

REPLY TO LUDOVIC SOUTIF AND CARLOS MARQUEZ

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Article info

CDD: 401

Received: 03.05.2022; Accepted: 14.05.2022

<https://doi.org/10.1590/0100-6045.2022.V45N3.RL>

Keywords

Indexicals

Abstract: The author's response to Ludovic Soutif & Carlos Márquez's contribution to the special issue on *The Indexical Point of View*.

I

My claim regarding the *Enterprise* case is that as long as the subject entertains no doubts as to whether *this ship* [pointing to the bow] is the same as *this ship* [pointing to the stern], she will think of it via the same sense, and be in no position to question (the truth of) this identity statement, thanks to her unreflectively taking it for granted that the ship is the same. By the same token, she will be in *no position* to rationally assent to “this ship₁ [pointing to the bow] weighs x pounds” while dissenting from “this ship₂ [pointing to the stern] weighs x pounds”. Once she learns that the *Enterprise* has been divided into two uneven halves while still taking it for

granted that it is the same ship, she will still be in *no position* to rationally assent to “this ship₁ [pointing to the bow] weighs x pounds” while dissenting from “this ship₂ [pointing to the stern] weighs x pounds”. On the other hand, if she rationally assents to “this ship₁ [pointing to the bow] weighs x pounds” while dissenting from “this ship₂ [pointing to the stern] weighs x pounds”, this is because she is *in a position* to do so thanks to entertaining doubts as to whether the ship is the same. For, on my view, in taking it unreflectively for granted that the object is the same the subject is in no position to assent to the one and dissent from the other statement.¹ This, I believe, leaves no room for having more senses than my criteria of sameness and difference for thoughts are devised to admit of. (It leaves no room for what I called proliferation of senses, which Soutif and Marquez more precisely call the semantic underdetermination and variability of thought-individuation.) But I may be wrong.

What about the case brought up by Soutif and Marquez in which the two *Enterprise* parts are replaced, unbeknownst to the subject, by those of another ship in which the subject rationally assents to “this ship₁ [pointing to the bow] weighs x pounds” while dissenting from “this ship₂ [pointing to the stern] weighs x pounds”? Since each of her thought episodes draws upon her former perception of one ship as well as upon her current perception of another ship, in assenting to “this ship₁ [pointing to the bow] weighs x pounds” the subject is expressing a confused thought (that is either equivocal or fails to refer, as the case may be, as claimed in the book) and in dissenting from “this ship₁ [pointing to the stern] weighs x pounds”, she is expressing another confused thought. I am glad that Soutif and Marquez alerted me to this case since in chapter 3 I was somewhat hesitant to resort to confused thoughts in accounting for the subject’s (synchronically) taking parts of two different ships for parts of a single ship. Now that we have a clear case of applying

(CD') or (CD) as criteria of thought individuation makes me more comfortable with this. The alternative view that is due to Evans, that in cases such as these (where the information that causally derives from both ships is combined in an indecomposable way) the subject is suffering an illusion of thought (discussed at length in chapter 3) is simply wrong in the light of the fact that the subject is judging here that she is thinking two different thoughts.

II

Let us turn now to the Rip Van Winkle case. I have claimed that when Rip wakes up after 20 years and utters 'Yesterday was a fine day' the thought that he is thinking is the same as the thought that he was thinking when he uttered 'Today is a fine day' before he went to sleep, due having *d*, the day he went to sleep, as its sole causal source and representing *d* as the same as the day that his original belief was about, despite his failure to make the standard appropriate linguistic/semantic adjustments. The latter of the stated conditions fulfills my criterion of sameness for thoughts which states that what makes an indexical thought the same over time consists in taking it for granted – in raising no doubts - that the individual thought about is the same from one occasion to the next.

However, Soutif and Marquez raise doubts about the (joint) sufficiency of these two conditions for thinking the same indexical thought over time. In support of this, they claim that, in spite meeting these two conditions, Rip's latter thought is not the same as the former one. For, in thinking it Rip lacks an adequate Idea of its target in failing to bring an objective (allocentric) temporal frame of reference into coincidence with a temporal egocentric frame – of the kind used to specify the subject's position in time vis-a-vis the

events (and follow this by the foregoing quotation from Campbell²). Then they remark:

Having no adequate Idea of the target of his thought, Rip is presumably deprived of the capacity to draw inferences human beings usually draw to find their way through time and adjust behaviour accordingly, namely inferences involving particular times referred to objectively ...

Keeping track of the days in Bozickovic's broader sense (than Evans's and Campbell's) *may* allow Rip to retain on $d+20$ years the original indexical belief expressed on d by "today", despite Rip's failure to make the standard appropriate linguistic/semantic adjustments. But this certainly does *not* amount (for Rip) to think the same *thought* on d and $d+20$ years, especially if the thought expressed is to be public and shareable, as it is required of Fregean thoughts. For the thought to own these properties, the subject must have an adequate conception of its object, which is obviously not the case, as the story is usually told by philosophers, with Rip.

In defending the (joint) sufficiency of the two stated conditions for thinking the same indexical thought over time against Soutif's and Marquez's charge, note that in the book (p. 81), I claimed that on finding out that he slept for 20 years, Rip will need to update his belief as a result of taking a different temporal perspective towards d which requires additional identifying information. He will typically express this belief by means of the character "That day was a fine

day', no longer finding the character 'Yesterday was a fine day' suitable. In being disposed to update his belief, Rip seems to manifest having an adequate Idea of *d*. (If we took this sequence to involve two distinct thoughts, the former deprived of an adequate Idea of *d*, as Soutif and Marquez claim, the latter involving an Idea of *d* as a result of Rip's recovery from the error of fact that he was making, it would be, it seems to me, unclear how the former thought gave way to the latter if it is 'deprived of the capacity to draw inferences human beings usually draw to find their way through time'.) In so doing, Rip manifests the ability to express his earlier belief (thought). As Ludlow notes, upon waking up, Rip still has the ability to say things such as 'That was a fine day – just before I fell to sleep, however long ago that was'. Rip's thought is also public and shareable in that people in the know third parties are in a position to report Rip's thought along the lines of 'Rip was thinking that day – 20 years ago to be a fine day'. That report is true in that Rip is being attributed the same thought that he had 20 years ago (Ludlow 2019, 74). (In accordance with my discussion in chapter 8 of the book, for such a report to be fully correct (in Frege's sense), the reporters would need to think of *d* in the same way as Rip which at the very least requires that they also remember *d*, but if they do not remember *d*, their report is as accurate as it would be had Rip not lost track of time.)

By the same token, Rip still has the ability to bring an objective (allocentric) temporal frame of reference into coincidence with a temporal egocentric frame, to draw inferences human beings usually draw to find their way through time and adjust behaviour accordingly. Some of these inferences and behaviour will be misplaced given Rip's mistaken conception of how the context has changed. But, this is by no means a freak accident. For, in far more commonplace cases our inference and behaviour is similarly misplaced as a result of making similar errors of fact.

Suppose, as I did in the book (p. 68), that I form an indexical belief (thought) that I express by ‘Today is a fine day’, and in being unaware that midnight has passed, I utter the same sentence again with the intention of re-expressing that very belief (thought). This does not seem to deprive me of continuing to think the thought that I was thinking before midnight, and of the abilities that Soutif and Marquez speak about. But, once again, I may be wrong.

Notes

1 Of course, ‘being in a position to rationally take conflicting epistemic attitudes’ can be taken more broadly. In this sense, the subject who knows that the morning star is the evening star is in a position to rationally take conflicting epistemic attitudes towards (the thoughts expressed) by the sentences ‘the morning star is a body illuminated by the Sun’ and ‘the evening star is a body illuminated by the Sun’ that Soutif and Ludlow discuss in their review in relation to my discussion of the modal and non-modal criteria of difference for thoughts: (CD) and (CD’). To be sure, I do not distinguish a synchronic from a diachronic version of (CD’) for the very reason that Soutif and Marquez recognize (note 6). They are also right in recognizing (note 4) that the functional transparency of mental content is the kind of transparency that is relevant for my purposes.

2 Curiously, Campbell (2002, 90 ff.) does not seem to make requirements for having an adequate conception of an object similar to those brought up in the passage that Soutif and Marquez quote when he claims that demonstrative sense is *inter alia* given by the *experienced* as opposed to the *objective* location of the object thought about, but I cannot deal with this issue here.

References

Campbell, J. 2002. Reference and Consciousness. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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