Otto said that I am a fool.
Sententialism, Indexicals and Kaplanian Monsters

Giulia Felappi

Abstract According to sententialism,

(1) Otto said that I am a fool

expresses the holding of a relation between Otto and the sentence 'I am a fool'. Sententialism is generally considered doomed but I will show that a suitably developed sententialist account can surmount the many objections that have been raised. I will also show how important it is to have a fairer attitude toward sententialism. For if sententialist accounts are recognised as real options, it should also be recognised that the conclusion, drawn by many, that sentences such as (1) force us to introduce Kaplanian monsters, is unwarranted.

We can divide semantic theories for sentences such as

(1) Otto said that David is a fool
(2) Otto believes that David is a fool

into two main categories: propositionalist and sententialist accounts. According to propositionalism, in (1) and (2) the proposition *that David is a fool* is denoted and the sentences express[1] the holding of a relation between Otto and such a proposition (and maybe something else). Sentence (1), for example, is traditionally taken to be true iff the content of Otto's saying is the proposition *that David is a fool.* According to sententialism, instead, in (1) and (2) the sentence 'David is a fool' is denoted and the sentences express a relation between Otto and the sentence 'David is a fool'. Because sententialism takes sentences such as (1) to relate subjects to sentences, it is sometimes described as the account according to which reports like (1) are to be taken as on a par with direct speech reports. Prior, for example, characterized sententialism in this way (1971, 61) and maintained that 'nothing could be more ... erroneous' than treating sentences such as (1) as in accordance with his characterization of sententialism. But this is a misleading characterization of sententialism. It is true that according to sententialism 'that David is a fool' as it occurs in (1) and 'David is a fool' as it occurs in

(3) Otto said: 'David is a fool'

are co-denotational. But this does not mean that sententialists are forced to hold that (1) expresses what (3) does. For, sententialists maintain, 'to say' contribute different relations in (1) and (3). Sententialists, together with propositionalists, take the 'to say' of direct discourse to be concerned with what words someone uttered. But as it occurs in (1), 'to say' is instead concerned with the content of something someone said. While propositionalists take the second relatum in these cases to be such a content, sententialists take the relatum to be a sentence in this case as well. Why are we mentioning a sentence in (1) then and what is 'to say' contributing as it occurs in (1)? The answer, common to the ways in which Davidson (1968, 140), Higginbotham (2006, 102-3) and Matthews (2007, 223) saw things, is that (1), for example, is true iff Otto is related to 'David is a fool' in virtue of having uttered something that can be *represented* via 'David is a fool', something that *samesays* 'David is a fool', something that *matches in content* 'David is a fool'. Since it is intuitive to think that two sentences stand in the representation, samesay, or match in content relations iff, to use the propositionalist jargon, they express the same proposition, propositionalists and sententialists might agree on the truth-conditions of sentences such as (1) and (2). Still, the two accounts are importantly different and incompatible. For according to propositionalism in (1) and (2) a proposition is denoted, while for sententialists it is a sentence that is denoted and sentences and propositions are different kind of objects. While sentences *have* meanings, propositions *are* meanings and in the case of 'David is a fool' the proposition *that David is a fool* is usually taken to be the meaning that the sentence has.

Some think that we can take 'that David is a fool', as it occurs in sentences such as (1) and (2), to denote both a sentence and a proposition (Fiengo & May 2006), but sententialism according to which 'that David is a fool' merely denotes a sentence is generally considered doomed.[2] But, as I will show, this is an unfair attitude. After having shown that many objections to sententialism are either off the mark or inconclusive, I will focus on another less discussed objection that I take to be the most serious problem for sententialist accounts. The objection concerns reports in which indexicals occur, such as

(4) Otto said that I am a fool.

I will argue that a suitably developed sententialist account can solve the objection by relying on what the purpose is of denoting a sentence in such a context.

Having shown that sententialism is a real contender to propositionalism, I will then discuss indexicals and monsters. Famously, Kaplan held that monsters do not play a role in English so that, for example, in every context I use 'I', it denotes me (1988, 510). Some have taken reports like (4) to show either that we have to introduce monsters (Anand & Nevins 2004; Schlenker 2003; Shklovsky & Sudo 2014), or at least that we have good reasons for introducing them (Israel & Perry 1996; Maier 2016; Santorio 2012). I will show that the discussion on monsters shows how important it is to have a fairer attitude toward

sententialism. For if we recognise that sententialist accounts are a real option, we should recognise that the conclusion that sentences such as (4) force us to introduce monsters is unwarranted.

1. Some off-the-mark or inconclusive objections

Sententialist accounts have been widely seen as 'more of a curiosity than a contender' (Burge 1980, 57) to propositionalist accounts, which are in fact 'widespread and in some circles orthodox' (Crane 2013, 108). So much so that in the current literature sententialism is usually not even discussed, or is merely mentioned to then quickly discard it. At first glance, sententialism seems obviously incorrect because, as Speaks puts it,

> [w]ere this theory true, then the truth of "Violet believes that the sky is blue" would entail that Violet stands in the belief relation to the sentence, "The sky is blue." But this ascription could be true even if Violet were a monolingual French speaker who stood in no special relation at all to this sentence—and indeed could be true even if Violet spoke no language at all (2014, 12)

Speaks's point becomes even more evident when we consider toddlers and puppies: my cat believes that I will feed her in a second, but clearly she does not (and never will) master a language. On further reflection, though, it becomes clear that this objection does not really hit all sententialist accounts. There are various sententialist accounts, which differ in important respects. They all share the thesis that in

(2) Otto believes that David is a fool,

the sentence 'David is a fool' is denoted, but this is the end of the agreement. Sententialist, for example, are not compelled to accept the thesis that if (2) is true then 'David is a fool' is literally in Otto's belief box, or that then Otto is disposed to assent to it. This was Carnap's view in 1947, but in fact Carnap himself quickly changed his mind (1954), while remaining a sententialist. Now, nobody would hold that we cannot stand in a relation to a book unless we read it or at least knew it existed. For example, we can stand in a relation to a book because although we are not aware of this, we resemble one of its characters. Similarly, sententialists can hold that we can stand in a relation with a sentence even if we do not understand it, or would never utter it, exactly as we can say that a map *says* that Houston is further South than San Diego even if the map does not have sentences written on it (Grandy 1986, 323). Thus we cannot simply discard all sententialist accounts because you can believe (or fear, or say, etc.) that the sky is blue even though you do not speak English.

Another misconception of sententialism takes it to be committed to a semantic account that gets rid of propositions across the board (Davidson 1968, 136). Admittedly, sententialism

has been originally suggested by authors who wanted to avoid propositions, which were taken to be *creatures of the darkness* (Quine 1956, 180). But it is in fact perfectly coherent to hold, for example, that we need propositions in semantics, while at the same time to be sententialist about sentences such as (2). For example, one might maintain, for reasons independent from reports of saying, belief, etc., that co-referential names should be taken to have the same meaning. Then one might urge that we nonetheless need to distinguish what sentences

(5) David believes that Hesperus is a planet
(6) David believes that Phosphorus is a planet

express and hold that sententialism is the best way to obtain such a result. For although the meaning of the two names is the same, the names are indeed different and on that basis, (5) and (6) might then somehow be distinguished in meaning. We do not need here to understand what proper names mean, or whether we want (5) and (6) to have different meanings. The point is that one might suggest a sententialist treatment of sentences such as (5) and (6) because one thinks that sentences do something that propositions cannot do, and this while admitting the existence of entities of both kinds. Thus sententialism cannot be criticised because, as Bach puts it,

> the quotationalist-sententialist view seems to have been motivated by an aversion to propositions. It seems to me, though, that philosophy of language should not let metaphysical considerations so easily trump semantic ones, if only because a language might have bad metaphysics built into it. (1997, 218)

While this might well be an objection to motivating sententialism on the basis of metaphysics, and then an objection to Quine's sententialism, it is not an objection to all sententialist accounts, and in fact sententialists can perfectly agree with Bach, and motivate sententialism on different grounds, as we just saw.

A further off-the-mark objection is to hold that no sententialist account can be correct because in order to account for propositional attitude sentences and the attitudes those sentences talk about we need mental notions, and this is incompatible with sententialism. For example, Schiffer holds that the 'sententialist can't appeal to referring, since that relation essentially involves propositional attitudes, most notably intending' (2003, 309). But why can sententialists not appeal to intentions? Sententialism is not committed to 'doing away at a stroke with all that is non-sentential' (Higginbotham 2006, 113) and while this objection might constitute a serious issue for the old days sententialists who combined their semantics with behaviourism, it is not an objection to sententialism as such. Just as sententialist accounts can and should be neutral on metaphysical issues, so they can and should be neutral on issues in philosophy of mind.

Having shown that some common objections are in fact misplaced, because they concern not sententialism as such, but some specific historical versions of it, we can then move to an objection that is instead on the mark, and that is the main reason why many discard sententialist accounts, i.e. the famous *Church translation argument*, firstly suggested by Church (1950) and then revamped by Schiffer more recently (2003, 47). Roughly, the problem is the following: take the following sentences

(2) Otto believes that David is a fool,
(7) Otto believes 'David is a fool',
(8) Otto crede che David sia un pazzo,
(9) Otto crede 'David è un pazzo'.

If sententialism is true, (7) is an *analysis* of (2) and (9) is an *analysis* of (8). Moreover, (8) is a *translation* of (2) into Italian. But then since both analysis and translation preserve what the sentences undergoing translation or analysis express, (7) and (9) would have to be translations of each other, but they clearly are not: in (7) an English sentence is denoted, while in (9) an Italian one is. Since it is certainly the case that (8) is a translation of (2) in Italian and that translation and analysis preserve what is expressed, we should conclude that sententialism is false.

Many accepted this argument and its conclusion, but it is also true that many rejected it. In particular, sententialists have been urging that it is not in general true that translation preserves what the sentences undergoing translation express. First, it is a fact that 'translations of fiction and, equally, of historical narrative (including the Gospel) always translate even directly quoted dialogue' (Dummett 1981, 372). Moreover, even if we do not rely on 'literary indulgences' (Burge 1986, 195), but rather focus exclusively on translations that aim at preserving what is expressed, still it is not in general true that translation preserves what the sentences undergoing translation express. For example, as Hart (1970) and Burge (1978; 1986, 194-197) have highlighted, when the sentence to be translated is self-referential, it is not possible to preserve what the sentence expresses. Take

(10) This very utterance is true.

There is no translation of (10) that can preserve both denotations and self-reference. For example, the two options in Italian are

(11) L'enunciato (10) e' vero,
(12) Questo stesso enunciato e' vero.

Sentence (11) preserves the denotation to (10) but is not self-referential, while (12) is self-referential, but the Italian sentence (12) is denoted rather than the original (10). So, Church translation argument relies on a claim that is not in general true. Moreover, sententialists can urge, reports such as

(2) Otto believes that David is a fool

are themselves self-referential. For example, they might maintain that when we utter a report such as (2) we express not that Otto is related to a sentence, but to a sentence *as belonging to a certain language*. The specification of the language often remains unarticulated, because, as Church himself remarks, there is generally no reason why to state this explicitly when it is clear what the language is (1956, 4f8). What is this obvious language? The very language of (2). Thus, once fully articulated and using Church's jargon, according to sententialism (2) is to be analysed as expressing that Otto is related to 'David is a fool' *as belonging to the very language of (2)*. Another (compatible) way to detect self-reference as occurring in a report such as (2) is to see an utterance of (2) as to be analysed as expressing that Otto believes 'David is a fool' *as taken in the very context of the utterance of (2)* (Burge 1986, 195-196). One way or the other, sententialists can conclude, (2) is itself self-referential and, as shown by (10), we then cannot expect its translations to preserve all it expresses. Since this is needed for Church's argument to go through, the conclusion that sententialism is false is then resisted.

We do not need here to discuss the details of the translation argument, this sententialist rejection[3] or any of the other solutions that sententialists have been offering.[4] It is sufficient to note that since the argument involves notions that open new cans of worms, like *analysis*, *translation*, *denotation*, *sentence or utterance*, *language* and since we do not have independent obvious accounts of these notions, the argument is inconclusive.

Thus we cannot rely on the translation argument in order to assess sententialist accounts. In the next section, I will therefore consider another less discussed objection that, like Church's argument, is on the mark, but, unlike Church's argument, opens fewer issues.

2. Another objection

In order to see the objection, let us take the following reports:

(4) Otto said that I am a fool
(13) Otto said: 'I am a fool'.

It is a datum that, at least in normal cases, if I utter (4), it expresses or conveys that Otto said something about *me*, while (13) expresses or conveys that Otto said something about *himself*. But given that in accordance with sententialist accounts in both (4) and (13) 'I am a fool' is denoted, why is it that the two express or convey something different and why is it the case

that (4) expresses or conveys that Otto said something about *me*, while (13) expresses or conveys that Otto said something about *himself*, rather than the other way round, for example?

Sententialists really need to come up with an explanation here, because from the difference in the behaviour of indexicals one might conclude that in (4) the indexical (and so everything else) is not mentioned, contrary to sententialism.

But, as I will now show, sententialists can in fact come up with a satisfactory explanation, which involves three main steps. First, we will set indexicals aside and show what sententialists can say about what indirect speech reports express and convey. We will then be able to focus on the indexical occurring in (4). In the second step, we will see how sententialists can account for the fact that (4) conveys that Otto said something about me and maintain that 'I am a fool' as uttered by me does indeed samesay, match in content or represent what Otto said even though he of course did not use 'I', but rather a denotational device denoting me. Thirdly and finally, we will see that sententialists can explain why (4) and (13) convey something different even though, according to sententialism, in both the very same 'I am a fool' is denoted.

So, on to the first step. Sententialism is often characterised as the view according to which 'it is as though ["that"-clauses] were simultaneously used and mentioned' (Seymour 1992, 194), the view according to which 'that'-clauses 'play a double role' (Higginbotham 2006, 108). As Ludwig & Ray put it, there is a sense in which according to sententialism what follows the 'that' is used (1998, 146):

> We suggest that in that-clauses (and like contexts) we see ... a use of a sentence in another sentence where the containing sentence's truth value is not a function of the extensional properties of the contained sentence but in which the contained sentence must be understood by the auditor in order for him to understand the containing sentence. That the sentence in a that-clause is used, in this sense, requires the auditor to understand it in order to understand fully the containing sentence. (Ludwig & Ray 1998, 146)

Put differently, according to sententialism the practice of indirect reports relies on the sentence following the 'that' to be understood by the audience and in this sense such a sentence is used. Different sententialist accounts differ on whether this requirement on understanding is part of what sentences such as

(1) Otto said that David is a fool
(4) Otto said that I am a fool

express, or is instead due to something else. Ludwig, for example, maintains that '[t]he expression "that the earth moves" refers to a sentence but its *semantic function* is not exhausted

by the fact that it refers to "the earth moves" ... one cannot understand the noun phrase "that the earth moves" unless one understands "the earth moves"' (2014, 744. My emphasis). But this is not a claim that sententialism is necessarily to be combined with and we do not need to enter into these details to see and address our objection. What matters is that sententialism can surely hold that when we utter a sentence such as (1) our audience will typically understand the denoted sentence 'David is a fool'. This is not a peculiar phenomenon that sententialists need to invent, but rather quite a general phenomenon about speakers, the phenomenon that the sententialist Meckler puts as follows: '[i]t is a long established habit of human beings to pluck out the meanings of phrases, whatever they may be, and devour them willy-nilly' (1956: 325. See also Smith 2009, 183). For example, in this very context I am now mentioning the sentence 'David Kaplan is nice'. I bet that you nonetheless know whom the sentence is about. Still, I did not denote Kaplan. Moreover, as Meckler says, we really cannot help it. Try not to understand while I am now merely mentioning 'Elephants dressed in pink t-shirts are dancing around my office'. If I ask you what colour the t-shirts of my elephants are you know that. We normally do and typically cannot but understand mentions of phrases and sentences belonging to (those fragments of) languages we are speakers of, and in reports such as (1) and (4) the sentences denoted typically belong to the very language of the reports, a language we are speakers of. Given this general phenomenon, we can say a bit more about the notion of representation sententialists rely on in holding that the sentence denoted represents what Otto said or believes. Representation is a delicate, context-dependent issue, and there are various reasons why something can or cannot be taken, in a certain context, to represent something else. Moreover, it is not really obvious that a definition of representation can be provided. But this, we should note, should not be taken as an objection to sententialism. As McDowell (1980, 83-4) and Schiffer, one of the fiercest critics of sententialism, remark, this would be a bad objection. For, in Schiffer's words,

> for [sententialism] relies on no such notion. On [sententialism], 'says' of indirect discourse is a *semantically primitive* predicate that relates a person to a [sentence], and it is further consistent with this theory to hold that the relation expressed is not strictly definable. (1987, 131. modified to match the terminology used here)

Still, something can be said about representation, in light of the general phenomenon just highlighted. Sententialism is the view that when in English we pick a sentence to represent an utterance, as in the case of (1) and (4), we do not match the two randomly, or maybe because of their length. What would the point be of choosing the sentence 'Flamingos fly' in order to represent an utterance about David being a fool, when we can choose a sentence about David and being foolish? It is true that according to sententialism in (1) 'David is a fool' is mentioned. But clearly this form of mentioning is iconic (Recanati 2000, 14), i.e. the sentence quoted is displayed. Since the sentence quoted typically belongs to a language we

understand and it is displayed, it is there in the context to be understood by the audience. Moreover, it is not just that we can understand the displayed sentence if we ever want to, it is a fact about us as speakers that in normal cases we cannot but understand it. From the sententialist point of view, then, in natural languages such as English, in denoting 'David is a fool' to represent Otto's saying, we maximise the information provided by our representation by relying (whether this is part of the semantic function of 'that'-clauses or not) also on the fact that the audience will typically understand the sentence. Since the audience will pluck out the meanings, in denoting 'David is a fool' we can then convey to them what Otto's saying is about, i.e. about David and being foolish, even though we did not denote David.

Having seen what sententialists can say concerning what belief and indirect speech reports express and convey, we can now move to the second step and then focus on the indexical occurring in

(4) Otto said that I am a fool.

Indexicals raise two further questions that sententialists need to answer. First, why is it that, at least in normal cases, if I utter (4), it expresses or conveys that Otto said something about *me*? Second, and relatedly, according to sententialism, for (4) to be true, 'I am a fool' should samesay, match in content, represent something Otto said. But in his saying relevant to the truth of (4), Otto did not use 'I', but rather a denotational device denoting me. So how can my 'I am a fool' samesay, match in content, represent Otto's saying?

Let start from the first question. According to sententialism, 'I', as it occurs in (4), does not denote me or Otto but surely, *at the level of what is conveyed*, it conveys me. Why is this the case? Burge held that there is a *convention* such that with indirect reports expressions 'are to be understood as they would be understood if they were used' (1978, 146. See also Burge 1986, 200; Higginbotham 2006, 108; Ludwig and Ray 1998, 147). But why do we have such a convention, if we speak about convention? With indirect reports such as (4) we do not try to repeat Otto's words, we do not pretend to be Otto, but we try to *represent* what he said. We then have some liberty here in choosing our representative sentence. Normally, 'I', as used by me, denotes me. It should be granted that, as many have remarked, it is not obvious that in every single context in which I use 'I', it denotes me. For example, we have the so-called *answering machine paradox*: let us suppose that you use a tape of me reading a message on your answerphone. Clearly, it does not seem that every time the answering machine goes on it is said that I am not in your house (Corazza, Fish, Gorvett 2002, 12-3). Finding other cases is only a matter of imagination. Still, even if these were genuine cases in which I use 'I' and it does not denote me, they would anyway surely be cases of deviations from the norm (Predelli 2003, 131), marginal and isolated cases (Recanati 2000, 174), and it goes without saying that in most of the cases the contextual agent is the speaker (Corazza, Fish, Gorvett 2002, 14). Moreover, as well as being marginal, there is also a reason why in these examples we should

depart from the norm. As Predelli (2004, 15) remarks, there is an undeniable supremacy of the parameters in the context of utterance in normal situations, so that strong motivations are required in order to raise to salience a context distinct from the context of utterance. In order to depart from the norm that 'I' as used by me denotes me, we need something that makes it worth it. Since with indirect reports such as (4) we have some liberty in choosing our representative sentence, there is no reason to deviate from the norm concerning 'I' at the level of what is conveyed, and this is then what neither the speaker nor the audience do. To understand 'I' denoted in indirect reports relative to the speaker's context is in line with how 'I' usually works and then more convenient. We have no reason to depart from this convenience, and so we do not depart from it. To put it differently, of course we can imagine a language in which we denote sentences in which 'I' occurs in order to represent that Otto said something about himself, or you, or flamingos for that matter, and we will go back to this in the next section, but this is not the way English works.

Having seen why it is the case that, *at the level of what is conveyed*, 'I' as it occurs in (4) conveys me, we can then address the second question that indexicals occurring in sentences such as (4) pose to sententialism. According to sententialism, (4) is true iff 'I am a fool' samesays, matches in content or represents something Otto said. Now, of course, of Otto's sayings the one that makes (4) true is such that Otto did not use 'I', but rather a denotational device denoting me. So how can 'I am a fool' samesay, match in content or represent Otto's saying? Sententialists can maintain that the samesaying, matching in content or representing relation we employ in indirect reports reflects our practice of no departure from the convenience of understanding 'I' denoted in indirect reports relative to the speaker's context. The relation, as used by speakers in indirect reports, in reflecting such a practice, is then context-dependent in the following way: in the context of my utterance of (4), 'I am a fool' samesays, matches in content, represents something Otto said because 'I am a fool' *as uttered by me in the context of uttering (4)* samesays, matches in content, represents something Otto said. Suppose Otto used 'That individual'. My 'I am a fool' *as uttered by me in the context of uttering (4)* samesays, matches in content, represents something Otto said because it samesays, matches in content, represents 'That individual is a fool' *as uttered by Otto in his context of utterance*, a context in which 'that individual' denotes me.[5]

Thus sententialists can specify the samesaying, matching in content, representing relation employed by speakers in indirect report in such a way that the right sentences, relative to their context of utterance, match in content. Sententialists can moreover explain that such specification reflects our general practices concerning indexicals. But in order to fully address the objection, we still need to show how sententialism can explain why

(4) Otto said that I am a fool

(13) Otto said: 'I am a fool'

convey something different even though in both the very same 'I am a fool' is denoted. As we saw in the first step, according to sententialism, the practice of indirect speech reports relies on the understanding, on the side of the audience, of the sentence denoted. Direct speech reports, instead, concerns the words uttered, not the content, and so sententialists can maintain that in the case of direct reports, such as (13), the practice does not rely on such understanding (Ludwig 2014, 744) and in fact we can even report nonsense, as in

(14) Otto said: 'All mimsy were the borogroves'.

Still, also in the case of a direct speech report, words will be displayed and then be ready to be devoured by the hearer if sensical and if belonging to (a fragment of) a language the hearer is a speaker of.[6] While the practice on indirect reports relies on the hearer understanding the sentence denoted, in the case of direct reports the understanding, if possible, is a bonus. Still, such understanding, if possible, is there. Although as it occurs in a direct report such as (13), 'I' does not denote me or Otto, since it is mentioned, sententialists, propositionalists and everybody should grant, *at the level of what is conveyed*, we have a deviation from the norm as even if I utter (13), 'I' conveys Otto, not me. So why do we have this deviation with direct reports? We have it because it is worth it: when we use a direct speech report such as (13), we talk as surrogate-speakers and put ourselves into somebody's shoes and repeat what she said. If she uttered 'I', we repeat and we utter 'I'. The devouring hearer knows that the aim of (13) is to report the words used by Otto and then while she willy-nilly interprets the mentioned sentence she will have conveyed that, since Otto uttered the first personal pronoun, he then uttered something about himself. So while in indirect reports we respect, *at the level of what is conveyed*, the norm for 'I' because we take it to be unnecessary and then not worth it to deviate from it, with direct speech reports, instead, we take a deviation *at the level of what is conveyed* to be worth it. This explains the difference in the behaviour of indexicals, at the level of what is conveyed, in the two contexts.

Kaplan urged:

> If we *mention* the indexical rather than *use* it, we can, of course, operate directly on it. Carnap once pointed out to me how important the difference between direct and indirect quotation is in
>
> Otto said "I am a fool"
>
> Otto said that I am a fool (1988, 510-1)

According to sententialism, in both reports the indexical is mentioned and both reports will typically lead to an understanding of the sentence following 'said'. But, for the reasons provided, only in the practice of indirect reports, the sentence 'I am a fool' is understood by the audience as if it were used by the reporter, so that in this particular sense, only in the

indirect report is 'I am a fool' used by the reporter. Hence sententialism can account for the important difference between direct and indirect reports. Sentences such as (4) and (13) then do not show that in indirect reports indexicals are not mentioned and sententialism still stands.[7]

3. Monsters?

Reports in which indexicals occur, such as

(4) Otto said that I am a fool,

are interesting not just in order to understand what the words following the 'that' express and more specifically whether all sententialist accounts are doomed, but also in order to understand how indexicals behave more generally. In fact, many have taken reports like (4) to show that we have to introduce Kaplanian monsters. As I will show in this section, the discussion on monsters shows how important it is to have a fairer attitude toward sententialism. For if we take sententialist accounts into account, we should recognise that the conclusion that we need to introduce monsters is unwarranted.

Before that, let us briefly and very informally remind ourselves what monsters are and why Kaplan famously maintains that they do not play a role in English. Take

(15) In some contexts it is true that the most beautiful flamingo is blue.

At least on one of the readings of (15), in order to evaluate whether it is true, we need to understand whether there are contexts in which the colour of what is the most beautiful flamingo *in that context* is blue. Now take instead

(16) In some contexts it is true that I am not tired now.

'I' (and 'now') obviously picks out me (and the time of utterance), the speaker of the actual context of utterance, despite the presence of 'in some contexts'. Kaplan (1988) then concluded that indexicals are different from definite descriptions, in that they are directly referential, i.e. what the indexical denotes, when occurring in a sentence uttered in a certain context, is not mediated by the content of the sentence in that context. Their content is simply their denotation, and the operator 'in some contexts' operates after the content-determining features of the context have already been applied and then the application of the operator is unable to make any change to the content. In other words, for Kaplan no matter in the scope of what operator 'I' occurs, if I use 'I' to denote a subject, it always denotes me and then operators that shift the content of indexicals, i.e., as he says, that 'attempt to operate on context' (1988, 510),

are, although conceivable, monstrous, and they are not present in English and cannot be added to it.

A lot is at stake here, such as the role of context in establishing content, whether indexicals are directly referential and whether there are directly referential terms in general. Therefore it is no surprise that Kaplan's prohibition on monsters received great attention and many came up with alleged counterexamples. Many considered reports such as

(4) Otto said that I am a fool

and concluded that they force us to introduce monsters (Anand & Nevins 2004; Schlenker 2003; Shklovsky & Sudo 2014), or at least concluded more mildly that if there are monsters at all, then reports like (4) are where monsters can be found (Israel & Perry 1996; Maier 2016; Santorio 2012). For suppose that the situation to be reported is

(13) Otto said: 'I am a fool'.

While in English we would use something like

(17) Otto said that he (he himself; he*) is a fool,

in some languages, such as Amharic, we would use something whose literal translation is (4).[8] Thus if I utter the Amharic literal translation of (4), even though I am uttering a first personal pronoun, I am expressing or conveying that Otto said something about Otto, not me. The reasoning then goes as follows. Premise 1: the pronoun denotes Otto in the Amharic case; Premise 2: in the Amharic case, the parameter with respect to which the pronoun is to be evaluated is not the context of utterance, because I uttered the pronoun, but the pronoun denotes Otto; Premise 3: the Amharic pronoun behaves perfectly like the English one outside of reports like (4), for example because in the context of 'It happens (to me/that I/etc.)' the Amharic first personal pronoun uttered by me always denotes me; Conclusion: the culprit should be the speech and attitude predicates occurring in the reports, which are then to be taken as a particular kind of monsters, i.e. *context shifters* (Predelli 2014, 390-1; Rabern 2013, 401), which systematically shift the context with regard to which the used indexicals falling within their scopes are to be evaluated.

The reasoning that leads to taking predicates like 'to believe', 'to say', etc. to be monstrous, then, relies on the thesis, in Premise 1 above, that the pronoun denotes Otto in the Amharic indirect speech report. But this thesis is true only if all sententialist accounts of indirect speech reports are incorrect. As we saw in the previous sections, although sententialist accounts might have a bad reputation, it is not obvious that they are all incorrect. The authors who conclude that predicates occurring in the reports are monsters generally do not even

consider sententialism. The only author who mentions sententialism explicitly is Schlenker, who, very briefly, holds that his conclusion that in the reports context shifters occur is drawn

> on the assumption that these should be analyzed in modal terms to begin with, that is, as a sort of (implicit) quantification over possible worlds (*rather than in quotational terms, for instance; I do not discuss the latter possibility in this paper*) (2003, 44. My emphasis)

But it does not seem that we can simply assume that sententialist accounts are not correct. For if sententialism is the correct account of indirect reports of saying, belief, etc., then in the Amharic case the indexical denotes neither Otto or me, or flamingos for that matter, but a linguistic item. This, crucially, is perfectly compatible with the thesis that the predicates occurring in those reports are *not* context shifters. While prohibiting monsters, Kaplan himself in fact remarks that

> Operators which attempt to meddle with character, I call monsters. I claim that none can be expressed in English (without sneaking in a quotation device). If they stay in the metalanguage and confine their attention to sentences as in
>
> In some contexts "I am not tired now" is true
>
> they are rendered harmless (1988, 510-1)

To use Kaplan's words, if the sententialist account of the Amharic report is correct, then the indexical occurring in it is *harmless*. As we saw, there is a sense in which sentences occurring in indirect reports are used according to sententialism. But sentences are used only in the sense in which the audience understand them. Pronouns, as they occur in 'that'-clauses occurring in English or Amharic reports, do not denote either me or Otto. Even if there are shifts in the context of interpretation for indexicals occurring in 'that'-clauses, this does not amount to a context shifting operator, because the 'that'-clause denotes a sentence, and it is the sentence as denoted which is then interpreted relative to a shifted context. If sententialism is right, reports in Amharic are then on a par with

(18) In some contexts 'I am not tired now' is true,

i.e. cases in which a denoted sentence is interpreted relative to a context different from the context of utterance. Exactly as the shift in (18) is harmless, so for sententialism is the one in Amharic indirect reports.

Thus we cannot simply assume that sententialist accounts are incorrect, and then conclude that monsters occur, because the correctness of sententialism is the very correctness of the thesis that only harmless 'I's do not denote the speaker.

While they do not even consider sententialist accounts, the other authors who conclude that predicates occurring in the reports are monsters, have arguments against taking the Amharic and similar cases to be cases of direct speech reports, though (Anand & Nevins 2004, 22-3; Maier 2016, 372-3; Schlenker 2003, 68-9; Shklovsky & Sudo 2014, 384-5). [9] It is not clear whether they simply do not discuss sententialist accounts or they instead think that the arguments against the Amharic and similar cases being cases of direct speech reports also show that sententialist accounts cannot be correct. Either way, there is a mistake. As just seen, discussing sententialist accounts is crucial and furthermore, as we saw in the previous sections, it is not the case that they are forced to take indirect speech reports as direct speech reports. [10]

Then, we have not ruled out a sententialist account of the Amharic and similar cases, and we cannot assume that as it occurs in them, the pronoun denotes Otto, as in accordance with Premise 1 above.[11]

A question naturally arises: Why is it the case that, at the level of what is conveyed, the English

(4) Otto said that I am a fool

is such that it conveys that Otto said something about me, while its counterpart in other languages instead conveys that Otto said something about himself? Put differently, why is it that speakers of English interpret the sentence denoted in reports relative to the utterer of the report, so that 'I' conveys me if I utter a report, while speakers of Amharic interpret the denoted sentence relative to the subject of the report, so that as it occurs in the Amharic counterpart of (4) 'I' conveys Otto? This is surely an interesting question, but it does not impinge on what pronouns denote as they occur in reports, on whether there are context shifters. From the sententialist point of view, the fact that in some languages we might denote the first personal pronoun to convey that Otto said something about me, while in others to convey that Otto said something about himself, does not impinge on what the pronouns denote, since in both cases the pronouns just denote themselves.

Conclusion

The fact that those authors who suggest a monstrous treatment of reports such as

(4) Otto said that I am a fool

either do not even consider sententialism or just state that they will avoid discussing it shows how bad sententialism's reputation is. In this paper I aimed, first, at showing that this bad reputation is unfair. Sententialism needs to be considered not as a curiosity but as a real contender to propositionalism. In particular, sententialist accounts can explain why my 'I am a fool' can samesay, match in content or represent a saying of Otto about me even though he of

course did not use 'I'; can detect a difference between direct and indirect speech reports; and can provide an explanation of why indexicals occurring in reports of the two kinds convey (even though they do not denote) different things.

We moreover saw that, if a sententialist account of (4) is correct, reports such as (4) are actually the first and foremost context in which you will never find a monster, because what follows the predicates is harmlessly concealed as if it occurred in quotation marks. I did not show that (4) *should* be accounted for as in accordance with a sententialist account, I merely showed that we have not ruled out sententialist accounts, so that we cannot easily conclude that in those reports monsters occur. Moreover, I did not take any stance on alleged monstrous cases other than reports like those above. Thus we did not reach any positive conclusion on monsters in general. Still, were it true that if monsters can be found, they can first and foremost be found in reports (Israel & Perry, 1996, 316), and were a sententialist account of reports correct, then we would have good reasons to think that there are no monsters in general. Thus we did reach the following conclusion: if you have independent reasons to prohibit monsters, quite surprisingly indexicals might actually be a reason *in favour of* accounting for indirect reports in sententialist terms, rather than one *against* doing so.[12]

Department of Philosophy
University of Southampton

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[1] I use *denotation* for the relation that a singular term bears to its worldly correlate, in order to be neutral and thus to allow that different expressions (such as proper names and definite descriptions) may function in different ways while ultimately designating the same thing. I use *to express* for the semantic relation that a sentence or an utterance of a sentence bears to its meaning. I will instead use *to convey* for the relation that a sentence or an utterance of a sentence bears to anything that goes beyond its semantic meaning. These are purely terminological choices, and should be taken to carry no substantive theory. Moreover, for ease, when nothing relies on that, I will speak simply of sentences and not of pairs of sentences or clauses and contextual factors or indexes, or of utterances.

[2] On propositionalism being the standard theory, see Schiffer 2003, 12-4.

[3] For this solution and the details, see Burge 1978; Burge 1986, 194-197; Higginbotham 1995, 123-125; 2006, 107-110; Ludwig 2014, 745; Ludwig & Ray 1998, 144-147; 161f.34.

[4] Discussions of the various other versions of the argument, its rejections and defences can be found in Anderson 1998, 138-143; Baldwin 1990, 197; Bealer 2002, 86; Carnap 1954; Cresswell 1980; Davidson 1963, 344-346; 1968, 135-136; Felappi 2014; Field 2001, 160-162; Geach 1957, 87-92; 1972, 167-169; Kripke 1979, 277, f. 25; 2008, 185-186; Leeds 1979; Lewy 1976, 64-66; Ludwig 2014; Meckler 1956, 325; Moore 1966, 132-149; Putnam 1954; Quine 1956, 187; 1960, 213-218; Rescher 1960, 93-94; Richard 1990, 162-173; Salmon 2007, 264-267; 2015; Scheffler 1954, 84-85; Schiffer 1987, 133-135; 2003, 47.

[5] Thanks to an anonymous referee for their suggestion concerning this point. It is worth noting that taking the samesaying, matching in content or representing relation to be context-dependent in the way specified squares nicely why the solution to Church translation argument presented in §1.

[6] This aligns with the fact that we have direct reports such as 'Caesar said, "I came, I saw, I conquered"', where the words mentioned are of course not those Caesar uttered, but a literal translation of the Latin words Caesar uttered. In direct reports, 'to say', sententialists and propositionalists alike can still say, is here concerned with the words uttered, but since the words will nonetheless be understood if they belong to (a fragment of) a language known to the audience, it might be worth using words they will understand, to convey their meanings as a bonus.

[7] While usually 'that'-clauses are taken to be denotational devices, new attention has been paid to some old linguistic data (Prior 1971, 3-21) that have been taken to show that 'that'-clauses are not in fact denotational. I take King 2007, 153-5 to have successfully shown that the data can be perfectly accounted for while holding that 'that'-clauses do indeed denote something. Anyway, in the light of the criticism, the thesis defended here should be taken to be the following: if 'that'-clauses are denotational, then we should not jump to the conclusion that they (also) denote propositions.

[8] For the data see Anand, & Nevins 2004, 20-2; Maier 2016, 372-5; Schlenker 2003, 63-71; Shklovsky & Sudo 2014, 382. For an ingenious case within English, Santorio 2012, 393-4.

[9] It is disputable whether the Amharic and similar cases are genuinely not cases of direct speech reports (Davidson 2015, 500-2). Given this, the thesis advanced in this section is that even if they were indirect reports, still it is not obvious that they show something about monsters.

[10] Data seem to show also that the Amharic and similar cases are not cases of mixed quotation, as in 'Otto said that I am "a fool"' (Maier 2016, 374-5). There are various accounts of mixed quotation. Still, it is clear that sententialist accounts intuitively do not and are not forced to take indirect speech reports as cases of mixed quotation, so again these data are not sufficient to show that sententialist accounts of reports are ruled out.

[11] Davidson 2015, 509-13 maintains that, contrary to what Schleker 2017 holds, context shifters are not needed to account for sign languages and in particular for their so-called *action role shift*. If Davidson is right, then another alleged set of cases in favour of monsters can actually be explained away. Quite interestingly, Davidson holds that monsters are not needed because the apparent shifting pronoun is displayed. Thus she thinks that the behaviour of indexicals is to be explained in terms of something that is characteristic also of reports of saying and belief according to the sententialist account here sketched, i.e. iconicity. While preferring a monstrous treatment of reports, Maier 2016 interestingly provides a non-monstrous treatment of many other phenomena, all based on the idea that the allegedly monsters are to be explained away in terms of harmlessly mentioned indexicals, as are the indexicals occurring in reports according to sententialism.

[12] I have presented earlier versions of this material at the University of Manchester, at the University of Warsaw and at a research event in my department at Southampton. I have benefitted greatly from the feedback received on those occasions. I would also like to thank Stefano Predelli, Marco Santambrogio, Mark Textor, Lee Walters and two anonymous referees for this journal for their helpful comments and suggestions.