

## **Semantics For Propositional Attitude Ascriptions**

Nathan Salmon (1986a)(1986b)(1989) and Scott Soames (1987)(1988) defend a neo-Russellian account of the semantics of propositional attitude ascriptions in which senses and modes of presentation play no part. They also defend an under-developed pragmatic theory in which senses and modes of presentation do play an important role.

Graeme Forbes (1987a)(1987b) defends a neo-Fregean account of the semantics of propositional attitude ascriptions in which senses and modes of presentation play a crucial part. He contends that the view which is defended by Salmon and Soames is not really an alternative to the view which he defends. (Hence, I suppose, his view is not an alternative to their view, either.)

There are two issues which I wish to take up. First, in sections I-V, I explore the question whether there are really any important differences between the view defended by Salmon and Soames, and the view defended by Forbes. The conclusion which I defend is that there is very little which distinguishes between them.

Second, in sections VI-X, I take up the somewhat neglected question of how theories of propositional attitude ascriptions in the Frege-Russell tradition ought to construe the notions of sense and mode of presentation.

## I

In his review of Salmon (1986a), Forbes (1987b) claims that it is possible to see the theory which Salmon advances in that book as a notational variant of the neo-Fregean theory of propositional attitudes and propositional attitude ascriptions which Forbes (1987a) defends. Against this, Jose Branquinho (1990) claims that: “[While] there must be *some sense* in which Salmon’s account could be seen as invoking the same kind of conceptual apparatus as the neo-Fregean theory ... Forbes “notational variation” claim cannot be accepted.” (p.22) I think that Branquinho is correct to argue that the *actual* claim which Forbes defends in his review is defective. However, I also think that the intuition which motivated Forbes’ claim is perfectly sound. Sections II-V of my paper are a defence of this position.

## II

If we allow ourselves a little terminological freedom, we may represent one central claim which Salmon (1986a) defends as follows:

(S) A believes that p is true iff  $(\exists x)(A \text{ grasps that Russellian proposition that } p \text{ by means of the Salmonian guise } x \text{ and BEL}(A, \text{ the Russellian proposition that } p, \text{ the Salmonian guise } x))$

where BEL is a ternary relation which holds between possessors of propositional attitudes, Russellian propositions, and ways of grasping Russellian propositions (= Salmonian guises).

Similarly, we may represent the Fregean postulate for which Forbes (1987b) claims equivalence as follows:

(F)  $p$  is believed by  $A$  to obtain is true iff  $(\exists x)(A$  thinks of the state of affairs that  $p$  by means of the Fregean proposition  $x$  and  $B$  ( $A$ , the Fregean proposition  $x$ ) and the state of affairs that  $p$  is the content of the Fregean proposition  $x$ )

where  $B$  is a binary relation which holds between possessors of propositional attitudes and Fregean propositions.

If we: (i) identify Russellian propositions with states of affairs; (ii) identify Fregean propositions with Salmonian guises; (iii) identify the relation of grasping-a-Russellian-proposition-by-means-of-a-Salmonian-guise with the relation of thinking-of-a-state-of-affairs-by-means-of-a-Fregean-proposition; and (iv) identify the relation  $BEL(A,p,x)$  with the product of the relations  $B(A, x)$  and  $C(p, x)$  -- where  $C(p, x)$  iff the state of affairs that  $p$  is the content of the Fregean proposition  $x$  -- then the right hand sides of (S) and (F) are also identical. In other words, given these apparently unproblematic identifications, Salmon's theory attributes the same truth-value to a sentence  $A$  believes that  $p$  which Forbes theory attributes to the sentence  $p$  is believed by  $A$  to obtain (and *vice versa*).

However, as Branquinho in effect points out, this does not show that the two theories are notational variants. The crucial difficulty is that, even after the proposed series of identifications, the left-hand sides of (S) and (F) differ. In a familiar -- though perhaps objectionable -- vocabulary, one might say this: Salmon's account entails the same distribution of truth-values to *de dicto* propositional attitude ascriptions which Forbes' account gives to the corresponding *de re* propositional attitude ascriptions.

Less problematically, we can certainly say that the theories of Salmon and Forbes disagree about the truth-values which are assigned to sentences of the form  $A$  believes that  $p$ . Hence, there is no way that the theories can be construed to be notational variants *when the only thing which is taken into account is the distribution of truth-values to sentences which is made by these theories*.

### III

Despite the fact that Forbes' actual argument is incorrect, the intuition which motivates his argument is sound. As his translation scheme suggests, the two theories invoke exactly the same theoretical entities. Hence, the differences between the two theories must be due to the different deployment of these entities in the theories. Thus, a charge of (something like) notational variation could still be sustained if it could be shown that these entities actually play the same sort of role in each theory, but in different locations in those theories.

The crucial difference between the two accounts of sentences of the form  $A$  believes that  $p$  lies in the fact that Salmon's guises play a role in pragmatics which Forbes' Fregean propositions play in semantics. On Forbes' theory, Fregean propositions play a role in the recursive assignment of truth-values to sentences. On Salmon's theory, Salmonian guises do not play this role. However, this is not to say that Salmon's guises do not play a structurally similar role in the pragmatic component of Salmon's theory. It seems to me that they must.

In order to account for the fact that his theory seemingly yields an assignment of truth-values to sentences which is wildly at variance with pre-theoretical intuition,

Salmon claims that those pre-theroetical intuitions are actually intuitions about the correct assertability of propositional attitude ascriptions. In particular, he claims that propositional attitude ascriptions carry Gricean implicatures about the Salmonian guises under which Russellian propositions are entertained.

Salmon tells us almost nothing else about how these Gricean implicatures get attached to sentences. However, it is as obvious that there must be a compositional theory involving Salmonian guises which issues in an assignment of assertability-values to sentence-context pairs as it is that there must be a compositional meaning theory for languages which issues in an assignment of truth-values to sentence-context pairs. (How else could we account for the fact that speakers can recognise the assertability-values of novel sentences? How else could speakers have the ability to produce and understand a potentially infinite range of sentences with attached assertability-values?) Moreover, it is equally clear that this theory will have exactly the same structure as the neo-Fregean theory of Fregean propositions. That is, it is clear that what Salmon's theory does is to shift some of the structure which is found in the Fregean theory from semantics to pragmatics.

(This conclusion is likely to appear unpalatable to direct reference theorists. After all, there are often supposed to be insuperable difficulties which face the construction of a Fregean semantic theory. However, it seems to me that if this were right, it could not be a welcome conclusion for direct reference theorists, since it would show that they are not be able to construct the pragmatic theories which they need in order to account for the way we actually speak.)

Neo-Russellianism and neo-Fregeanism are structural variants: the same recursive structures involving the same underlying entities appear in each theory. However -- at least *prima facie* -- the two theories are not notational variants; for they disagree on

the assignment of truth-values to sentences, and that certainly seems to be a substantive difference between them.

#### IV

The considerations advanced in II may seem to constitute an argument for neo-Fregeanism. After all, given that the only difference between the two theories lies in the location of the recursive structure involving Fregean propositions, surely we should opt for the theory which gives a distribution of truth-values (and assertability-values) which is in accordance with pre-theoretical intuition.

Well, I'm not so sure. The question is whether we really have any reason to hold that the relevant pre-theoretical intuitions are a reflection of the truth-values which are possessed by propositional attitude ascriptions, or whether they are merely a reflection of the assertability of those sentences. The two theories seem to be on a par in every respect -- i.e. there is no simplicity argument which favours one rather than the other -- so we need to decide whether the relevant intuitions are themselves direct evidence which favours one of the alternatives, or whether they would only constitute such evidence if there were some further argument which gave us good reason for thinking that those intuitions do support the view which they seem to support. (I don't see that it is any use saying: look, *Lois Lane really doesn't know that Clark Kent is Superman*. For each of the theories predicts that this is what we shall say.)

There are clear cases in which phenomena should be assigned to pragmatics.

(Consider, for example, the phenomena which Grice discussed in his original papers on implicature.) There are also clear cases in which phenomena should be assigned to semantics. (Simple subject-predicate sentences are surely of this sort, since in their

case there is no room for the sort of divergence between truth and assertability which direct reference theorists claim to find in the case of propositional attitude ascriptions.) However, in propositional attitude ascriptions, the fact that there are two distinct elements (object *and* sense) which must be brought into play means that we need some argument to tell us where is the appropriate location of these factors in our theory.

Perhaps there is an argument which shows that the neo-Russellians are definitely wrong. However, even if there were such an argument it would prove little, since there is so little difference between the two views. (Note, in particular, that the views agree on all the predictions which they make about which propositional attitude ascriptions speakers will and will not endorse.) Neo-Fregeans and neo-Russellians would do better to worry about their common problems -- e.g. empty singular terms, the nature of modes of presentation -- than to worry about their alleged differences.

## V

Forbes is well aware of the fact that his theory and Salmon's theory do not agree on the assignment of truth-values to sentences of the form *A* believes that *p*. Why then did he give the faulty argument which I discussed in section I above? The answer to this question is, I think, contained in the opening paragraph of his review. There, he says that propositions are "things which are the meanings of sentences and the objects of propositional attitudes" and then adds that: "The important questions are (a) according to the best philosophy of language, are the meanings of sentences Russellian propositions or Fregean ones? and (b) does the most plausible philosophy of mind take the objects of the attitudes to be Russellian propositions or Fregean ones?"

If there is to be just one entity which is both *the* object of propositional attitudes and *the* meaning of the content clauses of propositional attitude ascriptions, then the fact that there is a sense in which neo-Fregeans and neo-Russellians take the same objects to be the objects of propositional attitudes is good evidence that those theories are notational variants. (Of course, neo-Russellians will *say* that the objects of propositional attitudes are Russellian propositions. But when it comes to the explanation of behaviour, they agree that one has to appeal to Fregean propositions -- i.e. to modes of presentation of Russellian propositions. So, in the most important sense, they agree that the objects of propositional attitudes are Fregean propositions.)

But, of course, in the sense in which neo-Fregeans and neo-Russellians take the same objects to be the objects of propositional attitudes, it is simply incorrect to attribute to the neo-Russellian the view that there is just one entity which is both *the* object of propositional attitudes and *the* meaning of the content clauses of propositional attitude ascriptions. (In general, I think that one should be very careful in talking about "*the* meaning" of sentences or types of sentences. There are various different things which make good candidates for the meanings of sentences, depending upon the theoretical purposes at hand.) The claim that neo-Russellianism and neo-Fregeanism are *notational* variants relies on Forbes' neo-Fregean assumption that the objects of propositional attitudes which are invoked in the explanation of behaviour are also the semantic correlates of the relevant propositional attitude ascriptions. But this assumption is not shared by direct reference theorists (nor by other neo-Fregean theorists).



Suppose that we are agreed that we want a propositional analysis of propositional attitude ascriptions of the sort which is offered by neo-Russellians and neo-Fregeans. (This is a big assumption; however, I don't want to go into *that* here.) Then there are some very important questions about modes of presentation which need to be addressed.

For definiteness, I shall adopt a neo-Fregean notation (though, as I explained above, I do not suppose that anything much hangs on this). Since the formal aspects of this semantic theory are well-known, I shall only provide a very quick outline:

The first thing which we do is to describe the propositions which are assigned to sentences relative to a context and an assignment of individuals to variables:

- (i) the proposition expressed by an atomic formula  $Gb_1\dots b_n$  relative to a context  $c$  and an assignment  $f$  is  $\langle G^*, \langle \underline{b}_1, \dots, \underline{b}_n \rangle \rangle$ , where  $G^*$  is the property expressed by  $G$  in the context  $c$ , and  $\underline{b}_i$  is the individual which is the semantic content of  $b_i$  relative to  $c$  and  $f$ .
- (ii) the proposition expressed by  $b$  believes that  $A$ , relative to  $c$  and  $f$ , is  $\langle \langle \underline{b}, \text{Prop } A, \text{Mode } A \rangle, B \rangle$ , where  $B$  is the belief relation,  $\underline{b}$  is the content of  $b$  relative to  $c$  and  $f$ ,  $\text{Prop } A$  is the proposition expressed by  $A$  relative to  $c$  and  $f$ , and  $\text{Mode } A$  is a mode of presentation of the proposition which is expressed by  $A$  relative to  $c$  and  $f$ .

Next, we give a standard account of the intensions of expressions relative to contexts, and use this to provide a recursive characterisation of truth relative to circumstances of evaluation:

- (i) a proposition  $\langle G^*, \langle \underline{b}_1, \dots, \underline{b}_n \rangle \rangle$  is true relative to a circumstance of evaluation  $E$  iff the extension of  $G^*$  in  $E$  contains  $\langle \underline{b}_1, \dots, \underline{b}_n \rangle$ .
- (ii) a proposition  $\langle \langle \underline{b}, \text{Prop A, Mode A} \rangle, B \rangle$  is true relative to a circumstance of evaluation  $E$  iff  $\langle \underline{b}, \text{Prop A, Mode A} \rangle$  is a member of the extension of  $B$  in  $E$  -- i.e. iff  $b$  believes Prop A under Mode A in  $E$ .

Of course, we need to say a lot more about the nature of modes of presentation. It seems reasonable to suppose that a mode of presentation of a proposition will be a tuple of the modes of presentation of the constituents of that proposition. Thus, we shall have:

- (i) a mode of presentation of a proposition  $\langle G^*, \langle \underline{b}_1, \dots, \underline{b}_n \rangle \rangle$  is a tuple  $\langle [G^*], [\underline{b}_1], \dots, [\underline{b}_n] \rangle$ , where  $[G^*]$  is a mode of presentation of the property  $G^*$  and  $[\underline{b}_i]$  is a mode of presentation of the individual  $\underline{b}_i$ .
- (ii) a mode of presentation of a proposition  $\langle \langle \underline{b}, \text{Prop A, Mode A} \rangle, B \rangle$  is a tuple  $\langle [\underline{b}], [\text{Prop A}], [\text{Mode A}], [B] \rangle$ , where  $[\underline{b}]$  is a mode of presentation of the individual  $\underline{b}$ ,  $[\text{Prop A}]$  is a mode of presentation of the proposition Prop A,  $[\text{Mode A}]$  is a mode of presentation of the mode of presentation Mode A, and  $[B]$  is a mode of presentation of the belief relation B.

So, on this account, the semantic content of the sentence *c believes that b believes that Fa* with respect to a context of utterance  $c$  and an assignment function  $f$  is  $\langle \langle \underline{c}, \langle \langle \underline{b}, \langle F^*, \underline{a} \rangle, \langle [F^*]_1, [\underline{a}]_1 \rangle \rangle, B \rangle, \langle [\underline{b}]_2, [F^*]_2, [\underline{a}]_2, [[F^*]_1]_2, [[\underline{a}]_1]_2, [B]_2 \rangle \rangle, B \rangle$ . (The numerical subscripts indicate the degree of embedding within attitude

constitutions. Whether  $[a]_1$  is identical with  $[a]_2$  -- and whether  $[F^*]_1$  is identical with  $[F^*]_2$  -- is a question which I shall not address here.)

It is a consequence of this account that the contribution which a term makes to the semantic content of sentences in which it occurs is dependent upon the other expressions which occur in that sentence -- and, in particular, upon whether or not it falls within the scope of any propositional attitude verbs. However, this is not to say that the semantics is not compositional -- for it is still true that the semantic content of a sentence is a structured entity which is constructed from the semantic contents of the expressions which together make up the sentence. (Alternatively, we could think of the semantic contents of expressions on particular occasions of utterance as infinite matrices in which there appear appropriate modes of presentation for each degree of embedding in propositional attitude ascriptions. However, on any occasion, only a finite "initial segment" of the matrix will be required in order to determine the semantic content of a sentence in which these expressions occur. Of course, if we take this option, we will not want to suppose that a competent speaker of the language must somehow get these infinite matrices "into her head"; rather, the idea will be that a competent speaker of the language is one who is able to grasp the semantic contents of sentences in a wide variety of contexts of utterance.)

## VII

So far, we have only the barest bones of a theory. The first meat on these bones comes when we come to look at what Kaplan would call the *characters* of terms -- i.e. when we come to look at those functions from contexts of utterance to semantic contents which characterise another level of the meanings of predicates and singular

terms. For, while I would allow that a name like “George Bush” picks out the very same object in a large range of contexts, I would also maintain that the mode of presentation which is associated with this name will vary across those same contexts.

Suppose that a person P utters the sentence *Fred believes that George Bush is friendly* in a context c. Suppose further that, in c, “Fred” refers to Fred, and “George Bush” refers to the current U.S. president, George Bush. Then P’s utterance will have the content  $\langle \langle \underline{\text{Fred}}, \langle \text{is-friendly}^*, \underline{\text{George Bush}} \rangle, \langle [\text{is-friendly}^*], [\underline{\text{George Bush}}] \rangle \rangle, B \rangle$ , where  $[\text{is-friendly}^*]$  and  $[\underline{\text{George Bush}}]$  are modes of presentation which are supplied from, or determined by, P’s context of utterance.

This is still fairly thin, for nothing has yet been said about the nature of modes of presentation, nor about the mechanism by which they get supplied from the context of utterance of sentences which contain propositional attitude verbs. (One important point to note is that I have been using the term “mode of presentation” as a name for whatever it is that it the additional component of the semantic content of propositional attitude ascriptions. There things may turn out to have nothing to do with those other entities which have been called “modes of presentation” by other philosophers.)

## VIII

On the question of the nature of these modes of presentation, I think that it is natural to investigate the thought that modes of presentation must be some sorts of constraints on the mental representations which people have of those individuals, properties and functions which are parts of the semantic contents of the expressions of the language in question. Thus, in my example, it seems to me to be natural to suppose that  $[\underline{\text{George Bush}}]$  is a condition on the nature of mental representations of

George Bush. Moreover, it seems to me to be plausible to suggest that the proposition expressed by the sentence which P utters will be true just in case Fred has mental representations of George Bush and the property of being friendly which satisfy the constraints imposed by [George Bush] and [is-friendly\*], and in virtue of which representations it is correct to say that Fred attributes the property of being friendly to George Bush.

This is still a rather schematic suggestion, since the notion of a “condition on the nature of mental representations” obviously requires further clarification. What sorts of conditions or constraints on the nature of mental representations are candidates to be modes of presentation?

One obvious thought is that a mode of presentation can be a restriction on the sort of information which is encoded in a mental representation. Consider, for example, a case in which we are talking about the astronomical exploits of the ancient Babylonians. When our uses of the words “Hesperus” and “Phosphorus” have single embeddings in propositional attitude constructions, it seems reasonable to suppose that the associated modes of presentation might be “object represented only as visible in the morning sky” and “object represented only as visible in the evening sky”. Consequently, my utterance of the sentence *The ancient Babylonian astronomers believed that Hesperus is visible in the morning sky* has (subject to a certain amount of harmless simplification) the semantic content  $\langle \langle \text{the ancient Babylonian astronomers}, \langle \text{Venus}, \text{is-visible-in-the-morning-sky}^* \rangle, \langle [\text{“object represented only as visible in the morning sky”}], [\text{is-visible-in-the-morning-sky}^*] \rangle \rangle, B \rangle$ . Moreover, this utterance is true: for the ancient Babylonian astronomers did stand in the belief relation to the proposition  $\langle \text{Venus}, \text{is-visible-in-the-morning-sky}^* \rangle$  via a mental representation of Venus in which it was only represented as being visible in the morning sky.

Similarly, my utterance of the sentence *The ancient Babylonian astronomers believed that Hesperus is Phosphorus* has (subject to a certain amount of harmless simplification) the semantic content  $\langle \langle \text{the ancient Babylonian astronomers, } \langle \text{Venus, Venus, is-identical-to}^* \rangle, \langle \text{“object represented only as visible in the morning sky”}, [\text{“object represented only as visible in the evening sky”}], [\text{is-identical-to}^*] \rangle \rangle, B \rangle$ . Moreover, this utterance is false: for the ancient Babylonian astronomers did not stand in the belief relation to the propositions via two mental representations of Venus, in one of which it was only represented as being visible in the morning sky, and in the other of which it was only represented as being visible in the evening sky.

One obvious question which now arises concerns my use of the locution “is represented as”. When I say that someone possesses a mental representation of an object  $x$  in which that object is represented as having a property  $F$ , do I mean that the person in question must have an explicit representation of the possession of the property  $F$  as part of their representation of the property  $F$ ? Not necessarily; for I want to allow that someone may possess a mental representation of an object  $x$  in which that object is represented as having the property  $F$  provided that it is implicit in that person’s representation that  $x$  has the property  $F$ . (Cummins (1987) discusses a number of different types of what he calls “implicit content”. Some of his suggestions seem to be relevant (as does the discussion of “tacit belief” in Dennett (1987) and Richard (1990)); however, I do not propose to investigate here the question of how we tell that it is implicit in a person’s representation of  $x$  that  $x$  has the property  $F$ .)

Another obvious question is whether the above is an exhaustive account of the nature of modes of presentation. Once again, the answer is negative: I don’t want to hold that the only possible constraints on the nature of mental representations which could

be relevant to the semantic properties of propositional attitude ascriptions are constraints on what the things which are represented by those representations are represented as -- for sometimes constraints on the nature of mental representations can (e.g.) concern the causal history of those representations. (There is an illustration of this sort of case below.) However, most of the interesting puzzle cases in the literature on propositional attitude ascriptions do involve cases in which the relevant modes of presentation are constraints on the nature of mental representations which take the form of constraints on what the things which are represented by those representations are represented as.

There may be further possibilities. One of the reviewers of this paper suggested that there may well be “endogenous constraints on the mental structures themselves”. In a sense, this is certainly true: human mental representation is no doubt subject to endogenous constraints. However, I doubt that our ordinary practice of making and using propositional attitude ascriptions is sensitive to such constraints. The reason why we need modes of presentation is that singular propositions do not always suffice to pick out the states of mind which are causally operative in the production of behaviour. But could it be the case that the salient difference between two mental representations of a given singular proposition -- i.e. the difference which we use to pick out the fact that one rather than the other is causally involved in a given piece of behaviour -- is that only one of them is subject to a certain sort of endogenous constraint?

Again, I should emphasise that modes of presentation need to be publicly identifiable and linguistically usable differences between mental representations which have different causal profiles, but which represent the same objects (or properties).

Consequently, accounts of “modes of presentation” such as that offered by McGinn (1989) -- at pp.190-192 --do not address my problem. It seems very reasonable to say

that mental representations must always be partial and aspect-specific. Moreover, it also seems reasonable to say that this is an explanation of how it is that there can be mental representations which have different causal profiles, but which represent the same objects (or properties). But “modes of presentation” in my sense can only be *kinds* of mental representations -- since the mental representations themselves will almost certainly be unique to each person -- and it is precisely the basis of the system of classification into kinds which remains to be explained. (Of course, I don’t mean to suggest that McGinn is confused about this: he makes it quite clear that he is talking about mental content, not semantic content.)

## IX

What of the question of the mechanism by means of which modes of presentation get supplied from the context of utterance of sentences which contain propositional attitude verbs? Here again, what I have to suggest is rather programmatic. The main intuition which I have is that there are a variety of ways in which it could happen that a given mode of presentation of an object could become particularly salient in a context of utterance.

One possibility is that the previous usage of a word in a conversation can establish a connection to a condition (or perhaps to a set of related conditions) on mental representations of objects and properties. Thus, for example, consider the case in which Joe turns up to his first day of work, and is introduced to his boss “Robert” (a neat, clean, sober-looking gent who sports a three piece suit and tie). After work, Joe goes to the pub, where he is regaled with stories about a hard-living lunatic whom everyone refers to as “Bob”. Before long, Joe tires of these stories, and so he says: “Enough stories about Bob. Tell me about my boss.” There is a somewhat pained



silence, and then one amongst the assembled crowd states the obvious fact: *Joe hasn't realised that Bob is the boss he met this morning.*

In this case, it seems to me to be reasonable to suggest that the prior use of the word “Bob” in the conversation serves to establish a connection between it and a mode of presentation of the form “object which possesses most of the properties ascribed to “Bob” during the preceding conversation”. (Note, by the way, that the possibility of constructing this sort of case provides part of the motivation for supposing that modes of presentation are context-dependent. After all, it seems clear that we could further stipulate that, in this example, it is simply an accident that the name “Bob” is the only one used in the conversation in the pub -- for, in fact, all of the (other) participants in the conversation use the two names more or less interchangeably, at least outside of propositional attitude constructions. Indeed, *exactly* the same thing happened to Joe's predecessor in the job, except that the two names were everywhere interchanged, and beginning from the moment when that predecessor was introduced to his boss “Bob”!)

This suggestion may sound familiar; a reviewer of my paper suggested that it is defended by Evans (1982) and Bach (1987). I am not sure about this, since it is not clear to me that Evans' account of naming practices tells us anything about how names function in propositional attitude ascriptions. (What Evans and Bach do describe is ways in which it can come about that the pattern of use of a name *outside* of propositional attitude ascriptions can depend on “modes of presentation of objects”. But it is important to see that this is a different subject from the one which I discuss in my paper.) I suspect that my suggestion actually owes more to Lewis (1979); however, I doubt that it is important to pursue this suspicion.

Another possibility is that mutual knowledge of the interests and purposes of certain participants in a conversation can serve to establish connections between certain expressions and modes of presentation. Consider, for example, Scott Soames (1987)'s well-known example about Mary and her neighbour.

Soames asks us to suppose that Mary's neighbour, Samuel Clemens, is in the habit of soliciting her opinion of his manuscripts before he sends them to his publisher.

Moreover, he tells us that Mary thinks these manuscripts are wonderful, and hence thinks that Samuel Clemens (whom she knows only under that name) is a great writer. But, asks Soames, does it follow that she thinks that Mark Twain is a great writer?

Well, first, Soames invites us to consider the following situation. Mary, who is a student, has taken a written examination; and her teacher explains that even though Mary did very well on the exam, the reason why she didn't get a perfect score is that she didn't know that Mark Twain is a great writer. In this context, Soames suggests that the teacher's explanation is perfectly acceptable.

However, Soames also invites us to consider a different conversation, whose purpose it to determine Mary's opinion of various authors. The conversational participants, who use the name "Mark Twain" to refer to Samuel Clemens, want to know Mary's opinion of him. Soames suggests that one who knows Mary's opinion could surely report that, yes indeed, Mary *knows* that Mark Twain is a great writer.

I suggest that, in the first case, the teacher's utterance of *Mary didn't know that Mark Twain is a great writer* has (subject to a certain amount of harmless simplification)

the semantic content      < Not < < Mary, < Mark Twain, is-a-great-writer\* >, < ["object represented as bearing the name "Mark Twain"], [is-a-great-writer] > > K >

>. And I suggest that, in the second case, the utterance of Mary knows that Mark Twain is a great writer has (subject to a certain amount of harmless simplification) the semantic content < < Mary, < Mark Twain, is-a-great-writer\* >, < [“object represented as being the author of such and such works], [is-a-great-writer] > > K >.

In these cases, it seems plausible to me to suggest that the modes of presentation are determined by mutual knowledge of the interests and purposes of the participants in the conversations. In the first case, the main interest of the participants in the conversation is in the mark which Mary scored on a certain test. Consequently, their interest in Mary’s opinion of Mark Twain is an interest in her opinion of him under the representations of him which are relevant to the test which she has just taken -- and so they are interested in the properties which she attributes to him under representation of him in which she represents him as being called “Mark Twain”. Similarly, in the second case, the main interest of the participants in the conversation is in the literary merits of the authors of certain books. Consequently, their interest in Mary’s opinion of Mark Twain is an interest in her opinion of him as the author of certain books -- and so they are interested in the properties which she attributes to him under representations of him in which she represents him as the author of certain books.

Finally, I don’t want to discount the possibility that there may be a “default setting” for the contribution of modes of presentation to propositions, viz: that, in the absence of defeating contextual conditions, the mode of presentation which is associated with any term is simply something like “the dominant mental representation of [the object or property in question]” (where “dominance” here is cashed out in terms of the amount of information which is contained in mental representations). In general, we are pretty good at avoiding the sorts of situations in which the ancient Babylonian astronomers were placed with respect to the planet Venus; for, in general, we tend to

have one clearly dominant conception of an object or property -- and, moreover, in general, it tends to be this dominant conception which is causally involved in our dealings with those objects and properties. Consequently, it seems to me to be reasonable to suggest that we only need to postulate a mechanism whereby the default presumption that someone's dominant conceptions of objects and properties are involved in the production of their states and behaviour can be overridden. (Note that this last suggestion seems to give a more plausible way of handling the case in which Mary is said to know that Mark Twain is a great author. After all, it is not clear that there is anything in the context of utterance which imposes constraints upon how Mary thinks of Mark Twain. We would need to be told a lot more about the context of utterance before a final analysis of the case could be made.)

## X

One criticism which might be levelled at the theory which I have sketched is that the criticisms which have been levelled at neo-Fregean theories in the last twenty years show that it is untenable. It seems to me that this criticism relies upon an important misunderstanding of what it is that recent "anti-Fregean" arguments have really established.

A useful way to approach this issue is to consider a distinction which has been drawn between a variety of different components of the (allegedly) Fregean notion of sense. (Here, I follow Burge (1977) and Salmon (1981)(1986a).) Among the senses (or components) of "sense" which can be distinguished, there are at least the following:

- (i) Sense<sub>1</sub>: a purely conceptual or totally descriptive representation which all fully competent speakers associate with a singular term
- (ii) Sense<sub>2</sub>: a set or cluster of properties (represented in a dossier or mental file) which speakers (more or less) idiosyncratically associate with a singular term
- (iii) Sense<sub>3</sub>: the mechanism by which the reference of a singular term is semantically determined
- (iv) Sense<sub>4</sub>: the semantic value of hyperintensional occurrences of a singular term (i.e. of occurrences of a singular term which fall within the scope of verbs of propositional attitude)

Moreover, it is useful to note that Frege's own view -- or, at least, the view which is most commonly attributed to Frege, and which is taken to be the standard target of theorists such as Soames and Salmon -- relies on a notion of sense which is derived from the identification of sense<sub>1</sub>, sense<sub>3</sub>, and sense<sub>4</sub> (or perhaps sense<sub>2</sub>, sense<sub>3</sub>, and sense<sub>4</sub>).

Now, Frege's own view, as thus characterised, has been heavily criticised -- especially, and most famously, by Saul Kripke (1980). However, it is important to note that the most that this criticism seeks to establish is that it is not true that there is one notion which can plausibly be identified with sense<sub>1</sub>+ sense<sub>3</sub>+ sense<sub>4</sub>. Moreover, it is also worth noting that the main argument of Naming And Necessity aims to show that it is a mistake to identify sense<sub>1</sub> with sense<sub>3</sub>-- i.e. it says nothing at all about sense<sub>4</sub>.

More recently, there have been theorists -- e.g. Salmon, Soames -- who have contended that the only thing that sense<sub>4</sub> can be is the referent of the singular term in question. However, as far as I can see, there is very little positive argument which has been given for this view; rather, the main defence of this view has been that it is hard to see what else sense<sub>4</sub> could be. (I have criticised the positive arguments elsewhere; consequently, I do not propose to repeat these criticisms here.) But one important result of the above discussion is that there is good reason to suppose that sense<sub>4</sub>'s are modes of presentation in the sense there described. Hence, if -- as I have asserted -- there are no good positive arguments in favour of the view that the only thing that sense<sub>4</sub> can be is the semantic content which expressions have when they occur outside of hyperintensional constructions, then there are no good general objections to the position which I have defended to be found in the existing literature. (Of course, as I argued earlier, there is the further point that Salmon and Soames need an exact analogue of sense<sub>4</sub> in their pragmatics; consequently, they can hardly claim that they have shown that neo-Fregean theories are untenable.)

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