

# I and You, He\* and She\*

By Tomis Kapitan

*Analysis* 52, no. 2 (1992), 125-128.

In 'You and She\*' (ANALYSIS 51.3, June 1991) C.J.F. Williams notes the importance of reflexive pronouns in attributions of propositional attitudes, and claims to improve upon an earlier account of Hector-Neri Castaneda's in [1]. However, to the extent which his remarks are accurate, they reveal nothing that Castaneda hasn't already said, while insofar as they are new, they obliterate distinctions vital to Castaneda's theory.

Castaneda called these pronouns quasi-indicators and noted that they function as linguistic devices used for attributing indexical reference to others. For example, in hearing Arthur say 'I am wise' we would report his claim in English with,

(1) Arthur thinks that he himself is wise.

where 'he himself' is a quasi-indicator used to attribute to Arthur reference to himself qua self -- an expression that Castaneda abbreviated with 'he\*.' Note that (1) is quite different from,

(2) Arthur thinks that I am wise

for 'I', functioning here as an indexical term, represents only the speaker's reference. Nor can (1) be identified with,

(3) Arthur thinks that Arthur is wise.

for this fails to represent the indexical character of Arthur's thought. Thus, (3) falls short of the informational content of (1). Moreover, as Williams, echoing Castaneda, points out, Arthur might not know that he himself is Arthur, or that he is named 'Arthur.' Hence, (3) might be false even if (1) is true.

Williams observes that 'she' can also be used in oratio obliqua to report an indexical

usage, e.g., in

- (4) Arthur told Mary that she ought to talk to Shirley  
Makepeace's mother.

The conventions of English allow that 'she' is here used to attribute a second-person reference to Arthur which, in oratio recta, he would convey with 'you.' Williams is correct to point this out, but Castaneda observed twenty-five years ago that 'he', 'she', 'her', etc. can be used to report second-person indexical usage as well as third-person demonstrative reference (see [2]).

Nowhere did he suggest that 'he\*' is the unique quasi-indicator, or that only first-person usages can be conveyed by reflexives.

But now Williams begins to derail. He challenges Castaneda's claim that the quasi-indexical assertion of the form  $\delta\phi^*a$  entails  $\delta\phi ba$ , where  $\delta$  is any attitudinal verb,  $\phi$  a predicate,  $a$  the main subject, and  $*$  the quasi-indicator 'he\*' going proxy for a term  $b$ . Because 'thinks that' can be understood as establishing either a "transparent" or an "opaque" context, Williams finds an ambiguity in statements like (3). Read transparently, (3) is entailed by (1), though not so when taken opaquely. Now if Williams takes 'transparent' to imply existential commitment on the speaker's part -- so-called 'referential transparency' -- a common way to display the transparent reading of (3) is through the de re construction,

- (5) Arthur believes of Arthur that he is wise.

So understood, (5) is entailed by (1), since the attitude attributed in (1) is in some sense directed towards Arthur. Generalizing,  $\delta\phi^*a$  always entails  $\delta\phi aa$  when  $*$  is the first-person quasi-indicator and  $\delta\phi aa$  is read transparently.

But Williams is wrong to think that Castaneda denies this entailment or that he overlooks the ambiguity of (3). Castaneda has written a great deal about the transparent/opaque contrast (see [4] and [5]), and readily admits both that quasi-indicators are referentially transparent and that (1) entails (3) when the latter is understood as (5) (see [3], p. 455; [4], pp. 174-8; [5], p. 797;

[8], p. 107). What he would insist concerning the case at hand is two things. First, if 'he' in (5) is not the quasi-indicator 'he himself' then (5) does not entail (1) since (5) does not then guarantee that Arthur is thinking of himself in a first-person way. Hence, there is no reduction of (1) to (5). Second, if (3) is read in the de dicto sense as revealing the exact proposition Arthur thinks, then (1) does not entail (3) since (1) does not imply that Arthur thinks the third-person proposition that Arthur is wise.

Williams obscures this. Impressed by the fact that (1) entails (3) in the transparent de re reading (5), he goes on to repudiate the need for the concept of referential opacity, thereby suggesting that (3) is not ambiguous. This is a mistake. Admit that (1) conveys reference to a res, hence, permits existential generalization and entails (5); it does not follow that (3) is unambiguous. Plainly, the de re reading of (3) does not reveal how Arthur referred to himself and in this respect it differs from (1). In language Castaneda has come to favor, (5) is propositionally opaque because it does not reveal the exact proposition Arthur is said to have thought (see [4], [5], [6], [8]). However, when a de dicto construal of an attitude report is taken to convey the exact content ascribed to an agent then it is propositionally transparent. Understood in this way (3) not only expresses something different from (5) but, unlike (5), is false, hence, is not entailed by (1), just as Castaneda claimed in [1], p. 134. Consequently, while we can agree that (1) entails (5), we must preserve the contrast between the propositionally opaque and transparent readings of (3).

The failure to reduce (1) to either (3) or (5) accords with Castaneda's claim that quasi-indexical usage is an indispensable part of the language of other minds, an indispensability which is parasitic on the irreducibility of indexical reference to non-indexical reference. This irreducibility is due to the presence of indexical modes of presentation in indexical thought; we experience the world in terms of this's and that's, I's and you's, here's, now's, then's, and none of these can be replaced by non-indexical modes. Each reveals the fact that the subject is

experiencing things from a particular perspective, and to translate in terms of non-indexical representation is to lose this perspectivity. Moreover, each person's perspective is unique to that person. No one shares my particular here's and I's, and I cannot think in terms of anyone else's this's and you's; perspectival thought is mediated through determinate indexical properties each of which has just one instance (see [8], p. 76). What we share, however, are the indexical determinables. For example, each of us has first-person I-thoughts even though our specific modes of presentation are different. It is our grasp of the indexical determinables that underlies our ability to attribute indexical reference to others; I can know how you think indexically, even though I cannot share your exact perspective or think your exact content. Thus, I can use quasi-indicators to "depict" the content of your indexical references, but not to reduplicate them exactly ([8], p. 5).

If Castaneda is correct about this, Williams' later critical suggestions (pp. 145-6) are off the mark. He writes that in establishing the content of what is said attention should be given not just to the speaker, but also to what the hearer could be expected to understand. To illustrate,

If you say to me 'You are fat', there is a sense in which I  
shall understand your words only if I take you to have told  
me that I am fat. Speaker's you is hearer's 'I'. (p. 145)

Similarly, when Arthur says to Neil 'You ought to go', Williams concludes that "What Arthur tells Neil, Neil is told by Arthur" (p. 146). This is misleading. If what Castaneda has said about indexical reference is correct, a first-person reference is distinct from a second-person reference ([8], pp. 71-3). Arthur is referring to Neil qua YOU, not qua SELF, whereas when Neil hears Arthur's words he is caused to think a first-person proposition in which he refers to himself qua SELF. Hence, while Arthur and Neil are referring to the same entity -- in some sense of 'same' -- they do so through different modes of presentation. Consequently, their propositional content must differ, contrary to what Williams said.<sup>1</sup>

Department of Philosophy  
Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, IL 600115, USA

## REFERENCES

- [1] H-N. Castaneda, 'He: A Study in the Logic of Self-Consciousness', Ratio 8 (1966) 130-157.
- [2] H-N. Castaneda, 'Indicators and Quasi-Indicators', The American Philosophical Quarterly 4 (1967) 85-100.
- [3] H-N. Castaneda, 'On the Logic of Attributions of Self-Knowledge to Others', The Journal of Philosophy 65 (1968) 439-456.
- [4] H-N. Castaneda, 'On the Philosophical Foundations for a Theory of Communication: I, Reference', Midwest Studies in Philosophy II, P. French, T. Uehling, and H. Wettstein, eds., (Minnesota, 1977) 165-186.
- [5] H-N. Castaneda, 'Reference, Reality, and Perceptual Fields', Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association 53 (1980) 763-823.
- [6] H-N. Castaneda, 'The Semiotic Profile of Indexical Reference', Synthese 49 (1981) 275-316.
- [7] H-N. Castaneda, "Philosophical Refutations," in J. Fetzer, ed., Principles of Philosophical Reasoning (Rowman and Allanheld, 1984) 227-258.
- [8] H-N. Castaneda, Thinking, Language, & Experience (Minnesota, 1989).

i. In [7] and in [8], pp. 80-87, Castaneda gives an extended discussion of an argument by S. Boer and W. Lycan in 'Who Me?' The Philosophical Review 89 (1980) 427-66, against some of his irreducibility claims. There he indicates that his approach relies on an account of the sense in which an 'I' and a 'you' can refer to the same entity. An analysis of such sameness is developed in his theory of guises, a comprehensive account of mental content (see, for example, [8], chapters 13 and 14).