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Frege's Puzzle and Descriptive Enrichment

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As is (very) well known, Millians about proper names face a prima facie problem in accounting for our intuitions about instances of Frege's puzzle. The version of the puzzle I have in mind is this: sometimes two simple sentences can differ only with respect to the substitution of coreferential proper names, and yet one sentence seems to express a trivial and a priori proposition, whereas the other seems to express a non-trivial and a posteriori proposition. Consider, for example,

[1] If Hesperus exists, then Hesperus is Hesperus.

[2] If Hesperus exists, then Hesperus is Phosphorus.

The Millian has no problem explaining why [1] seems trivial and a priori, since, according to the Millian, [1] semantically expresses the trivial, a priori proposition expressed by

[3] If o exists, then $o = o$.

relative to an assignment of Venus to the free variable 'o.' The problems are rather with [2], which seems to many speakers to be non-trivial and a posteriori. The Millian, who thinks that the semantic content of a name is its referent and therefore that 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' have the same semantic content, must take this to be an illusion: according to the Millian, [1] and [2] express the same proposition — the a priori proposition expressed by [3] — and hence it can't be the case that the proposition expressed by the first is a priori and trivial,

whereas the proposition expressed by the second is a posteriori and non-trivial.[1] The plausibility of Millianism depends in part on how well the Millian can explain appearances to the contrary.

1 The pure pragmatic strategy

What we want, then, is an explanation of the fact that sentences which are relevantly like [2] — i.e., sentences which differ from some sentence which contains more than one occurrence of a simple name *n* and expresses an a priori proposition only by the replacement of one or more (but not all) occurrences of *n* with a distinct coreferential simple name — typically seem a posteriori to speakers. A very popular explanatory strategy might be described as follows:

> *The pure pragmatic strategy*
> Speakers often confuse properties of the proposition semantically expressed by a sentence with the properties of propositions that utterances of that sentence would often pragmatically convey. In particular, whenever a sentence like [2] seems a posteriori to speakers, this is because it would typically be used to pragmatically convey propositions which really are a posteriori.

Proponents of the pure pragmatic strategy thus explain the fact that sentences like [2] *seem to* express a priori propositions in terms of the fact that some other proposition — one pragmatically conveyed, rather than semantically expressed by, an utterance of the sentence — *really is* a posteriori.

Though it is rare to see explicit endorsement of the pure pragmatic strategy, it is extremely difficult — as Braun and Saul (2002) remark in a related context — to understand much of the literature on semantics and pragmatics without taking the relevant authors to be tacitly endorsing the following sort of principle:

> If competent speakers are inclined to take a sentence *S* to have a certain truth-value (or modal profile or epistemic profile) one must explain this fact about how speakers regard

[1] While this is true of standard versions of Millianism, one might take there to be a semantic difference between [1] and [2] without there being any intrinsic semantic difference between the names. For purposes of this paper, I set such views to the side; though such views needn't be versions of Fregeanism, they, like Fregean views, take the difference between [1] and [2] to be semantic, and here I am only concerned with pragmatic solutions to Frege's puzzle. For discussion of a view of the sort I have been describing, see Fine (2007), especially Ch. 3.

> *S* either with a semantic theory which assigns to *S* a proposition with the right truth-value (or modal profile or epistemic profile) or with a pragmatic theory which explains how *S* might be typically used to pragmatically convey propositions with the right truth-value (or modal profile or epistemic profile).

But, if Millianism is true, this principle forces the pure pragmatic strategy on us, since, if Millianism is true, a semantic explanation of differing speaker judgements concerning the epistemic profiles of [1] and [2] will not be available.[2]

To get a specific version of the pure pragmatic strategy on the table, we'll need an answer to the question of *which* a posteriori propositions might be pragmatically conveyed by utterances of sentences like [2].

2 Descriptively enriched singular propositions

An intuitively plausible answer to this question emerges from a view of the relationship between the semantic content of the sentence and what one would typically use that sentence to assert or convey which has recently been defended by, among others, Scott Soames.[3] On this view, the propositions pragmatically conveyed by an utterance of a sentence will typically include enriched propositions, which are obtained by supplementing the semantic content of the sentence with extra information salient to or presupposed by the relevant conversation. This sort of view promises to help with the seeming a posterioricity of [2], because, in a given conversation, two names might often be associated with different pieces of information — even if the two names are names for the same thing. This, as we will see, is enough to generate the wanted

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[2] See the discussion in Braun and Saul (2002) of the 'matching proposition principle.' The argument to follow against the pure pragmatic strategy to some extent parallels their argument against this principle. One important difference between the two arguments is that whereas Braun and Saul (in §3.3) argue against explanations of Frege puzzle-type intuitions on the basis of conversational implicatures (focusing on the case of conversational implicatures of information about propositional guises), I argue against explanation of these intuitions on pragmatic grounds more generally (and without restricting attention to the view that what is pragmatically conveyed has to do with propositional guises). The criticisms of Braun and Saul don't apply, as far as I can see, to the sort of pragmatic theory I will be discussing; the sort of theory I will be discussing is, I think, the most widely endorsed pragmatic solution to Frege's puzzle these days.

[3] See, for example, Soames (2004, 2005, 2008, forthcoming). Soames, however, does not endorse the pure pragmatic strategy. See Soames (2006a, b). For criticisms of Soames' view, see McKinsey (2005), Braun and Sider (2006), and Caplan (2007).

result that in at least many cases, sentences like [2] will be used to pragmatically convey a posteriori propositions.

To see how this sort of pragmatic enrichment might work, suppose that '*F*' stands for some piece of descriptive information associated with 'Hesperus' in a given context. Then one might use a sentence

[4] Hesperus is a planet.

which, according to the Millian, semantically expresses the proposition expressed by

[5] *o* is a planet.

relative to an assignment of Venus to '*o*,' to convey the proposition expressed by

[6] Hesperus, the *F*, is a planet.

i.e., the proposition expressed by

[7] [the x: x is F & $x = o$] x is a planet.

again, relative to an assignment of Venus to the free variable '*o*.' Let's call propositions like those expressed by [6] and [7] — propositions which differ from 'mere' singular propositions like those expressed by [4] and [5] by the addition of descriptive information about the referent of the name — *descriptively enriched singular propositions*.[4]

The idea that utterances of sentences involving names pragmatically convey descriptively enriched singular propositions seems to be just what the proponent of the pure pragmatic strategy needs. If, as above, we use '*F*' to stand for some descriptive information associated with 'Hesperus' in a context, and if we use '*G*' to stand for the descriptive information associated with 'Phosphorus' in a context, then it seems that utterances of [2] will pragmatically convey the proposition expressed by

[8] If Hesperus, the *F*, exists, then Hesperus, the *F*, is Hesperus, the *G*.

which is the proposition expressed by

[4] This view of what is asserted by the utterances of sentences involving names is worked out most fully in Soames (2002).

[9] [the x: x is F & $x = o$] (if x exists, then ([the y: y is G & $y = o$] $x = y$)) [5]

(relative to an assignment of Venus to the free variable) and this proposition will be, in the standard case, a posteriori, since it will be a posteriori, in the standard case, that something is both F and G.

So one reason why the apparatus of descriptively enriched singular propositions seems well suited to the pure pragmatic strategy is that it delivers the result that utterances of sentences like [2] pragmatically convey a posteriori propositions. But there is at least one other powerful reason for the proponent of the pure pragmatic strategy to look to descriptively enriched singular propositions. The impression that [2] is a posteriori rather than a priori is not one which depends on features of particular conversational settings: the intuition that [2] is a posteriori is one which speakers have no matter what the conversational setting; indeed, the intuition persists when speakers consider the sentence outside of conversation entirely, when using the sentence in thought.[6] For this reason, it seems that any broadly pragmatic explanation of this appearance of a posterioricity must not rely on pragmatic mechanisms which are specific to particular sorts of conversations; for example, it must not rely on the violation of conversational norms, as explanations given in terms of Gricean conversational implicature would. That is an important strength of the apparatus of pragmatic descriptive enrichment: on this picture, it is simply a general feature of our uses of sentences involving simple names that those uses will convey propositions which add to the semantic content of the sentence the descriptive information associated with the name in that context.

3 The main problem

But, however attractive it is, the conjunction of the pure pragmatic strategy with the view that the relevant pragmatically conveyed propositions are descriptively enriched singular propositions cannot succeed. Whether or not utterances of sentences like [2] do pragmatically convey descriptively enriched singular propositions, this fact does not, by itself, provide a good explanation of the fact that such sentences seem to many speakers to be a posteriori.

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[5] I'm simplifying a bit with [9] by including only one restricted quantifier corresponding to the two occurrences of 'Hesperus, the F'. This is a harmless simplification, since

[the x: x is F & $x = o$] (if x exists, then ([the y: y is G & $y = o$][the z: z is F & $z = o$] $y = z$))

is, like [9], a posteriori, and for the same reason.

[6] For discussion of the former point, see §3 of Braun and Saul (2002); for discussion of the latter, see Gauker (1997), Thau (2002), and Speaks (2008).

As we saw, utterances of sentences like

[2] If Hesperus exists, then Hesperus is Phosphorus.

will pragmatically convey descriptively enriched singular propositions like that expressed by

[9] [the x: x is F & $x = o$] (if x exists, then ([the y: y is G & $y = o$] $x = y$))

which are a posteriori. The problem is that there are trivial variants of [2] which can only be used to convey descriptively enriched singular propositions which are a priori. Consider, for example,

[10] If Hesperus exists and Phosphorus exists, then Hesperus is Phosphorus.

Surely, if [2] seems a posteriori, so does [10] — and for just the same reasons. The relevant difference between [1] and [2] seems to be exactly mirrored by the relevant difference between [10] and the following sentence:

[11] If Hesperus exists and Phosphorus exists, then Hesperus is Hesperus.

Just as [1] and [2] both (according to the Millian) semantically express a priori propositions despite the fact that it seems to speakers that the former is a priori and the latter is a posteriori, so [11] and [10] both semantically express a priori propositions despite the fact that it seems to speakers that the former is a priori and the latter is a posteriori.

However, unlike [2], [10] cannot be used to pragmatically convey a posteriori descriptively enriched singular propositions. As above, let '*F*' stand for the descriptive information associated in a context with 'Hesperus', and let '*G*' stand for some descriptive information associated in the context with 'Phosphorus.' Then the descriptively enriched singular proposition pragmatically conveyed by an utterance of [10] will be the proposition semantically expressed by

[12] If Hesperus, the *F*, exists and Hesperus, the *G*, exists, then Hesperus, the *F*, is Hesperus, the *G*.

i.e., the proposition expressed by

[13] [the x: x is F & $x = o$][the y: y is G & $y = o$] (if x exists and y exists, then $x = y$)[7]

relative to an assignment of Venus to the free variable 'o.' But any proposition of this form is a priori; hence the fact that propositions of this form are pragmatically conveyed by most utterances of [10] can hardly be used to explain the seeming a posterioricity of the latter.

It is worth pausing a moment to show that the propositions expressed by [12] and [13] really are a priori. This may be intuitively clear in the case of [12], but perhaps not so much in the case of [13]. We can argue as follows: [13] just says that that *if* there exists some thing, x, which is F and is identical to o, and some thing, y, which is G and is also identical to o, *then* x and y are identical. To show that this conditional is a priori, it suffices to find some conditional which is a priori, whose antecedent is an a priori consequence of the antecedent of [13], and whose consequent has the consequent of [13] as an a priori consequence. The following is such a conditional:

$$\forall x \forall y(\text{if}(x = o \ \& \ y = o), \text{then } x = y)$$

This principle seems to rely only on the symmetry and transitivity of identity, and so (relative to an assignment of an object to the free variable) is surely knowable a priori. Its antecedent is a trivial a priori consequence of the antecedent of [13] and its antecedent is identical with the consequent of [13]. Hence the a prioricity of the above principle is sufficient to show that [13] also expresses an a priori truth.[8]

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[7] Here and in what follows I am simplifying a bit by including just one occurrence of the restricted quantifiers, giving each wide scope over the conditional. One might, instead, take the descriptively enriched singular proposition pragmatically conveyed by an utterance of [10] to be the more complicated

> [the x: x is F & $x = o$][the y: y is G & $y = o$] (if x exists and y exists, then [the z: z is F & $z = o$][the a: a is G & $a = o$]$z = a$)

However, this would not affect anything, since this proposition, like the one expressed by [13], is a priori. Thus the simplification in the text.

[8] Another way to show that [13] is a priori is to consider the following pair of conditionals:

> [the x: x is F & $x = o$][the y: y is G & $y = o$] (if x exists and y exists, then ($x = o$ & $y = o$))
>
> $\forall x \forall y(\text{if}(x = o \ \& \ y = o), \text{then } x = y)$

Each of these conditionals is a plainly priori (relative to an assignment of an object to the free variable). But the consequent of the first and the antecedent of the second are identical; hence the conditional formed from the antecedent of the first and the consequent of the second must also be a priori. But this just is [13]; hence [13] is a priori.

So propositions of the form of [13] are, in general, a priori; since this is the form of a descriptively enriched singular proposition pragmatically conveyed by an utterance of [10], the descriptively enriched singular propositions conveyed by utterances of [10] will (like the proposition semantically expressed by [10], according to the Millian) be a priori. So we are left without an explanation of the fact that [10] — like [2] — seems a posteriori.[9]

It is important to see that this is a general result, in two ways. First, nothing turns on the selection of descriptive information; the proposition expressed by [12]/[13] will be a priori, no matter what values are assigned to '*F*' and '*G*.' This separates the present line of argument from other arguments which have been offered against the view that Frege's puzzle can be resolved via pragmatically conveyed descriptively enriched propositions.[10] Second, and more important, sentences like [10] are not isolated oddities. For any sentence *S* involving coreferential proper names *m*, *n*, whose seeming a posterioricity might be explained by the pure pragmatic strategy, there will be a corresponding sentence of the form

If *m* exists and *n* exists, then *S*.

which, like, [10], will only ever convey a priori descriptively enriched singular propositions. Thus, for every sentence which, according to the Millian, semantically expresses an a priori proposition but would typically be used to convey a posteriori descriptively enriched singular propositions, there is another which not only semantically expresses an a priori proposition but also could only be used to convey a priori descriptively enriched singular propositions. Hence (to put the same point another way) for every instance of Frege's puzzle that the present

[9] An anonymous reviewer suggested that, since it is not obvious that [13] is a priori, speakers may take sentences like [10] to be a posteriori because it would usually be used to convey a proposition — namely, some proposition of the form of [13] — which they *think* is a posteriori. This would involve giving up the pure pragmatic strategy as described above, since we would not have found a proposition conveyed by [10] which really has the epistemic properties which speakers mistakenly ascribe to the proposition expressed by [10]; but it may be an interesting fallback strategy. Discussion of this would take us too far afield at the moment; one initial worry is that this strategy attributes implausibly sophisticated beliefs to speakers. It seems that speakers can be got to see some epistemic distinction between [11] and [10] even if they are in no position to have views about the epistemic status of propositions like those expressed by [12] or [13].

[10] See, for example, the argument of Caplan (2007) and the reply to that argument in Speaks (forthcoming).

version of the pure pragmatic strategy promises to explain, there is another that it cannot.[11]

The defender of the present version of the pure pragmatic strategy, then, seems forced to give up the view that all of our intuitions about instances of Frege's puzzle can be explained in terms of the properties of descriptively enriched singular propositions conveyed by uses of those sentences. The only available fallback position seems to be that the pure pragmatic strategy provides a partial solution to Frege's puzzle: even if it does not explain why [10] seems a posteriori to speakers, it might still explain why [2] — which, after all, *can* be used to convey a posteriori descriptively enriched singular propositions — seems a posteriori to speakers.[12]

But this fallback position seems to me to be a difficult view to sustain. Consider again the two pairs of sentences discussed above:

[1] If Hesperus exists, then Hesperus is Hesperus.

[2] If Hesperus exists, then Hesperus is

[11] If Hesperus exists and Phosphorus exists, then Hesperus is Hesperus.

[10] If Hesperus exists and Phosphorus exists, then Hesperus is Phosphorus.

The worry for this fallback position is just that these pairs of sentences seem to be instances of exactly the same phenomenon. When evaluating explanations of linguistic data, we normally impose some sort of

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11 The same problem, it should be noted, arises for a neo-descriptivist view of names which identifies the propositions semantically expressed by sentences like [10] with the descriptively enriched singular propositions that the view currently under discussion would take to be pragmatically conveyed by utterances of those sentences. This would be a way of making names rigid designators which would avoid the problems encountered by the usual wide-scoping and rigidifying ways of accomplishing this task (for which see Soames (2002) and Caplan (2005)). But, as the above discussion makes clear, this would also be a version of descriptivism which would lack a semantic solution to this version of Frege's puzzle, and hence lack the main advantage that most versions of descriptivism have over Millian views.

12 There is another option: the proponent of descriptively enriched propositions could say that the descriptively enriched singular proposition conveyed by [10] is not that expressed by [12], but rather that expressed by

> If Hesperus exists and Hesperus exists, then Hesperus, the *F*, is Hesperus, the *G*.

which is, in the standard case, a posteriori, since it will not be a priori that the relevant object has the properties corresponding to '*F*' and '*G*.' But this seems plainly ad hoc. Why would the descriptive information associated with names affix to occurrences of those names in the consequents of conditionals, but not their antecedents?

requirement of generality to the effect that similar pieces of linguistic data ought to receive a similar explanation. For this reason, it is very hard to believe that the correct explanation of the fact that [2] but not [1] seems a posteriori to speakers could be different than the explanation of the fact that [10] but not [11] seems a posteriori. To give fundamentally different explanations of the apparent a posterioricity of [2] and [10] would, I think, be akin to positing a semantic ambiguity to explain the linguistic behavior of an apparently univocal expression. If this is right, then it seems as though it should be a condition on any explanation of the apparent difference between [1] and [2] that it also explain the apparent difference between [11] and [10]; but then the conjunction of the pure pragmatic strategy with the view that the relevant pragmatically conveyed propositions are descriptively enriched singular propositions must be rejected.[13]

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[13] An anonymous reviewer asked how the argument of this paper would apply to attempts to use the apparatus of descriptively enriched propositions to solve some other versions of Frege's puzzle. Consider, in particular, the difference between

(a) If Superman exists, then Superman has superpowers.

(b) If Clark Kent exists, then Clark Kent has superpowers.

Though this is far from obvious, let's suppose both that speakers would take (a) to be a priori and (b) to be a posteriori, and that both 'Superman' and 'Clark Kent' are functioning as ordinary proper names. This is a pair of sentences which is like the cases discussed in the text in that it involves an apparent epistemic difference generated by substitution of coreferential names, but differs from those in the text in two ways. The first is that neither of the sentences contains both names. The second, and more important, is that by Millian lights, both (a) and (b) are a posteriori — so what needs explaining is the appearance that (a) is a priori, not the appearance that (b) is a posteriori. It seems to me that the sort of pragmatic theory discussed above can offer a plausible explanation of why (a) seems a priori in at least some cases, since an utterance of (a) will pragmatically convey an a priori proposition in just those cases in which the descriptive information associated with 'Superman' is such that it is a priori that anything satisfying that description has superpowers.

However, this view is open to an objection closely related to the one developed in the main text above. Consider the following pair of sentences:

(a*) If Superman exists and Clark Kent exists, then Superman has superpowers.

(b*) If Superman exists and Clark Kent exists, then Clark Kent has superpowers.

Presumably if speakers take (a) to be a priori and (b) to be a posteriori, they will also, and for the same reason, take (a*) to be a priori and (b*) to be a posteriori. As in the case of (a) and (b), the Millian will take the propositions expressed by both (a*) and (b*) to be a posteriori; hence what needs explaining, if the pure pragmatic strategy is to succeed, is the fact that speakers take (a*) to be a priori. The proponent of the use of descriptively enriched propositions can explain this appearance of a prioricity since, if the descriptively enriched proposition pragmatically conveyed by an utterance of (a) is a priori, then the proposition pragmatically conveyed by (a*) will be as well. (The latter will be trivial consequences of the former,

4. Alternative versions of the pure pragmatic strategy

Suppose we grant that the argument above shows that the pure pragmatic strategy can't be combined with the view that the relevant propositions are descriptively enriched singular propositions. A proponent of the pure pragmatic strategy for explaining the fact that sentences like [2] seem a posteriori might simply reply that we should find some other class of propositions, other than descriptively enriched singular propositions, which are typically conveyed by sentences involving names.

Here there are two alternative views to consider: the view that utterances of the relevant sentences pragmatically convey merely descriptive propositions, rather than descriptively enriched singular propositions; and the view that they convey propositions of some other sort entirely.

Fairly clearly, the problems discussed above with the idea that the propositions pragmatically conveyed by utterances of [2] are descriptively enriched singular propositions could be avoided by taking the relevant proposition conveyed to be a merely descriptive proposition, which contains no direct reference to the object in question.[14] Suppose, as above, that '*F*' stands for the descriptive information associated with 'Hesperus' in the relevant conversational setting, and that '*G*' stands for the descriptive information associated with 'Phosphorus' in that setting. Then rather than claiming that [10] expresses a descriptively enriched singular proposition with the form of [13], we might simply claim that utterances of it pragmatically conveys a descriptive proposition with the form of

[14] [the x: x is F][the y: y is G] (if x exists and y exists, then $x = y$)

And the proposition expressed by [14] will be genuinely a posteriori, so long as it is not knowable a priori that exactly one thing is F iff that thing is also uniquely G. And in the standard case, this condition will be satisfied; so why not go for a pragmatic theory which focuses on descriptive propositions rather than descriptively enriched singular propositions?

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since their consequents are identical and the antecedent of (a*) has the antecedent of (a) as a logical consequence.) The problem is that the proposition pragmatically conveyed by (b*) will also be a priori. (The reasoning here is substantially the same as in the main text above.) Hence, while the proponent of descriptively enriched propositions can explain why (a) and (a*) are a priori, this explanation overgenerates, and makes the false prediction that speakers will find (b*) (though not (b)) a priori as well. There is thus a sense in which this view, even if it can explain why (a*) seems a priori, can't explain the apparent epistemic difference between (a*) and (b*).

[14] This seems to be the view of Thau (2002); see especially §§ 4.9-11.

The main worry here concerns the availability of proper descriptions. It is very plausible that in conversations there is standardly *some* descriptive information associated with names in use in those conversations, and that in many cases this descriptive information will be true of the referent of the name. But Millians often correctly emphasize one of the important lessons of *Naming and Necessity*: namely that, even in cases where there is descriptive information which a speaker correctly associates with the name, in most cases this descriptive information will not be uniquely identifying. And if it is implausible to claim that *speakers* in the standard case possess uniquely identifying descriptions associated with the names they use, it is yet more implausible to claim that the descriptive information associated with a name *in a conversation* — which will presumably be a small subset of the pieces of descriptive information associated with the name by the individual speakers, because it will be information which is both shared amongst the speakers and relevant to the conversation — will uniquely identify the referent of the name.

If the descriptive information associated with a name in a conversation is not uniquely identifying, then the relevant descriptive proposition — i.e., the relevant proposition with the form of [14] — will be false. But the intuition which we want explained is that [10] seems true and a posteriori to speakers, not that it seems false.[15]

There is also something odd about the idea that an utterance of a sentence like [10] could convey a proposition like that expressed by [14], especially when the relevant descriptions are not proper. Consider a case in which someone truly utters the sentence

[15] n is G.

in a conversational setting in which 'F' stands for the descriptive information associated with the name, and in which this descriptive information is true of the referent of the name, though not uniquely identifying. In such a case the descriptively enriched singular proposition expressed by

[16] [the x: Fx & $x = o$] Gx

[15] Here I'm assuming that our intuitions about truth-value and about epistemic status must have the same source. This seems plausible, since when assessing a sentence's epistemic profile we are judging how one can know what that sentence says to be true; it is difficult to do this without also making a judgement about what it would take for the sentence to be true, and hence about its truth-conditions. For related discussions of the sources of our intuitions about truth-conditions, epistemic profile, and modal profile, see Everett (2003) and Caplan (2007).

relative to an assignment of the referent of *n* to the free variable '*o*' will be true — but the corresponding descriptive proposition

[17] [the *x*: *Fx*] *Gx*

wil be false. But then in every such case a proposition pragmatically conveyed by an utterance of a simple predication like [15] will be false, *even though the referent of the name instantiates the property expressed by the predicate*. This would make it impossible to use names in most conversations without in so doing pragmatically conveying a false proposition; but it is highly implausible that this should be impossible in most conversations. This is a point in favor of taking utterances of simple predications like [15] to pragmatically convey descriptively enriched singular proposition like [16] rather than nerely descriptive propositions like [17]. And if this is what is pragmatically conveyed by utterances of sentences involving names like [15], why should sentences like [10] be any different?

So while it is true that merely descriptive propositions solve the problems, illustrated by the a prioricity of [12], with descriptively enriched singular propositions, shifting from descriptively enriched singular propositions to merely descriptive propositions would introduce more problems than it would solve. Are there any other options for the proponent of the pure pragmatic strategy?

Any candidates for propositions pragmatically conveyed by utterances of sentences involving names would, to help the cause of the pure pragmatic strategy, have to meet the following two constraints:

- The explanations of why utterances of sentences involving names pragmatically convey these propositions would (for the reasons discussed earlier) have to be independent of features of specific conversations. So one can't, for example, appeal to the fact that [10] might, on occasion, be used to conversationally implicate an a posteriori proposition. This is no doubt true, but does not explain the fact that [10] seems a posteriori to speakers who are not in the relevant conversational setting.

- The pragmatic explanation of the seeming a posterioricity of certain sentences should not overgenerate: we need an explanation not just of the fact that [2] and [10] seem a posteriori to speakers, but also of the fact that [1] and [11] do not. So, for instance, one might be tempted to explain the seeming a posterioricity of [2] by saying that an utterance of a sentence involving a name typically pragmatically conveys the proposition that the sentence

uttered is true, and noting that the proposition that "If Hesperus exists, then Hesperus is Phosphorus" is true is a posteriori. This is of course correct, but does not explain why [1] does *not* seem a posteriori to speakers, given that the proposition that "If Hesperus exists, then Hesperus is Hesperus" is true is equally a posteriori.

It seems to me unlikely that any sort of pragmatic explanation of the seeming a posterioricity of [2], [10], and the like will satisfy both of these constraints; so it seems to me that the argument of this section provides strong reason for thinking that the pure pragmatic strategy should be abandoned.

5 Impure pragmatic strategies

This does not mean that the distinction between propositions semantically expressed and propositions pragmatically conveyed by an utterance of a sentence can do no work in providing an explanation of the seeming a posterioricity of sentences like [2] and [10].

The preceding argument does show that the idea that speakers confuse the properties of what is semantically expressed with the properties of what is pragmatically conveyed does not have quite the central role that one might have thought (since, as just argued, the properties speakers attribute to what is semantically expressed often are not instantiated by what is typically pragmatically conveyed). Whatever mistake speakers are making when they take sentences like [2] to be a posteriori, it isn't this one.[16] However, it remains open to the Millian to argue that the mistake speakers are making when they take sentences like [2] to be a posteriori stems from their mistaken view that [1] and [2] differ in meaning, and that this mistaken view is traceable, at least in part, to the fact that these sentences often would be used to pragmatically convey different propositions.[17]

While this remains a live option, it significantly shifts the explanandum of pragmatic theories. The aim should not be to find pragmatically conveyed propositions that have the properties that speakers mistakenly take (the propositions semantically expressed by) sentences to have, but rather to say more about how a confusion between what is semantically expressed and what is pragmatically conveyed might explain the particular judgements that speakers are inclined to make.

[16] Others, most prominently David Braun, have also drawn this conclusion. See Braun (1998), Braun and Saul (2002), Braun (2003), and Braun and Sider (2006).

[17] This view is endorsed by, for example, Soames (2006b)

The most difficult aspect of this task is, I think, not just to explain why speakers take sentences like [11] and [10] to differ in meaning — after all, they really would convey distinct descriptively enriched singular propositions — but to explain how a confusion between semantics and pragmatics could lead speakers to classify [10], but not [11], as a posteriori, even when the semantic content of each, and the propositions each would typically pragmatically convey, are equally a priori.[18]

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