Seminar three
CUHK

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What we did and didn't do last time

- Spelt out how to think about the representation relation a bit more and which one is the representation relation for language
- Noted some lessons in the philosophy of mind from this (but did not cover teleonomy)
- Distinguished three questions about representation and reference as a preliminary to identifying the issue about the reference of names
- Didn't: i) cover teleonomy (teleological theory of content), ii) address the question of finding the right possible worlds to capture the representational content of a given sentence

Trouble for teleonomy

- We saw last time how to defend the view that mental states are brain states, the famous identity theory of Smart, Armstrong and Lewis, by the two property strategy. Can we do the same for teleological theories of content? No – let's see why.
- David Papineau's early account: belief that P is being selected to co-vary with P, and desire for P is being selected to bring about P.
- The transparency problem for teleological theories of content – when we use 'x believes that P' to describe x we are not expressing our belief that x is in a state selected to co-vary with P; we are not ascribing being in a certain selectional state. We *qua* the folk have never heard of selectional theories and may well lack the very concept of what it is to be selected for.

Why the two property strategy fails for teleonomy

- The two property strategy would be to offer
  - a) believing that P = having the property that is so and so
  - b) belief that P = the property that is so and so
- The claim is then that a) is something we plausibly do ascribe with the language of belief (*mutatis mutandis* for desire) – for suitable so and so, whereas b) is the 'hidden' selectional property.
- But this is only a teleological theory if the property that is so and so is a selectional property, and if it is, a) is not transparent. It is plausible that we folk know that subjects have inside them properties that play certain roles; it is not plausible that we folk know that subjects have inside them selectional properties.

Finding the right worlds for representational content

- We said that how a sentence represents things to be is given by a set of possible worlds – worlds where things are as they are being represented to be. How do we chose the right worlds for a given sentence?
- Our earlier discussion about the right representation relation for language tells us the set should be those that give the content of the belief about how things are that the sentence expresses.
- But how does this connect with the worlds at which the sentence is true?
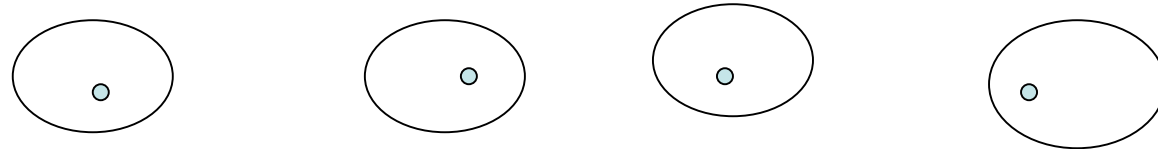
Finding the right worlds cont.

- Is the way *S* represents things to be the worlds at which *S* is true? Sometimes – e.g. 'Some things are round'– but not always.
- The examples that make trouble are ones where rigidification enters the picture. The effect of rigidification is to induce an illusory richness into the content of belief.
- Suppose I experience a number of robberies over time. I'm sure the same person is responsible but I have no idea who it is. I name the person 'Fred'. I say 'It's Fred again' on returning from holidays.
- What I'm claiming about how things are is that it is the same person again, and that's all. Words don't make beliefs. (Remember the tie between language-represents and what's believed.)
- But the worlds at which 'It's Fred again' is true are those where it is the person actually responsible.

More on how truth at worlds sometimes gets the content wrong

- Suppose Frank Jackson produces the sentence 'I am bearded' at 0300 to express how he takes things to be. The worlds where the sentence is true are those where Frank Jackson is bearded at 0300. But I may have no idea of who I am – I may be an amnesiac, or when it is – my watch is broken and I'm in a state of total confusion, or whatever.
- Moral: going for the worlds at which the sentence is true makes the belief expressed by the sentence far too rich.
- But that's only part of the trouble: we need centred worlds, not worlds.

Why we need centred worlds to model the content

- When I produce 'I have a beard', I make a claim about the kind of world I am in, but in addition I claim that I am one of the bearded.

- What is more this claim cannot be reduced to any claim about the kind of world I am in. Knowing who you are is like the information as to where you re given by the 'you are here' dot on shopping centre maps.

- To capture this extra, we need centred worlds. The extra is that I am not only in a world where some are bearded, I am at a 'beardedness point' in one of those worlds.

How to find the right set of worlds I

- Ask what information about how things are is made available on hearing a token of 'I am bearded now' by virtue of understanding the sentence.
  - Answer: the producer of the token sentence is bearded at the time of production.
- We obtain this answer by taking the content to be the set of centred worlds, whose centres are bearded at the time – $<c, w>$ such that at w, c is bearded. The token sentence then gives location information; it says it is produced by one of the cs in the set of ordered couples in question.

How to find the right set of worlds II

- If we think in terms of temporal parts, there is no need to include 't'. We can take the representational content to be the temporal parts of centres and world pairs such that the temporal part is bearded at the world.
- The suggested approach is thinking of 'I am bearded (now)' as like a diver-below flag; the sentence token tells you where and when the beard is in the way that the flag token tells you were the diver is.
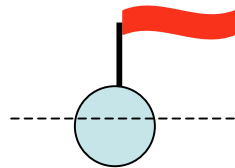
Saying it in terms of the distinction between *A*- and *C*-intensions--Easy introduction to the *A* versus *C* intension distinction

- Take the sentence 'Actually there are electrons', where the role of 'actually' is that 'Actually p' is true at world w iff 'p' is true at the actual world.

- As there are electrons, this means that 'Actually there are electrons' is true at every world. If we call the set of worlds where a sentence is true its C intension ('C', as all but one are counterfactual), this is to say that the C intension of this sentence is the universal set.

- Now consider the set of worlds w such that 'Actually there are electrons' is true under the supposition that w is actual. This set will be the set of worlds where there are electrons. If we call the set of worlds w where a sentence is true under the supposition that w is actual its A intension ('A' for actual), this is to say that the A intension is that set.

- So for some sentences, their C and A intensions differ.

Second example where *C*- and *A*- intensions come apart

- 'The actual *F* is G′ is true at w iff the thing which is the *F* in the actual world is *G* in w. The set of worlds meeting this condition is the *C*-intension of 'The actual *F* is G'.

- The *A*-intension of 'The actual *F* is G' is the set of worlds w such that the sentence is true at w under the supposition that w is actual.

- This is the same set as the set of worlds at which the *F* is G; that is, the *A*-intension of 'The actual *F* is G' is the *C*-intension of 'The *F* is G′.

Third example where *C*- and *A*- intensions come apart

- 'The *F* is actually *G*′ is true at *w* iff the thing which is the *F* in *w* is *G* in the actual world, be it *G* in *w* or not. The set of worlds meeting this condition is the *C*-intension of 'The *F* is actually *G*'.

- The *A*-intension of 'The *F* is actually *G*' is the set of worlds *w* such that the sentence is true at *w* under the supposition that *w* is actual.

- This is the same set as the set of worlds at which the *F* is *G*; that is, the *A*-intension of 'The *F* is actually *G*' is the *C*-intension of 'The *F* is *G*′.

Examples where the *A*- and *C*-intensions are one and the same set

- 'There are electrons', 'Some things are square' etc. For them the worlds where they are true and the worlds where they are true under the supposition that the world is actual are one and the same.

- Reason: they contain no implicit or explicit occurrence of 'actual' or 'actually' or some similar rigidification device.

- Moral: *A* - and *C*-intensions come apart just if the sentence in question contains a non-trivial rigidification device.

Getting the content of 'I have a beard (now)' right in terms of *A*-intensions

- A token of 'I have a beard' is true at $<c, w>$ iff the actual c is bearded at w.
- A token of 'I have a beard' is true at $<c, w, t>$ iff the actual c is bearded at w at the actual time.
- The actual centre and actual time are those of the sentence token.
- This makes the *C*-intension of 'I have a beard (now)' said by FJ at 0300 the set of worlds where FJ has a beard at 0300, and the *A*-intension the set of centred worlds with bearded centres.
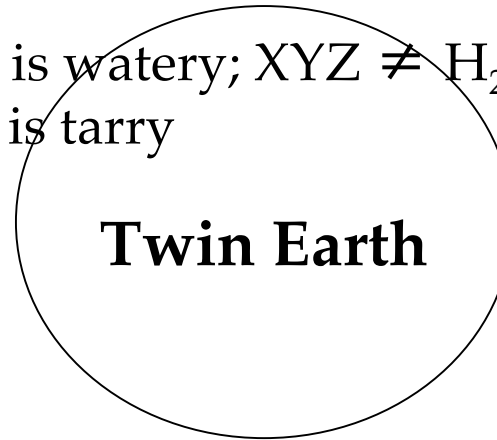
Twin Earth Defanged
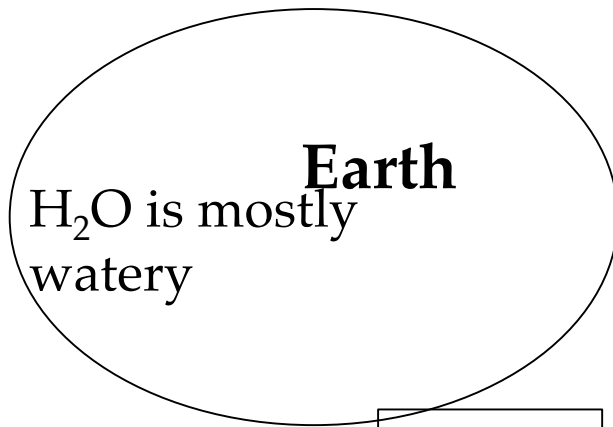
There are no word police

- We decided how we'd use the word 'water'. Not at a convention in the way the usage of some scientific terms are settled (temporarily) but implicitly. The key first step is to review the at all plausible candidates to be how we use 'water'.

- If we had funding for a survey, we could settle which usage is correct but we don't, so we'll conduct the discussion for each plausible view and show under each that the 'meanings (how things are being represented to be) ain't in the head' conclusion does not follow.

Ways one might use 'water'I

- First, perhaps the word 'water' is a word for any watery substance, any substance that has most of the usual list of properties: clear, odourless, falls from the sky, potable, and so on, and water beliefs are simply beliefs about watery stuff.
- In that case, 'water' in Jackson's mouth refers to XYZ every bit as much as to H_2O, and the beliefs he expresses using the word are about XYZ as much as they are about H_2O (but not the black tarry manifestation on Twin Earth). Likewise for Twin Jackson and H_2O.
- Second, perhaps the word 'water' is a natural kind word that it refers to the *unique* natural kind that in some good number of manifestations, but not necessarily all, has the watery properties, and water beliefs are beliefs about the unique kind that in many manifestations has the watery properties.

Ways one might use 'water'II

- In that case, 'water' in Jackson's mouth fails to refer. There is no unique kind; there are two kinds that satisfy the specification: H_2O and XYZ. And his belief that there is water in the bath, for example, is false. Similar remarks apply to Twin Jackson.

- Third, perhaps the word 'water' is a natural kind word in the sense that it refers to any natural kind that in some good number of manifestations has the watery properties, and water beliefs are beliefs about any kind that in a good number of manifestations has the watery properties.

- In that case, 'water' in Jackson's mouth refers equally to H_2O and XYZ. Both kinds fit the bill. Similarly for Twin Jackson.

Ways one might use 'water'III

- Fourth, perhaps, the word 'water' is a natural kind word in the sense that it refers to the natural kind that in some good number of manifestations has the watery properties *and stands in such and such a relation to users of the word,* and water beliefs are beliefs about the kind that in many manifestations has the watery properties *and stands in such and such a relation to those who have the belief.*
- This is a usage that makes Jackson's and Twin Jackson's word 'water' differ in reference. Likewise for the beliefs they express using 'water'. But it also makes the content of their utterances and beliefs centred, and difference in reference is compatible with sameness of content provided the difference is due to a difference in centre.