

Is there a fact of the matter between direct reference theory and (neo-)Fregeanism?

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Abstract It is argued here that there is no fact of the matter between direct reference theory and neo-Fregeanism. To get a more precise idea of the central thesis of this paper, consider the following two claims: (i) While direct reference theory and neo-Fregeanism can be developed in numerous ways, they can be developed in essentially parallel ways; that is, for any (plausible) way of developing direct reference theory, there is an essentially parallel way of developing neo-Fregeanism, and vice versa. And (ii) for each such pair of theories, there is no fact of the matter as to which of them is superior; or more precisely, they are tied in terms of factual accuracy. These are sweeping claims that cannot be fully justified in a single paper. But arguments are given here that motivate these theses, i.e., that suggest that they are very likely true.

Keywords Direct reference theory · Neo-Fregeanism · Factual emptiness · Facts of the matter · Belief reports · Propositions

1 Introduction

It's pretty widely held these days that direct reference theory is true. It's even more widely held, I think, that the question of whether direct reference theory is superior to Fregeanism has a determinate, factual answer. I want to argue against this latter thesis. I think we have pretty good reasons to endorse something like a disjunction of direct reference theory and neo-Fregeanism; but I don't think there's any fact of the matter as to which of these two views is superior, and that's what I want to argue here. (I won't argue that direct reference theory and neo-Fregeanism are superior to other semantic theories.)

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There are, of course, multiple versions of both direct reference theory and neo-Fregeanism. One way to argue that there's no fact of the matter between them would be to develop a specific version of direct reference theory, and a specific version of neo-Fregeanism, and then argue that they're the best versions of direct reference theory and neo-Fregeanism, respectively, and that there's no fact of the matter which of them is true. I'm not going to argue the point in this way because (a) I don't know what the best versions of the two theories are; and (b) even if I had an opinion here, it would take a lot of arguing to establish my preferences; and most importantly in the present context, (c) I don't think my nonfactualism depends on any claims about what the best versions of the two theories are. I think there's a more general point to be made here. I'm inclined to think that something like the following is true:

Sweeping Claim: There are numerous versions of both direct reference theory and neo-Fregeanism, but (i) the various (reasonable) versions of direct reference theory correspond pretty closely to analogous versions of neo-Fregeanism (we might call these D–F pairs, where D is a version of direct reference theory, F is a version of neo-Fregeanism, and D and F are “deeply parallel”, or “theoretically analogous”, in ways that will become clear below); and (ii) for each such pair of corresponding theories, there is no fact of the matter whether D or F is superior—or more precisely, D and F are *tied in terms of factual accuracy*.

Sweeping Claim is, of course, just that—a sweeping claim. There's no way that I can fully motivate it in a single paper. What I'd like to do, though, is say enough to make the thesis seem plausible. Here's my plan: In Sect. 2, I will develop a couple of versions of direct reference theory, and in Sect. 3, I'll develop a couple of analogous versions of neo-Fregeanism. In Sect. 4, I'll focus on one of the D–F pairs developed in Sects. 2 and 3, and I'll argue that there's no fact of the matter which of the two theories is superior. (I should note here that the particular versions of direct reference theory and neo-Fregeanism that I'll be working with are, in my mind anyway, very attractive; I don't know if they're the *best* versions of the two theories, but they strike me as *good* versions, although I won't be defending this claim here.) In any event, at the end of the paper, I'll say a few words about how my nonfactualist argument extends to the second D–F pair developed in Sects. 2 and 3. Now, of course, none of this will completely establish the strong conclusion in Sweeping Claim; but by showing how different versions of direct reference theory have neo-Fregean analogues (and vice versa), and by showing how to develop an argument for nonfactualism in connection with one D–F pair, and by explaining why it's plausible to think that the argument generalizes to other cases, I think I can make Sweeping Claim a lot more plausible than it might initially seem.

I develop the versions of direct reference theory I have in mind by describing the views of a couple of fictional characters, whom I call “Karl I” and “Karl II”; likewise, I develop the corresponding versions of neo-Fregeanism by describing the views of another pair of fictional characters, whom I call “Fred I” and “Fred II”. The view of Fred I is fairly close to that of Frege (1892, 1919). Kaplan's (1989) view is, I think, something of a cross between the views of the two Karls. Karl II's

view, where it differs from Kaplan's, is similar to a view of Salmon's (2002). I don't know anyone who has endorsed Karl I's view, where it differs from Kaplan's, though, of course, insofar as Karl I and Karl II are direct reference theorists, their views are both influenced by Kripke (1972). Finally, Fred II's view is essentially equivalent to a view I defended in my (2005); to the best of my knowledge, it was original there.

2 Thesis: direct reference theory and the two Karls

The views of Karl I and Karl II start out the same, and they both start out sounding like Kaplan. Both claim that expressions (i.e., words and sentences) have three semantic values, namely, character, content, and extension. The character of an expression is a semantic value that, when combined with a context, yields a content (assuming the expression in question isn't being used vacuously); and the content of an expression is a semantic value that, when combined with a possible world (or better, a circumstance of evaluation), yields an extension. Different kinds of expressions have different kinds of characters, contents, and extensions. Let's focus first on predicates like 'bachelor'.¹ Both Karls agree that expressions like this have "constant characters", i.e., characters that have the same contents in all contexts. For such expressions, we can take the character and the content to be identical, and we can think of them both as being the linguistic meaning of the expression in question. More specifically, according to the two Karls, we can take the character (and the content) of the predicate 'bachelor' to be the property of being a bachelor. Finally, the extension of a predicate like 'bachelor', at a given circumstance of evaluation, is just the set of things that have the given property at the given circumstance of evaluation.

Things are different for names and indexicals. Following Kaplan, we can distinguish two different kinds of indexicals, namely, *demonstratives* and *pure indexicals* (Kaplan calls the former "true demonstratives", but I'll just call them "demonstratives", and I'll use 'indexical' to refer to both demonstratives and pure indexicals). A pure indexical is an indexical that can refer in a context without being supplemented by a demonstration—e.g., 'I', 'now', 'today', etc.; and a demonstrative is an indexical that needs a demonstration (defined very broadly, to include things like prior discourse) in order to refer—e.g., 'that', 'she', 'he', etc. Kaplan (1989) endorsed different views of these two kinds of indexicals, and he endorsed a different view yet of names. But the two Karls endorse more homogeneous views: Karl I endorses a roughly Kaplanian view of demonstratives and then extends this

¹ I say "predicates like 'bachelor'" because the two Karls might want to endorse different theories in connection with other sorts of predicates, most notably, natural kind predicates like 'water'. For the sake of simplifying things, I'll ignore such predicates here. (I suppose you might think that the predicate 'bachelor' is defined in terms of a natural kind predicate, namely, 'human'. If this were true, it wouldn't really matter because I could just change the example to a different non-natural-kind predicate, like 'round', or 'pregnant', or whatever. But I don't think it is true. I don't think it's analytic that all bachelors are humans. I agree that chimps and dogs can't be bachelors—at least given how those creatures actually are—but I think that members of a species of marrying, human-like Martians could be bachelors.)

view to pure indexicals and names; and Karl II endorses a roughly Kaplanian view of pure indexicals and then extends it to demonstratives and names. Karl II's view is extremely easy to formulate, so I'll start there, beginning with pure indexicals.

According to Karl II, the character of 'I' is something like *dthat[the person who utters this token]*, where 'dthat' is an operator that direct-referentializes a singular term, in particular, whatever singular term is inside the brackets. Now, of course, Karl II doesn't think the character of 'I' is the *expression* 'dthat[the person who utters this token]'; rather, it's something like a *meaning*—in particular, an indexical meaning—where this is taken to be an abstract object. Put differently, the view here is that the expression 'I' is *synonymous* with the expression 'dthat[the person who utters this token]', because they have the same character. And likewise for other pure indexicals; e.g., the character of 'now' is something like *dthat[the present time]*. Thus, on this view, character is linguistic meaning. Note also that 'dthat' is not just a rigidifying operator; it does rigidify, but this is because it direct-referentializes, and direct referentiality entails rigidity. When I say that 'dthat' is a direct-referentializer, what I mean is that for any singular term *t* and any context *c*, the content of 'dthat[*t*]' in *c*—i.e., what it contributes to the proposition expressed—is the referent of *t* in *c*. And so this tells us what Karl II says about the *content* of pure indexicals. The view is this: (i) when we combine the character of a pure indexical with a specific context, it determines a referent—e.g., for 'I' it would be the speaker in the given context, for 'now' it would be the time of the utterance, and so on—and (ii) this referent is the content (and the extension) of the given use of the given indexical. So there's an important difference here between pure indexicals and predicates like 'bachelor': with the latter, content can be identified with character (and not with extension), whereas with pure indexicals, different uses of these expressions have different contents, and the content of a specific use of a pure indexical can be identified not with the character of the expression but with the extension of the given use of the term. So in both cases, there are really just two semantic values: character and extension are distinct in both cases, and then in connection with predicates like 'bachelor', content is identical to character, and in connection with pure indexicals, it's identical to extension.

All of this is pretty close to what Kaplan says about pure indexicals. But unlike Kaplan, Karl II endorses an analogous view of demonstratives. Thus, e.g., on Karl II's view, the character of the demonstrative 'that' is something like *dthat[the contextually salient object]*; and the character of 'he' is *dthat[the contextually salient male]*. Again, these characters are supposed to be the linguistic meanings of the corresponding expressions. And the idea is supposed to be that when we combine one of these characters with a context, it determines a referent, and this referent is the content (and the extension) of the given use of the given demonstrative. For instance, if I point at a girl and a boy playing together and say, "He is the cuter of the two," then the character of 'he'—i.e., *dthat[the contextually salient male]*—together with the given context, picks out the boy as the referent, or the content, because, quite simply, he is the salient male in this context (because he's the only male in the set of things I'm pointing at).²

² Again, this view of demonstratives is different from Kaplan's. But Salmon developed a view like this in his (2002) and argued that it's superior to Kaplan's view.

It's important to note that on Karl II's view, demonstrations are features of context. And it's also important to note that 'context' and 'demonstration' are being used very broadly here. The context of utterance, for a given use of a demonstrative, includes everything about the situation that might help fix the reference of the demonstrative—e.g., things like prior speech and even thoughts in the speaker's head. And 'demonstration' is being used in a similar way, so that just about any feature of context can count as a "demonstration". We can appreciate this point by looking at an example. Suppose that Cy and Jen are sitting in a room together, not speaking, and suppose that Cy starts thinking about George W. Bush and, perhaps more to himself than to Jen, says, "He is an idiot." There is, of course, no way that Jen could know who Cy is talking about—there is no public feature of context that she could use to figure this out—but it is still plausible to suppose that Cy has referred to Bush. According to Karl II, this is because Cy's thoughts are part of the context of his utterance, even though Jen doesn't have access to them. And if we like, we can say that Cy's thoughts count as the "demonstration" in this scenario, or that they play the role of a demonstration, or some such thing. (It is, of course, not good communicative practice, if you want people to understand you, to use demonstratives without making sure that there are *public* features of context that, together with character, fix reference; but this is irrelevant here.)³

Finally, unlike Kaplan, Karl II endorses an analogous view of names. In other words, he thinks names have characters that are analogous to the characters of demonstratives; for instance, just as the character of 'he' is *dthat*[*the contextually salient male*], so the character of 'David' is *dthat*[*the contextually salient bearer of 'David'*]. Thus, when 'David' is used in a particular context *c*, if there is a salient bearer of 'David' in *c*, then that person is the content (and the extension) of that use of 'David'.

It should be noted that Karl II does not claim that names *are* indexicals; there are obvious differences between the two kinds of words, and Karl II doesn't want to deny this. His claim is simply that names have characters that are similar to the characters of demonstratives. If this seems implausible to you, consider the following argument. Suppose you overhear someone uttering the following three sentences: (i) 'That is red'; (ii) 'He is Russian'; and (iii) 'John is tall'. Suppose further that you're not sufficiently tuned into the contexts of these utterances to know what the referents of 'that', 'he', and 'John' are. Then there's an obvious sense in which you don't know what these utterances *say*. But, still, you understand what they *mean*, and you can say something about what they say: (i) says that some object is red; (ii) says that some male is Russian; and (iii) says that some guy named 'John' is tall. This, anyhow, is what they say if they're being used literally, according to the standard rules of English. And this seems to suggest that 'John' has

³ One question that might be raised here is this: What happens when different features of context conflict with one another? Suppose, for instance, that Albert Einstein is standing right in front of me and I point at him and (thinking I'm pointing at George W. Bush and intending to refer to Bush) I say, "He is an idiot." Have I referred to Einstein or Bush? Well, I suppose different people will give different answers to this question. Personally, I have no strong intuition about it, and indeed, I'm not sure there's even a right answer. But for present purposes, we don't need to bother with this; in particular, we don't need to know what Karl II's view here is or, indeed, whether he even has a view about it.

a character, or a linguistic meaning, that's of the same general kind as the characters of 'that' and 'he'.

Moving on to sentences, Karl II says that the character of a sentence is just a structured character whose components are the characters of the words in the sentence (and he thinks the character of a sentence is essentially its linguistic meaning). When you add a context to the character of a sentence, it determines a content. The content of a sentence is a structured content whose components are the contents of the words in the sentence. Thus, if the sentence contains a name or indexical (or any other directly referential term), then the content of the sentence is a Russellian singular proposition with an actual object as a component. But even when this isn't the case, the content is still a proposition. That is, according to Karl II, what a sentence *says* on a particular occasion of use (i.e., the proposition it expresses) is the *content* of the sentence in the given context, not the character. Finally, when you add a circumstance of evaluation, or a possible world, to the content of a sentence, a truth value is determined, and this truth value is the extension of the sentence. Thus, if you like, you can think of the content of a sentence as picking out a set of possible worlds, but we shouldn't *identify* contents with such sets, because there can be pairs of sentences that have different contents but that are necessarily equivalent.

Let's move on now to Karl I. His view is more or less equivalent to Karl II's except that he has a different view of names and indexicals. Unlike Karl II, Karl I endorses an essentially Kaplanian view of demonstratives; and unlike Kaplan himself, Karl I extends this same view to pure indexicals and names. Thus, let me start with Karl I's view of demonstratives. On his view, demonstratives like 'that' are grammatically incomplete expressions that are completed by demonstrations. Thus, for instance, if I point at a book and say, "That belongs to Ralph," what refers to the book in question is not the word 'that' by itself, but the word *together with the act of pointing*. Moreover, it's the demonstrative-demonstration pair that has a character, so that two different uses of the demonstrative 'that' can have very different characters. Now, actually, we can also say that the word 'that' by itself (i.e., the word *type*) has a character, but it's not a full-blown character; it's an *incomplete* character that needs to be supplemented by a demonstration character. In other words, the idea here is that the character of a given use of 'that' (or equivalently, a given 'that'-demonstration pair) is composed of (a) the character of the word *type* 'that' and (b) the character of the given demonstration. In the case of a pointing demonstration, the character of the demonstration is something like a "look and feel"—what the object in question *looks like* from the given angle in the given context—or some such thing. It's important to note that the character of a demonstration can be put into a different context to produce a different referent; for instance, imagine that (i) in context *c*, I point at a certain book and say, "That belongs to Ralph," and (ii) in context *c'*, everything is the same except that I point at a different copy of the same book (a copy that looks just like the other copy). Then the two demonstrations have the very same character (thus, again, the character is an abstract object), but this character picks out different referents in the two different contexts (which explains why the two utterances can have different truth values). The character of the word *type* 'that' also contributes something important to the

character of the demonstrative-demonstration pair; it contributes *direct referentialization*. Thus, we might say that according to Karl I, the character of the demonstrative ‘that’ (i.e., of the word *type*) is *dthat[x]*. So, again, on this view, the character of ‘that’ is incomplete; it needs to be supplemented with another character—in particular, a demonstration character—before we get a full-blown character. (By a “full-blown character”, I just mean a semantic value (and again, this is going to be an abstract object) that, when combined with a context, yields a content.) Thus, summing up, we can say that (a) the word *type* ‘that’ has a single, incomplete character; and (b) specific *uses* of ‘that’ (or equivalently, ‘that’-demonstration pairs) have different (complete) characters. For instance, if I say ‘That is F’ and the word ‘that’ is conjoined with a specific demonstration *d*, and the character of *d* is *d**, then the character of this occurrence of ‘that’ (or of the ‘that’-*d* pair) is *dthat[d*]*.

Moving on to other demonstratives, e.g., ‘he’, Karl I says essentially the same thing, except that there is more conceptual meat built into the character of the word *type*. Thus, whereas the character of ‘that’ is *dthat[x]*, we might say that the character of ‘he’ is *dthat[male; x]*, or *dthat[the male in x]*, or some such thing.

Moreover, Karl I also endorses a view like this of pure indexicals. Thus, he thinks that different uses of, e.g., ‘now’ have different characters. For instance, if I use ‘now’ while thinking of the present time as 4:00 pm on July 1, 2010, then according to Karl I, the character of this use of ‘now’ might just be *dthat[4:00 pm on July 1, 2010]*. But on another occasion—and this is probably more normal—I might use the word ‘now’ while the given time is being represented in my head in a more ostensive, demonstration-esque sort of way, so that the relevant character is a more ineffable, look-and-feel sort of entity; in a case like this, the character of the given use of ‘now’ would, according to Karl I, be more like the character of a specific use of a demonstrative; e.g., it might be something like *dthat[d*]*, where *d** is a character that corresponds to the way that the given time was represented in my head when I uttered ‘now’.

Finally, Karl I endorses a similar view of names. More specifically, he thinks names have characters that are something like the characters of demonstratives. Thus, just as the character of ‘he’ is something like *dthat[male; x]*, so the character of ‘David’ is something like *dthat[bearer of ‘David’; x]*. Thus, on this view, the character of ‘David’ is incomplete. But particular uses of ‘David’ have complete characters, and different uses of ‘David’ can have different characters. E.g., the character of one use of ‘David’ might be something like *dthat[bearer of ‘David’; the guy over there drinking a martini]*, and the character of another use of ‘David’ might be *dthat[bearer of ‘David’; the author of “Dthat”]*.

An important feature of Karl I’s view is that the character of a specific use of an indexical is *not* the linguistic meaning of the given word; i.e., it’s not what competent English speakers associate with the word *type*. This is in stark contrast with the view of Karl II. On his view, as we saw above, every indexical is such that all of its (literal) uses have the same character, and this character is its linguistic meaning. A second important difference here is that according to Karl II, demonstratives are not grammatically incomplete; they are grammatically complete expressions, and they have complete characters. Thus, for Karl II, demonstrations

are not syntactic objects; rather, they are features of context; more specifically, a demonstration is part of what makes a specific object salient in a particular context. My own view is that these are very appealing features of Karl II's view. Indeed, it seems to me that because Karl II salvages the results that characters are linguistic meanings and demonstratives are grammatically complete expressions, his view is superior to Karl I's (and Kaplan's). But this won't matter here, and I won't try to argue the point.

In any event, aside from the differences I've mentioned here, Karl I's view is more or less the same as Karl II's. E.g., he thinks that when we combine the character of a name or indexical with a context, it determines a referent (as long as the name or indexical isn't being used vacuously in the given context), and he thinks this referent is the content (and the extension) of the given use of the name or indexical. And he thinks the character of a sentence is a structured character that's made up of the characters of the words in the sentence. And he thinks that propositions are sentence *contents*, not characters; i.e., he thinks that contents are the primary bearers of truth value, the objects of belief, the referents of certain kinds of 'that'-clauses, and so on.

3 Antithesis: neo-Fregeanism and the two Freds

There's a tension between two intuitive ideas often associated with a generally Fregean approach to semantics, namely, (i) that senses are linguistic meanings and (ii) that sense determines extension. It can't be that both of these ideas are right, because the linguistic meanings of words like 'he' and 'John' don't determine referents independently of context. In such cases, it seems that, at best, reference is determined by meaning plus context.

If you reject thesis (i) in connection with context-sensitive terms, you can stick more closely to thesis (ii), but it's important to note that even when we focus on terms that aren't context-sensitive, there are problems with the idea that meaning completely determines extension. Indeed, on at least one way of thinking of things, extension is almost never determined by meaning alone. Take, for instance, the meaning of 'bachelor'. Does it determine an extension all by itself? Well, in a sense it does—it picks out the set of things that have the property of being a bachelor. But it doesn't tell us which set this is, i.e., which objects are in the extension. We don't get a precise extension for a term like 'bachelor' until we combine its meaning with a possible world, or a circumstance of evaluation, or some such thing. Now, if we like, we can still speak in such cases of meaning determining extension, but it needs to be understood that what this really means is that the extension is fixed by meaning-plus-the-actual-circumstances.

In any event, I'm more concerned here with the issue of whether senses are linguistic meanings than the issue of whether sense determines extension. What I want to do is develop two different neo-Fregean views, one that says that senses *aren't* linguistic meanings and one that says they are. I will ascribe the former view to Fred I and the latter to Fred II. And as will become clearer in Sect. 4, these views correspond pretty closely to the views of Karl I and Karl II, respectively. Indeed,

I develop the views of the two Freds in the way I do precisely so that they correspond to the views of the two Karls. If the views of the Karls were different, I would develop the views of the Freds differently, in analogous ways. (I should also note here that the views of both Freds differ from Frege's view in at least some ways. I think that Frege's view is closer to Fred I's, partly because I don't think Frege believed that, in general, senses are linguistic meanings. But I won't pursue this exegetical issue here.)

The two Freds endorse essentially equivalent views of predicates like 'bachelor'.⁴ In particular, they both think that the sense of 'bachelor' is its linguistic meaning, and the extension is the set of all bachelors. When it comes to names and indexicals, however, the two Freds disagree. I'll start with Fred I.

Fred I thinks that the sense of a name or indexical is *not* its linguistic meaning. Rather, the sense is a mode of presentation. And insofar as the mode of presentation can differ from context to context while the word remains the same, it follows that the sense of a word can differ from context to context. For instance, suppose that you and I are college freshmen who have both just learned about Aristotle, and suppose that we both utter tokens of the sentence 'Aristotle was smart.' Finally, suppose that when we utter these tokens, Aristotle is represented in my head as *the ancient Greek philosopher who wrote De Anima* and in your head as *the ancient Greek philosopher who wrote the Nicomachean Ethics*. Then according to Fred I, the senses of the two different uses of 'Aristotle' are different.

Now, so far, this might sound like Frege's view, but there is an important difference between Fred I and Frege. Frege thinks that in the above scenario, when I say, "Aristotle was smart," the sense of this use of 'Aristotle' is *the ancient Greek philosopher who wrote De Anima*. But Fred I thinks this was a mistake; he's read his Kripke and knows that names are rigid designators. Thus, he thinks the sense of this use of 'Aristotle' is something like *rthat[the ancient Greek philosopher who wrote De Anima]*; in other words, he thinks that this use of 'Aristotle' has the same sense as the expression 'rthat[the ancient Greek philosopher who wrote *De Anima*],' where 'rthat' is an operator that rigidifies a singular term, in particular, whatever singular term is inside the brackets. Now, it's important to note that 'rthat' is different from 'dthat'. In particular, 'rthat' is not a direct-referentializer;⁵ thus, on Fred I's view, the content of this use of 'Aristotle'—or, more precisely, what it contributes to the proposition expressed—is not Aristotle, i.e., not the actual man, but rather a certain *sense*, namely, *rthat[the ancient Greek philosopher who wrote De Anima]*. So when a word 'N' is used with a sense like this, it's not directly referential, but it is rigid: assuming that there's a unique object picked out by the relevant description or singular term in the given context and circumstance, the given token of 'N' denotes that object in all possible worlds. So, for instance, an utterance of the form 'N could have been F' will be true iff there's a world in which

⁴ See footnote 1. What I said there about the two Karls applies to the two Freds as well.

⁵ They're also pronounced differently; 'dthat' sounds just like 'that', but 'rthat' sounds like 'rrrrr-that', where 'rrrrr' is long and drawn out, like a growl, and 'that' is a short, bursting monosyllable. Thus, when 'rthat' is pronounced correctly, it sounds much the way 'great' sounds in the mouth of Tony the Tiger.

the relevant object—i.e., the object picked out by ‘N’ in the actual context and circumstance—is F.

I already made this point once, but it’s worth repeating that Fred I does not think that senses like the above are the linguistic meanings of ordinary names like ‘Aristotle’. They are, rather, senses of specific uses of those names. These senses are *meaning-like* in certain ways, but they cannot rightly be called linguistic meanings because they don’t capture what speakers must understand in order to be competent users of the given names. This enables Fred I to sidestep many of the objections that have been brought against Frege’s theory of names. For instance, it has often been charged that Frege’s view couldn’t be right because it entails that sentences like ‘Aristotle wrote *De Anima*’ are analytic when, in fact, they’re not. But it doesn’t follow from Fred I’s view (nor, I think, from Frege’s, but I won’t worry about this here) that such sentences are analytic because his view doesn’t entail that the senses of specific uses of names are the linguistic meanings of those names.

Fred I has a similar view of indexicals. In particular, different uses of indexicals have different senses, and all of these senses are rigid. Thus, e.g., if I use ‘that’ together with a pointing demonstration *d*, then the sense will be something like *rthat[s]*, where *s* is a sense that’s determined by the “look and feel” of *d*; and if I use ‘that’ with a different demonstration *d'*, then the sense could be very different—we might represent it as *rthat[s']*. Likewise for pure indexicals; for instance, if I use ‘now’ while thinking of the present time as 4:00 pm on July 1, 2010, then the sense of this use of ‘now’ is something like *rthat[4:00 pm on July 1, 2010]*. But if I use ‘now’ while the given time is being represented in my head in a more demonstration-esque sort of way, then the sense might be a more ineffable, look-and-feel sort of entity; it might be more like the sense of a specific use of a demonstrative; thus, we might represent it as *rthat[s*]*, where *s** is a sense that corresponds to the way the given time was represented in my head when I uttered ‘now’.

Before moving on, it’s worth noting that Fred I rejects the idea that sense determines extension. This is analogous to Karl I’s rejection of the idea that character determines extension. If in context *c* I use the demonstrative ‘that’ while pointing at a certain book, and in context *c'* everything is exactly the same except that I point at a different copy of the same book (a copy that looks just like the other copy), then the two different uses of ‘that’ can have the very same sense while picking out different referents.

Let’s move on now to Fred II. Unlike Fred I (and, I think, Frege), Fred II thinks that the sense of a name or indexical is its linguistic meaning. Thus, he also thinks that names and indexicals have fixed senses that are operative for all of their (literal) uses. So, for instance, according to Fred II, the sense of the demonstrative ‘that’ is *rthat[the contextually salient object]*; and the sense of ‘he’ is *rthat[the contextually salient male]*; and the sense of the pure indexical ‘now’ is *rthat[the present time]*; and the sense of ‘John’ is *rthat[the contextually salient bearer of ‘John’]*;⁶ and so on.

⁶ This view of the senses of proper names is similar to views endorsed by Burge (1973) and Katz (1990).

Given this, it should be obvious that Fred II rejects the idea that sense determines extension. (Of course, Fred I rejects this thesis as well, but Fred II's rejection of it is much more obvious.) In any event, on Fred II's view, extension is determined by sense plus other things. What needs to be added to sense (or linguistic meaning) in order to get an extension is different for different kinds of words. In connection with predicates like 'bachelor', extension is determined by sense plus *circumstance of evaluation*; and in connection with names and indexicals, extension (i.e., reference) is determined by sense plus *context*. Thus, on this view, when we talk about *the* reference of a name or indexical, what we're really talking about is its reference *in the given context*. And note that, like Karl II, Fred II uses 'context' very broadly; what he calls "context" includes everything about a situation that might help fix the referents of the relevant names and indexicals. (And likewise for 'demonstration'; on Fred II's view, just about any feature of a context can count as a "demonstration" and help fix the reference of a name or demonstrative.)

Moving on to sentences, Fred II maintains that the sense of a sentence is a structured sense whose components are the senses of the words in the sentence (and he also thinks that a sentence's sense is its linguistic meaning). The extension of a sentence token is just a truth value, and again, this is not determined by sense alone. In connection with sentences that contain no names or indexicals—in particular, sentences like 'All bachelors are thin'—extension is determined by sense together with circumstance of evaluation; thus, when we speak of *the* extension (or truth value) of such a sentence, what we're really talking about is its truth value *in the actual circumstances*. When we come to sentences containing names or indexicals, things get a bit trickier because some elements of the sense of the sentence need to be combined with a *context* and other elements of the sense of the sentence need to be combined with a *circumstance of evaluation*. Fred II thinks that the adding of context is in some sense logically prior to the adding of a circumstance of evaluation, and so he says the following: When we combine the sense of a sentence with a context, we get the sentence's *truth conditions* (in that context); and when we combine the truth conditions with a possible world, or a circumstance of evaluation, we get a *truth value*. (Of course, with any actual use of a sentence, we get a context and a circumstance of evaluation at the same time, and so we instantly get truth conditions and a truth value.) In any event, we can still say that the extension of a sentence is its truth value, but the really important point here is that sentences containing names or indexicals have three distinct semantic values, namely, sense, truth conditions, and truth value.

Two points need to be made here to clarify Fred II's view. First, we can say that *all* sentences have three semantic values, not just sentences with names or indexicals. In other words, we can say that sentences like 'All bachelors are thin' have a third semantic value (i.e., that they have truth conditions), but in this case, the truth conditions are determined by the sense of the sentence by itself. Thus, in this case, the truth conditions and the sense are not importantly different. Second, according to Fred II, the truth conditions of sentences containing names or indexicals are analogous to Russellian singular propositions, not sets of possible worlds. In other words, a Fred IIian sense together with a context determines not just a set of worlds, or a set of circumstances, but also a Russellian proposition. For

instance, if we take a sentence of the form ‘Fa’, where ‘a’ is a name or indexical, and put it in a particular context *c*, then the truth condition that’s determined is that the referent of ‘a’ in *c* have the property of *Fness*. (If you like, you can take the Fred IIian truth conditions of a token of ‘Fa’ to *be* the Russellian proposition. Fred II never said this in print, but in private correspondence, he has indicated that he’s fine with it.)

By the way, Fred I and Fred II are in pretty close agreement on the topic of sentences. In particular, Fred I agrees that sentences have three semantic values, viz., senses, truth conditions, and extensions. But I won’t work through the details of Fred I’s version of this view because it won’t be relevant to anything I’ll argue later in the paper.

Finally, Fred I, Fred II, and Frege all agree that propositions are sentence senses. That is, they agree that the sense of a sentence is what’s *said* on a given occasion of use—i.e., it’s the proposition expressed—and they agree that sentence senses are the objects of belief, the primary bearers of truth value, the referents of certain kinds of ‘that’-clauses, and so on. Note, however, that for Fred I (and for Frege), the sense of a sentence (and, hence, the proposition expressed) can be different on different occasions of use, whereas for Fred II, this is not the case; on Fred II’s view, all (literal) uses of a (non-ambiguous) sentence have the same sense, i.e., express the same proposition.

4 Synthesis

The theories of Fred I and Fred II correspond pretty closely to the theories of Karl I and Karl II, respectively. Indeed, it seems to me that in both cases, there is no fact of the matter as to which view is superior. More specifically, my claim is that in both cases, the two theories are *tied in terms of factual accuracy*. I am going to argue this point at length in connection with Fred II and Karl II. Then at the end, I’ll say a few words about how the point extends to Fred I and Karl I. (The reason I focus mostly on Fred II and Karl II is simply that I like their theories more than those of Fred I and Karl I, mainly because I think their theories really are theories of *meaning*. Since Fred I and Karl I deny that senses and characters are, in general, linguistic meanings, their theories might more aptly be thought of as theories of the cognitive significance of specific utterances.)

4.1 Methodological preliminaries

Much of what I want to say about Fred II and Karl II should, I think, be pretty clear. The two theories are deeply parallel in pretty transparent ways. On Karl II’s view, sentences have characters, contents, and truth values; on Fred II’s view, they have senses, truth conditions, and truth values, and in all three cases, the Fred IIian semantic values are essentially equivalent to the Karl IIian semantic values. But the two views come apart in connection with the roles, or theoretical jobs, that they assign to the different semantic values. In particular, they disagree about which of the semantic values play the role of *propositions*. Karl II thinks that propositions are

the *contents* of sentences (or in Fred II's lingo, the truth conditions of sentences), whereas Fred II thinks propositions are the *meanings* of sentences—i.e., sentence *senses*, or in Karl II's lingo, characters. This leads to two seemingly important kinds of disagreements:

- (1) Disagreements about what's *said*, or *expressed*, by an utterance of a simple sentence of the form 'Fa' that contains a name or indexical: Karl II thinks that what's said by such an utterance is the content of the sentence in the given context; i.e., he thinks it's a Russellian singular proposition; and Fred II thinks that what's said is captured by the sense of the given sentence; i.e., he thinks it's a neo-Fregean proposition.
- (2) Disagreements about sentences that are *about* propositions, e.g., belief reports: It's widely believed that certain kinds of 'that'-clauses—e.g., the ones in belief reports—refer to propositions; I'll assume that something like this is right, and given this, it follows that Karl II and Fred II think that belief reports involving names or indexicals are about different sorts of objects; in particular, Karl II thinks they're about singular propositions, and Fred II thinks they're about neo-Fregean propositions.

These might seem like important differences between Karl II and Fred II, but I don't think they are. Indeed, I'm going to argue that in connection with both sorts of disagreements, there's no fact of the matter as to which of the two theories is superior.

Let's start by getting clear about the sorts of facts we're talking about here. What sorts of facts could make it the case that when ordinary folk utter ordinary 'Fa' sentences like 'Today is a Tuesday' and 'Obama is a politician', they're expressing singular propositions as opposed to neo-Fregean propositions (or neo-Fregean propositions as opposed to singular propositions)? And what sorts of facts could make it the case that when ordinary folk utter ordinary belief reports like 'Ralph believes that Mars is red', they're talking about singular propositions (or neo-Fregean propositions)? The most obvious answer to this question is that the debate could be settled by facts about the intentions of ordinary speakers. If, when ordinary folk uttered sentences like the above, they intended to be expressing and talking about singular propositions, then that would presumably be the best interpretation of their utterances, and Karl II's view would be superior to Fred II's. Likewise, if they intended to be expressing and talking about neo-Fregean propositions, then Fred II's theory would be superior to Karl II's. Now, it's important to note that when I speak of intentions here, I'm not just speaking of conscious intentions. We can have tacit or unconscious intentions that fit better with one semantic theory than another. And when I speak of tacit or unconscious intentions, I don't have anything particular in mind. In my lingo, an intention could be just about any feature of a person's psychology that could rightly be seen as fitting or conflicting with a theory of what that person means by her words. Thus, when I say that the dispute between Karl II and Fred II could be settled by facts about our intentions, all I really mean is that it could be settled by psychological facts about what we mean by our words.

I suppose you might think the dispute could be settled by facts of some other kind as well—i.e., by something other than facts about our intentions, or our psychology.

But this seems pretty implausible. It seems to me that the facts that semantic theories are trying to capture are facts about what our words mean, and it seems that these facts are ultimately determined by facts about *us*, in particular, by facts about what we mean by our words. Thus, it seems to me that if there are any facts that settle the debate between Karl II and Fred II, they're facts about the intentions of ordinary folk. And so it also seems that if the theories of Karl II and Fred II fit equally well with the sum total of all the facts about our intentions, or what we mean by our words, then they're simply tied in terms of factual accuracy—or as I'll also say, there's no fact of the matter as to which of the two theories is superior.

There are multiple ways to argue that two theories are tied in terms of factual accuracy. One way is to argue that the two theories are notational variants of one another, or that they don't make any distinct factual claims, so that there aren't any possible facts that could settle the dispute. But that's not what I'm going to argue here because I think that the theories of Karl II and Fred II do make distinct factual claims. What I'm going to argue is that there just aren't any facts of the kinds there would need to be to settle the debate. In other words, since the relevant facts here are facts about our intentions, I'm going to argue that ordinary speakers just don't have the kinds of intentions they would need to have for there to be a fact of the matter in the debate between Karl II and Fred II. Or put differently, my claim is that the semantic intentions that we do have are neutral between the two theories. You can think of it like this:

Simplified schematic of what I'm saying: The theories of Karl II and Fred II do make distinct factual claims; in particular, Karl II's theory entails that we have intentions of kinds A1, B1, and C1, and Fred II's theory entails that we have intentions of kinds A1, B1, and C2. But my claim is that while it may be true that we've got intentions of kinds A1 and B1, *we don't have any type-C intentions*. That is, we don't have intentions of kinds C1 or C2.

So given that this is my strategy, it should be clear that my nonfactualist thesis is a contingent, empirical claim. On my view, if our intentions had been different, then the relevant facts would have been different, and so one of the two theories could have been factually superior to the other, or more factually accurate. For instance, if when ordinary folk uttered simple sentences of the form 'Fa', they intended to be expressing singular propositions and not neo-Fregean propositions, then Karl II's theory would be superior to Fred II's theory. And likewise, if ordinary folk intended their utterances of such sentences to express neo-Fregean propositions and not singular propositions, then Fred II's theory would be better. But my claim is that in point of actual fact, the intentions of ordinary speakers are neutral between the two theories. Ordinary speakers *could have* had intentions that settled the debate, but they don't.

In any event, my central thesis is that the intentions of ordinary speakers are neutral between the theories of Karl II and Fred II. My argument for this will have a negative side and a positive side. On the negative side, I will argue that we don't have any *evidence* for thinking that ordinary speakers have the kinds of intentions they would need to have for there to be a fact of the matter in the debate between Karl II and Fred II. If we did have such evidence, it would presumably be evidence

having to do with our *intuitions*, but I'll argue that we just don't have any evidence of this kind. This, I think, is already an important result; if we don't have any evidence for the claim that ordinary speakers have intentions of the kind needed to settle the debate, then that should undermine our confidence in the idea that ordinary speakers do have such intentions, and it should make us think that it may very well be that they don't. But, again, there's also a positive side to my argument; I will argue that we've got some initial reasons to think that ordinary speakers just *don't* have intentions of the kind needed to settle the debate.

I'll also say a few words at the end to motivate the idea that the two theories are essentially tied in connection with things like theoretical elegance, simplicity, non-ad-hocness, and so on. This is important because even if the two theories fit equally well with all of the evidence that we currently have about our intentions, it could still be that one of them fits better with the sum total of the objective *facts* about our intentions, and indeed, it could still be that we have good *reasons* to think that one of them fits better with the facts. For instance, if one of the theories was simpler than the other one, or more unified, or less ad hoc, then that would give us good reason to favor it over the other theory. But given what I'll argue below, it's hard to believe that either of the two theories *is* superior in any of these ways. In other words, my arguments are going to make it plausible to suppose that the theories of Karl II and Fred II are essentially tied in terms of how elegant they are, and how unified, and how non-ad-hoc, and so on.

4.2 Type-(1) disagreements

In this subsection, I'll concentrate on the debate between Karl II and Fred II over the kinds of propositions that are expressed by simple 'Fa' sentences containing names or indexicals. I don't think ordinary speakers have intentions of the kind needed to settle this debate, but in the present subsection, I just want to argue that we don't have any good *evidence* for thinking that ordinary speakers have intentions of this kind.

You might think there's a really quick argument for Karl II's view here, i.e., for the claim that when ordinary folk utter simple 'Fa' sentences like 'Today is a Tuesday', they're expressing Russellian propositions. One might put the argument here as follows:

Suppose that on two different days—call them “Day 1” and “Day 2”—you and I utter two different tokens of the sentence ‘Today is a Tuesday’. Karl II thinks that we've *said different things*; in particular, he thinks that I've expressed the Russellian proposition <Day 1, being a Tuesday>, whereas you've expressed the Russellian proposition <Day 2, being a Tuesday>. In contrast, Fred II thinks that we've said the same thing; in particular, we've both expressed the neo-Fregean proposition <*rthat*[*the present day*], the sense of 'is a Tuesday'>. But that can't be right. The two utterances might have different truth values; one could be true and the other false. Thus, there have to be two different propositions here, since propositions are the bearers of truth value. Therefore, since Fred II's view gives us only one proposition to work

with, it gives us only one truth value, and so it can't account for the fact that the two utterances could have different truth values.

The author of this argument doesn't understand Fred II's view. According to Fred II, sense doesn't determine extension all by itself, so in general, on his view, propositions don't have fixed truth values. This, of course, is in opposition to Frege; he thought that senses do determine extensions (at least relative to the actual world), and so he thought that propositions have fixed truth values (again, relative to the actual world). But Fred II's view is different. On his view, when we put a proposition into a context, it picks up a truth condition, so it can have one truth value in one context and a different truth value in another context. Thus, if I say "Today is a Tuesday" and it really is, and if you say "Today is a Tuesday" and it really isn't, then (according to Fred II) I express a certain neo-Fregean proposition, and you express the very same neo-Fregean proposition, and this proposition is true in the context of my utterance and false in the context of your utterance.

So the quick argument for Karl II's view doesn't work. Moreover, my response to this argument points to a more general result. Given what I've said here, it seems clear that the theories of Karl II and Fred II are always going to assign the same truth values to all simple 'Fa' sentences in all contexts. This is important because it suggests that we can't argue for the superiority of either of the two theories by eliciting native-speaker intuitions about the truth values of simple 'Fa' sentences. Now, of course, it could still be that our intentions fit better with one of the two theories, but it makes the point harder to argue.

In any event, it seems to me that we don't have any *evidence* for thinking that our intentions fit better with one of the two theories, at least in connection with simple 'Fa' sentences. In particular, it seems that the intuitive data are entirely neutral here. Think about it. Karl II thinks that when you and I utter our tokens of 'Today is a Tuesday,' we've said two different things, i.e., that I've expressed one Russellian proposition and you've expressed another; and Fred II thinks that we've said the same thing, i.e., that we've both expressed one and the same neo-Fregean proposition. But, intuitively, it seems obvious that we've said the same thing in one sense and different things in another sense. And what's more, both Karl II and Fred II can account for this: Karl II says that the two utterances have the same character but different content, and Fred II says they have the same sense but different truth conditions.

Now, one might respond that while there's a sense in which we're expressing both sorts of propositions when we utter sentences like 'Today is a Tuesday,' we can nevertheless maintain that we're *primarily* expressing—or some such thing—one of the two kinds of propositions, i.e., singular propositions or neo-Fregean propositions. But (a) it seems pretty obvious that ordinary folk don't have *conscious* intentions to be primarily expressing propositions of one of the two kinds, and (b) while it's possible that they've got tacit or unconscious intentions here, there's no *evidence* for this. In particular, there's no intuitive evidence for it. For, again, when we native speakers of English reflect on cases involving multiple utterances of sentences like 'Today is a Tuesday,' it seems intuitively that they say the same thing in one sense and different things in another sense. We don't have the intuition that

they *primarily* say the same thing, and we don't have the intuition that they primarily say different things. Moreover, when we focus on single utterances of such sentences, we don't have an intuition to the effect that they primarily express Russellian propositions and not neo-Fregean propositions, or vice versa.

Now, it's important to note that I'm not making the ultra-strong claim that ordinary speakers don't have *any* intuitions that fit better with either of the two theories. Indeed, it seems possible to construct cases where we have something like an intuition that the relevant speakers are primarily expressing one kind of proposition or the other. For instance, if Smith points at the Matterhorn and Jones points at van Gogh's *Starry Night* and they both say, "That object is beautiful," it seems that most people would have the intuition that Smith and Jones are saying different things and, hence, primarily expressing singular propositions. And likewise, if Jill and Ed are kidnapped and blindfolded and brought to two different locations, and if they both whisper to themselves, "The kidnappers live here," it seems that most people would have the intuition that Jill and Ed are saying the same thing and, hence, primarily expressing one and the same neo-Fregean proposition. Or to use a different kind of case, if Lois Lane says, "Superman can fly, but Clark Kent can't," it seems that most people would have the intuition that Lois hasn't contradicted herself and, hence, that the two conjuncts of her sentence primarily express neo-Fregean propositions. But these cases are the exception, not the rule. In most cases, we don't have clear intuitions about which sorts of propositions are primarily expressed by our simple 'Fa' sentences. Moreover, even though there are some exceptions to this rule—or some "outlier intuitions"—there doesn't seem to be any reason to think that there are more exceptions on one side of the debate than the other. And so it seems to me that if we look at our intuitions *as a whole*, they don't deliver a clear verdict about the kinds of propositions that are expressed, or primarily expressed, by our simple 'Fa' sentences. Indeed, they don't even come close to delivering a clear verdict here. They just seem neutral. And if this is right, then it seems safe to conclude that, at present, we don't have any good evidence for thinking that ordinary speakers have intentions of the kind needed to settle the debate between Karl II and Fred II over simple 'Fa' sentences.

4.3 Type-(2) disagreements

You might think that if we want to find intuitions or intentions that settle the debate between Karl II and Fred II, we should focus on sentences like belief reports. One might motivate this attitude by saying something like the following:

Your nonfactualist thesis might seem plausible when we restrict our attention to simple 'Fa' sentences like 'Today is a Tuesday', for it seems obvious that the views of Karl II and Fred II are always going to assign the same truth values to such sentences in all contexts. But with respect to belief reports (and various other 'that'-clause-containing sentences), the situation is different. In particular, it seems that the theories of Karl II and Fred II will sometimes assign different truth values to such sentences. Thus, *prima facie*, it seems that if we focus on belief reports, we might be able to uncover some evidence for

thinking that one of the two theories fits better with the intentions of ordinary speakers; in particular, we might be able to do this by eliciting ordinary-language intuitions about the truth values of certain sorts of belief reports involving names and indexicals.

My response to this is simple: The best theories of belief reports can be given both direct-reference and neo-Fregean formulations, and in each such case, the two different versions of the theory assign the same truth values to all belief reports in all contexts. I can't provide a complete argument for this claim here, but by showing how the story goes for one such pair of parallel theories, I can make the claim plausible.

The first point I want to make here is that the simple theories of belief reports that are immediately suggested by direct reference theory and Fregeanism are both implausible. The simple theory suggested by direct reference theory is that sentences of the form 'S believes that a is F,' where 'a' is a name or indexical, say that S believes the singular proposition $\langle a, F_{\text{ness}} \rangle$. And the simple theory suggested by Fregeanism is that such sentences say that S believes the Fregean proposition $\langle \text{the sense of 'a'}, \text{the sense of 'is F'} \rangle$. Both of these views are implausible because they're both badly inconsistent with the intuitive data about the truth values of ordinary belief reports. Now, one might try to argue that our intuitions are simply mistaken—see, e.g., Salmon (1986)—but I don't think we need to do this, and I don't think we should. I think we can cook up a theory of belief reports that saves all the intuitive data. Indeed, I think there are multiple theories that do this. But, again, I also think these theories can be given both direct-reference and neo-Fregean formulations.⁷ In what follows, I will explain how this goes for one such theory of belief reports. I begin with the direct reference version of the theory.

The central idea here has been developed before, in a few different ways, by people like Schiffer (1977, 1978), Crimmins and Perry (1989), Richard (1990), and Recanati (1993). For our purposes, it doesn't matter which version of the view Karl II endorses, but for the sake of getting a specific view on the table, we can say that he accepts the following theory (actually, we'll see in a bit that he's going to have to tweak this theory just a bit, but for now, let's assume that this is his final view):

Sentences of the form 'S believes that a is F,' where 'a' is a name or indexical, say the following: S believes the singular proposition $\langle a, F_{\text{ness}} \rangle$ under some (contextually appropriate) mental representation or other of the referent of 'a'. (Karl II might also want to add a clause about S's mental representation of F_{ness} , but for the sake of simplicity, I will ignore this complication.)

The 'contextually appropriate' qualifier is crucial; it is this that enables Karl II to account for the fact that (a) some belief reports place almost no substantive restrictions on the kinds of representations (or modes of presentation) that must be involved in the given belief state in order for the belief report to be true; and (b) some belief reports place a moderate amount of substantive restrictions on the

⁷ I also think that (a) the simple theory suggested by direct reference theory can be given a neo-Fregean formulation, and (b) the simple theory suggested by Fregeanism can be given a direct-reference formulation. But I won't pursue this here.

kinds of representations that must be involved in the given belief state; and (c) some belief reports seem to zero in on *specific* representations, or modes of presentation, that must be involved in the given belief state for the belief report to be true. Let me give a few examples to clarify this point.

First, an example along the lines of (a). Suppose that Jim is at a party and has just met Tanya; he doesn't even know Tanya's name yet, but he thinks she's funny, and you and I notice that he is laughing at virtually everything Tanya says to him. You and I know both Jim and Tanya, and I say to you, "Jim believes that Tanya is funny." Intuitively, this report is true, and Karl II's view seems to get this right because, intuitively, it seems that I haven't said much of anything about how Jim represents Tanya in his head, and so it seems that however she is represented in his head, it's going to count as a contextually appropriate representation.

Here's a second case along the lines of (b). Suppose that Betty is in the know about Lois's Superman-Clark Kent confusion, and suppose she says the following: "Lois believes that Superman flies, but she doesn't believe that Clark Kent flies." Intuitively, this report is true, and Karl II's view gets this right, because it entails (or seems to entail—more on this in a moment) that this report is true iff Lois believes the Russellian proposition <Superman, being able to fly> under some "Superman-type representation" of Superman but doesn't believe it under any "Clark-Kent-type representation" of Superman. In order to motivate the claim that his view really does entail this, Karl II has to argue that in the context of Betty's utterance, Superman-type representations of Superman count as contextually appropriate in connection with the first belief report ('Lois believes that Superman flies') but not the second ('Lois doesn't believe that Clark Kent flies'). I think that Karl II can make a convincing case for this stance because I think something like this really is built into the context, or background assumptions, of Betty's utterance. But I won't argue this here.

Finally, a third case along the lines of (c).⁸ Suppose that I'm a dentist, you're my assistant, and I'm performing a root canal on Lila. Suppose further that Lila believes that her root canal will be over at 4:00 pm; that it's currently 4:00 pm; that Lila doesn't realize that it's 4:00 pm; and that she believes that her root canal isn't over yet. Finally, suppose I see what I think is an expression of relief on Lila's face, and I say to you, "Lila believes that her root canal is over now." Intuitively, this report is false: Lila *doesn't* believe that her root canal is over now; she thinks it's still going on. Of course, she *does* believe the Russellian proposition <her root canal, being over, 4:00 pm>, but Karl II can argue that his view gets the right truth value here (i.e., False) because he can argue that Lila doesn't believe this Russellian proposition under any contextually appropriate representation of 4:00 pm. For in the given context, I am making an *essential* use of the indexical 'now'.⁹ Thus, Karl II can argue that my belief report zeros in on a specific representation of 4:00 pm; that is, he can argue that on his view, my report is true iff Lila believes the above Russellian proposition under a very specific representation of 4:00 pm, namely, one that corresponds to the concept *the present time*, or perhaps *dthat[the present time]*.

⁸ This case is derived from a similar case in Higginbotham (1995).

⁹ For a discussion of essential uses of indexicals, see Perry (1979).

Let's move on now to Fred II. If he wants to save the intuitive data, he needs to depart pretty radically from the simple view of belief reports suggested by traditional Fregeanism. For instance, the simple Fregean view flies badly in the face of our intuitions in the Jim-Tanya case because, intuitively, in making my report, I have said very little about the kind of representation of Tanya that Jim needs to have in order for my report to be true (in particular, Jim doesn't need to represent her with what Fred II thinks is the sense of 'Tanya'—i.e., with *rthat[the contextually salient bearer of 'Tanya']*—because, intuitively, my report can be true even if Jim doesn't know that Tanya's name is 'Tanya'). Moreover, surprisingly, traditional Fregeanism can't even handle the Betty-Lois case because it entails (implausibly) that Betty has zeroed in on unique Fregean propositions that Lois needs to believe and not believe. So Fred II needs to endorse a different theory here. Once again, I think there are multiple views, all pretty similar, that he could go for. I developed one such theory in detail in my (2005). Fred II endorses a slightly different theory, which can be put in the following way (again, we'll see below that Fred II is going to have to tweak this theory a bit, but for now we can work with this version of the view):

Sentences of the form 'S believes that a is F,' where 'a' is a name or indexical, say the following: S believes some (contextually appropriate) neo-Fregean proposition or other of the form $\langle S(a)$, the sense of 'is F' \rangle , where $S(a)$ is the sense of some expression 'b' that, in the relevant context, is coreferential with 'a' (and might be identical to 'a'). (Fred II might want to alter this a bit so that, in some contexts, it would be OK if the second component of the proposition were something other than the sense of 'is F'; but for the sake of simplicity, I will ignore this complication.)¹⁰

To see how this view differs from traditional Fregean views, let's see how it handles the Jim-Tanya case. According to Fred II, when I utter the sentence 'Jim believes that Tanya is funny,' what I've really said is that Jim believes some (contextually appropriate) neo-Fregean proposition of the form $\langle S(Tanya)$, the sense of 'is funny' \rangle , where $S(Tanya)$ is the sense of an expression that, in the given context, refers to Tanya. But Jim presumably *does* believe some such proposition; for he's obviously got some way of representing Tanya in his head, and he apparently thinks she's funny. Moreover, Fred II can argue that however Jim represents Tanya in his head, it will count as "contextually appropriate" because in making my belief ascription, I haven't said much of anything about how Jim needs to represent Tanya, and so just about any neo-Fregean proposition that gets the reference right will be good enough, i.e., contextually appropriate. Therefore, on Fred II's view, unlike Frege's view, the Jim-Tanya belief ascription comes out true.

Fred II's analysis of the Jim-Tanya case is virtually identical to Karl II's analysis. Moreover, this point generalizes to other belief ascriptions. For instance, Fred II's analysis of the Betty-Lois case is also essentially equivalent to Karl II's analysis. In particular, Fred II can argue that Betty's utterance is true because in the context of

¹⁰ This view is similar in certain ways to views developed by Forbes (1987) and the early Kaplan (1968–1969). But the 'contextually appropriate' qualifier sets this view apart from those earlier views, and as we'll presently see, this qualifier is a crucial part of the theory.

that utterance, Superman-type senses (or Superman-type representations) count as contextually appropriate in connection with the first belief report ('Lois believes that Superman flies') but not the second ('Lois doesn't believe that Clark Kent flies'). Likewise, Fred II can say just what Karl II says about the Lila case—i.e., that I make an essential use of the indexical 'now' and, in so doing, zero in on a specific neo-Fregean proposition that Lila needs to believe in order for my report to be true, namely, one that has as a component the sense of the word 'now', i.e., *rthat[the present time]*.¹¹

As things stand, however, neither of the above theories of belief reports can be right because they both fail in connection with belief reports involving vacuous names and indexicals. Suppose, e.g., that Drew is a normal 5-year-old child who believes in Santa Claus, and suppose I utter the following:

(D) Drew believes that Santa Claus is nice.

Intuitively, (D) is true. But neither of the two above theories can account for this. It seems to me, however, that both Karl II and Fred II can alter their theories to account for the truth of (D) and that when they do, we end up, once again, in a situation in which they endorse deeply parallel theories.

Let's start with Fred II. On his view, as it was stated above, (D) is true iff Drew believes some (contextually appropriate) neo-Fregean proposition of the form $\langle S(\textit{Santa Claus})$, the sense of 'is nice' \rangle , where $S(\textit{Santa Claus})$ is a sense of some expression 'b' that, in the relevant context, is coreferential with 'Santa Claus'. But since, in the context of (D), 'Santa Claus' doesn't refer at all, we're obviously not going to get the right result here. But Fred II can alter his view to account for the truth of sentences like (D). All he needs to do is introduce a relation that does for vacuous terms what the relation of coreferentiality does for non-vacuous terms. In other words, the idea here is that the relation will hold between, e.g., 'Santa Claus' and 'Kris Kringle', and 'Romeo' and 'Juliet's boyfriend', but not between 'Pegasus' and 'Oliver Twist', or 'Sinbad' and 'Mrs. Dalloway'. I'll use the term '*covacuous*' to express this relation. (I assume that this notion can be defined in terms of ordinary-language intentions, or conventions, or some such thing; I won't pursue this here; I think the notion is clear enough for present purposes.) Armed with the notion of covacuity, Fred II can alter his view of belief reports to say something like this:

A sentence of the form 'S believes that a is F,' where 'a' is a name or indexical, is true iff S believes some (contextually appropriate) neo-Fregean proposition of the form $\langle S(a)$, the sense of 'is F' \rangle , where $S(a)$ is the sense of some expression 'b' that, in the relevant context, is either coreferential with 'a' or covacuous with 'a'.

What about Karl II? Well, as it stands, his view can't account for the truth of (D) either because it entails that (D) is true only if Drew believes $\langle \textit{Santa Claus}$, niceness \rangle , and there is obviously no such proposition. But, again, Karl II can alter

¹¹ It's not quite right to say that in uttering this belief report, I've zeroed in on a unique neo-Fregean proposition that Lila needs to believe; for I haven't been precise about how she needs to represent her root canal. We can ignore this complication here; the remarks in the text capture Fred II's view of my belief report *with respect to the word 'now'*.

his theory to account for the truth of (D). He might start out by saying something like the following:

A sentence of the form ‘S believes that a is F,’ where ‘a’ is a name or indexical, is true iff either (i) ‘a’ has a referent (in the relevant context), and S believes the singular proposition $\langle a, F_{\text{ness}} \rangle$ under some (contextually appropriate) mental representation or other of the referent of ‘a’; or (ii) ‘a’ is vacuous (in the relevant context), and S believes the gappy singular proposition $\langle _, F_{\text{ness}} \rangle$ under some (contextually appropriate) mental representation or other that’s covacuous with ‘a’ (in the relevant context).¹²

I think it would be OK for Karl II to endorse this theory, but you might think that if he did this, then his theory would be less elegant (or more ad hoc) than Fred II’s theory because of the way that it splits the truth conditions of belief reports into two completely separate disjuncts. I don’t think there’s any deep difference in theoretical elegance or ad hocness here; I think this is a shallow, insignificant difference that’s generated by my presentations of the two theories. To appreciate this point, notice that Karl II can articulate his theory without splitting the truth conditions into two completely separate disjuncts by simply stipulating that if the term ‘a’ is vacuous, then the symbol ‘ $\langle a, F_{\text{ness}} \rangle$ ’ denotes the gappy singular proposition $\langle _, F_{\text{ness}} \rangle$. Given this, Karl II can articulate his theory of belief reports as follows:

A sentence of the form ‘S believes that a is F,’ where ‘a’ is a name or indexical, is true iff S believes the singular proposition $\langle a, F_{\text{ness}} \rangle$ under some (contextually appropriate) mental representation or other that, in the relevant context, is either coreferential with ‘a’ or covacuous with ‘a’.

If Karl II proceeds like this, then the supposed difference in elegance just disappears. Indeed, once the theory is put like this, it seems exactly parallel to Fred II’s theory.

These, then, are the final theories of belief reports that Fred II and Karl II endorse. So this gives us the result that Karl II thinks that belief reports involving names and indexicals are about singular propositions, whereas Fred II thinks they’re about neo-Fregean propositions. But despite this, the two theories of belief reports are deeply, and pretty transparently, parallel theories. Moreover, it should be clear that the two theories are always going to assign the same truth values to ordinary belief reports. Thus, since the primary data that these theories need to save, in order to be empirically adequate, are just native-speaker intuitions about the truth values of ordinary belief reports, it’s hard to see how we could get any evidence that would favor one of the two theories. In other words, it seems that the two theories are

¹² Of course, to make this work, Karl II would need to define the notion of covacuity so that it covers mental representations as well as expressions; but (a) I don’t see any reason why he can’t do this, and (b) it doesn’t even matter because Karl II could avoid this issue by changing clause (ii) to the following, which is clumsier but essentially equivalent: (ii*) ‘a’ is vacuous (in the relevant context), and S believes the gappy singular proposition $\langle _, F_{\text{ness}} \rangle$ under some (contextually appropriate) mental representation that has the same character as some expression ‘b’ that’s covacuous with ‘a’ (in the relevant context).

going to be tied with respect to empirical adequacy, or accounting for the relevant data.

4.4 Wrapping up the argument about Karl II and Fred II

The remarks in the last paragraph were intended to be about belief reports only, but given what I've argued in this paper, the points seem to generalize. First of all, the theories of Karl II and Fred II seem to assign the same truth values to all ordinary-language sentences in all contexts. Moreover, given what I've argued here, it seems that the two theories fit equally well with the intuitions of ordinary speakers. And given this, it seems plausible to conclude that the two theories fit equally well with the available evidence.

Now, of course, even if I'm right that the two theories fit equally well with the available evidence, it could still be that one of them fits better with the relevant *facts*—i.e., the facts about our intentions. But given what I've argued here, this just seems really hard to believe. It seems much more plausible to suppose that our intentions are neutral between the two theories—i.e., that we simply don't have the kinds of intentions that we would need to have in order for there to be a fact of the matter between the two theories. One argument for this claim is based on the idea that if we did have intentions of the kind needed to settle the debate, then this would probably show up in our intuitions. In other words, if there were psychological facts about us—about what we mean by our words—that made it the case that our talk is best interpreted by one of the two theories here and not the other, wouldn't this be reflected in our intuitions? It seems to me that it probably would. And so if I'm right that our intuitions are neutral between the theories of Karl II and Fred II, then it seems likely that our intentions are neutral as well.

So that's one argument for the positive claim that ordinary speakers don't have intentions of the kind needed to settle the debate between Karl II and Fred II. A second argument for this claim is based on the fact that the differences between the two theories are extremely abstract and esoteric. Given this, and given that the differences never result in different truth-value assignments for any sentences, why would ordinary folk have developed intentions of the kind needed to settle the debate? After all, it seems pretty clear that ordinary speakers have never had any *need* to develop such intentions. So why would they? Why would ordinary folk get precise on a highly esoteric question about what exactly their sentences say, when there is no need to do so—when they can do everything that they want and need to do, in terms of communication, without getting precise in this way? It seems to me that they wouldn't. Semantic precision is the output of *need*. And this is especially true when it comes to highly abstract issues that could have no bearing on the truth conditions of our sentences and that ordinary speakers have presumably never thought about. So given all this, it's hard to believe that ordinary folk have developed intentions that are robust enough to make one of the two theories true and the other false. It seems much more likely that the intentions of ordinary folk are simply neutral in this regard. In short, this looks like an obvious case of semantic indecision.

Finally, given what I've argued here, it seems plausible to suppose that the theories of Karl II and Fred II are roughly equal with respect to how elegant they are, how simple they are, how unified they are, how non-ad-hoc they are, and so on. In connection with simple 'Fa' sentences, this point is hardly even disputable. The two theories just seem exactly tied here. Moreover, even when we focus on the two theories of belief reports, there's still not much room to question the idea that the two theories are roughly tied with respect to the above traits. For the two theories of belief reports do the exact same thing; they both attempt to capture our intuitions by moving to a theory that's essentially halfway between pure direct reference theory and pure neo-Fregeanism. More specifically, they both go for versions of the idea that ordinary belief reports (involving names or indexicals) say that the believer in question believes something about some object via some (contextually appropriate) sense, or mode of presentation, or mental representation. It's hard to believe that this idea fits better with direct reference theory or neo-Fregeanism—i.e., with Karl II's overall theory or Fred II's overall theory—because, again, the core idea is to move to a theory that lies halfway between the two pure theories and uses the resources of both. And it's equally hard to believe that one version of the theory of belief reports is simpler, or more elegant, or less ad hoc, than the other. The two versions of the theory just seem exactly parallel in connection with these traits.

In sum, then, it seems to me that (a) we have no evidence for thinking that ordinary folk have intentions of the kind needed to settle the debate between Karl II and Fred II, and because of this, the two theories are tied with respect to how well they account for the relevant data; and (b) the two theories are also tied with respect to how simple they are, how unified they are, how non-ad-hoc they are, and so on; and (c) we have at least some initial reasons to endorse the positive claim that ordinary speakers just *don't* have intentions of the kind needed to settle the debate. And given all this, it seems to me that we have some initial reason to endorse my nonfactualist conclusion that there is no fact of the matter in the debate between Karl II and Fred II.

4.5 Karl I and Fred I

It seems to me that we can run an analogous argument about the debate between Karl I and Fred I. I can't argue this point in any real depth, but I'd like to say just a few words about it in connection with the disagreement over simple 'Fa' sentences. On Karl I's view, when you and I uttered our tokens of 'Today is a Tuesday,' we said two different things; more specifically, he thinks we expressed two different Russellian propositions. Fred I agrees that we expressed two different propositions—or at any rate, he thinks it's very likely that we did—but he thinks the propositions were neo-Fregean. Which neo-Fregean propositions were expressed depends on the details of the two situations, including how Day 1 and Day 2 were represented in our heads. But to make things easy, we can suppose that on Fred I's view, my utterance expressed a proposition like $\langle rthat[July\ 1,\ 2010] \rangle$, the sense of 'is a Tuesday', and your utterance expressed a proposition like $\langle rthat[July\ 6,\ 2010] \rangle$, the sense of 'is a Tuesday'. This view is deeply similar to Karl I's view. Indeed, it seems that the only differences concern highly abstract, esoteric issues

that don't affect any truth-value assignments, don't matter to ordinary communication, and have never been thought about by most ordinary speakers. Moreover, I think it can be argued pretty easily that (a) our intuitions are neutral between the two theories, and (b) the two theories are roughly tied with respect to things like theoretical simplicity. Thus, given all this, it seems plausible to suppose that the intentions of ordinary folk are simply neutral between the two theories. And if this is right, then it seems reasonable to conclude that the two theories are tied in terms of factual accuracy and that there's no fact of the matter as to which of them is superior.

This argument is obviously very quick, and I don't have the space to develop it more slowly. But it's worth noting that the case of Karl I and Fred I seems entirely analogous to the case of Karl II and Fred II. I just can't see any reason to think that we'd be led to different conclusions in the two cases.

4.6 Final remarks

The arguments I've given here obviously don't constitute a complete argument for the "Sweeping Claim" I formulated at the start of the paper. But I think I've said enough to motivate the idea that (a) there are easy ways to develop neo-Fregean analogues of directly referential semantic theories (and vice versa); and (b) when we develop these pairs of theories properly, they differ in only abstract, esoteric ways that don't have any impact on truth-value assignments and don't matter to ordinary communication; and (c) the intentions of ordinary folk are essentially neutral between the directly referential theories and their neo-Fregean analogues because they don't, so to speak, take a stand on the abstract, esoteric questions that separate the various pairs of theories. If this is right, then I think there isn't any fact of the matter whether direct reference theory or neo-Fregeanism is true. And, remember, I intend this as an empirical claim: If the intentions of ordinary folk had been different, then there could have been a fact of the matter. We could have been a community of speakers who intended to express neo-Fregean propositions (or Russellian propositions) with our utterances. I just don't think we in fact *are* such a community.

I suppose one might object that I've been able to argue for my conclusion here only because the kinds of "neo-Fregeanism" I've constructed are really just versions of direct reference theory in disguise. This, I think, is false. Both of the Freds reject direct reference theory because they both deny that our sentences express singular propositions. Now, granted, they both endorse the idea that names and indexicals are rigid designators—more precisely, they both think there are rigidifiers built into the senses of names and indexicals—but this doesn't make them closet direct reference theorists, for while direct reference entails rigidity, the reverse is not true. To say that a term is directly referential is to say that it contributes its referent to the proposition expressed, and on this definition, both Freds deny that names and indexicals are directly referential.

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