

# *Intentional Contexts*

## **Part I: Davidson introduced.**

1. The principle [P] that coreferential expressions are intersubstitutable *salva veritate* looks pretty compelling. What is it for an expression to *refer* to some object in an assertion? Surely just for the expression to pick out the object as the topic of the assertion, so the assertion will then be true just so long as the thing in question has the property ascribed to it by the predicative part of the assertion (i.e., the assertion minus the referring expression). But so understood, two expressions whose function is to refer to the same thing will operate (truth-wise) in the same way – to repeat, they both locate an object as the topic of a claim, the whole claim being true so long as the object satisfies the condition expressed by the rest of the sentence. So truth-wise, it shouldn't make any difference which of two coreferential expressions we use. Which is just what principle [P] says.

2. Compare

- 1) Superman loves Lois Lane,
- 2) 'Superman' has eight letters.

The first, 'straight', context allows intersubstitution of coreferential names, *salva veritate*. Thus from (1) and the identity claim

- 3) Clark Kent is Superman,

we can infer

- 4) Clark Kent loves Lois Lane.

But plainly we can't infer

- 5) 'Clark Kent' has eight letters

from (2) and (3). So are contexts like (2) an exception to principle [P]?

Not so. We can say that in the quotational context (2), the sequence of letters  
Superman

does not have its normal use (as a name for the man from Krypton, Clark Kent in fact), but rather is used as [part of] a name for that man's *name*! And it is still the case that in (2), coreferential denoting expressions can be intersubstituted *salva veritate*. Thus given that

- 6) The name on the front of the comic is 'Superman'

we can correctly infer from (2)

- 7) The name on the front of the comic has eight letters

We must just remember (what is obvious enough) that in (2) what appears is not the name of the man from Krypton but an expression denoting *his name*.

3. Now consider

- 8) Lois Lane believes that Superman is a hero.

Again, we cannot infer from (8) and (3) that

- 9) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is a hero,

for she doesn't (at least not until *Superman III* or whatever!). So apparently we can't intersubstitute coreferential names in a 'believes that' context.

There's nothing special about *names* here. Consider the predicates 'cordate' and 'renate' [Quine's coinages]. A creature is cordate (by definition) if it has a heart, and reneate (by definition) if it has a kidney. Then in 'straight' contexts, the two predicates, happening to be co-

extensional [i.e. applying to the same set of creatures], can be intersubstituted *salva veritate*. We can infer from

10) All and only cordates are renates

and

11) Splodge is not cordate

that

12) Splodge is not renate,

and so forth. However, we can't infer from

13) Lois believes that Superman is cordate

that

14) Lois believes that Superman is renate

(she's interested in winning his heart, not his kidneys). But though the problem about intersubstitution in 'believes that' contexts applies to many more classes of expression than names, we will concentrate on that one problem case. What goes for that case should apply *mutatis mutandis* to other sorts of expression.

And of course there is nothing special about the '*believes that*' context here. We get the same problem with 'hopes that', 'wishes that', 'desires it to be true that', and so forth through psychological 'that'-clauses generally. Also, we have the same problem for the oratio obliqua construct 'says that'. From

15) Lois Lane says that she loves Superman

and (3) you cannot infer

16) Lois Lane says that she loves Clark Kent.

We will here, however, talk only about 'believes that' and 'says that' contexts. What goes for them should apply *mutatis mutandis* to other sorts of 'indirect' context.

4. Faced with the apparently failure of substitutivity in (2), we said – that's only an appearance, because strictly speaking the name 'Superman' (the name of the man from Krypton) doesn't appear in (2), but only "“Superman”" (which designates not the man but his name). And once you correctly see what the subject term in (2) refers to, you will see that coreferential names for *that* can indeed be intersubstituted, and principle [P] is not violated. So [a hopeful thought!], can we treat the failure of the inference from (3) and (8) to (9) on the model of the failure of the inference from (3) and (2) to (5)? Can we say that the reason why you can't replace 'Superman' in (8) with some coreferential expression is that strictly speaking that name doesn't occur in (8)?

Well, suppose we analyse

8) Lois Lane believes that Superman is a hero.

as

17) Lois Lane BEL the sentence 'Superman is a hero'

where BEL (perhaps *believes true*) is a predicate expressing a relation between Lois and a *sentence*, in this case the sentence designated by the quotation expression

'Superman is a hero'.

Then arguably, the name 'Superman' no more occurs in (17) than (2); what occurs in (17) is rather the expression "“Superman”", the name of the name. And co-referential expressions for *that* can indeed be intersubstituted, with a bit of butchery of surface structure. E.g. we have

18) Lois Lane BEL the sentence [constructed from] the name on the front of this comic [and] 'is a hero',

because (18) relates Lois to the *same* sentence as (17), the same sentence described in a different way.

If (17) is an acceptable analysis of (8), then we explain why (3) and (8) do not entail (9), and we explain away the apparent contravention of principle [P] by saying that ‘Superman’ does not strictly occur in (8), and that we can still intersubstitute for what *does* occur in (8) – namely “‘Superman’”. In short, if (8) can be analysed as (17), our problems are over.

5. *Objection (a)* (8) can’t be analysed as (17); for a sentence (graphical string/string of phonemes) could have different meanings in different languages. And Lois Lane might stand in the BEL relation to a given sentence construed as a sentence of English but not to that sentence construed as a sentence of Hopi, or Martian or whatever. *Reply* Strictly true, obviously what was intended was to analyse (8) as

19) Lois Lane BEL ‘Superman is a hero’ in English

*Objection (b)* Surely Lois could believe that Superman is a hero (so (8) is true) even if she is a monoglot Polish speaker; but then (19) would be false. *Reply* Not so. Suppose BEL is unpacked as ‘...accepts as true some sentence which means in her language what is meant by...’. Then Lois could stand in an appropriate BEL relation without being an English speaker.

*Objection (c)* Still, Lois would have to have some language to stand in that BEL relation, but surely languageless creatures can have beliefs, so we shouldn’t build a presumption about language possession into an analysis of belief statements. *Reply* True. But the suggested reading of BEL wasn’t offered as the final analysis of belief ascriptions, but just to show that an analysis of the form (19) doesn’t imply that Lois is an English speaker. And nor does the form of (19) imply that Lois is a speaker of *any* kind at all! For we could unpack BEL as something like ‘...is in some internal state which has a causal role in producing behaviour similar to that had by the state which would in certain standard circumstances also elicit the utterance...’, and then a creature could stand in the BEL relation to a sentence without itself being linguistic at all.

*Objection (d)* Still, especially if Lois is not an English speaker, it is odd that a reference to English should appear in an analysis of (8). We have

8) Lois Lane believes Superman is a hero  
supposedly equivalent to something of the schematic form

19) Lois Lane .....English.

Translate (8) into French, and we get [approximately!]

8F) Lois Lane croit que Superman est un hero  
and translate the schema (19) and we get

19F) Lois Lane .....Anglais.

But the proud monoglot Frenchman would hardly accept as an account of what he means when he says (8F) that he is saying something about English! *Reply* OK, we shouldn’t have put an explicit reference to English into the analysis. The idea that ‘Superman is a hero’ is to be construed as an English sentence hardly needs to be made explicit; given that we are already talking English, what else is to be expected? Context fixes the relevant language. If you insist on putting that more formally, then we want something like

20) Lois Lane BEL ‘Superman is a hero’ as a sentence of the language of this very sentence!

*Objection (e)* A translation counterargument still works. For the translation of (20) into French is something of the form

20F) Lois Lane BEL ‘Superman is a hero’ comme un expression de la langue... and (20F) doesn’t even begin to look like an *analysis* of (8F): it refers to an English sentence, but then says that Lois Lane relates to it as a sentence of the very language of (20F), namely French! *Reply* But (20F) isn’t the French translation of (20) – if you are translating into another language, you standardly translate what’s in quotation marks as well!

*Objection (f)* Everyday translation is multipurpose. We are talking here of strict, monopurpose translation – where the aim of the translation of a sentence into another language is to ascribe exactly the same properties to exactly the same things. Now (20), by hypothesis, is about a sentence, the string

Superman is a hero

so its strict translation must be another sentence about the very same item, namely (20F). But it is a reasonable principle that analytical equivalences should be preserved by strict translation. The Frenchman (rightly) wouldn’t accept (8F) and (20F) are equivalent – so (8) and (20) aren’t either.

6. What’s the origin of the trouble here? Putting an expression in quotation marks gives us a way of talking about the expression without talking about its meaning. But it is absurd to say that in the claim

8) Lois Lane believes that Superman is a hero

the meaning of the words ‘Superman is a hero’ is irrelevant to the content of the whole claim (8). Indeed, intuitively it’s only the meaning that is relevant! Compare (2) where the semantics of the word ‘Superman’ evidently *is* quite irrelevant to the truth of the claim. But then if we try to analyse (8) in the form

Lois Lane *R* ‘Superman is a hero’

we are going to have to build into *R* something that undoes the effect of the quotation marks; we are going to have to talk somehow about the meaning of that sentence, as a sentence of English. But putting any reference to English into the account of *R* (even in a fancy, self-referring way) causes trouble.

The solution? Well, in analysing (8) let’s not drain the meaning out of the content clause ‘Superman is a hero’ by hermetically sealing it in quotation marks. On the other hand, we can’t treat that clause as something *asserted* by (8). Someone who thought Superman a show-off, not a hero, would not endorse the content clause, but could still assert (8). So we want the content clause *not* hermetically sealed off with quotes which block out its meaning, but not yet operating as a bona fide assertion.

Well, how about treating the content clause as a kind of *mock* assertion, a rehearsal, a dummy run, an illustrative sample .... So, in giving the content clause in (8), one is going through the motions of asserting that Superman is a hero, giving a pretend assertion of what Lois endorses for real. In other words (the suggestion goes), we should treat (8) as having this double-barrelled form:

Superman is a hero.

Lois Lane BEL *that*.

Here, the *first* clause is not asserted for real, but rather the speaker rehearses a mock claim, but the *second* clause is asserted in earnest and claims a relation between Lois and the mock assertion (i.e. that Lois is prepared to say the same thing for real; or more fancily, Lois is in some state which is functionally similar enough to the state which would prompt the speaker to make that assertion for real).

Regaining surface structure, the idea is that we should parse

8) Lois Lane believes that Superman is a hero

as

21) Lois Lane believes *that*. Superman is a hero.

where now the first half is what is asserted, and the ‘that’ is a genuine demonstrative, referring to what follows, i.e. the utterance of ‘Superman is a hero’. And that second utterance is presented in, as it were, play mode. It is *meaningful* all right. The speaker is rehearsing an assertion, not just exercising his larynx on a string of sounds. But is not *asserted*.

Does this story help us out with the original question about (8) and principle [P]? Well the reason that you can’t (on this analysis) replace ‘Superman’ with ‘Clark Kent’ and preserve truth is that the asserted part of (8) – the first part of (21) – *doesn’t even contain the name in any guise at all!* So the new story is like the old quotational story is saying that [P] doesn’t sanction the swapping of ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ because ‘Superman’ doesn’t appear in the analysis: but on the old story “‘Superman’” appears instead, on the new story *neither* appears in the *asserted* part of the claim (8).

The sentence

9) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is a hero

is to be analysed as

22) Lois Lane believes that. Clark Kent is a hero.

And the demonstrative in (22) plainly refers to something different from the demonstrative in (21) – these referents are different utterances, and the fact that Lois is prepared to endorse one doesn’t imply that she will endorse the other! The failure of the inference between the assertions in (21) and (22) is no more surprising than the failure of the inference between

23) Lois Lane sat on that. [Demonstrating one chair]

and

24) Lois Lane sat on that. [Demonstrating a different chair]

7. This elegant story is modelled on Donald Davidson’s account of indirect speech, which similarly construes

25) Lois Lane said that Superman is a hero

as

26) Lois Lane said that. Superman is a hero

where again only the first segment is asserted, and where the demonstrative denotes the following utterance (an utterance of the *speaker* of course: the speaker is doing a mock saying and pointing to it and claiming *that’s* the sort of thing that Lois did). For more details of the Davidsonic account see his ‘On Saying That’, in *Synthese* 19 (1968) 130-46, or in D. Davidson and J. Hintikka (eds) *Words and Objections*, or in D. Davidson *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*. But is the Davidsonic story not still open to the translation objection? Simon Blackburn and Tom Baldwin have argued so. For more discussion see Part II below.

8. Suppose that ‘The Winged Crusader’ is another name for Superman, and that this is treated as just a stylistic variant on ‘Superman’ (the two names have the same cognitive content, the same associations, etc., in short the same *sense*). So there’s nothing to choose between

21) Lois Lane believes that. Superman is a hero.

and

27) Lois Lane believes that. The Winged Crusader is a hero.

(because on the speaker’s lips the two mock assertions ‘Superman is a hero’ and ‘The Winged

Crusader is a Hero' come to just the same, and so will do equally well to mimic an expression of Lois's state of mind – as it were, it's merely a difference in pronunciation). Which means to say that there is nothing to chose between

8) Lois Lane believes that Superman is a hero

and

28) Lois Lane believes that The Winged Crusader is a hero.

So in this case, where 'Superman' and 'The Winged Crusader' not just refer to the same person but have (in some sense) the same sense, they *can* be exchanged *salva veritate* in belief contexts. Generalizing, it might seem we can interchange in intentional contexts expressions which have the same sense.

That generalization is arguably wrong: for example from

29) No one doubts that whoever believes that Superman is heroic believes that Superman is heroic,

it is not clear that we can infer

30) No one doubts that whoever believes that Superman is heroic believes that The Winged Crusader is heroic,

Maybe some philosophers do think you can have the one belief without the other (those who think that having a belief is having a natural-language token in your 'belief-box' could suppose you can have one token without the other).

But perhaps we can accept that in simple intentional contexts without multiple embeddings expressions with the same sense (cognitive content) can be interchanged. Then, applying principle [P] again, which says that two referring expressions can be interchanged *salva veritate* just when they have the same reference, we might be inclined to conclude that (in these 'believes-that' contexts) expressions like 'Superman' and 'The Winged Crusader' must change their ordinary reference (Clark Kent) and come to be referring to their shared *sense* (for *that's* what must be held constant if exchanging expressions is to preserve truth in the belief contexts). This echoes a doctrine of Frege's: expressions in 'indirect' contexts have as their reference what is customarily their sense in direct contexts. That sounds weird; but in fact it is (almost) a simple implication of sticking to [P] *and* continuing to assume [R] that 'Superman' and 'The Winged Crusader' are still functioning as interchangeable referring expressions even inside ascriptions of belief. However, there's no reason to accept [R]; and in any case – and this is the important point – the Fregean doctrine should not be regarded (as maybe Frege did regard it) as an *explanation* of the behaviour of names in indirect contexts. The Fregean doctrine is, rather, only a (potentially misleading) redescription of what needs to be explained, namely the failure of normal intersubstitutivity. The correct explanation is to be found in some version of the Davidsonic, neo-quotational theory, though we are still some way from having a clear grip on the *best* version.

## Part II: Davidson examined.

1. In his paper 'Prior and Davidson On Indirect Speech' (*Philosophical Studies* 42 (1982), pp. 255–82), Thomas Baldwin offered a number of objections to Davidson's paratactic theory of indirect discourse. These objections were in fact already rather well-known ones, and they had previously been criticized as fallacious by defenders of the paratactic theory. However, Baldwin maintained that these counter-criticisms fail and the original objections to Davidson remain quite decisive. He argued in particular that an earlier paper of mine completely failed in

its attempted defence of Davidson against Simon Blackburn's versions of two of the familiar objections.\* Here I want to return to consider whether the paratactic theory is indeed vulnerable to the kind of objection that Blackburn and Baldwin present: the excuse for raking over the embers of an old debate is that in doing so we will get clearer about the content of the Davidsonian account of indirect discourse.

For the sake of the present argument, we can follow Baldwin's exposition and understand the paratactic theory as holding that

(S) Galileo said that the earth moves

is equivalent in content to

(D) An utterance of Galileo's was the same in content as this. The earth moves.

As is familiar, only the first component of (D) is to carry assertoric force; and, on a given occasion of use, the demonstrative 'this' is to be taken as referring to the utterance of the second component. Of course, the paratactic theory crucially holds in addition that this equivalence of (S) with (D) reveals – in some good sense – the true logical form of (S). But I will for the moment set aside this further claim and concentrate first on Baldwin's arguments for rejecting even the basic equivalence thesis.

Baldwin's first objection to the equivalence thesis is simply that

The claim made by the use of (S) does not entail that there is any utterance other than Galileo's original one; the claim made by the use of (D) does entail this.

This brisk argument is hardly transparent; and Baldwin later adds only the briefest word of explanation:

The objection to (D) as an analysis of (S) was ... that it entails the existence of the utterance to which the demonstrative refers, just as 'I had a shirt which was the same colour as that shirt' entails 'that shirt exists'.

Still, brief as it is, this gloss on the original objection does suggest an interpretation of the intended line of argument. On the suggested interpretation, however, the objection turns out to be based on a simple confusion.

Suppose I assertively utter – to change Baldwin's own example slightly – the sentence

(J) I had a jacket which was the same colour as that shirt.

Then, if I am to count as saying something which is literally true, the demonstrative phrase 'that shirt' must be supplied with a suitable reference. Hence, if I am to use (J) to make a true claim, there must exist at least one shirt. On the other hand, if I assertively utter

(K) I had a khaki jacket

then the truth or falsity of my claim is plainly quite independent of the existence of any shirts. We might reasonably conclude that (J) and (K) are non-equivalent in content. And perhaps one fairly tempting but really rather misleading way of reporting this divergence between (J) and (K) would be by saying that the claim made by the use of (J) entails the existence of a shirt, and the claim made by the use of (K) does not entail this. Given Baldwin's last quoted remark, we can take it that he would describe the difference between (J) and (K) in just this way; and it seems that he holds that (S) and (D) can be differentiated in a precisely analogous way. But this is a mistake.

Of course, if I merely utter the first component of (D), viz.

(D–) An utterance of Galileo's was the same in content as this

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\*. For Blackburn's versions of the objections, see his 'The identity of propositions' in Simon Blackburn ed., *Meaning, Reference and Necessity* (Cambridge UP, Cambridge 1975), especially pp. 185–87. For my earlier – less than ideally clear – attempted defence of Davidson, see Peter Smith, 'Blackburn on saying that', *Philosophical Studies* 30 (1976), pp. 423–26.

then I only succeed in expressing a truth if a reference is supplied for the demonstrative. And let's agree that (i) the use of 'this' demands a reference available in the temporal neighbourhood of the speaker and thus distinct from Galileo's past utterance, and (ii) we can ignore the possibility of self-reference in (D-). Then, for an utterance of (D-) to count as saying something true, there must exist in the world two further utterances, namely Galileo's original one and a second utterance to supply a reference for the demonstrative in (D-). By contrast, for an utterance of (S) to say something true, there need exist in the world only one additional utterance, namely Galileo's. This suffices to show that in some good sense an utterance of (S) is not equivalent in content to an *unaugmented* utterance of (D-), just as (J) is non-equivalent to (K). But this point is no objection at all to the paratactic theory which urges the equivalence of the overall speech-act performed by using (S) with the overall speech act performed by using the complete double-barrelled (D). If I seriously utter (D), where it is understood that the demonstrative in the first component is to refer to the utterance of the second component, then for me to be saying something true by means of the asserted component (D-) there need exist no utterances other than my present total utterance of (D) and Galileo's original one. The additional utterance which is needed to supply a reference to the demonstrative in (D-) is here provided within the total double-barrelled utterance (D). So there is after all no divergence between the ontic commitments of (S) and (D). An utterance of (S), if it is to express a truth, requires the existence of just one additional utterance, namely Galileo's original one. Likewise, an utterance of the complete analysans (D), if it is to express a truth, also requires the existence of just one additional utterance, Galileo's again.

It might be objected that these remarks miss the point. For according to the paratactic theory, all that is asserted in uttering (D) is the first component (D-); and the total claim made by uttering (D) can hardly lack an entailment possessed by its asserted component. But it has just been conceded that the claim made by (D-), unlike that made by (S), entails the existence of two further utterances. So (D) itself has an entailment which (S) lacks. But this reply is confused.

It is true that, for an utterance of (D-) to count as saying something true, there must exist two further utterances. But it would be wrong to present this point as if the utterance of (D-) by itself makes a determinate claim which has a double entailment. On the contrary, the use of (D-) by itself makes no particular claim with a determinable truth-value and so has *no* entailments until we supply a reference for its demonstrative. In other words, it is not as if (D-) taken by itself has two entailments, one of which I am supposing to vanish mysteriously when (D-) occurs in the context of a full utterance of (D). Rather, far from cancelling an entailment, uttering (D-) in the full context (D) supplies a reference for the demonstrative in (D-) and so brings into being entailments which are conditional upon such reference-fixing. And so far as existence entailments go, I have already argued that the *full* utterance (D) has just the same ontic commitments as an utterance of (S).

In short, following the obvious line of thought suggested by Baldwin's brisk remarks does not reveal any asymmetry between the commitments of (S) and (D). So I submit that, in the absence of any further elucidation of the first objection, the paratactic theory so far remains unscathed.

2. Let us turn, therefore, to consider Baldwin's second objection:

The content of Galileo's statement is rigidly specified in (S), but non-rigidly specified in (D). That is, if what Galileo said was that the earth moves, then by his statement he could not but have said that the earth moves; whereas even if



an utterance of Galileo's was the same in content as this utterance – The earth moves – his utterance might not have been the same in content as it (for the content of that utterance might not have been what it is).

Now, these remarks are indeed sufficient to refute a certain classical quotational theory of indirect discourse. For, as Baldwin in effect points out, there can clearly be possible worlds where Galileo's utterance has the same meaning as it has in this world (and so where he continues to say that the earth moves), while the sentence 'The earth moves' there has a quite different meaning to its present meaning. By hypothesis, then, (S) will be true of such a world; however

(Q) An utterance of Galileo's was the same in content as the sentence 'The earth moves'

will typically be false with respect to such worlds. This is enough to show that (S) isn't equivalent to (Q) or to any close variant. Indeed, we could take it to be definitive of classical quotational analyses of indirect discourse that they are vulnerable to this sort of argument. But what has all this to do with the paratactic theory (which after all was quite explicitly designed to remedy this perceived defect in classical quotational theories)?\*

The argument above goes through because in evaluating (Q) with respect to alternative worlds, the sense of the sentence 'The earth moves' is up for grabs. In a phrase, that sentence is only mentioned in (Q), and not used. But it is at precisely this point that the paratactic theory parts company from classical quotational analyses. In his original presentation of the theory, Davidson remarks that while the words 'The earth moves' are employed in (Q) to help refer to a sentence, in (D) 'I speak for myself, and my words refer in their usual way to the earth and to its movement'. And surely, although Davidson does not discuss the point, he would say exactly the same about a modalized version of (D) such as

(E) Galileo might have uttered something which was the same in content as this.  
The earth moves.

Here too, in using (E), I speak for myself and my words refer again in their usual way to the earth and to its movement. So in determining the truth of (E) the import of my content-specifying sentence 'The earth moves' is not an open question; rather, it is to be held fixed while the possibilities concerning Galileo's words are considered. Now presumably (E) is in fact true just if (D) is true of some possible world. So, if we are to preserve this linkage, when we evaluate (D) with respect to alternative worlds, we must again hold the sense of the content-specifying sentence fixed. In contrast to (Q), therefore, (D) will be true of a world just if Galileo's utterance there has the content which my utterance of 'The earth moves' has *in the actual world*. Hence consideration of worlds in which those words carry a different sense cannot show that (S) is non-equivalent to (D).

Perhaps one way of bringing out the force of these points would be to insist that (D) is to be construed as

(D\*) Galileo made an utterance whose content was the same as that which this utterance actually has. The earth moves.

And I have been arguing that while the consideration of possible worlds where my words have a sense different from the sense they actually have shows that (S) cannot be equivalent to (Q), the same sort of considerations do not tell, as far as I can see, against (D\*). Baldwin disagrees, however: he argues

It is only in conjunction with the contingent premiss (M) 'The earth moves' ac-

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\*. See Davidson's 'On Saying That' *passim.*, and for further discussion of quotation and indirect speech see John McDowell, 'Quotation and Saying That' in Mark Platts ed., *Reference, Truth and Reality* (Routledge, 1980).

tually means that the earth moves that (D\*) entails (S); and to articulate this relationship one can legitimately consider a world in which (M) is false, and supposing that to be the actual world, see what it is for (D) to be true and (S) false.

But note that the assumption here – that the truth of the claim made in uttering (D\*) only guarantees the truth of (S) on the supposition that (M) – seems to presuppose that the sentence ‘The earth moves’ is in effect quoted rather than used in (D\*), and hence we need the fact about that sentence’s meaning which is recorded in (M) to pass from (D\*) to (S). But the whole point of the formulation (D\*), which I have borrowed from Baldwin himself, is precisely to emphasize the non-quotational character of (D): so we should immediately be suspicious.

And initial suspicion turns out to be justified. For consider the following question: When I am instructed ‘to see what it is for (D) to be true and (S) false’, am I supposed to consider these sentences with the senses that they now have in the actual world as it is, or with the senses that they *would* have in the supposed actual world where (M) is no longer true? On the former option, both (S) and (D\*) fully retain their present senses, and nothing changes. So, as has just been argued, (D\*) will be true of a world just when Galileo there says this present utterance in the actual world – The earth moves: hence (D\*) will be true just when Galileo says that the earth moves. On the latter option, other things being equal, (S) and (D\*) still have the same truth-value at each world. For suppose that in the world we are imagining to be actual, ‘The earth moves’ means that snow is white. Then (S) with its new sense will be true of a world just if –as we would now put it – Galileo there says that snow is white. Likewise (D\*) with its content-specifying clause now carrying a new sense, will be true if Galileo said something which meant what ‘The earth moves’ means in the imagined world, i.e. if Galileo said that snow is white. So again we get no divergence between (S) and (D\*). Indeed, it would only be by comparing (S) with its actual actual sense and (D\*) with its imagined actual sense that we get the two to peel apart. And that manoeuvre is plainly illegitimate.

In summary, Baldwin’s second line of objection, while it is successful against quotational theories of indirect discourse, does not work against the paratactic theory, properly understood. Indeed, as I said, Davidson’s remarks about the content-specifying clause being used rather than mentioned in (D) seem intended to exactly block such an argument.

3. So, far, I have discussed two arguments deployed by Baldwin which have their roots in the paper by Simon Blackburn.\* I turn now to discuss the third objection to the paratactic theory which Baldwin presents. He writes

Translation of (S) requires translation of the content sentence, whereas in (D), if one translates the second sentence, one changes the referent of the demonstrative, thereby altering the claim made and not merely translating the sentence.

Now; I am not inclined, as perhaps Davidson would be, to mount a general attack on translation arguments of this kind. However, I do maintain that in this particular case the use of the argument can only be question-begging.

Let’s introduce a couple of bits of jargon: we will say that the sentence  $s_1$  is a *passable translation* of the sentence  $s_2$  just when  $s_1$  is conventionally used in the one language to secure the same communication purposes as  $s_2$  is used to secure in the other language. And we will

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\*. I would concede that my earlier attempt to sabotage Blackburn’s versions of these arguments was unclear or confused at a number of points. So I have re-argued what I hope is essentially the same case against these two types of argument, starting again from scratch. I leave it to others to decide whether I am rather unsportingly moving the target long after Baldwin has shot at it.

say, secondly, that  $s_1$  is an *absolutely literal translation* of  $s_2$  if the references of the singular terms in  $s_1$  are just the same as the references of the singular terms in  $s_2$  (and, of course, the extensions of their respective predicates are the same, etc.). Then, uncontroversially enough, a passable translation of (S) into French would be

(S<sub>F</sub>) Galilée a dit que la terre tourne

while a passable translation of (D) would run, say,

(D<sub>F</sub>) Une affirmation de Galilée avait le même contenu que celui-ci. La terre tourne.

Thirdly, let's agree for the sake of argument – though the point is a debatable one – that the absolutely literal translation of (D) into French is the mixed form which leaves the content-clause untranslated, viz.

(D<sub>M</sub>) Une affirmation de Galilée avait le même contenu que celui-ci. The earth moves.

But, agreeing all that, what is supposed to follow? To show that (S) is non-equivalent to (D) we obviously need further premisses. Suppose we buy the assumption

(T) The literal translation of equivalents preserves equivalence

together with the premisses that (1)(S<sub>F</sub>) is not merely a passable translation but an absolutely literal translation of (S), and further (2) (S<sub>F</sub>) is not equivalent to the mixed form (D<sub>M</sub>). If we accept these further premisses, then – but only then – we can use a translation argument to show that (S) and (D) are not equivalent.

But in fact both the needed further premisses can be challenged. On the lips of a competent bilingual who can correctly use the content-specifying sentence 'The earth moves', (D<sub>M</sub>) is arguably perfectly equivalent to (S): what she says when she utters (D) will indeed be true just when (S) is. So the argument doesn't get off the ground.

However, maybe the argument is intended to cut against not the weaker thesis that (S) and (D) have the same truth-conditions, but against the stronger equivalence thesis that (D) gives the underlying logical form of (S). A translation principle (T) should still apply to this stronger equivalence relation: but surely it is quite implausible to suppose that (D<sub>M</sub>) gives the form of (S<sub>F</sub>). Hence a translation argument might seem to sabotage Davidson's claim about form. But not so. For it simply begs the whole question at issue to suppose that (S<sub>F</sub>) is an absolutely literal translation of (S). For what counts as an absolutely literal translation of (S) is a function of what we determine to be a singular term within (S). If we hold that the paratactic theory is correct – not only in giving an equivalence but in revealing logical form – then we will hold that the 'that' in (S) is a demonstrative singular term. Hence, if we accept Davidson's theory, we will not allow that (S<sub>F</sub>) is the absolutely literal translation of (S) – at least so long as we go along with Baldwin in thinking that (D<sub>F</sub>) is not the absolutely literal translation of (D), for the same considerations about keeping the reference of the demonstrative fixed across translations will apply in each case. Conversely, allowing (S<sub>F</sub>) to be the absolutely literal translation of (S) presupposes the paratactic theory is false. So we can hardly invoke the alleged absolute intertranslatability of (S) and (S<sub>F</sub>) as a *premiss* to our argument: an argument already based on this assumption would cover no argumentative ground at all.

In short, by the relaxed everyday standards of passable translation, the translations of (S) and (D) are the pair of sentences (S<sub>F</sub>) and (D<sub>F</sub>) which stand in the same relations as the originals, and hence are no more or less obviously equivalent than the originals. So there can be no translation argument against the paratactic theory which relies on the standards of passable translation. But we have just seen that the tougher standards of absolutely literal translation cannot be invoked in a way which doesn't immediately beg the question. So the paratactic theory survives translation arguments, just as it survived Baldwin's two other objections.

Finally, Baldwin offers a supplementary consideration, simply that

Since there seems nothing wrong, when considered in the light of Davidson's semantics for 'saying', with

(A) Galileo said that. *La terre tourne*

it is most mysterious that we cannot in this case eliminate the full stop, to form

(B) Galileo said that *la terre tourne*.

For on the paratactic approach, (B) just is (A).

Baldwin suggests that the defender of Davidson's theory will have to say that (B) is objectionable because

there is an implicit requirement within the semantics for 'saying' that the second utterance belongs to the same language as the first one.

and he tries to go on to make trouble for this suggestion. But of course we do not need to make any hypothesis about the semantics for 'saying' to account for the oddity of (B): for we normally operate for obvious enough reasons with a perfectly general convention not to switch languages in mid-sentence. In those cheerfully relaxed bilingual households where this convention is regularly flouted, and midstream language-shifts go unremarked, (B) would pass muster. Of course (B) isn't available to the monoglot, but neither is (A), for the content-specifying sentence in the paratactic construction is (to repeat) used in a way which presupposes understanding. In other words, someone who understands (A) won't have any trouble with (B); removing the full stop in (A) doesn't destroy comprehension, it just breaks a rather uninteresting convention. And where's the mystery in that?

4. On Davidson's account, then, when I say

(S) Galileo said that the earth moves

is not just equivalent to, but is simply the same as:

The earth moves. Galileo samesaid that.

where 'that' is a demonstrative referring to ... what, exactly? *The preceding utterance* according to Davidson. So let's make it clear again (as Baldwin did) that it is indeed an utterance which is the referent of the demonstrative: rephrasing Baldwin's version slightly

(D) The earth moves. Galileo samesaid that utterance.

But the performance of Galileo's which makes what is claimed in (D\*) true also makes this true

(D\*) The earth moves. Galileo samesaid *that* utterance (too),

and likewise

(D\*\*) The earth moves. Galileo samesaid *that* utterance (as well).

We can produce, given time enough, *unlimited* numbers of utterances which Galileo samesaid in that one speech-act of his.

The trouble with this is that Davidson is construing 'Galileo said that' as 'Galileo samesaid that': so if Galileo samesaid many things, then he said many things. But that's absurd. He may only relevantly have said one thing.

A closely related problem is this: the inference

Galileo said that the earth moves

Hence: Galileo said that the earth moves

is surely trivially valid, and any account of the logical form of its premiss and conclusion should surely preserve formal validity. But on Davidson's theory, this argument has the form

Galileo said that.

Hence, Galileo said *that*.

where the referents of the demonstratives have *changed*. So the argument wouldn't be formally

valid after all.

Now, note that such considerations do not undermine the thesis defended in Part II §§1–3 that when I say (S) what I say is true just so long as what I assert in saying (D) is true. For it could be the case that whenever I use (D), I am referring to something different by the use of ‘that’ (namely a different utterance), but that still what I say each time is true just so long as (S) is true. Compare: if I have a whole stack of colour samples which are the same, then every time I say ‘My shirt is the same colour as this’, tearing off another sample for comparison, what I say may be true each and every time. But if it is claimed that what I say by (S) *is the same as* what is said by (D), then we will need different occurrences of (D) to say the same thing as assuredly different uses of (S) do.\*

This problem was noted by Ian McFetridge in an incisive paper ‘Propositions and Davidson’s Account of Indirect Discourse’ (*Proc. Aristotelian Society* 1975-6), and raised again by Tyler Burge in much less incisive way in his ‘On Davidson’s “Saying That”’ (in *Truth and Interpretation* ed. Ernest Lepore, 1986). And McFetridge notes too the obvious way of coping with the problem. For compare the following: I’m teaching someone the Russian alphabet, and I point to this inscription

C

and I say ‘that’s the one and only Russian letter pronounced S’. Now, what does ‘that’ refer to here? Not what I point at, the particular inscription: or else I couldn’t repeat the lesson, point to this second inscription

C

and correctly say that this is the one and only Russian letter pronounced S. So in this case, although I am ostending (pointing to) an inscription, what I am talking about is not the inscription itself but something else – namely that which this inscription is an inscription *of*. Quine calls this sort of thing ‘deferred ostension’ and examples are legion. I gesture to some inscription and say ‘That’s the largest known perfect number’; I indicate a colour sample and say ‘That’s the colour artist’s call “Burnt Sienna”’.

Similarly, then, the obvious way to handle our counting problem in a broadly Davidsonian framework is to maintain that when I say ‘Galileo samesaid that’, this is again a case of deferred ostension: I indicate an utterance, but that isn’t what I refer to (not what contributes to the truth-conditions of my assertion). Rather I indicate – shall we say? – that which my utterance is an utterance of (a proposition, if you will: but only put that way so long as the terminology doesn’t carry for you any heavy philosophical baggage). But obviously we now need to know more: what exactly *are* propositions in the current sense of that which utterances are utterances of?

Here are two views, wrong in different ways. First, suppose we say that individual token utterances are simply utterances of *type utterances*, identified syntactically. (Compare: when I indicate the inscription ‘C’ and say that it is the Russian S, I am surely referring to the type letter of which the inscription is a token). But consider the following scenario:

Romeo (to Juliet): I love you

Nurse (to Juliet): Romeo said that he loves you

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\*. Is there is a tension here? I’m now saying that different occurrences of (S) obviously say the same, and criticizing Davidson’s version of the paratactic theory for implicitly denying this. Yet I disallowed Baldwin’s objection based on the notion of literal translation by allowing the Davidsonian to reject the ‘obvious’ claim that the translation of (S) is (S<sub>F</sub>). This looks like a double standard. But I think not. Baldwin’s argument depended in effect on applying a special philosopher’s notion of ‘absolutely literal’ translation, and our intuitions about the applicability of this notion will be to a significant extent theory-driven and open to challenge: but the thought that different occurrences of (S) say the same is surely a pre-theoretic one that needs to be captured by any adequate theory.

Juliet: Romeo said that he loves me.

On the ‘type utterance’ theory, Nurse represents Romeo as samesaying *he loves you*; Juliet represents Romeo as samesaying the *different* type utterance *I love you*. Yet surely we do want to say that, even by very strict standards, Nurse and Juliet represent Romeo as saying the same thing.

Perhaps then we shouldn’t pay too much attention to the surface words: it is the underlying *message* that counts. When Nurse uses the word ‘you,’ it is to refer to the same person as Juliet uses the word ‘I’ to refer to: isn’t that what makes their two reports of what Romeo said come to the same thing. Let’s call the ordered triple of [Romeo, Juliet, the relation of loving] a *Russellian proposition* – for an account of why this label is appropriate, see McCulloch, *passim*. Then, we might say, Romeo propounds this Russellian proposition, and Nurse and Juliet both represent Romeo as having propounded it. So, on this view, what both say that Romeo stands in the ‘said’ relation to (what, for both, is object of the deferred ostension) is [Romeo, Juliet, the relation of loving].

But this won’t do at all. George Orwell and Eric Blair are the same person: so [George Orwell, 1984, the relation of authoring] and [Eric Blair, 1984, the relation of authoring] are the same ordered triples: so the same Russellian propositions are expressed by ‘George Orwell wrote 1984’ and ‘Eric Blair wrote 1984’. But then on the current proposal, Fred said that George Orwell wrote 1984 just if Fred stands in the ‘said’ relation to the Russellian proposition presented by ‘George Orwell wrote 1984’ which will be the case just if he stands in the ‘said’ relation to the Russellian proposition presented by ‘Eric Blair wrote 1984’, i.e. if Fred said that Eric Blair wrote 1984. But now we have lost exactly what the Davidsonian story was advertised as buying as, namely an account of the why we cannot substitute coreferential names like this and hope always to preserve truth.

So it seems that the proposition demonstrated by the ‘that’ must be something (as it were) between a type utterance – too superficially syntactic – and a ‘Russellian proposition’ individuated by its worldly constituents – too coarsely referential. What we need, it seems, is a Fregean *Gedanke* or thought, composed not of syntactic items, nor of referents but of *senses*.

But hang on! Isn’t this where we came in? Wasn’t the whole point of the Davidsonian story to enable us to *avoid* the Fregean apparatus, and avoid talk of propositions and similar dubious entities? Surely, if we find ourselves reintroducing such entities at the end of the day, in order to make the Davidsonian theory fly, all our labours have been in vain!

Well, not quite. For consider the thought that we might construe (S) as having the logical form

Galileo *R* that-the-earth-moves

which contains two (alleged) singular terms, ‘Galileo’ and ‘that-the-earth-moves’, and proclaims that a certain relation holds between their (alleged) referents, i.e. between Galileo and the proposition that the earth moves. One objection we might have to this construal is ontological, an objection to countenancing propositions as objects. But Davidson’s prime objection is more fundamental: it is that if we treat ‘that-the-earth-moves’ as one primitive singular term, and ‘that-grass-is-green’ as another primitive singular term, and ‘that-p’ as singular term however we fill in the place-holder ‘p’ with an indicative sentence, then we will have to countenance an unlimited number of primitives in our language. But that’s unacceptable: we can handle an unlimited number of sentences like (S) without needing to learn a new primitive each time. So, *some* story needs to be told that treats ‘that the earth moves’ as a complex, but which does not discern this complex as containing a straight occurrence of ‘the earth’ in such a way as to legitimate the intersubstitutions we want to avoid. And the Davidsonian story – even when

‘that’ is construed as having deferred reference to a proposition – still neatly cracks the original problem. Even in this version, there is no mystery about the logical form of either the asserted or the unasserted component of

Galileo *R* that. The earth moves.

There is no mysterious multiplication of primitives, no mystery about the failure of substitution. Still, we are left, on the current version, with the puzzle about the nature of the referent of the demonstrative.

Let’s pause here, then, to review the situation. We can distinguish two theses which Davidson runs together as a package deal. First the thesis about demonstratives

(TD) The ‘that’ in ‘Galileo said that *p*’ is a genuine demonstrative.

and second the thesis that we can explicate the truth-conditions of (S) in terms of a relation of samesaying,

(SS) ‘Galileo said that *p*’ is true if Galileo said something which makes him and the utterer of ‘*p*’ samesayers.

Of course, Davidson thinks that (SS) is true in part because

(S) Galileo said that the earth moves

actually unpacks as

(D) Galileo samesaid *that*. The earth moves

with demonstrative ‘that’: so (TD) is part of Davidson’s explication of (SS). But we could buy (SS) without buying (TD). In §1 we argued, in effect, that (SS) could be defended against the Baldwin/Blackburn modal objections: but that could be the case irrespective of whether (TD) is true. And it is (TD) that is causing us grief at the moment. If ‘that’ is a genuine demonstrative, then there must be some entity for it to demonstrate: and do we really want to countenance such entities as propositions to serve as the referent?

The problem isn’t so much that propositions do not have clear identity conditions (though they don’t), or that it is unclear what their role would be in a physicalist ontology (though it is): the problem is that they seem to be superfluous to an account of the truth-conditions of (S). According to (SS), it will be the case that Galileo said that the earth moves just so long as he assertively uttered something that makes him a samesayer with me when I say ‘the earth moves’. And an account of what makes for samesaying will no doubt be a complex affair, part of the general theory of interpretation which talks of speech-intentions, the way these relate to our belief-desire psychology, and to linguistic conventions and the like. But all this (at least Davidson himself would want to say) can be explicated without reference to propositions qua abstract entities. But then, if the truth-conditions of (S) can be explicated without reference to propositions, then probably we shouldn’t after all be discerning reference to such entities in our account of the underlying logical form of (S).

So, should we go for (SS) – the insight about ‘samesaying’ – without (TD), the tendentious claim that the ‘that’ in (S) is a demonstrative?

5. We have been sliding past a problem that should now be highlighted. We hid the problem from ourselves by concentrating on Baldwin’s version of (D), which contained ‘this’ rather than ‘that’. But let’s stick now to the original Davidsonian version: so the claim, once more, is that

(S) Galileo said that the earth moves

can be construed as

(D) Galileo said that. The earth moves.

Now put these into French. We get

(S<sub>F</sub>) Galilée a dit que la terre tourne  
and

(D<sub>F</sub>) Galilée a dit ça. La terre tourne.

Note, ‘ça’, not ‘que’ which would be quite illegitimate. And we cannot normally replace ‘ça’ by ‘que’ or vice versa while preserving grammaticality. (Thus ‘Regardez ça!’ but not ‘Regardez que!’; and ‘Galilée a dit que la terre tourne’ but not Galilée a dit ça la terre tourne.) So, the move from (D<sub>F</sub>) to (S<sub>F</sub>) is far from grammatically insignificant: it is the replacement a genuine demonstrative ‘ça’ with the complementizer ‘que’.\* But now this looks very worrying. If different words are used in French (Spanish, Latin) to do – apparently – different work, then perhaps it is merely an accident of English that we use the (normally) homophonic words ‘that’ in (S) and (D), and the surface similarity here blinds us to difference of function.

And the worry is justified. Here’s three, not absolutely conclusive but telling, reasons in favour of maintaining the traditional view that ‘that’ functions differently in (S) and (D), respectively as complementizer (*c-that*) and demonstrative (*d-that*)†. First, *c-that* but not *d-that* can be pronounced using the phonetic [ə], the colourless vowel we use in ‘the’. Second *c-that* but not *d-that* can frequently be omitted altogether, preserving acceptability, (So ‘Galileo said the earth moves’, but not ‘Galileo said. The earth moves’). Third, uses of *d-that* can naturally be expanded for further precision by use of some sort predicate: ‘I sat on d-that chair’, ‘Did you see d-that car?’. But we can’t expand

(S) Galileo said that the earth moves

to

(S!) Galileo said that utterance the earth moves

or some such.

More telling, note that in (S) we can replace ‘that’ with other complementizers: e.g. ‘why’, ‘when’, ‘whither’, *salva congruitate* but not with other demonstratives ‘this’, ‘that other thing’. But in

(D) Galileo said that. The earth moves.

we can replace ‘that’ by other demonstratives (as we did, following Baldwin in §1) and not by other complementizers.

Finally, note that we can demonstrate all kinds of sayings. Teacher says ‘Stand’ and everyone rises. Little Johnny also said that, and no-one moved. (Here ‘that’ is a genuine demonstrative). But we cannot say ‘Little Johnny said that stand’ – but why not on Davidson’s theory?

Such considerations, which are all elegantly marshalled by Gabriel Segal and Margaret Speas in their paper ‘On Saying  $\partial_{\partial t}$ ’ (*Mind and Language* 1 (1986) 124-132) seem to demonstrate pretty conclusively that ‘that’ in (S) is *not* a true demonstrative. And that suggests that Davidson is wrong: (S) does *not* wear its logical form on its face, apart from one small point – for inserting that small point takes us from a complementizer *c-that* to a genuine demonstrative *d-that*. Now, it could still be argued that (D) does give the logical form of (S) – that just as (for example) on Russell’s theory of descriptions, definite descriptions which certainly don’t look quantificational on their face are (allegedly) revealed to be disguised quantifications, so ‘Galileo said that the earth moves’, although not involving a true demonstrative at the surface level, does do so at some underlying level of deep structure. But the thesis has certainly now lost most of its initial charm, for as (1) we have seen that if we are to discern reference, it must be to propositions in some non-anodyne sense, and (2) we lack any principled story about why deep-

\*. The same applies to other languages with strong Latin roots, where the original distinction is between the demonstrative ‘hic, haec, hoc’ and the complementizer ‘qui, quae, quod’.

†. Careful. The use of ‘d-that’ for demonstrative that must not be confused with Kaplan’s use of ‘dthat’.



structural demonstratives – which could so easily have shown up as surface demonstratives – show up as surface complementizers.

Suppose then we say that (D) does not give the logical form of (S). If the claim is just the weaker one that (SS) is true, so that whenever (S) is true then an instance of (D) is, we don't need to treat the demonstrative in (D) as referring to anything other than token utterances. And (SS) by itself is still worth having (generalized to other psychological 'that-clauses, it nicely harmonizes with some attractive theses in the philosophy of mind). But, of course, retreating from Davidson's account of the logical form of 'Galileo said that the earth moves' leaves us – in the end – where we started: not knowing the first thing about indirect discourse.