



Reply to Egré

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Reply to Egré

Paul Egré mentions three main strategies for dealing with substitutivity problems in epistemic contexts :

1. The *fine-grained strategy* makes the semantic values of linguistic expressions so fine-grained that the (apparent) failures of substitutivity are thereby explained. According to the fine-grained strategy, the names 'Cicero' and 'Tully' refer to the same person, but they do not have the same (fine-grained) semantic value ; that is why one cannot substitute 'Cicero' for 'Tully' in belief sentences. Similarly, 'eye-doctor' and 'ophthalmologist' have different (fine-grained) semantic values even though they correspond to the same function from situations to sets of individuals. This view stands in sharp contrast to *the theory of direct reference*, according to which the semantic value of a name is its reference, and the semantic value of a general term like 'ophthalmologist' is a property coarse-grainedly construed as a function from situations to sets of objects.
2. The *deviant strategy* accounts for failures of substitutivity in epistemic contexts by treating such contexts as semantically special. In epistemic contexts (e.g. belief sentences) the semantic value of an expression is not its ordinary semantic value, but a deviant semantic value. This explains why one expression cannot substitute for another one in belief sentences even if they have the same semantic value (e.g. the same reference) in normal contexts. Within this framework, one can stick to the theory of direct reference for normal contexts, and hold that the semantic value of an expression shifts from coarse-grained to fine-grained in belief sentences.
3. The *pragmatic strategy* is like the fine-grained strategy in that it takes the semantic value of an expression to be the same in epistemic contexts and elsewhere. But the truth-conditions of utterances are said to be sensitive to pragmatic factors which, in epistemic contexts, induce failures of substitutivity. The choice of a particular name ('Cicero' or 'Tully') is such a pragmatic factor which may affect truth-conditions, in epistemic contexts. That is so even though the two names have the same semantic value and retain that semantic value in belief sentences.

Paul Egré notes that the fine-grained strategy, no less than the pragmatic strategy, enables one to maintain 'semantic innocence', i.e. the view that the semantic value of an expression does not shift under embedding. I agree. Only the deviant strategy rejects semantic innocence. But the fine-grained strategy rejects the theory of direct reference, which can be maintained (even for epistemic contexts) if one opts for the pragmatic strategy.

Which reason do we have for accepting direct reference ? I think we have strong intuitions in support of that theory. A simple utterance like 'Cicero is bald' has the property of *truth-conditional singularity*: there is an object x (namely Cicero) such that the utterance is true if and only if x is bald. In general, no one can understand a sentence of the form 'NN is F' (where 'NN' is a proper name or a referential expression) without knowing that, for any utterance of that sentence, there is (or has to be) an x such that the utterance is true iff x is F. This is accounted for by saying

that names are directly referential, and that their semantic value is their bearer. From that thesis, the facts of rigidity follow.

We can weaken the fine-grained view and render it consistent with direct reference by claiming

- (i) that the semantic value of a name, though more fine-grained than the reference, nevertheless involves the reference, *plus something else* (a mode of presentation) ;
- (ii) that the modes of presentation which are an aspect of the expression's semantic value are truth-conditionally irrelevant.

This is the neo-Fregean position which I described (and endorsed) in *Direct Reference*. But this view, by itself, does not account for failures of substitution. To account for substitution failures we must either give up direct reference and stick to the (unweakened) fine-grained strategy which make modes of presentation truth-conditionally *relevant* ; or, if we do not want to pay that price, we must shift to either the deviant strategy or the pragmatic strategy in order to account for substitution failures. That is, we must admit that modes of presentation *become* truth-conditionally relevant, for semantic or pragmatic reasons, when referential expressions occur within the embedded portion of a belief sentence. The advantage of the pragmatic strategy over the deviant strategy is that it enables us to save semantic innocence as well as direct reference.

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In *Oratio Obliqua, Oratio Recta* I categorized Hintikka's position as an instance of the deviant strategy. Hintikka equates opacity to multiple referentiality. 'Cicero' and 'Tully' refer to a certain individual in the actual world, but in Peter's belief worlds they possibly refer to distinct individuals. According to Hintikka, when the sentence 'Cicero is bald' is embedded under 'Peter believes that', the reference of the name shifts because the operator 'Peter believes that' shifts the circumstance of evaluation for the embedded sentence (much as a temporal operator does). Hintikka's view, therefore, is an instance of the deviant strategy. It violates semantic innocence since the semantic value of a name is said to shift when it occurs in the scope of an epistemic operator.

But Egré provides a novel interpretation of Hintikka's view. On that interpretation a name refers to its actual reference in *all* contexts, including epistemic contexts ; but in epistemic contexts the name *also* refers to the alternative referents it has in the ascriber's belief worlds. In effect, Egré makes the semantic value of referential expressions in epistemic contexts fine-grained by enriching the ordinary reference of the term with a mode of presentation, which mode of presentation he cashes out model-theoretically in terms of the referents the name has in the believer's epistemic alternatives to the actual world. If the subject takes 'Cicero' and 'Tully' to refer to two different individuals, then, when we report his belief by saying that, according to Peter, Cicero is rich but Tully isn't, we refer to Cicero twice over — once by means of the name 'Cicero', and another time by means of the name 'Tully' — but in the same breath we refer, or pretend to refer, to two distinct epistemic counterparts of Cicero, namely the two distinct individuals *a* and *b* which, in Peter's belief worlds, are the referents of the names 'Cicero' and 'Tully'. The semantic value of a name such as 'Cicero' or 'Tully' in the embedded portion of a

belief sentence can therefore be represented as an ordered pair consisting of the actual referent, Cicero, and the epistemic counterpart of that referent in the belief worlds of the ascriber. (Since proper names are modally rigid, this is the same object in all of the worlds in question.)

Egré thinks his interpretation of Hintikka's view makes it consistent with semantic innocence. But does it? The fact that the name 'Cicero' refers to (the actual) Cicero in all contexts, including epistemic contexts, is not sufficient to protect semantic innocence. For, in epistemic contexts, the actual reference of the name is only an aspect or a part of the name's semantic value. Another aspect is the mode of presentation which Egré cashes out in terms of the epistemic counterparts of the reference. The mode of presentation becomes part of the semantic value of the name *in epistemic contexts*; and this implies that the semantic value of the name *is* affected, in epistemic contexts.

There is a way to save semantic innocence consistently with the position Egré sketches, however. We may argue as follows. A name's semantic value is its actual reference and nothing more, so that 'Cicero' and 'Tully' have the same semantic value. The reason why 'Peter believes that Cicero is rich, but he does not believe that Tully is rich' is not contradictory is the fact that, by using two distinct names, the ascriber pragmatically implies that Peter mentally refers to what he takes to be two distinct individuals. Peter thinks that one of them is rich but he does not think that the other is. This means that he believes of Cicero both that he is and that he isn't rich, but holds these beliefs under different modes of presentation, i.e. by subjectively referring to (what he takes to be) distinct individuals. Thus interpreted the Hintikka-Egré view is no longer an instance of the deviant strategy. It is an instance of the pragmatic strategy — the strategy I recommend.

On the pragmatic strategy the mode of presentation (i.e., the epistemic counterpart of the reference) is introduced into the truth-conditions through pragmatic enrichment. But a different option may be available to make the Hintikka-Egré position consistent with semantic innocence. The introduction of modes of presentation can be blamed on the semantics of the epistemic verb. On this view, to say that Peter believes that Cicero is rich is to say that Peter and Cicero stand in the relation $\lambda x \lambda y$ (*in x's belief worlds there is a counterpart z of y, and z is rich*). The semantic value of the name 'Cicero' (or 'Tully') is its actual reference, but the belief-relation is analysed in such a way that in order to believe something about someone there has to be a counterpart of that person in all of one's belief worlds. Of course, nothing prevents a given individual, say Cicero, from having several counterparts in the ascriber's belief worlds. In the Cicero-Tully example, there are two counterparts. Peter and Cicero stand in the relation $\lambda x \lambda y$ (*in x's belief worlds there is a counterpart z of y, and z is rich*), but they also stand in the relation $\lambda x \lambda y$ (*in x's belief worlds there is a counterpart z of y, and z is not rich*).

On this view the existence of a counterpart of the name's referent in the ascriber's belief worlds is entailed in virtue of the semantics of the epistemic verb. Does this mean that there cannot be transparent readings of belief ascriptions, that is, attributions where modes of presentation play no role? No — this conclusion does not follow. Transparent readings will be treated as cases in which nothing is suggested regarding the relevant epistemic counterpart, save for the fact that it exists. All other cases will be treated as cases in which more information is provided regarding the epistemic counterpart of the reference. That extra information will come from the context, not from the semantics. For example, the use of two distinct names in 'Peter believes that Cicero is rich but he believes that Tully is not rich'

suggests that the relevant counterparts — the (possibly identical) counterparts whose existence is entailed in virtue of the semantics of 'believe' — are named 'Cicero' and 'Tully' respectively (hence are two distinct individuals) in Peter's belief worlds. So, even if we favour the more 'semantic' approach, we end up with something that is very close to the pragmatic strategy.