

Reflexivity

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In [38], Mark Richard formulated a new and interesting problem for theories of direct reference with regard to propositional attitude attributions. The problem was later discovered independently by Scott Soames, who recently advanced it in [47] as a powerful objection to the theory put forward by Jon Barwise and John Perry in [1]. Interestingly, although both Richard and Soames advocate the fundamental assumption on which their philosophical problem arises, they disagree concerning the correct solution to the problem. In this paper I discuss the Richard-Soames problem, as I shall call it, as well as certain related problems and puzzles involving reflexive constructions in propositional attitude attributions. I will treat these problems by applying ideas I invoked in [44] defending a semantic theory that shares certain features with, but differs significantly from, that of [1]. Unlike the theory of [1], the theory of [44] has the resources without modification to solve the Richard-Soames problem and related problems.

I In setting out the Richard-Soames problem, we make some important assumptions. First, we make the relatively uncontroversial assumption that a monadic predicate 'believes that S ', where S is a sentence, is simply the result of filling the second argument place of the dyadic, fully extensional predicate 'believes' with the term 'that S '. Furthermore, it is assumed that the contribution made by the dyadic predicate 'believes' to securing the information content (with respect to a time t) of, or the proposition expressed (with respect to t) by, a declarative sentence in which the predicate occurs (outside of the scope of any nonextensional devices, such as quotation marks) is a certain binary rela-

*Many of the ideas in the paper were first urged by me in correspondence with David Kaplan, Mark Richard, and Scott Soames during February of 1984. There was also a discussion of some of these issues with Joseph Almog, Kaplan, and Soames, and some later correspondence with Alonzo Church. Although there was not the time prior to submission to receive reactions or comments on the present paper itself, it has benefited from these earlier exchanges.

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