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SO-LABELED NEO-FREGEANISM*

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I will discuss a promising “neo-Fregean” account of belief ascriptions that Graeme Forbes has developed in *Languages of Possibility* and in several recent papers.¹

First a sketchy overview of some of Forbes’ ideas. Forbes holds that modal facts are facts about states of affairs;² these are abstract entities containing individuals, properties, and relations, and he takes them to be the Fregean referents of sentences (and of thoughts). The sentence “possibly, *s*” straightforwardly expresses the state of affairs of the possibility of another state of affairs — that expressed by the contained sentence *s*. Forbes takes the basic belief facts to be facts about agents and *thoughts*, which are complex senses composed of ways of thinking, which in turn are (often) individuated by particular, idiosyncratic psychological structures. Thoughts being woollier creatures than states of affairs, Forbes holds that belief facts are ordinarily given a less direct expression in belief ascriptions than modal facts are given in modal sentences. In an opaque use of a belief sentence (*A* believes that *S*), the embedded “that-clause” (‘that *S*’) refers to the state of affairs it normally refers to, but more is required for the truth of the ascription than simply that the subject (*A*) believe a thought that refers to the mentioned state of affairs. In particular, it is required that the subject believe a thought that is attached to a sentence that is a ‘linguistic counterpart’ of the very sentence (*S*) used in the ascription.

I will bring in more details soon, but let me get this out of the way: I’d just as soon avoid debates about what’s Fregean, but for the record, I do not think his attitude semantics shares many of the distinctive features of Frege’s. For Forbes, but not Frege, words and sentences in opaque contexts standardly refer to their customary referents, not to

senses; for Forbes, but not Frege, senses of many expressions, including names, are not sharable even in principle; for Forbes, but not Frege, senses of many expressions are individuated by narrowly psychological entities. The “Fregean” label seems to me misplaced; at the very least it is unhelpful. But this is all to the good, because Forbes’ account is in many ways clearly superior to Frege’s, especially in providing more successful explanations of opacity, mental representation, and modality. Maybe the connection is best put by regarding Frege’s account as proto-Forbesian.

My main criticism will be directed at Forbes’ idea that, as a matter of the semantic rules of belief reporting — as a matter of the meaning of belief ascriptions — to get at the subject’s way of thinking in an attitude ascription, we must use expressions that are “linguistic counterparts” of the subject’s expressions. I think we often *do* something like that, but that we have other, equally good methods of getting at ways of thinking; so what is wanted is a more inclusive characterization of the rules of belief reporting by which we manage to do it — a characterization more along the lines of: anything goes.

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Consider the following belief ascriptions:

- (1) Lois believes that Superman can fly.
- (2) Lois believes that Clark can fly.

On their opaque readings, these sentences will differ in truth value, according to Forbes, because Lois has two senses that refer to Superman, and she attaches these senses to the two names used in the ascriptions (or at least to “linguistic counterparts” of these names, as I will explain soon). In Forbes’ jargon, the expressions that senses are attached to *label* the senses. The objects of belief are thoughts, which are senses of the kind that can be labeled by sentences and which refer to states of affairs. States of affairs are abstract entities containing objects, properties and relations. Using this terminology, Forbes gives the following as “analyses” of (1) and (2):

- (3) Lois believes her so-labeled thought of the state of affairs that Superman can fly.
- (4) Lois believes her so-labeled thought of the state of affairs that Clark can fly.

In these analyses, the 'so' in 'so-labeled' refers to the sentence that is used (in the analysis itself) to refer to the state of affairs. Because of this, (3) is true and (4) is false. Lois believes the state of affairs under a thought having one label but not under a thought having the other.

Forbes explains the senses of names in terms of *dossiers*, which are particular mental items that are used to organize information about an individual. A dossier *contains* beliefs and other attitudes about the individual. When an agent thinks of an individual, it is by exercising a particular dossier. *Labeling* is a particular kind of connection between a name and a dossier; when you think of an individual in the way you would express with a name, a dossier labeled with that name is being exercised. Dossiers have *subjects*, or *referents*, which are determined not by descriptive fit but by whatever causal/informational story one likes. The referent of a dossier is thereby also the referent of the name labeling it. Thus, dossiers individuate ways of thinking of things.

But apparently dossiers are not quite senses of their labels. Instead, a dossier is related to the sense of the name that labels it as follows: the sense of the name is a priori equivalent, for the agent, to the sense of this description:³

- (5) the subject of *this* dossier.

If the name is '*NN*', then it is a priori for the subject that:

- (6) *NN* is the subject of *this* dossier.

According to Forbes, the sense of the name and the sense of the description are *different* senses with the same *cognitive significance*; thoughts containing them stand in the same relations of evidential support to other thoughts. The idea seems to be that, since you think about a thing under a name *by* exercising a dossier of the thing, you are in effect thinking of the thing *as* the subject of that dossier, which is captured by the description 'the subject of *this* dossier'.

Of course, for this idea to work, the agent will have to understand the expression ‘the subject of *this* dossier’ in a particular way (not, for instance, while noticing the dossier through a self-directed “cerebroscope” in a laboratory). I find no substantive explanation in Forbes’s work of this special way of understanding ‘*this* dossier’, beyond the simple point that, when an agent thinks of an individual in a way he would express with a name, the dossier labeled by the name is cognitively salient in a certain way.⁴ But this is little more than what we started with, namely, that agents use dossiers in thinking about things. Forbes holds that the sense of ‘*NN*’ is cognitively equivalent to the sense of the description (5). But I cannot see how this is any more helpful than holding that the sense of the name is cognitively equivalent to the sense of the pronoun ‘*it*’, when the pronoun is thought while exercising the dossier.

Forbes tells us nothing more about the senses of names than their cognitive significance (which does not fix what they are, since different senses can have identical cognitive significance). If I am right that what he tells us about the cognitive significance of the sense of names amounts to nothing more than that agents use dossiers labeled by names when they think about things, then it appears that the view that there *are* such things as senses of names, in addition to dossiers, is without support. Now, there are only two features of the senses of names that are relied on by the semantics for attitude ascriptions: their referents and their labels. And these are just the referents and labels of dossiers. So it is clear that all the real work in the account is done by dossiers. If these are not senses, then Forbes has effectively dispensed with sense, at least in the case of proper names.

Back, now, to belief ascriptions. The way speakers distinguish among the subject’s senses in belief ascriptions is by describing their labels. A speaker does this by using a sentence of her own that is a *linguistic counterpart* of the sentence the subject would allegedly use. More precisely, for the ascription to be true, the subject must believe a thought labeled by the sentence that is the subject’s linguistic counterpart of the speaker’s embedded sentence. The expression ‘her so-labeled thought’ picks out a unique thought only given both a sentence for the ‘so’ to refer to *and* facts about what’s a linguistic counterpart of what. The sentence referred to by the ‘so’ in the analysis sentence is the

one the speaker uses (which is also used in the analysis sentence) to refer to the state of affairs; the facts about linguistic counterparthood are determined by context, sometimes in subtle ways, as we will see. To give a simple example, my use of

(7) Galileo believed that the Earth moves

is true because Galileo believed a thought involving a sense of the Earth labeled with a linguistic counterpart of my expression ‘the Earth’.

For a glimpse of the machinery at full tilt, consider the case of Kripke’s Pierre. At one point in Kripke’s story it seems true to say:

(8) Pierre believes that London is pretty.

And at another point, though Pierre hasn’t changed, it seems right to say:

(9) Pierre does not believe that London is pretty.

For Forbes, both these ascriptions come out true. When we tell the first part of the story, Pierre’s sentence ‘Londres est jolie’ becomes the linguistic counterpart of our sentence ‘London is pretty’. Since Pierre in fact believes his thought, labeled ‘Londres est jolie’, of the state of affairs that London is pretty, the ascription (8) is true. Later in the story, Pierre’s ‘London is pretty’ has become the linguistic counterpart of our ‘London is pretty’; since Pierre does not believe his thought labeled ‘London is pretty’, the ascription (9) is true. Thus, the facts about linguistic counterparthood are determined in part by conversational forces. I’ll return to linguistic counterparthood below.

I should point out that I have ignored Forbes’ rather different treatments of ascriptions that contain indexicals and transparently occurring names.

The analysis (3) of the ascription (1) reveals that, in the ascription, the sentence ‘Superman can fly’ serves two functions: it refers to the state of affairs that Superman can fly, and it also does something else — something that is captured by having a demonstrative in the analysis that refers to the sentence. But what is this feature of the analysis sentence supposed to tell us about the belief ascription itself? I suppose this depends on what we take analyses to be. Forbes expresses some uncertainty about the requirements of correct analysis.⁵ Recall that

Forbes thinks uses of sentences refer to states of affairs and express thoughts. It seems fairly clear from Forbes' work that we should take his analyses as attempts to spell out *at least* the state of affairs referred to by a statement. This is suggested by, among other things, Forbes' approving mentions of Terry Parsons' idea of 'subatomic semantics'. Supposing we are offered an account of the states of affairs referred to by belief ascriptions (the whole ascriptions, not just the that-clauses), then it would seem that, for Forbes, in a use of (1), the sentence 'Superman can fly' is *referred* to, and (hence?) is a constituent of the state of affairs referred to.

To nail down the state of affairs that the analysis (3) expresses, we need to unpack the contextual devices and intricate logical form of the analysis (whose presence in the analysis obviously points toward Forbes' intention to give us more than simply a state of affairs). It seems to me that unpacking the description

(10) her so-labeled thought

would set the matter straight, since the state of affairs expressed by the analysis is to the effect that Lois believes a certain kind of thought that refers to a specific state of affairs. What kind of thought? How are we to read the description?

Forbes does say that the 'so' in 'her so-labeled thought' refers to the sentence used in the analysis to pick out the believed state of affairs; so a start in clarifying the description would be:

(11) her thought labeled 'Superman can fly'.

Now, we know that the state of affairs expressed by the analysis depends on facts about what's a linguistic counterpart of what in this context. So we must build in this restriction. But how? There are several possible ways to work the contextual restriction of linguistic counterparthood into the description. Call the context C . An approach that is in line with what Forbes has written most recently,⁶ is to look for a contextually provided linguistic counterpart relation to restrict the description. That is, in the context C , there would arise a relation LC_C that fits into the description as follows:

(12) her thought labeled with a sentence that bears LC_C to my 'Superman can fly'.

So my sentence and the contextually provided LC_C would be constituents of the state of affairs expressed by the ascription. On this way of working things out, the nature of LC_C is critical, since the state of affairs expressed by the belief ascription will be that of Lois believing a thought labeled by a sentence that stands in LC_C to my ‘Superman can fly’. If Forbes does in fact mean the description to be taken as in (12), then what his account *is* turns on what kinds of relation the contextually provided linguistic counterpart relations are. In particular, this issue will determine just how troublesome it is to take the speaker’s sentence to be a constituent of the state of affairs expressed by the ascription (whether, for instance, the state of affairs is so much *about* the speaker’s sentence that its holding entails the existence of the sentence). So I record a concern about the lack of details we have been given about linguistic counterpart relations beyond claims about their extensions in certain examples.⁷

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Let’s look at the intuitive motivation of the account. It seems clear that in an opaque ascription involving a name, the speaker specifies *some* information about the alleged belief beyond what is given by the state of affairs expressed with the *that*-clause. In particular, some information is specified about the agent’s (alleged) take on the named individual. So the question is what information. Forbes proposes that it’s a matter of constraining what dossier the subject is allowed to employ in the alleged belief. Suppose we grant this (I think something like it is right). Then, the problem is to explain systematically what constraints on dossiers are expressed in (specific uses of) belief ascriptions.

We stare for a while at two sentences like (1) and (2):

- (1) Lois believes that Superman can fly.
- (2) Lois believes that Clark can fly.

Why is it that these two sentences seem different? It probably has something to do with the names! But what? It would be nice if the way language worked, somehow each name was permanently attached to something that determines a specific constraint on dossiers. But we

can't get that to work; actual ascriptions are too flexible for that, as we find out from (among other things) the Pierre case. But a more plausible account is nearby: a name gets attached to something *in a context* giving us a constraint on dossiers. So, for any particular use of an ascription involving a name, the name is attached to something that constrains the dossier the subject must employ in her belief.

But now it sounds like we have gotten nowhere: the problem was to explain systematically *which* constraints on dossiers are expressed in uses of ascriptions involving names. If the proposal is simply, "*something*, depending on context," progress is hard to see. So we look for a pattern in how dossiers seem to be constrained in ascriptions involving names, and we notice that, very often, it seems that for the ascription to be true, the subject must use the very name used in the ascription, or at least a related name, to express her belief. This seems a beginning. So we propose that the constraint on dossiers expressed in an ascription involving a name is that the dossier be labeled with that name, or an appropriately related name — a linguistic counterpart. If this strategy is to admit the contextual shiftiness of opaque ascriptions, then there must be shiftiness in what counts as an appropriately related name — in what is a linguistic counterpart.

This is where we stand with Forbes' account. We hold that the name the subject would use has to be a linguistic counterpart of the name the speaker uses. We view as paradigm cases identity of names and clear translation relations between names. But speakers of ascriptions can stretch and adapt the idea of linguistic counterparthood as long as it's clear in context how they are doing it. Sure, there are cases in which the label "linguistic counterpart" seems inappropriate, but we treat these as severe conversational stretches of the mechanism. Surely it's better to have this sort of account than *no* account of how dossiers get constrained.

I want to examine some features of our ascriptive practices that suggest that the idea of linguistic counterparthood gets stretched not conversationally (by speakers) but theoretically (by Forbes). I think certain classes of examples suggest that the mechanisms of dossier-constraint available to speakers of ascriptions go well beyond and properly include the technique of exploiting linguistic relations between names. And I will suggest that, in a couple of ways, it *is* better to have

no account (or a very slender account) of how dossiers get constrained, than one that shoehorns linguistic relations into the semantics of all opaque ascriptions.

Since I'm out to discredit the idea that names are specially important, the obvious place to start is with opaque ascriptions in which the subject has no names. After Lois encounters Superman in both guises, but before she learns either of his names, we can report:

- (13) Lois believes that Clark is in the building, but doesn't believe that Superman is in the building.

There is no linguistic counterparthood going on here. We are constraining dossiers, to be sure, but it seems obvious that we are not doing this *by* constraining their labels.

A less obvious place to look for evidence is in cases where the speaker does not use a name, but nonetheless constrains dossiers. Cases of this kind are useful to me, since they suggest that there are general principles governing dossier-constraint that are not specifically tied to the speaker's use of names. Call a use of an ascription attributing to a subject belief about a thing *notionally specific* if, for it to be true, the subject's belief cannot involve just *any* dossier referring to the thing, but must involve a dossier meeting a certain constraint. I think there is a very persuasive case for the view that there are plenty of notionally specific ascriptions besides the opaque ones involving names. For instance, Castañeda can be read as claiming that we have a way of using pronouns to be notionally specific about "self-dossiers." Forbes actually agrees with this idea.⁸ But I think this is just one particularly widespread kind of case; we are notionally specific with pronouns in a wide variety of cases, not just in one class of special cases.

The easiest cases are like this:

- (14) Superman is devious. Lois doesn't know that he works with her.

Here, the speaker is notionally specific enough to rule out Lois' 'Clark' dossier from counting. Of course, someone might object that the pronoun here somehow goes proxy for the name 'Superman'. I'd press on this point, if there were not better cases.

Consider this one: Lois enters a dark warehouse, hears someone (Superman) say he is her friend, but:

(15) Lois does not believe that he is her friend.

Since the use of 'Lois does not believe that he is her friend' is true, and since we all know how cozy Lois is with Superman (in both of his guises), it must be that the ascription is notionally specific: it is true because her 'Superman' and 'Clark' dossiers are ruled out, the only dossier that counts is the one that organizes the information about Superman she is dealing with in the warehouse. So we have a notionally specific report involving a pronoun; and a very ordinary case at that. (Nothing depends on whether the 'he' is anaphoric or deictic.)

Consider a case with almost no details:

Ann has two dossiers of the same individual. She formed the first long before the second; at that time, she believed that he had a certain property *P*, and never lost that belief. Then, she formed the second dossier of the individual, not realizing that this was the same individual; she didn't believe he had property *P*.

The point is that 'she didn't believe he had property *P*' manages to rule out the first dossier. We have notional specificity, but no label, no name used in the ascription, no details about the contents of the dossiers.

Let me state a plausible principle that is suggested by these cases: *the speaker can constrain dossiers in any way she intends, subject to the usual cooperative principles about making oneself clear.* The idea is to allow for dossier constraint on the model of deictic uses of 'it': you can refer to anything, but it's up to you to make it clear what you're referring to. Forbes agrees that something like this is one way to constrain the dossier you want to talk about in exceptional cases. He exploits this idea in the Pierre and Paderewski cases.⁹ In these cases, there are dossiers that are in themselves equally good candidates to be linguistic counterparts of the speaker's name, but the speaker makes it clear through salience-raising or accommodation which one she means to discuss. Forbes treats this as arising from conversational panic at the failure of linguistic counterparthood to do its job, rather than as an unexceptional case of something that is entirely different from comparing names.

Let's ask what we would expect if the rule about constraining dossiers was Forbes' *use linguistic counterparts*, rather than my *do what*

you want. I think what we would expect is aptly captured by two principles, both false, that Forbes suggests about what ought to be *easy* cases for his account:

A general principle . . . is: if the ascriber and the believer each has exactly one dossier for the object x , then the ascriber can use any name labeling his dossier for x to report a belief the believer would express using one of the names labeling his dossier for x .

. . . if the ascriber has one dossier for x labeled with names N_1, \dots, N_n , and the believer has n dossiers D_i each labeled uniquely with N_i , then the linguistic counterpart_(B, A) relation on this domain relative to these to speakers is the set of pairs $\langle N_i, N_j \rangle$.

To see that the first principle does not hold in general, consider this ascription about Bill, who has heard of Superman but not of Clark: 'Bill believes that Superman is Clark Kent'. On the first principle, since Bill has but one dossier, it gets to be the counterpart of both of our names, so the ascription should be true. But it's not.

The second principle is falsified by cases of what Joe Moore calls "mis-disquotation,"¹¹ in which the speaker and the subject have the same two names for an individual, but in which the (non-confused) speaker uses the *opposite* name in the ascription. Forbes considers this kind of case in a recent manuscript: B has the names of Hesperus and Phosphorus backwards (and doesn't know they are the same), so we use 'Hesperus' to report the beliefs he would express with 'Phosphorus' and vice versa. Like the Babylonians, he believes Hesperus is an evening star and Phosphorus is a morning star, but he has their names backwards. Forbes admits uncertainty about this case, which, I should note, he discusses in a manuscript written well after the paper in which he proposes the two principles; but he hangs onto the idea that the rules are to use linguistic counterparts. I think very solid such cases exist; Moore gives several in his paper. But to make Forbes' own case more obviously right, just imagine that the speaker doesn't know about B 's confusion about names, and in fact has no idea whether B has names at all; what the speaker knows through observation of B 's nonverbal behavior is that, like the Babylonians, he worships Venus under two guises, thinking the heavenly bodies he sees in the morning and evening are different. In this case, it's quite clear (to me, at least) that the speaker's ascription 'He believes that Phosphorus is the most glorious heavenly body' focuses on the dossier which is in fact labeled 'Hesperus'.

That Forbes even expresses uncertainty about such cases shows that he himself is skeptical about these principles. But surely one would expect these principles, and similar, similarly false, principles to hold if one assumes that linguistic counterparthood drives our ascriptive practices.

Suppose, as I hope I have made plausible, that we do indeed have a general license to constrain dossiers in belief ascriptions by conversational focusing — a license that is not limited to toying with indeterminacies about what names are linguistic counterparts in strange cases. How does this fit with what goes on in the usual cases of opacity involving names? I want to make a case for the view that the “usual cases” with names can be handled as simply a special case of the idea of conversational focusing; and given the simplicity and generality this buys us in the semantics of ascriptions, we should prefer the idea to the idea that there is, say, a special *sense* of an ascription on which the rule about linguistic counterparts applies.

I think that some will retain a strong hunch that, whether or not a general license to focus is operative in many cases, there just *are* cases of regular old de dicto opacity, in which Forbes’ rule about linguistic counterparts or something like it seems to hold sway. So perhaps we should segregate two classes of ascriptions that operate under different semantic rules.

The argument I have against this is really very simple, and should sound familiar in strategy from Kripke’s criticism of the idea that there is a referential/attributive *truth-conditional* ambiguity. If the rule *were* simply to focus how you like, then speakers would very naturally happen on the *strategy* of using linguistic counterparts to do it in exactly the cases in which it is clear that we *do* use linguistic counterparts. The strategy is easy, and it’s easy for even a novice to understand. Imagine the hearer’s Gricean deduction about a simple utterance of ‘Lois believes that Clark is nearby’. “What dossier does he mean to focus on? Neither of Lois’ notions is terribly salient in this context. He used the name ‘Clark’, which labels one dossier but not the other. Hmm. I don’t know. Hey! Maybe he did that to make that dossier salient. I can’t think of any other hypothesis as plausible. He knows I’m clever enough to reason like this. So that’s got to be it.” The strategy would naturally be used more and more and thus become an easier and easier way to

focus. So the fact that we use linguistic counterparts to get at particular dossiers as we do cannot show that the rule we follow is *not* that of focusing how you like.

Now, if in lots of cases the speaker of an ascription is able to focus on different dossiers without the help of linguistic counterparthood (as I will assume the above considerations strongly suggest), then considerations of simplicity in our semantics strongly support the idea that linguistic counterparthood is not part of a semantic rule for ascriptions, but simply a very popular, systematic strategy for conversational focusing.

In short, I like the idea of conversational focusing on dossiers. I think we do it a lot, and that sometimes we do it by exploiting relations that naturally fall under the 'linguistic counterpart' label. And I think it would be relatively easy for Forbes to agree with me about this; not much of his account would have to change: he would merely have to give up the claim that the rules for belief ascription involve a rule that dossier-constraint is to be done by focusing on linguistic counterparts. I think he should do this.

In winding up, I want to admit to a real problem with this sort of account, which I take to be a problem with Forbes' account even if he does not agree to my suggested revision. The account, at least as I have presented it here sometimes treats dossier-constraint as akin to reference: particular dossiers get picked out either by conversational focusing (on my favored account) or by the linguistic counterpart relations (on Forbes' account) which can provide effectively just as *specific* a way of picking out a dossier as would reference to the dossier. Despite the initial discomfort with the idea that we as good as *refer* in one of these ways to dossiers in other people's heads, this really seems to provide a powerful explanation of our ascriptive practices in lots and lots of cases. But not all cases. Sometimes we are not fully specific. Sometimes how we constrain dossiers seems to be not like *reference* at all, but instead like description. When we say that everyone knows that Superman is taller than Clark, surely we are not referring to lots and lots of particular dossiers; it seems we *must* be talking about dossiers of two different *types*. If Bill has encountered Superman as a super-hero but not as a reporter (and so has just the one dossier of him), we can point out that Bill does not believe that Superman is Clark. We cannot

be referring to Bill's "Clark-dossier" — he hasn't got one. We must, it seems, be claiming that he doesn't believe the state of affairs via a thought that contains his dossier labeled 'Superman' *and* another dossier of a certain *type* — one that is a *Clark-dossier*, whatever that means! The best idea I can come up with is that the rule is not that you can focus on a dossier any way you want, but that you can either do that, or else focus on a dossier-condition (a property of dossiers) any way you want. But it seems far from clear just *which* dossier-conditions speakers focus on in reports like the ones I've mentioned; certainly, it's not nearly as obvious as what particular dossiers they focus on in, say, the Superman or Paderewski cases — or any of the other tricky ones we have considered. Maybe there is a neat account I haven't been able to find about what dossier-conditions are focused on in the troublesome reports. But suppose not; suppose the best we can hope for is a vague cluster of candidate dossier-conditions. Perhaps it would be plausible to hold that what happens in these cases is: being *that* clear about what you mean to say, or, meaning something *that* specific, is good enough.¹²

NOTES

* Many thanks to Joe Moore for very helpful discussion and comments.

¹ See the references at the end of this article.

² Really, he has them be about "abstract contents of states of affairs," creatures the nature of which is best conveyed briefly by the label 'states of affairs'.

³ I assume we are meant to take the description referentially (or in some similar manner), to avoid having one's thoughts about a thing entail that one's dossier exists.

⁴ See the discussions of name-senses in *Languages of Possibility*, pp. 122–129, "Indispensability," pp. 538–545, and especially "Cognitive Architecture," pp. 85–88. In the latter paper, Forbes proposes the following:

A plausible candidate for the sense of '*this* dossier' as it occurs in '*NN* is the subject of *this* dossier' is 'the dossier in which this information is stored'. Here, 'this information', relative to a context, refers to some piece of information produced in the context as a result of accessing the dossier by thinking the name '*NN*'.

But of course lots of information about *different* things can "come to mind" when you think of a thing. What Forbes tells us doesn't carve off just the in-mind information which is about the thing one is thinking of (and about it in the particular way that makes it thought under the sense we are interested in). So *this* proposal gives us little or no help in characterizing the sort of (internal) use of '*this*' on which '*NN*' and 'the subject of *this* dossier' have the same sense.

⁵ See "Indispensability," p. 553. On p. 554, he claims of his analysis of a belief ascription that "it correctly articulates the way the world has to be if [the ascription] is to be made true: it explains what constitutes the truth of [the ascription]." In "Iteration," he suggests that in addition, analyses ought to reveal the form of some level of representation in the heads of people who understand the analysandum.

- ⁶ "In the Mind of a Brain in a Vat," p. 10, "Solving the Iteration Problem," pp. 11–14.
- ⁷ This query has been abbreviated from a longer section in the version of this paper originally written for the Pacific Meetings because many of my speculations about what Forbes might have had in mind are not relevant given his reply.
- ⁸ In "Indexicals and Intensionality: a Fregean Perspective."
- ⁹ "Indispensability," p. 566 ff., "On the Persistence of Belief," "Solving the Iteration Problem," pp. 11–12.
- ¹⁰ "Indispensability," p. 552.
- ¹¹ In "Imperfect Echoes, Mis-disquotation, and Substitutivity," manuscript.
- ¹² In *Talk About Beliefs*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), I very tentatively defend the view that in most simple, affirmative reports we *refer* to dossiers (representations, actually) rather than constrain them. In part this is because of a preference for taking speakers to be saying *specific* things where possible. But I am now even more tentative about this view and I am again finding attractive the idea John Perry and I proposed in "The Prince and the Phone Booth," (*Journal of Philosophy*, 86, 1989, 685–711), to the effect that it will often be indeterminate whether the speaker refers to or constrains representations, and indeterminate just which constraint is placed on representations (I think something like this is also true of how "incomplete descriptions" are tacitly restricted). Fuzzy business, belief reporting.

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