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Intentionality without Exotica*

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[T]here are strong reasons for *not* regarding ''X is thinking of Y''as
expressing a relation between X and Y.

(Prior 1971: 112)

1. Internal versus External Singularity

Some thoughts are *externally singular*: there is an object which the thought
is about. Some thoughts which are not externally singular are *internally
singular*: although there is no object the thought is about, it recruits
resources of a kind appropriate to external singularity. An illustration: Jack
wants a sloop (I am using ''thought'' broadly, so that wanting is a species
of thinking). The desire is externally singular if there is a sloop (a ''specific
sloop'') he wants. There are two ways in which the desire can fail to be
externally singular (so we cannot describe the cases just in terms of Quine's
notional/relational distinction, for we need three pigeon-holes and not just
two). The desire can be wholly non-specific: the desire is, as Quine (1956)
famously put it, for relief from slooplessness. But the content of the desire
can alternatively possess internal singularity. This is so if Jack has engaged
in very specific imagining: ''She's called *The Mary Jane*; 42 ft, a nanteen
sail . . . .'' Of an existing sloop Jack might truly say: ''*That's* not the sloop I
want; I want *The Mary Jane*; and in fact she should be ready in a couple of

months—I've already signed the contract with the shipyard.'' Alas, tragedy strikes, and *The Mary Jane* is never built, so the desire was not externally singular. The concept *The Mary Jane* that features in the content of the desire is the kind of concept appropriate to external singularity, though that kind of singularity is absent, so the desire counts as internally singular.

The kind of concept that makes for singularity in thought is one produced by a concept-producing mechanism whose functional role is to generate concepts fit for using to think about individual things. I call such a concept an ''individual concept'' (Sainsbury 2005: 217ff). Individual concepts are individuated by the event in which they are introduced. In typical cases, and when all goes well, an act of attention to an object accompanies, or perhaps is a constituent of, the introduction of an individual concept, which then has that object as its bearer. In cases in which all does not go well, for example in hallucination, an individual concept is used by the subject as if it had an object even though it does not; an act internally indistinguishable from an act of attending to an object occurs, and in that act an individual concept without a bearer comes into being. A concept so introduced can be used in thought; for example an individual concept *C* can be a component in wondering whether C is real or merely hallucinated. In less typical cases, it is known to the subject that the concept has no bearer. An example would be a case in which I know I am hallucinating.

External singularity is relational: a subject is related to an object. Internal singularity is not relational in this way. The Greeks worshipped Zeus, but there is no relation holding between them and Zeus, for there is no such thing as Zeus. Jack hoped to build *The Mary Jane*, but there is no relation between Jack and *The Mary Jane*, for there is no such sloop. The most general form is *thinking about*: Jack thought about Pegasus, but this is, on the face of it, not a relational fact, since there is no such thing as Pegasus.

The contrast between external and internal singularity has been noted by several writers. Grice asks us to reflect on not just two but three readings of ''John wants a girl to marry him'' (1969: 144–5). The least familiar reading is exemplified in this story: John falsely believes his friend William has a sister called Martha (in fact William has no sister). John wants Martha to marry him. John's mental states have the kind of internal configuration they would have if there had really been a sister, and it had been her he wanted to marry.

Internal singularity is also a feature of Geach's Hob/Nob cases. In

Hob thinks a witch has blighted Bob's mare, and Nob wonders whether she (the same witch) killed Cob's sow.   (Geach 1967: 147)

there is no referent for the definite "she," which accordingly marks internal singularity.

Prior illustrated the point with the example "I know that Joe believes that there is a unique King of France, and that Joe believes that *he* is bald" (1971: 115). Here a reporter of someone else's states needs to use some kind of singular content, marked by "he," in order to make a correct report. The reporter may well know that this singular content is empty.

The aim of this chapter is to develop a picture of internal singularity. In particular, I wish to resist an attempt to reduce internal singularity to external singularity by positing exotic objects to be the relata of such states, and the referents of such expressions or concepts, where by an exotic object I mean one that is either nonexistent, nonactual, or nonconcrete. First I need to locate the discussion in a wider framework, and introduce the assumptions on which the argument will depend.

2. Intentionality, O-sentences and V-sentences: Two Locations for Internal Singularity

An appealing thought is that, in an intentional mental state, the mind is directed at an object: at, as one might say, an "intentional object." This seems unproblematic for cases like Bush's admiration for Cheney or Obama's careful thought about Iraq. Bush directs his mind at the object Cheney, Obama at the object Iraq. These unproblematic cases are of external singularity, and the so-called intentional objects are just ordinary ones. It is problematic in cases like Bush's admiration for Superman or Obama's careful thought about Arcadia, since on intuitive views there is no such object as Superman or as Arcadia. These cases cannot be straightforwardly described as ones in which the minds of Bush or Obama are directed on objects. The "exotic" strategy this paper opposes is one according to which the problematic cases are structurally just like the

unproblematic ones, but the "intentional objects" involved are objects like Superman or Arcadia, ones that are nonexistent, nonconcrete, or nonactual.

Intentional facts are standardly described using intensional expressions, and sometimes "object" plays a role, as in "grammatical object," in picking out a component of a sentence in which an intensional expression occurs. We could say that in these three sentences

- John is thinking about Pegasus
- John wants a horse
- John hopes that it will be sunny

the "intentional objects" in this grammatical sense are "Pegasus," "a horse," and "it will be sunny." There is no room for dispute about the reality of intentional objects in the grammatical sense. But we must keep the senses apart: it might be that someone who wants a sloop wants an intentional object in the first sense, but they certainly do not want merely an indefinite noun phrase.[1]

I take very seriously the contrast between the first two of these sentences and the third. In the third case, the grammatical object is a complete sentence, evaluable as true or false. It is embedded in an expression ("John hopes that"), which I'll call a propositional operator, since it takes a (proposition-expressing) sentence to make a sentence.[2] In general, I'll call sentences formed by applying a propositional operator to a sentence "O-sentences."

By contrast, in the first two cases, built from verbs standardly called "intensional transitives," the apparent overall form is that of a two-place predicate. I'll call these sentences "V-sentences."

The reason I take the contrast between O-sentences and V-sentences seriously is that I believe the problems we seem to confront in the case of V-sentences do not arise for O-sentences. That is for two main reasons. First, I think that all that's needed for the propositional attitudes reported by O-sentences to obtain is a suitable content, expressed by the embedded sentence. This content will be propositional, in the sense that it can be assessed for truth or falsehood. Second, I think that non-referring names,

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[1] For more nuances on various understandings of "intentional object," see Crane 2001.
[2] That, at least, is a superficial analysis. I do not wish to commit to a serious semantic account of the structure of O-sentences.

predicates without extensions, and other expressions that create problems in V-sentences, are fully intelligible, and do not create problems in O-sentences. This approach is defended elsewhere (Sainsbury 2005), so here I just state the relevant aspects of the position, which I call RWR (for *Reference without Referents*):

A

Singular referring expressions, and individual concepts, may be fully intelligible despite having no referent. This means they can contribute unproblematically to truth evaluable content.

B

Propositional attitudes, in particular O-states, are relations to truth evaluable contents.

C

A simple[3] sentence or thought (that is, one not embedded in any kind of operator) containing a non-referring referring expression or individual concept is false.

Given assumptions A and B, internal singularity in O-sentences raises no special problems. Even if "Vulcan" has no referent, it can contribute to the truth-evaluable content *that Vulcan is a planet*. This content does not have to be true in order to be available to verify the claim that Leverrier believed that Vulcan is a planet. There is singularity in Leverrier's belief. It is of the internal kind for it does not involve a relation to an object. Granted RWR, this is unproblematic.

However, given assumption C, the very possibility of the truth of some kinds of V-sentences is threatened. What sense can we make of the claim that Leverrier thought about Vulcan? On the face of it, the claim is expressible in a simple sentence; but the presence of a nonreferring referring expression is, according to C, enough to ensure that the claim is false. V-states thus at best constitute unfinished business for RWR, and at worst indicate a problem that might turn out to threaten the whole approach. Of course, they are of interest in any case: you do not have to accept RWR to find it hard to give a satisfying semantic account of V-sentences or a satisfying metaphysical account of the states they express.

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[3] The qualification "atomic" rather than "simple" is close enough. It's not quite right, for RWR allows for complex referring expressions: these could occur in a simple but not in an atomic sentence.

3. Marks of Intentionality and Intensionality

Let's say a verb V is intensional if any of the following hold:

V1

a sentence of the form ''NP1-V–NP2'' can be (genuinely and literally) true even if the corresponding ''there is no such existent, actual concrete thing as NP2'' is true.

V2

a sentence of the form ''NP-V–an F'' can be true even if ''there is no existent, actual concrete F such that NP-V–it'' is true.

V3

a sentence of the form ''NP-V–an F but no F in particular'' can be true.

V4

sentences of the form ''NP1-V–NP2'' and ''NP2 = NP3'' can both be true even if ''NP1-V–NP3'' is not.

Alleged examples:

V1: ''The Greeks worshipped Zeus'' is true even though ''There is no such existent, actual concrete thing as Zeus'' is true.

V2 can arise in two ways. The first is through lack of anything answering to the noun in the indefinite phrase, as in: ''The Greeks worshipped a god'' is true even though ''There is no existent, actual concrete god such that the Greeks worshipped it'' is true. The second is through unspecificity, as in Quine's famous example. It may be that ''I want a sloop'' is true, read as implicitly qualified by ''but no sloop in particular,'' even though ''there is no sloop such that I want it'' is true. (Restricting to non-exotic sloops, as V2 requires, makes no difference.) What's blocking the inference is not lack of sloops (contrast lack of gods in the previous example) but something about the nature of the mental state.[4]

Sloop desires can be specific in two ways, the externally singular way and the internally singular one. The former is what Quine (1956) calls, appropriately enough, the relational case: the state consists in a relation

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[4] It would be too simple to characterize this nature simply as monadic, for ''I want a sloop'' entails ''There's something I want (namely, a sloop).'' We could replace ''something'' by ''some object'' or ''some entity'' while preserving truth. The inference that fails, on an unspecific reading, is to: there's a sloop I want.''

between S and a sloop. In the latter case the subject has desires which are specific in their content, even though they fail to be relational: John does not want any old sloop but a particular sloop, *The Mary Jane* (even though there is no such sloop and never will be).

V3: The third mark is the possibility of truth when "but no F in particular" is added to something of the form "NP-V-an F"; the possibility of an unspecific reading. Arguably, the third mark can fail even when the second mark is satisfied. "The Greeks worshipped a god, but no god in particular" cannot be true, but many will think that the inference from their worshipping a god to there being a god they worship is suspect.

V4: The fourth mark is the supposed failure of substitution of identicals to preserve truth. On standard views, this can't apply if the first mark is present, for empty terms cannot enter into truths of identity. As a further sign of the possible divergences among the marks, many think that "worship" does not satisfy V4, even though it does satisfy V1.

The marks discussed pick out a category of verbs. When these occur in true sentences, we have facts which present analogous puzzles. At the linguistic level we ask how the sentence "Leverrier thought about Vulcan" can be true, given that there is no such (nonexotic) thing as Vulcan. The corresponding metaphysical question is: what sort of fact is the fact that Leverrier thought about Vulcan, given that there is no such (non-exotic) thing as Vulcan?

4. Relationality: Syntactic, Semantic, Factual; and An Argument for Exotica

The *syntax* of

John thinks about Pegasus

is relational (with respect to "John" and "Pegasus") iff it consists in a two-place verb phrase, "thinks about," taking the two noun phrases "John" and "Pegasus" to make a sentence.

The *semantics* of the sentence is relational (with respect to "John" and "Pegasus") iff its truth requires that "John" and "Pegasus" have referents which stand in the relation expressed by the verb phrase.

If a *fact* is expressed by the sentence, it is relational iff it consists in a structure consisting of the two objects, John and Pegasus, and the relation of thinking about.

Using these notions, we can construct an argument for exotica as follows:

1. The sentence "John is thinking about Pegasus" is true.
2. The sentence is syntactically relational.
3. Hence it is semantically relational.
4. Hence "Pegasus" has a referent.
5. Since "Pegasus" does not have an ordinary object as its referent, it has an exotic object as its referent: one that is nonexistent, nonactual, or nonconcrete.

If the argument is sound, it shows that the singularity in the target sentence ("John thinks about Pegasus") is external after all. Similar arguments might be used to extend the conclusion case by case, to end with the generalization: singularity in V-sentences is external. The argument cannot be resisted simply by insisting on the intelligibility of some empty names (or empty individual concepts). The problem is not how it can be intelligible that John thinks about Pegasus, but how it can be true.

Let's not quibble with the argument for the moment, but instead work out how someone who accepted it would spell out the resulting view. I have taken it as a premise that the RWR picture of how proper names work is correct for ordinary cases: that is, RWR is right for ordinary sentences like "Fido barks," and also for O-sentences in which names are embedded in a full sentential complement. Quite likely, exoticists would do best not to accept RWR, but this chapter considers whether an RWR theorist must also be an exoticist. I'll be quite happy with a conditional conclusion: Given RWR, we should not be exoticist about V-sentences.

The exoticist must treat names with fictional, mythological and other empty uses as ambiguous, or, better, as polysemous. Outside V-sentences, they have no referent. In the context of V-sentences, they refer to an exotic object. The imputed lack of semantic uniformity should be

somewhat worrying (though many theorists have not been deterred, for example Kripke 1973). It seems that once we have learned a fictional name in no matter what kind of context, nothing in our understanding of the name stops us from understanding it in all the others. If there were "bank"/"bank" ambiguity here, it would be mysterious how people in learning one meaning thereby learn another, just as it would be mysterious if somehow learning one meaning of "bank" was always associated with learning the other.

That's exactly why polysemy is a better option for the exoticist than ambiguity. The idea is that some doubtless implicit general principle gets us from any one of polysemously linked meanings to any other. Normally, coming to understand a new word that manifests container/contents polysemy equips one to use it in both ways. If I tell you that a jeroboam is equivalent to four normal bottles, you should be able to understand both "This jeroboam is made of glass" and "This jeroboam is ready to drink." The close relationship between the meanings of a polysemous expression explains how both (or all) of them can be acquired in a single act of learning. If the various meanings of names are polysemously related, they can be acquired in a single act.

It might seem easy to refute the view that fictional names are polysemous by reflecting on anaphoric relations. In

Sherlock Holmes is a detective. He was created by Conan Doyle

it seems that our exoticist will have to say that "Sherlock Holmes" refers to nothing (acceptance of RWR approach) yet that "He" refers to an exotic object (to give a straightforwardly relational reading of the second sentence).[5] If an anaphorically dependent pronoun had to agree in reference with the expression on which it depends, that would be a powerful argument. But we can see in other cases that the principle is false. For example, in

He drank the whole bottle and smashed it to the floor

"the bottle" has its contents reading whereas "it" has its container reading. There's been a shift in reference, despite the dependence.

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[5] The first sentence is unproblematic for RWR since it can be regarded as false. The second sentence, by contrast, is problematic, since it seems to be true which, by RWR principles, it cannot be if "He" has no referent.

5. Entailment: A Problem for Exoticism

Our exoticist thus adopts polysemous semantics for fictional names. Now let's return to the argument for the exotic view, based on the syntactic relationality of sentences like "John is thinking about Pegasus." I suggest that the notions of syntactic and semantic relationality on which the argument trades are not as clear as they might seem; and this will be its undoing. Let's start by mirroring the argument with one whose conclusion is well known to be false, or at least controversial.

1. The sentence "I did it for John's sake" is true.
2. The sentence is syntactically relational.
3. Hence it is semantically relational.
4. Hence "John's sake" has a referent.
5. Since "John's sake" does not have an ordinary object as its referent, it has an exotic object as its referent.

Quine (1960) has made many people suspicious of this conclusion. Suspicions arise because we can "paraphrase" the original sentence by something that's not syntactically relational in a relevant way: maybe "I did it for John's sake" is true because I did it to help John, or to honor John, or to commemorate John. If facts like that are enough to make my action one done for John's sake, it seems that no such entity as John's sake is required. This shows either that "I did it for John's sake" is not really syntactically relational, or that syntactic relationality does not entail semantic relationality. This kind of point initiates the case against exotica in accounting for intensionality.

First let's consider premise (2) of the argument for sakes. The claim requires that "did it for" is a verb phrase which makes a sentence by being flanked with two noun phrases. To support that opinion, the defender might ask us to consider sentences like "I did it for John." Given that "I" and "John" are indisputably noun phrases, the defender might urge that what stands between them is a two-place verb phrase, something that takes two noun phrases to make a sentence. This provides a highly defeasible case for the desired conclusion of syntactic relationality. To defend it, one would have to show that alternative syntactic proposals are incorrect, for example the much more natural proposal that the sentence is composed of a two-place verb "did," and that "for" introduces an adverbial phrase. The

exoticist would need to respond to such alternative proposals by finding further principles, for example that any referring expression in an adverbial phrase needs to have a referent for the whole sentence to be true. No such simple principle is uncontentiously correct ("In my dream about Zeus, I was petrified"), so this would be a long road to take.

Even if syntactic relationality is hard to detect in general, the exoticist may still insist that the relevant cases are clear: there are no serious alternative syntactic proposals for "worship" and "thinks about." That does not seem entirely obvious to me (perhaps "thinks" is intransitive, and "about" phrases have some special function which, like a "that" which introduces a complement in an attitude ascription, is part of a construction which permits truth without reference). But I want to focus on a different point.

The interesting feature of a Quinean "paraphrase" approach to sakes is that it's fairly easy to think of sufficient conditions for the truth of "I did it for John's sake" in which there is, apparently, no reference to sakes, but it's not easy to think of necessary conditions. Disjoining the suggested sufficient conditions does not result in a necessary condition. It does not take much imagination to think of scenarios in which I did it for John's sake, but neither to help him, not to honor him, nor to commemorate him. I may simply have done it to please him (to humor him, to impress him . . .). There's no reason to think that we can construct a complete list of motivations, specified without overt reference to sakes, thanks to which I count as having done it for John's sake. This raises the question what the methodology of paraphrase is.

On a natural view, a paraphrase (in the present kind of content) offers something truth conditionally equivalent to a problematic target sentence, but lacking the target sentence's apparent ontological commitment. A familiar problem is that, equivalence being a symmetric relation, some further consideration needs to be adduced to show why we should take the apparent (smaller) commitments of the paraphrase more seriously than the apparent (larger) commitments of the sentence paraphrased. In the case of sakes, we do not reach that debate, since we do not have equivalence.

Even so, we have something that properly discourages an ontology of sakes. Suppose I did it to please John. There's an action of mine, governed by an intention: I intend that by doing the action I please John. No hint of sakes. So if that fact is enough to ensure that I did it for John's sake, it seems we should not imagine that doing it for John's sake is a matter of standing in a relation to an entity, John's sake.

The underlying general principle might be expressed like this:

(*) if p entails q, then the ontology of q does not exceed that of p.

The notion of entailment I wish to invoke is just necessitation: p entails q iff every world at which p is true is a world at which q is true. The ontology of a sentence, as I will use that phrase here, consists in the things that have to exist for the sentence to be true.[6] Otherwise put, x belongs to the ontology of p iff every world at which p is true is a world at which x exists.[7] "I did it to please John" entails "I did it for John's sake"; since the former does not require an ontology of sakes, (*) entails that nor does the latter. The principle ensures that a whole range of cases seemingly favorable to exoticism would lose their force. Here are some examples:

1. "The Greeks thought that Zeus was powerful" entails "The Greeks thought about Zeus." By RWR, the former does not require an ontology containing Zeus, so, by (*), nor does the latter.
2. "Ponce de Leon has summoned his men and told them that there is a fountain of youth (he heard it from a reliable source), that finding it would enable each of them to attain immortality, and wealth

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[6] Other notions of ontological commitment are appropriate for other purposes. For example, one might say that Fs belong to the ontology of a *theory* (a set of sentences closed under a relation of consequence) iff there's a theorem of the theory which says that there are Fs; or one might say that Fs belong to the ontology of a *person* iff that person can know a priori that it would be inconsistent to combine what she believes with the claim that there are no Fs. The various notions are very far from co-extensive. Expressions of the form "x is ontologically committed to y" themselves involve intensional verbs, as Church (1958) says. The explication in the text is one way to offer an operator reduction, the operator in this case being modal rather than one used to attribute a propositional attitude.

[7] This is not quite right, since it has the unwanted result that an impossible sentence includes everything in its ontology. By contrast, it seems intuitive to say that unicorns must exist for "Unicorns exist" to be true, but centaurs don't need to. This is a problem, but not one pertinent to the present discussion.

beyond imagination, that therefore they would be starting at dawn the next day, using a rough map drawn by the local informant. Next day at dawn, true to his word, Ponce de Leon led the expedition up river." entails "Ponce de Leon sought the fountain of youth." Since the series of sentences that does the entailing does not have an ontology that includes the fountain of youth, nor does the entailed sentence. This relies on the following assumption, which I take to be uncontroversial: it can be true that de Leon told his men that there is a fountain of youth without there being a fountain of youth.

3. "Conan Doyle wrote certain words (these are specified) with certain intentions (specified using O-sentences)" entails "Conan Doyle created Sherlock Holmes." Since the entailing series of sentences does not have an ontology that includes Sherlock Holmes, nor does the entailed sentence.

(*) itself cannot be disputed, but there is room for dispute about its application. In the case of sakes, an objector might say that the entailing sentence has an ontology which includes sakes, since it entails a sentence whose ontology include sakes. We reach a familiar kind of impasse; (*) will not help us solve the general problem of ontological commitment.

However, the impasse does not arise in the present dialectic. That is because the agreed acceptance of RWR principles ensures that the entailing sentences in (1)−(3) do not have an exotic ontology. The dialectic thus ensures we have a firm starting point, and (*) enables us to transfer this to the anti-exoticist conclusion concerning V-sentences. Indeed, in very many cases, like example (2), we don't even need to appeal to RWR.

There is a small overstatement in the previous paragraph. What RWR ensures is that the names (and other relevant expressions) that tempt us to an exoticist conclusion for V-sentences do not have referents, exotic or other, as they occur in O-sentences. For most of us, there will be an insignificant gap between that point and the stronger point of the previous paragraph: the entailing sentences do not have an exotic ontology. But suppose the exotic entities are necessary existents. Then they belong to the ontology of every truth; so they would belong to the ontology of the entailing sentences.

The view that exotica are necessary entities is not one that, as far as I know, has been taken seriously (though I don't wish to imply that it should

not be), so I'm not going to take seriously the task of refuting it. I will just note a couple of problems. One is that the nonactualist versions of exoticism cannot accept that the exotic entities are necessary, for our own world is a counterexample. The only theorists who could use the envisaged escape route are those who think of exotic entities either as nonexistent or as existent but nonconcrete. The second point is that the supposed exotic entities are clearly closely related to the contingent. The myth of Zeus does not exist in every world; even atheists who believe there is such an exotic thing as Zeus (the mythical god) in every world in which the myth exists might be reluctant to say that there is such a thing as Zeus (the mythical god) in a world which never has contained and never will contain intelligent life.

The conclusion of this section is as follows. Many V-sentences are entailed by a set of sentences containing only neutral sentences and O-sentences, and these, we are assuming, do not have an exotic ontology. So, by (*), the entailed sentences also lack an exotic ontology. No assurance has been given that a suitable entailment holds for every V-sentence. The general claim is that every V-truth is entailed by some set of sentences which are either neutral or else are O-sentences. Apart from induction, I have not thought of a way to argue for the more general conclusion (which, I confess, does not diminish my confidence in its truth!). What I'll do in the final section is consider a variant of the present strategy which is certainly limited in its application, but is nonetheless, I believe, quite significant.

6. Propositionalism

Propositionalists say that every V-sentence is reducible to an O-sentence. This is much stronger than merely the entailments considered in the previous section. The view dates back at least to Quine (1960). He suggests, for example, that the V-sentence "I want a sloop" is equivalent to the O-sentence "I want that I have a sloop," and that the V-sentence "I'm looking for the chairman" is equivalent to the O-sentence "I am endeavoring that I myself find the chairman."[8] Quine thought that one merit of propositionalism is that it could explain the contrast between the

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[8] Quine 1960: 154–6. I have simplified the examples.

nonspecific and what he calls relational readings, a contrast which an exotic ontology leaves unexplained.

More recently, Peter Ludlow has given an interesting argument for a propositionalist treatment of some V-sentences. He points out that there's an ambiguity in

Max needs a bicycle tomorrow.   (cf. Larson 2002: 5)

It can be read as saying that Max will tomorrow need it to be the case that he has a bicycle (at some future time or other, maybe much later than tomorrow). Or it can be read as saying that Max will (perhaps as early as later today) need it to be the case that he has a bicycle tomorrow. As the disambiguations illustrate, if we gloss the verb "need" in terms of the operator "—needs that" we find two slots in which to insert the adverb: either as qualifying the needing, as in the first reading, or as qualifying the having, as in the second. This may be taken as an argument for the view that, at least in these cases, what we really have before us is an intensional operator (and so two verbs) rather than a single intensional verb.

The argument is interesting but, as Larson notes, somewhat limited in scope. It's hard to get the ambiguities for sentences built from "fears" and "worships," used as intensional verbs. So at best it will deliver a somewhat restricted propositionalism.

Even a limited propositionalism is somewhat suggestive. It suggests the essentially secondary place that V-sentences often occupy. Every time there's a propositionalist reduction, we see we should not be looking to V-sentences as a guide to ontology. My aim in this section is to point out two cases of reduction that I find specially striking.

The first concerns thinking about. To think about something is to entertain a suitably related internally singular propositional content. For example, for John to think about Pegasus is for John to stand in some attitudinative relation to a propositional content expressible using "Pegasus." The content might be that Pegasus flies, though no restriction is placed. The attitude might be that of believing or imagining or simply entertaining the proposition; again, there's no restriction.[9]

One could present the proposed reduction schematically. The proposal is that sentences on the same row in the table are equivalent:

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[9] My view on this issue has been substantially influenced by discussion with Tim Crane.

Table 10.1. Thinking about Propositional

X thinks about n	For some attitude A and some property F, X As that n is G
X thinks about the G	For some attitude A and some property F, X As that the G is F
X thinks about a G	For some attitude A and some property F, X As that a G is F
X thinks about many Gs	For some attitude A and some property F, X As that many Gs are F

This is significant because it shows that what many people rightly take as the central case of intentionality does not require exotic objects. The possibly empty "intentional object" in the grammatical sense has been safely relegated to an embedding under an intensional sentence operator. Thinking about an object reduces to a proposition-related activity. If the proposition involves an object, as it will if it is expressed using a non-empty name, then the thinking about will also involve an object: we'll have external singularity. If not, any singularity will be internal.

Might one not just think about, say, Paris, without thinking any specific thing about it? "Ah, Paris . . . !" It seems to me that thinking about Paris must put the city in some kind of light, as attractive, expensive or whatever (the ellipsis in the quoted phrase is not without point); likewise for any object. The light in which my thought places the object provides the predicative material for the propositional content.

One might propose such reductions as a contribution to the semantics of intensional verbs. Then perhaps the reducing sentence gives the "logical form" of what it reduces. That is not the spirit of the present proposal. I simply ask the equivalences to be noted. They ensure, for the reasons rehearsed in the previous section, that the V-sentences have no ontology not possessed by the O-sentences; and RWR tells us that the O-sentences require nothing exotic for their truth.

The second example is

Holmes is famous.

This is capable of being understood in two ways. On one reading, it makes a claim that is properly evaluated for its fidelity to the story, rather than for literal truth. Thus conceived, it's false, for Holmes shunned publicity and

allowed the bumblers at the Yard to take credit for his successes.[10] However, understood as a contribution to literary sociology, it's true: Holmes is, as theorists often remind us, more famous than any real detective. Doesn't this strongly suggest that exoticism cannot be avoided? In particular, it might seem that some kind of polysemous approach is required: on the false reading (the one in which it's a failed attempt to be faithful to the stories) it might be that "Holmes" has no referent, but the impression that it needs a referent for the true reading can be very powerful. Subject–predicate sentences cannot be true unless their subject expressions have a referent; right? And isn't "Holmes is famous" just a true subject–predicate sentence?

I think not. Whatever one's final view about the syntactic–semantic parsing of the sentence, one must take into account the fact that for something to be famous is (and is nothing more than) for it to be thought about in the right sort of deferential way. We have a two-stage reduction: being famous is a special case of being thought about, and thinking about, by the earlier reduction, is essentially a matter of an attitudinative relation to a proposition.

These reductions seem to me rather striking. Although I've not attempted an exhaustive survey of V-sentences, these kinds of case suggest that it would be strange indeed if there lurked a true V-sentence that was not at least entailed by, and perhaps reducible to, O-sentences (along with neutral sentences). It looks as if the role of V-sentences is to come to our aid when we don't have any very specific information about the relevant underlying O-facts. They are simply less specific versions of O-sentences, or versions of unspecific O-sentences, and so won't involve us in exotica if the O-sentences do not.

I think I have given serious reasons for thinking that we can have intentionality and intensionality without exotica. That's very different from providing a satisfying semantics for intensional verbs which reflects this metaphysical point. I'll conclude with one observation about the semantic question.

Intensional verbs are well named: the expressions in the second place contribute something other than their extension. That's why hunting

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[10]   That's roughly true of some of the earlier stories, but in *The Reigate Puzzles* we read that "Europe was ringing with his name and [. . .] his room was literally ankle-deep with congratulatory telegrams."

unicorns is one thing and hunting centaurs another, despite the fact that "unicorn" and "centaur" do not differ in extension. Exoticism in effect denies this: intensional verbs emerge as semantically ordinary, and only metaphysically strange. I prefer a more conservative view according to which they are metaphysically ordinary and semantically (slightly) strange.

I have already noted in passing that exotic objects won't deliver everything we want in an account of intensional verbs; in particular, they have no role in explaining the contrast between specific and unspecific readings. An unspecific desire for a sloop is not a desire for an exotic sloop: a nonexistent, nonactual, or nonconcrete sloop will not satisfy it. Moreover, there are quantificational facts that exoticism cannot begin to touch. If I desire a sloop nonspecifically, there is no sloop that I desire, but there is something I desire, namely, a sloop. The "something" quantification can't be regarded as over sloops, even if there are exotic ones among them, or else we are back to a specific reading.

This fact points to something a semanticist must address, and which exoticists signally fail to take into account. We have to distinguish between an object of an intensional verb, reading "object" in just an ordinary way so as to include sloops, and the content of the noun phrase in its second slot.[11] The noun phrases may not refer, but they all need to have contents. The content contributes a condition under which the state the verb introduces will be realized. On an unspecific reading, the content of "a sloop" in "I want a sloop" contributes to a specification of a state necessary and sufficient for my desire to be satisfied: that I stand in some suitable relation (not specified by the sentence, but a salient one is possession) to a sloop. In extensional contexts, contents contribute their extensions, but in these kinds of context they contribute themselves. That's what the "something" operator engages with: there is something I want, namely, a sloop, even though there's no sloop I want. It's not a quantification over objects, but a quantification that engages contents. What I want is a sloop; a desire-satisfying state is to be specified using the content *a sloop*. He's got a sloop? Then his desire is satisfied.

In short, I think an appropriate semantic approach to intensionality will mirror a feature I regard as familiar: reference without referents will be mirrored by contents without objects.

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[11] This works for typical cases. Obvious modifications are needed for others (e.g. passive inversions).

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