

Kaplan: “Quantifying In”

Overview

Kaplan suggests a way of understanding quantifying into opaque contexts to be possible, by taking advantage (in effect) of both objectual and substitutional interpretations of quantifiers.

More precisely, he construes names and descriptions in opaque contexts as having a dual referential function—they refer both to their normal referents and to themselves. Hence, when one quantifies over such expressions, one needs **two** quantifiers—one for the normal referent, one for the expression itself.

Notional vs. Relational Belief

Kaplan’s operators ‘**B**’ and ‘**Bel**’ correspond to Quine’s notional and relational senses of ‘belief’, respectively.

Notional

16. Hegel **B** ‘nine is greater than five’

Relational

18. Hegel **Bel** (‘ x is greater than five’, nine)

Explaining Relational in terms of Notional

Quantifying into (18) is no problem. We get:

$\exists y$ Hegel **Bel** (‘ x is greater than five’, y)

“There is something such that Hegel believes, of it, that it is greater than five.”

The problem then is what such a belief is **like**. I.e., how would Frege, who thought of belief as a relation to a proposition, analyze relational belief ascriptions? Clearly, it would be in terms of the **notional** sense of ‘belief’. So we have to figure out how to translate this result of “quantifying into” into a relational belief-ascription into a notional belief-ascription. Kaplan’s first stab at this is to use a special **denotation** predicate, Δ . The idea is simple:

Δ (‘nine’, nine) Δ (‘Cicero’, Cicero) Δ (‘the man in the brown hat’, Orcutt)

So, using ‘ α ’ as a variable ranging over expressions, we can write ‘ $\Delta(\alpha, y)$ ’ for the open sentence ‘ α denotes y ’. A “Fregean” version of the notional belief attributed to Hegel in (18) will be expressed by some sentence of the form ‘ α is greater than 5’, where α is some expression that denotes the number nine:

25. $\exists\alpha [\Delta(\alpha, \text{nine}) \wedge \text{Hegel } \mathbf{B} (\text{‘}\alpha \text{ is greater than five’})]$

Troubles with Exportation

The trouble with the solution so far is that such notional belief attributions are too easy to come by. The idea of relational belief is that it is supposed to relate a believer to an **object** about which the believer holds a belief. But (25) above is too weak to do this.

The problem arises in the implicative rule that Quine calls “exportation,” viz., from:

(26) Ralph **B** ‘the man in the brown hat is a spy’

infer:

(29) Ralph **Bel** (‘ x is a spy’, the man in the brown hat)

Kaplan shows that this inference is invalid, by means of the example at (38) – (41) on p. 406-7. Let us suppose that Ralph believes that there are spies, that is:

(38) Ralph **B** “ $\exists y$ y is a spy”

Let us also suppose that Ralph believes that no two spies have the same height. It would then seem to follow that Ralph holds the following notional belief:

(39) Ralph **B** “the shortest spy is a spy”

But (39) leads by exportation to:

(40) Ralph **Bel** (“ x is a spy,” the shortest spy)

and (40) leads by **EG** to:

(41) $\exists y$ Ralph **Bel** (“ x is a spy,” y)

But, as Kaplan says, the fact (38) from which we deduced (41) is not something that “would interest the F.B.I.” Exportation, as currently construed, has blurred the “vast difference” between notional and relational belief (cf. p. 407). So exportation must be rejected.

The problem is that Kaplan's first proposed ("Fregean") version of **Bel** expressed in terms of **B** has the unfortunate result of justifying exportation. For the proposed "notional" version of (29) is:

$$(31) \exists \alpha [\Delta(\alpha, \text{the man in the brown hat}) \wedge \text{Ralph } \mathbf{B} [\alpha \text{ is a spy}]]$$

But (31) follows from (26) plus the "nearly analytic truth":

$$\Delta(\text{'the man in the brown hat'}, \text{the man in the brown hat}).$$

Vivid Names

Kaplan's solution is to use the notion of a *vivid* name and the allied notion of a name being *of* an object for someone. Using these notions, he defines what it is for a name to **represent** an object to a person. Both *vividness* and *ofness* of names are explained in terms of analogous features of pictures.

'Of'

This is a causal, genetic, concept. For a name to be *of* an object for a user, that object must play an appropriate causal role in the user's acquisition and use of the name.

'Vivid'

The definition here is murkier. A vivid name of x for Ralph is "the conglomeration of images, names, and partial descriptions which Ralph employs to bring x before his mind" (p. 411). (It is related to the resemblance of a picture to what it's a picture of, but Kaplan denies that it necessarily involves resemblance.)

'Represents'

A name represents an object for a person if it denotes the object, is *of* the object, and is (sufficiently) vivid. Kaplan's definition of "**R**(α , x , Ralph)" is on p. 413, top left:

α represents x to Ralph if and only if (i) α denotes x , (ii) α is a name *of* x for Ralph, and (iii) α is (sufficiently) vivid.

Relational Belief and Quantifying In

Armed with this definition, Kaplan gives his final version of the relational sense of 'belief'—a sentence employing '**B**' that gives an acceptable analysis of 'Ralph believes, of Ortcutt, that he is a spy', i.e., of 'Ralph **Bel** (' x is a spy', Ortcutt)':

$$(44) \exists \alpha [\mathbf{R}(\alpha, \text{Ortcutt}, \text{Ralph}) \& \text{Ralph } \mathbf{B} [\alpha \text{ is a spy}]]$$

Presumably, although both \mathbf{R} (‘the man in the brown hat’, Orcutt, Ralph) and \mathbf{R} (‘the man seen at the beach’, Orcutt, Ralph), it is only when $\alpha =$ ‘the man in the brown hat’ that we have an instance of (44) that is true.

We can now see when quantifying in is legitimate and when it is not.

When we can quantify in

When we have a sentence like (44), we can quantify over ‘Orcutt’, since its occurrence there is purely referential:

(44a) $\exists y \exists \alpha [\mathbf{R}(\alpha, y, \text{Ralph}) \ \& \ \text{Ralph } \mathbf{B} \text{ ‘}\alpha \text{ is a spy’}]$

(44a) says that there is someone (represented to Ralph by some name or description), whom Ralph believes (under that name or description) to be a spy. And indeed there is such a person, viz., Orcutt, represented to Ralph by the description ‘the man in the brown hat’.

And we can obtain (44) from the notional belief:

(30) $\text{Ralph } \mathbf{B} \text{ ‘the man in the brown hat is a spy’}$

because the condition that ‘the man in the brown hat’ should *represent* someone to Ralph is satisfied. That is, because we have:

\mathbf{R} (‘the man in the brown hat’, Orcutt, Ralph)

When we can’t quantify in

Without a relational belief ascription like (44), we cannot quantify in. Consider a case where we can’t quantify in. From the notional belief ascription:

(39) $\text{Ralph } \mathbf{B} \text{ ‘the shortest spy is a spy’}$.

we cannot obtain the relational belief ascription:

(39a) $\exists \alpha [\mathbf{R}(\alpha, \text{the shortest spy}, \text{Ralph}) \ \& \ \text{Ralph } \mathbf{B} \text{ ‘}\alpha \text{ is a spy’}]$

because the description ‘the shortest spy’ does not *represent* anyone to Ralph. That is:

$\neg \exists x \mathbf{R}$ (‘the shortest spy’, x , Ralph)

[Note that (39a) might still be **true**. (Suppose that a certain man Ralph suspects of being a spy—perhaps a man he saw seated on the 72 bus—happens, unbeknownst to Ralph, to be the shortest spy.) So Ralph is suitably *en rapport* with the man who is the shortest spy to have beliefs **of** that man, but not **under that description**. The point is that (39a) does not **follow** from (39).]

So quantifying in is possible for relational belief ascriptions, and these are obtainable from notional belief ascriptions only when the name or description in the notional belief ascription *represents* the object quantified over.

Kaplan's Retraction

In “Dthat,” Kaplan backs away from the idea that the most fundamental cases of relational belief (believing something **of** an object) involve situations where the believer is *en rapport* with (directly acquainted with) the object.

The argument seems to be based on his studies of demonstratives, in particular, the semantics of ‘dthat’ (p. 354).

Thus, he argues that I can assert something *of* the first child to be born in the 21st century by referring to him as “Dthat [‘the first child to be born in the 21st century’].”

I am not convinced. Kaplan’s move here seems like a sleight of hand that argues against taking ‘dthat’ seriously as a way of making a designator rigid in any epistemologically interesting sense.

On the other hand, it does seem to me that I can assert or believe things of someone (myself, or someone else) using an indexical (‘I’, ‘you’) which is relational (that is, I have a propositional attitude toward a singular proposition) without having a vivid name for the object of my assertion or belief.

E.g., I am an amnesiac who asserts, of himself, that he is hungry by using the sentence “I am hungry.” Or, I believe something about a person I am speaking to over the telephone by thinking, to myself, “You sound like Lauren Bacall.” I have no vivid name, as far as I can tell, for either of these objects of my assertion or belief. But I still believe singular propositions of which they are constituents, and have relational beliefs with respect to them.