

S. SOAMES

REPLY TO CRITICS

Thanks to my critics for their illuminating essays. It is a pleasure to respond to such well informed and intelligent criticism.

1. REPLY TO LINSKY

Linsky's central point is correct; Kripke's distinction between rigid and nonrigid designators can be extended in a straightforward way from singular terms to general terms. In both cases, for an expression to rigidly designate its extension is for it to designate the same extension with respect to every possible world-state (in which it has an extension at all). On this account, simple natural kind terms like *water*, *gold*, *electricity*, *blue*, and *tiger* – as well as ordinary general terms like *bachelor*, *philosopher*, *automobile* and *triangle* – designate the same extension with respect to each world-state. As I see it, however, the two differ importantly in the metaphysics of their designata. Whereas a term like *bachelor* designates a property that may be distinguished from other properties that are necessarily coextensive with it, natural kinds differ from one another only if there are possible world-states in which some of their instances are different. Intuitively this seems plausible; it is hard to imagine two distinct species of animal, two distinct substances, or two distinct colors which have precisely the same instances in every possible world-state. This is important for my linguistic model. Consider, for example, the color blue (which I take to be a natural kind). Color science tells us that the object-color blue is determined

by a certain type of surface spectral reflectance property – one which specifies proportions of light reflected at different wavelengths. Let Q be a complex general term of English explicitly mentioning proportions of light reflected at different wavelengths that designates this property. The term *blue* is clearly **not** synonymous with Q . The same can be said for other descriptive general terms. Suppose there is a further complex term \hat{Q} that applies to surfaces on the basis of a specification of their minute physical structure, which turns out to be necessarily equivalent to Q . Then, although *blue* is necessarily equivalent to both Q and \hat{Q} , it is synonymous with neither. The different complex properties designated by these general terms have equal claim to determining the color blue, but neither is identical with the color itself. What is said here about *blue*, and the color it designates, applies to many linguistically simple general terms for natural kinds, and their designata.

Although most of this picture can be found in *Beyond Rigidity*, one important distinction was left out – the distinction between a general term, like *blue*, and the predicate *is blue* formed from it by attaching the copula. Whereas *blue* directly and rigidly designates the color blue – which is both its extension and semantic content – the predicate *is blue* designates the set of individuals to which it applies, which is its extension. Since the set of blue things varies from world-state to world-state, there is no natural extension of Kripke's notion of rigid designation to predicates that classifies *is blue* as rigid, even though the general term *blue* is rigid in roughly Kripke's original sense. Similar remarks apply to other general terms for natural kinds and the predicates that contain them – as well as to ordinary general terms like *bachelor*, and the predicates that result from combining them with the copula. The semantic content of such a predicate is a complex, consisting of the semantic content of its general term plus the content of the copula (being an instance of). For each world-state w , the latter assigns to the argument provided by the semantic content of the general term at w the class of instances of that argument. Since *blue* is directly referential,

its semantic content is the color itself, which is the argument it provides to the content of the copula at every world-state. Thus, for all intents and purposes, the semantic content of the predicate *is blue* may be taken to be the property of being (an instance of the color) blue.

Next consider the predicate *is the color of a cloudless sky at noon*. Following Linsky's elegant suggestion, we may treat the description it contains as a general term, *the F: F is a color of a cloudless sky at noon*, in which F is a second-order variable ranging over kinds and properties of individuals, and *is a color of the sky at noon* is a higher-order predicate of these entities. Unlike *blue*, the description is nonrigid, denoting the color blue at the actual world-state, while denoting other colors at different world-states. When combined with the copula, the description forms a predicate the semantic content of which is the complex <being an instance of, D>, where D is the semantic content of the description. Since D determines the color blue at the actual world-state, the actual extension of the predicate is the set of blue things, whereas its extensions at other world-states may be sets of things of different colors.

The end result is a distinction between rigid and nonrigid general terms that is a helpful addition to, and correction of, *Beyond Rigidity*. The next question, which Linsky doesn't address, is how, if at all, this addition affects the account of necessary, *aposteriori* theoretical identification statements involving general terms for natural kinds. Here, it is useful to begin with a simple example which is neither necessary, nor a theoretical identification statement.

1. Blue is the color of a cloudless sky at noon.

Given what we have said so far, we could treat this as an ordinary identity statement involving a pair of coreferential terms flanking the *is* of identity. Of course, since the terms are general, we would then interpret *is* as second-order identity, taking general, rather than (first-order) singular, terms as arguments. On this account (1) is true but contingent, since one of the general terms is rigid and the other is not.

Next consider a corresponding analysis of the genuine theoretical identity (2a).

2a. Water is H_2O .

If *water* is treated as a general term denoting an abstract kind having the higher-order property of being a substance, and H_2O has (roughly) the content of the rigid second-order description. *The F: F is a substance instances of which are made up of molecules with two hydrogen and one oxygen atoms*, then it may seem that (2a) may be treated as a statement in which a pair of rigid general terms flank the (second-order) identity sign. Since the terms are rigid, (2a) is necessary if true, even though it is knowable only *aposteriori*.

Despite the satisfying parallel between this account of the necessity of (2a) and familiar examples of necessary identities involving rigid (first-order) singular terms, there is reason to be suspicious of its general applicability. For example, (2a) seems to be linguistically parallel to (2b) and (2c).

2b. Ice is H_2O .

2c. Water vapor is H_2O .

However, since one thing cannot truly be identified with three different things, (2a), (2b), and (2c) cannot all be of the form $\delta = \gamma$, where δ and γ are (codesignative) general terms. Clearly, (2b) and (2c) each has a reading in which it expresses a necessary *aposteriori* truth, even though that truth is not of the form $\delta = \gamma$. But then, surely, (2a) has such a reading as well. Perhaps these sentences also have readings in which they are strict and literal identities (and in which (2a) alone is true). But even if they do, their other readings must be explained.

The same is true for other examples of the necessary *aposteriori* explicitly discussed in *Naming and Necessity*, including those in (3).

3a. Lightning is electricity.

b. Flashes of lightning are flashes of electricity.

c. Light is a stream of photons.

- d. A material object is (pure) gold if and only if the only element contained therein is that with atomic number 79.
- e. For all bodies x and y , x is hotter than y if and only if x has a higher mean molecular kinetic energy than y .

Like the examples in (2), these sentences have natural readings in which they are instances of the necessary *a posteriori*, even though they are not of the form $\delta = \gamma$. This poses a challenge for Kripke's suggestion that his account of natural kind terms plays an important role in explaining why they are necessary, if true (even though they are knowable only *a posteriori*). As I explained in the précis, I believe he is right in thinking that it does play such a role, even though the necessity of the sentences in (2) and (3) doesn't follow from their truth, plus the rigidity of their general terms, in the way that the necessity of *Hesperus is Phosphorus* follows from its truth, plus the rigidity of its singular terms. The explanation in the case of (2) and (3) may be seen as presupposing what we have here described as the rigidity of simple general terms for natural kinds. However, it also depends crucially on (i) the way in which the reference of such terms is standardly fixed, (ii) the semantic contents of such terms and the predicates that contain them, and (iii) the representation of (the relevant readings of) the examples in (2) and (3) as universally quantified conditionals or biconditionals. This explanation remains intact, and is further clarified by Linsky's useful contrast between rigid and nonrigid general terms, and the need, in light of this contrast, to carefully distinguish general terms like *blue*, *water*, and *electricity* from the associated predicates *is blue*, *is water*, and *is electricity*.¹

2. REPLY TO BRAUN AND SIDER

Braun and Sider focus on a different aspect of *Beyond Rigidity* – the attempt to use pragmatic descriptive enrichment to reconcile semantic Millianism with seemingly anti-Millian intuitions about how substitution of (linguistically simple) coreferential

names in sentences can change their “cognitive values,” and with the apparently different truth values of attitude ascriptions containing such sentences. The idea, in both cases, is that although substitution may sometimes change the propositions asserted and/or conveyed by utterances of such sentences, it does not change their semantic content (i.e. the propositions they semantically express). In this way the pragmatic mechanism of descriptive enrichment can be used to disarm certain objections to an austere Millian semantics.

Braun and Sider agree with the Millian semantics, but object to the partially descriptive pragmatics. On their view, Kripke’s arguments against full-fledged semantic descriptivism can be adapted to refute even my more modest brand of pragmatic descriptivism – hence, their terminology, *Kripke’s revenge*. Their first argument is a variant of Kripke’s modal argument based on example (A).

- A. It is necessary that: (If Aristotle exists, then Aristotle taught Alexander)

They claim that there is no context in which (A) would seem true. Certainly it is very hard to imagine any natural context in which an utterance of (A) would result in the assertion of a truth. But why is that supposed to be an argument against pragmatic, descriptive enrichment? Perhaps the argument is this: (i) if such enrichment ever occurs, then it should, in principle, be possible to enrich *Aristotle* in (A) with the property of being the teacher of Alexander, in which case an utterance of (A) in the relevant context would express a truth; (ii) since there is no such context, there is no such thing as descriptive enrichment. The problem with the argument is that it takes it for granted that there is nothing in the nature of descriptive enrichment itself that would block the imagined enrichment of (A). But there is.

Pragmatic descriptive enrichment exists to serve conversational purposes. Whether it occurs in a given context, and what content it has when it does occur, depends not only on what conversational participants assume at the time of utterance, but on a variety of other factors as well – including

Gricean (and other) conversational maxims. Since (A) is not exactly a conversational staple, we may illustrate this by looking first at (A1).

A1. Aristotle taught Alexander.

It is easy to see why, in normal contexts in which (A1) might be uttered, *Aristotle* will not be pragmatically enriched by the addition of the property of being the teacher of Alexander. In order for such enrichment to take place it must be taken for granted by conversational participants, and so go without saying, that the referent of *Aristotle* was the teacher of Alexander. In any such context, (A1) will already be assumed to be true, and so will not be a candidate for assertive utterance. So, if C is a normal conversational context in which (A1) is assertively uttered, we may take it that it is **not** already assumed in C that the referent of *Aristotle* was the teacher of Alexander, and hence that the utterance of the name is **not** pragmatically enriched by the addition of the property of being the teacher of Alexander.

Much the same can be said for (A2).

A2. If Aristotle existed, then Aristotle taught Alexander.

To enrich the use of the name *Aristotle* with content identifying its referent as a teacher of Alexander would render the assertion trivial, uninformative, and redundant. Since such assertions are to be avoided, there is an obvious explanation of why – even though pragmatic descriptive enrichment occurs in other cases – the particular enrichment envisioned by Braun and Sider does not occur here, and an utterance of (A2) does not assert a necessary truth. Finally, the connection to (A) should be obvious. Our judgment that there are no normal contexts in which (A) would be used to assert a truth is tied to our recognition that there are no such contexts in which an utterance of (A2) would assert a necessary truth. The explanation of the two cases go hand in hand. Since this explanation is compatible with the combination of semantic Millianism and pragmatic descriptive enrichment advocated in *Beyond Rigidity*, the view advanced there is **not** refuted by the

adaptation by Braun and Sider of Kripke's model argument – though the original Kripkean argument remains effective against the descriptivist semantic theories it was designed to refute.

Their next argument is presented as a version of Kripke's semantic argument. Here is what they say:

About to give a lecture, Gödel is introduced by his host as follows: *We are very pleased to have the person who proved the incompleteness of arithmetic with us today.* Professor Gödel will speak on logic. Gödel's host believes the partially descriptive proposition, *Gödel, the person who proved the incompleteness of arithmetic, will speak on logic*, and even intends the audience to come to believe this proposition. Thus, it seems that on Soames's theory, the host descriptively enriches *Gödel* with *the person who proved the incompleteness of arithmetic*, and asserts the descriptive proposition when he utters (G) (G) *Professor Gödel will speak on logic*. Now suppose that, as in Kripke's example, Gödel never proved the incompleteness of arithmetic. Someone else, Schmidt did. Soames must then say that the host asserted something false by uttering (G). Doesn't that seem wrong?

No, it doesn't. The host did say something false (even if Schmidt, who really proved the incompleteness theorem, was in the audience and so was with them on that day). After all, the host did say, *We are happy to have the person who proved the incompleteness of arithmetic with us today*, clearly indicating that Gödel, whom he went on to say would speak on logic, was that very person. So he said, of Gödel, that he both proved the incompleteness of arithmetic and would speak on logic – even though this was false. Did the host say something false “by uttering (G).” I think so – in the sense that uttering (G) contributed to the false assertion, even though it was not the only contributing factor. The host's utterance of the sentence preceding (G), together with the obvious fact that Gödel was the subject of both remarks, also contributed. This illustrates an important point. The propositions asserted by a speaker who makes more than one utterance are not always traceable, one by one, to individual utterances each of which is sufficient for the assertion of the

proposition in question. Sometimes a proposition is asserted as a result of the combined effects of several utterances.

Braun and Sider's third argument is a variant of this example, in which Jones and Smith arrive late to the lecture, miss the first sentence of the introduction, but hear the host utter (G). In this variant of the example, only Smith and Jones know of Gödel's theft of the incompleteness theorem, but they mistakenly think that everyone knows. Smith then says to Jones, *Gödel stole the incompleteness proof from Schmidt! I really doubt that he will have the nerve to talk on logic. Surely he'll talk about something else. Still the host believes the Professor Gödel will speak on logic. So perhaps he will.* Braun and Sider say the following about this:

According to Soames, by uttering *The host believes that Professor Gödel will speak on logic*, Smith primarily asserts the descriptively enriched proposition *The host believes that Professor Gödel who stole the incompleteness proof from Schmidt, will speak on logic*. Since the host believes no such thing, this proposition is false. Yet, as with (G) our intuition is that Smith's utterance is true. There is no whiff of doubt.

Although I agree that we have a strong intuition that Smith's utterance is true – which makes the case difficult – I think that there are reasonable doubts about whether it is a genuine counterexample to my claims about descriptive enrichment.

To begin with, it is clear that whether or not Smith has said anything false, he has asserted a number of truths. One of these truths is the singular proposition semantically expressed by the ascription (which says that the host believes of Gödel that he will speak on logic). In addition, it is plausible to suppose that Smith asserted (a) that the host believed that the day's guest, Professor Gödel, would speak on logic, (b) that the host believed that the person, Gödel, he was introducing would speak on logic, (c) that the host believed that the man, Gödel, standing with him on stage would speak on logic, (d) that the host believed that the logician, Gödel, would speak on logic, (e) that the host believed that the well-known, Professor Gödel, would speak on logic, as well as a

number of related propositions. As I pointed out in Chapter 3, when descriptive enrichment occurs there are often many equally correct enrichments of the same utterance. In the present case, the wealth of obvious enrichments produces an avalanche of truths. There are two ways in which this may be relevant. First, in considering what someone said we often focus on some subpart of the whole of what was asserted; hence, it is possible that this avalanche might mask the assertion of something false. Second, and I believe more significant for this example, our decisions about what descriptive enrichments should be credited to a speaker in determining his assertions may be guided, in part, by considerations of charity. In particular, when there are several obvious, relatively simple and straightforward truths the assertion of which may be credited to a speaker's remark, we may resist adding what we know to be a clear falsehood to the list, unless something about the discourse, or the broader context of utterance, makes the addition unavoidable.²

The context described by Braun and Sider does not meet this condition. In addition to producing a falsehood, the problematic descriptive candidate for being added to the interpretation of the speaker's remark – the property of being one who has stolen the incompleteness theorem from Schmidt – is both more complex and less straightforwardly obvious as part of what the speaker was attributing to the host's beliefs about Gödel than the unproblematic additions already noted – being a well-known professor, being a logician, being the day's guest, and so on. Hence, there may be good reasons why Braun and Sider's problematic enrichment is correctly judged not to have occurred, even though the unproblematic enrichments did.

One could, of course, change the example to strengthen the basis for the enrichment they are interested in. Instead of merely describing the conversational participants (Smith and Jones) as (wrongly) assuming that everyone, the host included, knows that Gödel stole the theorem, we can have the speaker, Smith, explicitly say this. With this change, the discourse now reads as follows: *I can't believe it. Gödel's theft of the incompleteness theorem from Schmidt is the scandal of the year; the*

host, the audience, everyone knows about it. It is foremost on everyone's mind. How could Gödel have the nerve to speak about it? Still, the host believes that Gödel will speak on logic. So perhaps he will. Here, there is no avoiding the fact that the speaker has asserted falsehoods about the beliefs of the host and his audience. Can the speaker be correctly described as having said that the host believes the proposition that the man, Gödel, who stole the incompleteness theorem from Schmidt, will speak on logic? It seems to me that he can, and that the case is now analogous to their second argument – the original version of the example (without the insertion of Smith and Jones). Thus, when their third argument is reformulated in this way, my reply to it is essentially the same as my reply to their second argument. When it is not reformulated, I agree that the descriptive enrichment that worries them does not occur, but I suspect that there is an independent explanation of this.

Braun and Sider tweak the argument by adding a case in which Jimmy Olson is able to correctly report one of Lex Luthor's beliefs – that Superman is strong but Clark Kent isn't – even though Jimmy's views about Superman are very different from Luthor's. This poses no real difficulty. Surely Jimmy and Lex share the view that Superman has super powers, and that is descriptive enrichment enough. Even if there were no such enrichment in this case, that wouldn't be a problem. When there is no descriptive enrichment of an utterance, the proposition asserted is nothing more than the semantic content of the sentence. Braun and Sider find this problematic for what they take to be my view. They say:

And the present case [involving Jimmy's report of Luthor's belief] contains an extra obstacle to this reply: the semantic content of (SC) [*Lex Luthor believes that Superman is strong and Clark Kent is not*] attributes to Luthor belief in a contradictory (singular) proposition. Why would Jimmy assert such a thing?

This comment betrays a serious misunderstanding of my view.

Asserting and believing contradictions pose no problem. Imagine Venus observing the ancients pointing at her in the

morning and saying *That is a heavenly body visible only in the morning*, and then later pointing at her in the evening and saying *That is a heavenly body visible only in the evening*. Recounting her observations to Mars, she may truly report *They say, and believe, both that I am visible only in the morning and that I am visible only in the evening*. In saying this, Venus truly says of herself that the ancients assert and believe contradictory propositions about her. The lesson of this and similar (Pierre-type) examples is that (unwitting) belief in contradictory propositions, and assertions that others have such beliefs, is not uncommon. The standard Millian account of this – to which I subscribe – is that it involves different ways of entertaining, asserting, and believing the propositions in question. What I have added to this picture is (i) that these different ways of entertaining propositions often involve different descriptive enrichments of the propositions so entertained, and (ii) that these descriptive enrichments often enter into what is asserted by speakers. However, as I pointed out in the précis, I do not hold that all differences between ways of entertaining the same proposition are differences in descriptive and/or Russellian content. Nor do I think that descriptive enrichment of what is asserted always occurs, or that it is the only factor giving rise to anti-Millian intuitions.

This last point may be illustrated by imagining a speaker who says [A believes both that n is F and that m is not F] in a situation in which he doesn't know much about what descriptions his audience associates with the names m and n used in the belief report. In this situation, there is no significant descriptive enrichment of what is asserted, and essentially all the speaker takes for granted is that members of his audience will understand him as having said of the referent of n that A believes it "is F" and of the referent of m that it "is not F". If m and n are coreferential, then the speaker has in fact attributed contradictory beliefs to A, even though there may be nothing in the context to indicate this. Here, what is asserted coincides, for all intents and purposes, with the Millian semantic content of the sentence uttered. The fact that hearers would not judge the speaker to have

attributed contradictory beliefs to A is an anti-Millian intuition that is **not** defused by their grasp of the descriptive content of what is asserted.

I agree with Braun and Sider that the full explanation of this intuition involves a certain semantic ignorance, and even confusion, on the part of ordinary speaker–hearers about the meanings of sentences containing the two names. As I argued in Chapter 3, the mechanism of descriptive enrichment has something to contribute to our understanding of how this ignorance and confusion arises. Roughly put, the fact that $\lceil n$ is F \rceil and $\lceil m$ is F \rceil can be used to assert and convey different propositions, even though n and m are coreferential, is wrongly taken by speakers to show that the two sentences differ in meaning. This disposes them to think that attitude ascriptions containing the two sentences mean different things, and can always differ in truth value. This is wrong, though not completely wrong. In various situations, assertive utterances of the relevant attitude ascriptions **can** result in the assertion of propositions with different truth values, due to different descriptive enrichments. In such cases, speakers' intuitions are not completely off the mark. However, in other cases, their faulty anti-Millian intuitions are **not** redeemed, or partially mitigated, by correctly tracking truths about what is asserted. In these cases, speakers are wrong about both assertion and meaning. *Beyond Rigidity* emphasized the first class of cases, in which speakers are partially right. Although it did not preclude the second class, it also did not focus on it. I now regard this as a bad decision, capable of leading even sympathetic and sophisticated readers astray. I suspect that what most worries Braun and Sider is the thought the message of the book is that all anti-Millian intuitions about sentences are simply the transformation of correct judgments about what is asserted by utterances of them into incorrect judgments about their meanings. It is not.

Next, Braun and Sider turn to what they call *intuitions concerning the validity of arguments*, which they tap as follows: a speaker in a particular context assertively utters (or considers assertive utterances of) S_1, \dots, S_n and then is asked \lceil Does it

follow that C?]. The speaker is said to intuit, in the context, that the argument is valid if the speaker answers *yes*. Braun and Sider search for some concept of validity in terms of semantic/pragmatic truth preservation that will match these intuitions – if the framework of *Beyond Rigidity* is correct. It should be clear from what I have just said that there is no reason to expect there to be any. One possibility – call it *validity-1* – that they consider is the relation that holds between S_1, \dots, S_n and C, relative to a context, just in case the proposition asserted by the relevant utterance of C in the context follows from (I gloss this *is a necessary and a priori consequence of*) the propositions asserted by the utterances of S_1, \dots, S_n in the context. A second relation of truth preservation – call it *validity-2* – is one that holds between S_1, \dots, S_n and C just in case for any context of utterance U, the proposition asserted by an utterance of C in U follows from (is an *a priori* and necessary consequence of) those asserted by utterances of S_1, \dots, S_n in U. (Here we assume that words do not change meanings, and hence that names do not change characters, across contexts.) Obviously, there will be many valid arguments in these two senses, that will not reliably be intuited by competent speakers.

But are there arguments that are intuited to be valid in Braun and Sider's sense which are not really valid-1 or valid-2? I don't see why not. If I point to different individuals – *He* [pointing at x] *is F* but *he* [pointing at y] *is not G* – in a conversation in which it is wrongly taken to be obvious by everyone that I have pointed twice to the same person, the argument from my premises to the conclusion – *Someone is F but not G* – may be intuited to be valid, even though it is not valid-1. The case might be extended to cover validity-2 by substituting for the two occurrences of indexicals a pair of names of different individuals that are wrongly thought (by everyone) to be (obviously) coreferential (and to be recognized as such). After all, speakers are not infallible about what they refer to, and nothing in my view requires them to be.

Still, particular arguments that speakers intuit to be valid might cause problems. One such argument that Braun and Sider consider is their A3.

- A3. a. α believes that β is F
 b. $\exists x x = \beta$
 c. Therefore, $\exists x \alpha$ believes that x is F

About this, they say the following:

A3 does not threaten Soames, for if he makes certain assumptions he can explain our intuition that it is valid. He might, for instance, claim that if a speaker utters A3a, thus intending to assert a descriptively enriched proposition *α believes that β , the G , is F* , then in that context, by uttering A3c the speaker would assert the descriptively enriched proposition *$\exists x \alpha$ believes that x , the G , is F* The argument asserted by A3 is thus valid...

Although I do regard the argument as valid in the intended sense, descriptive enrichment in (Ac3) is not required. If no descriptive enrichment of the conclusion takes place, an utterance of it will assert that the agent believes an unenriched singular proposition. However, since this belief is obviously necessary for believing descriptive enrichments of it, the argument is valid-1, whether or not the premise is descriptively enriched.

The argument they do find problematic is A4.

- A4.a. Superman = the superhero & Lois Lane believes that Superman can fly
 b. Therefore, $\exists x (x = \text{the superhero \& Lois Lane believes that } x \text{ can fly})$
 c. Clark Kent = the milquetoast reporter & Lois Lane does not believe that Clark Kent can fly
 d. Therefore $\exists x (x = \text{the milquetoast reporter \& Lois Lane does not believe that } x \text{ can fly})$
 e. The superhero = the milquetoast reporter
 f. Therefore, $\exists x (x = \text{the superhero \& Lois Lane believes that } x \text{ can fly \& Lois Lane does not believe that } x \text{ can fly})$

Since the final conclusion (f) is false in any normal context, the premises (a), (c), and (e) cannot be jointly true. Braun and Sider take this to be a problem for my view. They say:

A4 puts us in an awkward position. Our intuitions clash: we want to utter A4's premises and the negation of its conclusion, yet we also intuit its validity. Something has to give. Soames's stand on intuitions about particular sentences, roughly speaking is that they are correct about *something*, namely, asserted content. We think that the correct stand is rather that, in some cases, speakers' intuitions about particular sentences are correct about *nothing*.

Except for their claim about my stand on intuitions, I agree with this. As I have already indicated, some assertive utterances of attitude ascriptions do not trigger significant descriptive enrichment. If this is true of the utterance of (A4c), then the proposition asserted will be false, despite the fact that speakers may be ignorant of this fact, due to misconceptions about the meanings of sentences containing names. If there is descriptive enrichment of (A4c), but not of (A4d), then that step is invalid. If there is descriptive enrichment of both these ascriptions, then the move from (A4d, e) to (A4f) is invalid (unless one allows as theoretically possible the highly unlikely enrichment that would be required to guarantee the truth of (A4f)).

Why isn't all this transparent to ordinary speakers? There are three main reasons – their semantic ignorance (already mentioned), complications arising from the number of combinations to consider, and the tendency at certain steps – e.g. from (A4c) to (A4d) – not to notice when certain implicit enrichments are dropped. (Regarding the latter, we tend to over generalize from the fact that this sort of inference preserves the truth of what is asserted when there is systematic enrichment, or no enrichment at all.) Of these reasons, the first seems to be the most important. Accepting, for the sake of argument, that *Superman* is a linguistically simple rather than a partially descriptive name, Millians correctly characterize *Superman can fly* and *Clark Kent can fly* as synonymous. The fact that ordinary speakers take these sentences to

be nonsynonymous leads them (wrongly) to think that (A4a) and (A4c) are jointly true **whether or not there is any enrichment**. Since this view is false – while providing the chief intuitive reason supporting (A4d) – it is not surprising that speakers should feel hard pressed to resist the move to (A4d) and ultimately to (A4f).

Braun and Sider are right to maintain that certain anti-Millian intuitions driving (A4) must be rejected. However, this is not an argument against descriptive enrichment as a significant pragmatic phenomenon. Such enrichment plays an important role in making the Millian conception of semantic content plausible, in accommodating correct anti-Millian intuitions about certain assertions and distinguishing them from corresponding incorrect judgments about meaning, and in explaining the basis for rejecting those anti-Millian intuitions about assertion and meaning that cannot be so accommodated. As I see it, the lesson to be learned from Braun and Sider is not that descriptive enrichment, or other central tenets of *Beyond Rigidity*, should be given up, but rather that they must be integrated both with standard Millian accounts of different ways of entertaining propositions, and with a clear understanding of the extent to which speakers are prone to semantic error. Point taken.

3. REPLY TO RICHARD

Like Braun and Sider, Richard is skeptical about descriptive enrichment. His first objection is designed to make trouble for the view that such enrichments capture what is asserted or conveyed by speakers. The example involves a conversation during which an initially misguided subject, Bertrand – who wrongly attributes one of Saul Bellow's books to Samuel Clemens – is said to “realize that Mark Twain is Samuel Clemens.” Since Bertrand already knew the bare Russellian proposition expressed by the complement of *realize*, he can't have learned that. Since the new belief he acquires – that Mark Twain, the author of *Huck Finn*, is Samuel Clemens, the author of *The Adventures of Augie March* – is

false, Bertrand can't realize that either. (*Realize* relates agents only to truths). So what, Richard wants to know, does he come to realize? He comes, I suspect, to realize several things, – one of which is that the well-known author, Mark Twain, referred to as *Twain* by the experts in the conversation (as well as by Bertrand and others) is the man, Samuel Clemens, referred to as *Clemens* by the experts (as well as by Bertrand and others). Since, this proposition is both true and one that Bertrand comes to know in the course of the conversation; it is something he comes to realize. Thus, there is an obvious descriptive enrichment of the use of the attitude ascription *Bertrand will thereby realize that Twain is Clemens* in Richard's story that captures (at least in part) the truth conveyed that is conveyed. The same enrichment works for the variant of the case in which Bertrand already knows, prior to the conversation, of the man Twain, that he was named both *Twain* and *Clemens*, while wrongly thinking that this man with two names was not the famous author.³

Richard's next example is more challenging. The problematic ascription is (4).

4. Donald, but not Drummond, knows that Jones is in jail.

What makes the case problematic is that although the use of (4) in Richard's scenario seems intuitively to convey a truth, it is also a bit puzzling, since there seems to be no piece of knowledge regarding Jones being in jail that Donald has which Drummond lacks. Both know of Jones that he is in jail. Both know that Jones, the man Donald is looking for, is in jail, and neither knows that Jones, the man Drummond is looking for, is in jail. On my view, the proposition semantically expressed by (4) is false, while the truth that is conveyed is the result of enriching (4) so as to yield (5), while taking (5) to express (6).⁴

5. Donald, but not Drummond, knows that the man, Jones, he is looking for is in jail.
6. Donald knows that the man, Jones, he is looking for, is in jail but Drummond doesn't know that the man, Jones, he is looking for, is in jail

Thus, on my account, a bit of creative reconstruction is needed to interpret the utterance of (4) in the scenario. Intuitively, this seems right. Given the use of (4) in the story, one's natural response is, I think, to ask for clarification. *What exactly does Donald know that Drummond doesn't? ... Well, nothing exactly, what I am saying is that ...* [now one gives (6)].

After leveling these objections against my positive view, Richard turns to defending his own view against criticisms made of it in *Beyond Rigidity*. He first addresses my suspicion that his semantics attributes to speakers too much in the way of speculative assumptions about representations in agents' minds underlying the propositions they believe. Let $[A$ believes that $S]$ be a belief ascription and p be the structured, Russellian proposition expressed by S (relative to a certain context C). According to Richard's semantics, the truth of the ascription (relative to C) requires the agent $@$ to have a representation R in mind which (i) $@$ accepts, (ii) is composed of representational constituents $r_1...r_n$ in 1-1 correspondence to the constituents in p , which they determine (as their Russellian contents), and (iii) has a structure that can be seen as isomorphic that of p . In addition, the linguistic constituents $s_1...s_n$ of S must conform to the assumptions of speaker-hearers about which expressions in the language used in C may serve as translations of $r_1...r_n$. Although this picture is pleasingly tidy, it also contains substantial and, as far as I know, unsupported empirical assumptions about the psychology of believers. To take just one point, it is assumed that discreteness in things believed must be matched by a corresponding discreteness of mental representations underlying those beliefs. More specifically, it is assumed that for any pair of beliefs with distinct Russellian contents, an agent must have distinct mental representations satisfying (i)-(iii) above. Isn't this a matter of scientific psychology, rather than arm-chair speculation? If it is, then Richard's semantics has given a hostage to fortune. To make the truth of ordinary attitude ascriptions dependent on a scientifically vulnerable elaboration of the representational theory of mind is risky. To

attribute the central tenets of this theory to ordinary speakers is even riskier.

This is not to say that ordinary speakers make **no** assumptions about the representations of other language users. As Richard points out, when interpreting and reporting the speech of others – which sometimes leads us to ascribe beliefs to them – we routinely do make assumptions about how their words relate to ours. However, it is far from clear that, as a general rule, our belief ascriptions are guided by the assumptions required by Richard's semantics. Suppose someone says *The ancients believed that Hesperus was dangerous* – not knowing which languages they spoke. In saying this, the speaker may make no assumption about whether the ancients had any proper name for Hesperus at all, or even whether they expressed their belief in words. Suppose they didn't, and the speaker knows this. Must such a speaker assume that they had other purely mental representations – ideas – by which they thought about the planet, and believed the proposition? I don't see why.

Some speakers, of course, may assume that agents always have linguistic or mental representations of things they think about. However, in many cases – including our example about the ancients – these assumptions are parasitic on something more basic. Suppose that a speaker, in uttering the ascription *The ancients believed that Hesperus was dangerous*, presupposes that the ancients thought about Hesperus in a certain way – e.g. as being visible in the evening. Given this supposition, plus a commitment to mental representations, Richard can view the speaker as implicitly imposing semantic constraints requiring the ancients to believe the Russellian proposition by virtue of accepting some representation or other of it containing a representation H of Hesperus that is associated in their minds with a description predicating being visible in the evening of its referent. But this is just a way of translating into his contentious theoretical framework the ordinary thought that the speaker intended the utterance to be understood as asserting and conveying the descriptively enriched information that the ancients believed that the

heavenly body, Hesperus, seen in the evening, was dangerous. It is this descriptive enrichment that the speaker and his audience make assumptions about. Any more elaborate claim about the mental representations of the ancients is either not assumed at all, or derived from assumptions about descriptive enrichment plus the tenets of some potentially contentious representational theory of mind. Thus, as I see it, Richard puts the cart before the horse. Instead of taking descriptive enrichments to be primary, he derives them from claims about mental representations that are, in many cases, both secondary and too contentious to be included in the semantics of ordinary belief ascriptions.

Richard next defends himself against a criticism of his view originally presented in my “Beyond Singular Propositions,” and elaborated in *Beyond Rigidity*.⁵ On his view, the semantic content of a belief ascription in a context C encodes translational rules indicating which words used in C may serve as adequate translations of the words or mental representations of different believers. It is because these rules may require expressions with the same semantic content in C to be mapped onto different words or representations used by agents whose beliefs are being reported that substitution of expressions with the same content is allowed to change the truth values, semantic contents, and propositions asserted by utterances of belief ascriptions. My criticism focuses on the fact that the translation rules themselves reflect beliefs and intentions of speaker–hearers regarding the relationship between their words and the words or representations of others. Thus, in cases in which speaker–hearers know a single believer under two different names or descriptions, without realizing that this is the case, they may unwittingly adopt translation rules that require the same expression to be mapped onto different symbols used by the agent – as when a speaker utters (7a) and (7b) in a context governed by R1 and R2.

- 7a. Superman believes that Twain is boring.
- 7b. Clark Kent believes that Twain is tired.

- R1. When ascribing beliefs to Superman “Twain” can be mapped only onto some name – e.g., “Twain” itself – that Superman associates with the description *the author of Huck Finn*.
- R2. When ascribing beliefs to Clark Kent “Twain” can be mapped only onto the demonstrative representation *the man standing over there* [demonstrating Twain’s location].

Let us further stipulate that in the world-state of the context, Superman/Kent does not take the man standing over there to be the author, “Twain,” of *Huck Finn*. In such a context, no translation of the ascriber’s words onto words or representations used by Superman – i.e. Clark Kent – can satisfy both R1 and R2. Thus, even if Superman/Clark Kent accepts both (8a) and (8b) in his own context, Richard’s original theory wrongly characterizes the speaker’s utterances of (7a) and (7b) – and indeed every ascription *Superman/Clark Kent believes that Twain is ...* as untrue.

- 8a. Twain (the author of *Huck Finn*) is boring
- b. That man standing over there [demonstrating Twain’s location] is tired.

Richard’s original response to this problem⁶ was to call contexts with conflicting restrictions “defective,” and to assign truth (falsity) to an ascription used in such a context just in case it comes out true (false) on all ways of removing the conflict by removing one of the restrictions. On this account, *Superman believes that Twain is a man* comes out true relative to the context. However, as pointed out in *Beyond Rigidity*, (7a) and (7b) are labeled truth valueless (if in addition to accepting (8a) and (8b), Superman/Kent does not accept (9a) and (9b)).

- 9a. The man standing over there [demonstrating Twain’s location] is boring
- b. Twain (the author of *Huck Finn*) is tired

Intuitively, this is wrong because, as the case is set up, it is clear that the speaker asserts and conveys the pair truths (10a) and (10b).

- 10a. Superman believes that the author, Twain, of *Huck Finn* is boring.
- b. Clark Kent believes that the man, Twain, standing over there is tired.

Since intuitions such as these are precisely the sort that Richard's semantics was designed to capture, the fact that it doesn't do so is a serious problem.

Richard's response to this problem is to note that in a speech situation in which the speaker first utters (7a) and then utters (7b), we can treat the context for the first utterance as containing only R1, and the context for the second utterance as containing only R2 – thereby insuring the truth of both. But what of an utterance of the conjunction of (7a) and (7b)? If, as one would expect, the context for it includes both R1 and R2, then Richard's proposal will wrongly characterize it as truth valueless. The only suggestion he makes about this is that the utterance “can be interpreted, not unnaturally, as involving a context switch somewhere around the *and*.” The idea, I take it, is that nothing much would be lost by treating the utterance of the conjunction as a pair of assertive utterances, in different contexts, of the conjuncts (one resulting in the assertion of (10a) and the other of (10b)). Although not unreasonable in this case, the idea fails to generalize.

One problem concerns cases in which the conjunction is embedded under another operator in a sentence. In this sort of case, we often can't get the effect of assertively uttering the entire sentence by breaking up the utterance into a sequence of separate assertive utterances, each with its own context. Suppose, for example, that instead of uttering the conjunction of (7a) and (7b) (with the force of (10a, b)), one utters (11a), with the force of (11b).

- 11a. It is surprising that Superman believes that Twain is boring and Clark Kent believes that Twain is tired.
- 11b. It is surprising that Superman believes that the author, Twain, of *Huck Finn* is boring and Clark Kent believes that the man, Twain, standing over there is tired.

As before, we assume a context C containing R1 and R2 – which are Richard’s means of generating the different enrichments of “Twain” in the two belief ascriptions. Since *surprise* is factive, the truth of (11a) in C requires the truth of its complement, which comes out truth valueless on Richard’s proposal. Thus the utterance of (11a) in C will wrongly be characterized as untrue, no matter how surprised the conversational participants are at the combination of beliefs intuitively reported. Since the situation can’t be remedied by treating the utterance of (11a) as a series of assertions, Richard can’t handle this case.

A related problem is posed by an utterance of (12a) used to assert and convey (12b).

- 12a. Either Superman believes that Twain is boring or Clark Kent believes that Twain is tired.
- 12b. Either Superman believes that the author, Twain, of *Huck Finn* is boring or Clark Kent believes that the man, Twain, standing over there is tired.

Here again, the expedient of regarding the utterance as a sequence of separate assertions is not available. Thus, Richard has no option but to recognize the context C as one that contains both R1 and R2. Applying his semantics to this “defective” context, we get the result that (12a) is true – since both ways of rendering C nondefective by removing one of the translation rules makes (12a) true (in the case as we have set it up). Although this is the right truth value, Richard gets this result only by misrepresenting what is semantically expressed and asserted by (the utterance of) (12a) in C. The content of what is really asserted is given by (12b). For

Richard, however, what is asserted is a proposition necessarily equivalent to (i.e. true in the same circumstances as) the proposition (12c). (This proposition is the conjunction of the pair of propositions given by (12d) and (12e). The former is equivalent to the proposition expressed by (12a) relative to the context that results from removing R1 from C; the latter is equivalent to the proposition expressed by (12a) relative to the context that results from removing R2 from C.)

- 12c. [Either Superman believes that the man, Twain, standing over there is boring or Clark Kent believes that the man, Twain, standing over there is tired] & [either Superman believes that the author, Twain, of *Huck Finn* is boring or Clark Kent believes that the author, Twain, of *Huck Finn* is tired].
- 12d. Either Superman believes that the man, Twain, standing over there is boring or Clark Kent believes that the man, Twain, standing over there is tired.
- 12e. Either Superman believes that the author, Twain, of *Huck Finn* is boring or Clark Kent believes that the author, Twain, of *Huck Finn* is tired.

Since the proposition, (12b), really asserted by the speaker's utterance of (12a) in C is not necessarily equivalent to (12c), Richard can't handle this example either.

Another anomaly, related to this one, is the falsity of (13) in C on Richard's supervaluationist account of truth and falsity in "defective" contexts.

- 13. If **it is true** that either Superman believes that Twain is boring or Clark Kent believes that Twain is tired and **it is not true** that Superman believes that Twain is boring, then **it is true** that Clark Kent believes that Twain is tired.

Let A and B be (7a) and (7b), respectively. Then (13) is equivalent to $\lceil ((\text{it is true that } A \text{ or } B) \ \& \ (\text{it is not true that } A)) \rightarrow (\text{it is true that } B) \rceil$. Since, for Richard, *A or B* is true in C, while both A and B are not true (and not false), the antecedent of the conditional is true and its consequent is

false. Hence the conditional as a whole is (wrongly) characterized as false. This result, along with the others, indicates that Richard still has no acceptable answer to what in *Beyond Rigidity* I called “the problem of conflicting restrictions” (179–191).

Richard’s final point is devoted to explaining and defending a special feature of the context sensitivity he posits for attitude verbs like *say* and *believe*. Like the demonstratives and other indexicals treated by David Kaplan,⁷ Richard’s context-sensitive attitude verbs have different intensions (functions from circumstances of evaluation to extensions) relative to different contexts of utterance. However, unlike Kaplan’s indexicals, neither these intensions nor the extensions they determine relative to a context are the semantic contents of Richardian attitude verbs – where the semantic content of an expression, relative to a context, is, roughly, what it contributes to what is said by sentences containing it, relative to the context. Instead, Richard takes the semantic contents of attitude verbs to be Kaplanian characters – i.e. functions from contexts of utterance to intensions. As a result, the truth values of the propositions expressed by sentences containing such verbs must be relativized not just to world-states, but to contexts of utterance as well. In *Beyond Rigidity* (195–203), I criticized this aspect of his view as leading to sharply counterintuitive results, and as constituting an unmotivated and troubling exception to an otherwise unified and well worked out conception of indexicality in semantics. Despite his dismissal of the intuitions with which his view conflicts as theoretically tainted, I continue to suspect that they are genuine. I am also skeptical about his other point – that certain classes of adjectives, including those like *rich*, are indexical in a similar nonKaplanian way. Unfortunately, although the points Richard makes about these expressions are well made, and worth taking seriously, the issues at stake are too numerous and complex to be debated here. Though I suspect that we may again come out on different sides of some important questions, if there proves to be as much to learn from his exploration of this new class of expressions as there

has been from his discussion of attitude ascriptions, I, for one, will be much the wiser for it.

NOTES

¹ Nathan Salmon also points this out in his “Naming, Necessity, and Beyond,” *Mind*, 112, 2003, 475–492, where he makes some of the same points as Linsky. My failure in *Beyond Rigidity* to make the distinction between general terms and predicates was encouraged by my focus on examples like (2a, b, c) and (3a, c) in which a bare general term (without copula) occurs as a grammatical subject, but nonetheless functions predicatively. Taking these as my paradigms, I thought of the extensions of general terms (e.g. *water*) as identical with the extensions of corresponding predicates (e.g. *is water*), which are, of course, sets of instances of the kind. I now regard this to be an error. The general term *water* designates a kind (substance), while the predicate *is water* designates the set of instances of the kind. When the general term functions predicatively while occurring as a grammatical subject, as in (2), I regard it as carrying the semantically complex interpretation of the corresponding predicate constructed from the general term plus the copula.

² This point is related to the possibility, mentioned in footnote 24 of Chapter 3 – that verbs like *say* and *assert* may be context sensitive. Whether or not a descriptively enriched proposition *p* counts as asserted by a speaker’s remarks depends on *p*’s being directly, immediately, and relevantly inferable from those remarks plus the background context. However, what counts as satisfying these standards may vary from context to context. The new thought prompted by our present discussion is that attribution of known (and rather complex) falsehoods when simple truths are readily available may require higher standards.

³ Might one come up with an even more bizarre variant in which no plausible enrichment yields a truth about what Bertrand comes to realize? Perhaps, but in such a case the correct response would be to reject the intuition that the attitude ascription asserted or conveyed a truth.

⁴ The move from (5) to (6) is parallel to the move from (i) to (ii) in a situation in which (i) is used to assert or convey a truth, where each woman knows that Pam is popular, but neither knows that Pat is.

- (i) Pam, but not Pat, knows that she is popular.
- (ii) Pam knows that she (Pam) is popular but Pat doesn’t know that she (Pat) is.

⁵ “Beyond Singular Propositions,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 25, 1995, 515–550.

⁶ In “Defective Contexts, Accommodation, and Normalization”. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 25, 1995, 551–570.

⁷ David Kaplan, “Themes from Kaplan,” in Almog, Perry and Wettstein, eds. *Themes from Kaplan* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1989.

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