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## Pragmatic enrichment and ‘two-context’ fictional utterances

Voltolini (2013) recruits free pragmatic enrichment in an account aimed to assign ‘real’ truth-condition to certain utterances involving referentially defective expressions. In my presentation I object that the account might not involve *free* enrichment, that a construal in terms of mandatory pragmatic enrichment (saturation) comes short of determining ‘real’ truth-condition, and does not explain intentional identity between occurrences of the same expression across utterances.

### 1. ‘Two-context’ fictional utterances

Consider:

- (1) Holmes is a detective.
- (2) Batman is Bruce Wayne.
- (3) Pegasus was born from the blood of Gorgona.

Sentences like these can be used to report on the relevant fictional stories or traditions from two different cognitive perspectives: the perspective of someone participating to a game of make-belief, not aiming for truth nor intending to affect her audience’s beliefs; or the perspective of someone performing a sincere assertion, aiming for truth and intending to affect an audience’s beliefs. An important question is how to capture this difference at the level of the utterances’ content. The question is not trivial since an utterance cannot be assigned a complete truth-condition if it contains a referentially defective expression, as is plausibly the case for (1-3).

Voltolini (2013) proposes a ‘pragmatic fix’, which does not require positing fictional individuals at the actual world. According to him, any ‘two-context’ fictional utterance of a sentence *S* proffered with assertoric intent is semantically equivalent to:

(S’) *According to the fictional story F, S(x...y).*

, with *F* a free variable for a fictional story, and *x...y* a sequence of free variables for fictional individuals, with the context contributing the appropriate assignment functions via free pragmatic enrichment (FPE). According to Voltolini, then, the context contributes the truth-condition of the utterance by providing both (a) the unarticulated constituent *According to the fictional story F* and (b) the relation-instance mediating the assignment of *F* and *x...y* to the appropriate witnesses.

### 2. Free pragmatic enrichment or saturation?

It is questionable that Voltolini’s account applies FPE. According to Recanati (2012), FPE is always optional, never mandatory. FPE requires that the situation of use prompt the audience to re-interpret the utterance, by means of an interpretation function that is a modification of the conventionally encoded meaning. FPE thus only applies to utterances which already express a full-blown proposition. But if (1-3) already express a full-blown proposition for FPE to operate on, it is unclear why we would need FPE to assign the utterances a real truth-condition.

A more charitable construal of Voltolini’s idea mobilizes not the notion of FPE but that of saturation, which means the contextually assignment of free variables present in the syntax of expressions or introduced via lexical rules (i.e. conceptual free variables). Since there is no lexical reason for positing the unarticulated constituent *According to the fictional story F* (no expression in the utterance has the required scope), the only way to go would be to associate the target utterances with a ‘covert’ syntax more complex than expected.

### 3. ‘Real’ truth-condition

On a such a ‘covert syntax’ construal, however, it is not clear how to analyse the unarticulated constituent *According to the fictional story F*. Construed as a quantifier over circumstances of evaluation, *F* occurs bound, not free, and the only contribution left for the context is to implicitly restrict the domain of the quantifier and to assign the free variables  $x...y$  accordingly. But for the utterances to receive a ‘real’ truth-condition, the interpretation function of the referentially defective expressions need to be *extended* to a function ranging over possible individuals serving as witnesses for  $x...y$ . After all, the quantifier applies to these variables. This goes against the idea of a contextual restriction of the domain of the quantifier. Unless, of course, the actual domain already contains fictional individual, which would undermine the need for a pragmatic fix.

#### 4. Intentional identity

A better construal of the unarticulated constituent is as a function  $f$  from the context associated with the situation of use into an extended context, at which the required witnesses for the free variables for individuals are available, with the situation of use supplying a condition  $C$  on the range of the function (i.e. the extension should map to the fictional worlds relevant in the context associated with the situation of use). On this construal, however, it is not clear how to explain the ‘intentional identity’ between the witness of the free variables for individuals. Consider for example two utterances of (1),  $u$  with assertoric intent and  $u'$  without. Intuitively, the ‘real’ truth-condition of  $u$  and the ‘fictional’ truth-condition of  $u'$  should be such that, anyone who understands either utterance knows that the other utterance is about the same individual. The free variables for individuals corresponding to the occurrence of “Holmes” in  $u$  are assigned relative to the extended context returned by the unarticulated function. But since the situation of utterance of  $u'$  does not contribute  $f$  nor  $C$ , there is no guarantee that the occurrence of “Holmes” in  $u'$  receives the same assignment as the occurrence of the same variable in  $u$ . Such a guarantee would require a constituent operating directly on the assignments of the respective variables. But that is not the constituent suggested by Voltolini’s account.

#### **References**

- Recanati, F. (2012) “Pragmatic enrichment” in G. Russell & D. Graff Fara (eds.), *Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Language*.
- Voltolini, A. (2013) “Contexts, Fiction and Truth” in A. Capone, M. Carapezza & F. Lo Piparo (eds.), *Perspectives on Pragmatics and Philosophy*. Springer. pp. 489-500 (2013).