Enkrasia and *de se* Ascriptions

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This note is a brief discussion of Broome's analysis of the notion of 'ought', as it occurs in its central principle of *Enkrasia*. We follow on Broome's footsteps seeking to shed some light on several features that characterize this elusive notion: ownership, propositionality, and reflexivity. As we will argue, 'ought' is best viewed as a higher-level predicable [cfr. Williams (1992)], in this case a function that takes a first-level predicable as its argument. This, as we will show, is the best way to account for the kind of reflexivity that the principle of Enkrasia seems to require. We also discuss the status of Castañeda's *quasi-indicators*, and their role in *de se* ascriptions, such as Broome's 'ought'-ascriptions, as contained in the principle of Enkrasia.

I. THE NOTION OF 'OUGHT' AND THE PRINCIPLE OF ENKRASIA

In his challenging book [Broome (2013)], John Broome provides an answer to the 'motivation question' — how is it that some of our beliefs seem to have causal powers? How is it that when we believe that we ought to do something, this belief causes our intention to do it? Rationality seems to require some of our beliefs and intentions to be connected in a special way. Broome makes the required connection between belief and intention explicit through the principle of *Enkrasia*, which, in its most complete formulation, states the following:

Enkrasia. Rationality requires of *N* that, if

(i) *N* believes at *t* that she herself ought that *p*, and if

(ii) *N* believes at *t* that, if she herself were then to intend that *p*, because of that, *p* would be so, and if

    (iii) *N* believes at t that, if she herself were not then to intend that
        p because of that, *p* would not be so, then

    (iv) *N* intends at t that *p* [Broome (2013), p. 170].

We are not rational unless we intend to do what we believe we ought
to do, and Broome convincingly argues in favour of the general ap-
plicability of such a principle throughout the book. This principle sus-
tains an "enkratic disposition" that human beings exhibit, as a result of
natural selection, to some degree or another – the disposition to intend
to do what we believe that we ought to do.

    Three peculiar predicates are central in this formulation of the
enkratic disposition: 'believe', 'ought', and 'intend.' They are 'peculi-
ar' because, unlike most common predicates, these transitive verbs
can take whole sentences as their complement. I can *believe you*, but I
can also *believe that* the Apollo 13 mission was really a scam filmed
by Stanley Kubrick. 'Intend' and 'ought' very rarely, if at all, take
simple noun-phrases as their complements. From a logical standpoint,
these expressions work as operators, higher-level functions, one of
whose argument-places is not to be filled by a singular term denoting a
particular object. Broome discusses at length in the first part of his book
the kind of role that 'ought' plays in the formulation of Enkrasia.
Amongst the different possible meanings that the word 'ought' can dis-
play in natural language, 'the central ought is normative, owned, un-
qualified and prospective' [p. 44]. In the following sections, we will
discuss three features of this particular ought, as it has to be used in the
formulation of Enkrasia, its *owned*, *propositional* and *reflexive* nature.
In order to do this, a simplified version of Enkrasia will suffice:

    Enkrasia, roughly. Rationality requires of you that, if you believe
    that you yourself ought that you F, you intend that you F [p. 21].

    'Ought' is used here in the antecedent of a conditional, embedded
under a belief operator, as a function that seemingly takes as arguments
an object, 'you, yourself', and a proposition, 'that you F'. The 'owned'
and propositional nature of this 'ought' will be the focus of our next sec-
tion, where we explore the syntactic status of the verb's subject, as used
in this simplified version of Enkrasia. Sections III and IV present a dis-
cussion of the reflexive nature of the pronoun and its implications for the
propositional status of the complement. Thus, we first discuss the left-

side argument of the verb as it appears in Enrasia – 'you, yourself', and afterwards we move to the right-side argument –'that you F'.

II. Owned Oughts and the Property/Proposition Dispute

'Ought', like other modals, such as 'possibly' or 'necessarily', seems to have one argument-place for a proposition or a property, as we will discuss below, but its apparent logical structure is not sufficent to display the intuitive distinction between cases (1) and (2):

(1) Alison ought to get a sun hat.

(2) Alex ought to get a severe punishment.

Only in (1) is the subject of the sentence somehow *responsible* for coping with the conditions established by the subordinate clause. Alison is 'at fault if she does not get a sun hat' [p. 12], while Alex cannot be said to have 'responsibility' in any sense of the word to get a severe punishment. Getting a sun hat is required *of* Alison, while getting a severe punishment is not required *of* Alex. Broome argues that Enrasia should be phrased with the aid of the kind of 'ought' involved in (1), an *owned ought*.

The logical analysis of this 'ought' has thus to accommodate a reference to the owner of the ought, but the way in which this should be done is not entirely spelled out by Broome. In fact, he seems to be claiming two things about the logical status of the owner which are not necessarily compatible with each other:

> [...] my artificial grammar makes available a second argument-place for the subject of the verb that follows 'ought' [p. 14].

> Some authors have assumed that when an ought is a propositional operator it must be unowned. That was a confusion. An owned ought may be a propositional operator that is indexed to a person. So please do not assume that a propositional ought must be unowned. Indeed, I have just defined a propositional ought as a sort of owned ought [p. 15].

Thus, in the first quote, Broome supports the idea that the subject of the subordinate-clause fills an argument-place of the 'ought' function, while the second quote suggests that owned 'oughts' with propositional arguments are *indexed* to the subject of the subordinate-clause.

Similar as they sound, these statements can be quite straightforwardly taken to correspond to two different analysis of the logico-syntactic status of the subject of the subordinate-clause. This difference can be represented as follows [cfr. Castañeda (1986), p. 389; (1988), p. 112].

(1') [Ought] (Alison, that Alison will get a sun hat)

(1'') [Alison-ought] (that Alison will get a sun hat)

In (1') 'ought' is a binary operator, having Alison and that-Alison-get-a-sun-hat as arguments, while 'Alison-ought' is a monadic operator in (1''), having only one argument-place, filled by the proposition that-Alison-will-get-a-sun-hat. Typically, when using any kind of indexed n-ary function – an operator or a predicate – we are saying something *about* whatever fills the argument-places of the function, *with respect to* whatever indices the function might be attached to. In Kaplanian terms, argument-fillers modify the *content* of our claims, while *indices*, in this sense, only modify the *circumstances of evaluation*.

The debate of arguments and indexes (the left-side argument debate) has an effect on the right-hand side debate, the debate about properties vs. propositions. Indexed operators are not only of use in multimodal systems, they are also linked to a traditional dispute concerning the analysis of epistemic and doxastic operators – the dispute between the *property-view* and the *proposition-view*. The right-side argument-place of owned oughts can be thus interpreted to be filled either by a *property* or by a *proposition*.

(1*) Alison ought *the property of getting a sun hat*

(1**) Alison ought *that Alison will get a sun hat*

According to the property-view, 'ought' is a function with an argument-place for a property, the property of getting a sun hat. In (1*) 'ought' is a relation between an agent (to whom the ought is owned) and a property. Alternatively, the proposition-view holds that this favoured 'ought' receives a whole proposition as an argument. It is customary to present the owner of the ought as a first argument-place (the one 'on the left side' of the operator) under the property-view, while 'ought' is usually taken to be, under the alternative proposition-view, a monadic operator indexed to its owner, with only one argument-place to be filled by a whole proposition.

Broome argues for the proposition-view, and this we take to be sufficient evidence to claim that he also supports the view according to which the owner of the ought is no longer an argument-place of the relation, but the index that completes the indexed operator:

> As a formal matter, owned oughts could be expressed either way. However, I prefer the propositional ought because it covers a wider range of deontic situations. For every property F there is a corresponding proposition FN, that N has the property F. Any sentence expressed in terms of the property ought therefore has an equivalent expressed in terms of the propositional ought. [...] But not every proposition has a corresponding property. For example, no property of the judge corresponds to the proposition that Alex gets a severe punishment [p. 15].

As occurs in the principle of Enkrasia, 'ought' is a monadic higher-order function, indexed to its owner, and taking a whole proposition as its argument.

The purpose of the next section is to challenge this conclusion. We will start by discussing the third feature mentioned above, the reflexive nature of the ought involved in the principle of Enkrasia. From that, we will draw some evidence to question Broome's aforementioned assumption that 'Any sentence expressed in terms of the property ought therefore has an equivalent expressed in terms of the propositional ought. [...] But not every proposition has a corresponding property'.

III. REFLEXIVITY AND IMMUNITY TO ERROR THROUGH MISIDENTIFICATION (IETM).

Enkrasia, roughly formulated, states that rationality requires of you that, if you believe that you ought to F, you intend to F. As we said above, this is Broome's way of articulating the relation between belief and intention, and therefore addressing the motivation question. Rational beings are such that if they believe that they ought to do something, then they intend to do it. For this principle to be correctly stated, though, the logico-syntactic role of the pronoun has to be qualified:

> Suppose you believe that the mate ought to learn astral navigation. Indeed you believe it is the mate's own responsibility to learn; you believe the mate ought that the mate learns astral navigation. Suppose also that you

are the mate, but you do not know that; the previous mate has recently fallen overboard and the post has devolved on you, but no one has told you yet. In a sense, you believe you ought to learn astral navigation, since you are the mate and you believe the mate ought to learn astral navigation. In a sense, your belief ascribes ownership of the ought to you. Nevertheless, you may be entirely rational even if you do not intend to learn astral navigation. So if Enkrasia is to be correct, it must specify that you *self*-ascribe ownership of the ought. This does not just mean that you ascribe ownership to yourself. It means that you are in a position to express your ought-belief using the first personal pronoun 'I' [p. 22].

Rationality does not require of you that if you believe *of somebody else* – even though it turns out to be you in the end – that she ought to do something, then *you* intend to do it. As Broome's example shows, I cannot be rationally expected to derive intentions from obligations, if I do not assume that I *own* those obligations. In no way am I forced to intend what I believe others ought to do. This is the reason why Enkrasia is phrased so as to include a reflexive pronoun: if you believe that *you yourself* ought to F, you intend to F. In this section we will, first, contextualize this use of the reflexive pronoun within the discussion of the particular cognitive significance of sentences containing the pronoun 'I'. Secondly, we will point out that if Enkrasia is going to provide an adequate answer to the motivation question, it needs to include a second reflexive pronoun as well. The last section of this note will be devoted to deliniating the consequences of these two ideas.

It is reasonable to suppose that Enkrasia's constraint concerns only *de se* beliefs. Only when you believe of yourself that you ought to do something, you are irrational if you do not intend to do it. Pronouns involved in *de se* attributions cannot be substituted *salva veritate* by definite descriptions, or even proper names, referring to the same individual. This is the *problem of the essential indexical* [cfr. Geach (1957), Lewis (1979/1983), Perry (1979/1993), Castañeda (1999)]. The meaning of sentences (3)-(6) should thus be clearly distinguished:

(3) John expects that the mate will learn astral navigation

(4) John expects that he learns astral navigation

(5) John expects that John learns astral navigation

(6) John expects that he himself learns astral navigation

The term 'he himself', on the one hand, and 'the mate', 'he', and 'John', on the other, cannot be freely inter-changed as the subject of the that-clause without taking the risk of losing some essential cognitive significance associated with (6). Only in (6), as Broome elegantly puts it, is John able to express his expectancy using the first-person pronoun 'I' as the subject of the complement-clause. In Higginbotham's words, using Kaplan's example: 'I am mildly amused when I think, 'His pants are on fire', but horrified when I realize, 'My pants are on fire', having discovered the legs I was looking at were my own' [Higginbotham (2009), p. 66].

Sometimes the problem is approached from a slightly different perspective. Those cases in which my belief can be expressed with the use of the first-person pronoun are cases that display a particular kind of *immunity to error*. If (3)-(5) were appropriate descriptions of the situation, John could be mistaken as to whom he expects to learn astral navigation. He might not know that he himself is the mate, as in Broome's example; he might have suffered a temporal memory loss and be unaware that his own name is John, so that while he's able to expect that John will learn astral navigation he is in no position to express himself by saying 'I expect that I will learn astral navigation'. This *immunity to error through misidentification* [see e. g. Shoemaker (1968)] also characterizes *de se* attributions in which the information that supports our claim comes through *proprioception*. Let us consider the difference between stating that my legs are crossed as a result of looking at a mirror and checking my body posture, after I have been distracted for a while, let us say, in a conversation with somebody, and making the same statement as a result of becoming aware of my bodily posture. Only in the second case am I immune to the error of mistaking the subject of the experience for somebody else (I can take somebody else to be myself when I look in the mirror).

Nevertheless, it is not the case that every *de se* ascription is immune to error through misidentification. Take the following example, as it appears in Recanati (2007):

> [...] suppose the subject is a schizophrenic patient who believes that, among the mental states he is conscious of, some are not really his mental states, but those of some other person that have been somehow implanted in him. Let us refer to them as the subject's 'alien' states, and, for any such state, to its putative owner as 'the Other'. Suppose the sub-

> ject takes the state e_1 to be an alien state. The state e_1 might be, for ex-
> ample, the state of thinking the following thought: 'The owner of this
> mental state is good and omnipotent' (or equivalently: 'I am good and
> omnipotent'). The schizophrenic subject in whose mental life this
> thought occurs will understand that *the Other* — the person from whom
> the thought emanates — declares himself/herself to be good and om-
> nipotent. If he thinks his psychiatrist is the Other, he will tentatively as-
> cribe the property of being good and omnipotent to the psychiatrist, not
> to himself [Recanati (2007), p. 183].

If Recanati's description is plausible, there we find a subject having a
mental state that he would normally express by using the pronoun 'I',
and yet he takes the state to belong to a different person, *the alien*. So
'reflexive mental states', *de se ascriptions* as the ones we presented,
should be split into two different groups, those that exhibit immunity
to error through misidentification, and those that do not exhibit such a
feature. The list that we presented above should consequently be ex-
panded to include a contrast between (6) and (7):

(7) John expects to learn astral navigation

It takes little argument to show that, if Enkrasia contains a *de se* as-
cription, as Broome holds, this ascription belongs with those that are
immune to error through misidentification. Rationality cannot require
of a subject that an alien state has some bearing on that person's inten-
tions. As we shall show in the final section, the analysis of this kind of
de se ascriptions might shed some light on the dispute between those
who defend the proposition-view, like Broome, and those who support
the property-view.

Before moving to this final section, though, we need to empha-
size a point that could be obscured by Broome's "mature" formulation
of Enkrasia. Compare Enkrasia's condition (i), as it appears in
Broome (2013), p. 170 – N believes at t that she herself *ought that p*,
and the same antecedent (in p. 21) – if you believe that you yourself
ought that you F. Broome being a defendant of the proposition-view,
takes those two antecedents to be equally revealing. But even from
such a perspective, paying attention only to the mature formulation of
the principle could hide the fact that the subject of the subordinate-
clause, rather than simply referring to the owner of the ought, has to
work also as a *quasi-indicator*. Some of the oughts that I own concern

what other people should do. Enkrasia does not connect these oughts with my intentions – if the ought's subordinate-clause did not contain a de se ascription, Enkrasia would be of no use. If Enkrasia is going to properly address the motivation question, the aforementioned antecedent should read: if you believe that you yourself ought that you yourself F. This is not necessarily incompatible with Broome's mature formulation of the principle, but his formulation can make it less apparent.

IV. 'OUGHT' AS A HIGHER-LEVEL FUNCTION

In order for Enkrasia to bridge the gap between beliefs and intentions, we have argued, the principle needs to be formulated using two *quasi-indicators*. In stating the principle, we need to make two *de se* ascriptions –I need to ascribe *myself* both ownership of the ought, and a certain obligation specified by the subordinate-clause. These *de se* ascriptions need to be immune to error through misidentification, for Enkrasia to properly express a restriction that rationality imposes on us. We will show in this section that these considerations bear some importance on the debate between the property-view and the proposition-view.

Within the field of *de se* attributions, a similar divide can be found between those who think that in order to give a proper analysis of *de se* thoughts it is enough to include modes of presentation in a traditional Kaplanian proposition [Perry (1979/1993)], and those who think that immunity to error through misidentification has to be granted by *taking out* the subject of the proposition, and postulating that the subordinate-clause of the attribution expresses an object-less proposition – a property without a bearer, a *relativized* proposition [Lewis (1979/1983)]. This second line of thought is suggested by examples like (7), where immunity to error through misidentification seems to make the context completely transparesubordinate-clausent — no substitutivity problem can arise in this context, because there seems to be no object that we can be mistaken about. We will leave the first option unexplored, and focus on what would be the impact of the second analysis of *de se* ascriptions on Broome's 'ought'.

Instead of enriching the so-called Kaplanian proposition with modes of presentations corresponding to the self, D. Lewis thought that a proper analysis of immune *de se* ascriptions could be provided

by getting rid of the contribution to the proposition supposedly made by the subject of the subordinate-clause. In a self-ascription of this sort, we do not predicate a relation between ourselves and a proposition, we ascribe a property with respect to ourselves. In (7), I ascribe an expectation to the extent that learning astral navigation should be made true of myself. When I say that 'my pants are on fire', or 'my legs are crossed', I ascribe the property of having burning pants, or 'being cross-legged' with respect to myself. Under this deflationary analysis of otherwise intensional operators, they become immune to error through misidentification, and therefore they are not affected by substitutivity problems, which were the two features that characterized the phenomenon.[1]

A more harmonious way to make sense of the notion of a relativized proposition could be provided by C.J.F. Williams' unified analysis of higher-order operators [Williams (1992)]. Williams starts with Geach's notion of a predicable: a predicable is 'an expression which can be used to predicate something of something, though it may not be so used in the current context' [Williams (1992), p. 449; Geach (1980), §18]. According to Williams, 'no-place predicables' are the logico-syntactic counterparts of traditional propositions. In classical Fregean fashion, to produce monadic first-level predicables out of no-place predicables, we subtract a name from a no-place predicable. A monadic second-level predicable results from subtracting a first-level predicable out of a no-place predicable, and so on. Uninstantiated normal properties are expressed by using first-level predicables, expressions that form no-place predicables out of names, while quantifiers, among others, are (binary) second-level predicables, forming no-place predicables out of first-level predicables. Relativized propositions, those expressed in de se ascriptions with the aid of first-level predicables, and full-fledged propositions are thus associated with the same logico-syntactic category, that of predicables. Relativized propositions are, in this respect, no longer a logical *rara avis* to be used in the analysis of de se ascriptions. The exotic nature of relativized propositions should no longer be a deterrent for those that sympathize with Lewis' position.

Let us now go back to Broome's defence of the proposition-view. In Broome's view, the proposition-view is superior to the property-view because 'Any sentence expressed in terms of the property ought therefore has an equivalent expressed in terms of the propositional ought' [p. 15]. If Lewis' analysis of de se attributions is correct, then not only do we have a case to show that Broome is wrong, but we

have a critical case to do so: Enkrasia has to be interpreted as a Lewisian *de se* case, if it is to provide an answer to the motivation question. It is thus not true that everything that we can do by using properties and relativized propositions we can do by using propositions. By taking 'ought' to be a second-level concept, taking first-level concepts – relativized propositions – as arguments, we are able to explain precisely those cases that matter the most to Broome. Certain de se cases can be expressed only with the aid of first-level predicables, and do not have an equivalent that contains only no-place predicables. In Enkrasia, 'ought' is a second-level concept that takes one of these first-level concepts as its argument.

In summary, we have argued for three points in this note. The first two are weaker than the third, and can be accepted independently. First, we have contended that if Enkrasia is going to play the role that it is supposed to play in answering the motivation question, it needs to contain, in its rough formulation, not only one, but two quasi-indicators. Second, we have claimed that these pronouns mark two de se ascriptions characterized by immunity to error through misidentification. It is not enough that I can express these ascriptions by using the pronoun 'I'; if these contexts were not totally transparent – i. e. immune to error, Enkrasia would not provide an answer to the motivation challenge. Finally, we have shown that one of the most promising analyses for these de se ascriptions is one where complement-clauses embedded under the 'ought' operator contain first-level predicables; they express relativized propositions, rather than full-fledged ones, as the proposition-view maintains.

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NOTES

   [1] Much can be said, and has been said, about the plausibility of this theoretical option. In particular, one could doubt that relativized propositions are good candidates to be the content of propositional attitudes, or that the use of relativized propositions is enough to be free from the need for modes of presentation. As we said above, our line of argument here simply assumes that something close to Lewis' analysis can be made to work.

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RESUMEN

        El objetivo de esta nota es discutir diferentes aspectos del análisis de 'debe' de Broome, tal como aparece en el principio clave de Encrasia. En primer lugar, defendemos que si Encrasia ha de desempeñar un papel clave a la hora de responder a la

cuestión de la motivación, tiene que contener dos cuasi-indicadores. En segundo lugar, se argumenta que esos pronombres señalan adscripciones *de se* cuando se favorece un enfoque lewisiano. Finalmente, se muestra que este enfoque es incompatible con un análisis proposicional de la noción de 'debe'.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Broome, Encrasia, pensamientos* de se.

ABSTRACT
      The aim of this note is to discuss several aspects of Broome's analysis of 'ought', as it appears in the key principle of Enkrasia. First, we defend that if Enkrasia is going to play a role in answering the motivation question, it needs to contain two quasi-indicators. Second, it is argued that these pronouns mark *de se* ascriptions, where a Lewisian approach is favored. Finally, it is shown that this approach is incompatible with a propositional analysis of the notion of 'ought'.

KEYWORDS: *Broome, Enkrasia*, de se *Thoughts*.