

Comments on Inan's Notions of Objectual and Propositional Curiosity

MIRELA FUŠ*

Department of Philosophy, University of Oslo, Norway

Department of Philosophy, University of St Andrews, Scotland, UK

In this paper I comment on Inan's notions of propositional and objectual curiosity. Even though Inan offers an interesting and intuitive distinction between propositional and objectual curiosity, I want to question two aspects of his theory of curiosity. One aspect concerns his thesis that propositional curiosity is interdependent on epistemic attitudes such as belief, certainty and interest. Another aspect of his theory that I discuss is his thesis that objectual curiosity is not reducible to propositional curiosity. In more detail, in the first part, I start off by explaining what propositional curiosity is according to Inan and I bring up two worries that I call: (i) over-complexity as a result of subjectivity and (ii) over-complexity as a result of dynamics for the above mentioned epistemic attitudes. Both worries stress the problem of over-complexity of Inan's theory of propositional curiosity. In the second part, I argue that objectual curiosity is, contrary to Inan's hypothesis, reducible to propositional curiosity. I further argue that the object of wh- questions that, according to Inan, express objectual curiosity can either be about the truth value of general or singular proposition. In addition, I suggest that only the reading where wh- questions express curiosity in a form of de re reading and have a singular proposition as their content is the one that is compatible with Inan's notion of objectual curiosity.

Keywords: Propositional curiosity, objectual curiosity, *de re* belief, *de dicto* belief, general proposition, singular proposition.

*I am thankful for the feedback on earlier drafts of this paper that I have received from the participants of two conferences, i.e. *Philosophy and Curiosity* (Maribor, April 21–23, 2015), and *Mind, World and Action* (Dubrovnik, August 24–28, 2015). I am especially indebted to Prof. İlhan Inan, Prof. Nenad Mišćević, Prof. Berislav Žarnić, and Prof. Timothy Williamson for useful comments and critique.

“The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.”

— Albert Einstein

Introduction

What is a curiosity? “A desire to know” (“desire to understand”¹) has been considered as a cursory definition or rather an abbreviation for curiosity. Apart from that, the history of philosophy did not have much to tell us about curiosity until recently.² On the other hand, notions such as belief, acquaintance, and knowledge have been discussed at great length and have earned their place within the philosophical fields of epistemology, philosophy of language and philosophy of mind.

Whereas the unknown is our starting point, curiosity is related to asking and answering of questioning or queries, and, thus, bringing us closer to either ignorance or knowledge. Inan (2014) argues that curiosity contributes to epistemic attitudes and achievements. Under the assumption that curiosity is an epistemic attitude as well as knowledge is, Inan is curious to discover the relation between curiosity and other epistemic attitudes; in particular, for propositional curiosity: a “*belief that is uncertain,*” and for objectual curiosity: “*partial acquaintance with an object.*” Furthermore, he seeks to find a place for curiosity within the existing philosophical tradition, and, by offering this distinction, he aims to clear up the possible misunderstandings.

The motivation for his theory he finds in a direct connection between curiosity and knowledge. Here I spell out a simple and intuitive argument Inan (2014) offers: (i) Knowing is (at least sometimes) an epistemic achievement. (ii) Curiosity is one of the basic motivators of knowing. (iii) Thus, curiosity is (related to) an epistemic achievement.

However, this becomes more complicated when one wants to show how exactly curiosity amounts to knowledge and knowledge related notions such as belief, acquaintance (ostensibility) and ignorance. In particular, Inan (2014: 143–144) tries to answer the following questions:

“If knowledge is a propositional attitude, is curiosity so too?”

“Is awareness of ignorance a precondition for curiosity?”

“If all knowing is in fact knowing the answer to a question, does it then follow that knowledge always originates from curiosity?”

“How does curiosity motivate inquiry into the unknown?”

“How does curiosity relate to the holding of a belief that is uncertain and how does it relate to having partial acquaintance with an object?”

In this paper, I focus on Inan’s notions of propositional and objectual curiosity as spelled out in his book *The Philosophy of Curiosity* (2012),

¹ See Descartes (1989).

² Nowadays, after a brief categorical search, one could classify curiosity under the scope of virtue epistemology.

and the ideas that he further developed in his recent paper “Curiosity, Belief and Acquaintance” (2014). Inan (2012, 2014) thus contrasts two types of curiosity: *propositional* (Aristotle’s “whether” questions) and *objectual* (“what” questions) curiosity. Propositional curiosity is a propositional attitude for Inan and it takes the following form: “S is curious whether p” where “p” is a proposition. In cases such as “I am curious whether it will rain tomorrow,” Inan argues that one is curious about the truth value of a proposition in question, namely “it will rain tomorrow.” The object of propositional curiosity is thus an unknown truth value of a proposition. Propositional curiosity has a question form: “is it the case that s?” where “s” is a full declarative sentence that expresses a proposition. On the other hand, objectual curiosity, for Inan, takes the form of *wh-* questions, such as: “Who is the murderer of Smith?” For the objectual curiosity, Inan argues, does not involve curiosity in the truth of a proposition because there is no particular proposition one is curious about.

Even though Inan offers an interesting and intuitive distinction between propositional and objectual curiosity, I want to question two aspects of his theory of curiosity. One aspect concerns his thesis that propositional curiosity is interdependent on epistemic attitudes such as *belief*, *certainty* and *interest*. Another aspect of his theory that I discuss is his thesis that *objectual curiosity is not reducible to propositional curiosity*. In more detail, in the Part I, I start off by explaining what propositional curiosity is for Inan and I bring up two worries that I call: (i) *over-complexity as a result of subjectivity* and (ii) *over-complexity as a result of dynamics* for the above mentioned epistemic attitudes. Both worries stress the problem of over-complexity of a theory of propositional curiosity. In the Part II, I argue that *objectual curiosity is*, contrary to Inan’s hypothesis, *reducible to propositional curiosity*. I will hopefully show the analysis under which his thesis comes up short and claim that objectual curiosity is, in fact, reducible to a propositional curiosity.

1. *Propositional Curiosity*

Propositional curiosity for Inan (2014) takes the following form: “S is curious whether p” where “p” is a proposition. In cases such as “I am curious whether it will rain tomorrow,” one is curious about the truth value of a proposition in question, namely, the proposition “it will rain tomorrow.” The object of propositional curiosity is thus an unknown truth value of a proposition.

Here are some further working assumptions. Inan thinks that a *belief* comes in degrees as well as curiosity. He further argues that belief and curiosity are inversely proportional. If one believes 100%, i.e. if she is completely certain in the truth value of the proposition in question, then she is not curious at all.

Certainty leaves no room for curiosity since: “Curiosity about whether a proposition is true or false can only take place under uncertainty”

(Inan 2014: 144). One can ask oneself whether a certain proposition is true or false only when one is uncertain. In brief, he thinks, dogmatics cannot be curious. Furthermore, certainty is taken here to be an epistemic attitude with respect to the truth of a proposition and Inan thinks of it as a subjective category, no matter whether the proposition is true or false objectively since: "People who are certain of their beliefs may not always have the right to be certain" (Inan 2014: 144). He also takes utterances such as: "I am certain that p, but I am still curious whether p" never to be true because one cannot be 100% certain and still be curious, i.e. one's curiosity is then 0%, which makes this conjunction false. On the other hand, one can claim: "I believe that p, but I am curious whether p" and sometimes be true because one can believe something but not be certain, and this opens a possibility for a curiosity, at least according to Inan.

Finally, there is another important parameter that also comes in degrees and that should be taken into consideration, namely our *interest* in the object of our curiosity. Inan argues that a relation between curiosity and interest is a proportional one. On the other hand, he believes that a relation between interest and belief is not an easy one, but rather a "peculiar" one, and he believes he cannot offer it without a further investigation. However, he believes that incorporating interest as a parameter should help to explain cases such as:

Lack of certainty only when accompanied with interest motivates curiosity. This is why you may hold two separate beliefs having the same degree, though you may be curious about the truth of one, and not the other, or you may be curious about both, but with different degrees. (Inan 2014: 147)

To sum up, there are various parameters and epistemic attitudes Inan thinks that are at play together with propositional curiosity. Moreover, different relations among them are quite important. Inan admits that, without further investigation, he cannot tell for sure how those three parameters relate, i.e. belief, curiosity and interest. However, he argues that *they come in degrees* and are not independent epistemic attitudes, because if they were, then they would connect to curiosity in a more obvious way. He leaves us with a following conclusion:

... for any subject and a proposition that that subject grasps, the degree of curiosity in the truth of that proposition will be *inversely proportional to the degree of belief* in the truth of that proposition, but it will be *directly proportional to the degree of interest* in the truth of that proposition. (Inan 2014: 147; italics mine)

In the remaining two subsections of this part of the paper, I will spell out my two worries related to Inan's notion of propositional curiosity. I proceed with the first worry that I call *Over-complexity as a Result of Subjectivity*.

1.1. *First Worry: Over-complexity as a Result of Subjectivity*

Let me give you the gist of this worry. Inan believes that: “Curiosity can only take place when we come to realize the fallibility of our beliefs” (Inan 2014, 145)³. As mentioned above, Inan talks about certainty or “a degree of belief” in a subjective sense. For the sake of argument, I would like to take into consideration another possible parameter that can influence our belief: namely *context sensitivity*. Context sensitivity can affect our belief in both objective and subjective sense, i.e. when *context switches* (objective sense) and as our *realization (or our failure to realize) that context has switched or could switch without us noticing it* (subjective sense). In other words, changes in context and our (failure of) tracking it can influence our degree of belief. Consequently, this would influence our degree of curiosity. It seems that our degree of curiosity can be changed because of the context sensitivity parameter either in objective or subjective sense (or both).

In particular, when taken as an objective parameter, context sensitivity can (but does not have to) influence a belief without a subject necessarily having to be directly aware of it, yet it still can affect subject's degree of belief. For example, how certain one is in the proposition that *it will rain tomorrow* depends also on the context. If context changed, e.g. if one saw more clouds, one would become less certain that it will rain tomorrow. On the other hand, when taken as a subjective parameter, i.e. our realization that context changed or could change and we would not detect it, can influence our degree of belief, in a similar way as our realization about fallibility of our beliefs that Inan mentions can change our degree of belief and influence curiosity. Thus, context sensitivity as a parameter could affect curiosity.

Moreover, we could explain a subjective context sensitivity as a parameter that is connected to the notion of our fallibility realization, which is also a subjective notion according to Inan. In this sense, our realization about our fallibility could also include a realization that all sorts of other parameters (context sensitivity included) can play a role in (a possible) change of our beliefs when things go wrong and when a change is not detected properly. These subjective realizations could, thus, motivate our curiosity.⁴

³ Timothy Williamson (in personal discussions) pointed out that what is going completely astray with Inan's strategy is that he is focusing all the time on *belief* when the curiosity has to do with *knowledge*. For example, Williamson strongly disagrees with the above claim that “Curiosity can only take place when we come to realize the fallibility of our beliefs” (Inan 2014: 145). He believes that somebody who has no awareness of their own fallibility can also be curious, let's say, about what is inside of the box. For if you don't know what is inside the box, you can still have a desire to know what is inside the box. This is for Williamson a result of his commitment that curiosity acquires a desire to acquire knowledge. However, for the sake of argument, I will proceed with Inan's notion about one's realization of one's fallibility.

⁴ The objective context sensitivity can still play a role, in sense that it could influence curiosity indirectly via our subjective realization that context has perhaps changed.

One could further argue that some other (sub)parameters and our subjective realization of their existence can affect our belief. In other words, once we allow the subjectivity into our account of a degree of belief, how do we know where to stop? For instance, allowing a subjective notion of certain parameters which includes our realization of the fallibility of our beliefs could leave us room to introduce numerous other subjective parameters that subject might have and that could consequently affect one's curiosity. This would make the interdependence between these parameters and curiosity even more peculiar. Consequently, explaining curiosity as relying on the other epistemic attitudes and parameters could become extremely complex.

Finally, I believe this could turn out problematic in two ways: (i) too complex for the subject to grasp, and (ii) too complex for a theory of propositional curiosity. First, it would presuppose either (a) subject's extremely high-order ability to grasp many real and also possible complex relations and parameters which can influence her curiosity, or, on the contrary, (b) subject's failure or incapacity to grasp (all or some of) these parameters. I think both cases seek further explanation. Second, a theory of curiosity that could possibly include so many parameters related to degree of one's belief, might turn out to be over-complex and metaphysically too rich. This sort of explanation of propositional curiosity puts a lot of weight on the subjective relations that might have influence on curiosity. There might be another, more simple, way of explaining curiosity, without using such a complex theory of explanation and putting so much demand on the subject's cognitive capacity.

1.2. *Second Worry: Over-complexity as a Result of Dynamics*

Inan assumes that in order to be uncertain about something and then become curious one has to have an object of her curiosity. In case of propositional curiosity, for him, this is a truth value of proposition. However, apart from being an object of *curiosity*, the truth value of proposition can also be taken as an object of a *belief* or an *interest* in the following forms (1)–(3):

- (1) S *believes* that p
- (2) S has *interest* in p
- (3) S is *curious* about p

Since Inan admits that belief, interest and curiosity are related, and some of them, such as interest and belief are related in a “peculiar” way, I am wondering about the possibility of different inner dynamics of these epistemic attitudes. Is it a dynamic of a conjunctions or something else?

I offer some possible structures of complex epistemic attitudes and their dynamics: (a) *Vertical dynamics* (5), (b) *Horizontal dynamics* (6), (c) *Vertical-horizontal dynamics* (7), where (4) is a zero-order epistemic attitude.

- (4) (0-order epistemic attitude) It will rain tomorrow. (T/F)
 (a) *Vertical dynamics*
 (5) (1st-order epistemic attitude) I *believe* that it will rain tomorrow.
 (1st-order epistemic attitude) I have *interest* in whether it will rain tomorrow.
 (1st-order epistemic attitude) I am *curious* whether it will rain tomorrow.

Vertical dynamics would presuppose dynamics between different first-order epistemic attitudes, i.e. belief, interest and curiosity, towards the same proposition, i.e. “it will rain tomorrow.” For example, one could at the same time hold a belief, have interest, and be curious whether it will rain tomorrow.

- (b) *Horizontal dynamics*
 (6) (3rd-order epistemic attitude) I am *curious* about my *interest* in my *belief* that it will rain tomorrow.

Horizontal dynamics would presuppose dynamics within one third-order epistemic attitude, i.e. belief, interest and curiosity, towards the same proposition, i.e. “it will rain tomorrow.” For example, one could be curious about one’s interest in one’s belief that it will rain tomorrow.

- (c) *Vertical-horizontal dynamics*
 (7) (1st-order epistemic attitude) I *believe* that it will rain tomorrow.
 (2nd-order epistemic attitude) I am *curious* about my *belief* that it will rain tomorrow.
 (3rd-order epistemic attitude) I am *curious* about my *interest* in my *belief* that it will rain tomorrow.

Vertical-horizontal dynamics presupposes dynamics that would be a combination of vertical and horizontal dynamics. For example, one could at the same time hold a belief, be curious about one’s belief, and be curious about one’s interest in one’s belief that it will rain tomorrow.

Since, in examples (5)–(7), all the three parameters come in degree, they could also influence one another and one could become more or less curious depending on what is going on between these epistemic attitudes. If we also allow a horizontal and horizontal-vertical dynamics, things might get really fuzzy. Thus, I would be curious to know more about their inner dynamics.

The moral of the second worry is partly analogous with the first worry: if we allow some other epistemic attitudes into account, those relations might get really over-complicated to explain propositional curiosity.

2. *Objectual Curiosity*

Inan contrasts two types of curiosity: propositional (Aristotle’s “whether” questions) with objectual (“what” questions). As explained in the Part 1, propositional curiosity has a question form: “is it the case that

s?" where "s" is a full declarative sentence that expresses a proposition. Object of it is an unknown truth value and he takes it to be a propositional attitude. On the other hand, according to Inan, objectual curiosity takes the form of *wh*- questions, such as: "Who is the murderer of Smith?" For the latter, namely, objectual curiosity, Inan argues that it does not involve curiosity in the truth of a proposition because:

there is no particular proposition in the form [a is the murderer] of which Holmes is curious to know. So my hypothesis is that being curious who someone is, or being curious when or where or how or why some event took place need not involve curiosity in the truth of a proposition. (Inan 2014: 148)

Furthermore, Inan thinks that *a degree of belief* is not applicable for objectual curiosity. Instead, he introduces a new epistemic parameter to explain the objectual curiosity—a *degree of ostensibility*, which he gets out of the notion of acquaintance that he takes to be: "an extensional notion, whereas what we need is an intensional one, that is, we need a notion that is sensitive not only to the degree of acquaintance of the object of curiosity, but also to what concept you represent that object in your mind" (Inan 2014: 152). For Inan, curiosity requires a conceptualization or a representation of its object: "The degree of curiosity is then a function of the degree of ostensibility of that concept. The notion of acquaintance is still relevant, but in an indirect way. We may define the ostensibility of a concept for a subject in terms of the degree of acquaintance of the object (determined by that concept) *under that concept*" (Inan 2014: 153).

To sum up: for Inan, propositional curiosity is: "a function of [one's] degree of belief and [one's] degree of interest when there is a full proposition involved" (Inan 2014: 148). On the other hand, objectual curiosity is: "a function of two factors: degree of interest and degree of ostensibility. It is directly proportional to the former and inversely proportional to the latter" (Inan 2014: 152).

Even though I, in principle, find Inan's distinction intuitive, I want to focus on Inan's thesis that *objectual curiosity is not a propositional attitude*. Inan believes that there is a difference between: "the logical status of belief and objectual curiosity [that] reveals itself in surface grammar" (Inan 2014: 149). Inan further argues that when Holmes is curious about: "Who is the murderer of Smith?", the sentence has a form of: "S is curious about the F", namely (8) will express the truth.

(8) Holmes is curious about the murderer of Smith.

However, Inan thinks that if we switched from "is curious" to "believes" as in sentences (9) or (10) below, both (9) and (10) would be ungrammatical.

(9) Holmes believes about the murderer of Smith.

(10) Holmes believes the murderer.

He further argues that this kind of interrogative sentence does not contain a full proposition and, more importantly, that there is no proposition that can be singled out of which Holmes might want to know whether that proposition is true or false, as might be the case with propositional curiosity.

Furthermore, Inan rightly thinks that introducing a long disjunctive proposition, such as (11) below, and being curious which of these propositions is true cannot help in all cases because Holmes might not have any actual nor possible suspects, yet he could still be curious *who* the murderer is.

- (11) Ralph is the murderer of Smith or Brown is the murderer of Smith or ...

He also points out that: “being curious about who the murderer is, is not the same thing as being curious about which disjunct is true in a disjunction” (Inan 2014: 150). Even if we could formulate a very long disjunction with all the possible answers, one couldn’t grasp this long proposition, he argues.

2.1. *Two Readings of Inan's Objectual Curiosity*

In the rest of this paper I would like to offer a different, yet familiar and somewhat neutral approach to this issue. I would like to argue that there is such a proposition Holmes believes when he becomes curious about the murderer of Smith. I believe that (8) can be translated into (12):

- (12) Holmes believes that *somebody* is the murderer of Smith.

Thus, Holmes is curious about *somebody*. He thinks that *somebody* did it.

Let me qualify this a bit further. The two examples, (13) and (8), depict what Inan calls propositional curiosity (13), and objectual curiosity (8):

Propositional curiosity

- (13) Holmes is curious if Jones is the murderer of Smith.

In (13) Holmes is curious about the truth value of (14), namely whether this proposition is true or false.

- (14) Jones is the murderer of Smith.

Objectual curiosity

- (8) Holmes is curious about the murderer of Smith.

In (8) Holmes is curious about who is the murderer of Smith.

The hard question is: if Holmes is curious about who killed Smith, what is the proposition that he has in mind? One can argue that it is already a background assumption that somebody killed Smith and that (13) is thus true by default, but that the real question is not whether someone killed Smith, but *who* did it? In other words, one can say that

the proposition saying that somebody killed Smith is presupposed and that is true, yet what we really want to know is *who* is the person that killed Smith. For this reason, I propose two possible readings of (12), i.e. reading (12a) and (12b) below:

Reading A

(12a) *Holmes believes that this is true: Somebody is the murderer of Smith.*

where (12a) represents *de dicto* (general) reading: it is who ever happens to kill Smith.

Reading B

(12b) *Somebody is such that Holmes believes that he is the murderer of Smith.*

where (12b) represents *de re* (singular) reading: the person who killed Smith. I also propose the reading of *somebody* from (12b) as Kaplan's (1989a, 1989b) indexical.⁵

I believe that (8) can be spelled grammatically in the manner of (12). Furthermore, I believe that (12) has two satisfactions, one is satisfied by *de dicto* reading, i.e. (12a), and another by *de re* reading, i.e. (12b).

Moreover, there is a distinction in the *scope* of the definite description *somebody is the murderer of Smith*. In the *Reading A*, the definite description has narrow scope, within the scope of 'believes'. In the *Reading B*, the definite description has wide scope, in effect "picking out" an individual and then ascribing to Holmes a belief about that individual. The *Reading A* is a *de dicto* ascription of belief (relating him to a *dictum*, a complete proposition), whereas the *Reading B* is a *de re* ascription of belief (relating him to an individual, a *res*, that his belief is about).

When one wants to say that certain beliefs are true or false one takes 'belief' to mean *thought-content* (see Boër 2007: 35). Depending on whether reading is *de dicto* or *de re*, belief-states that are reported will have different contents: "One who takes a belief-state to involve a relation to a proposition might then be tempted to suppose that the content of a *de dicto* belief is a wholly general proposition and the content of a *de re* belief is a singular proposition" (Boër 2007: 35).⁶

⁵ Kripke's (1970/1980) modal argument has been used by Kaplan (1977/1989: 512–13) to argue that demonstratives refer directly and express singular propositions.

⁶ Let me briefly explain a standard distinction between a general and a singular proposition. If one takes propositions to be structured objects and that they can contain objects and can contain properties, then some of the propositions are not going to contain any objects but just properties—namely, the *general* ones. Those are the ones that are about objects if they are about objects and only by way of properties, only qua possessors of properties, whereas the structured propositions that have objects right in them do not need to get these objects by way of properties, objects are already in there—those are the *singular* ones (see Fitch and Nelson 2013).

That would mean that *de dicto* reading of (12), namely (12a), takes a general proposition as its content, whereas *de re* reading of (12), namely (12b), takes a singular proposition as its content. Furthermore, when the content of belief-state that takes form of *wh*- questions is a singular proposition (as in 12b), a thought that is expressed in such a proposition is often called a singular thought.^{7, 8}

From that we could say that examples that Inan classifies as the ones of “objectual curiosity” can have two readings, i.e. *de dicto* and *de re*. I claimed that both of these readings have propositions as its contents, yet different ones, i.e. one having a *general*, and another *singular* proposition as its content. In this sense what Inan calls objectual curiosity can be spelled out or is reducible to the propositional one in the sense that there is indeed a proposition that one has in mind. In (12a), i.e. in *de dicto* reading, the truth of the general proposition might as well be presupposed. However, this seems not to be the proposition Inan (2014) is interested in to call it objectual curiosity. In particular, I believe that (12) when read as (12a), or *de dicto*, would be compatible with “propositional curiosity” according to Inan’s terminology, and only when read as (12b), or *de re*, (12) would be compatible with objectual curiosity according to Inan’s terminology.⁹

Conclusion

My aim in this paper was to comment on two aspects of Inan’s notions of curiosity: i.e. propositional and objectual curiosity. In the first part of this paper, I have expressed two worries concerning the epistemic attitudes and parameters that Inan takes to be relevant for propositional curiosity. Both worries that I bring up, namely the *over-complexity as*

⁷ There are three dominant theories of singular thought, namely *Acquaintance Theory* of singular thought (see Burge 1977, Donnellan 1979, Lewis 1979, Evans 1982, Boer and Lycan 1986, Bach 1987/94, Salmon 1988, Brewer 1999, Recanati 1993, Soames 2003, Pryor 2007), *Semantic Instrumentalism* (see Harman 1977, Kaplan 1989a) and *Cognitive Authority* or *Cognitivism* (see Jeshion 2002, 2009, 2010). (See Fuš 2013a: 201; also see Fuš 2013b).

⁸ As mentioned, there are different theories of singular thoughts and, at this point, I remain neutral, whether one could perhaps also accept the adopted version of Inan’s (2010, 2012) theory of ostensibility to accommodate such belief-state.

⁹ Timothy Williamson (in personal discussions) claims that curiosity is propositional because there is a desire for some *x* one knows that *x* is the murderer. Williamson finds *de re/de dicto* distinction I introduced relevant, because he thinks that in case when one is curious about who is the murderer of Smith, the knowledge that one wants to acquire is *de re knowledge* of somebody, namely the murderer. In other words, he thinks that *de re/de dicto* distinction I introduced is relevant because it is a desire for a certain sort of *de re knowledge*. However, he also rightly pointed out that a desire to have a *de re* attitude of a certain sort, isn’t itself *de re*.

My quick reply to this worry is that precisely because (12) has two satisfactions, namely *de re* or *de dicto*, only when one’s belief-state objectively satisfies *de re* reading (in which case one could also perhaps claim that one possesses *de re* knowledge), one is curious objectively (in Inan’s terms).

a result of subjectivity and the over-complexity as a result of dynamics, point at the theoretical over-complexity as a result of Inan's theory of propositional curiosity. In the second part of this paper, I have focused on Inan's thesis that *objectual curiosity is not reducible to propositional curiosity* because there is no proposition in question one can be curious about. In other words, Inan argues that there is no proposition Holmes has in mind when he is curious about the murderer of Smith. My claim, against Inan's thesis, is that objectual curiosity also comes in a form of a proposition. I have argued that there is indeed a proposition that Holmes has in mind when he is curious about the murderer of Smith. I claimed that when Holmes does not have any actual nor possible suspects to point at or call by name, he can still be curious who the suspect is, and that does not mean he does not have any proposition on his mind. I have argued that the object of *wh-* questions that express curiosity can either be about the truth value of general or singular proposition. In addition, I have suggested that only the reading where *wh-* questions express curiosity in a form of *de re* reading and have a singular proposition as their content is the one that is compatible with Inan's notion of objectual curiosity.

References

- Bach, K. 1987/94. *Thought and Reference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burge, T. 1977. "De Re Belief." *Journal of Philosophy* 74: 338–62.
- Boër, S. E. and W. Lycan. 1986. *Knowing Who*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Boër, S. E. 2007. *Thought-Contents: On the ontology of Belief and the Semantics of Belief Attribution*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Brewer, B. 1999. *Perception and Reason*. Oxford: Calderon Press.
- Descartes, R. 1989. *The Passions of the Soul*. Translated and annotated by Stephen Voss. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Donnellan, K. 1979. "The Contingent A Priori and Rigid Designators." In T. F. Jr. Uehling, P. A. French, and H. K. Wettstein (eds.). *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 12–27.
- Evans, G. 1982. *The Varieties of Reference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fitch, G. and M. Nelson. 2013. "Singular Propositions." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta. <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/propositions-singular/>>
- Fuš, M. 2013a. "Bach's Constraint on Extending Acquaintance: Some Questions and a Modest Proposal." *Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 13 (2): 201–216.
- Fuš, M. 2013b. "An Acquaintance Constraint and a Cognitive Significance Constraint on Singular Thought." *Balkan Journal of Philosophy* 5 (2): 163–174.
- Harman, G. 1977. "How to Use Propositions." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 14: 173–176.
- Inan, I. 2010. "Inostensible Reference and Conceptual Curiosity." *Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 10 (1): 21–41.

- Inan, I. 2012. *The Philosophy of Curiosity*. New York: Routledge.
- Inan, I. 2014. "Curiosity, Belief and Acquaintance." In A. Fairweather (ed.), *Virtue Epistemology Naturalized*. New York: Springer International Publishing: 143–157.
- Jeshion, R. 2010. "Singular Thought: Acquaintance, Semantic Instrumentalism, and Cognitivism." In R. Jeshion (ed.), *New Essays on Singular Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 105–140.
- Jeshion, R. 2009. "The Significance of Names." *Mind and Language* 24 (4): 370–403.
- Jeshion, R. 2002. "Acquaintanceless *De Re* Belief." In J. K. Campbell, M. O'Rourke, and D. Shier (eds.), *Meaning and Truth: Investigations in Philosophical Semantics*. New York: Seven Bridges Press: 53–78.
- Kaplan, D. 1989a. "Demonstratives." In J. Almong, H. Wettstein, and J. Perry (eds.), *Themes from Kaplan*. New York: Oxford University Press: 481–563.
- Kaplan, D. 1989b. "Afterthoughts" In J. Almong, H. Wettstein, and J. Perry (eds.), *Themes from Kaplan*. New York: Oxford University Press: 565–614.
- Kripke, S. 1970/1980. *Naming and Necessity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lewis, D. 1979. "Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*." *Philosophical Review* 88: 513–543.
- Pryor, J. 2007. *An Epistemic Theory of Acquaintance*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Recanati, F. 1993. *Direct reference: From Language to Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Salmon, N. 1988. "How to Measure the Standard Metre." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 88: 193–217.
- Soames, S. 2003. *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century, Vol. 2*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

