence that contains a name expresses a descriptive proposition: that is, a proposition that contains a descriptive mode of presentation. For example, according to Fregean Descriptivism $MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$ might pick out Cary by describing him as having the property *being the actor who played C. K. Dexter Haven in* The Philadelphia Story; and (1) might express the same descriptive proposition as

> (1D) The actor who played C. K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story* is debonair.[6]

On the other hand, according to Fregean Nondescriptivism modes of presentation are nondescriptive: that is, they pick out objects, but not by describing them as having certain properties. For example, according to Fregean Nondescriptivism $MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$ might be an abstract object that is individuated by an agent's cognitive abilities,[7] or something that contains the linguistic expression "Cary,"[8] or a *sui generis* entity of some other kind. Fregean Nondescriptivism and Fregean Descriptivism agree that, since it is singular, the proposition represented as <Cary, *being debonair*> is the wrong sort of proposition to be the proposition expressed by (1). But, unlike Fregean Descriptivism, Fregean Nondescriptivism says that, since it is descriptive, the proposition expressed by (1D) is also the wrong sort of proposition to be the proposition expressed by (1).

Since Millianism and Fregeanism disagree about the propositions expressed by sentences that contain names, Millianism and Fregeanism disagree about the contents of names, where the content of a name is what it contributes

to the propositions expressed by sentences that contain it. According to Millianism, names are directly referential. This means that the content of a name is nothing other than the object that it refers to. For example, according to Millianism the content of "Cary" is Cary himself.[9] By contrast, Fregeanism denies that names are directly referential. According to Fregeanism, the content of a name is not the object that it refers to; rather, the content of a name is a mode of presentation of that object. For example, according to Fregeanism the content of "Cary" is $MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, a mode of presentation that presents Cary. This mode of presentation is also known as a sense.

2. Millian Problems

2.1. THE PROBLEMS

Although it seems to many to be an attractive view about the connection between language and the world, Millianism faces several well-known problems.[10] Here's one. For example, it seems that

(2) Cary is Cary.

and

(3) Cary is Archie.

differ in cognitive value: (2) is trivial, uninformative, and *a priori*; whereas (3) is nontrivial, informative, and *a posteriori*. But "Cary" and "Archie" corefer. ("Cary Grant" is the screen name of Archibald Alexander Leach.) So, according to Millianism, (2) and (3) express the same singular proposition, one that can be represented as the ordered triple <Cary, the identity relation, Cary>.[11] As a result, it seems that Millianism cannot account for the apparent difference in cognitive value between (2) and (3). Let's call this *The Problem of Cognitive Value for Simple Sentences*.[12]

Here's another. For example, it seems that

(2Bel) George believes that Cary is Cary.

and

(3Bel) George believes that Cary is Archie.

can differ in truth-value: (2Bel) can be true even if (3Bel) is false.[13] (2Bel) expresses a proposition, about George and the proposition expressed by (2), to the effect that he bears a propositional attitude – namely, the belief relation – to it; and (3Bel) expresses a proposition, about George and the proposition expressed by (3), to the effect that he bears that propositional attitude to it. And, according to Millianism, (2) and (3) express the same proposition. So, according to Millianism, (2Bel) and (3Bel) also express the same proposition, one that can be represented as the ordered triple <George, the belief relation, <Cary, the identity relation, Cary>>.[14] As a result, it seems that Millianism cannot account for the apparent difference in truth-value

between (2Bel) and (3Bel). Let's call this *The Problem of Truth-Value for Propositional-Attitude Ascriptions*.

Empty names pose a host of further problems for Millianism.[15] An empty name is a name that doesn't refer to anything. For example, suppose that Katharine introduces the name "Sparkie" to refer to the lighter in her pocket, if there is one, and to nothing otherwise. If it turns out that Katharine's pockets are empty, then "Sparkie" is also empty. The source of the problems that empty names pose for Millianism is that it seems that Millianism entails that a sentence that contains an empty name doesn't express any proposition at all. According to Millianism, propositions are structured. So, if

(4) Sparkie doesn't exist.

– for example – expresses a proposition, then that proposition can be represented as the ordered pair <S, *not existing*>, where S is something that corresponds to "Sparkie." And, according to Millianism, sentences that contain names express singular propositions, if they express any propositions at all. So, if (4) expresses a proposition represented as <S, *not existing*>, then S is the object that "Sparkie" refers to. But, since "Sparkie" is empty, there is no object that it refers to. So there is no object in the S slot in <S, *not existing*>. As a result, it seems that there is no singular proposition for (4) to express and hence that, according to Millianism, (4) doesn't express any proposition at all. Let's call the view that sentences that contain empty names don't express any proposition at all *The No Proposition View*.

The No Proposition View apparently has a number of consequences that are apparently counterintuitive. Here's one. You might think that a sentence is meaningful only if it expresses a proposition. If that's right, then The No Proposition View entails that (4), for example, is meaningless. But (4) doesn't seem meaningless. Let's call this *The Problem of Meaningfulness for Sentences that Contain Empty Names*. Here's another. You might think that a sentence inherits its truth-value from the proposition it expresses. If that's right, then The No Proposition View entails that, for example, (4) and

(4Bel) Katharine believes that Sparkie doesn't exist.

have no truth-value. But (4) and (4Bel) seem true. Let's call this *The Problem of Truth-Value for Sentences that Contain Empty Names*. And here's a third. You might think that a person can sincerely and assertively utter a sentence only if she believes the proposition that it expresses. If that's right, then The No Proposition View entails that no one can sincerely and assertively utter (4), for example. But it seems that someone could sincerely and assertively utter (4). Let's call this *The Problem of Sincere Assertive Utterance for Sentences that Contain Empty Names*. Let's call these problems – namely, The Problem of Meaningfulness for Sentences that Contain Empty Names, The Problem of Truth-Value for Sentences that Contain Empty Names, and The Problem of Sincere Assertive Utterance for Sentences that Contain Empty Names – *The Problems for Sentences that Contain Empty Names*. Because of The Problem

of Cognitive Value for Simple Sentences, The Problem of Truth-Value for Propositional-Attitude Ascriptions, and The Problems for Sentences that Contain Empty Names, many philosophers have concluded that Millianism should be rejected in favor of Fregeanism.

2.2. FREGEAN SOLUTIONS

Fregeanism can solve just about all of the problems that beset Millianism.[16] According to Fregeanism, "Cary" and "Archie" have different contents: the content of "Cary" is one mode of presentation, $MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$; whereas the content of "Archie" is a distinct mode of presentation, $MP_{\text{"Archie"}}$. (If modes of presentation are descriptive, then $MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$ might be something that presents someone as being the actor who played C. K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story*, whereas $MP_{\text{"Archie"}}$ might be something that presents someone – the same person, as it turns out – as having been the boy from Bristol who ran away to join an acrobatic troupe.) In that case, (2) and (3) express different propositions: (2) expresses a proposition that can be represented as the ordered triple $<MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, $MP_{\text{"Cary"}}>$, whereas (3) expresses a proposition that can be represented as the ordered triple $<MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, $MP_{\text{"Archie"}}>$. According to Fregeanism, (2) and (3) differ in cognitive value, because they express different propositions. This is a Fregean solution to The Problem of Cognitive Value for Simple Sentences.

According to Fregeanism, (2Bel) and (3Bel) express different propositions: (2Bel) expresses a proposition that can be represented as the ordered triple $<$George, the belief relation, $<MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, $MP_{\text{"Cary"}}>>$; whereas (3Bel) expresses a proposition that can be represented as $<$George, the belief relation, $<MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, $MP_{\text{"Archie"}}>>$. And these propositions can differ in truth–value, because George can bear the belief relation to the proposition represented as $<MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, $MP_{\text{"Cary"}}>$ without bearing that relation to the proposition represented as $<MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, $MP_{\text{"Archie"}}>$. Since the propositions that (2Bel) and (3Bel) express can differ in truth-value, so can (2Bel) and (3Bel) themselves. This is a Fregean solution to The Problem of Truth-Value for Propositional-Attitude Ascriptions.

Fregeanism doesn't entail The No Proposition View. Fregeanism and Millianism agree that the proposition expressed by (4) can be represented as $<$S, *not existing*$>$. But, according to Fregeanism, S isn't the object that "Sparkie" refers to; rather, S is a mode of presentation, $MP_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$, that corresponds to "Sparkie." If $MP_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$ is a descriptive mode of presentation, then it might be something that would pick out the unique object that has the property *being a lighter in Katharine's pocket*, if there were such an object; but perhaps $MP_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$ is a nondescriptive mode of presentation instead.[17]

Since it doesn't entail The No Proposition View, Fregeanism can solve many of The Problems for Sentences that Contain Empty Names. First, Fregeanism can solve The Problem of Meaningfulness for Sentences that

Contain Empty Names: (4) is meaningful, because it expresses the proposition represented as <MP$_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$, *not existing*>. Second, Fregeanism can solve The Problem of Truth–Value for Sentences that Contain Empty Names, at least for propositional-attitude ascriptions like (4Bel): (4Bel) can be true, because Katharine can believe the proposition represented as <MP$_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$, *not existing*>. And, third, Fregeanism can solve The Problem of Sincere Assertive Utterance for Sentences that Contain Empty Names: speakers can sincerely and assertively utter (4), because they can believe the proposition represented as <MP$_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$, *not existing*>.

But Fregeanism doesn't straightforwardly solve The Problem of Truth–Value for Sentences that Contain Empty Names when it comes to sentences like (4). For (4) is true if and only if the proposition that it expresses, the proposition represented as <MP$_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$, *not existing*>, is true; and that proposition is true if and only if the object that MP$_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$ presents has the property *not existing*. But there is no object that MP$_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$ presents and hence it is not the case that the object that MP$_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$ presents has the property *not existing*. So (4) isn't true (either because it's false or because it lacks a truth-value altogether). Still, many philosophers think that, overall, Fregeanism fares better than Millianism in handling the problems that beset Millianism.

2.3. SENSE MILLIANISM

To solve the problems that beset Millianism, Fregeanism appeals to propositions that contain modes of presentation. But Millian views can appeal to modes of presentation, too. Let's call any Millian view that appeals to modes of presentation a *Sense Millian* view.[18] According to one Sense Millian view, sentences that contain names express singular propositions (if they express any propositions at all); but, when they use those sentences, speakers communicate − that is, nonsemantically communicate (or assert, or convey, or implicate) − propositions that contain modes of presentation.[19] For example, according to this Millian view, (1) expresses the singular proposition represented as <Cary, *being debonair*>; but, when they use (1), speakers communicate the proposition represented as <MP$_{\text{"Cary"}}$, *being debonair*>. Perhaps this proposition is descriptive (for example, the proposition expressed by (1D)); perhaps not. Sense Millians disagree about what modes of presentation are.[20]

According to Millianism, (2) and (3) express the same singular proposition: namely, the proposition represented as <Cary, the identity relation, Cary>. But, according to Sense Millianism, when they use (2) and (3) speakers communicate different propositions: when they use (2), they communicate the proposition represented as <MP$_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, MP$_{\text{"Cary"}}$>; whereas, when they use (3), they communicate the proposition represented as <MP$_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, MP$_{\text{"Archie"}}$>. Because speakers communicate different propositions when they use (2) and (3), (2) and (3) seem to differ

in cognitive value. This is a Sense Millian solution to The Problem of Cognitive Value for Simple Sentences.

According to Sense Millianism, (2Bel) and (3Bel) express the same proposition: namely, the proposition represented as <George, the identity relation, <Cary, the identity relation, Cary>>. But, according to Sense Millianism, when they use (2Bel) and (3Bel) speakers communicate different propositions: when they use (2Bel), they communicate the proposition represented as <George, the belief relation, <$MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, $MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$>>; whereas, when they use (3Bel), they communicate the proposition represented as <George, the belief relation, <$MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, $MP_{\text{"Archie"}}$>>. (2Bel) seems true, because when they use it speakers communicate a proposition (namely, the proposition represented as <George, the belief relation, <$MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, $MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$>>) that they believe; but (3Bel) doesn't seem true, because when they use it speakers communicate a proposition (namely, the proposition represented as <George, the belief relation, <$MP_{\text{"Cary"}}$, the identity relation, $MP_{\text{"Archie"}}$>>) that they don't believe. This is a Sense Millian solution to The Problem of Truth-Value for Propositional-Attitude Ascriptions.

Sense Millianism can also solve The Problems for Sentences that Contain Empty Names. First, Sense Millianism can solve The Problem of Meaningfulness for Sentences that Contain Empty Names: (4) seems meaningful, because speakers use it to communicate a proposition (namely, the proposition represented as <$MP_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$, *not existing*>). Second, Sense Millianism can solve The Problem of Truth-Value for Sentences that Contain Empty Names: (4) seems true, because speakers use it to communicate a proposition (namely, the proposition represented as <$MP_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$, *not existing*>) that they believe; and (4Bel) seems true, because speakers also use it to communicate a proposition (namely, the proposition that can be represented as the ordered triple <Katharine, the belief relation, <$MP_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$, *not existing*>>) that they believe. And, third, Sense Millianism can solve The Problem of Sincere Assertive Utterance for Sentences that Contain Empty Names: speakers can sincerely and assertively utter (4), because they can believe the proposition represented as <$MP_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$, *not existing*>.

3. Fregean Problems

3.1. THE PROBLEMS

Although it seems to many to be an attractive view about the connection between language and thought, Fregeanism faces problems of its own. Here's one.[21] Suppose that George assertively utters (1). In that case, it seems that

(1Bel) George believes that Cary is debonair.

is true. It also seems that

(5Bel) George believes that you are debonair.

(6Bel) George believes that he is debonair.
(7Bel) George believes that I am debonair.

are true in the appropriate contexts: when one is speaking to Cary, when one is speaking about Cary, and when Cary is speaking, respectively. According to Fregeanism, (1) and

(5) You are debonair.
(6) He is debonair.
(7) I am debonair.

express different propositions (even in the appropriate contexts): the proposition expressed by (1) contains a mode of presentation − namely, MP$_{\text{"Cary"}}$, which corresponds to "Cary" − that presents Cary in one way; whereas the propositions expressed by (5)–(7) contain distinct modes of presentation − namely, modes of presentation that correspond to "you," "he," and "I" − that present Cary in other ways.[22] (1Bel) and (5Bel)–(7Bel) express propositions, about George and the propositions expressed by (1) and (5)–(7), to the effect that he bears the belief relation to those propositions. According to Fregeanism, (1) and (5)–(7) express different propositions; so (1Bel) and (5Bel)–(7Bel) express different propositions, too. As a result, it seems that Fregeanism cannot straightforwardly account for the apparent sameness of truth-value among (1Bel) and (5Bel)–(7Bel). Let's call this *The Reverse Problem of Truth-Value for Propositional-Attitude Ascriptions*.

Fregean Descriptivism, in particular, also faces several well-known problems.[23] Here's one. For example, it seems that

(8) Peano is Italian.

is true. But the descriptive mode of presentation that speakers associate with "Peano" might be given by "the discovererer of the Peano axioms," and that descriptive mode of presentation picks out Richard Dedekind rather than Giuseppe Peano. In that case, assuming that the descriptive mode of presentation that is the content of a name is the descriptive mode of presentation that speakers associate with that name, Fregean Descriptivism entails that (8) expresses the proposition that the discoverer of the Peano axioms is Italian; and that proposition is false, since Dedekind is not Italian. So it seems that Fregean Descriptivism cannot account for the apparent truth-value of (8). Let's call this *The Problem of Truth-Value for Simple Sentences*. (In the literature, this problem is known as the semantic argument against Fregean Descriptivism.)

Here are two others. For example, it seems that

(9) If Cary exists, then Cary is an actor.

is neither necessary nor *a priori*: Cary might have existed without ever becoming an actor; and, independently of sense experience, one cannot be justified in believing that Cary is an actor if he exists. But the descriptive

mode of presentation that speakers associate with "Cary" might be given by "the actor who played C. K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story*." In that case, assuming again that the descriptive mode of presentation that is the content of a name is the descriptive mode of presentation that speakers associate with that name, Fregean Descriptivism entails that (9) expresseses the proposition that, if the actor who played C. K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story* exists, then the actor who played C. K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story* is an actor; and that proposition is necessary *a priori*. (9) doesn't seem necessary; but, according to Fregean Descriptivism, the proposition it expresses might be; so it seems that Fregean Descriptivism cannot account for the modal profile of (9), where the modal profile of a sentence includes information about whether it's necessary or contingent. Let's call this *The Problem of Modal Profile for Simple Sentences*. (In the literature, this problem is known as the modal argument against Fregean Descriptivism.) Similarly, (9) doesn't seem *a priori*; but, according to Fregean Descriptivism, the proposition it expresses might be; so it seems that Fregean Descriptivism cannot account for the epistemic profile of (9) either, where the epistemic profile of a sentence includes information about whether it's *a priori* or *a posteriori*. Let's call this *The Problem of Epistemic Profile for Simple Sentences*. (In the literature, this problem is known as the epistemic argument against Fregean Descriptivism.) Because of The Reverse Problem of Truth-Value for Propositional-Attitude Ascriptions, some philosophers doubt that Fregeanism, in general, is true. And, because of The Problem of Truth-Value for Simple Sentences, The Problem of Modal Profile for Simple Sentences, and The Problem of Epistemic Profile for Simple Sentences, many philosophers have concluded that Fregean Descriptivism, in particular, is false.

3.2. MILLIAN SOLUTIONS

Millianism can solve the problems that beset Fregeanism in general and Fregean Descriptivism in particular. Millianism can solve The Reverse Problem of Truth-Value for Propositional-Attitude Ascriptions. According to Millianism, (1) and (5)–(7) express the same proposition (in the appropriate contexts).[24] So (1Bel) and (5Bel)–(7Bel) also express the same proposition (in the appropriate contexts). As a result, (1Bel) and (5Bel)–(7Bel) have the same truth-value, as desired.

Millianism can also solve The Problem of Truth-Value for Simple Sentences. According to Millianism, (8) expresses a singular proposition that can be represented as <Peano, *being Italian*>. Even if speakers think that Peano is the discoverer of the Peano axioms, it is not the case that that proposition is true if and only if the discoverer of the Peano axioms has the property *being Italian*; rather, that proposition is true if and only if Peano has the property *being Italian*. And Peano does have that property, so the proposition represented as <Peano, *being Italian*> is true, as desired.

And Millianism can solve The Problem of Modal Profile for Simple Sentences and The Problem of Epistemic Profile for Simple Sentences. According to Millianism, (9) expresses a conditional proposition whose antecedent is a singular proposition that can be represented as the ordered pair <Cary, *existing*> and whose consequent is a singular proposition that can be represented as the ordered pair <Cary, *being an actor*>. Let's call this conditional proposition *Condie*. Unlike the proposition that, if the actor who played C. K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story* exists, then the actor who played C. K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story* is an actor, Condie is neither necessary nor *a priori*. Since it is possible that Cary exists without having the property *being an actor*, it is possible that Condie's antecedent – namely, the singular proposition represented as <Cary, *existing*> – is true and its consequent – namely, the singular proposition represented as <Cary, *being an actor*> – is false; so it is not necessary that Condie is true. And, independently of sense experience, one cannot be justified in believing that, if the proposition represented as <Cary, *existing*> is true, then so is the proposition represented as <Cary, *being an actor*>; so Condie is not *a priori* either.

3.3. OBJECT FREGEANISM

To solve the problems that beset Fregean Descriptivism, in particular, a number of technical views have been proposed: for example, that the descriptive mode of presentation that is the content of a name is given by an "actually"-rigidified definite description like "the *x* such that *x* is actually the actor who played C. K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story*," or that the definite description that gives the content of a name must take wide scope with respect to modal operators (even in the metalanguage).[25] But the possibility of Sense Millianism, which co-opts Fregean resources (namely, modes of presentation) to solve the problems that beset Millianism, suggests a simpler solution. To solve the problems that beset Fregean Descriptivism, Millianism appeals to singular propositions, which contain objects. But Fregean views can appeal to objects and the singular propositions that contain them, too. Let's call any Fregean view that appeals to objects or singular propositions an *Object Fregean* view.[26] According to one Object Fregean view, sentences that contain names express propositions that contain modes of presentation; but, when they use those sentences, speakers communicate singular propositions. For example, according to this Object Fregean view, (1) expresses the proposition represented as <MP$_{\text{"Cary"}}$, *being debonair*>; but, when they use (1), speakers communicate the singular proposition represented as <Cary, *being debonair*>. This Object Fregean view is just like the Sense Millian view discussed above, except that the proposition expressed by the sentence and the proposition communicated by the speaker have been swapped.[27]

Object Fregeanism can solve The Problem of Truth-Value for Simple Sentences: even if (8) expresses a proposition that is false, (8) seems true, because when they use it speakers communicate a proposition (namely, the singular proposition represented as <Peano, *being Italian*>) that they believe.[28]

Object Fregeanism can also solve The Problem of Modal Profile for Simple Sentences and The Problem of Epistemic Profile for Simple Sentences: even if (9) expresses a proposition that is necessary *a priori*, (9) seems neither necessary nor *a priori*, because when they use it speakers communicate a proposition (namely, Condie, the conditional proposition whose antecedent is the singular proposition represented as <Cary, *existing*> and whose consequent is the singular proposition represented as <Cary, *being an actor*>) that they believe – correctly – to be neither necessary nor *a priori*.

In addition to solving the problems that beset Fregean Descriptivism in particular, Object Fregeanism can solve The Reverse Problem of Truth-Value for Propositional-Attitude Ascriptions: even if (1Bel) and (5Bel)–(7Bel) express different propositions, they seem to have the same truth-value, because when speakers use those sentences they communicate the same singular proposition (namely, the proposition represented as <George, the belief relation, <Cary, *being debonair*>>).

Object Fregeanism is not discussed much in the literature.[29] Perhaps that is because Object Fregeanism mimics Sense Millianism, and Fregeans tend to think that Sense Millianism doesn't work. Or perhaps it is because Object Fregeanism appeals to objects, and Fregeans tend to think that one can't have objects directly in mind. But Sense Millians cannot dismiss Object Fregeanism for these reasons.

4. Conclusion

Sense Millianism and Object Fregeanism both appeal to modes of presentation to solve problems about one group of cases (namely, those that concern intuitions about the cognitive value of simple sentences, about the truth-value of some propositional-attitude ascriptions, or about sentences that contain empty names); and both appeal to objects or singular propositions to solve problems about another group of cases (namely, those that concern intuitions about the truth-value of simple sentences, about the modal and epistemic profile of simple sentences, or about the truth-value of other propositional-attitude ascriptions). One further problem for both views is to explain, in a principled way, why one level (the propositions expressed by sentences that contain names, according to Object Fregeanism; something else, according to Sense Millianism) matters in the first group of cases but not in the second; and, conversely, why another level (the propositions expressed by sentences that contain names, according to Sense Millianism; something else, according to Object Fregeanism) matters in the

second group of cases but not in the first. This further problem is, it seems, pressing and difficult for both views.[30]

Whatever the prospects for their viability are, the possibility of Sense Millianism and Object Fregeanism suggests that a core dispute between Millianism and Fregeanism should be understood, not as a dispute about *whether* there are modes of presentation, but rather as a dispute about *where* there are such modes of presentation.[31] Fregeanism says that such modes of presentation are invariably contained in the propositions expressed by sentences that contain names, whereas Millianism says they're not – although they might be contained in the propositions that speakers communicate when they use sentences that contain names (or they might otherwise mediate agents' cognitive relations to singular propositions).

Appendix: Named Sentences

(1) Cary is debonair.
(1D) The actor who played C. K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story* is debonair.
(1Bel) George believes that Cary is debonair.
(2) Cary is Cary.
(2Bel) George believes that Cary is Cary.
(3) Cary is Archie.
(3Bel) George believes that Cary is Archie.
(4) Sparkie doesn't exist.
(4Bel) Katharine believes that Sparkie doesn't exist.
(5) You are debonair.
(5Bel) George believes that you are debonair.
(6) He is debonair.
(6Bel) George believes that he is debonair.
(7) I am debonair.
(7Bel) George believes that I am debonair.
(8) Peano is Italian.
(9) If Cary exists, then Cary is an actor.

Notes

[1] On propositions, see, for example, Cartwright "Propositions", "Propositions Again". On structured propositions, see, for example, Kaplan, Soames "Direct Reference".
[2] In the text, complications about what goes in the non–C slot are glossed over; it is assumed that what goes in that slot is a property: namely, *being debonair*. Other complications about other slots are also glossed over elsewhere in the text. A list of named (or numbered) sentences is provided in the appendix.

[3] Millianism and Fregeanism also disagree about the propositions expressed by sentences that contain demonstratives and indexicals; but, for the most part, in the text those expressions will be ignored in favor of names.

[4] On Millianism, see, for example, Kaplan; Salmon *Frege's Puzzle*; Soames "Direct Reference", "Substitutivity", *Beyond Rigidity*. The view is named after John Stuart Mill (see Mill), although he probably wasn't a Millian.

[5] On Fregeanism, see, for example, Frege "Über Sinn und Bedeutung" and the works cited in notes 6–8.

[6] "D" is for "descriptive." On Fregean Descriptivism, see, for example, Dummett, Stanley, Jackson, Sosa.

[7] See, for example, McDowell; Evans; Peacocke *Sense and Content*, *Thoughts*, *Study of Concepts*.

[8] See, for example, Richard.

[9] Millianism is also known as "the direct reference theory" or "neo-Russellianism." Unlike "the direct reference theory," "Millianism" is sometimes reserved for a claim about names – say, the claim that the semantic function of a name is exhausted by its having the bearer that it does – that doesn't presuppose the existence of propositions. Since not everyone who is willing to accept the claim about names is willing to accept the existence of propositions, it is sometimes handy to have a name for that claim. Although the existence of proposition is not beyond dispute, it is assumed in the text that propositions do exist. In keeping with that assumption, "Millianism" is used in the text for a claim that presupposes the existence of propositions.

[10] These problems can be traced back to Frege "Über Sinn und Bedeutung".

[11] This ordered triple is <Cary, the identity relation, Archie>, or <Archie, the identity relation, Cary>, or <Archie, the identity relation, Archie>.

[12] A simple sentence is simply a sentence that doesn't contain propositional-attitude verbs, modal operators, or other nonextensional fancy stuff.

[13] "Bel" is for "belief."

[14] This ordered triple is <George, the belief relation, <Cary, the identity relation, Archie>>, or <George, the belief relation, <Archie, the identity relation, Cary>>, or <George, the belief relation, <Archie, the identity relation, Archie>>.

[15] These problems are nicely catalogued in Braun "Empty Names, Mythical Names, Fictional Names". See also Caplan "Empty Names".

[16] These solutions can be traced back to Frege "Über Sinn und Bedeutung".

[17] If there is such a mode of presentation as MP$_{\text{"Sparkie"}}$, then there can be empty modes of presentation: that is, modes of presentation that don't actually present anything. The existence of empty modes of presentation isn't particularly controversial if Fregean Descriptivism is true. But some Fregean Nondescriptivists reject the existence of empty modes of presentation. See, for example, McDowell, Evans. In the text, it is assumed that empty modes of presentation exist.

[18] It is tempting to call these views *Sensible Millian* views, but that carries the unwanted suggested that other Millian views aren't sensible. Perhaps other Millian views are indeed not sensible, but that need not be reflected in the name of the views in question.

[19] This sort of view can be found in Soames *Beyond Rigidity*, Thau, and – perhaps – Salmon *Frege's Puzzle*. This sort of view coupled with the claim that modes of presentation are descriptive has been called *Millian Descriptivism*. See Caplan "Millian Descriptivism".

[20] For a Sense Millian view on which modes of presentation are descriptive, see Thau. For a Sense Millian view on which at least some modes of presentation are descriptive, see Soames *Beyond Rigidity*. For a Sense Millian view on which modes of presentation are not descriptive, see Salmon *Frege's Puzzle*. There are other Sense Millian views. For example, according to another Sense Millian view, sentences that contain names express singular propositions (if they express any propositions at all); but agents' cognitive relations to those propositions are mediated by modes of presentation. (This sort of view can be found in Braun "Understanding", "Cognitive Significance". Parts of this view can be found in Salmon *Frege's Puzzle*.) According to yet another Sense Millian view, propositional-attitude ascriptions express propositions that contain modes of presentation, but not because these modes of presentation are the contents of any names that occur in those propositional-attitude ascriptions. (This sort of view can be found in Crimmins and Perry, Crimmins.) In the text, these other Sense Millian views are ignored in favor of the view that, when they use sentences that contain names, speakers communicate propositions that contain modes of presentation.

[21] See, for example, Soames "Substitutivity", Braun "Understanding".

[22] Here Fregeanism is being extended from names like "Cary" to demonstratives and indexicals like "you," "he," and "I."

[23] These problems come from Kripke "Naming" and Kaplan, among other places. See also Salmon *Reference and Essence*, Soames *Beyond Rigidity*, *Reference and Description*.

[24] Here Millianism is also being extended from names like "Cary" to demonstratives and indexicals like "you," "he," and "I."

[25] *Pro* the rigidity view, see, for example, Plantinga "Boethian Compromise", Nelson. *Contra* the rigidity view, see, for example, Soames *Beyond Rigidity*, Everett "Recent Defenses". *Pro* the wide scope view, see, for example, Dummett, Sosa, Hunter. *Contra* the wide scope view, see, for example, Soames *Beyond Rigidity*, Caplan "Against Widescopism", Everett "Recent Defenses".

[26] It is tempting to call these views *Singular Fregean* views, but that carries the unwanted suggestion that these views are odd. Perhaps these views are indeed odd, but that need not be reflected in their name.

[27] See Bach. There could be other Object Fregean views. For example, according to another Object Fregean view, sentences that contain names express propositions that contain modes of presentation; but, when they bear cognitive relations to those propositions, agents have some object directly in mind (and hence bear cognitive relations to singular propositions, too). In the text, these other views are ignored in favor of the view that, when they use sentences that contain names, speakers communicate singular propositions.

[28] This solution is the converse of the Sense Millian solution to The Problem of Truth-Value for Propositional-Attitude Ascriptions: even if it is true, (3Bel) doesn't seem true, because when they use it speakers communicate a proposition (namely, the proposition represented as <George, the belief relation, <MP$_{"Cary,"}$ the identity relation, MP$_{"Archie"}$>>) that they don't believe.

[29] But see Bach.

[30] This sort of problem is pressed against one version of Sense Millianism – namely, Millian Descriptivism (see note 19) – in Everett "Empty Names", McKinsey, Sider and Braun, Caplan "Millian Descriptivism".

[31] This assumes that it isn't the case that too much is built into the notion of a mode of presentation. Among other things, this assumes that it is not built into the notion of a mode of presentation that it is the sort of thing that is the content of a name or that it is the sort of thing that is contained in propositions expressed by sentences that contain names.

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