

Philosophy 324A

Philosophy of Logic

2016

Note Nineteen

SOME WRAP-UP REMARKS BEFORE THE SECOND TEST

1. We'll begin with some brief comments about Ori Simchen's defence of NR, but not before a bit of advice on how to deal with his lecture + classnotes in preparation for test #2.

- Earlier on, OS remarked to JW that a talk on semantic indeterminacy might resonate more with a class which had recently been exposed to an examination of the formal recognisability question. Had OS himself been part of that discussion, he'd not likely have made that prediction. Had JW retained enough of his reading of a young draft of OS's paper, he would have demurred from the prediction at first hearing. It doesn't matter. The two subject-matters don't interact in any compelling way, apart from the "torted up" parts of OS's talk (and notes). Again, it doesn't matter. It is a very nice problem and a very capably handled in this instance. Just don't waste your time in trying to think up connections that aren't there. (Mind you, if they *are* there and you think that you've spotted them, by all means have a go at saying where, how and why, but *only if* doing so is responsive to a question actually asked.)
- Concerning this same matter, don't waste time over the details of my chapter 6 of the logic of fiction book. Section 2 should be your focus, and so too the remarks that now follow.
- OS rejects the metaphysical version of S1 and stands mute on the epistemic version. I will have nothing to say of it in this note, beyond remarking that Quine has given us a false choice as to knowing what "Tabitha" refers to.

OS's rebuttal of S1_{meta} is achieved as follows:

- Since NR is true, then "Tabitha" refers of necessity to whatever "Tabitha" names, whether Tabitha herself or the rest of the cosmos minus that self-same pussycat. (I know neither Quine nor OS would regard this wording as sufficiently canonical. Dearie, dearie me! Naughty, naughty JW!)

Anyhow, my target here is NR – never mind what we end up thinking of S1_{meta}. In making his case for NR, OS invokes Peirce's type-token distinction, e.g. the difference between the bicycle as-such and the bicycles in my shed. (Notice the use here of what Harold Langford called the institutional use of "the".) The bicycle as-such is unridable but tokenable, whereas tokens are rideable but not tokenable in their own right. The successor of my present bike will be another token, but it won't be a token of *it*. In older times, we would have said that the bicycle as-such is a universal of which the ones in my shed are some of its particulars.

Consider now the predicate "rides" defined on riders and bicycle tokens. Whenever someone rides a bike, she rides a token of *the* bike. Consider now a household of two 35-year-

olds, both fit and strong, he the taller but she the longer-legged in relation to her height. The upshot is that their two bikes are as similar in all the respects in which one token of a like type resembles another, not only of the same type, but one produced on the same day on the same production line. Still, Bill has his bike and Sally has hers. If Sally's had been a ladies bike (or a smaller one) there'd be some sense in which Bill can't ride it. Similarly, had there been a semi-pro cyclist and his bike purpose-built in Nancy, there'd be a sense in which Sally can't ride it. In these two cases, the "can't"s are modal, carrying the sense of *obligated not to*. (In deontic modal logic, "obligatorily" is the counterpart of the alethic "necessarily".) The point of this pretty little *tableau* is that, in the present case, there doesn't appear to be any room at all for even the deonticized notion of necessary ridership.

Moreover, when the bike that is now Sally's came off the line, was it necessary to its bikely tokenhood that it have a rider? I mean any rider at all? The question answers itself, in the negative.

Now compare the relation born by a bike-token to the person who happens to be its owner-rider – Sally, let's say – with the relation born by the token-name "Sally" to Sally. OS claims (or seems to) that it inheres in the nature of a tokenhood that the name-token "Sally" names of necessity the one and only bearer of it, namely, Sally herself and none other. I myself don't see it. I don't see it in name-tokenhood because I can't see it in bike-tokenhood. So I conclude that

- *The Peircian type-token distinction doesn't deliver the goods for NR.*

On the other hand, there is another "paradigm" of necessary uniqueness quite different from the failed type-token one. I borrow the example from William Alston, another of my teachers at Michigan, who observed that as a matter of necessity "only Yogi Berra catches Yogi Berra's catches. He meant by this that only one person could catch the very catches that Yogi actually made in his long career with the Yankies. (If this is too much ancient history for you, feel free to substitute the Blue Jays' Russell Martin for Yogi.)

Now compare the relation between catching and the very catches that Yogi made with the relation between the name-token "Yogi" and the very name that Yogi actually bore. We can see the necessity in the first instance. But do we see it in the second? I would say not, and here's why:

- *There's no catching a ball unless it's actually caught. A ball that's thrown but not caught is not a failed catch by virtue of it's not being caught by Yogi. It's a failed catch by virtue of not being caught by anyone.*
- *Naming isn't enough like this to bear that weight of NR.*

True, if mum and dad are intent on naming their first male heir "Charles", they can't succeed unless they tokenize "Charles", the type, in favour of the swaddling wee bundle in the crib below. I think OS worries that this intention would be unrealized if mum and dad were to have lifted the token that names Mr. Chaplin and stuck it on their own little gaffer. It's not that OS is a prude about name-theft. His worry is that purloined name-tokens are rendered nominatively impotent when transported from a London suburb of a generation past to Buck House in central London is the one that came after.

A ball that's not caught by Yogi is not, just so, a stolen catch. (I'm not talking about the case in which Yogi calls for an infield pop-up and the pitcher beats him to the punch.) A ball caught by Russell Martin is not a catch stolen from Yogi. Yogi's catches are unstealable. The token that names Charles Wales is stealable after bestowal. (Look at the outbreak of "Britney"'s about (when?) twenty years ago.

So, in my respectful submission, we have yet to find a telling analogy that makes of NR a convincing analogue.

2. To round things off, just a few more words about the test.

- As before, you must have a clear-eyed grasp of the model theory of classical logic. You should also be able to specify a standard type of interpretation for a modal propositional language.
- As before, it shouldn't be too hard to "tape" the test, that is, predict at least some of the questions – or at least their subject-matters. Do your best to prepare even partial answers before-hand.
- In class I've explained why, this time-out, the test is cumulative. Here's another stab at it: If you read the pages of *Logical Pluralism* you'll see the non-stop effects of "torting" of the kind that Tarski committed upon the English word "semantics". When we examined Tarski's "The concept of truth in formalized languages", we saw that, contrary to what the title suggests, Tarski's target was not the predicate "is true" when used in model theory to say of a formal sentence that it has a model on an interpretation, but was rather the plain old predicate of everyday English.

How, then, did Tarski plan to proceed? As we saw, he would proceed by rationally reconstructing the English predicate (denied an extension by the Liar) in a two-placed recovery:

- (1) Everyday English would be replaced by regimented English, or English in canonical notation.
- (2) The theoretical terms of the reconstruction – reference, predication, quantification, truth, logical truth, implication, etc. – would in turn be rationally reconstructed as NL representations of the FL formalizations of model theory. In this way, the ins-and-outs of classical model theory would serve as a template for a NL theory of the cleaned-up English predicate "is true".

Needless to say at that stage of the course, questions arose:

- Just what *is* this supposed representation relation?
- How do we know that it *exists*?

For the most part, philosophers who follow the example of formal semantics leave these questions unasked and unanswered. B&R pluralists are no exception.

As for B&R pluralism itself, we've devoted a lot of time to sorting just what that position really is, and a good deal of time in determining whether it is both an adequately explained and sufficiently defended position.

You should know the ins-and-outs of these discussions. You should also be mindful of

- (a) other ways for logic to be pluralist, and relatedly,
 - (b) of differences of opinion about the centres of gravity of these different positions, and
 - (c) how, if at all, these various positions interact with the CC-line.
- Finally, there are questions we've glanced upon in class without having paused to dig into them. If you've been paying attention during our time together, you'll have taken note of some of these questions (not all that many, for sure; don't worry), and should be ready to say something in answer to them.

Onwards and upwards!