OUKA
The University of Osaka
Institutional Knowledge Archive

Title	<Review>Scott SOAMES, Rethinking Language, Mind, and Meaning, Princeton University Press, 2015, 256pp., ISBN : 9780691160450.
Author(s)	Izumi, Yu
Citation	Philosophia OSAKA. 2016, 11, p. 73-85
Version Type	VoR
URL	https://doi.org/10.18910/54528
rights	©2016 by Yu IZUMI. All rights reserved.
Note	

The University of Osaka Institutional Knowledge Archive : OUKA

https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/

The University of Osaka

Reviewed by Yu IZUMI (JSPS/Kyoto University)

Scott SOAMES, *Rethinking Language, Mind, and Meaning*,
Princeton University Press, 2015, 256pp., ISBN: 9780691160450.

This book is based on the Hempel Lectures Scott Soames gave at Princeton University in 2013 and provides the most fleshed-out and up-to-date presentation of a cognitive account of propositions Soames has been developing in recent years (in particular, see Soames 2010, King, Soames, and Speaks 2014). First, I will summarize the main points presented in each chapter, and then turn to some of the remaining issues left unanswered in the book. I will conclude this review by sketching a possible application of Soames's semantic framework.

Soames begins chapter 1 by tracing the history and development of what he describes as the "dominant semantic conception in theoretical linguistics today" (p.6). According to this dominant conception, which has evolved out of the pioneering work on formal logic by Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, and Alfred Tarski, the meanings of natural language sentences are specified in terms of when the sentences are true or false (i.e., their truth conditions); the role of a sentence is to "represent" the world as being a certain way, and the sentence is true just in case the world in fact is the way represented by the sentence. This "representational paradigm" (p.6) is a natural (and perhaps an inevitable) descendant of the foundational studies of logic and science because logic and science are primarily concerned with truth and falsity as well as truth-preserving relations between sentences.

This representational paradigm in philosophy of language and linguistics is tied to traditional accounts of propositions because "propositions" are normally identified with the meanings of sentences (relative to contexts). According to two prominent traditional accounts, propositions are understood as sets of possible worlds or as Russellian structured entities consisting of particular objects and their properties. The structured entities account of propositions is often seen as overcoming the inadequacy inherent in any account that defines propositions as sets of truth-supporting circumstances (worlds, situations, etc.). For example, if propositions are defined as sets of possible worlds, since all necessary statements (e.g., true statements in mathematics) are true in all possible worlds, the proposition that 1+1=2 would have to be identical with the proposition expressed by the Pythagorean theorem. No one would, however, consider 1+1=2 to mean the same thing as the Pythagorean theorem. On the other hand, the structured entities account of propositions can distinguish these two statements because the propositions expressed by them would consist of different objects and relations. Nevertheless, Soames is no less critical of the structured entities account

than of a possible worlds account. For example, Soames emphasizes the so-called "unity" problem of propositions. If the proposition that Socrates died is constituted by Socrates and the property of *having died*, what is it that puts these two constituents together to make the pair representational? The mere pair of Socrates and the property of having died is not a right kind of object that represents the world as being a certain way and thereby is truth-evaluable. Soames views traditional accounts of propositions as inadequate and possibly even incoherent. For Soames, the dominant conception of semantics, which is based on the traditional accounts of propositions, is essentially inadequate to achieve the main goal of this book, namely the "goal of founding a truly scientific study of language and information" (p.7). Thus, Soames sets out to find a new account of propositions that is more suitable for serving this purpose, and the greater part of the book is devoted to developing and defending his own "cognitive" conception of propositions, which is first introduced in chapter 2.

In chapter 2 "The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Information," Soames starts describing a new approach to understanding propositions, according to which propositions are identified with mental acts or events in which agents representationally predicate properties of objects. To illustrate, imagine a yellow soccer ball and call it "o." The proposition that o is yellow is the act of predicating the property of *being yellow* of o. Taking for granted that human cognition is representational (that agents represent is "an uncontested certainty" p.16), this conception of propositions overcomes the "fundamental defect of traditional conceptions of propositions" (p.15), which is to consider propositions to be conceptually and explanatorily prior to agents who make use of propositions. By doing so, Soames claims, the traditional accounts leave many questions unanswered. For example: How can propositions be representational? How do we "grasp" or "entertain" propositions? It is not difficult to see how the answers to these questions follow from the cognitive conception of propositions sketched above. Consider again the proposition that o is yellow. This is a mental act in which *being yellow* is predicated of o. Since it is assumed that human agents represent the world as being certain ways, this act of predication (namely, the proposition that o is yellow) seems to be representational as well. Likewise, entertaining a proposition is understood in cognitive terms. An agent "entertains" the proposition that o is yellow in virtue of *performing* a particular act, namely, the proposition that o is yellow (that is, the agent predicates *being yellow* of o). Soames also suggests that other attitudes towards propositions ("judging," "believing," "hoping," etc.) can be understood by extending this cognitive notion of entertaining a proposition. For example, "to *judge* that B is red is to perform the predication in an affirmative manner" (p.18). Besides the basic act of entertaining a proposition, an agent performs some further mental act, such as affirming that predication as true (alternatively, an agent perhaps performs the act of predication in a different manner). These further mental

acts account for a variety of attitudes we can observe in our language and mental life. This cognitive view of propositional attitudes closes the epistemological gap between agents and propositions traditionally construed (sets of worlds or structured entities). One of the looming issues that the proponents of traditional accounts have been facing is the question of how agents stand in an attitudinal relation to abstract entities such as sets of possible worlds. On the cognitive conception, by contrast, there is no explanatory gap to be filled with respect to the relation between agents and propositions. As an illustration, consider belief. For an agent to believe some proposition is for her to entertain that proposition while performing some further mental act, and the agent's act of entertaining the proposition is an instance of the very proposition (remember that a proposition is an act of predication, that is, the same as entertaining that proposition). In other words, a proposition itself is a constitutive part of an agent's psychological attitude; therefore, in explaining propositional attitudes, there is nothing to add over and above an account of psychological attitudes that agents have. A major attraction of this cognitive conception of propositions is that it is mostly naturalistic and potentially widely acceptable by the broad cognitive science community, including both linguists and psychologists.

After explicating atomic propositions, chapter 2 also discusses how the cognitive account applies to complex and compound propositions covering truth-functional connectives, quantification, definite descriptions, and necessity and possibility modals. I will return to the significance of this discussion of compositional semantics later. The remaining part of chapter 2 touches on two important themes that recur multiple times throughout the rest of the book: the distinction between understanding an expression and merely knowing the meaning of that expression, and what Soames calls "Millian modes of presentation," the role of which is to individuate propositions cognitively in a fine-grained fashion. Simply put, Millian modes of presentation are ways of identifying a constituent of a proposition. Since ways of identifying a propositional constituent are involved in mental acts, they distinguish propositions that require agents to perform mental acts in particular ways from propositions that have no such special requirements. As a result, Millian modes of presentation enable distinguishing truth-conditionally equivalent, but cognitively distinct propositions, which Soames exploits to account for a variety of truth-conditionally equivalent pairs of sentences. For example, assuming that a *that*-clause is a directly referential expression the semantic contribution of which is a proposition, the sentences below will be truth-conditionally equivalent because the proper name *logicism* presumably contributes nothing but the proposition that arithmetic is reducible to logic to the semantic content of the whole sentence.

(1) Logicism is (the proposition) that arithmetic is reducible to logic.

(2) Logicism is logicism. (p.41)

It is, however, possible that an agent takes two conflicting attitudes towards (1) and (2). One may accept the proposition expressed by (2) while rejecting the proposition expressed by (1). Soames thinks that (1) and (2) are truth-conditionally equivalent because they just identify one and the same thing with itself (namely, the proposition that arithmetic is reducible to logic). Nevertheless, Soames's cognitive conception of propositions distinguishes the two propositions expressed by (1) and (2) on the basis of Millian modes of presentation. Call "l" the propositional constituent that is being identified with itself in these propositions. Because of the composite nature of the embedded *that*-clause in (1), in entertaining the proposition expressed by (1), agents must identify l by entertaining it, namely, by predicating *being reducible to logic* of arithmetic. On the other hand, in entertaining the proposition expressed by (2), agents merely have to use the proper name *logicism* to identify l (they can do so in virtue of knowing the meaning of *logicism*). Thus, the propositions expressed by (1) and (2) are different, making it possible that an agent takes differing attitudes towards (1) and (2).

One might object that users of the name *logicism* cannot be said to know the meaning of it unless they know that *logicism* means the view that arithmetic is reducible to logic; and so an agent who knows the meaning of (2) would also have to entertain the proposition that arithmetic is reducible to logic in virtue of knowing the meaning of *logicism*; therefore, Soames's conception would not be able to distinguish the propositions expressed by (1) and (2).

This objection leads to one of the recurring themes I mentioned above: the distinction between understanding an expression and knowing its meaning. According to Soames, "understanding an expression is *not*, in general, having knowledge of its semantic properties. Rather, understanding is having the ability to use the expression in conventionally expected ways" (p.45). The objection above overlooks or disregards this distinction by equating knowing the meaning of *logicism* to being fully versed with the conventions surrounding the uses of *logicism*. Soames denies that the latter is required for one to be a competent user of the name *logicism*; being able to describe the content of logicism is not part of the lexical meaning of the name *logicism*. Individuals who accept only (2) indeed seem to lack relevant background knowledge about logicism, and we usually have no problem in attributing the competence of using *logicism* to such individuals. As illustrated by this example, Soames appeals to Millian modes of presentation to account for the significance and differences of truth-conditionally equivalent sentences, addressing a number of widely discussed problems in philosophy of language: Russell's "Gray's Elegy" case, Frege's puzzle about identity, Saul Kripke's puzzle about belief, Kripke's "Paderewski" case, and so on. Below I will discuss a few applications of this general strategy.

Soames develops a more detailed account of Millian modes of presentation and explores their implications in chapters 3 through 8. In chapter 3 "Thinking of Oneself, the Present Moment, and the Actual World-State," three types of Millian modes of presentation are introduced: a "first-person" way of identifying a particular person, a "present-tense" way of identifying a particular time, and a way of identifying a world as "this very world-state" (the actual world). Although they are all legitimate Millian modes of presentation, Soames considers only the first two types of cognition to play a significant role in distinguishing propositions and accounting for information exchange. Here, I will focus on the first-person Millian mode of presentation that is used to distinguish *de re* and *de se* propositions. Compare the following pair of sentences:

(3) Yu Izumi is in danger.
(4) I am in danger.

Given a context in which I am the speaker of the sentences, (3) and (4) are truth-conditionally equivalent, just as (1) and (2) above, whereas (4) is motivationally different from (3) in the sense that seriously accepting (4) motivates me to act accordingly (such as avoiding a threat). Notably John Perry (1979) and David Lewis (1979) have proposed a semantic system that can account for this contrast. Soames criticizes their views (chapters 3 and 9), and applies the cognitive conception of propositions to this case. According to the cognitive conception, while the proposition expressed by (3) is simply the act of predicating *being in danger* of a particular individual (however that individual is identified; it is me, but it does not have to be identified *as me*), the proposition expressed by (4) incorporates the first-person way of identifying the predication target, me, in addition to its basic component, the predication of *being in danger* of me. Since I am the only person who can truly identify oneself with me, no one but I can entertain the proposition expressed by (4). This "limited accessibility" accounts for why sentences like (4) can be motivationally special.

Chapter 4 "Linguistic Cognition, Understanding, and Millian Modes of Presentation" extensively discusses "linguistic" Millian modes of presentation considering a number of classic examples involving proper names. For example, what distinguishes the proposition expressed by (6) from that by (5) is that in the former proposition the predication target, namely Mr. Hempel, is identified using the expression *Carl Hempel* in the second argument.

(5) Peter Hempel is Peter Hempel.
(6) Peter Hempel is Carl Hempel. (p.77)

Chapter 4 also extends this line of discussion to other cases such as those involving general terms (e.g., *Water is H_2O*) and Kripke's (1979) puzzle about belief.

Chapter 5 "Perceptual and Demonstrative Modes of Presentation" introduces another Millian mode of presentation: a perceptual way of cognizing a propositional constituent (Soames is skeptical about the existence of distinctive "demonstrative" Millian modes of presentation). As an illustration, let us suppose that a bird called "B" is a cardinal owned by Tom, and you know full well that B is Tom's pet cardinal because Tom has introduced B to you as a pet cardinal before. Also suppose that you have no reliable ability to discriminate Tom's pet cardinal from other birds of similar size (let alone from other cardinals). Assuming that a demonstrative expression such as *that* given a context only contributes a particular object to the overall content, (7) and (8) will be representationally (truth-conditionally) equivalent in this scenario.

(7) B is Tom's pet cardinal.
(8) That [demonstrating B] is Tom's pet cardinal.

It is, however, possible that (8) is more informative than (7), or that (8) has some significance that is not present in (7), since you can naturally utter (9) upon the reintroduction of B.

(9) I didn't realize that that [demonstrating B] was Tom's pet cardinal. (p.98)

On the cognitive conception of propositions, (8) as well as the embedded clause of (9) can express a proposition that incorporates the perceptual Millian mode of presentation that requires agents to identify B based on their visual experience. Predicating *being Tom's pet cardinal* of B while visually identifying B is different from merely predicating *being Tom's pet cardinal* of B. This is how it becomes possible that you do not initially accept a proposition even when you have knowledge of a truth-conditionally equivalent (but cognitively distinct) proposition. Soames applies this idea of perceptually individuated content to some of the classic issues in philosophy of mind: Frank Jackson's (1982) "knowledge argument" and Thomas Nagel's (1974) famous question as to "what it is like to be a bat." As for the latter question, Soames suggests that the cognitive conception of propositions enables understanding the differences and similarities between the cognition of human agents and that of non-human animals:

> Since the perceptual modes of presentation of bats are very different from ours, it is impossible for us to entertain many of the perceptually enhanced propositions they do.

> However, with enough research on bat perception and bat psychology we may be able to specify representationally identical counterparts of those propositions that both they and we entertain. (p.104)

Soames's discussion here is interesting for two reasons. First, it clearly shows that the cognitive approach to understanding propositions is (at least a part of) a general account of content and information, and it has a number of implications for debates in philosophy of mind and cognitive science. Soames's view must be tested and verified considering its rich implications and predictions concerning topics in these areas. Second, this quote also illustrates how Soames views animal cognition. Soames takes as primitive the notion of predication, an essential component of the cognitive conception of propositions, and so he does not fully elucidate what it is. The discussion here suggests that the ability to predicate something of something is at least shared by other mammals, and that linguistic competence is not required for entertaining propositions. I will revisit this topic of predication later in this review.

In chapter 6 "Recognition of Recurrence" and chapter 8 "Recognition of Recurrence Revisited," Soames examines the notion of recognition and asks whether cognizing something as "recurring" or recognizing two occurrences of an expression as having the same content constitutes another type of Millian mode of presentation that can be incorporated into cognitive propositions. The main target of this chapter is Kit Fine's (2007) "relationist" semantics that takes recognition of recurrence as its core part and attempts to solve many of the puzzles Soames addresses in this book (Frege's puzzle, Kripke's puzzle, etc.). Arguing against the idea that recognition of recurrence is essentially involved in an explanation of the semantic features of an expression, Soames states, "Recognition is a ubiquitous feature of thought and inference, and hence not an essentially linguistic matter at all" (p.127). For Soames, recognition of recurrence is a pragmatic feature of human thinking in general, and it is not encoded as part of the semantic content of any sentence. That is, on the one hand, Soames considers recognition of recurrence to constitute another Millian mode of presentation that can be incorporated into propositions (they are pragmatically invoked in some instances of Frege's puzzle), and on the other hand, he takes recognition of recurrence to have no place in the semantics of natural language. To pick a simple example that Soames uses to argue against Fine's semantic relationism, Soames mentions Nathan Salmon's example, (10) below, claiming that, since *ketchup* and *catsup* are "variants of the same term" (p.129), if being a competent user of these expressions were requiring one to recognize them to have the same content, it would become impossible to ask a meaningful question using (10).

(10) Is catsup ketchup? (p.129)

Although the overall thesis about recognition of recurrence Soames defends in these sections seems plausible, this particular example is not compelling. The words *ketchup* and *catsup* can be seen as *independent* synonymous expressions in the speaker's lexicon, and so Soames's premise that *ketchup* and *catsup* are variants of the same term might turn out to be false.

Each speaker holds a different perspective in producing and understanding speech, and a type of cognition available to one speaker may not be available to another. For Soames, propositions are individuated in terms of cognition in a fine-grained fashion, and so there are many propositions the entertainment of which is restricted to agents taking particular perspectives. Then, will there be many propositions that cannot be communicated through speech? Chapter 7 "Limited Accessibility" addresses this question, and Soames's answer is that the hearers are often able to identify precisely what has been asserted without being able to entertain it. As an example, consider the following *de se* claim made in the circumstance where the speaker knew for some time that the person in a store mirror (which turned out to be the speaker) made the mess (see, Perry 1979).

(11) Only now do I realize that I made the mess. (p.145)

Since the speaker knew that the person (the speaker) made the mess, (11) is plainly false, semantically speaking. What is asserted is, however, different from the semantic content of (11) relative to this context. Pragmatic enrichment is needed to recover the asserted content, and the embedded clause expresses a proposition incorporating the first-person way of identifying the subject (i.e., a *de se* proposition). This enriched proposition expressed by the embedded clause of (11) is something that the speaker did not realize earlier (the speaker, though, knew the truth-conditionally equivalent *de re* proposition that the speaker made the mess). Since the hearers often identify themselves in the first-person way, they understand what it is to have such a first-person form of cognition (for one thing, it is motivationally special). Accordingly, the hearers can identify the *de se* proposition asserted by the use of (11), which incorporates the first-person Millian mode of presentation and allows no one but the speaker of (11) to have a privilege to entertain it (because no one but the speaker of (11) can identify herself with the referent of the embedded subject *I*). This is how it becomes possible to communicate propositions of limited accessibility. Soames outlines basically the same explanation for the communication of propositions that incorporate present-tense and perceptual Millian modes of presentation as well as recognition of recurrence.

The next two chapters, chapter 9 "Situating Cognitive Propositions in a Broader Context" and chapter 10 "Overcoming Objections," are devoted to defending and motivating the account of propositions developed so far in the book. In chapter 9, Soames compares his own

views with the existing semantic frameworks and solutions to the puzzles he has discussed in the previous chapters. In particular, Soames discusses Perry's and David Lewis's accounts of *de se* attitudes, Salmon's treatment of identity statements, and Kripke's (2011) Fregean view of first-person and temporal indexicals. The basic approach Soames adopts towards these various positions is the same: worrying and undesirable outcomes of each position are pointed out, and the cognitive conception of propositions is shown to deal with the cases at hand in a less worrisome way. Chapter 10 addresses some of the objections to the cognitive conceptions of propositions. Let me discuss one objection and Soames's response to it. The "most common objection" (p.209) according to Soames is that it is a category mistake to conceive of propositions as things we *do*; it is obviously counterintuitive to say that we *do* this or that proposition, and so propositions can't be mental acts we perform. Soames's reply to this objection is two-fold. First, Soames suggests that what is important is to meet "the explanatory goal" (p.210) and not to preserve our intuition, and he states:

> By supplying us with representationally identical but cognitively distinct propositions, the cognitive conception delivers results we need … [cognitive propositions] impose different conditions on minds that entertain them. As argued in chapters 3-8, this opens up many new opportunities for explaining cognitive and linguistic facts. (p.211)

For Soames, the cognitive conception of propositions has a number of explanatory advantages over competing accounts of propositions, and these advantages counterbalance the *prima facie* counterintuitive consequence. Second, Soames seeks an explanation for why we are inclined to think that it is a category mistake to consider propositions to be things we do. The proposed reason is that we are prone to cling to a visual analogy: just as we see a thing and become aware of the thing seen, we "see" a proposition in the "mind's eye" and become aware of the proposition that we entertain, believe, assert, etc. Since we are not always aware of an act we perform, a proposition understood on this "mind's eye" view can't be an act we perform. This visual analogy is, however, precisely what must be rejected given the cognitive conception of propositions, which is motivated by its explanatory virtues. According to the cognitive conception, in entertaining a proposition, an agent has to identify its propositional constituents, such as an object and its property, and the agent is by no means required to identify the whole proposition, the very act of predication that the agent performs. In other words, the agent has to be aware of the constituents of a proposition, but not of the proposition itself. Thus, it is unjustified to assume that we are always aware of a proposition itself. We are inclined to think that propositions are not things we do merely because of this unfounded assumption. An important objection discussed in this chapter is concerned with the notion of predication, which I will return later.

Chapter 11 "Worries, Opportunities, and Unsolved Problems" introduces three independent questions arising from the semantic framework developed in the book that need to be answered in future studies. Soames also attempts to sketch possible answers to the questions. The first question is how to account for the distributional facts about the complements of attitude verbs. For example, *believe* takes both noun phrase and *that*-clause as its complement, whereas *think* only takes a *that*-clause. Ideally, the distributional facts like these should follow from an analysis of attitude verbs based on the cognitive account of propositions. The second unanswered question is how to handle the so-called "empty names" such as *Vulcan* and *Pegasus*. If a proposition is an act of predicating something of something, and *Vulcan* provides no predication target, then the seemingly true sentence *Vulcan doesn't exist* can't express a proposition at all because there is no act of predication where there is no predication target. The third and final question is how to extend the cognitive account of propositions beyond declarative sentences. I will discuss this last question below.

I concur with Soames that the cognitive conception of propositions is a good candidate for providing a foundation of linguistic meaning and content in general. In particular, it opens up the possibilities of connecting formal linguistic analyses of various constructions to the resources and insights accumulated in cognitive science in general. It is true that linguistic semantics is normally classified as a branch of cognitive science, the study of the human mind. Nevertheless, working semanticists are often dedicated to and consumed by providing (compositionally) the right truth conditions of the sentences in question, and it is unclear how the characteristics of human cognition give rise to the observed truth conditions of particular constructions. Furthermore, it is sometimes difficult to adjudicate between truth-conditionally equivalent analyses of the same constructions. The cognitive conception of linguistic meaning can shed light on the relation between human cognition and formal analyses of linguistic expressions, and may help to verify or falsify competing, equivalent semantic analyses.

For the cognitive conception of propositions to genuinely fulfill the ultimate "goal of founding a truly scientific study of language and information," two important tasks must be accomplished. The first task relates to the compositional semantics Soames sketches in chapter 2 and one of the three unanswered questions he mentions in chapter 11. Getting compositional semantics right is very important if Soames's account of propositions purports to be a genuine alternative to standard semantic systems that have been successful in deriving the truth conditions of a great number of constructions in the world's languages. Semanticists have developed formal systems that can account for the intuitive meanings of sentences containing not only basic logical connectives and alethic modal operators—expressions discussed by Soames—but also epistemic and deontic modals, attitude verbs,

comparative adjectives (e.g., *tall*), interrogative constructions including *wh*-sentences, answers to questions (e.g., *yes, no*), imperatives, focus elements, different types of particles (e.g., *too*, *already*, *like*), evidentials (e.g., *yooda* in Japanese), and the list keeps growing. Analyses of these expressions are often given using the notion of propositions as sets of possible worlds (or situations). If the cognitive conception of propositions is the right way to understand the meaning of natural language, it must be possible that existing formal analyses are reinterpreted or paraphrased in cognitive terms available within the semantic framework developed in this book. So what needs to be done is to clarify the connection between this foundational cognitive view of linguistic information and current formal systems that mostly utilize the notion of propositions as sets of possible worlds (or situations) by going through a substantial fragment of a particular natural language.

The second task is to elucidate the notion of predication. A proposition is essentially defined as an act of predication, but the notion remains underspecified. Soames describes an act of predication as follows:

> One might, however, wonder what it is to predicate a property of an object. Though I don't have a definition, there are some things to be said. To predicate redness of B is to perceptually or cognitively represent B as red, which is to see, visualize, imagine, or cognize B as red in some other way. These are different *ways* of predicating, *not different doings in addition to predicating* … There are no mode-neutral events of bare predication. (p.22, italics in original)

This description raises more questions than answers about the nature of predication. For example, according to Soames, seeing is representational and it is a kind of predication. Then, what characteristics of seeing make it representational? There are mechanisms that are similar to or related to vision. For example, plants are light sensitive, but we probably do not want to attribute to them the capacity to entertain propositions. What are the differences between seeing and mere light sensitivity? Answers to questions like this lead to a direct characterization of predication and a better understanding of what a proposition is.

In chapter 10, Soames discusses Peter Hanks's conceptual objection to Soames's use of predication and his response to it. It is doubtful, however, that a concept analysis of predication will bring us any closer to a proper understanding of it. If perception and cognition are representational and thereby acts of predication, it will be more fruitful to investigate perception and cognition directly, and doing so is a part of empirical psychology—*a priori* concept analysis by no means settles the issues. Figuring out the details of the propositional nature of perception and cognition will provide support of the cognitive conception of propositions.

To conclude this review, I would like to sketch another possible application of Soames's

cognitive account of propositions. In recent years there is a growing interest in the semantics and pragmatics of predicates of personal taste such as *tasty* and *fun* (for example, see MacFarlane 2014 and the citations in it), and various analyses of them have been proposed in the philosophical and linguistic literature. One puzzle about predicates of personal taste is that we have conflicting intuitions about their uses. Suppose that A and B eat the same food, and A finds it tasty whereas B does not. Thus, they speak as follows:

(12) A: This is tasty.
B: No, this is not.

On the one hand, there is a sense in which both A and B speak truly; they express their preferences about food, and no one seems to be in a position to deny either claim. On the other hand, there is a disagreement between A and B: what A says and what B says can't both be true at the same time (B clearly negates A's assertion). How can we reconcile these two conflicting intuitions about (12)? Let us appeal to a Millian mode of presentation to solve this puzzle.

The simplest analysis of the proposition expressed by (12A) is that it is the act of predicating the property of tastiness of "f," the food in question. Millian modes of presentation are ways of cognizing propositional constituents. Here, we have two propositional constituents: the property of tastiness and f. Perhaps, the semantics of *tasty* introduces a particular perceptual Millian mode of presentation: tastiness must be identified through one's own experience. A proposition incorporating this Millian mode of presentation is *de se* in some sense because it requires agents to use their own pleasing experiences when they taste food. If this semantics of *tasty* is remotely on the right track, then the proposition expressed by (12A) is a proposition of limited accessibility, since A is the only person who has access to A's perceptual experience of f, and as a result, it is only A who is able to entertain the proposition expressed by (12A). Others can identify and report the same proposition, but are unable to entertain it, just as the *de se* proposition expressed by the sentence *I am in danger* can be entertained only by the speaker of it. This analysis of predicates of personal taste accounts for why speakers seem to speak truly when they sincerely use *tasty*. In the above scenario, A is the only person who can assert (12A), because no one else can entertain the proposition expressed by it. At the same time, B is the only person who can assert (12B) because no one but B can entertain the proposition expressed by it. A and B have their own privileged access to the propositions expressed by (12A) and (12B). Furthermore, the propositions expressed by (12A) and (12B) are incompatible with one another because the perceptual Millian mode of presentation associated with *tasty* does not affect the truth-conditional content

of a proposition. The proposition expressed by (12A) is the opposite of (12B); the former predicates *being tasty* of f, whereas the latter negates that predication. Thus, there is a genuine disagreement between (12A) and (12B).

This particular application of the cognitive conception of propositions might turn out to be misguided. Nevertheless, the semantic framework Soames has elaborated in this book will no doubt inspire many more applications to issues not only in philosophy of mind and language, but also in other areas of philosophy, such as ethics and aesthetics. More research needs to be done for the cognitive conception to provide a foundation of linguistic meaning and information. But it is very clear that with this book, *Rethinking Language, Mind, and Meaning*, Soames has opened up many opportunities for future studies of human mind and language.[1]

References

Fine, Kit. 2007. *Semantic Relationism*, Malden, MA: Blackwell.

King, Jeffrey, Soames, Scott, and Speaks, Jeffrey. 2014. *New Thinking about Propositions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kripke, Saul. 1979. "A Puzzle about Belief." In Avishi Margalit, ed., *Meaning and Use,* Dordrecht: Reidel, 239-83; reprinted in Peter Ludlow, ed., *Readings in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997, 875-920.

Kripke, Saul. 2011. "The First Person." In *Philosophical Troubles*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 292-321.

Lewis, David. 1979. "Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*." *Philosophical Review* 88:513-43; reprinted in *Philosophical Papers*, vol. 1, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 133-55.

MacFarlane, John. 2014. *Assessment Sensitivity: Relative Truth and its Applications,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nagel, Thomas. 1974. "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" *Philosophical Review* 83:435-50.

Perry, John. 1979. "The Essential Indexical." *Noûs* 13:3-21.

Soames, Scott. 2010. *What Is Meaning?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

©2016 by Yu IZUMI. All rights reserved.

[1] I would like to thank Kent Erickson for his helpful comments on an earlier draft.