Proper Names: Reference and Attribution

by

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Abstract

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In the wake of Saul Kripke's landmark *Naming and Necessity*, the claim that proper names are directly referential expressions devoid of descriptive content has come to verge on philosophical commonplace. Nevertheless, the return to a purely referential semantics for proper names has coincided with the resurgence of the very puzzles which motivated so-called description theories of proper names in the first place – to wit, the failure of substitutivity for co-referential names in propositional attitude ascriptions, the informativeness of true identity statements involving co-referential names, and the meaningfulness of negative existential discourse. In the following I argue in favor of what I dub Metalinguistic Description Theory, which holds that the meaning of typical uses of the name type 'NN' to be given by the definite description 'the ϕ bearer of 'NN'' (where ϕ is a contextually determined sortal which speakers use to disambiguate the reference of names with multiple bearers). This analysis, I contend, provides an ultimately novel solution to the principal puzzles for the Direct Reference theory of proper names which, nevertheless, avoids the devastating arguments which felled the classical description theories of Frege and Russell.

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Introduction

Principally under the influence of Saul Kripke and David Kaplan, philosophical semantics since the closing decades of the 20th Century has been dominated by fallout from the revolution which Nathon Salmon has aptly dubbed Direct Reference "mania".[1] Indeed, in the wake of Kripke's landmark *Naming and Necessity*, the claim that the meanings of proper names are entirely exhausted by their referents and devoid of any descriptive content has come to verge on philosophical commonplace.[2] Nevertheless, the return to a purely referential semantics for proper names has coincided with the resurgence of the very puzzles which motivated so-called description theories of proper names in the first place – to wit, the failure of substitutivity for co-referential names in propositional attitude ascriptions, the informativeness of true identity statements involving co-referential names, and the meaningfulness of negative existential discourse.

In the following I argue in favor of what I dub the Metalinguistic Description Theory, which holds that the meaning of typical uses of the name type 'NN' to be given by the definite description 'the ϕ bearer of 'NN'' (where ϕ is a contextually determined sortal predicate which speakers use to disambiguate the reference of names with multiple bearers). This analysis, it is argued, provides an ultimately novel solution to the principal puzzles for the Direct Reference theory of proper names which, nevertheless, avoids the devastating arguments which felled the classical description theories of Frege and Russell.

The solution to the puzzles of substitutivity and informativeness involving proper names which the Metalinguistic Description Theory permits is found by appealing to a characteristic property of syntactically descriptive constructions first observed by Keith Donnellan – namely, their apparent ambiguity between so-called "attributive" and "referential" uses. Specifically, it is argued that the failure

[1] Salmon (1986) p. 82
[2] This, despite the fact that Kripke does not, himself, explicitly endorse Direct Reference. See Ch. 2, below.

of substitution of proper names in attitude contexts and the informativeness of true identity locutions of the form ‘a=b’ is the result of speakers using the names in question *attributively*. In such a case, the speaker does not intend merely to single out an individual as the subject of discourse by using his or her name, as would be the case in ordinary referential usage, but instead wishes to *describe* an individual as being a bearer of the name in question.

The existence of attributive and referential *uses* of descriptions is beyond dispute. Nevertheless, the semantic significance of Donnellan’s distinction has been hotly debated in the past four decades, with many arguing that the referential usage of descriptions is merely a pragmatic phenomenon. In Chapter 1, I argue that this view is mistaken and that the attributive and referential uses Donnellan identifies are best seen as corresponding to distinct attributive and referential *meanings*: Attributive uses of ‘the F’ are held to express completely *general* or *object-independent* propositions as per the Russellian theory of descriptions, while referential uses, on the other hand, are held to semantically express *singular* or *object-dependent* propositions essentially involving a *particular* F.

Nevertheless, I argue in the following that even the referential use of definite descriptions (and, derivatively, of proper names) is still not “direct” in the sense of the expression’s contributing nothing other than its referent to propositions expressed by sentences of which it is a constituent. Instead, it is held that the logical form of referential usage is to be given in terms of so-called “Gödelian” descriptions of the form [The x: Fx & x= *that*], where the semantic value of the directly referential demonstrative expression is provided by the unique object which the speaker has in mind and intends to communicate about by means of ‘the F’.

In Chapter 2, I argue that the Metalinguistic Description Theory proposed below is independently motivated by a wealth of common constructions (such as plural and determiner bound usage) in which proper names *prima facie* function as predicates. The theory is then demonstrated to offer an account of identity discourse which nevertheless respects the *objectual* nature of such talk (in contrast to, *e.g.*, Frege's famous linguistic solution to the puzzle in the *Begriffsschrift*).

Chapter 3 applies the theory to the problem of substitutivity in the context of attitude ascriptions and addresses Kripke's famous puzzle about belief, which has oft been seen as fatal to metalinguistic accounts of the semantics of attitude reporting. It is further argued that the solution which the Metalinguistic Description Theory permits to the puzzles of attitude ascription is superior to antecedents in the literature in that the mechanisms to which it appeals are readily observed in plainly extensional discourse, outside the problematic contexts which they are intended to solve.

Chapter 4 addresses various puzzles surrounding the use of so-called "empty" names – a notorious thorn in the side of the Direct Reference theorist. Beyond offering an account of the meaningfulness of true negative existential assertions, a comprehensive account of the nature of fictional discourse involving proper names is set forth. The actual propositions expressed by content sentences of a fictional work are held to be "incomplete" ones without determinate truth conditions, given that the author of the fiction does not actually assign any value to the sortal ϕ in 'the ϕ bearer of 'NN''. Negative existential discourse and other discourse about fictional characters *qua* fictional characters are held to express (complete) attributive propositions where the content of ϕ is given by the property of being anaphorically linked to authors' initial use of the name in question. Accordingly, it is argued, the Metalinguistic Description theory is able to offer a largely uniform account of the wide variety of linguistic practices involving fictional names without thereby committing itself to a shadowy realm of fictional entities.

Collectively, I take the arguments advanced below to demonstrate that the death knell for the description theory of proper names has – at the very least – been sounded prematurely. And, if this is so, then present philosophical semantics has been unjustifiably deprived of a prime contender for explaining the role played by names in a broader compositional theory of language.

Chapter One:

Descriptions

"... that paradigm of philosophy, Russell's Theory of Descriptions."

F.P. Ramsey[1]

I.

Russell and the Theory of Descriptions

In October of 1905, Bertrand Russell published his landmark first formulation of the theory of descriptions, "On Denoting". In the grip of a recently awakened robust sense of reality, Russell's thought in "On Denoting" marked a stern departure from the Meingongian sympathies of *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903). In that earlier work, Russell felt it necessary to accommodate non-existent entities within his ontology to serve as the referents to empty names such as 'Zeus' or 'Pegasus'. Similarly, Meinong, whose views Russell had previously endorsed, had, himself, famously posited a "jungle" of nonexistent objects to account for the meaningfulness of descriptive phrases such as 'the golden mountain' and 'the round square'.[2,3]

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[1] Ramsey (1931) p. 263n

[2] Though Russell (1959, p. 64) writes that he found Meinong's postulation of "shadowy" subsistent entities a necessary evil until he happened upon the Theory of Descriptions, this recollection, as Ostertag (1998) observes is false. For, in a letter to Meinong from December of 1904, Russell explicitly rejects the necessity of postulating a realm of nonexistent objects on purely Fregean grounds, writing: "In such a case as that of the golden mountain or the round square one must distinguish between sense and reference (to speak with Frege): The sense is an object and has being, but the reference is no object".

[3] The now common "jungle" epithet is originally due to Kneale (1949).

Russell's new analysis of descriptions, however, provided a two-stage method for dispensing with the linguistic puzzles which motivated these extravagant ontologies: First, it provided an analysis of descriptive phrases according to which they are devices of quantification (rather than of reference) whose semantic values (like those of other quantificational expressions, *e.g.*, 'some Fs' and 'all Fs') cannot be assigned in isolation.[4] Secondly, it opened the door to an analysis of "ordinary" proper names such as 'Zeus' that analyzed these as, themselves, "disguised" or "abbreviated" descriptions.[5]

The central thesis of Russell's Theory of Descriptions is that sentences of the form 'The F is G' express existential generalizations of the form $\exists x\, (Fx \,\&\, \forall y(Fy \rightarrow x=y)) \,\&\, Gx)$ – colloquially, the proposition that there is at least one F, at most one F, and whatever is F is G. Significantly, this is a completely general or "object-independent" proposition: there is no particular object for which 'the F' may be seen to stand, no single entity which serves as a *constituent* of the proposition and upon which the existence of the proposition is dependent. Hence, the apparent problem of reference to non-existent entities in sentences such as

(1) The round square is both round and square

(2) The golden mountain glistens in the sun

and

(3) Zeus is the greatest of the Olympian gods

is dissolved.

[4] Herein lies the true novelty of "On Denoting". Russell (1903) had previously assimilated descriptions to other denoting phrases. However, there, he held that such phrases could be defined directly.

[5] According to Russell's (1911) famous principle of acquaintance the only *true* or "logically proper" names are the demonstratives 'this' and 'that' and the pronoun 'I'.

A significant challenge to the new Theory of Descriptions was, nevertheless, famously posed by P.F. Strawson in his "On Referring" (1950). Here, Strawson famously objected to Russell's quantificational analysis on the grounds that it conflates the distinct notions of (a) the expression *type* 'the F', and (b) a dated *tokening* of 'the F'. According to Strawson, this conflation results in Russell's running together of the similarly distinct notions of *reference* and *meaning*, leading him to incorrectly attribute truth values to sentence *types* containing descriptions rather than to *uses* thereof. Once these distinctions are appreciated, Strawson contends, descriptions must be seen as *indexical* devices of reference, functioning similarly to the pronoun 'I':

> . . .[C]onsider the sentence "I am hot". Countless people may use the same sentence; but it is logically impossible for two different people to make *the same use* of the sentence . . . The expression "I" may correctly be used by (and only by) any one of innumerable people to refer to himself. To say this is to say something about the expression "I": it is, in a sense to give its meaning. This is the sort of thing that can be said about *expressions*. But it makes no sense to say of the expression "I" that it refers to a particular person.[6],[7]

Russell's worries about reference to non-existents via apparently *meaningful* sentences, are, thus, according to Strawson misplaced, for:

> Meaning (in at least one important sense) is a function of the sentence or expression [type]; mentioning and referring and truth or falsity, are functions of the use of the sentence or expression . . . So the question of whether a sentence

[6] p. 250
[7] Mill (1881) seems to have held a similar view in taking definite descriptions to be singular, but connotative *names*.

> is *significant or not* has nothing whatever to do with the question of whether the sentence *uttered on a particular occasion* is on that occasion, used to make a true-or-false assertion or not, or of whether the expression is, on that occasion, being used to refer to, or mention anything at all.[8]

Russell's error, Strawson alleges, is made manifest by consulting our intuitions about the truth conditions of utterances where 'the F' is non-denoting. Consider the expression type 'the present king of France'. According to Russell, a speaker presently uttering, *e.g.*,

(4) The present kind of France is wise

is

(a) asserting an existential generalization

(b) making a true assertion only if there, in fact, exists at present a unique entity that is king of France

(c) making a false assertion if there is no unique present king of France.

The falsity of the above theses, Strawson claims, is nevertheless revealed by considering how one might react to a sincere assertion of (5) in the present day:

> Now suppose someone were in fact to say to you with a perfectly serious air: "The king of France is wise." Would you say, "That's untrue"? I think it is quite certain that you would not . . . I think you would be inclined . . . [to say] that the

[8] *Ibid*. Emphasis in original.

> question of whether his statement was true or false simply *did not arise* because there was no such person as the present king of France.[9]

Instead, Strawson maintains, a speaker employing the expression type 'the present king of France' *presupposes* the existence of a unique male French monarch.[10] The sense of 'presupposition' here is suggested by Frege (1892): A statement *p* is presupposed by *q* if and only if *p* is neither true nor false unless *q* is true.

However, as Stephen Neale (1990) observes, there appear to be numerous tokenings of 'the present king of France' which rather clearly undermine Strawsonian truth-value intuitions. After all, anyone presently uttering, *e.g.*:

(5) This morning my father had breakfast with the [present] king of France

or

(6) The [present] king of France shot my cat last night

would almost certainly be taken as uttering a falsehood, despite the fact that here we encounter the very same failure of reference as in

(4) The present king of France is wise.[11]

Accordingly, save for a small, but vocal, minority, semanticists have by and large abandoned attempts at pursuing a Strawsonian semantics for descriptions.[12]

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[9] p. 252

[10] Strawson (1950), it should be noted, does not employ the term "presupposition". Instead, he talks of speakers "implying", *e.g.*, the existence of a unique male French monarch by their use of 'the present king of France'. However, to avoid conflation with the logical sense of implication, by the time of Strawson (1952) he adopts the present terminology.

[11] p. 27

[12] Cf., *e.g.* Atlas (2008), Elbourne (2005), McCawley (1981), Von Fintel (2008).

Nevertheless, to many it has seemed that *both* Russell and Strawson have latched onto something quite right in their respective analyses of definite descriptions, though neither's theory captures the full range of ordinary uses of 'the F'. The *locus classicus* for this strain of thought is Keith Donnellan's "Reference and Definite Descriptions" (1966).

II.

Donnellan's Distinction and the Argument from Misdescription

According to Donnellan, definite descriptions have *both* an "attributive" use roughly captured by Russell's Theory of Descriptions as well as a referential use analogous to that posited by Strawson.[13] Though Donnellan, himself, falls short of *explicitly* endorsing such a view (and indeed appears to vacillate somewhat on the issue)[14], many so-called "referentialists"[15] now hold that the attributive/referential dichotomy he illustrates is semantically significant – that is, that Donnellan's attributive and referential *uses* correspond to distinct attributive and referential *meanings*.[16]

[13] Though, notably, for Strawson reference is determined descriptively. Donnellan, as we will see, abandons this requirement for reference.

[14] Cf. Devitt (1974), Bertolet (1980), and Salmon (2004) for opposing exegeses. Any divergence between my use of the terms "attributive" and "referential" from Donnellan's intended use (as well as any differences between Donnellan's conception of attributive usage from Russell's theory of descriptions) are tangential to the scope of this exposition.

[15] A group exemplified by *e.g.,* Almog (1998), Barwise (1988), Bezuidenhout (1997), Carston (1998), Devitt (2004), Hornsby (1977), Kaplan (1989), Lewis (1983), Peacocke (1975), Perry (2001), Recanati (1993), Reimer (2004), Rundle (1979), Schiffer (1995), Stalnaker (1999), and Wettstein (1983).

[16] 'Meaning' is of course, an elusive term, standing for a wealth of non-overlapping (and often obscure) concepts. In what follows shall restrict my use of the term to refer to an expression's propositional contribution. On my usage an expression has a referential meaning if it essentially contributes an individual object to the proposition

Donnellan's paradigm of attributive usage involves the case of a detective investigating the gruesome murder of one Mr. Smith. Basing his assessment purely upon Smith's horribly mutilated corpse and having no suspects in the ghastly crime, the detective declares

(7) Smith's murderer [= 'the murder of Smith'] is insane

According to Donnellan, as the detective's remark could be faithfully paraphrased as

(7a) Smith's murderer, whoever he might be, is insane

the truth conditions of his utterance are intuitively captured by the completely general proposition entailed by Russell's theory.

In contrast, Donnellan offers the following as an exemplar of referential use: Jones is on trial for the murder of Smith. Observing the defendant's highly unusual behavior in the courtroom, an observer is moved to utter (7). In this case, however, the paraphrase offered by (7a) would be inappropriate, a fact Donnellan alleges is borne out by a consideration of the intuitive consequences of the assumption that Jones is, in fact, innocent of the crime.

Indeed, according to Donnellan, the fact that Smith actually committed suicide or was horribly mangled by an escaped circus lion (and the coincident failure of 'Smith's murderer' to veritably describe anyone at all) should have no effect at all upon the truth conditions of the courtroom observer's utterance. After all, he contends, in such a case:

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expressed. Conversely, an expression has an attributive meaning if its propositional contribution is an "object-independent" existential generalization.

> Jones might . . . accuse [the observer] of saying false things about him in calling him insane and it would be no defense, I should think, that [the] description ‘the murderer of Smith’ failed to fit him.[17]

As many have noted, however, this argument – which Neale (1990) dubs the “Argument from Misdescription” – would seem a decidedly weak reed on which to rest a claim of a semantic ambiguity. In the first place, as Ludlow and Neale (2006) note, the argument’s core appeal to speaker’s intuitions simply doesn’t seem to accommodate all the relevant psychological facts. Indeed, an honest assessment of our intuitions about Donnellan’s paradigmatic referential case would seem, instead, to unveil:

> an uneasy tension in our phenomenology: we want to say that the speaker did something right but *also* that he did something *wrong*. After all, the description he used *failed to fit* the person he wanted to ‘talk about’ and to that extent the speech act was defective. We are [thus] ambivalent about the truth of what was said . . . [18]

Moreover, as Kripke (1977) has famously observed, this ambivalence, it seems, may be neatly explained by appeal to Grice’s (1957) distinction between an individual speaker’s act of meaning/reference and the literal or semantic meaning/reference of her words. To illustrate the distinction, he offers the following case:

> Two people see Smith in the distance and mistake him for Jones. They have a brief colloquy: "What is Jones doing?" "Raking the leaves." "Jones", in the

[17] p. 267
[18] p. 300. Emphasis in original. The argument in the quoted passage is adapted from Neale (1990).

common language of both, is a name of Jones; it never names Smith. Yet, in some sense, on this occasion, clearly both participants in the dialogue have referred to Smith, and the second participant has said something true about the man he referred to if and only if Smith was raking the leaves (whether or not Jones was).[19]

Kripke's case seems to instantiate roughly the same phenomenon as Donnellan's courtroom observer scenario, and yet, here, there is simply no temptation to posit a semantic ambiguity.[20] The Argument from Misdescription would, thus, seem a nonstarter.

III.

The Argument from Incompleteness

Despite the apparent failure of the Argument from Misdescription to demonstrate the semantic significance of the attributive/referential distinction , a number of referenitalists, principally under the influence of Strawson (1951) and Wettstein (1981), have nevertheless argued that the regular, felicitous use of "incomplete" definite descriptions such as 'the table' in

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[19] p. 263

[20] Roughly, but not *exactly* the same phenomenon. For, in the first place, as Devitt (1981), observes, in the Smith/Jones case, the belief that the speaker expresses by his utterance (to wit, that Jones is raking the leaves) is accompanied by two additional beliefs – the *true* belief that *that man* (demonstrating Smith) is raking the leaves and the *false* belief that that same man is Jones. So in this case, the speaker is not merely mistaken in attributing a property to an individual, he is, additionally, *confusing two individuals*. Hence, Devitt contends that the speaker in Kripke's colloquy is better seen as *partially* referring to both Smith and Jones. Secondly, as Neale (1997) notes, unlike the Smith/Jones case, in the case of descriptions such as 'Smith's murderer' there is, of course, strictly speaking, no semantic *reference* to speak of, if the unitary Russellian analysis is correct. However, as Neale further observes here, the distinction Kripke attempts to illustrate by the Smith/Jones exchange is nevertheless sufficient for present purposes. For, at the very least, we can say that while 'Jones' does not conventionally designate Smith, the speaker in Kripke's colloquy *does* refer to Smith by *his* use of' Jones' – a fact that remains regardless of whether or not he *also* referred to Jones.

(8) The table is covered in books

suffices to make a *prima facie* case for the ambiguity thesis. Utterances such as (8), they maintain, are routinely judged by ordinary speakers to make *true* assertions despite the fact that it is typically mutual knowledge between speaker and audience that no object uniquely satisfies 'the F.[13] Therefore, it is at least plausible that a speaker using an incomplete description expresses a proposition other than the glaringly false existential generalization apparently demanded by Russell's theory. Following Neale (1990), we may call this challenge to a unitary Russellian semantics of 'the F' the "Argument from Incompleteness".

Two dominant strategies have emerged in the literature which attempt to vindicate the unitary Russellian theory in the face of pervasive incomplete usage. On one hand there is the approach adopted by, *e.g.*, Quine (1940), Sellars (1954), and Vendler (1967), commonly referred to, following Neale (1990), as the "explicit" strategy.[21] According to this approach an incomplete description, such as 'the table' is elliptical for some determinate completion, *e.g.*

(8a) The table in Room 401 of Camden Hall

(8b) The table at which the author of *The Persistence of Objects* is sitting

(8c) The table in this room that has the short leg

etc.

As Neale (2007) notes, the explicit strategy gains its initial air of plausibility from the fact that our interpretive abilities are "*so good*" that often:

[21] Schiffer (1995) aptly dubs this approach the "naïve hidden indexical theory".

> we can reasonably expect our addressees . . . to identify the thoughts we seek to express, even when the linguistic meanings of the expressions we use fall short of delivering the precise concepts involved in the thought.[22]

Indeed, consider the following (but a few of the wealth of examples found in Neale (2004) and Bach (2001)), where the parenthetical content seems to make perfectly explicit the implied content in a given context:

(9) I haven't had breakfast (this morning)

(10) It's snowing (here)

(11) Maria and Fred want to get married (to one another)

(12) You are not going to die (from that injury).

However as Wettstein (1981), and, subsequently, a host of others have observed, in supposing that there is some determinate completion to, *e.g.* a particular utterance of (2), the explicit strategy falls prey to an apparently devastating problem. For, what, non-ad hoc method could one possibly have for selecting which of the indeterminately large number of non-equivalent candidate completions is *the one* meant?[23] After all, if queried, speakers are almost certain to respond that they intended their utterance to be elliptical for *no* other expression in particular. But, if we cannot – even with the help of the speaker himself – say for certain which of these non-equivalent completions is the one meant, it begins to seem decidedly implausible that any such completion was actually intended by the speaker.

Stephen Schiffer (1995) voices a similar concern in considering a speaker uttering

[22] p. 256

[23] One might retort that the demand for systematicity here is misplaced as in each case the "proper" completion is an inference to the best explanation. Nevertheless, the problem Wettstein observes would seem to cast doubt on the very notion of there being a *best* explanation in the case of most incomplete uses of 'the F'.

(13) I'll be damned! The guy's drunk.

In whatever context (13) is uttered it is likely that speaker and audience may fall back on an indeterminately large number potential completions – a fact mutually known to both speaker and audience. Nevertheless, he asserts:

> Imagining myself as your audience, I do not see how I could have identified any one individual concept, however complex, as *the one* which figured which figured into the proposition you asserted. And yet it would seem that I understood your utterance perfectly well.[24]

It may initially seem that Schiffer and Wettstein's worries might be circumvented if instead of receiving *descriptive* completions (such as those in cases (8a) – (8c)) incomplete definite descriptions are contextually completed by referential or indexical material. (8), for instance, might plausibly be seen as elliptical for

(8d) The table *over there*

in which case (at least according to the dominant direct reference theory of indexicals) the actual location of the table (as opposed to a descriptive characterization thereof) would enter into the proposition expressed, thereby sidestepping the issue of non-interchangeable though co-denoting completions entirely.

However, as Evans (1982) and Neale (1990) have observed it simply does not follow from the fact that an incomplete description may be rendered uniquely denoting by means of a demonstrative or referential completion that the description will function referentially. For, as Evans notes suppose you are driving through a town whose streets have fallen into an extreme

[24] p. 376

state of disrepair. You might utter "The mayor ought to be impeached" intending it as elliptical for "the mayor of *this* town", yet even this uniquely denoting description is being used attributively as it might be paraphrased "the mayor of this town (whoever he or she may be)".[25]

Moreover, as Reimer (1992) makes clear, appealing to the phenomenon of referential completion ultimately fails to resolve the problem at hand:

> To see this consider a Donnellan courtroom scenario involving Jones on trial for the murder of Smith. Suppose further that Jones is in fact guilty as charged. And finally, suppose that someone in the courtroom, observing Jones' outrageous behavior on the witness stand comes out with an utterance of "The murderer is insane".[26]

The trouble is this: There are at least two non-equivalent referential/indexical ways of completing

(14) The murderer is insane.

We could, for instance, reasonably construe (14) for elliptical for

(14a) The murderer *of Smith* is insane

in which case Smith, himself, becomes a constituent of the proposition expressed. However, one could, just as plausibly contend that (14) is instead elliptical for

(14b) The murderer *over there* is insane

in which case the location of Jones is indexed in the expressed proposition. It seems decidedly unlikely that an audience could have principled grounds for choosing one of these non-

[25] p. 324
[26] p. 883

equivalent completions over the other, given that, again, speakers will report have no determinate intentions on the matter. Thus, ironically, the problem seems only to have intensified once we are forced to countenance referential/indexical completions *in addition* to the previously acknowledged plethora of descriptive completions from which the explicit strategy demands we must choose.

In light of the above difficulties with the explicit approach, most defenders of the Russellian orthodoxy have opted, instead, for some variant of what Neale (1990) dubs the "implicit" strategy. According to this tactic, the context of utterance automatically delimits the domain of the quantification, thereby rendering 'the F' uniquely instantiated. A Russellian embracing the implicit strategy is, thus, in a position to straightforwardly account for the truth of (8): The speaker has not absurdly committed herself to the existence of one and only one table in the universe, only to a unique table within the domain of quantification, which Neale (1990) suggests is typically restricted to individuals/objects within the immediate shared perceptual environment. The descriptive content of the speaker's utterance is, thus, left untouched (thereby avoiding the explicit strategy's identification problem).

The implicit strategy is further recommended by the fact that it seems already necessary to explain the ubiquity of incomplete (and uncontroversially) quantificational expressions. After all, as Neale (1990) rightly observes, a speaker responding to a query about last night's party might perfectly felicitously utter

(15) Everybody had a good time

or

(16) Most men wore tuxedos

without thereby being taken to express contextually irrelevant falsehoods about all persons in existence.[27]

The implicit strategy, nevertheless, faces its own problems. For as Reimer (1998) notes, it seems unable to handle cases such as the following. John and Mary hire a pair of handymen to do remodeling work on their home: an electrician, Fred, and a carpenter, Joe. After watching the two bicker all afternoon, John remarks to Mary:

(17) The carpenter is not getting along with the electrician.

However, unbeknownst to both John and Mary, Joe is also a licensed electrician and Fred a licensed carpenter. No contextual restriction on the 'the carpenter' and 'the electrician' would seem capable of rendering either description uniquely denoting, despite the apparent truth of (17).

Nevertheless, despite the attention that they have received in the literature, it would ultimately seem that the success or failure of either the implicit or explicit strategies is largely irrelevant to the truth or falsity of the referentialist thesis. For, as Peacocke (1975) argues, the phenomenon of incompleteness is, in and of itself, neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the referential use of a description. Against the necessity of incompleteness for referential use, suppose:

> you and I visited the Casino at Monte Carlo yesterday, and saw a man break the bank . . . and it is common knowledge that this is so, then the description 'The man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo yesterday' as it occurs in a particular

[27] p. 95

> utterance *today* . . . may well be satisfied by just one object, but it is here [referential].[28]

Against the sufficiency of incompleteness for referential use, suppose:

> two school inspectors [are] visiting an institution for the first time: one may say to the other, on the basis of the activities around him, 'The headmaster doesn't have much control of the pupils.' Here there is no object such that the school inspector has said of it that it doesn't have much control over the pupils. One cannot say that the headmaster is such an object since what the inspector (*actually*) said would be true even if someone else were headmaster.[29]

As incompleteness is pervasive within both the Russellian and referentialist frameworks, no *mere* appeal to the phenomenon can decide between the two.

IV.

The Argument from Convention

Ultimately, the most powerful argument for the semantic significance of Donnellan's distinction emerges from the undeniably *conventional* use of 'the F' as a means of expressing singular thoughts. Consider again Donnellan's courtroom spectator and his utterance of

(9) Smith's murderer is insane.

[28] p. 117
[29] p. 117

As noted above, the thought which the observer seeks to express by means of this utterance is not a general one about whoever happens to be Smith's unique murderer, but rather a singular thought about a specific individual – Jones – which the speaker has in mind.

As Neale (1990) has rightly observed, however, an expression's merely being used to express a singular thought is not in and of itself evidence of that expression's having such a role literally or conventionally. For:

> Suppose it is common knowledge that Smith is the only person taking Jones' seminar. One evening Jones throws a party and Smith is the only person who shows up. A despondent Jones when asked the next morning whether his party was successful says ... ["]Well, everyone taking my seminar turned up["] ... fully intending to inform me that only Smith attended.[30]

Consider, too, the following, also due to Neale (1990):

> Suppose that Scott Soames, David Lewis, and I are the only three people in Lewis's office. Soames has never played cricket and knows that I know this. In addition Soames wants to know whether Lewis and I have ever played cricket, so I say ... ["]Most people in this room have played cricket["] ... fully intending communicate to Soames that Lewis and I have played cricket.[31]

In both of the above cases, though the thoughts expressed are object-dependent, there is no temptation to regard the expressions "everyone" and "most" as having a literal meaning beyond the quantificational.

[30] pp. 87-88
[31] p. 441

Similarly, Grice (1961) has plausibly argued that with *enough* stage setting practically *any* expression can be used to convey practically *any* thought – as in the notorious case of the professor who “recommends” his student in a letter to a colleague by noting only the student’s appearance, politeness, and punctuality. Though the thought communicated by means of the letter is that the student has poor prospects for academic success, this is not part of the literal meaning of his utterance.

There is, however, a salient disanalogy between Neale and Grice’s cases and paradigmatic referential uses of ‘the F’. As Devitt (2004), notes:

> When a person has a thought with a particular F object in mind, there is a regularity of her using the ‘the F’ to express that thought. And there need be no special stage setting enabling her to conversationally imply what she has not literally said, nor any sign that her audience needs to use a Gricean derivation to understand what she means. This regularity is strong evidence that there is a *convention* of using ‘The F’ to express a thought about a particular F, that this is a standard use.[32]

And as it is a *standard* use of ‘the F’ to express object-dependent thoughts in such a manner, this use may plausibly be regarded as a *literal* one. Following Neale (2004), let us dub this argument, the “Argument from Convention”.

Nevertheless, though the conventional use of definite descriptions to convey object-dependent thoughts certainly constitutes *prima facie* evidence that the referential usage of ‘the F’ is semantically significant, as Bach (1990) correctly observes, this fact alone fails to eliminate

[32] p. 284

the possibility that referential uses are not instances of what Grice (1975) dubs *generalized* conversational implicatures.

Generalized implicatures are implicatures which are inferable without reference to a particular context. Uses of ‘some’ and the indefinite article ‘a(n)’ offer paradigmatic cases of generalized implicature. A speaker uttering

(18) Some people at the party seemed to enjoy the goats head soup

would, for instance, regardless of context, be taken to imply

(18’) Some people at the party seemed *not* to enjoy the goats head soup.

Similarly, a speaker uttering

(19) John accidentally scratched a car in the parking lot with his keys

would automatically be taken to mean that the car in question was not John’s. Nevertheless, that some people did not enjoy the goats head soup or that the car was not John’s is not part of the literal meaning of (18) or (19) respectively. Analogously, a Russellian might plausibly hold that the object-dependent propositions communicated by referential uses of definite descriptions are merely pragmatically implied, and, hence, not part of the semantics of the ‘the F’.

Nevertheless, as Devitt (2008) notes, in cases of implicature – even *generalized* conversational implicature – a speaker implying that *q* must first assert that *p*. Therefore, if it can be shown that speakers using definite descriptions to convey an object-dependent proposition are not *also* asserting an object-independent one, the referentialist thesis can be vindicated against the generalized conversational implicature model.

V

Incompleteness, Implication, and Indeterminacy

Though, as noted above, the mere phenomenon of incompleteness is, in and of itself, insufficient to arbitrate between the Russellian and referentialist alternatives, the pervasiveness of incompleteness would nevertheless seem to undermine the position that in cases of referential uses speakers imply object-dependent propositions by means of first asserting object-independent ones. For in the case of referential usage, such as that exemplified by

(8) The table is covered in books

as we have seen, it is (a) wildly implausible to hold that the speaker means any proposition to the effect that there is one and only one table in the universe; and (b) often a speaker may be unable to muster a completion or delimit the domain in such a manner to yield a plausible general proposition. Accordingly, there will often be no good reason to suppose that a speaker using a description referentially to communicate a singular, object-dependent proposition will *also* be asserting a general, object-independent one.

At this point, however, a Russellian might, nevertheless, retort that while it may be implausible to suppose that a speaker typically has any determinate intentions regarding an elliptical, uniquely denoting completion when 'the F' is incomplete, she might nevertheless *in*determinately intend a range of completions. Indeed, this seems to have been Russell's own stance on the phenomenon when concerning proper names. For instance, in discussing the semantics of the name 'Bismarck', Russell (1917) writes:

> When we make a judgment . . . about [Bismarck] the description in our minds will probably be some more or less vague mass of historical knowledge – far more, in most cases than is required to identify him.[33]

On the plausible assumption that what is "in our minds" determines what is said, it follows that typically ordinary uses of proper names result in the expression not of a single, determinate proposition, but rather a vague or indeterminate *range* of propositions. A contemporary Russellian might say the same of incomplete uses of 'the F'.

This is precisely the line Blackburn (1988) takes. He alleges that in most cases where a speaker employs an incomplete description:

> there is no single proposition he expresses. Rather, there is some more or less vague class of propositions, each determined by some expansion of the description - "The F that is H", "The F that is K", and so on.[34]

By adopting this stance, Blackburn is apparently able to circumvent both Wettstein's principled basis worries *and* Devitt's response to the argument from generalized implicatures. After all, that response appealed to the problem of incompleteness in allegedly demonstrating that speaker's using 'the F' referentially could not be *implying* the object-dependent propositions communicated by means of their utterances, since they could not plausibly be seen to be first *asserting* any object-independent proposition.

But, once the demand that a speech act employing an incomplete definite description must literally express a determinate proposition is removed, the Russellian may coherently hold that in cases where the incomplete description 'the F' is used referentially, the object-

[33] pp. 208-209
[34] p. 270

dependent proposition communicated by the speech act is one that is only implied by the indeterminate matrix of object-independent propositions which are the sole semantic content of the speaker's utterance.

Nevertheless, while indeterminacy is doubtless a pervasive feature of communication, and may plausibly be seen as seen as playing an ineliminable role in the semantics of incomplete, *attributively* used definite descriptions such as 'the murderer' in

(14) The murderer is insane

as uttered by Donnellan's detective, it is, nevertheless, theoretically redundant in explaining referential usage.

For as Devitt (2008) observes, for *any* Russellian analysis of referential usage to be plausible:

> *We need a plausible account of why the speaker would think that saying the general proposition will convey the singular one and why the hearer would take the saying of the general one to convey the singular one*.[35]

Presumably, in the case of incomplete referential uses such as

(8) The table is covered with books

the reason the speaker believes his use of a non-uniquely denoting description will be successful in communicating an object-dependent proposition is the causal/perceptual link mutually known to exist by the communicating parties between themselves and the intended object of communication. This type of causal link between world and speaker, however, is precisely the relation that underlies the semantics of uncontroversially referential uses of the

[35] p. 12. Emphasis in original.

bare demonstratives ‘this’ and ‘that’. Quite general methodological considerations such as theoretical economy and unity would therefore seem recommend the referential thesis over its Russellian alternative.[36]

VI.

Gödelian Completions

Perhaps the most promising gambit a committed Russellian may appeal to in the face of the ubiquity of incomplete uses of the ‘the F’ is a variant of the explicit strategy which appeals to so-called “Gödelian descriptions” of the form [The x: Fx & x = *a*], where the value of *a* is given by the unique object which the speaker has in mind and intends to communicate something about.

As Neale (2008) observes (and as we’ve seen above in §III), there is nothing unusual about a quantifier phrase containing a genuinely referential element as a proper constituent. Take, for instance, ‘France’ in

(20) Every politician in France

(21) Some countries bordering France

(22) No country other than France

and – assuming that definite descriptions are quantifiers

[36] As Devitt and Sterelny (1999, p.61) note, this same type of theoretical redundancy prevents the Russellian from “going parasitic” and attempting to give the meaning of incompletes, *e.g.,* ‘the table’ in terms of a description such as ‘the table I am currently perceiving’.

(23) The king of France.[37]

As, trivially, no problem of incompleteness arises for Gödelian descriptions, Neale (1999) contends such completions suggest:

> a fool-proof way of *regularly* interpreting utterances of incomplete descriptions used referentially . . . The underlying idea is simple and natural: completion of an incomplete description is effected *non-descriptively* (as non-descriptively as possible, at any rate).[38]

As noted above, the value of the directly referential *a* in the Gödelian matrix is the unique object which the speaker (a) has in mind and (b) intends to communicate about. The former requirement suggests that *a* is best conceived of, not as a public language expression, but as a formula in the speaker's language of thought or "mentalese". A speaker using a referential description, then, will be expressing what might be called a "direct thought" about a certain object. As a result, that object will be an essential constituent of the "object dependent" or "singular" proposition which the speaker intends to express by means of 'the F'.

Qua mentalese formula, *a,* cannot, of course, be a constituent of the logical form of the public language expression 'the F'. Nevertheless, if, as is widely held following Kaplan (1989) the bare demonstratives 'this' and 'that' are directly referential expressions whose reference is fixed by means of speakers' communicative intentions, the logical form of referential uses of 'the F' may be given by [The x: Fx & x = *that*].

[37] p. 410
[38] p. 171

While appealing to Gödelian-completed descriptions clearly captures the intuitive truth conditions of referentially used definite descriptions in terms which are *logically* or *syntactically* Russellian, its *semantic* ramifications are unclear to Neale:

> Do we now say that it is part of the *meaning* or *semantics* of 'the' that on one interpretation it invites a Gödelian completion? Or should we see such completions as an abstraction over regular interpretations? [39]

As Neale notes, there is a certain advantage to treating Gödelian completions as semantically significant in that it would seem to explain why on one reading

(24) It is always the case that the player on the left wins these games

a speaker could be taken of saying of, *e.g.* Kasparov (who is sitting on the left) that *he* always wins, seeing as orthodox understandings of descriptions and scope hold that a description may not take scope over the temporal operator.[40,41]

Nevertheless, Neale ultimately doubts the semantic significance of Gödelian completions matters much to how we think about descriptions "until we have some understanding of the cognitive mechanisms involved in interpretation, which is presumably a

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[39] p. 172

[40] A further motivation for treating Gödelian completions as semantically significant is the role it plays in explaining the apparent parity of bound "pronominal" uses of descriptions. Cf. Neale (2004).

[41] Schiffer (2005, p. 1177) objects that there is a truth-conditional problem for explaining referential uses of 'the F' in terms of Gödelian completions given that on the present picture a referential usage of 'the guy' in 'The guy might have been female' will be ambiguous between a true wide scope reading (The male who is identical to *a* might have been female) and a false narrow scope construal (The proposition that *the male who is identical to a* is such that it might have been true). Schiffer, however, suggests that it seems "reasonably clear that there is no reading of this utterance on which it is false, given that sex change is possible", though the intuitive correctness of this contention "might be obscured by the fact that *attributive* utterances of 'It might have been the case that the F is G' do display a scope ambiguity". Nevertheless the partially "obscured" intuition Schiffer appeals to here is far from sufficiently robust to sway the uncommitted. Moreover, whatever intuitive bite is lost by holding that even referential uses of 'the F' to contribute the property of *F-hood* to propositions expressed is more than made up for by the ability of this strategy to straightforwardly explain referential uses of 'the F' as a direct function of the expression's linguistic meaning.

long way off."[42] In the following, however, I shall argue that we *do* in fact have good reason to treat Gödelian descriptions as semantically significant. For, as we shall see below Donnellan's distinction for definite descriptions is but one facet of a much more general linguistic phenomenon – one that is essential for a full understanding of the semantics of proper names.

[42] p. 172

Chapter Two:

Proper Names and Frege's Puzzle

What's in a name?

− Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet (II, ii, 1-2)*

I.

The Extralinguistic Hypothesis

Perhaps the most immediately noteworthy feature of proper names from a semantic perspective is that there seems to be something almost misguided about any sustained inquiry into their meaning(s). Indeed, it has been the opinion of some philosophers that proper names are not even veritable linguistic entities. As one defender of this view, Kent Bach (2002) observes, this Extralinguistic Hypothesis derives an initial air of plausibility from the commonplace, but nonetheless striking, fact that proper names are not (typically) included in dictionaries – and that said books are not regarded as incomplete for this omission. Similarly, speakers' vocabularies are never judged to be "deficient" because of their ignorance of the overwhelming majority of proper names.[1] Francois Recanati (1993) echoes this sentiment in arguing that names cannot be held to be part of the language because it is never necessary to

[1] p. 82

know "the bearer of a name such as 'Aristotle' or 'Ralph Banilla' in order to master [a] language."[2]

Nevertheless, despite the initial plausibility of these considerations, a closer examination of the matter finds them sorely lacking. In the first place, as Barbara Abbott (2004) observes, the conclusion that names are extralinguistic only follows from observations such as Bach's and Recanati's on the assumption that:

> knowledge of every word in a language were required for a person to be regarded as competent in that language, which is obviously not the case. There are perfectly fine English speakers who do not know what [']grilse['] or [']retiary['] or [']chiasmus['] means.[3]

No doubt, speakers are competent with a much smaller proportion of proper names compared to other parts of speech, but this fact has a devastatingly simple explanation: Speakers will typically only learn words which refer to things they *want* and/or *need* to talk about – but the vast majority of names refer to entities which simply have no bearing on their lives.

Despite this, it is, nevertheless, possible to argue for the Extralinguistic Hypothesis based on the fact that ordinary proper names are not conventionally translated – as any other word – from one language to another. Paul Ziff (1960), for instance, wryly observes:

> If I say 'are you familiar with Hsieh Ho's view on art?' I am speaking English: I am not speaking a combination of English and Chinese.[4]

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[2] p. 144
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] p. 12. Of course, this point may alternately be taken to illustrate nothing more than the fact that two languages may share some of the same vocabulary, and that this may *include* proper names.

Similarly, Bach (2002) has aptly noted that a speaker wishing to talk in English about a Spanish acquaintance named ‘Juan’ would not ordinarily call him ‘John’ despite the fact that the two names are often thought of as being “translations” of one another. Nor would an English speaker writing of Juan italicize his name, as he would other foreign expressions.

Once again, however, such facts simply do not support the conclusion that proper names are not genuine linguistic items. A much more plausible explanation for our failure to translate the majority proper names is, as Abbott (*op cit*) notes that:

> in order to translate a term from one language to another, the target language must have a corresponding expression with approximately the same semantics value, but typically there will not be corresponding proper names in different languages for the same entity. Of course we do not switch from [‘]Juan[’] to [‘]John[’] when speaking of our Spanish friend, but that's because the only name he has is [‘]Juan[’], not [‘]John[’]; we do not have a name for this particular guy in English.[5,]

Moreover, in evaluating the Extralinguistic Hypothesis, it bears noting that speakers regularly describe names as belonging to particular languages. Indeed, speakers typically regard statements such as:

(1) ‘Mao’ is a Chinese name

(2) ‘McDonald’ is a Scottish name

(3) ‘Tutankhamen’ is an Egyptian name

(4) ‘Xyxl28!’ is not a name in any language

[5] p. 82

as expressing truths. In addition, *pace* Ziff and Bach, a wealth of common names *do* have conventional translations. *Viz.*

(5) 'Nueva York' is the Spanish name for New York

(6) 'Δίας' is the Greek name for Zeus.[6]

Accordingly, it would seem that, as Geach (1962) contends, "it is part of the job of a lexicographer to tell us that "Warsaw" is the English word for 'Warszawa'; and . . . that 'Warszawa' is a Polish word."[7]

II.

The Millian View

A more intuitively palatable perspective on names that nevertheless retains a number of the insights of the Extralinguistic Hypothesis is famously espoused by J.S. Mill (1843). According to Mill proper names, while part of the language, differ from most other verbiage in that they "are not connotative; they denote the individuals who are called by them but they do not indicate or imply any attributes as belonging to those individuals."[8] Indeed, Mill contends, names are but meaningless "marks used to enable those individuals to be made subjects of discourse."[9]

Mill's rationale for this view is simple and intuitive:

[6] Of course we need not employ cognates to refer to individuals with foreign names. Recent immigrants to this country, for instance, will often adopt a more "typical" English language name to ease assimilation. However, this marks the beginning of a novel convention for referring to the individual in question, unlike the case of translation which seeks to *extend* a prior convention.
[7] p. 15.
[8] p. 26
[9] p. *Ibid*.

> It may be said indeed, that we must have had some reason for giving them those names rather than any others, and this is true, but the name, once given, is independent of the reason. A man may have been named [‘]John[’] because that was the name of his father; a town may have been named [‘]Dartmouth[’] because it is situated at the mouth of the Dart. But it is no part of the signification of the word [‘]John[’] that the father of the person so-called bore the same name, nor even of the word [‘]Dartmouth[’] to be situated at the mouth of the Dart.[10]

To see this, Mill suggests we consider the reaction of the linguistic community if:

> sand should choke up the mouth of the river or an earthquake change its course and remove it to a distance from the town, [in such a case] the name of the town would not necessarily be changed. That fact, therefore, can form no part of the signification of the word; for otherwise, when the fact confessedly ceased to be true, no one would any longer think of applying the name. [Hence, proper] names are attached to the objects themselves and are not dependent on the continuance of any attribute of the object.[11]

Indeed, not only would it seem that proper names are not dependent on the *persistence* of any attribute of an object, but simply do not require any *initial* descriptive fit between object and moniker. As several have noted there is, in the sense, much to be appreciated in Voltaire’s quip that the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, Roman, nor an empire. This oft-cited example is, of course, hardly *sui generis*. After all, the majority of proper names are

[10] p. 38
[11] *Ibid*.

etymologically connotative – 'Fletcher', for instance is derived from the French word *flechier,* meaning 'arrowsmith' – and, yet, these meanings evidently play no role in their current usage *qua* names.

III.

Direct Reference and Frege’s Puzzle

Though Mill often speaks of names as having *no* meaning, if meaning is identified with an expression’s propositional contribution, his arguments may be charitably recast as endorsing the view that names are *directly referential* – that the propositional contribution of a name is *exhausted* by its referent. Despite its initial intuitive appeal, however, this view famously gives rise to a puzzle about identity statements. Where 'a' and 'b' are both proper names: If a statement of the form 'a=b' is true, and the semantic content of the names 'a' and 'b' is exhausted by the common referent of both 'a' and 'b’, then the proposition expressed by 'a=b' should be identical to that expressed by 'a=a' (or 'b=b'). Nevertheless, it is hard to see how this could be the case. For, though 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorous' are both names of the same celestial body, it seems that while it is (always) trifling to be told

(7) Hesperus is Hesperus,

the statement

(8) Hesperus is Phosporous

is (at least potentially) informative.

In his logical treatise the *Begriffschrifft* (1879), Gottlob Frege responds to this *prima facie* paradox by arguing that identity statements do not assert objectual identity, but rather the identity of *content*, or the synonymy of linguistic forms:

> Elsewhere signs are mere proxies for their content, and thus any phrase they occur in just expresses a relation between their various contents; but names at once appear *in propria persona* so soon as they are joined together by the symbol for equality of content; for this signifies the circumstance of two names' having the same content. Thus along with the introduction of a symbol for equality of content, all symbols are necessarily given a double meaning – the same symbols stand now for their own content, now for themselves.[12]

However, by the time of *Uber Sinn und Bedeutung* (1892), Frege had come to reject the above solution to the problem of informativeness on the grounds that it artificially (and disastrously) restricts identity statements to expressing "linguistic" rather than "worldly" facts. For, if an identity statement necessarily expresses a two-place relation between *signs* and not the "relation" of identity that all objects bear to themselves:

> a sentence like 'a=b' would no longer refer to a matter of fact, but rather to our manner of designation; no genuine knowledge would be expressed by it. But this is just what we do want to express in many cases.[13]

Indeed, ordinarily, the primary communicative intention of someone reporting, e.g., the discovery that

(8) Hesperus is Phosphorous

[12] p. 10
[13] p. 217

is to express an *astronomical* fact, rather than merely a linguistic fact about the names 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorous'. To accommodate such usage, as well as to explain the cognitive significance of it, Frege (1892) famously posits the "sense" (*sinn)/"*reference" (*bedeutung*) dichotomy.

According to this hypothesis names (and all meaningful signs) refer not "directly", as per the Millian view, but in a mediated fashion via their *sense*, "in which is contained [their] manner and context of presentation."[14] The sense of an expression is, in other words, the feature of an expression responsible for its cognitive significance – the means by which a competent user of a term *grasps* its meaning; how speakers *conceive* of the term's referent. For Frege, senses are objective features of reality which exist independently of particular minds and languages, thereby distinguishing them from connotations individual speakers associate with the name. Nevertheless, it is natural to *represent* the sense of an expression by means of one or more definite descriptions which specify the (purported) characteristics of an object that all competent speakers must associate with a term in order to successfully refer by means of it.

With the introduction of senses, Frege is able to accommodate the informativeness of identity discourse such as (8), above. For, he contends, that when flanking the identity sign, names – which typically contribute only their reference or denotation to propositions expressed by utterances of which they are a constituent – denote, instead, their customary sense. Thus, given that the sense of 'Hesperus' is captured by the definite description 'the brightest celestial body in the morning sky' and that the sense of 'Phosphorous' is similarly captured by 'the

[14] p. 218

brightest celestial body in the evening sky', a speaker uttering (8) will be expressing the same proportion as the English sentence

(9) The brightest celestial body in the morning sky is identical with the brightest celestial body in the evening sky

– a proposition which is both informative and expressive of *objectual identity* (rather than of the alleged synonymy of linguistic forms).

IV.

The Cluster Theory

Given Frege's conception of senses as essentially *public* entities, classical Fregeanism faces two apparently devastating objections initially due to John Searle (1953) which following Devitt and Sterelny (1999) we may call the “principled basis” and “unwanted necessity” problems. Regarding the former problem, as Searle notes:

> if it is asserted that every proper name has a sense, it must be legitimate to demand of any name, 'What is its sense?'. If it is asserted that a proper name is a kind of shorthand description then we ought to be able to present the description in place of the proper name.[15]

However, the selection of any single uniquely denoting description as the sense for any arbitrary proper name begins to seem hopelessly *ad hoc* once it is observed that competence with a proper name simply does not appear to require the association of any particular doing or

[15] p. 169

attribute of the referent with the name: A speaker whose primary association with the name 'Aristotle' is, *e.g.* "the author of the *Nicomachean Ethics*" denotes Aristotle no more or no less than a speaker who knows Aristotle only as satisfying the description "Plato's most famous student".

Moreover, even should a principled means of selecting any single description as the sense of a name present itself, making a proper name synonymous with a particular description yields decidedly counterintuitive results. For now, it becomes a *necessary* feature of the named object that it satisfies the description which expresses its sense. For, as Searle again observes, suppose that we select, *e.g.* the description 'the most famous ancient Greek philosopher born in Stagira' as the sense of 'Aristotle': If it is subsequently discovered that Aristotle was born in Thebes rather than Stagira, it seems clear that we "will not now say that the meaning of the name has changed, or that Aristotle did not really exist at all".[16] Hence, the name cannot be mere shorthand for the description.

Nevertheless, Searle argues, the intuitive consequences of discovering that our present use of a name is *completely* misguided are quite different:

> Suppose most or even all of our present factual knowledge of Aristotle proved to be true of no one at all, or of several people living in scattered countries and in different centuries? Would we not say for this reason that Aristotle did not exist after all, and that the name, though it has a conventional sense, refers to no one at all?[17]

Wiggenstein echoes this same sentiment in §79 of the *Philosophical Investigations*:

[16] p. 169
[17] *Ibid*.

> If one says "Moses does not exist", this may mean various things It may mean: the Israelites did not have a *single* leader when they withdrew from Egypt – or: their leader was not called Moses – or: there cannot have been anyone who accomplished all that the Bible relates of Moses . . . But when I make a statement about Moses – am I always ready to substitute some *one* [particular description] for "Moses"? I shall perhaps say: By "Moses" I understand the man who did what the Bible relates of Moses, or at any rate a good deal of it.

The above considerations suggest a natural means of reconciling a theory of sense with the principled basis and unwanted necessity problems: The sense of a proper name is not expressible by any single definite description, but rather by a *cluster* of descriptions which are collectively sufficient to uniquely denote the referent of the name.[18] The precise content of this cluster of descriptions, however, should not be seen as being *fixed*. Indeed, it is the inherent "looseness" of this cluster that provides for the very utility of proper names in the first place. As Searle (*op cit*) observes:

> if we came to agreement in advance of using the name on precisely what characteristics constituted the identity of Aristotle, our rules for using the name would be precise. But this precision would be achieved only at the cost of entailing some specific predicates by any referring use of the name. Indeed, the name itself would become superfluous for it would become logically equivalent to this set of descriptions. But if this were the case we would be in the position

[18] Searle's and Wittgenstein's considerations may also be seen as suggesting not a theory of *sense* or *meaning* but rather a theory of *reference fixing*. According to such a picture, proper names are not *synonymous* with clusters of descriptions, but the satisfaction of such a cluster remains a necessary condition for an entity being the referent of a name. However, as the arguments in §IV below apply against either interpretation, the distinction is irrelevant for purposes of the present exposition.

> of only being able to refer to an object by describing it. Whereas in fact this is just what the institution of proper names enables us to avoid and what distinguishes proper names from descriptions.[19]

V.

Naming, Necessity, and the Return of Direct Reference

While the above Cluster Theory avoids rendering any particular description commonly associated with a name as expressive of a necessary truth about the referent, it nevertheless, as Searle notes, has the consequence that that, *e.g.*

> Aristotle has the logical sum, inclusive disjunction, of properties commonly attributed to him: any individual not having at least some of these properties could not be Aristotle.[20]

However, as Kripke (1980) famously argues, the above simply does not seem to be true "in any intuitive sense of necessity".[21] After all, it seems perfectly possible that Aristotle might never have been a philosopher, in which case *all* of the descriptions commonly associated with the name would denote someone else, or perhaps no one at all. Once again, even the amended Fregean account yields "unwanted" necessities.

Due in part to considerations such as the above, Kripke concludes that names are *rigid designators* – they denote the same individual throughout all possible worlds in which that

[19] p. 170
[20] p. 172
[21] p. 295

individual exists (and denote nothing in worlds where that individual does *not* exist).[22] However, the phenomenon of rigid designation, itself, would seem perfectly consistent with the view that the association of a cluster of properties with an arbitrary proper name is necessary and sufficient for competence with that name. After all, while a description such as 'the first Postmaster General' denotes different individuals in different possible worlds, a description such as 'the *actual* first Postmater General of the United States' always denotes the same man – Benjamin Franklin. Accordingly, the rigidity of proper names could be explained in terms of the name's bearer satisfying a cluster of *actualized* descriptions.

Kripke, nevertheless, argues that such a strategy drastically overestimates the knowledge of ordinary speakers. In the first place, ordinary speakers, it seems, will often not have at their disposal any description(s) sufficient to *uniquely* denote individuals to whom they may wish to refer to by name:

> most people when they think of Cicero, just think of *a famous Roman orator* without any pretension to think . . . that there is only one famous Roman orator.[23]

And yet, such speakers presumably designate Cicero in uttering, *e.g.*

(10) Cicero was Roman

no more or less than a speaker who is able to identify Cicero as the denouncer of Cataline or the author of *De Officiis* and the *Fourteen Philippics*.

Secondly, as Kripke observes, quite often "we use a name on the basis of considerable

[22] Note that 'possible worlds' in this sense refers only to *counterfactual scenarios* – ways the actual world might have been – as opposed to, *e.g.*, the possible worlds of Lewis's (1968) Counterpart Theory.
[23] p. 297

misinformation."[24] The cluster of commonplaces associated with 'Columbus', for instance, is populated with descriptions related to his alleged discovery of North America and discovery of the Earth's true spherical nature. Neither feat, of course, was actually performed by Columbus. And, yet, for instance, when children ignorant of this fact utter, *e.g.*,

(11) In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue

they presumably speak *truly* of Columbus rather than falsely of the actual discover of America (supposing such an *individual* exists) or whoever was, in reality, the first to realize that the Earth is round. Following Devitt and Sterelny (*op cit*), we may refer to these difficulties for the actualized cluster theoretic account the "problem of ignorance" and the "problem of error" respectively.

Though Kripke's arguments are perhaps more faithfully represented as favoring a "Non-Descriptivist" rather than a Millian or Direct Reference semantics of proper names – demonstrating that names are non-Fregean, after all, only suffices to show that names directly refer on the (faulty) assumption that these are the only theories at one's disposal – the fallout from his above arguments has been nothing short of a revolutionary paradigm shift in the philosophy of language which Nathan Salmon (1986) has aptly dubbed "Direct Reference Mania."[25]

Concomitant with the resurgence of Direct Reference Theory, however, has been the resurrection of Frege's puzzle about identity statements. While Kripke argues at length about the *necessity* of statements such as

(8) Hesperus is Phosphorous,

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[24] p. 298
[25] p. 82

which follows from the terms 'Hesperus' and “Phosphorous' rigidly designating the same celestial body in the actual world, he is notably silent on the question of the statement's *informativeness*. Accordingly, in the decades since Kripke (1980) a great deal of attention has been paid to and much ink has been spilled over the problem of explaining this phenomenon while retaining rigidity.

VI.

Frege's Puzzle: Direct Reference Strategies

By and large, the predominant response on the part of Direct Reference theorists to the re-emergence of Frege's Puzzle has been to attempt to export the problem to the realm of pragmatics or the philosophy of mind for its solution.[26] Soames (2002, 2004) for instance, attempts to export Frege’s Puzzle to a theory of pragmatics on the grounds that a speaker uttering, *e.g.*,

(12) Peter Hempel was Carl Hempel

does not *invariably* wish to assert any proposition other than one merely expressive of objectual self-identity. But, he contends, a proposition p, is *semantically* expressed by a sentence s only if:

> p is included in the information a competent speaker would assert and intend to convey by an assertive utterance of s in *any* context c.[27,28]

[26] In addition to those cited below, cf. also Tye (1978), Bradley and Schwartz (1978), Fodor (1987) for similar exportation strategies.
[27] p. 60, emphasis added.

Salmon (1986) similarly attempts to export Frege's Puzzle to the realm of pragmatics on the grounds that speakers sincerely uttering sentences of the form 'a=b' typically succeed in communicating the information that 'a=b' is true, and hence that the names 'a' and 'b' are co-referential. But, he argues, this is presumably *pragmatically* and not semantically encoded information, hence:

> It is by no means clear that the sentence ['a=b'] stripped naked of its pragmatic impartations and with only its properly semantic information content left is any more informative in the relevant sense than ['a=a'].[29,30]

However any pragmatic explanation of Frege's Puzzle must grapple with the fact that ordinary speakers, while not infallible, are typically sensitive to the distinction between semantically and pragmatically imparted information. The implication of temporal order by the conjunction 'and' is a good example of this. A speaker uttering*, e.g.*

(13) Jack and Jill went up the hill and Jack fell down and broke his crown

would not ordinarily be mistaken for contradicting himself were he to continue ' . . . but not in that order'. On the other hand mountains of philosophical literature is testament to ordinary speakers' inclinations to regard

(7) Hesperus is Hesperus

and

(8) Hesperus as Phosphorous

[28] Provided that s is not used metaphorically, ironically, or sarcastically in c.

[29] p. 291

[30] It bears noting, in addition, that there is something quite odd about Salmon's talk of *sentences* (rather than tokenings thereof) carrying pragmatic implications.

as divergent in *meaning*. There, is, hence, a *prima facie* bias in favor of semantic solutions to Frege's Puzzle, which any pragmatic account must first overcome. Moreover, as we will see in Chapter 3, below, the pragmatic strategy falters as an account of the apparent of failure of substitutivity when identity statements are embedded within attitude contexts as in

(14) Jim believes Hesperus is Hesperus

and

(15) Jim believes Hesperus is Phosphorous.

Similar considerations undermine, *e.g.* Wettstein's (1986) attempt to export the solution of Frege's Puzzle, not to a theory of pragmatics, but to a theory of *mind*. According to him, Frege's Puzzle rests on a false condition of adequacy for semantic theories – to wit, the contention that any account of the semantics of singular terms:

> must provide an answer to a crucial question concerning the cognitive significance of language: the question of how identity sentences in which proper names flank the identity sign can both state truths and be informative.[31]

The latter concern, Wettstein maintains, pertains to a theory of "matters cognitive" rather than semantics, which, properly construed, relates to, *e.g.* questions of how the reference of proper names are ordinarily fixed by communal practices rather than the "ways in which speakers *think* about [these] referents".[32]

Of course, for this maneuver not to be *ad hoc*, Wettstein requires a principled motivation for this exportation that lies outside the problem at hand. However it is hard to see what such a justification could be, especially given the denial this maneuver entails of the

[31] p. 85
[32] p. 185

orthodox view of the connection between thought content and the semantic value of terms in public languages. Typically the former is seen as explaining the latter, and yet Wettstein explicitly denies this, going so far as to dismiss, in Wettstein (1988), the notion that meaningfulness is a function of mental representation as a product of philosophers' "Cartesian" upbringing.[33]

Almog (2008) similarly contends that Frege's Puzzle is ultimately derived from issues "in epistemology, not in the semantics of names". Fregeans, he maintains, have merely "legislated" their view of the semantic task and the conditions of adequacy it places on individual theories by conveniently ignoring the synonymy of linguistic forms attested to by "empirical facts about language – facts recorded in actual dictionaries".[34] Nevertheless, *pace* Almog, *lexicographers are not semanticists* and are, therefore, not typically sensitive to and/or interested in the distinction between co-reference and synonymy for the vast majority of terms defined. Dictionaries, accordingly, cannot serve as evidence of the latter relation holding between expressions and therefore can play no significant role in exporting Frege's puzzle from the realm of semantics.

VII.

Names and Their Uses

A solution to Frege's puzzle which nevertheless avoids the otherwise devastating principled basis, unwanted necessity, ignorance, and error objections to both classical

[33] p. 201
[34] p. 13

Fregeanism and the Cluster Theory begins by untangling two oft-conflated semantic concepts: names *qua lexical items* and *referring uses* of names. That this distinction is often overlooked is not surprising given the majority of typical uses of proper names. For, despite the fact that there exist multiple bearers of the name 'Aristotle', a speaker sincerely uttering, *e.g.*

(16) Aristotle was wise

must have determinate communicative intentions to predicate wisdom of a particular individual – *e.g.* a certain famous philosopher of antiquity – rather than just any individual named 'Aristotle' – *e.g.* the 20th century shipping magnate. Thus, Searle (*op cit*), contends that:

> the force of 'Aristotle' is greater than the force of 'identical with an object named 'Aristotle'', for not just any object named 'Aristotle' will do. 'Aristotle' here refers to a particular object named 'Aristotle', not to any. 'Named 'Aristotle'' is a universal term, but 'Aristotle', is a proper name, so 'this is named 'Aristotle'' is at best a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the truth of 'This is Aristotle'. Briefly and trivially, it is not the identity of this with any object named 'Aristotle', but rather its identity with Aristotle that constitutes the necessary and sufficient conditions for the truth of 'This is Aristotle'.[35]

Such considerations have suggested to many that the name type 'Aristotle' is not really borne by multiple entities: Though homonymic, the name 'Aristotle' (as a name for the philosopher) and the name 'Aristotle' (as a name for the shipping magnate) are distinct individual constants.[36]

[35] p. 12
[36] Kripke (1980, p.8), for instance, explicitly endorses this view.

Nevertheless, as Tyler Burge (1973) has observed, numerous commonplace uses of proper names are patently inconsistent with this view. In the first place, names frequently appear in plural constructions such as

(17) I've met a few Fletchers in my lifetime.

They may take the definite or indefinite article, as in

(18) I met another Fletcher at this conference

(19) The guitarist John Perry will be appearing, not the John Perry that wrote "The Essential Indexical"

(20) The Maumuses will be coming over for dinner this evening

and they neatly accommodate a wide range of determiners as in

(21) Several Georges have been president of the United States

(22) Let's not name our child 'Brittany'. Every Brittany I've met has been hoity-toity

(23) Which John Perry do you mean -- the guitarist or the philosopher?

(24) The papacy has seen twenty-three Johns occupy the Holy See.

The individual constant view of proper names, as noted above, can give no account of the apparent literal truth of (17) – (24). Instead, such uses must be treated as somehow "arch", and, accordingly analyzed not by a semantic theory, but by, *e.g.* Grice's (1957) theory of speaker meaning. Yet as Burge (*op cit*) has noted, *prima facie*, there is a notable distinction between utterances such as the above and, *e.g.*

(25) George Wallace is a Napoleon

or

(26) Dan Quayle was no Jack Kennedy

which require significant stage-setting and mutual knowledge between speaker and audience in order for the intended proposition (*i.e.* that Wallace is pompous and has dictatorial aspirations or that Quayle lacks vision and charisma) to be successfully communicated.

As noted in the preceding chapter, however, *particularized* implications such as (25) and (26) are not the only means by which a speaker may successfully communicate a proposition which he does not literally assert. A speaker may, instead, exploit *generalized* conversational implicatures to this end. Perhaps then, the Direct Reference theorist may accommodate uses such as (17) – (24) by appealing to the latter phenomenon. Accordingly, we might analyze, e.g.,

(17) I've met a few Fletchers in my lifetime

as literally meaningless, but conventionally implicative of the literally proper construction

(17') I've met a few people named 'Fletcher' in my lifetime.

However, a characteristic feature of implicatures (conventional or otherwise) is that they are *cancellable*. Hence, there is no contradiction in uttering, *e.g.*

(27) John and Mary got married and had a baby, but not in that order.

(28) Some people had a good time at the party – in fact everyone did.

So, if the paraphrase given by (18') is pragmatically implied by (18), it should be felicitous to utter, *e.g.*

(29) I've met a few Fletchers in my lifetime, but they were not named 'Fletcher'.

However (29) appears *literally* unintelligible.[37] As do:

(19') The guitarist John will be appearing, not the John Perry that wrote "The Essential Indexical", but neither is named 'John Perry'.

and

(21') Several Georges have been president of the United States but none were named 'George'.

This failure to produce intelligible cancellations suggests that whatever account is produced to accommodate (17) – (24), pragmatic implicatures will not play a central role.

Moreover, as Bach (2002) argues, in addition to the cases Burge cites, a wealth of other conventional uses of proper names appear to be similarly inexplicable according to the direct reference *status quo*. Consider for instance,

(30) In 1991, Leningrad became St. Petersburg

and

(31) After beating Sonny Liston, Cassius Clay became Mohammed Ali.

As Bach sardonically notes:

> Beating Liston was a great accomplishment, but [31] does not imply or even suggest that Cassius Clay became a distinct person as a result. Referentialism seems to predict that it does, and that it is equivalent to 'After beating Sonny

[37] This is not, however, to deny that there are perfectly intelligible *non-literal* uses of (29). A speaker might, for instance, utter (29) based on meeting a few people saliently similar to myself in ways in which the context of utterance makes clear. However, as in the case of (25) and (26), for the intended proposition to be communicated– for instance, that the speaker has met a few other strikingly handsome and bright philosophers – special "stage setting" must take place and significant mutual knowledge between speaker and audience must exist about the qualities of the *specific* bearer of 'Fletcher' that the speaker wishes to refer to. It is, therefore, implausible to hold that such uses are *literal*. Indeed, the success of communicating propositions such as this by means of (29) seems to hinge on a blatant violation of Grice's (1975) Maxim of Quality: Do not say what you know to be false.

Liston, Cassius Clay became Cassius Clay'[38]

Moreover, as Bach further observes, the very practice of introducing speakers to one another suggests a fundamentally non-referential use of proper names. For example, suppose I meet you at an APA conference. A mutual acquaintance might introduce us by saying

(32) This is Fletcher.

However, in the above scenario, as I have already been referred to by the demonstrative 'this' and you are currently perceptually acquainted with me, it seems decidedly unlikely that our mutual acquaintance would intend to express an *identity* claim akin to

(8) Hesperus is Phosphorous.[39]

Indeed, *prima facie* it would seem here that the 'is' in (32) is not functioning as the 'is' of identity, but rather the 'is' of *predication* (as in 'Fletcher is human'): Our mutual acquaintance first refers to me by means of the demonstrative, then continues to inform you of a certain distinguishing property of mine – to wit, me being a bearer of the name 'Fletcher'.

The above considerations I take to suggest a picture of proper names diametrically opposed to the Direct Reference Theorist's, to wit: Names *qua* lexical items do not refer, though individual uses may.[40]

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[38] p. 80

[39] p. 81

[40] Of course the Direct Reference theorist will not take a *phonetic* or *orthographic* type, *e.g.* 'John' or [jahn] to refer, she is still committed to the view that a suitably disambiguated proper name type, *e.g.* John_{37} *does*. However, in holding this, she cannot account for the apparent literal truth of, *e.g.*, 'There are many people named 'John'.

VIII.

The Metalinguistic Description Theory

Burge (*op cit*) argues that pluralized and determiner bound constructions such as (17) – (24) naturally underwrite the view that "a proper name is a predicate true of an object if and only if the object is given that name in an appropriate way".[41] In other words, the meaning of an arbitrary proper name 'NN' may be seen as roughly that expressed by the indefinite description 'bearer of 'NN''. Of course, as noted above, a speaker using a name such as 'Aristotle' or 'John' typically does not intend for his utterance to refer to just *any* individual bearing that name. Accordingly, Burge contends unmodified uses of proper names:

> play . . . the roles of demonstrative and predicate. Roughly, singular unmodified proper names, functioning as singular terms, have the same semantical structure as the phrase 'that book'.[42]

Further considerations, however, suggest that Burge should have accounted for unmodified usage of names not in terms of the implicit demonstrative *'that'*, but instead in terms of the phonologically null determiner '*the'*.[43] In the first place, the case for a phonologically null definite article receives strong cross linguistic support from languages and dialects in which proper names in argument positions may explicitly take the definite article. As Ora Matushansky (2009) notes, this is the case in languages as dissimilar as dialectical German, *viz*.

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[41] p. 429
[42] p. 432
[43] More accurately, Burge should not have accounted for unmodified uses of 'NN' *simply* in terms of the demonstrative 'that'. As we will see below, in the case of referentially used proper names there is still an essential role for 'that' *qua* Gödelian completion.

(33) Ich habe den Karl gesehen. (I have seen [the] Karl).

and the Uto-Aztecan language Pima:

(34) John ‘o n˜eid heg Mary (John sees [the] Mary).

Similar constructions are common in Catalan (in which a *unique* definite article is used in conjunction with proper names), modern Greek (in which the definite article is *obligatory* in argument positions), as well as dialects of Portuguese, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Italian, to name but a few.[44] Moreover, even in English a plenitude of names take the form of definite NPs, viz:

(35) the Goldberg Variations

(36) the Netherlands

(37) the Holy Spirit

(38) the Bank of England

(39) the Mississippi River

(40) the Rolling Stones.

Of course, if names are syntactically on par with descriptions, it is reasonable to expect that they will accommodate both wide and narrow scope readings. And, though, admittedly, uses of names almost always take wide scope, narrow and ambiguous readings do exist. One such case is suggested by Bach (1987):

> The electoral process is under attack, and it is proposed, in light of recent results, that alphabetical order would be a better method of selection than the present one. Someone supposes that 'Aaron Aardvark' might be the winning name and

[44] For an in depth survey of the crosslinguistic use of the definite article in conjunction with proper names, Cf. Matushansky (2005).

says, 'If that procedure had been instituted, Ronald Reagan would still be doing TV commercials, and Aaron Aardvark might have been president'.[45]

In such a case, it seems clear that the speaker need not have any specific referential beliefs about 'Aaron Aardvark', and yet his usage of the name appears perfectly felicitous.

Similarly, utterances of, *e.g.*

(41) Pat may be a man or a woman

would appear to be genuinely ambiguous with respect to the scope given to the metalinguistic description 'the bearer of 'Pat'' at the level of logical form – either expressing the proposition that both men and women may be named 'Pat', or expressing uncertainty about the gender of a particular androgynous individual so-named.

As noted above, narrow scope and ambiguous readings of sentences containing proper names are decidedly rare – thereby explaining their almost complete absence from the data considered by the semanticists that have both laid the groundwork for and staunchly defended the Direct Reference orthodoxy in the face of Frege's Puzzle. Nevertheless, this rarity is unsurprising and easily accounted for given the intentions that we have seen speakers typically have in using proper names – to wit, the intention to talk about determinate individuals, rather than just anybody bearing the name in question.

[45] pp. 146-147

IX.

The Circularity Objection

The considerations in §s VI and VII above suggest a semantics for proper names which treats unmodified, non-generic uses of an arbitrary proper name type ‘NN’ as being roughly equivalent to the description ‘the bearer of ‘NN’’ at the level of logical form. This approach is, of course, by no means novel. Russell (1918) briefly suggests as much, as does William Kneale (1962), who famously argues for the view based on the fact that it is always trifling to be told, *e.g.*

(42) Socrates was called ‘Socrates’.

If (42) is trifling, he reasons, it must be because the subject term already contains all of the information expressed by the predicate. Accordingly, he concludes that ‘Socrates’ is synonymous with the description ‘the individual called ‘Socrates’’.

In evaluating this argument, it bears noting in the first place that, as Kripke (1980) observes, *pace* Kneale, it simply does *not* seem trifling to be told (42). After all, the fact that *we* refer to Socrates as such in no way ensures his ancient Greek contemporaries did as well. Indeed, they *did not*.[46] However, as Kripke further argues, even charitably amending the premise of Kneale’s argument to state (truthfully) that it is trifling to be told that

(43) Socrates *is* called ‘Socrates’

the conclusion that names are semantically equivalent to metalinguistic descriptions does not

[46] p. 71

follow.[47] After all:

> In the same way, it is trifling to be told that horses are called 'horses', without this leading to the conclusion that the word 'horse' simply *means* 'the animal called a "horse".[48]

Though the above merely demonstrates the inadequacy of Kneale's considerations to underwrite a Metalinguistic Description Theory of names, Kripke further argues that *any* attempt to motivate such a thesis is doomed to failure on the grounds that it will violate a condition of adequacy for all semantic theories – to wit, the "circularity condition":

> For any successful theory, the account must not be circular. The properties which are [appealed to] must not themselves involve the notion of reference in such a way that it is ultimately impossible to eliminate.[49]

Certainly a theory, such as Kneale's which treats 'NN' as roughly equivalent to 'is called 'NN'' would seem to violate this condition as the predicate 'called 'NN'' would be trivially satisfied by, *e.g.*, *my* using 'NN' to refer to a certain individual. Thus we would explain my act of reference in using 'NN' *in terms of that act of reference itself*. But as we shall see below, the family of predicates including 'is *named*' and '*bears 'NN''* have very different satisfaction conditions, thus revealing the circularity objection to be wide of the mark.

[47] Though, as Kripke notes, the sense in which such a statement is trifling is debatable. After all, the statement is presumably not *necessary* or *analytic*.
[48] p. 71
[49] p. 70

X.

Bearing 'NN' and Being the Referent of 'NN'

Despite, its initial air of plausibility, the circularity objection to the Metalinguistic Description Theory of names ultimately fails as a result of the common conflation noted in §VI between *names* and *referring uses of names*. For, Kripke's objection undermines a theory which treats most uses of proper names as roughly equivalent to the description 'the bearer of 'NN'' only if the theory is further intended as a theory of *how and why an individual comes to be the bearer of 'NN'*. Nevertheless, as argued above, bearing a name and being the referent of a use of that name are two very different relations. In short: I may refer to NN by my use of 'NN', but NN is *not* the bearer of 'NN' *because* I refer to them as such.

As both Bart Geurts (1997) and Bach (*op cit*) have independently observed, considering the parallels between referring uses of names and referring uses of numbers is especially instructive here. Most of us in addition to bearing names are assigned social security or taxpayer identification numbers by which the government may refer to us. Owners of motorized forms of transportation are routinely assigned license plate and tag numbers which may be used to refer to their vehicles. Inmates are assigned prisoner identification numbers, etc.

Consider, momentarily, the latter phenomenon: Inspector Javert may refer to his quarry, prisoner Valjean, by his inmate ID #24601. However his so doing does not, of course, *explain* why or how Valjean bears this number. Presumably such an explanation would make reference to certain official protocols – *e.g.* a convention that the first digit stands for the month the prisoner was received, the second number refers to his security classification, and so on. *Mutatis mutandis* for social security numbers, motor vehicle tags, and so forth.

Similar considerations apply to names. An individual may bear the name 'Fletcher' because he was ostensively so-dubbed by his parents at the time of his birth.[50] But this fact alone does not explain why a token utterance containing the name type 'Fletcher' refers to that same child. As Geurts (*op cit*) nicely puts it:

> Bearing a name is like wearing a tie. Like ties, names are seldom unique, but circumstances permitting they may be used for referential purposes. More accurately, just as you can employ the attribute of wearing a tie to [descriptively] identify to your audience the person you have in mind . . . you can use the attribute of being named 'John' for the same purpose. Taken on its own, however, a name doesn't refer any more than a tie does.[51]

As the Metalinguistic Description Theory is not a theory of how or why a person comes to bear a name, but only how subsequent *uses* of that name may refer to an individual, the circularity objection fails to undermine it.

[50] Though this is Kripke's preferred paradigm of the reference-fixing relation, it bears noting that this is far from the *only* manner in which individuals may come to bear a name. A name may be attributively bestowed upon an individual, as is plausibly the case with, *e.g.* 'Jack the Ripper'. In some cultures, patronymics – the assigning of a name based on paternal lineage – explains this relation. In 2001, two New Yorkers attempted to auction the naming rights of their first child to the highest corporate bidder on Ebay; (the auction regrettably closed without any parties bidding over the reserve price of half a million dollars). Computer programs often automatically name the files they generate. Nicknames, *e.g.* 'Fatty' (as in the ill-fated star of silent cinema) are often assigned on the basis of physiology. And so on, *ad nauseum*.

[51] p. 326

XI.

Names and "Indices"

To review, it has been argued above:

(a) Names *are* genuine linguisitic entities and, thus, appropriate subjects for linguistic study.

(b) Names *qua* lexical items have many properties (phonological, syntactic etc.) but reference is not one of them.

(c) Literal uses of an arbitrary name type 'NN' have a meaning expressible in English by the predicate 'bearer of 'NN''.

(d) Non-generic, unmodified uses of 'NN' are accompanied by the phonologically null determiner 'the' at the level of logical form.

Of course, in almost all cases the metalinguisitic description 'the bearer of 'NN'' will be, in the terminology of the previous chapter *incomplete* – failing to *uniquely* denote any single individual. How then to explain speakers' referential capacities in employing names?

Here the Metalinguistic Description Theory may help itself to the same broadly causal theory of reference borrowing first suggested by Kripke (1980). Loar (1980) offers a succinct picture of such a process: At time t_0 a speaker (call him Adam) ostensively dubs an object 'NN'. Having dubbed the object 'NN' Adam is now in the position to utter various sentences of the form 'NN is F'. At t_1 other speakers within the linguistic community hear Adam so-using the name. Having been thus exposed to Adam and his use of 'NN', these successive speakers are now in a position to use the name 'NN' to speak about the same object.[52]

More likely than not the name type 'NN' that the speakers at t_1 hear Adam employing is not unique – and it is, again, more likely true than not that our speakers know this. Accordingly, speakers at t_1 assign what might be called an "index" to the name – creating what might be thought of as a "label" for a mental "file" in which information associated with the name may be organized.[53] Thus, while most speakers will only have one file (at most) associated with the name 'Wittgenstein', common names such as 'John' will likely have multiple files 'John_1', 'John_2,' 'John_3' etc. – one for each distinct person the speaker believes to bear that name.

The precise content of this index which differentiates, *e.g.* one 'John' file from the next, can be expected to vary greatly from speaker to speaker. In the case above, our speakers at t_1 may assign an index equivalent in content to the description 'Adam's NN' – or, if they ever become perceptually acquainted with the object so-named, the visual impressions formed at this meeting may constitute the basis of the indexing content. At some successive t_n later speakers who have never known Adam or his linguistic network may index the name based on properties widely associated with the referent. It is likely that most "famous" names are so-indexed, providing for mental files we might represent as, *e.g.* '$\text{Aristotle}_{\text{shipping magnate}}$' and '$\text{Aristotle}_{\text{philosopher}}$'. What *is* shared by speakers at every stage of this causal chain, however, is

[52] p. 525
[53] Note that the purely metaphorical sense of "index" here – as an individuating descriptive "label" for a mental "file" is *not* the formal semantic sense of the term in which indices are a function from context (world, time, etc.) of utterance to truth value.

the deferential intention to use the indexed name ‘NN’ to refer to the same object as the source of the name.[54]

XII.

Names and Expressions

Following May and Fiengo (2007) – we may now distinguish between *names qua lexical items* and syntactic *expressions containing names*. As we’ve seen, *names qua lexical items* do not refer – only particular *uses* of names by speakers do. We are now in a position to refine this view: The above considerations suggest that unmodified, non-generic uses of an arbitrary name ‘NN’ instantiate the *expression type* ‘the ϕ bearer of ‘NN’’ – where ϕ represents the content which serves to distinguish one ‘NN’-file from another for a given speaker.[55]

We’ve seen above that the content of ϕ may be expected to differ greatly across speakers. However, for our purposes we may consider two expression types containing names as identical insofar as they relate (or “assign”) the same name *qua lexical item* to the same referent. Hence, though you and I may index, the name ‘Frege’ differently, we may be said to utilize the same expression type in uttering, *e.g.*

(44) Frege was bearded

[54] Typically we may expect that the content of ϕ will not be a single individuating description, but an indeterminate range of contextually relevant descriptions of which S and her audience are mutually aware. In using, ‘NN’, S thus makes an indeterminate or vague statement which is true just in case it is true under all admissible “sharpenings” of her implicit reference, false just in case it is false under all admissible sharpenings, and neither true nor false if it is true under some sharpenings while false under others. Cf. Schiffer (1997).

[55] More precisely, typical utterances of ‘NN is G’ will instantiate the logical form [the x: x bears ‘NN’ & ϕx](Gx). For expository simplicity, however, in the following I shall persist in speaking of ‘the ϕ bearer of ‘NN’’.

if and only if both of our “mental files” relate the linguistic entity ‘Frege’ to Frege, himself via the type of process sketched in §X above. Accordingly, the relation of *expression* identity is distinguished from both *name* identity (in cases of names with multiple bearers) and *referential* identity.

XIII.

Proper Names and Frege’s Puzzle: A Metalinguistic Solution

Treating ordinary assertoric uses of proper names as instantiating the expression type ‘the ϕ bearer of ‘NN’’ opens the door to a largely formal, grammatical solution to Frege’s puzzle about the informativeness of identity discourse. Statements of the form ‘a=a’ and statements of the form ‘a=b’ will impart different information partly because the expressions used collectively contain the information that ‘a’ and ‘b’ are co-referential. Moreover, the proposed solution respects the *objectual* nature of identity discourse by analyzing it in terms of the (single, self-identical) *bearer* of ‘a’ and ‘b’, as opposed to the names themselves, as Frege initially proposed in the *Begriffschrifft*. Before such a solution can be offered, however, we must answer the question: In virtue of what does metalinguistic descriptive content enter into the propositions expressed by informative identity talk?

As May and Fiengo (*op cit*). observe, in order to sincerely assert, *e.g.*

(45) Frege was bearded

a speaker must believe both:

(a) That ‘Frege’ has the value Frege

(b) That Frege (the man) satisfied the predicate 'bearded'.[56]

Tacit knowledge of these competence conditions is required for an audience to grasp the proposition the speaker intends to assert by means of (45). Hence, it is mutually known between speaker and audience, that when a speaker utters 'NN is F', he believes that a particular *bearer of 'NN'* is F. Such beliefs typically exist as part of an unarticulated conversational "background". But occasionally, speakers may wish to make these linguistic beliefs *explicit.* As we shall see in the following chapter, this is frequently the case when we ascribe beliefs to others. However, it is also the *norm* for identity discourse. This is so because of our typical motivations for engaging in talk about identity.

To see this, let us return to some considerations from the previous chapter. If, as argued above, the vast majority of uses of proper names are definite descriptions at the level of logical form, then we should expect that speakers will use them either *attributively* or *referentially* depending on their conversational purposes. However, if speakers were to have purely referential intentions regarding expressions flanking the identity sign when uttering a sentence of the form 'a=b' then the proposition expressed by her utterance would merely exemplify the law of self-identity. There may, of course, be cases in which speakers have such intentions – perhaps a logic or math tutorial – but in ordinary contexts, these will be decidedly rare.[57]

[56] p. 9

[57] Similarly rare will be cases in which occurrences of 'a' in 'a=a' are indexed *differently* so as to express a proposition over and above trivial self-identity. As we will see in Chapter 3, below, an extension of Kripke's famous puzzle about belief necessitates countenancing such uses. However, in the absence of explicit contextual clues provided by the speaker that the iterations of 'a' in his utterance of 'a=a' are indexed differently, Grice's (1975) Maxim of Quantity ("Be as informative as is necessary") provides a basis for explaining our intuitions about the analyticity of the speaker's utterance.

For a speaker who *does,* in fact, index the iterations of 'a' flanking the identity sign differently, but does nothing to indicate this fact to his audience, would not be being sufficiently informative, and, hence, would be in violation of the Cooperative Principle. Since the audience is entitled to presume the speaker's adherence to this

Consider typical motivations for engaging in identity speak. Often we are faced with a speaker who has two names in his lexicon, but believes erroneously that these are assigned to distinct individuals, as in the case of Lois Lane who believes that her uses of 'Superman' and 'Clark Kent' refer to different men. Just as frequently, we discover this fact of *ourselves* and wish to report it to others, as in the case of the Babylonian astronomer who discovers that the object he has been calling 'Hesperus' and the object he has been calling 'Phosphorous' are one and the same. Sometimes we want to provide a speaker who has only one name of an individual in her lexicon with another name for that individual, as when an English teacher informs her students that Mark Twain is Samuel Clemens. Sometimes we might wish to provide another speaker with *two* new names simultaneously. I might, for instance, begin a book on an obscure blues musician with:

(46) Blind Willie Hootenanny is William Smith of Harrison County, Mississippi.

In all of these scenarios, what the speaker wishes to assert is not *merely* a belief about objectual self identity, but a belief about *names and their assignments*. Accordingly, speakers wishing to communicate such beliefs intend to use the expressions types 'the ϕ bearer of 'a''

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principle, it is similarly entitled to presume (in the absence of evidence to the contrary) that the iterations of 'a' in his utterance are co-indexed.

Though it bears noting that Grice, himself, does *not* see a role for the Cooperative Principle and derivative conversational maxims in arbitrating between candidate *literal* interpretations of ambiguous utterances (as in the above), as Soames (2008) observes, in order to arbitrate between distinct possible implications of a (literally) ambiguous utterance, it is first necessary to establish the utterance's literal semantic content upon the occasion of use. Let us consider, then, a typical use of 'a=a': Ordinarily a speaker uttering this locution will be doing so not merely to express a tautology, but in order to *imply* something else. For instance, a speaker might reply to an interlocutor's expressed dismay at an action of the President of the United States by uttering, *e.g.*, "Well, what do you expect? Obama is Obama". In so doing, the speaker implies that, *e.g.*, Obama is acting in a manner consistent with his past behavior, that Obama is a pragmatist who will compromise his expressed ideals, or some similar proposition.

Nevertheless, on the standard Gricean view, these propositions can only be understood as implied by the speaker's utterance if the audience first infers that the speaker would have been being less than fully cooperative by uttering 'a=a'. However, a speaker would only be so-interpreted if his utterance were first understood as literally expressing nothing over and above trivial self-identity.

and ‘the ϕ bearer of ‘b’’ *attributively*, in which case, satisfaction of the predicates ‘bearer of ‘a’’ and ‘bearer of ‘b’’ are intended as essential to the truth of what is said.

Though speakers’ attributive intentions explain the informativeness of statements of the form ‘a=b’ *tout court*, of course, the *precise* effect of the information conveyed (and, hence, in one sense the “informativeness” of the utterance) will vary from speaker to speaker, depending on the speaker’s prior epistemic states, as the above examples illustrate. May and Fiengo (*op cit*)offer a nice analogy:

> . . . one could think of the “informativeness” of identity statements as a measure of their causal/epistemic role for an individual – think of an identity statement as like a virus implanted into an interwoven nexus of beliefs, and assess the damage it does. But insofar as we have we have such a notion of informativeness for identity statements, it is derivative from the information conveyed . . . that the expressions flanking the identity sign corefer.[58]

XIV.

The Schmidentity Objection

Though we have seen the potential of a Metalinguistic Description Theory to offer a solution Frege’s puzzle which (a) respects the objectual nature of identity discourse, and (b) avoids the principled basis, unwanted necessity, ignorance, and error arguments, many have,

[58] p. 116

nevertheless, been deterred from pursuing solutions such as the above on the basis of Kripke's (1980) well-known "Schmidentity" argument. Regarding metalinguistic theories, Kripke argues:

> If anyone ever inclines to this particular account of identity, let's suppose we *gave* him his account. Suppose identity *were* a relation in English between the names. I shall introduce an artificial relation called 'schmidentity' (not a word of English) which I now stipulate to hold only between an object and itself. Now then, the question of whether Cicero is schmidentical with Tully can arise, and if it does arise the same problems will hold for this statement as were thought in the case of our original identity statement to give the belief that this was a relation between the names.[59, 60]

As Murali Ramachandran (1995) observes, the above passage seems to operate on what might be called the "Counterexample Principle". The principle, first suggested by Kripke (1977) holds that:

> If someone alleges that a certain linguistic phenomenon in English is a counterexample to a given analysis, consider a hypothetical language which (as much as possible) is like English except that the analysis is *stipulated* to be correct. Imagine such a hypothetical language introduced into a community and spoken by it. *If the phenomenon in question would still arise in a community that*

[59] p. 108
[60] Note that while Kripke poses the objection in terms of *identity* it seems that what is actually at stake is the nature of *identity discourse*.

> *spoke such a language (which may not be English), then the fact that it arises in English cannot disprove the hypothesis that the analysis is correct for English*.[61]

Hence, since a speaker aware of the definition of schmidentity, belonging to a community where *this* relation is stipulated to be the correct analysis of identity talk could still wonder if Cicero is *schmidentical* with Tully, the same problem of informativeness which the metalinguistic theory purported solves, still arises in such a community. Hence, the metalinguistic theory cannot *disprove* a purely objectual account of identity discourse.

But though the schmidentity argument demonstrates that a purely objectual, directly referential account of the semantics of identity statements is *consistent* with the phenomena that give rise to Frege's puzzle, it is nevertheless notable that without the aid of an appropriate theory of pragmatics, the direct reference view cannot *explain* the informativeness of identity discourse, as the Metalinguistic Description theory does. What does this tell us about the true ramifications of the Schmidentity Argument? Nothing more than this: Frege's puzzle does not *need* to be accounted at the level of *semantic* theory – a suitable pragmatic one will save the phenomena. Nevertheless, we are not interested merely in which theories *could* account for the data – our desideratum is formulating the *best model* of the semantics proper names. The considerations in §s VI-XII suggest the Metalinguistic Description Theory is just this.

[61] Kripke (1977, p. 16). Emphasis in original.

Chapter Three:

Proper Names and Attitude Ascriptions

Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to believe!

– Lawrence Peter

I.

Transparency and Opacity

Like identity discourse, reports of speakers' beliefs, hopes, desires, assumptions, wonderings, and other psychological states – what Russell (1918) dubbed "propositional attitudes" – give rise to a stubborn puzzle involving the substitutivity *salve veritate* of co-referential terms. Quine (1956) succinctly illustrates the predicament:

> There is a certain man in a brown hat whom Ralph has glimpsed several times under questionable circumstances . . . Ralph suspects he is a spy. Also there is a gray haired man vaguely known to Ralph as rather a pillar of the community, whom Ralph is not aware of having seen except once at the beach.[1]

What Ralph fails to realize is that the man in the brown hat and the man seen at the beach are the same man – namely, Bernard J. Ortcutt. The puzzle is this: If, based on the above scenario, we are lead to utter

[1] p. 384

(1) Ralph believes that Ortcutt is a spy

do we speak truly?

Our intuitions seem to conflict on the matter: On the one hand, it seems quite clear that we do speak truly in uttering (1). After all, Ortcutt *is* the man who Ralph has glimpsed wearing a brown hat and acting suspiciously. Thus, (1) seems like a perfectly natural means for an omniscient spectator to relate the facts of the matter to a third party. On the other hand, given Ralph's disposition to sincerely withhold assent from (or even actively *dissent to*) 'Ortcutt is a spy', (1) seems to fail at the level of describing the representational reality of Ralph's belief state.

Faced with this dilemma, Quine concludes that sentences like (1) are genuinely *ambiguous* between "transparent" and "opaque" readings. [2] Transparent ascriptions allow for *salve veritate* substitution of co-referential terms, *e.g.* 'Ortcutt' and 'the man in the brown hat'. Opaque ascriptions do not permit of such substitution. Note that the ambiguity in ascriptions such as (1) is apparently a scope ambiguity, similar to that exhibited by sentences such as:

(2) Everybody loves somebody.

Just as an individual uttering a *token* of (2) must have *unambiguous* communicative intentions to assert either

(2a) There is certain person such that everyone loves *that* person ($\exists x \ \forall y \ (Lxy)$)

or

(2b) For every person$_x$ there is some person$_y$ such that x loves y. ($\forall x \ \exists y \ (Lxy)$)

[2] Though Quine's analysis, it should be noted, was only intended to apply to descriptions in that-clauses, not proper names.

so too must a speaker uttering (1) have determinate intentions regarding the construal of her utterance. The speaker's intentions determine, in this case, the designation of 'Ortcutt' with respect to the scope of the attitude verb 'believes': In the opaque reading the designation of 'Ortcutt' is a person existing only in a possible world of Ralph's beliefs; in the transparent reading the designation of 'Ortcutt' is an individual existing outside of just this possible world.

II.

Transparent and Opaque Intentions

The ambiguity Quine postulates for attitude ascriptions dovetails neatly with the dichotomous motivations speakers typically have for engaging in attitude ascription involving proper names.[3] On the one hand a speaker may be interested merely in describing the *extra-mental reality* to which the agent's beliefs ultimately refer.[4] Consider, for instance, the following case: Ralph is a rogue assassin of foreign spies. Based on his suspicious demeanor, Ralph is led to suspect that a certain man in a brown hat is a spy. Ralph sneaks up behind the man, who unknown to Ralph is Bernard Ortcutt, and dispatches him. DNA left at the scene quickly leads authorities to arrest Ralph.

At the trial, the District Attorney is giving his opening remarks: "Why," he begins, "did Ralph murder the upstanding Mr. Ortcutt? Because Ralph believed Ortcutt was a spy." In so speaking, the DA intends only to convey to the jury the *individual* about whom Ralph formed his

[3] For ease of exposition, I ignore here so called *de se* or *self-ascriptive beliefs*, which raise unique complications for *any* semantic theory, and focus solely on second and third-person ascription.
[4] This terminology, it should be noted, is not to imply that there are *two* realities – mental and extra-mental. The reader should feel free to paraphrase such talk into the more accurate, but somewhat unwieldy "extra-mental *aspect* of reality'.

belief. Given his conversational purposes, substituting another co-referential expression, *e.g.* 'the victim' for 'Ortcutt' would not affect the truth of the DA's utterance. The DA, thus, speaks with transparent intentions.

Alternately, speakers may wish to describe the *representational content* of an agent's belief-state. In doing so, a speaker intends to refer to the finer-grained manner in which the agent *conceives of* or *represents* a state of affairs. Such opaquely-intended ascriptions are apparently indispensible to rational explanations of an agent's behavior. Consider, for instance Lois Lane. As anyone familiar with the fiction knows, Lois is a co-worker and love interest of Kal-el – an alien known on Earth alternately as 'Clark Kent' (in the guise of a mild-mannered reporter) and 'Superman' (in the guise of a spandex-clad vigilante hero with myriad superpowers, among them the ability to fly). Suppose Lois sees Kal-el in his mild-mannered reported guise poised to leap from a rooftop. She immediately wrestles him to the ground (in spite, somehow, of his super-strength). Why did Lois take such drastic action? While

(4) Lois believed that Clark Kent could not fly

seems genuinely explanatory here, substituting the co-referential 'Superman' for 'Clark Kent' to yield

(5) Lois believed that Superman could not fly

seems to undo the ascription's explanatory value. After all, like the rest of Metropolis, Lois has seen Kal-el flying many times in his Superman guise. Accordingly, in ascribing (4) to explain Lois' actions, one, it seems, must speak opaquely.

III.

Opacity and Direct Reference

Given her antecedent commitment to the thesis that a proper name's propositional contribution is exhausted by its reference, the Direct Reference theorist is, of course, unable to account for the opacity of attitude ascriptions involving proper names in terms of the semantic properties of the names, themselves. As in the case of identity discourse, many have attempted to circumvent the problem of substitutivity by exporting it to a theory of pragmatics for a solution. Tom McKay (1981), for instance, has suggested that any infelicity in, *e.g.* (5) is purely pragmatic and results from the violation of a general conversational maxim which might be stated: *When ascribing beliefs to an agent only use a that-clause that the agent himself would accept*.[5]

Whatever *prima facie* plausibility this maneuver enjoys, however, is undermined by the observation that the endorsement of this strategy would apparently prevent a Direct Reference theorist from even straightforwardly describing the source of, *e.g.* (5)'s pragmatic infelicity. After all, such a theorist is committed to holding that 'Clark Kent flies' and 'Superman flies' make the exact same propositional contributions even when embedded in belief contexts. So, in believing that Superman flies, Lois *ipso facto* believes that Clark Kent flies. Nevertheless, Lois, *ex hypothesi* won't assent to 'Clark Kent flies'. Why?

In our post-Freudian age in which agents are no longer taken to have privileged Cartesian access to the contents of their own minds, the following explanation would, initially,

[5] p. 294

seem quite plausible: while Lois believes that Clark Kent flies, *she does not believe that she believes this*. Nevertheless, this explanation would appear off-limits to a Direct Reference theorist such as McKay. For, if the names 'Superman' and 'Clark Kent' make exactly the same propositional contribution in the context of attitude ascriptions of belief then embedding the names within the scope of additional belief operators presumably should have no effect on their semantic properties, in which case

(6) Lois believes that she believes that Superman flies

and

(7) Lois believes that she believes that Clark Kent flies

should have the same truth conditions. While, plainly, it seems, they do not.[6] Moreover, McKay's sentence-acceptance strategy fails to account for our ability to ascribe beliefs to speakers of other languages. For, given that Hammurabi would not have assented to 'Hesperus is Phosphorous', we are now unable to account for the truth of

(8) Hammurabi believed Hesperus was Phosphorous.

Salmon (1986, 1989) and Soames (1987, 1988) offer a means around this otherwise disastrous consequence by holding that the relation of believing is the existential generalization of a three-place relation (call it BEL) which holds between a speaker, a proposition, and a sentence-like *guise* under which the proposition is apprehended. Because guises on this view are sentence-like, but not themselves sentences, we may explain the apparent truth of (8) in terms of Hammurabi's believing the Russellian proposition containing the planet Venus and the identity relation under a guise roughly captured by the English sentence 'Hesperus is

[6] Cf. Schiffer (1987) for a similar objection involving iterated belief.

Phosphorous'. Guises however are *not* part of the semantic content of a belief ascription. Hence both identity of semantic content and truth value are preserved by substitution of co-referential expressions.

Because the guise under which the belief is held is often more important to, *e.g.*, explaining a subject's behavior than the actual semantic content of her belief, Salmon and Soames hold that utters of attitude ascriptions will often carefully choose the words that constitute the ascription. Specifically, they will try to select verbiage that will indicate to their audience something about the guise under which the agent holds the belief in question. Moreover, audiences will often expect speakers to be doing just this. Hence, information about the quasi-linguistic guise under which an agent allegedly apprehends a belief will often be pragmatically implicated in the course of ascribing attitudes. Indeed, the commonplace nature of such implications, Salmon and Soames contend, lead ordinary speakers to mistake them for components of the ascription's literal semantic content – thus explaining anti-substitution intuitions.

Nevertheless, as Jennifer Saul (1998) rightly observes, neither Salmon nor Soames provides an explanation of the underlying nature of the guises to which they appeal, aside from remarking that they are sentence-*like*. But without an account of *exactly* what these sentence-like guises are we have no means of evaluating whether or not the intuitive truth conditions of attitude ascriptions are actually met. Hence, the above sketch simply won't do as a comprehensive account of the semantics of belief.

Crimmins and Perry (1989) have developed a similar account to those of Salmon and Soames which accounts for substitution failure in terms of speakers' tacit reference to context-sensitive *modes of presentation* under which agents entertain a belief. According to this model, though the names ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ contribute nothing more than their common referent to, *e.g*. (4) and (5), a speaker uttering (4) makes tacit reference to a (broadly-construed) *superhero* mode of presentation, whereas a speaker uttering (5) implicitly invokes an extra-propositonal *mild-mannered reporter* mode of presentation.[7] So construed, propositional attitude reports are once again held to ascribe a three-place relation – this time, one that holds between a believer, a proposition, and a mode of presentation.

This solution, which following Schiffer (1977) we may call the “Implicit Reference Theory”, falters in two regards. In the first place there is, once again, the nagging question of what precisely is the nature of the mechanisms invoked to explain anti-substitution intuitions – in this case *modes of presentation*, which are often captured well enough captured by descriptions, but not themselves descriptions. Secondly the Implicit Reference theory is apparently unable to account for ascriptions of belief with quantified NPs as their grammatical subjects. For instance, as Schiffer (1992) observes, the Implicit Reference Theory entails that the ascription

(10) Everyone who has met her believes Madonna has musical talent

has the logical form

(10a) $\forall$y (y has met Madonna $\rightarrow$ Bel (y, <Madonna, being musically talented>, m))

where m is a contextually determined mode of presentation. Nevertheless, (10a) implies

(10b) $\exists$m$\forall$y (y Bel $\rightarrow$ (y, <Madonna, being musically talented>, m))

[7] For purposes of the present discussion, we may charitably take modes of presentation be *whatever* mental entities play roughly the epistemological role of Fregean senses in grasping a proposition.

which implausibly asserts that there is a *single* mode of presentation (or mode of presentation type) under which everyone who has met Madonna conceives of Madonna.[8]

Finally the Implicit Reference Theory's (as well as Salmon and Soames' Implication Theory's) abandonment of the surface grammar of belief ascriptions (which *prima facie* renders them as ascribing a *two-place* relation between believers and propositions believed) is, furthermore, only warranted if we have independent theoretical grounds for holding a Direct Reference theory of names. In the previous chapter it was argued that Frege's Puzzle about identity statements gives ample us reason to reject this picture in favor of one which holds the majority of uses of proper names as instantiating the syntactic expression type 'the *i* bearer of 'NN''. Let us then turn to applying this analysis to the behavior of proper names in belief ascriptions.

IV.

Attributive Names and Opaque Attitude Ascription

As we've seen, speakers' motivations for engaging in attitude ascription may be plausibly seen as falling into one of two broad categories – transparent intentions, which permit substitution of co-referential terms and only purport to identify the *individual* of whom the agent believes, and opaque intentions which do not permit substitution and purport to capture to the *representational content* of an agent's belief state.

[8] p. 508

Assuming momentarily that ascriber and agent speak the same language, it follows from the above that an ascriber can have opaque intentions in ascribing a belief with a that-clause employing a proper name only if he believes the agent, himself, has that same name in his lexicon. Otherwise, the ascriber would either speak transparently, or use another expression which he believed to better capture the agent's own mental representations.

Accordingly, it is a pre-condition for a truthful opaque ascription of

(15) A believes NN is G

that the agent of whom the belief is ascribed believe that a particular bearer of 'NN' is G. This quite general fact, mutually known between competent speakers and audiences, provides the basis for a plausible solution to the behavior of proper names in opaque attitude ascriptions: A speaker who utters (15) opaquely intends to assert an attributive, metalinguistic proposition with the logical form

(16) A believes the ϕ bearer of 'NN' is G.

To put it slightly differently, an opaque ascription such as (15) ascribes an inherently *linguistic* belief about an expression and its semantic value.

Of course, all attitude ascription does not take place within the context of a single language shared by both ascriber and agent. For instance, in illustrating Frege's puzzle, it is common to invoke the case of the ancient Babylonian ruler Hammurabi. Hammurabi, we are told, believed that Hesperus, but not Phosphorous was visible in the morning sky. Consider, then, the ascription:

(17) Hammurabi believed that Hesperus but not Phosphorous was visible in the morning.

Presumably, in uttering (17) a speaker does not wish to assert that the renowned ancient lawgiver was *irrational*. But this is exactly what a transparent reading would imply: that Hammurabi believed a single, self-identical object was both visible and not visible in the morning. Accordingly, we are forced to construe (17) opaquely. According to the analysis suggested above (17) expresses roughly the same proposition expressed by

(17a) Hammurabi believed that the [celestial] bearer of 'Hesperus' but not the [celestial] bearer of 'Phosphorous' was visible in the morning.

But, of course, being an ancient Babylonian, Hammurabi had neither the modern English names 'Hesperus' or 'Phosphorous' (or their Greek antecedents, for that matter) in his lexicon. Accordingly, a truthful opaque ascription of (17) supervenes on our ability to translate *our* names 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorous' into verbiage that Hammurabi would, himself, have used to express the belief in (17).[9]

Allowing for such translation, nevertheless, gives rise to an infamous *prima facie* puzzle about beliefs and their ascription due to Kripke (1979). The puzzle proceeds from two apparently innocuous principles:

The Disquotational Principle: If a speaker S of a language L assents to 'p' and 'p' is a sentence of L, then S believes that p.

and

[9] That names are so-translatable is argued in §I of the preceding chapter. Though a full account of the notion of *translation* is, itself, beyond the scope of this exposition, it bears noting that if Kaplan (1990) is correct, many so-called "translations" of proper names are but orthographic and phonological variants of a single word. According to his "common currency" theory of word identity, 'London' and 'Londres' would, for instance, be regarded as distinct spellings of the same name in the way that we typically regard /JEE-sus/ and /Hey-zeus/ to be merely distinct pronunciations of a single name. Though I am sympathetic to this account, in what follows I shall continue to speak of terms such as 'London' and 'Londres' as though they are distinct names.

The Translation Principle: If a sentence of a language expresses a truth in that language, then a translation of it into any other language expresses a truth in that language.

Consider, then, Pierre, an ordinary monolingual Frenchman who has come to assent to

(18) Londres est jolie

based on the reports of fellow Frenchmen who have regaled him with glowing descriptions of the city. From this, the Translation Principle and Disquotational Principle apparently allow us to infer

(18a) Pierre croit que Londres est Jolie

and

(18b) Pierre believes that London is pretty

respectively.

So far, so good. Suppose, however, that Pierre later

> moves to England, in fact to London itself, though to an unattractive part of the city with fairly uneducated inhabitants. He, like most of his neighbors, rarely ever leaves this part of the city. None of his neighbors know any French, so he must learn English by 'direct method' without using any translation of English into French.[10]

Learning, thusly, by immersion, Pierre acquires the term 'London' as the name of the dreadful slum in which he lives. Eventually, upon learning the English predicate 'pretty', Pierre becomes disposed to assent to the English sentence

(19) London is not pretty.

[10] p. 443

On the basis of the Disquotational Principle, we appear entitled to conclude

(20) Pierre believes that London is not pretty.

However, now suppose that Pierre

> does not for a moment withdraw his assent from the French sentence "*Londres est Jolie"*; he merely takes it for granted that the ugly city in which he is now stuck is distinct from the enchanting city he heard about in France. But he has no inclination to change his mind for a moment about the city he still calls '*Londres*'.[11]

We are, thus, left with a puzzle: What belief about London's pulchritude should we ascribe to Pierre?

In responding to the puzzle, two psychological facts about Pierre bear noting. First, he does not believe the *geographic* fact that London and Londres are one and the same. Secondly, and equally importantly, Pierre does not believe the *linguistic* fact that 'London' and 'Londres' are co-referential. (After all, if he believed the latter, being rational, he would *ipso facto* come to believe the former).

While *no transparent* ascription suffices to encapsulate the dual nature of Pierre's confusion, an opaque ascription of

(21) Pierre believes that Londres, but not London is pretty

which, on the present account is held to express the same proposition as

(21a) Pierre believes the [city] bearer of 'Londres', but not the [city] bearer of 'London' is pretty

[11] p. 443

initially seems to accomplish just this. However, applying the Translation Principle would appear disastrous to such an account, for it would permit the *salve veritate* substitution of 'London' for 'Londres' in (21), yielding the absurd

(21b) Pierre believes that London, but not London, is pretty.

Accordingly, it seems that in addition to

> **Transparent ascriptions** – Ascriptions which allow for unrestricted substitution of co-referential names as the speaker only intends to stipulate individual of whom the agent believes

and

> **Opaque ascriptions** – Ascriptions which restrict substitution to translations of the same expression

we must countenance

> ***De dicto* ascriptions** – in which *no* substitution of names is permitted;
> the orthographic and phonetic form of the ascribed name is essential to what the speaker means.

While the admission of *de dicto* ascriptions, so construed, to our taxonomy of attitude reports may initially seem nothing more than an *ad hoc* maneuver to avoid the force of Kripke's particular puzzle, a closer look reveals the phenomenon to be found elsewhere in our ascriptive practices.

Consider for instance the well known (now former) Libyan dictator الـ قذاف ي معمر whose name is variously translated into English as 'al-Gadaffi', 'Qadaffi', 'Khadafi', etc. Based on the orthographic variances in these translations, it is quite possible for a rational agent to assent to, *e.g.*

(22) Khadafi is a terrorist

but not

(22a) Al-Ghadafi is a terrorist

or

(22b) Qadaffi is a terrorist.

Should a speaker by appraised that an agent would not, himself, make the inference from (22) to (22a) or (22b), he may ascribe the belief *that Khadafi is a terrorist* with strict *de dicto* intentions.

Variations in conventional pronunciation of orthographically identical tokens may similarly underwrite strict *de dicto* ascriptions of belief. For instance, while in America Immanuel Kant's name is typically pronounced /känt/, British speaker's typically pronounce it /can't/. I, myself, once met an Englishman who while convinced of the genius of /can't/, sincerely attested to being unfamiliar with /känt/. I might naturally describe this scenario to another by uttering

(23) Liam believes that /can't/ is a genius, but not /känt/

in which case, again, the intelligibility of my ascription depends on it being uttered with *de dicto* intentions.

V.

Paderewski

De dicto ascriptions appear to give us the necessary tools to dissolve the puzzle of ascribing London-beliefs to Pierre. Kripke (1979) nevertheless, poses a *second* version of his puzzle – this one based solely on the disquotational principle – which would appear to threaten at the outset any *de dicto* solution to the first version. For, he contends, even if we confine ourselves to a single language and to homophonic and orthographically identical tokens of a single name, we can still generate a paradox about belief ascription. Consider the case of an ordinary English speaker, Peter, who

> may learn the name 'Paderewski' with an identification of the person named as a famous pianist. Naturally, having learned this, Peter will assent to "Paderewski had musical talent"[12]

from which the Disquotational Principle allows us to infer:

(24) Peter believes that Paderewski had musical talent.

Later, suppose:

> Peter learns of someone called 'Paderewski' who was a Polish nationalist leader and prime minister. Peter is skeptical of the musical abilities of politicians. He concludes that probably two people, approximate contemporaries no doubt,

[12] p. 449

were both named ‘Paderewski’. Using Paderewski’ as a name for the *statesman*, Peter asserts to “Paderewski had no musical talent”[13]

thereby licensing us to conclude, again by the Disquotational Principle

(25) Peter believes that Paderewski had no musical talent.

Thus, we appear forced to attribute to Pierre inconsistent beliefs, even though we have no inclination to view him as *irrational* in light of his confusion.

Upon closer inspection however, Peter’s beliefs about Paderewski are ultimately no more puzzling than, *e.g.* one’s ability to believe that Jimmy Dean (the breakfast food division of the Sara Lee corporation) makes good sausages, while simultaneously doubting that Jimmy Dean (the late country singer who lends the brand his name and once acted as its spokesperson) ever did, himself. As we’ve seen in the preceding chapter, speakers – being aware of the fact that most names have more than one bearer – “index” names to differentiate their bearers.

At the *psychological* level, then, the source of Peter’s predicament is straightforward: Peter’s belief that politicians are not musical leads him in the case of Paderewski to give the name ‘Paderewski’ two distinct indices. Hence, (though he would deny this) it would seem that Kripke’s puzzle is less a puzzle about belief than a puzzle about belief *ascription*: How can *we* (being aware of Peter’s confusion) coherently ascribe both (24) and (25) to Peter without, thereby contradicting ourselves?

It has been argued in §IV above, that in ascribing beliefs employing proper names, speakers sometimes use the name *attributively* – in which case, satisfaction of the

[13] p. 449

metalinguistic description 'the ϕ bearer of 'NN'' is essential to what is meant. When speakers do so, they make beliefs about lexical items and their semantic values which would otherwise be part of an unarticulated conversational background *explicit* in virtue of the ascribed sortal ϕ . As May and Fiengo (*op cit*.) observe, further support for this view is provided by considering a natural means by which a speaker might alleviate Peter's confusion – to wit by uttering:

(26) But Peter, Paderewski is Paderewski.[14]

In so doing, an informed speaker may cause Peter's beliefs to become coincident with his own. But this is precisely what we would *not* expect if the name tokens in (26) were uttered with purely referential intentions. For in such a case, the speaker would have expressed nothing over and above trivial self identity. On the other hand, if (26) is analyzed as semantically encoding the information

(26a) The [pianist] bearer of 'Paderewski' is the [politician] bearer of 'Paderewski'

we have a natural explanation of why (26) would lead Peter to revise his beliefs.

The distinct syntactic expressions employed in (26a), in turn, provide the means for explaining how in asserting both

(24) Peter believes that Paderewski had musical talent

And

(25) Peter believes that Paderewski had no musical talent

we do not thereby attribute contradictory beliefs to him. In (24), the content of ϕ in the attributive description 'the ϕ bearer of 'Paderewski' involves the property of being a piano

[14] p. 123

player; in (25) ϕ involves the property of being a politician. Because Peter does not believe the distinct expressions the 'the *piano-player* bearer of 'Paderewski'' and 'the *politician* bearer of 'Paderewski'' co-refer, we do not attribute irrationality to him in ascribing both (24) and (25).

In spite of all this, Kripke, would, nevertheless, protest that though the above might be in some sense a "*complete* description" of the situation nothing in the above answers his questions as originally posed: *Does Pierre or does he not believe that London is pretty? Does Peter or does he not believe Paderewski had musical talent*? "It is no answer" he contends, "to protest that in some *other* terminology one can state 'all the relevant facts.'" [15] It is, nevertheless, unsurprising that Kripke is unable to find any satisfactory answer to these questions, for in light of considerations in §IV, we may now see that the questions themselves are *ambiguous*. More specifically, we may now see that the puzzle results from posing the questions *transparently* in a context where the appropriate attributions are *de dicto*.[16]

VI.

Assignments and Pretense

In contrast with many attributions of belief, it bears noting that a speaker uttering

(26) But Peter, Paderewski is Paderewski

[15] p. 445

[16] To put it slightly differently, there is no single answer to Kripke's puzzle because the answer to the question will depend on the sense in which the question is asked. Just as there is no single *answer* to the puzzle, there is no *single* question corresponding to the interrogative 'Does Pierre believe London is pretty?'

necessarily does so *in spite of* his own semantic beliefs. For, the ascriber in (26) will have only *one* ‘Paderewski’ assignment around which Paderewski-beliefs (political, musical, and otherwise) are organized. Accordingly, when engaging in talk such as (26), the speaker participates in a (very) shallow sort of *pretense*: The ascriber pretends as if he, like the agent to whom he ascribes the belief, has two distinct ‘Paderewski’ assignments in order to inform the latter that *his* ‘Paderewski’ assignments, in fact, co-refer.

This sort of pretense, however, is a commonplace element of our ascriptive practices. Suppose, for instance, that a certain Republican senator from Utah makes a number of statements about a legendary former Chicago Bulls guard whom he calls ‘Michael Jackson’. As Bach (2002) observes, on the basis of his verbal behavior one would almost certainly conclude that the man in question has confused Michael Jordan’s name with Michael Jackson’s. Nevertheless, I might report this fact to a third party by uttering:

(27) Orrin Hatch believes Michael Jackson played for the Bulls.[17]

In doing so, I do not speak *transparently* – for I do not mean to imply by (23), *e.g.*

(27a) Orrin Hatch believes the singer of “Billie Jean” played for the Bulls

or

(27b) Orrin Hatch believes the King of Pop played for the Bulls.

My intent in uttering (27) is, instead, to indicate a specific *linguistic* confusion on the part of the senator. Accordingly, I utter ‘Michael Jackson’ in (27) with an *attributive* logical form.

[17] In fairness to Sen. Hatch, it bears noting that his was but likely a momentary confusion. Nevertheless this does not undermine the legitimacy of the example. In the first place we can easily enough *conceive* of someone being more significantly confused in the manner proposed above. Secondly, we can always ask of Hatch what he believed in that one instant.

However, for my utterance to be faithful to Sen. Hatch's beliefs, I cannot index the description 'the ϕ bearer of 'Michael Jackson'' as I, myself, do when I use the name to talk about the late pop singer. For, Hatch's verbal behavior indicates he does not associate the lexical item 'Michael Jackson' with any musical modes of presentation. Hence, when I utter (27) I assign a sortal that I believe the *Hatch* uses to individuate the bearer of 'Michael Jackson' in question from others. The logical form of (27) is, thus, given by

(27c) Orrin Hatch believes that the *athlete* bearer of 'Michael Jackson' played for the Bulls.

Consider also the following: Jethro Tull is a 1970s-era British progressive rock band lead by flautist/vocalist Ian Anderson. Over the years, however, many have come to believe that Mr. Anderson is, himself, named 'Jethro Tull'. Among these, there are no doubt some that believe (*transparently*) of Anderson that he is a talented flute player. I may, nevertheless, ascribe this belief to such an individual by uttering:

(28) Wendy believes that Jethro Tull is a talented flautist.

Once again, in so doing, I do not ascribe to the agent in question the index that I, myself, give to 'Jethro Tull'. For then my ascription would implausibly assert that the agent believes a *band* is a talented flautist. Instead, for the purposes of my ascription, I engage in the pretense that I assign 'Jethro Tull' to a man, just like the agent of whom I ascribe the belief. We will find a larger role for such metalinguistic pretense in considering the semantics of negative existential discourse in the next chapter.

VII.

Contemporary Precedents and Extensional Evidence

In holding that the propositions expressed by utterances of opaque attitude ascriptions involving proper names are essentially metalinguistic, the present account has significant affinities with the metalinguistic theories of Jerrold Katz (1990) and John Justice (2001).[18] According to the former's "Pure Metalinguistic Theory":

> (i) The sense of a proper noun mentions (or represents) the noun of which it is the sense, and (ii) the sense of a proper noun contains no condition on being a bearer of the name beyond being a bearer of that name . . . the sense of a proper noun 'N' has the form . . . 'The thing which is a bearer of 'N'.[19]

The fact that names typically have multiple bearers, of course, entails that on Katz's conception, the sense of a proper name is typically insufficient to determine its reference on a particular occasion of use. Accordingly, he appeals to pragmatic considerations such as context of utterance to provide the necessary disambiguation:

> Speakers who know the sense of ['NN'] know that literal tokens of that proper noun type denote the contextually definite bearer of that name, but that

[18] Other antecedents to the present view include Bach's (2002) "Nominal Description Theory", which similarly analyzes singular uses of a name 'N' as semantically equivalent to 'the bearer of 'N''. However as we have seen, Bach implausibly holds names themselves to be *extralinguistic* – thereby rendering their syntactically rule-governed behavior decidedly mysterious. Recanati (1993, p. 140) has similarly argued that "the meaning of a proper name NN refers the hearer to a relation which holds in context between the name and its referent namely the name-bearer relationship." However as Bach (op cit., p. 19) rightly observes, the problem Recanati's account is that the name-bearer relationship simply is not context sensitive. A name holds this relationship to *all* its bearers. What is context-sensitive is the speaker-referent relation which holds between individuals *using* names and the name-bearers.

[19] p. 4

> knowledge does not tell them who or what the bearers are, or even whether there are tokens of the type. Extra-linguistic information of various sorts is required to know who or what the bearers of the proper noun ['NN'] are and whether an utterance of an inscription is a literal occurrence of that type [as opposed to, *e.g.* 'Napoleon' being archly tokened as a name for Wallace]. Given this information, the speaker *still* requires further extra-linguistic information to know *which* of the bearers is the referent in the context.[20]

Justice, similarly contends that:

> a name presents its referent as bearer of the name . . . [and] plays an essential role in its own condition of satisfaction, which is to say that it has word-reflexive sense.[21]

In contrast with Katz, however, Justice attempts to circumnavigate the problem of multiple bearers by adopting the homonymic conception of orthographically and phonetically identical name tokens endorsed by, *e.g.* Kripke (1980) (and discussed above in Chapter 2, §VI):

> Mere vocables are not words. They are entities abstracted from words . . . . Names originating in different occasions and having their currency preserved through different chains of occurrences are distinct names that necessarily have distinct word-reflexive meaning.[22]

However, while both Katz's and Justice's accounts concur with the present contention that the problem of opacity for proper names in belief ascriptions is to be resolved by appealing to the

[20] p. 8, emphasis is mine.
[21] p. 353
[22] p. 359

referent's property of bearing the very name ascribed in the relevant that-clauses, the present view marks a notable departure from both.

In contrast with Justice's view, on the present account, the metalinguistic content of proper names is *not* to be accounted for in terms of a broadly Fregean notion of sense. Indeed, a significant advantage of the largely formal, syntactic solution to the problems of opacity which the present Metalinguistic Description Theory permits is that – unlike senses – the phenomenon appealed by the present account to explain substitution failure (to wit, singular, attributive uses of proper names) may be readily observed in purely extensional contexts outside of the "problem" cases which it aims to solve.

Consider, for instance, the following, Donellan-inspired scenario: A detective finds a horribly mutilated corpse. Next to the corpse is a note taking responsibility and signed 'Fletcher'. Knowing there to be several people so-named in the town, but having no idea which one is responsible for the crime, the detective remarks

(29) The guilty Fletcher is a sick man.

Here, the name in question occurs as part of the larger descriptive phrase 'the guilty Fletcher', but this is precisely what it has been argued is the case in opaque attitude ascriptions, where the metalinguistic description 'the bearer of 'NN'' is indexed with a descriptive sortal ϕ . Admittedly purely extensional contexts in which a proper name is used singularly, yet attributively are rare. But this is to be expected given that a speaker's primary intention in such contexts will typically be merely to *refer*.

Aside from the trivial difference of being an ambiguity theory, the present Metalinguistic Description Theory similarly diverges from Katz's "pure" metalinguistic account of attitude ascription in holding the name-bearing relationship invoked to be a *genuine* property of individuals. For, according to Katz the "purity" of the theory he advances is derived from his holding of senses to contain or represent "no real property of bearers in addition to the purely nominal bearer relation that makes a sense metalinguistic".[23,24]

According to Katz, construing the name-bearing relationship as a real property of individuals bearing names – as per the present theory – "forfeit(s) the advantage of having gone metalinguistic in the first place" by rendering the theory "vulnerable to the very counterfactual arguments that refute straightforward Fregean versions of the description theory".[25] This, Katz contends,

> was clearly demonstrated by Kripke when he pointed out that the name `Socrates' would apply to Socrates even if his contemporaries never called him that.[26]

But, as noted in Chapter 2, above, Kripke's observation, here, only demonstrates that there is a distinction to made between *bearing a name* and *being called by that name*. The former is a matter of having been *dubbed* with the name in question (typically by means of initial ostensive baptism); the latter, a matter of *speakers* using the name in question to refer to the individual so-baptized.

Of course the analogous point may be raised that just as it is not intuitively a necessary feature of Socrates that he is or ever was *referred to* by that name, neither is it a necessary

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[23] p. 5

[24] For similar reasons, despite his countenancing of senses, Justice regards his theory as fundamentally non-Fregean – Fregeanism, in his opinion, being implausibly wedded to the conception of meaning as "what essence becomes when it is divorced from the object of reference and wedded to the world" that Quine (1951, p. 23) famously derides.

[25] p. 5

[26] *Ibid*.

feature of Socrates that he ever bore the name in the first place. However, this fact is perfectly consistent with the present view. For, according to the analysis of referential usage of proper names advanced in the preceding chapters, to utter, *e.g.*,

(30) Socrates might not have been the bearer of 'Socrates'

is essentially to assert of a certain individual that *he* might not have been the bearer of the name 'Socrates'. And there is surely no incoherence in such an assertion.

Moreover, the present *impure* metalinguistic view offers a straightforward explanation of the truth of, *e.g.*,

(31) There are many Smiths in the United States

and

(32) There are more Smiths than Joneses in the United States

which Katz's "pure" account cannot – to wit, that in this country, many people have the property of bearing the name 'Smith' and that more people have this property than the property of bearing the name 'Jones', respectively.

VIII.

Pseudo De Dicto Ascriptions

Despite the above argued for ability of the Metalinguistic Description Theory to account for a wide variety of our ascriptive practices employing proper names, Jennifer Saul (1998, 1999) has argued that there is a fatal flaw in this – and any metalinguistic account (semantic or pragmatic) – to wit, that it cannot provide intuitively correct truth conditions for attitude ascriptions to the linguistically impoverished. To see this, she alleges, we need only consider the following case:

Nicole is new to Metropolis and attends a mixer to meet some of city's more prominent residents. At the party she finds herself strangely to attracted to a man dressed in blue spandex and sporting a red cape. Never, however, does she learn the name of this apparently witty and urbane stranger. In her new position as a secretary at the Daily Planet Nicole has, in fact, glimpsed this very same man several times in his guise as a mild mannered reporter. However, she is indifferent to the man in this persona and never even bothers to attempt to learn his name. In such a scenario, Saul contends, an ascription of

(30) Nicole believes that Superman is witty and urbane

is intuitively true, while

(31) Nicole believes that Clark Kent is witty and urbane

is intuitively false. However, any attempt to account for the failure of substitutivity between (30) and (31) in terms of de dicto ascriptions employing the names themselves will attribute linguistic beliefs to Nicole which she simply does not have.

As we've seen in Chapter 1, above, however, proper names may be used in an "arch" manner to communicate propositions involving commonplaces associated with the names in question. Hence when Lloyd Bentsen famously asserted

(32) Dan Quayle is no Jack Kennedy

he was not asserting (simply) the numerical distinctness of the two men, but, instead, aiming to communicate that Quayle lacks vision and charisma – properties widely associated with Kennedy. Similarly, when Hank Williams Jr. recently claimed

(33) Obama is Hitler

he was, of course, not claiming that the two men were one and the same, but, instead, that Obama is fascistic, dictatorial, and, perhaps, even evil.

Moreover, it is quite possible to use names in this same arch manner when ascribing attitudes. For instance, when I utter, based on the above,

(34) Hank Williams Jr. believes Obama is Hitler

I do not attribute to Williams a belief whose content is captured by the literal semantic content of ‘Obama is Hitler’. Instead, I attribute to him belief in the same sort of proposition as the one he, himself, intended when making the utterance in the first place.

Notably, I can make similarly arch ascriptions in cases in which the agent to whom I ascribe the belief does not possess in his lexicon the name I employ. For instance, a child might protest vehemently at being forced to eat his vegetables and throw a temper tantrum at the alleged injustice of being confined to his room for not doing so. The child’s parent might, in light of this situation, wryly remark to a friend

(35) I try to make him eat his vegetables and, for this, the kid thinks I’m Hitler.

Once again, in this case, the belief I ascribe is not a lexical one, despite the fact that substituting Hitler’s given surname ‘Schicklgruber’ for ‘Hitler’ in (33) would likely undermine the aptness of the ascription for almost any given audience.

Similar considerations would seem to underlie our intuitions about the apparent truth of

(30) Nicole believes that Superman is witty and urbane

and falsity of

(31) Nicole believes that Clark Kent is witty and urbane

in Saul's example. Given that there are well known guises associated with the names 'Superman' and 'Clark Kent' which will be mutually known between speaker and audience, (30), though literally false, may be used as an expedient alternative to the literally true but comparatively unwieldy ascription

(36) Nicole believes that the man she has seen at the party wearing blue spandex and a red cape is witty and urbane.

Hence, examples such as (30) may be seen as instances of what we might call *pseudo de dicto* ascriptions: Ascriptions which do not seek to attribute actual lexical beliefs to agents, but instead, to pragmatically communicate attributes commonly associated with the names in question. As the attributes associated with one name are often not those associated with other names of the same individual, we, thus, have a natural explanation of our anti-substitution intuitions in such cases. Moreover, the present view offers a similarly straightforward explanation of why a speaker might not *retract* (30) upon being informed of Nicole's impoverished lexicon. For, there is still a sense in which the speaker's ascription remains true of Nicole – to wit, the *transparent* sense of the ascription. The speaker, accordingly, may not retract his ascription in light of learning of Nicole's impoverished lexicon because he remains aware of the sense in which what he says is still true.

The appeal to distinct pragmatic mechanisms in the case of attitude ascription to the lexically impoverished would only be *ad hoc* and unwarranted here if the type of case which Saul illustrates really were a "garden variety" case of substitution failure. Let us, then, examine this allegation further.

The intuitive “pull” of the case Saul provides is derived from the fact that in the above scenario it is apparently felicitous to utter

(37) Nicole believes Superman but not Clark is witty and urbane

despite the fact that Nicole possesses neither name in her lexicon. However this intuition would seem to be grounded solely in the fact that there are, in this case, famous “guises” or “personae” associated with the names in question. But cases such as this in which the names in question have become almost shorthand for such associated guises are extraordinarily rare. Indeed, it is decidedly difficult to formulate cases in which ascriptions as the same form as (37) may be felicitously uttered for the vast majority of proper names if it is stipulated that the agent of whom the belief is ascribed does not possess either name in his lexicon. For instance, it is hard to understand what a speaker might mean by uttering, *e.g.*,

(38) Nicole believes that Peter Hempel but not Carl Hempel is a genius

or

(39) Nicole believes that Michael Maumus but not Fletcher Maumus is handsome

If it is antecedently understood that Nicole knows none of the names in question. As the felicitousness of uses such as (37) supervenes on the existence of famous descriptions for which the names are capable of standing in proxy, the appeal to a distinct mechanism for these cases involving the very descriptions in question is prima facie plausible.

Saul, nevertheless, objects to the above on the grounds that the proposition pragmatically communicated will sometimes still fail to capture the intuitive truth conditions of certain utterances. To see this, she alleges, we may return to the case of Hesperus and Phosphorous. As Saul correctly observes, even many philosophers are unaware of the fact that the morning and evening appearances of Venus associated with the names ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorous’ are appearances that occur during different times of the year, and not within a single twenty-four hour cycle. Now, let us consider the case of the ancient astronomer who first discovered that the morning appearance of a bright light in the sky during one time of the year and the evening appearance of a bright light in the sky at another time of the year were caused by a single celestial body. Next let us suppose that this astronomer had no names in his lexicon for either of the seasonal appearances of Venus.

In such a case, she alleges, two things are true: First a de dicto attribution of

(40) The ancient astronomer discovered that Hesperus is Phosphorous

will emerge as false, since our astronomer *ex hypothesi* has no terms which are translations of our names ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorous’. Secondly, if (40) is uttered with pseudo de dicto intentions and intended as shorthand for, *e.g.*

(41) The ancient astronomer discovered that the brightest celestial body in the morning (year round) is the brightest celestial body in the evening (year round)

the proposition intended is *still* false. Hence, the appeal to pragmatics has not done the required work and captured the intuitive truth conditions of the utterance.

Nevertheless, *pace* Saul, this fact alone – that sometimes speakers ascribing attitudes to the linguistically impoverished will simply get it wrong – cannot be a decisive objection to the present proposal. Given the inherent fallibility of speakers, there is simply no good reason to suppose that an adequate account of our ascriptive practices will not sometimes have this consequence. What is important is that the account provided gets it right *enough* of the time and can explain our potential intuitions to the contrary when speakers *do* inadvertently speak falsely. And, the considerations from the present chapter would seem to demonstrate precisely this. Hence, the existence of pseudo de dicto ascriptions such as Saul's poses no significant threat to the adequacy of the Metalinguistic Description Theory.

Chapter Four:

Naming the Non-existent

Quaestio subtillissima, utrum Chimera in vacuo

bombinans possit comedere secundas intentiones . . .

A most subtle question: Whether the chimera

buzzing about in a vacuum can consume second intentions . . .

—Rabelais

I.

Two Approaches to Empty Names

The question of how we can speak of that which does not exist has tantalized philosophers since antiquity.[1] Such discourse is puzzling, in the first place, for the tug-of-war it plays with our intuitions about *truth*. On the one hand, it has appeared to some that talk about the non-existent should be truth valueless. After all, they argue, that for an utterance of, *e.g.*

(1) Pegasus flies

[1] Perhaps the earliest treatment of the topic is found in Parmenides' *On Nature* in which he argues for the falsity of all negative existential claims on the grounds that "One cannot know that which is not — that is impossible —nor utter it; for it is the same thing that can be thought, that is."

to be either true or false, Pegasus must either possess or lack the power of flight – which, in either case, they have assumed, requires Pegasus to exist. Hence (1) and related discourse about the unreal would seem to be *neither* true nor false.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to see how this could be the case for *all* talk about the non-existent. For, it would seem that it is the very falsity of

(2) Pegasus exists

and, conversely, the truth of

(3) Pegasus does not exist

that renders discourse such as (1) puzzling in the first place.

In addition to the above problem of truth, the use of empty names gives rise to a concomitant puzzle about *meaning*: Given that Santa Claus exists no more or no less than Hamlet – that is, given that that both terms apparently refer to the same (no)thing – we must explain how it is that

(4) Santa Claus brings toys to well-behaved children

and

(5) Santa Claus does not exist

intuitively express different claims than

(6) Hamlet brings toys to well-behaved children

and

(7) Hamlet does not exist.

For, Frege and Russell, of course, the solution to these puzzles was straightforward: there were no puzzles to speak of, as the names in question were not veritably *empty*. For

Frege, as we've seen, even denotation-less names had *sinn*. For Russell, names in these cases were to be analyzed as disguised definite descriptions, which themselves made no pretense of reference, but only expressed a complex of existential assertions (thus rendering discourse "about" non-existent entities, as in (1), (4), and (6) straightforwardly *false*).

In the Post-Kripkean era responses to the Puzzle of Empty Names are divisible into two broad camps: *realist* strategies which postulate some manner of other-worldly object to which the "empty" name is held to refer; and, *anti-realist* strategies which deny that such objects are necessary to explain either the meaningfulness or intuitive truth-value of discourse about the unreal.[2] Though there are multiple ways in which an entity might truly be said not to exist – *e.g.*, being the deity of a long-abandoned cult (Zeus), a failed scientific posit (Vulcan), or a logical impossibility (the round square) – for simplicity of exposition I shall, in the following, focus exclusively on the question of names in fiction. Given this restriction, we may frame the central question of the realist/anti-realist debate as follows: Does the existence of fictional entities follow from the existence of a fictional text?

II.

Two Realist Strategies

Realist responses to the puzzle of empty names are, themselves, roughly divisible into two factions. One the one hand lie *Language-Independent Realists* who would locate the

[2] Though some, most notably Currie (1990), have tenaciously clung to the view that fictional names are to be analyzed descriptively, based on the content of the fictional work. This view, however, is subject to many of the same devastating objections that Kripke (1980) levies against description views of ordinary proper names. Cf. Salis (2010) for a detailed criticism along these lines.

referents of empty names in terms of some manner of "other worldly" objects (such as *possiblia*) whose existence do not supervene on any particular act of storytelling.[3] On the other hand (naturally enough) are *Language-Dependent Realists* who allege that fictional entities are abstract objects *generated* by our linguistic behavior in the actual world.[4]

Language-Independent Realism may be dealt with swiftly: Given the availability of equally adequate but less metaphysically extravagant theories, quite general Occamist considerations would recommend against countenancing such a baroque ontology. Though these very same considerations would seem to simultaneously knock-out the Language-Dependent Realist's position, Stephen Schiffer (2003) has forcefully argued that the view is, in fact, immune to such objections. To see this, however, we must first examine the Language-Dependent Realist's account of how fictional entities come to be.

Schiffer considers the "birth" of Joyce's Buck Mulligan from the pages of *Ulysses*. As he rightly observes, both the realist and anti-realist may agree that:

> [The] occurrence in the novel of the name 'Buck Mulligan' neither refers to nor purports to refer to anything. Joyce was not trying to refer to a man named 'Buck Mulligan' and failing miserably; he was, in the manner characteristic of fiction *making as if* to refer to a man with that name and to tell us something about him, and we, in reading the novel collude in this make believe . . .[5]

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[3] The most (in)famous Language-Independent strategy is, of course, Meinong's (1904) approach according to which empty names denote non-existent but, nevertheless, *subsistent* objects. More recently, Priest (2005) has argued that even apparently impossible objects such as the round square can be expected to exist in *impossible* worlds in which the law of non-contradiction does not exist. Parsons (1980), Zalta (1988), Routely (1979), and Casteneda (1979) have all developed variants of the Language-Independent strategy.
[4] In addition to Schiffer, considered below, see also Van Inwagen (1983), Kripke (2011), and Thomasson (1999).
[5] p. 50

The realist and antirealist positions diverge, however, over the “remarkable” transformation that Schiffer and other Language-Dependent Realists contend occurs at this point – to wit:

> that this *pretending use* of the name ‘Buck Mulligan’ [creates] the existence of something whose name is ‘Buck Mulligan’, thereby making it possible to use the name in a genuinely referential way.[6]

Following Schiffer, we may call uses of fictional names that engender such “something-from-nothing transformations” *hypostasizing* uses, and the resultant abstract objects *pleonastic* entities.

The obvious question at this juncture is (*pace* idealism and constructivism) why anyone should countenance the idea of such creation *ex nihilo*. After all, as Schiffer concedes, on the face of it, the generation of pleonastic entities by the hypostatizing use of names would seem as patently absurd as, say, the springing to life of “whishdates”, where a wishdate is defined as

> a person whose existence supervenes on someone’s wishing for a date, every such wish bringing into existence a person to date.[7]

Nevertheless, Schiffer contends that not only are fictional entities created by the hypostatizing use of fictional names, it is a *conceptual truth* that they do. What, then, is the difference between the two cases? The answer, he alleges, lies in the concept of *conservative extension*. In mathematical logic, a theory *T’* is a conservative extension of *T* if (a) *T*’ includes *T*, and (b) nothing statable in the vocabulary of *T* is entailed by *T’* but not by *T*.

So, while there are

[6] pp. 50-51
[7] p. 51

> numerous theories *T* such that when we add to *T* the concept of a wishdate together with the claim that wishing for a date entails the existence of a wishdate, the resulting theory is not a *conservative extension* of *T*. But if we add to *any* theory *T* the concept of a fictional entity together with its attendant claim that using a name in the [hypostasizing] way entails the existence of the fictional entity, the resulting theory *is* a *conservative extension* of *T*.[8]

This is because, should our wishing for a date cause a wishdate to spring into existence, the resulting entity "would be a substantial physical object that would enormously disturb the pre-existing causal order."[9] The same, of course, would be true were we to countenance the existence of, *e.g.* Vulcan or caloric of past scientific discourse.[10] On the other hand, fictional entities such as Buck Mulligan have, by their very nature, *no* causal powers.[11] Hence, aside from, *e.g.*, statements to the effect that Buck Mulligan was created by James Joyce, there is nothing in the extended *T'* that could not originally be stated in *T*.[12]

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[8] p. 54
[9] *Ibid*.
[10] Vulcan, of course, being unreal cannot disturb the existing causal order in the same way that a wishdate does, given that wishdates are, *ex hypothesi*, entities that "spring into existence" in the actual world. The point here is that admitting Vulcan enormously disturbs our *theories* of the existing causal order, given that, *were it to exist* Vulcan would have innumerable causal powers.
[11] Though we often talk as this is the case. Consider: "His obsession with Holden Caufield caused Mark David Chapman to kill John Lennon".
[12] Nevertheless, there *are* apparently some things assertable in the original T that are *not* assertable in T' – to wit, certain genuine denials of existence.

III.

Language-Dependent Realism and Negative Existentials

The greatest problem for Language-Dependent Realism, however, lies not in its (real or imagined) ontological extravagance but in its treatment of negative existential discourse. For the Language-Dependent Realist has the unenviable task of explaining away our strong intuition that in uttering, *e.g.*

(7) Hamlet does not exist

we assert something *true*. After all, the central contention of the Language-Dependent Realist's hypothesis is that characters of fiction, in a perfectly good sense, *do* exist.

Typically, realists have responded to this challenge by alleging that speakers denying the existence of fictional entities implicitly restrict the domain of quantification to the domain of (real) *persons* (or physical objects in the case of, *e.g.* Cinderella's castle).[13] Hence, within the intended domain, the negative existential statements in question emerge as true.

However, as Frederick Kroon (2003) observes, the realist has a more difficult task in accounting for the apparent truth of certain *quantified* negative existential statements. The problem is this: Just as, *e.g.* the singular assertion

(8) New York is cold in December

implies the quantificational assertion

(8a) At least one American city is cold in December

[13] Cf., *e.g.*, Parsons (1980), Thomasson (1999), and Kripke (1973). Salmon (1998) holds the related view that in the context of negative existentials, fictional names function as disguised definite descriptions, *e.g.*, 'Holmes-as-he-is-described-in-the-story'.

(given the additional premise that New York is an American city) so too, would the singular statement

(9) Buck Mulligan does not exist

seem to imply, *e.g.*

(9a) At least one fictional Irishman does not exist

given that Buck Mulligan is a fictional Irishman.

So far, so good. However, matters quickly grow complicated for the Language-Dependent Realist once we consider quantified negative existential assertions which are apparently made true in virtue of some of the decidedly less famous denizens of fictional realms.

As Kroon observes, the world of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* saga provides a helpful example. Tolkien's Middle Earth is the site of numerous epic battles. These battles are, of course, not fought merely by the *named* protagonists of the work but by an indeterminately large cast of thousands. Of course, these unnamed legions do not exist any more or less than Frodo, Gollum, or any of their better-known contemporaries. Hence, there seems no reason that the truth value of, *e.g.*

(10) Frodo Baggins does not exist

should diverge from that of

(11) The many elves and dwarves which participate in the battle
against Mordor do not exist.

Nevertheless, not only are these unheralded warriors *unnamed* by Tolkien, but very few are provided with anything resembling a uniquely identifying description. So, it would seem that we are left without the requisite hypostasizing sentences for the creation of unique pleonastic entities corresponding to each of these unsung infantrymen. Hence, the Language-Dependent Realist seems constrained to say that while (10) is false if intended as a denial of existence “across the board”, but true if restricted to the domain of actual persons, (11) is true under *either* construal.

David Lewis (1978) – albeit, in the service of a decidedly different point – draws attention to similar difficulties. Given the book of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *H.M.S. Pinafore*:

> We can truly say that Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., is attended by a chorus of his sisters and his cousins and his aunts. To make this true, it seems that the domain of fictional characters must contain not only Sir Joseph himself, but also plenty of fictional sisters and cousins and aunts. But how many? Five dozen, perhaps? No, for we cannot truly say that the chorus numbers five dozen exactly. We cannot truly say anything exact about its size. Then do we perhaps have a fictional chorus, but no fictional members of this chorus and hence no number of members? No, for we can truly say some things about the size. We are told that the sisters and cousins, even without the aunts, number in dozens.[14]

Lewis’ point is an epistemological one: we cannot *know* how precisely how many chorus members accompany Sir Joseph. Nevertheless, such epistemological considerations are problematic for the Language-Dependent Realist. After all, she holds both that the chorus members are *real* and that they are objects of our own creation. Should we not, therefore, be

[14] p. 42

in a position to *state* what we, ourselves, have wrought?[15] Any appeal to indeterminacy here would seem misplaced, so long as the characters of fiction are construed as *discrete* abstract objects. Similarly, it is of little use, here, to draw analogies between the present case and real world objects with *vague* identity conditions – *e.g.* heaps. For unlike fictional entities, these have genuine causal powers. If we did not countenance them in our ontology – to paraphrase Russell's famous (1905) quip about the distinction between Napoleon and 'the present king of France' – they would soon enough see to it that we did.

In light of the above, it is difficult to see how the Language-Dependent Realist can give a plausible and principled explanation of the generation of these fictional characters in terms of a hypostasizing language game. For admitting under-described characters such as Tolkien's anonymous elves and the chorus of the *Pinafore* would seem to place the Language-Dependent Realist on a dangerously slippery slope towards countenancing the Platonic existence of, *e.g.* all manner of failed theoretical posits, hallucinations, outright fabrications, etc.[16] On the other hand, it seems that the Language-Dependent Realist has little grounds for denying that Tolkien's elves or the members of Pinafore's chorus are veritable fictional characters.[17] After all, in filmic adaptations and staged productions we "see" them just as clearly as any of the protagonists.

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[15] Herein lies the essential difference between*, e.g.*, the Pinafore's chorus and the wealth of ordinary non-fictional cases for which the asserting of indefinites does not require epistemological access to exact instances. For instance, one can assert, *e.g.*, that some citizens of Iowa are Republicans without knowing of any *particular* Republicans in that state.

[16] Though, this may be a happy enough course for some. Cf. Kripke (1973) and Salmon (1998) for examples of this liberal ontological bent.

[17] Note that appealing to vagueness or indeterminacy here would seem of little help here, so long as the characters of fiction are construed as *discrete* abstract objects.

IV.

"Clothed" Discourse and the Possible Worlds Strategy

The failure of Language-Dependent Realism to give a plausible account of the semantics of quantified negative existential statements recommends an anti-realist semantics for at least *some* fictional discourse. Before exploring some such strategies, however, it is first necessary to disambiguate the notion of 'fictional discourse'. Amie Thomasson (2003) has helpfully distinguished four types of such talk, to wit:

(a) Fictionalizing discourse – discourse *within* a work of fiction. (*E.g.*, 'Call me Ishmael.')

(b) Internal discourse – discourse about the *contents* of a work of fiction (*E.g.*, 'Ishmael is obsessed with the white whale.')

(c) External discourse – discourse about characters of fiction *qua* fictional characters – the circumstances of their creation, their historical relevance, etc. (*E.g.*, 'Ishmael is the most famous of Melville's characters.')

(d) Negative existential discourse (*E.g.*, 'Ishmael does not exist').[18]

(a) and (b) exemplify what we may call "clothed" fictional discourse – contexts in which it is mutually known between speaker/author and audience that the remarks are to be understood within the context of an imagined world. (c) and (d), on the other hand, are instances of "nude" discourse – contexts where the sentences in question are "stripped" of their fictional status, and evaluated against actuality.

[18] p. 207

Regarding fictionalizing discourse, as we've seen above, here, the anti-realist and the realist may agree – the author of a fiction does not attempt refer to people and states of affairs and fail miserably. He, instead, merely *makes as if* to refer, and we, as readers of the fiction, collude in this game.

Internal discourse would seem similarly unproblematic for the anti-realist, given the phenomenon of domain restriction – which, as we've already seen, the realist must countenance in order to account for the truth of negative existential talk. Accordingly, it is *prima facie* reasonable for the antirealist to hold that in uttering, *e.g.*

(12) Sherlock Holmes lives on Baker Street

or

(13) Buck Mulligan is stately and plump

speakers express propositions like

(12a) Sherlock Holmes lives on Baker Street in the fiction.

or

(13a) Fictionally, Buck Mulligan is stately and Plump.[19]

Of course, the notion of something being "in the fiction" requires cashing out, here. A natural first suggestion might be to analyze the concept according to a framework of possible worlds. Hence, the world against which the truth of "clothed" remarks about, *e.g.,* Sherlock Holmes are to be evaluated would be the possible world in which there are individuals who instantiate the properties and relations ascribed to Holmes, Watson, *et. al*. (including the

[19] As Orenstein (2003) observes, the case for implicit domain restriction for "clothed" fictional remarks is bolstered by the fact that some languages contain grammatical *evidentials* for storytelling. Mushlin (2001) identifies the Andean language Quechua, the Native American language Makah, and Lhasa Tibetan as three such languages.

property of being named ‘Holmes’, ‘Watson’, etc.), and perform all of the deeds described in the fictional text.

However, as Kripke (1973) observes, the Possible Worlds Strategy loses much of its luster upon engaging in a simple thought experiment: Suppose that Conan Doyle (as we actually suspect) wrote the Sherlock Holmes stories intending them to be pure fiction. Now suppose that, by pure coincidence that the actual world is *exactly* as Conan Doyle describes in the Holmes stories. Such a scenario would, according to the Possible Worlds Strategy, make it the case that Conan Doyle was *referring* to this actual Holmes all along – despite never having heard of him. However, the case for a genuine act of reference on Conan Doyle’s part here would seem exactly on par with that for Hillary Putnam’s (1981) famous ant “artist” which:

> traces a line in the sand. By pure chance the line that it traces curves and recrosses itself in such a way that it ends up looking like a recognizable caricature of Winston Churchill. Has the ant traced a picture of Winston Churchill, a picture that depicts Churchill?
>
> Most people would say, on a little reflection, that it has not. The ant, after all, has never seen Churchill, Or even a picture of Churchill, and it had no intention of depicting Churchill. It simply traced a line (and even that was unintentional) . . .[20,21]

The moral from such considerations would seem to be this: Just as a series of lines in the sand does not necessarily represent anything, neither can orthographic forms on the printed page

[20] p. 1
[21] Consider also the many famous, allegedly miraculous “depictions” of Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary on sundry pastries over the years.

refer to anyone in the absence of referential intentions.[22] As Conan Doyle had no intention to genuinely refer to any actual state of affairs, it is unreasonable to take the *text* of the fiction as doing so, as the Possible Worlds Strategy implies. Considerations such as these, in turn, suggest a conception of fiction which focuses not on *works*, but on *acts* of storytelling.

V.

"Clothed" Discourse and Pretense

The beginning of an alternative semantics to the Possible Worlds strategy for "clothed" fictional discourse lies in treating such remarks as (non-formally) entailing a sort of propositional attitude ascription. On this view a speaker uttering, *e.g.*

(12) Sherlock Holmes lives on Baker Street

expresses something like

(12a) Someone makes believe (or is supposed to make believe) that Sherlock Holmes lives on Baker Street.

An author's act of writing a fictional text is, for instance, a sufficient condition for the truth of such an ascription. For, as we have seen above, in writing, *e.g.*:

> Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed

[22] More specifically, there is no reference in the absence of referential intentions on the part of the *speaker*.

Joyce *makes believe* (rather than asserts) that the above described scenario obtains. Hence, the mere act of composition on Joyce's part renders the clothed remark

(13) Buck Mulligan is stately and plump

true.

However, not everything that we would intuitively regard as true in a clothed sense is *explicitly* imagined by the author of a text. Consider, for instance

(14) Sherlock Holmes has ten fingers.

Nowhere in the Conan Doyle stories is this fact explicitly asserted.[23] Nevertheless, in the absence of explicit descriptions to the contrary, it seems reasonable to regard this as something which a reader is *supposed* to make believe in imagining the world of the Holmes stories.

Similarly, Lewis (*op cit.*) observes:

> Suppose I write a story about [a dragon named] Scrulch, a beautiful princess, a bold knight, and what not. It is a perfectly typical instance of its stylized genre, except that I never say that Scrulch breathes fire. Does he nevertheless breathe fire in my story? Perhaps so, because dragons in that sort of story do breathe fire. But the explicit content does not make him breathe fire.[24]

Following Lewis, we may account for propositions which an audience is *supposed* to make believe in terms of either (a) the overt beliefs of the community at which the fiction is aimed or (b) inter-fictional "carryover". The clothed truth that

(14) Sherlock Holmes has ten fingers

[23] Nowhere to my knowledge, that is. If memory fails to serve correct, here, the reader should feel free to substitute a suitable example of her own contriving.
[24] p. 44

for instance, may be explained in terms of the reasonable expectation of Conan Doyle's audience that *ceteris paribus* an individual selected at random from the population can be expected to possess all ten digits. Scrulch's fiery breath, on the other hand, "carries over" to Lewis' story from the fact that this attribute is *typically* ascribed of dragons in legend, mythology, and popular fiction.

As Kendall Walton (1990) has famously observed, the generation of "clothed" fictional truths in this manner can be thought of in terms of participation in a sort of prop-oriented language game. The children's Halloween game "Mad Scientist's Laboratory" provides a nice analogy here. In the game, participants close their eyes and are presented with a bevy of food items to feel, which are said to be various grotesque accoutrements of a mad scientist's lair: A bowl of grapes is said to be a bowl of gouged-out eyes, steamed cauliflower is said to be lobotomized brains, and so on. Certain manipulations of the props within the context of the make-believe "laboratory" sanction certain forms of verbal behavior. Spilling a bowl of grapes on the floor, would for instance, sanction an utterance of "So-and-so spilled eyeballs on the floor".

Participation in other, less richly imaginative forms of social behavior, however, may also be seen as instantiating the sort of prop-sanctioned activity that Walton has in mind. For instance, suppose that I invite a decidedly plebian acquaintance to an elegant dinner and the place settings contain pieces of silverware unfamiliar to my guest. When food is served, I may empathize with her situation and pick up a certain fork to eat with. In so doing, I indicate the correct thing to do.

In the case of a fictional text, the story told (concomitant with its Lewisian implications) is the prop. When a speaker, on the basis of the fiction utters or assents to, *e.g.*,

(12) Sherlock Holmes lives on Baker Street

he is, similarly, providing the proper, sanctioned response to the text.[25]

VI.

"Nude" Discourse: Negative Existentials

Mark Crimmins (1998) has offered an account of "Nude" fictional discourse which similarly draws upon Walton's notion of prop-oriented pretense. As Crimmins observes, statements that rely on make-believe may, nevertheless, be used in a "piggybacking" fashion to express genuine, literal claims about reality.[26] For instance, suppose that a speaker desires to communicate to his audience the cleverness and modesty of a mutual acquaintance, yet cannot find words to adequately and perspicuously express the traits in question. As Crimmins notes, one might do this by uttering a construction of the grammatical form

(15) S is as clever as X and more modest than Y

where X and Y are the names of other people mutually known to speaker and audience. But suppose that no mutual acquaintances embody the characteristics in question. In such a case, one might utter, instead, *e.g.*

[25] Carroll (1990, pp. 73-74) has argued that Walton's account of prop-sanctioned pretense is inadequate as it is unable to explain, *e.g.*, the *visceral* fear that a spectator may experience in watching a horror movie. According to Carroll, if Walton's picture is correct, the phenomenology of engaging with such a work of fiction should only involve *make believe* fear. However, as Walton (1990, p. 413) counters, there is no reason that a participant in a prop-oriented game cannot experience genuine shock or fear at *portrayals* in a horror movie, given that these may "induce or revive fear of real life dangers that the [fiction] somehow reminds her of".

[26] The term "piggy-backing" is Richard's (1990).

(15a) The degree of cleverness and the degree of modesty that are portrayed as being possessed by the fictional creation of Conan Doyle named 'Holmes' and the fictional creation of Conan Doyle named 'Watson', respectively, are such that S's degree of cleverness is comparable to the former and her degree of modesty comparable to the latter;

thereby conveying the intended point. But, this construction is, of course, prohibitively long and awkward. So what one utters in such a case is:

(15b) S is as clever as Holmes and more modest than Watson.[27]

In so speaking, the utterer *pretends* or *makes as if* to refer an actual Holmes and Watson in essentially the same manner that Conan Doyle, himself, does in writing the Holmes stories. However, the speaker of (15b) asserts a proposition whose truth condition supervenes not only on the content of the Holmes fiction but also certain facts about *reality*.

Negative existential discourse provides another context in which pretense seems essential to capturing intuitive truth conditions. For, as Evans (1982), Walton (*op cit*.) and Crimmins (*op cit.*) have all noted, upon examining the phenomenology of such talk, it would appear that in asserting, *e.g.*,

(16) Holmes does not exist

a speaker initially pretends that there is an entity by that name, only to *disavow* a moment later that is actually the case. As Evans nicely puts it:

> The general idea is that someone who utters [a negative existential statement] should be likened to someone who makes a move within a pretence in order to

[27] Cf. Crimmins (1998) p. 498

> express that it is a pretence . . . he is like someone who jumps on the stage and says: 'Look, Suzanne and the thief over there are just characters in a play'.[28]

According to Crimmins, the pretense inherent to sincere negative existential utterances revolves around the notion of *modes of presentation* – where such modes are understood loosely as those things which "group together actual or possible cases of thinking about (or thinking as if about) a thing."[29] In uttering, *e.g.*, (16), Crimmins maintains, a speaker pretends (a) that all modes of presentation (including the Holmes mode) *actually* present something; and (b) that 'exists' is a predicate which segregates the world into two sets – the set of things that exist, on the one hand, and the set of things that do not.[30]

Nevertheless, as Frederick Kroon (2004) observes, there would seem to be a significant *modal* problem for the above account. To wit: In order to know what proposition is asserted by means of a negative existential statement, we must know not only what it asserts about the actual world, but what *possible* situations are described. But when we consider an utterance such as

(7) Hamlet does not exist

it would seem that:

> Given our rather robust modal intuitions about such cases . . . the propositions asserted by means of such utterances can't simply be propositions about modes of presentation. After all, there surely are worlds where the Hamlet-mode does

[28] p. 362
[29] p. 509
[30] Though it is undoubtedly too strong of a word for the present phenomenon, due to its ubiquity in the literature I shall persist in using 'pretense' and its cognates in describing the non-factive attitudes readers adopt toward fiction. Consider as another exemplar of the attitude I intend to describe in the following (whatever we may ultimately choose to call it) the attitude towards the concept of *absolute* rest that even a committed relativity theorist might take in his descriptions of "ordinary" macroscopic objects on Earth.

present something but of which it is false to say that Hamlet exists ([for] according to the Kripkean orthodoxy Hamlet *couldn't* have existed).[31]

Crimmins, it should be noted, apparently grants the latter point, holding it to be "normally defensible" that "no possible world makes it fictionally true that there is a possible world in which [*e.g.,* Hamlet] exists".[32] Nevertheless, he provides no principled reasons which might ground this intuition. In the absence of such, this strategy must be regarded as little more than an *ad hoc* solution to the problem.

VII.

Negative Existentials: Semantic Pretense

An alternative to Crimmins' account, which, nevertheless, retains a number of its key insights is suggested by Kroon (2004). However, to understand the precise nature of the pretense involved on this view it is useful to first consider some of the class of statements which Kroon has dubbed "quasi-contradictions".[33] Consider, for instance, the following (true) story. I am walking with my wife, who is extraordinarily fond of dogs. With each passing block, she is compelled to comment on the adorableness of every demonstratively salient mutt. In the distance, she professes to spy another. "Oh and that dog is so cute, too", she exclaims. Alas,

[31] p. 527, emphasis in original.
[32] p. 513
[33] The sense of 'pretense' invoked here (and, subsequently, below), it should be noted, has more in common with the way in which, *e.g.*, a physicist might readily speak *as if* there are objects at absolute rest despite her belief in the Theory of Relativity, than it does with Walton's prop-centric use of the term. 'Pretense' in this context may, thus, be seen as a placeholder for whatever non-factive propositional attitudes turn out to be involved in such usage.

however, the “dog” she spies in the distance is, in fact, little more than a can of paint tied by a “leash” of twine to a tarp – a mere anchor. I am, thus, moved to utter:

(17) That dog you love so much is not a dog.

Similarly, Kroon considers the case of an audience member who, perhaps unaware of the conventions of Shakespearean drama, points to a “female” protagonist and declares

(18) That woman is not a woman!

Clearly, in both cases, what is communicated is not the blatant contradiction which the utterances literally express. If we understand *assertion* as roughly corresponding to Grice’s (1951) conception of speaker meaning, it would seem that what is asserted by means of (17) is that the demonstratively salient entity is not a dog. (18), similarly, would seem to assert that the demonstratively salient person is not a woman.

How are these propositions asserted? Though it is initially tempting to treat the complex demonstrative ‘that dog’ here as functioning analogously to a referential description – that is, serving only to make a certain entity the subject of discourse rather than to describe it – this strategy upon closer inspection fails adequately make sense of the phenomena in question. For, as Kroon observes:

> There is a striking sense in which the speaker does as if the description correctly describes the intended referent, and that he achieves his communicative purpose partly through knowing that his audience knows that he is [pretending] as if the description is apt. Unlike the standard cases of [allegedly referential misdescriptions], correction of the speaker would simply be misplaced.[34]

[34] p. 529

Similarly, the referential construal of the complex demonstrative in (19) would be of no assistance in, *e.g.* the possible scenario in which the "dog" my wife sees is no physical object at all, but a mere hallucination. For in such a case there is, of course, nothing to which the demonstrative *may* refer.

Such problems are avoided, however, if we explain the assertions made by quasi-contradictions as involving pretense of a distinctively *semantic* variety: the speaker makes as if the *expression* 'dog' or 'woman' together with the demonstrative 'that' are sufficient to secure reference to the mutually perceived entity. What the speaker effectively asserts is that *outside* of that pretense, such reference is not achieved by the expressions employed.[35]

This approach, in turn, suggests a natural means of capturing the semantics of negative existential discourse involving proper names. As we've seen above, it's plausible to maintain that these too involve an element of pretense. However, if we analyze the operative pretense as involving not modes of presentation, but the ability to secure reference by means of the fictional name we may, as we shall see below, avoid the modal problems inherent to Crimmins' account.[36]

[35] The pretense invoked in the case of negative existentials may, interestingly, be nested within further pretenseful acts. Consider: 'Hamlet does not exist, though his mother would disagree'.

[36] Somewhat confusingly, Kroon (p. 533) refers in to Crimmins' view as "the semantic pretense picture" (because of the semantic ambiguity it posits for 'exists') and his own as "pragmatic" pretense (due to the manner in which it exploits the literal meaning of 'exists' in order to "assert what is not [literally] expressed". For the reasons outlined above, however, I shall persist in my current usage.

VIII.

Semantic Pretense and Metalinguistic Descriptions

In the preceding chapters it has been argued that the logical form of a singular use of the proper name type ‘NN’ is given by the metalinguistic description ‘the ϕ bearer of NN’, where ϕ is a contextually determined sortal predicate which the speaker uses to disambiguate the reference of names with multiple bearers. In addition to being independently motivated by the phenomenon of plural and determiner-bound constructions and the semantically innocent solutions it permits to the puzzle of the informativeness of identity statements and the problem of substitutivity of names in attitude ascriptions, the Metalinguistic Description Theory proposed above enables an account of the distinctively semantic pretense inherent to sincere utterances of negative existential statements which, itself, doubles as an account of *fictionalizing* discourse.

To see this, let us first return to the latter phenomenon and inquire: What sorts of propositions are expressed by an author’s use of fictional names? As we’ve seen in §II, above, all parties to the realism debate may agree that in composing a story, the author only makes as if to refer to his characters. But what does she *actually* assert? According to Walton’s influential account (upon whom, as we’ve seen both Crimmins and Kroon draw):

> the words uttered, taken literally, do not express a proposition . . . . [S]ince there is no such thing as Lilliput, “Lilliput is an island southwest of Sumantra” does not express a proposition.[37]

[37] Walton (2000), p. 76

This, however, is a *prima facie* puzzling contention. In the first place, if the content sentences of a work of fiction do not express *any* kind of propositions, it would seem we should regard them as being literally meaningless. Indeed, this seems to be precisely what Walton (2000) has in mind, when he compares content sentences such as

(19) Baggins is a hobbit

to idiomatic constructions such as

(20) I'll have no truck with that

(21) He took a shine to her

and

(22) She lost her cool

which, despite being literally meaningless and/or ungrammatical are readily understood.

Nevertheless, poverty of stimulus would seem to give us ample reason to reject the above analogy. There are but a handful of idiomatic constructions such as (20) – (22) for a speaker to master in his or her lifetime. On the other hand, speakers are routinely confronted with novel works of fiction, which they readily understand. Moreover, as works of fiction appear to be *processed* by the reader no differently than historical reports (explaining how, for instance how Welles' adaptation of *The War of the Worlds* was mistaken by many for a news broadcast upon its initial airing), Walton owes an account of what such processing entails if not grasping the literal meaning of the sentences.

Braun (1993) suggests that works of fiction may, indeed, express propositions, albeit "gappy" ones. On such a view 'Holmes lives on Baker Street' expresses the incomplete proposition represented by the ordered pair < ___ , living on Baker Street>. However, it follows from this analysis that ‘Pegasus lives on Baker Street’ expresses the very same proposition as ‘Holmes lives on Baker Street’. Any difference in cognitive significance between the two must be *pragmatic* rather than semantic. However, as argued in Chapter 1, above, speakers are typically sensitive to the distinction between semantically and pragmatically imparted information, yet are still inclined to regard utterances involving ‘Pegasus’ and ‘Holmes’ as divergent in *meaning*.

The Metalinguistic Description Theory enables us to do better. As we’ve seen, *fictionalizing* discourse involves the pretense of successful reference. On the present view, this boils down to *making as if* to use the metalinguistic description ‘the ϕ bearer of ‘NN’’ *referentially*. However the metalinguistic *character* (in Kaplan’s sense) of an arbitrary proper name type allows us to retain the fundamental insight of Braun’s analysis while still explaining ordinary speakers’ intuitions that, *e.g.*, the sentences

(23) Sherlock Holmes lives on Baker Street

and

(24) Pegasus lives on Baker Street

differ in *meaning* and not just pragmatic implications.[38] For, it is plausible to hold that authors, having no genuine referential intentions regarding their uses of fictional names, simply do not assign *any* value to the index ϕ . ϕ , after all, is a disambiguating device. However, as we’ve observed, Conan Doyle, for instance, (despite *pretensions* to the contrary) has no actual intention to refer to any one bearer of ‘Holmes’ more than any other.[39] So it is *prima facie*

[38] Cf. Kaplan (1989)

[39] This fact, in turn, explains why in only pretending to provide any actual content for ϕ , the author is not, in effect, allowing the description revert simply to, *e.g.*, ‘*a* bearer of ‘NN’’. For authors *qua* competent speakers know

implausible to hold that he assigns any actual value to the variable in ‘the ϕ bearer of ‘Holmes’’. As there is no *automatic* saturation of ‘the ϕ bearer of ‘NN’’ in the absence of speaker intentions, however, the proposition literally expressed by a sentence containing a fictional name will be a “skeletal” one without determinate truth conditions. Nevertheless, as the incomplete propositions expressed still contain this “skeletal” metalinguistic content, we have a natural explanation of the intuitive divergence in meaning between, *e.g.* (23) and (24).

IX.

Internal Discourse: Truths in Fiction

Kripke (2011) has endorsed a no-proposition view of fictional works similar to that of Walton’s on the grounds that:

> it should be required of a genuine proposition that we should be able to say, of each possible world, whether the proposition allegedly expressed by the sentence would or would not have been true under the circumstances in question. If this test fails for the sentences in fiction, then they do not express genuine propositions. And to my mind this test does fail for the sentences in fiction.

As we’ve seen above, the Metalinguistic Description Theory is able to accommodate this insight by holding that in the case of sentences containing fictional names ‘the ϕ bearer of ‘NN’’ is unsaturated. However, it bears noting that what Kripke says in the above above cannot be

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names to be multiply borne and it is implausible to hold that in composing a fiction, authors intend their verbiage to be potentially true of *actual* individuals.

true of *all* the content sentences of a work of fiction. In the first place, Kripke, himself allows (*pace* Frege) that, *e.g.* "When in *War and Peace* Tolstoy mentions Napoleon, and has him as a character in the work, he is talking about Napoleon" rather than a fictional doppelganger bearing the same name. So, a sentence of *War in Peace* which Tolstoy, *e.g.,* attributes the property of being French to Napoleon would *prima facie* not only express a genuine proposition but a true one at that.

Similarly, aphorisms in fictional works are often likely to strike us as true. For instance, when Shakespeare's Juliet utters that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, we are inclined to regard what she says as true not merely in the world of the fiction, but in reality as well. Indeed, a wealth of *truisms,* such as this, are drawn from the content sentences of fiction. Nevertheless, we do not regard this fact as in any way undermining the fictional status of a text.

Moreover, there seems nothing incoherent in the supposition that fictional works may inadvertently *denote* reality. Otherwise there would seem little point to the familiar legal caveats accompanying works of fiction to the effect that any resemblance between characters and situations depicted and the real world is purely coincidental. The very basis for adopting such a defense against potential libel suits would seem to be that while there is a potentially perfect descriptive fit between fictional scenarios and reality, such a fact is, nevertheless, irrelevant to the work's status *qua* fiction. So long as the author was not intending to *refer* to any actual people or states of affairs, the work is a fictional one and there may be no legal recourse.

Similarly, we often speak of the propositions of some fictional works as "coming true". The work of Jules Verne, for instance is often regarded as having described with remarkable fidelity technologies (most famously the submarine) that would not be invented for decades after the work's publication. Nevertheless, we are not at all tempted to regard, *e.g.*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* as a work of genuine prophecy. Of course no actual work of fiction has *completely* or *perfectly* described a state of affairs that has come to be the case. But this is simply a matter of detail. Such a scenario is perfectly intelligible. After all, I might write a fiction about an author who composes a fictional text whose every sentence subsequently comes true, and there would be no apparent *incoherence* to my story.

Hence , the possibility that some of the descriptions within fictional work may be or become genuinely denotative ought not worry us. For even in the unlikely scenario in which all the object-independent propositions expressed by a fictional work turn out to be literally true, this is not a scenario in which the author has unwittingly written a history. For to make such a claim is to ignore the fundamental distinction between descriptive fit and *aboutness*. Denotation is a matter of the former. And, as Putnam's "Churchill"-sketching ant (discussed above) illustrates, this relation is simply not sufficient for reference or *aboutness*.

Moreover, descriptive fit would seem to be not even a necessary condition for a work's being about a real world individual. Consider, *e.g.*, the cubist portraits of Picasso's lover Dora Maar (which resemble *no one* whatsoever), or the recent film *I'm Not There* in which Woodie Guthrie is played by an African American boy and Bob Dylan is portrayed by Cate Blanchet. For a work to be non-fiction it must be *about* reality, but, as the above examples illustrate, this relation would seem to have little to do with descriptive fit.

X.

Pretense and External Discourse

Perhaps the greatest difficulty for an antirealist account of fiction, such as the above, is to accommodate intuitions about the truth of certain *external* discourse – talk about fictional characters *qua* fictional characters, *e.g.*

(25) Buck Mulligan is a fictional character

(26) Holmes is more famous Sam Spade

(27) Many Shakespeare scholars have discussed Iago.

For, as many have observed, while (25) – (27) are likely to strike us as true, unlike the case of, *e.g.*

(13) Buck Mulligan is stately and plump

the appearance of reference in these utterances cannot be paraphrased away by appealing to an implicit "according to the fiction" operator.[40] After all, according to the fiction, Buck Mulligan is a *man*, not a fictional character.[41] Similarly, Sam Spade does not exist in the Holmes stories and there are no Shakespeare scholars written into the plot of *Othello*.

However, as Stuart Brock (2002) has argued, the antirealist may, nevertheless, give a highly uniform analysis of critical discourse by going parasitic on the realist's own theory of

[40] Cf., *e.g.*, Lewis (1978), Parsons (1982), and Currie (1990).

[41] Which is not, of course, to say that such *fictional* fictional characters do not exist. Gonzago from Hamlet's play-within-a-play "The Murder of Gonzago" is one such character. *The Simpsons*' Itchy and Scratchy are a popular contemporary example. Cf. Kripke (1973) for an extended discussion of such figures.

fictional characters and recasting external statements as involving the pretense that the realist's hypothesis is true.[42] Hence, a statement such as

(25) Buck Mulligan is a fictional character

is roughly recast as

(25a) Within the pretense that the realist hypothesis is true Buck Mulligan is a fictional character.

Similarly,

(26) Holmes is more famous than Sam Spade

may be given the gloss

(26a) Within the pretense that Holmes and Sam Spade both exist, the former is more famous than the latter.

Both (25) and (26) are intuitively true. However, in order for either to have a truth value, they must express complete propositions. And, yet, as we've seen, given that the author of a fiction has no genuine intentions to refer to any actual or potential bearer of 'NN', it is *prima facie* implausible to hold that he provides any genuinely content to ϕ in the metalinguistic description 'the ϕ bearer of 'NN''. How, then, to reconcile this apparently contradictory data?

Here, the Metalinguistic Description Theory may appeal to the notion of anaphorically dependent chains of reference. Consider, for instance the following (due to Chastain (1975)):

(28) A man in a brown suit$_1$ approached me on the street yesterday and offered to buy my briefcase$_2$. When I declined to sell it$_2$, the man$_1$ doubled his offer. Since he$_1$ wanted the case$_2$ so badly, I sold it$_2$ to him$_1$.

[42] p. 9

The above contains two intertwining anaphoric chains – one corresponding to the buyer of the briefcase (‘A man in a brown suit’, ‘the man’, ‘he’, ‘him’) and one corresponding to the briefcase (‘my briefcase’, ‘it’, ‘the case’). In both cases, the latter elements of the respective chains secure their reference only by means of being “linked” to the initiating terms.

As Robert Brandom (1984) observes, the functioning of such anaphoric chains of reference may be thought of as analogous to the indirect addressing function present in most basic computer architectures:

> Ordinarily the central processor uses addresses to pick out values just as we use descriptions to pick out objects. But, in indirect mode, the CPU, when given an address as an input does not return the value stored at that address as its output. Instead it treats that value as another address and returns the value stored in that second address as its output.[43]

Prima facie, negative existential discourse involving fictional characters would seem to exhibit this same type of anaphoric dependence. For, a speaker who sincerely assets, *e.g.*,

(16) Holmes does not exist

does not deny that there exists anyone by that name – only a *particular* bearer, the one Conan Doyle talks “about” in his works. Similarly in the case of external discourse, a speaker sincerely uttering, *e.g.*,

(25) Buck Mulligan is a fictional character

[43] p. 475

does not wish to assert that any or all bearers of that name are fictional, only that the Buck Mulligan of *Ulysses* is.[44]

The above suggests the following picture of fictional names and their usage external to a fictional work: When an author introduces a fictional name within a text, the author makes as if to (but does not actually) provide content for the sortal ϕ in 'the ϕ bearer of 'NN''. Subsequent uses of the name external to the fiction are *anaphorically dependent* on this initial usage: In such cases the value of ϕ is specified in terms of occurrences of 'NN' which form antecedent "links" in an anaphoric chain of reference of stretching back to the author's initial use of the name. It follows from this picture that external uses of the fictional name 'NN' will express complete propositions, given that speakers in these contexts *do* provide an actual value for ϕ. However, since the author's initial use of 'NN' which stands at the beginning of this chain fails to designate any actual or possible individual, so too will derivative uses of that name external to the fiction.

A significant advantage of the fictionalist approach to external discourse that the appeal to anaphoric dependence enables is that the fictionalist need not consistently commit herself to a *particular* version of realism when engaging in such pretense. She is, thus, able to more smoothly accommodate a wider range of external discourse than her realist counterpart. For instance, while the Language-Dependent Realist apparently cannot straightforwardly account for, *e.g.*

(29) Holmes is more clever than Sam Spade

[44] Though not all back reference to fictional contexts will be this coarse grained. Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock*, for instance, contains multiple characters named 'Philip Roth'. A speaker critically discussing any of these, accordingly, must refer back to specific portions of the novel for sufficient disambiguation.

or

(30) Holmes would almost certainly have found Bin Laden by now

given her commitment to the view that characters such as Holmes are abstract objects (which themselves may, of course, neither be clever nor possess causal powers such as the ability to track down a real world individual), the anti-realist may simply treat discourse such as (29) and (30) as involving the pretense that some form of *concrete* realism is true. In so doing, the anti-realist, of course, does not necessarily commit herself to the metaphysical plausibility of such a theory. She need only acknowledge that talking *as if* we had such ontological commitments can be useful and perspicuous. Moreover, should the Language-Dependent realist wish to resist this invocation of pretense in the explanation of external discourse, it would seem she must provide a compelling account of how abstract objects such as Holmes may actually possess qualities that appear to apply exclusively to men. However, in the absence of such an account, an anti-realist alternative is surely to be preferred.

XI.

Conclusions and Methodological Reflections

Realists about fictional entities have often alleged that it is not possible for the anti-realist pretense theorist to provide a principled and uniform account of the myriad ways we use fictional names. The Metalinguistic Description Theory taken in conjunction with a semantically significant attributive/referential distinction demonstrates that they are wrong in this contention. Moreover, general methodological considerations indicate that this anti-realist alternative should be preferred.

In the first place, as we've seen, the only plausible version of realism about fictional characters is the Language-Dependent Realist's, who accounts for existence of fictional entities in terms of a hypostasizing language game. However, even the Langauge-Dependent Realist must invoke some manner of pretense to account for fictionalizing discourse and both internal and external discourse which ascribes, *e.g.*, anthropomorphic properties to the abstract fictional entity. However, as she already countenances the need for pretense here, what motivation can she have for clinging to realism in other contexts?

It is instructive, here, to consider the contrast between anti-realism about fictional entities and *scientific* antirealism. Like fictional entities, many of the entities postulated by contemporary physical theory are in principle unobservable. Should we, therefore, regard them solely as useful theoretical constructs – mere means of facilitating perspicuous communication, as the literary anti-realist maintains we should regard fictional entities?

Perhaps yes, perhaps no. We need not resolve such disputes here. What bears noting, however, is that the case for scientific realism largely supervenes on the *causal* powers of posited entities – powers which enable us to both predict future events and manipulate observable reality. However, both sides of the realism debate in the philosophy of fiction concur that it would be a category mistake to ascribe such causal powers to fictional entities. Given that both the realist and antirealist agree there are no causal consequences of abandoning realism about fictional entities, the uniformity (and hence, greater adequacy) of the anti-realist pretense approach, to which the present account of proper names appeals, renders it clearly preferable to its realist alternative.

Concluding Remarks: The Case for Ambiguity Reviewed

As observed in Chapter 1, the case for the Metalinguistic Description Theory as a solution to the classic Frege-Russell puzzles involving proper names began with the seemingly unrelated observation that definite descriptions appear to be ambiguous between *referential* uses in which a speaker only wishes to raise an entity to the subject of discourse and attributive uses in which the satisfaction of the predicate 'F' in 'the F' is criterial to the speaker's communicative intentions. Given that there is a well-established convention for the phenomenon of referential usage, it was argued that the attributive/referential distinction is of semantic, rather than merely pragmatic significance. The logical form of referential usage was, in turn, given by appealing to non-descriptive Gödelian completions of the form [The x: Fx & x = *that*] where the reference of the directly referential demonstrative 'that' is given by the unique object which the speaker has in mind and intends to communicate about by means of 'the F'.

In Chapter 2, it was argued that singular uses of proper names are metalinguistically descriptive at the level of logical form. This insight, in turn, was used to provide a principled solution to the problem of informativeness for true identity statements involving proper names of the form 'a=b', which, nevertheless, respected the objectual nature of such discourse – to wit: Speakers making assertions of identity involving proper names typically take the metalinguistic descriptive content of the names in question to be criterial to the satisfaction of their communicative intentions. Hence, in the vocabulary of the preceding chapter, the names 'a' and 'b' in the statement 'a=b' will generally be used *attributively*.

Chapter 3 applied the attributive/referential distinction and the Metalinguistic Description Theory of proper names developed in Chapter 2 to puzzles of attitude ascription involving proper names. Here it was argued that attitude ascription are themselves ambiguous: sometimes they are *transparent* and permitting of substitution of co-referential terms; sometimes they are *opaque*, in which case such free substitution is not permitted. This ambiguity was, once again, explained in terms of attributive and referential usage: Transparent ascriptions are the result of the names employed in the ascriptions being used referentially. The speaker in such cases wishes only to identify the entity at which the agent's belief is directed. Opaque ascriptions, it was argued, result from the names employed being used attributively. In such cases the speaker wishes to capture in part the representational content of the agent's belief. Satisfaction of metalinguistically descriptive content is, thus, essential to the achievement of the speaker's communicative aims. In addition, a class of *Strict De Dicto* ascriptions – in which the orthographic and phonetic form of the ascribed name is essential to what the speaker means – were identified and held to be the key to unraveling Kripke's infamous puzzle(s) about belief.

Finally, the attributive/referential distinction in conjunction with the Metalinguistic Description Theory of proper names enabled us in Chapter 4 to address puzzles surrounding the use of fictional names and negative existential discourse. The case was made that fictional uses of proper names within the context of a fictional work involved the *pretense* of referential usage. This pretense – and the coincident failure of authors to provide actual content for the sortal ϕ in the names of their characters – explained the lack of determinate truth conditions for the propositions actually expressed by content sentences of a fictional work containing fictional names. Negative existential assertions were, similarly, analyzed in terms of semantic pretense: the speaker who asserts sincerely that NN does not exist, it was argued, engages in the pretense that the metalinguistic description 'the ϕ bearer of 'NN'' secures reference to an actual entity, only to assert that outside of this pretense, the description in question is non-denoting. However, such discourse, it was argued, *does* have determinate truth conditions in virtue of the sortal ϕ 's standing in such cases for the present token's property of being anaphorically dependent on antecedent uses of the name in question.

If the above considerations are – as I believe – fundamentally correct, then the upholding of proper names as a paradigm of directly referential expressions is mistaken. And if this is so, then much of contemporary semantic theorizing is revealed to have rested upon a myth.

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