Semantics Without the Distinction Between Sense and Force

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0 Introduction

At the heart of semantics in the 20th century is Frege's distinction between *sense* and *force*. This is the idea that the content of a self-standing utterance of a sentence *S* can be divided into two components. One part, the sense, is the proposition that *S*'s linguistic meaning and context associates with it as its semantic interpretation. The second component is *S*'s illocutionary force. Illocutionary forces correspond to the three basic kinds of sentential speech acts: assertions, orders, and questions. Forces are then kinds of acts in which propositions are deployed with certain purposes.

There are at least five reasons for positing Frege's distinction, which we can discern in Searle's *Speech Acts* (1969) and other writings:

R1: It seems we ought to analyse assertion in terms of belief: assertions are acts in which we utter sentences aiming to manifest our commitment to belief states. Belief-states are truth-apt. Therefore, the primary truth-bearers are prior to assertion. Furthermore, beliefs are propositional attitudes, states that comprise an attitude component—characteristic of belief—and a content. It seems reasonable then to equate the primary bearers of truth with the contents of belief states, and to claim that these contents are propositions. Thus the content of an assertion involves two components: a propositional content—the object of the belief that the assertion is a manifestation of—and a force—the act type which is that of committing oneself to a certain belief.

R2: To assert that *P* is to utter a sentence *S* with the intention of manifestings one's commitment to belief that *P*. But assertion must involve more than this. In uttering *I hereby commit myself to P*, I utter a sentence and commit myself to *P*, but do not assert that *P*—Pagin (200+). The extra distinguishing characteristic of asserting that *P* is that the speaker utters a sentence *S* that *means* that *P*. To assert that *P* is to utter *S*, meaning *P*, and committing oneself to *P*. Here we have the idea of a sentence *meaning* or *saying* something that is distinguishable in its nature from the illocutionary act in which the sentence is

performed. But that means a sentence has a component of content not captured by its assertoric use. That, it would appear, is its encoded propositional content.

R3: Part of doing semantics is providing a compositional account of how the meaning of a sentence depends on the meaning of its parts and their mode of composition. Compositional semantics can be divided into several parts. One part concerns subsentential constituents, such as names and predicates, and how they combine to form meaningful simple sentences. For example, one might think that a name introduces an object and a predicate a property. They get together somehow to form the content of a subject-predicate sentence. Propositions beckon as an explanation of such basic compositional facts since objects and properties have nothing to do with speech-acts as such.

R4: A second aspect of compositional semantics concerns sentential compounds. In *(i)* below, *Fred is sick* is asserted as a premise of an argument, but in *(ii)* it is not asserted, yet these two instances of *Fred is sick* must, in some sense, have the same meaning if the validity of the argument here displayed is to be affirmed:

(i) Fred is sick.

(ii) If Fred is sick, he will die.

(iii) Therefore, he will die.

The common content that *Fred is sick* has must be assertion-independent. What else would this assertion-independent content be if not propositional content? Thus we should analyse *(i)* as a sentence with a propositional content plus something else, i.e., an assertoric force.

R5: A third aspect of compositionality concerns grammatical mood. The three mood-modified sentences

Fred jumps.

Does Fred Jump?

Fred, jump!

all involve the same grammatical elements but combined differently. The content that *Fred jumps* shares with the other sentences cannot be anything that depends on its assertoric use, since the other sentences are not associated with assertion. Thus the common content must be assertion-independent. What is this assertion-independent content if not a propositional

content? Denote it by <Fred jumps>. Structurally the content of the three sentences is given thus, where *A*, *Q* and *O* correspond to three distinct forces:

Fred jumps	A<Fred jumps>
Does Fred Jump?	Q<Fred jumps>
Fred, jump!	O<Fred jumps>

That there is a common content seems to be confirmed by the fact that the truth-conditions for the declarative sentence, affirmative-answer conditions for the interrogative, and compliance conditions for the imperative can all be specified by the same condition: that Fred jumps.

With the sense/force distinction in place—reasonably secured, one might hope, by *R1* to *R5*—the problem of meaning is divided into two parts: *Pragmatics*, the study of speech acts and communicative structures, and *Semantics*—with a big *S*—the study of propositional content. The dominant form that theories of Semantic content take is theories of truth-conditions—Davidson (1984) and Lewis (1972). Truth-conditional Semantics has its detractors: Dummett (1976), Horwich (1998), Brandom (1994), who dispute that truth explains propositional content. They recommend that we look to other kinds of properties of sentences to explain their senses, such as verification conditions, certain use properties, or conceptual roles. Such critics of truth-conditional semantics accept the force/sense distinction: the issue for them is how to understand propositional content as conceptualised within that distinction.

There is, however, a second more radical way of rejecting truth-conditional semantics. This involves abandoning the distinction within which the idea of proposition lives: the force/sense distinction. The form that this more radical approach takes is the speech-act theoretic semantics—STA—developed in Barker (2004). In STA, there is no distinction between Semantics and Pragmatics. The study of how sentences gain their truth-conditions—*semantics*—is a kind of formal pragmatics, which is developed without the concept of a proposition. In what follows I block the five arguments, *R1* to *R5*, for the force/sense distinction, constructing as I go the alternative STA: semantics without the distinction between sense and force.

1. Assertion and Belief—R1

What is that peculiar activity we call assertion? Grice argued for a perlocutionary effect theory of assertion, according to which, in asserting that *P*, a speaker U utters a sentence intending to get an audience to have a belief that *P*, or a belief that U has a belief that *P*. Such *perlocutionary affect* theories have big problems—see Alston (2001). I offer instead a non-perlocutionary-effect theory. Assertion is an act in which a speaker utters a sentence and *defends* a state of mind. To defend a state of mind is to take epistemic authority for tokening a property Π, where Π is a mental property—or state of mind type. To take epistemic authority for a tokened mental state is represent oneself as able to offer reasons for that state: sufficient reasons. So in asserting that the sky is blue, U defends a mental property Π of some kind, representing herself as possessing reasons for that state. If she is sincere and clear-headed, she has the state, if she is insincere, or muddled, she does not. U's audience H will consider U's assertion right, just in case she too is willing to make the assertion, that is, defend the state of mind Π concerned. Given that assertions are defences of Π-properties, as we might call them, truth-evaluation has the following *Intersubjective Dimension*, **ID**:

> **ID**: H judges true an assertion of *S* uttered by U conveying that she, U, defends Π iff H judges that she, H, defends Π in her own case.[1]

ID is not an account of what truth consists in; it is no invitation to anti-realism or idealism. **ID** simply follows from the fact that an assertion of *S* commits U to an assertion of *S is true*, and vice versa, and assertion is the defence of a Π-property.

What is the state of mind Π that is defended? Those wedded to Frege's distinction between sense and force answer that this state Π is a belief state. Assertion is analysed in terms of belief as outlined in *R1*. And that means truth is prior to assertion, and the primary

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[1] I do not require that U and H are different people. The intersubjectivity may be intra-subjective, as it were. I note that for literal assertions to take place, Π must be conventionally associated with S. Sincerity means U not only defends the state, but has the state. Falsity evaluation requires more than merely that H lacks the state. She must reject the state, or be in a position to defend the Π-property of *Not-S*.

truth-bearers are certain non-assertions. To block *R1* we need, it seems, to deny that the Π-properties defended in assertion are belief states. The general thought I propose is this: although broadly specifiable as cognitive or conative properties, Π-properties are not truth-apt states. Π-properties are functional states of various kinds; they can cause behaviour, and be caused by and cause other instantiations of Π-properties. But they are not beliefs. Assertion, judgement and belief are all found on a level of cognition above that of Π-properties. This is a level of cognition that involves symbol manipulation that presupposes instantiation of Π-properties. Assertion and judgement are the production of symbols, either public or private, involving defence of a certain Π-property. Belief is a disposition to perform that kind of defensive act; it is a disposition to produce symbols, either public or private, defending a certain Π-property, where that Π-property is actually possessed.[2] The Π-property itself is not the belief state; the belief is rather the disposition to defend the Π-property through symbol production. Truth-aptness then is not a feature of states that pre-exist assertion, rather it only arises with assertion. The primary truth-bearers are assertions. Structurally we can represent this approach, which is the basic move of STA distinguishing it from orthodox semantics, in the table below:

		Orthodox Semantics	STA
Act	Assertion: Production of *S* defending Π.	Truth-apt (Secondary)	Truth-apt (Primary)
State	Π	Truth-apt (Primary). Belief-state ontologically prior to assertion.	Not a belief-state. Non-truth-apt.

STA is a dialectical conception of truth-bearers, since according to it, truth-aptness only arises at the domain in which reason operates. It might be objected that reason presupposes truth-apt states. Reason is about relations between truth-apt states or contents. Thus if reason is brought in to explain assertion we are back to commitment to truth-apt states that are ontologically prior to assertion. *R1* reasserts itself.

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[2] Assertion is a kind of disposition to (privately or publicly) assert. The sincerity condition required is that the speaker actually have the state defended. Unlike for other sincere assertion accounts of belief developed within the Frege approach, this is not circular, since sincerity is not explained in terms of belief.

My response here is to deny that reason is fundamentally grounded in relations between truth-apt states. Reason is associated with inference, and the correlate of inferences on the level of intentional systems are *transitional states*: causal regularities of an intentional system that link instantiation of one Π-property Ψ to instantiation of another Σ. I call such transitional states *commitment laws* or *C-laws*, which we represent thus: $\Psi => \Sigma$. Think of U's intentional system, at one level, as a web of instantiated Π-properties bound together in part by C-laws, which are themselves Π-properties. What makes the relation $=>$ a relation of reason is a certain functional role in relation to inputs and outputs.

Even if some such natural characterisation of the reason relation were available, a further critical question would remain: what makes an instance of $\Psi => \Sigma$ right or valid? One answer is that $\Psi => \Sigma$ is a valid relation of reason because if Ψ is true then the state Σ must be true. Another is that $\Psi => \Sigma$ is a valid if and only if a warrant for Ψ provides a warrant for Σ. Both these analyses assume that the states Ψ and Σ are truth-apt or doxastic states. Thus, short of treating validity as a primitive fact—surely an unattractive option—it would appear that the need to assign normative status to C-laws as right drives us back to viewing Π-properties as already belief-states, and thus into the arms of *R1*.

Fortunately there is a way out. This is to embrace *expressivism* about reason and norms. In order to understand the notion of validity as it applies to C-laws we should not frame the issue in terms of what constitutes the rightness of a certain C-law. Rather we should ask: what goes on when we assert the rightness of a C-law, or more generally, what goes on when we assert that something is a reason for something else? I deal with this question now and show how judgements about the rightness of $\Psi => \Sigma$ do not imply that Ψ and Σ are truth-apt.

1.1 Reason and Normative Expressivism

Suppose that to assert P is to defend Ψ and assert S to defend Σ. Our concern is what Π-property is defended in asserting R:

> R: Asserting/believing that P is a reason for asserting/believing that S.

The answer is that U utters R defending her acceptance of the state: $\Psi => \Sigma$. Sentences of the form R have the following Π-property specification—this is the kind of Π-property that is associated with such assertions by virtue of meaning and context:[3]

Assertion (of Reason)	Π-Property Specification
Believing P is a reason for believing S	Π-[P] => Π-[S]

In accordance with **ID**, an audience H will judge assertions of R true if and only if, she herself experiences the C-law as something compelling in her case; she instantiates the state and feels compelled to defend it. Thus, in terms of **ID**, the following holds:

> **ID-Reason**: H judges true an assertion of R uttered by U defending possession of $\Psi =>$ Σ iff H judges that she, H, defends commitment to $\Psi => \Sigma$ in her own case.

In asserting R, U is not making an autobiographical claim about her possession of $\Psi => \Sigma$. U's statement is not true in virtue of her possession of the state. U is not claiming that members of some class of intentional systems posses the state. Rather, assertions of R are *expressive assertions* in the sense that what U defends is the state itself, not some commitment about her possession of the state. U's utterance is not *about* her instantiating the state Π-[P] => Π-[S]. To assume that it must be is to embrace orthodox semantics which treats contents as propositions. U's statement is an expressive commitment to the state.

C-laws are then simply causal facts about particular speakers; it is our attitude in relation to them—which revolves our willingness to defend, or reject them, through assertions like R—that allows for the emergence of normative judgement. Of course defending a C-law $\Psi => \Sigma$ may mean invoking other C-laws. But that is not in itself problematic.

Objectivity and Normative Facts

To assert statements of reason then is to utter sentences like R defending Π-properties that are C-laws: $\Psi => \Sigma$. Π-properties of the form $\Psi => \Sigma$ are not belief-states as such. The state Ψ $=> \Sigma$ is not truth-apt. Only the assertions of defending such states are truth-apt. The states Ψ

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[3] In what follows *Π-[S]* is used to designate the Π-property associated by context and meaning with a sentence S

and Σ do not have to be thought of as truth-apt in explaining how claims of validity of reason function.

The idea then is that we account for the nature of reason-statements by describing the natural facts about activities of speakers defending C-law Π-properties. We do not specify truth-conditions for statements of reason as a way of capturing their content. One might object that STA's analysis of reason-statements is manifestly inadequate for this very reason. By not offering truth-conditions, or conditions of correct use, it misses a crucial feature; that there are facts of the matter over and above what people are inclined to believe about what reason-statements are true: in short, the objective normative facts. The objectivity of a discourse resides in the sentences of that discourse validating bivalence: *either S is true or S is false*. But, the objection goes, it is because sentences in a domain *D* represent, or have truth-conditions about, possible conditions of a determinate reality, that sentences in *D* are bivalent.[4] Thus we need propositional content to explain bivalence. STA's purely expressive treatment of reason-assertions can't then work.

Fortunately, this objection, natural in many ways, is without cogency. The explanation of bivalence gestured at invokes the idea of sentences representing reality whose structure is determinate. For this explanation to be non-vacuous, reality's being determinate must be more than that we can affirm bivalence or excluded middle for sentences about it. If not, the explanation invokes the very principle of bivalence we are trying to explain. However, reflection indicates that determinacy is little more than a commitment to bivalence or excluded middle.[5] So the appeal to representing determinate reality cannot explain our adherence to bivalence and excluded middle. Consequently, *pace* the argument just

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[4] Wright (1992) defends the idea that the objectivity of a domain of assertion functions in terms of representation with his notion of *cognitive command*. Dummett's (1963) equates realism with bivalence, indicating that he thinks that bivalence is ultimately explained by representation of determinate reality.

[5] We might understand determinacy in terms of properties: for every property π, either O has π or lacks π. But if *property* here just means *set* qua extension of a predicate, then our explanation of bivalence is vacuous, since we think predicates fix sets because bivalence holds for sentences featuring the predicates. By properties we might mean universal-like entities. So our claim of determinacy is: for every universal υ, either O instantiates υ or does not. But now we should ask: why are universals determinate? Why do we assert for any particular object O, either O has υ or not? There is nothing built into the concept of universal that makes them determinate. Nor will it do any explanatory work here to reply: *Because 'O has v' represents a state of affairs and reality in this domain is determinate*.

rehearsed, the fact that assertions of reason do not function in terms of representational content does not undermine a bivalent attitude to such assertions.

What then is the source of our affirmation of bivalence for sentences in a domain *D*? STA proposes that it resides in our attitude to the defence of Π-properties for sentences in *D*. It is our vigorous defence of Π-properties in *D*—the fact that we do not ever agree to disagree about acceptance of Π-properties—that grounds our assertion of bivalence in *D*. If such conditions hold for discourse, there is no *faultless disagreement*. Our robust defence of Π-properties in *D*, however, is not explained by our taking them to represent a determinate reality, since *determinate reality* presupposes excluded middle.[6] The attitudes have natural explanations: it has profited humans to have such attitudes to Π-properties concerning C-laws. In renouncing representation in this way, STA is not committed to an idealism in which objectivity is constituted by our attitudes. Objectivity is not constituted by anything, since *objective*, like *is a reason for*, is an expressive concept. To assert that assertions in *D* are objective is to expressively commit oneself to vigorous defence of Π-properties in *D*. In short, STA rejects the equation of *fact-stating* with *representational* and of *non-fact-stating* with *expressive*.

1.2 A plurality of Π-Properties

Statements of reason then involve defending functional states or C-laws of the form $\Psi => \Sigma$. STA is wedded to normative expressivism, or cognitive irrealism, about reason. It is not required as such that assertors have concepts of reason: defending can involve offering or indicating grounds. A child who asserts that Toby the dog is sleeping can point to a sleeping dog. In that sense we can see that the child is disposed to engage in defence.

What generally are the Π-properties, the states Ψ and Σ linked in C-laws? The question is partially empirical—it depends on the kinds of functional states minds can have—and partially metaphysical—it depends on broad assumptions about the structure of reality. In what follows I look very briefly at two classes of cases. The Π-properties of logically simple

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[6] Thus Wright (1992) takes faultless disagreement to be a sign of non-representationality.

sentences and those of logically complex sentences. My main task will be to dispel the idea that we need to look at Π-properties as belief-states.

Logically simple

Sentences like *Haggis is tasty*, *The Tractatus is interesting*, *Murder is wrong*, which is to say, broadly evaluative utterances, are perfect illustrations of the advantages of not treating Π-properties as belief states. Here are hypotheses about what the Π-properties of such sentences are:

Sentence (Value)	Π-Property Specification
Haggis is tasty	Possessing a gustatory preference state for haggis.
The Tractatus is interesting	Being disposed to find a certain intellectual satisfaction in engaging with *The Tractatus*.
Murder is wrong	Being disposed to seriously disapprove of acts of murder.

Again, fitting in with **ID**, we find that evaluation of such sentences, for example, of the Haggis-sentence, has the following form:

ID-Haggis: H judges true an assertion of *Haggis is tasty* uttered by U defending her preference for haggis iff H judges that she, H, defends that preference in her own case.

Thus H finds U's assertion of taste right, just in case, H too defends the state that U defends, that is, just in case, she has good reasons, by her lights, to like haggis. Potential intersubjective engagement releases speakers from the solipsism of their own orientations and preferences. Statements of moral value have exactly the same general discourse structure. The difference is that in the case of moral statements speakers may defend the Π-properties concerned more vigorously. Thus there are no properties of tastiness or of interest, qua entities, which these statements represent. In such cases, the Π-properties are clearly nothing like belief states. And that is a good thing. To insist on the Frege model here only forces us into the problem of value-realism, which is clearly problematic.

Representation and Belief

The statements just looked at are non-representational in the sense that their predicates do not denote properties, qua world-parts. One tempting idea is that some logically simple sentences must involve Π-properties that are representational. And it is here that the Fregean paradigm might reassert itself with the following line of thought: Π-properties that are representational should be equated with belief states since what is a belief state, if not a representational state?

The kinds of cases we might have in mind here are non-evaluative empirical sentences such as *Fred is pink*, *George is a cat*, etc. In these cases on might think that the Π-properties defended are ones in which we represent the pinkness of Fred, or the catishness of George. That means having a mental state that represents Fred being pink and George being a cat. But, goes the charge, such states are, more or less, belief states.

Suppose that we granted that some logically simple sentences need to be construed in this way, though it is not yet clear what the basis of this need is. One could still coherently hold out that these states are not, as such, belief states. There are two reasons for this:

(a) If such representational states were deemed belief-states then the class of belief-states would become quite heterogeneous. Clearly there are beliefs in the case of evaluative sentences: one can believe that Haggis is tasty. But surely we do not want to give up the analysis given above in which preference states are those that are defended in such utterances? Belief must be a disposition to defend a prior state, not the prior state itself. Thus, even if some Π-properties are representational we can resist the idea that the representational states are belief-states.

(b) A state can be representational, but that does not make it a belief state. Motivational states can also have representational content. Thus states can be representational but may lack the kind of representationality that we associate with belief. A fairly well entrenched view—instigated by Searle (1983)—is that what makes a representational state a belief state is *direction of fit*. For a representational state to be a belief state, it must be *right* because it fits the world, the world does not have to fit it. Thus it is not intrinsic to a representational state that it is a belief state. The standard view about direction of fit is that it is a matter arising at a level prior to assertion. But in STA it is not. A belief state, qua

disposition to defend a state Π, which may be representational or not, has a direction of fit because it is defensive. States that have no defensive component are not belief-states even if they have a representational component. Thus it is not representationality that is crucial and distinctive of belief, it is direction of fit, which here is captured by the notion of a defensive stance.[7]

Logically Complex sentences

The next set of Π-properties are those defended in logically complex sentences. Consider negations. In asserting *not-S*, the speaker defends a state of *rejecting* the Π-property of the assertion of *S*. The Π-property defended is, succinctly, the following: Rejecting: Π-[*S*]. Rejection is not a speech act; it is a mental state. Rejection is a specific functional state that a mind can have towards a Π-property. This is a kind of constraint on not being disposed to token Π—write that as *¬Disposed-token Π-[S]*—which is distinguished from that in which we lack evidence for tokening Π. Rather than being produced by lack of evidence, the state ¬Disposed-token Π-[*S*] is produced by evidence. To reject Π is to instantiate some state Ψ such that there is a C-law Ψ => ¬Disposed-token Π-[*S*]. Thus rejection is the state:

(i)   U tokens some Ψ.

(ii)   In U, Ψ => ¬Disposed-token Π-[*S*].

Rejective states are in themselves subjective. I emphasise again, that in asserting *not-S,* a dialectical stance is taken with respect to U's tokening the rejective state, which, in terms of the intersubjective dimension **ID**, means that truth-evaluation works in these terms:

ID-Not: H judges true an assertion of *Not-S* uttered by U defending Reject: Π-[*S*] iff H judges that she, H, defends Reject: Π-[*S*] in her own case.

In short, evaluators are not concerned with whether or not U instantiates any such state but with their own willingness to defend a comparable state in their own case. It is this inter-subjectivity of **ID-Not** that drags U and H out of their respective solipsisms.

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[7] On the other hand, it is quite possible that an expressivist analysis of such predicates is available, in which case no reference to representational states is required at all.

It should not be thought for one moment that *Not-S* is equivalent in any way to *I reject Π-[S]*, or any sentence used to make a claim about possession of a subjective state. The Π-property associated with *I reject Π-[S]* is distinct from that for *Not-S*. For that reason, one cannot substitute, *Not-S* for *I reject Π-[S]* in say assertions of the form: *either S or not-S*, to produce *Either S or I reject Π-[S]*. That does not follow since again semantic content is given by Π-properties, and by nothing else.

The expressivist proposal is that for all logically complex assertions the Π-properties defended are non-representational. The Π-property specifications for negation, disjunction, indicative conditional, and universal-statements are as follows:

Sentence (Logical)	Π-Property Specification
Not-S	Reject: Π-[*S*]
Either P or Q	Reject: [Reject: Π-[*P*], Reject: Π-[*Q*]]
If P, Q	D{Π-[*Q*], Π-[*P*]}
Every F is G	D{Π-[*T is G*], Π-[*T is F*]}

The case of disjunction is a translation of de Morgan. The conditional corresponds roughly to a translation of a Ramsey belief-update analysis. Thus in uttering *if P, Q*, U defends a disposition to token Π-[*Q*] given the Π-[*P*]. That disposition would reflect actual background beliefs, or further suppositions, possessed by the agent. In the case of the universal, *Every F is G*, we find a generic disposition: Being disposed to assert/infer a sentence of the form *T is G* based on assertion/supposition of a sentence of the form *T is F*. This disposition can be analysed as a disposition to token Π-[*T is G*], given tokening of Π-[*T is F*].

Again, we should see the evaluation of acts involving defence of such Π-properties, in terms of **ID**. In asserting logically complex sentences speakers are not making claims about their subjective states, but defending those states. This expressive treatment of logically complex sentences is neither a truth-conditional analysis nor an assertability, or inferential analysis. And again we can assert with some confidence that the Π-properties involved here are not belief-states.

Truth

On the conception of semantic unfolding, STA, truth-bearers are acts: assertions. But what of the very assertions of truth and falsity? Truth ascriptions and falsity ascriptions are assertions in which we defend Π-properties. But what are these Π-properties? The minimal assumption that explains the intersubjective engagements outlined above is simply the following:

> *That S is true*: Π-property: commitment to Π-[*S*].
>
> *That S is false*: Π-property: commitment to rejecting Π-[*S*].

Truth- and falsity-ascriptions are expressive commitments to either accepting the Π-property defended in asserting *S*, or rejecting it. Truth- and falsity-ascriptions are not assertions about the speaker's acceptance or rejection of Π-properties. Such an interpretation would construe them as claims about subjective states; which would not get the dialectical effect we want. They are not reports that certain parties agree. That would be to collapse into a kind of relativism. They are not assertions about what we should ideally believe. That is a speculative assertion about the ideal. Rather they are expressive assertions and thus conform in terms of **ID** to:

> **ID-True**: H judges true an assertion of *S is true* uttered by U defending Π-[*S*] iff H judges that she, H, defends Π-[*S*] in her own case.

Utterance of *S is true*, simply has the normative force of assertion of *S*. Whatever dialectical obligation imposed by assertion of *S* on others to respond to the state Π defended, will be imposed by *S is true*. Likewise, mutatis mutandis for *Not-S* and *S is false*.

The truth- and falsity-predicates are then our means to carry on our defence or rejection of Π-properties. Thus this treatment is not a theory of what truth resides in. Rather, the whole semantics of *is true*, concerns the act the speaker performs in using *is true*. Again, it might be objected that this theory only tells us about how speakers engage in agreement and dispute about truth and falsity attribution. But what about the facts about what is true? In such debates there is a fact of the matter. How does the expressive theory account for this fixation of truth by something outside of practice? This is, of course, the same question posed above

above that led us to note the need to refer to our metatheoretic, factive attitudes, in particular, our commitment, in some areas of discourse to bivalence. We do not, however, need to explain this commitment by appealing to representational and ontic structures; the Π-properties that underpin assertion of bivalence are not representational.

2. Compositionality: Jumping to R3

That completes my response to reason *R1* for postulating the force/sense distinction. Dealing with *R1* has been quite an involved business. Giving up on the idea of belief as an explanatory concept in pragmatics has wide-ranging ramifications. As I have urged, it implies a general kind of expressivism about the logical and the normative. Our next reason for the sense/force distinction is *R2*. However, it is expositionally useful to deal with *R3* and *R4* first, and return to *R2*. Reason *R3* for the sense/force distinction invokes considerations of compositionality, as do *R4* and *R5*. *R3* focused on atomic sentences where a name introduces an object and a predicate a property. They get together somehow to form the content of a subject-predicate assertion. Propositions beckon as an explanation of such basic compositional facts.

This charge is entirely false. It has been assumed that the meanings of names and predicates are kinds of objects. But in maintaining that propositions are not the contents of assertions we have to renounce the idea that the meanings of sub-sentential units such as names and predicates are objects and properties, etc. What are the meanings of names and predicates? The answer is: speech-act types—see Barker (2004). Consider names first. STA begins by asking what we do when we use a name. We might answer: utter a term, *N*, and intend to denote something. We can say a bit more than this. Names involve using a technique of denotation of some kind. When we intend to use a name to denote something, we do so be relying upon the fact that tokens of it have already denoted. In using *Bush* to denote, I intend to denote whatever I, or someone else, denoted last time they used certain tokens of the orthographic-phonological type *Bush*-bʊʃ. The rules for name use are basically anaphoric. So names have rules of use associated with them that are denotative techniques.

But is this the basic speech-act U performs in uttering a name: uttering *N* and intending to denote an object using such techniques? No, it isn't. Consider communication. In communicating, a speaker U engages in verbal behaviour with the intention of getting an audience to make certain inferences about what her, U's, intentions are. In using a name to sincerely refer, U utters an expression with the syntax of a referring term and intends to denote, in the manner of a name, an object with certain properties.[8] But if U communicates, U also wants her audience H to recognize that she has this intention. How does U get H to do this? Simply, by acting in the manner of someone, who, following certain rules, known to both U and H, has that sort of intention. So what is basic to name use is that we intentionally engage in the behaviour characteristic of someone, who following the rules determining name use, intends to denote something. Call this *advertising intentions*. And call advertising an intention to denote something, a *proto-referring act*.

The basic speech-act I perform in using a name is not a referring act, but a proto-referring act. Communication, as we have seen, shows this, but so does another fact. It is not essential when using a name that I believe that it denotes. Perhaps I believe that I am denoting. But perhaps I do not. So what is common to name use? It is advertising an intention to denote: proto-referring. In uttering *Pegasus* U advertises an intention to denote a certain object, namely, something denoted by earlier uses of *Pegasus*. This means U engages in the behaviour characteristic of a speaker, who, following certain rules, has such an intention. Again U may or may nor have the intention. Advertising an intention to represent is the common element in sincere, insincere and fictional uses of the name.

The next fact about names to note is that they naturally form referential trees, such as the following:

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[8] I use 'denotes' for the relation that holds between a referring term and an object, if it has a denotation, and 'refers' for the act the speaker performs in uttering a referring term.

T ——— T———

T < ———— T < T——T

◯— T T 'T T——T

'B B T

'B B B——B

B ———— B N——
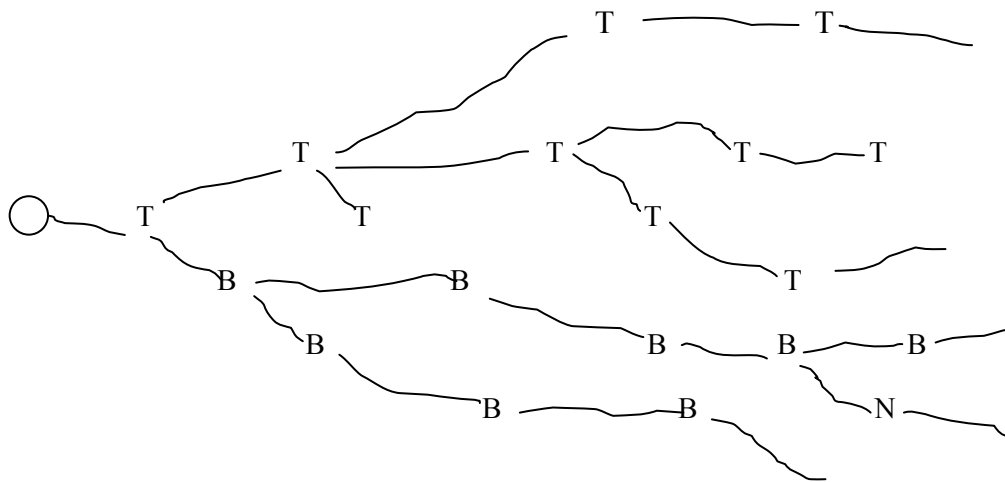
Each letter is a tokening of a name—the performance of a (nominal) proto-referring act. The letters differ since the same source, origin of the practice, may spawn different phonemic types. We have a complex causal-social-intentional structure. It is basically a convergence of very specialized anaphoric chains. The source of the name is where it begins whether or not it may issue in an object. If it is the tree for *George Bush*, it does issue in an object; that name denotes. But the tree for *Pegasus* does not denote.

But at this stage, having described all these structures, what do we say is the meaning of the name? Why opt for the object, or descriptions? The best idea is that the meaning of the name is the speech-act types defined by the tree. That gives us a theory of names that is neutral between empty and full names. The semantic contribution of a name is the speech-act type all of whose tokens are nodes on a certain referential true. That is, acts, $R(N)_{pro}$, in which speakers advertise intentions to use some name N to denote an object using the denotative techniques of names.

Predicates have similar kinds of speech-act structure. Predicates have their meanings fixed by Π-property types: which is to say, speech-act types that combining with proto-referring-act types, generate acts in which Π-properties are defended. A simple assertion A(T V__), where T is a referring term and V__ a predicate has the structure:

AS: $R(T)_{pro}$ ⌒⌐ $Pred(V$__$)_{pro}$

That is, we find the concatenation of two speech-act types. The nominal proto-act R(T)$_{pro}$ and the predicative proto-act Pred($V\_\_$)$_{pro}$. This is the constituent structure of the thought encoded by a sentence $T\ V\_\_\_$.

3. Proto-asserting and Sentential Embedding—R4

There is another aspect of compositionality that also needs to be addressed. *R4* sets out the charge that to explain the embedding of sentences in sentential compounds we need to invoke propositions as the contents of embedded sentences. There is a simple reply to this line of argument. Clearly assertions cannot embed. But we don't have to turn to propositions to explain embedding. We can appeal to a concept we already have: *proto-acting*. I suggested above that the basic facts about name use boil down to performing proto-referring acts. Something similar holds for sentences. The basic act U performs with declarative sentences is proto-assertion. U utters S and advertises defence of a Π-property. This is a proto-assertion, which I symbolise thus: A(S)$_{pro}$. To proto-act is to utter an expression—or produce it mentally—with the intention of engaging in a behaviour characteristic of someone who, following certain rules, defends a certain Π-property.

So in uttering 'Snowy is black', U advertises defence of an intention to represent with *Snowy is black* a complex of the form <Snowy, black>. If U sincerely asserts that Snowy is black, U really has the defensive state she advertises herself as having. And if U is engaging in fictional make-believe, she lacks the intention she advertises, and intends her audience to recognize this fact. When U has the defensive state she advertises herself as having, I say that the proto-assertion is doxastically grounded. The proto-assertion is part of an assertion.

It is proto-assertions that embed logical compounds. Although falling short of a full-fledged assertion, proto-assertions, nevertheless, determinately indicate assertions. So in *Either S or R*, U performs a proto-assertion with S and R, and indicates a commitment to the Π-properties of the corresponding assertions. Of course, in uttering S embedded, she lacks the state she advertises herself as having and it is clear to her audience H that she lacks that state. Thus in a compound *either S or R*, U performs a proto-assertion with S and R and expresses

expresses her commitment to a Π-property that concerns the status of assertions A(S) and A(R), corresponding the proto-assertions A(S)$_{pro}$ and A(R)$_{pro}$. The state Π in the case of disjunctions was given in §1.

One might ask: doesn't the embedding simply cancel the advertising? A characteristic behaviour of someone defending Π is to utter S free-standing and not flanked by *either...or*, or *if,* etc. But embedded, S is flanked by *either...or*, so U cannot advertise defence of Π. This objection flows from an understandable misunderstanding of *advertising*. There are a number of ways we might rectify this misunderstanding. Here is one that works through a causal account of what constitutes being an assertion and proto-assertion. Let us begin with assertion. Assertions are utterances of sentences S that have a specific kind of cause. The cause is U's desire to defend a certain Π in combination with a dispositional state Δ. Δ is the dispositional state that underpins U's use of S; we might say Δ is a linguistic production disposition which is guided by U's grasp of the syntactic and semantic properties of words in the language U speaks. Roughly, Δ is triggered by U's desire to defend Π, plus other background factors. Thus Δ, U's desire to defend Π, and background conditions issue in production of S. Moreover, since U is conscious, at some level, that her assertions are acts produced by stable linguistic dispositions, we can say that U desires that Δ cause her production of S. In self-conscious linguistic production, U wants her utterance of S to be caused by Δ, the causal system that is triggered by the kind of defensive desire she possesses. (Which is to say, U wants to speak in accordance with the meaning of her terms.) Such is assertion. What is proto-assertion? Proto-assertion is assertion abstracting away from the desire to defend Π (and get others to believe that one so desires). But what is that act? It is the utterance of S caused by the causal factor Δ in combination with U's desire that Δ cause her production of S. That goes on in assertion, and so assertion also counts as proto-asserting. But it also goes on in embedded utterances of S. With embedded S, the same causal factor Δ is behind the production of S. It is just that here, U's utterance of S is not the manifestation of Δ triggered by a desire to defend Π, but rather an act caused by Δ in combination with a desire that Δ be a cause of her behaviour. That is what constitutes U's advertising a defensive stance with S embedded.

To conclude: a speech-act semantics faces no insuperable problem of embedding. Proto-assertions indicate clearly enough assertions, or assertion types. Logical compounds are used to express commitments about assertion-types corresponding to the proto-assertions displayed. This is a compositional semantics without the force/sense distinction. Rather the work done by that distinction in orthodox semantics in explaining embedding is taken over by the assertion/proto-assertion distinction. Proto-assertions are nothing like propositions: they are *force-y* in a way that propositions are force-less. How one supplements a proto-assertion to produce an assertion is nothing like how one supplements a proposition to produce an assertion.

4. Back to Assertion and Saying—R2

We can now return to reason *R2* for the sense/force distinction. *R2* is the claim that analysing assertion requires reference to the notion of *saying* and this means introducing propositions. The resources that enable us to tackle *R1*, *R3*, and *R4* allow us to diffuse *R2*.

An assertion involves the production of a sentence with the defence of a Π-property. The Π-property of an assertion A(S) is ontologically prior to A(S). On the other hand, in a literal assertion of S, the Π-property defended in asserting S is one that is fixed compositionally by the linguistic meaning of S and the context of utterance. Indeed, we can think of the linguistic meaning of the sentence as a Π-property specification, that is, a specification of the kind of Π-property correlated with that sentence, which, supplemented by context, can fix a Π-property token.

With this idea we can give a simple account of the saying-component of assertion, or at least of literal assertion. We can analyse attributions of literally asserted content thus:

> *U literally asserts that P by uttering S* as uttered by an attributor *A* is true if and only if the Π-property specification Π-[S] in the context of utterance in which S is produced by U fixes a token Ψ, where Ψ is the Π-property defended in an assertion of *P* by A.

This is an account of literal assertion. It will not do as an account of non-literal assertion. In asserting as a metaphor *George is a rock*, U makes an assertion. In asserting ironically *George is a real genius*, U makes an assertion. And in asserting *I think that George should go*, U can assert that George should go. In these cases what is literally said is not what is asserted. It might seem that we need the notion of proposition here to account for the said but non-asserted contents. But again the notion of proto-assertion does all the work we need. In these cases the speaker performs a literal proto-assertion, but lacks the state she advertises, having instead some other state. So in asserting ironically *George is a real genius*, U performs: A(*George is a real genius*)$_{pro}$—so she says that George is a real genius—but U lacks the defensive state she advertises, and indicates that what she defends is the rejection of the state correlated with this proto-assertion.

5. Mood—R5

The final reason to accept the force/sense distinction—*R5*—was an appeal to mood. Our three mood modified sentences, *Fred jumps*, *Does Fred jump?*, and *Fred, jump!*, it seems, should be analysed in terms of a common propositional content combining with distinct force operators. That is the argument, but it doesn't work.

According to STA, the illocutionary acts that are conventionally associated with the three kinds of sentences are given below:

Assertion: *(i)* U utters *Fred jumps* and advertises defence of a commitment to the state: Π
(ii) U really defends the state.

Question: *(i)* U utters *Does Fred jump?* advertising a state of representing herself as having an intention that U by virtue of recognition of her manifested desire provide information regarding the status of A(*Fred jumps*).
(ii) U really represents herself thus.

> **Order**: *(i)* U utters *Jump, Fred!* advertising a state of representing herself as having an intention that U by virtue of recognition of her manifested desire make true A(*Fred jumps*).
>
> *(ii)* U really represents herself thus.

There are three distinct kinds of speech acts here. The *(i)*-components in each case are the proto-acts. The *(ii)*-components are the states advertised actually being possessed by the speaker. Assertions are democratic in that they involve defences of mental states that invite response from audiences. Orders and questions are autocratic in the sense that social intentions are manifested and audiences are expected to act accordingly.

It will be noted that the speech-act specifications for the orders and questions make reference to the assertion: A(*Fred jumps*), which involves a proto-assertion. Thus, given that the speaker performs such a proto-assertion in **Assertion** *(i)*, there is, one might argue, a common content between all three acts. But this admission does not in any way move us towards accepting the sense/force distinction. This is so for two reasons.

(a) It is not part of the analysis of orders and questions in STA that in performing an order or question U performs a constituent proto-assertion. U may have a commitment about a proto-assertion. So nothing comparable to the structure articulated above in my original discussion of *R5* holds in this analysis.

(b) Nothing in the given analysis implies that there is an entity that is *force-less* in the makeup of an order or question. Proto-assertions, we have already noted, are *force-y*. Thus, even if we admit that the proto-assertion A(*Fred jumps*)$_{pro}$ is somehow a content common to all three illocutionary acts, it is not a content that fits into the model of the distinction between sense and force.

Conclusions

There is no compelling set of reasons—such as *R1* to *R5*—to accept the distinction between sense and force. In adopting the speech-act theoretic approach to semantics—STA—we provide a semantics without that distinction. But, unsurprisingly, STA takes us far from

reaches chartered by orthodox truth-conditional semantics. Whether we should follow STA into these reaches is another matter.

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