

# 9. Ontological Change Caused by Negation: The Case of Identity Statements

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The negation of sentence P generally has no effect on the ontological status of objects denoted by proper names occurring in P. Thus, ‘François Hollande’ denotes as much an individual in the negative sentence in (1b) as in the affirmative sentence in (1a).

- (1) a. François Hollande is a candidate in the presidential election.
- b. François Hollande is not a candidate in the presidential election.

This comes as no surprise if we assume that the proposition that there is a person named ‘François Hollande’ is not part of the assertion made by the utterance of (1a), thus not falling within the scope of the negation in (1b). That proposition is no more the object of negation than it is the object of assertion. This line of thought dates back to Frege (1892a, p. 40; 1997, p. 163), who says “[t]hat the name ‘Kepler’ designates something is just as much a presupposition for the assertion ‘Kepler died in misery’ as for the contrary assertion”.<sup>2</sup> Following Frege, Strawson (1952, p. 213) maintains that the existential proposition corresponds to a contextual requirement whose satisfaction is “not a part of what is *asserted* by the use of a sentence”; “it is, rather, presupposed by the use of the expression” (emphasis in the original). On this view, there is an individual *h* such that (1a) is true if and only if *h* satisfies the predicate *C* (‘a candidate in the presidential election’), and such that (1b) is true if and only if *h* does not satisfy *C*. (1a) and (1b) have the truth-conditions illustrated in (2a) and (2b), respectively.

- (2) a.  $C(h)$
- b.  $\neg C(h)$

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Neither (2a) nor (2b) contain the proposition that there is an individual *h*, thus fulfilling Recanati's (1993, p. 17) definition of singular proposition: "The truth-condition of an utterance *G* (*t*) is singular if and only if there is an object *x* such that the utterance is true if and only if *x* satisfies *G* (*.*)"

A major exception to this observation is existential statements.

- (3) a. Odysseus exists (in reality).
- b. Odysseus does not exist (in reality).
- (4) a. Odysseus is a historical person.
- b. Odysseus is not a historical person.

Compare these statements to (5a) and (5b), below. It is not the case that (3a)–(4a) and (3b)–(4b) express the singular propositions illustrated in (5a) and (5b), respectively.

- (5) a.  $E(o)$
- b.  $\neg E(o)$

To say that there is an individual *o* such that (3a) is true if and only if *o* satisfies the predicate *E* ('exist') would leave the cognitive significance of (3a) unaccounted for. If, through the utterance of (3a), we could presuppose that there is an individual *o*, understanding what the predicate 'exist' contributes to the assertion becomes difficult (Kripke, 2013, p. 5). Even more obvious is the problem raised by the negative statements in (3b)–(4b). As Quine (1953, p. 2) says: "[i]f Pegasus were not, [...] we should not be talking about anything when we use the word; therefore it would be nonsense to say even that Pegasus is not". When viewed through this lens, (5b) seems nonsensical. Nevertheless, (3b) and (4b) can be held to be true, hence meaningful, statements, thus suggesting that they do not express any singular proposition of the form (5b)<sup>3</sup>. It seems that, contrary to the negation in non-existential statements such as (1b), negative existentials such as (3b) and (4b) are not ontology-preserving; (3b) and (4b) commit us to a poorer ontology than (3a) and (4a), respectively.

This chapter argues that this seemingly trivial observation provides an insight into the information conveyed by identity statements like (6a)–(6b).

- (6) a. Émile Ajar is (identical with) Romain Gary.
- b. Émile Ajar is not (identical with) Romain Gary

Identity statements can plausibly be analysed as covert existentials. The affirmative statement in (6a) is ontology-preserving, just like its overt counterparts in (3a)–(4a), while the negative statement in (6b) is no more ontology-preserving than its overt counterparts in (3b)–(4b). This chapter asserts, however, that there are two differences between overt and covert existentials:

- (i) in a covert existential, the negation operates on an entity which is not explicitly named by any terms occurring in it; and
- (ii) in a covert existential, the negation operates not on the truth-conditional content of the proposition, but on the modes of presentation of the entities denoted by the terms occurring in it.

These differences allow us to submit that the negation in covert existentials is pragmatic in character.

## 2. Overt existentials

### 2.1. Descriptivism

Sentence (7) can hardly be considered to express any singular proposition, as it does not presuppose the existence of Pegasus, and is irreducible to the proposition that there is an individual *o* such that (7) is true if and only if *o* satisfies the predicate *E* ('exist').

- (7) Pegasus exists (in reality).

A well-known solution to this problem is descriptivism (Russell, 1918/2010; Quine, 1953, Ch. 1), according to which a proper name *N* that can occur meaningfully in the sentence of the form '*N* exists' "is not really a name, but a sort of truncated description" (Russell, 1918/2010, p. 79). Russell's position is eloquently articulated in the following passage:

If ["Romulus"] were really a name, the question of existence could not arise, because a name has got to name something or it is not a name, and if there is no such person as Romulus there cannot be a name for that person who is not there, so that this single word "Romulus" is really a sort of truncated or telescoped description, and if you think of it as a name you will get into logical errors. (Russell, 1918/2010, p. 79)

If (7) is a truncated version of (8), for example, then (7) expresses a general rather than singular proposition. Thus, as outlined in Russell's

Theory of Descriptions (Russell, 1905), there exists one and only one *x* which fulfills the description “*x* is a winged horse”.

(8) The winged horse exists (in reality).

There has been much debate about whether Frege was a descriptivist or not. As far as existential statements are concerned, there is some textual evidence in Frege’s work that emanates an eminently descriptivist impression: “[t]he sentence ‘There is Julius Caesar’ is neither true nor false but senseless; the sentence ‘There is a man whose name is Julius Caesar’ has a sense, but here [...] we have a concept [...]” (Frege 1892b, p. 200/1997, p. 189).<sup>4</sup> This remark is highly compatible with the idea that ‘Pegasus’ in (7) denotes a concept rather than an individual, and it is congenial to what Russell said more than ten years later:

[“Romulus”] stands for a person who did such-and such things, who killed Remus, and founded Rome, and so on. It is short for that description; if you like, it is short for “the person who was called ‘Romulus’”. (Russell 1918/2010, p. 79)<sup>5</sup>

Notwithstanding this, however, the rest of this chapter assumes that descriptivism for proper names is not a viable option. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, ‘Odysseus’ in (3)–(4) and ‘Pegasus’ in (7) intuitively sound like proper names, and, secondly, these words exhibit the same grammatical properties as typical proper names: ‘Odysseus’ and ‘Pegasus’ are employed in the singular form without any determiner accompanying them, and capitalised in written English, on a par with ‘François Hollande’ and ‘Bucephalus’. Furthermore, *Wiktionary* classifies both ‘Odysseus’ and ‘Pegasus’ as proper nouns.<sup>6</sup> It is hardly justifiable to adhere to descriptivism at the sacrifice of these intuitive and grammatical considerations:<sup>7</sup>

Contemporary philosophers of language study language as it is rather than it ought to be: when it comes to proper names, they try to capture the characteristic features of those words which *are* called ‘proper names’ rather than the features of the words which *deserve* to be so-called.

(Recanati, 1993, p. 177, emphases in the original)

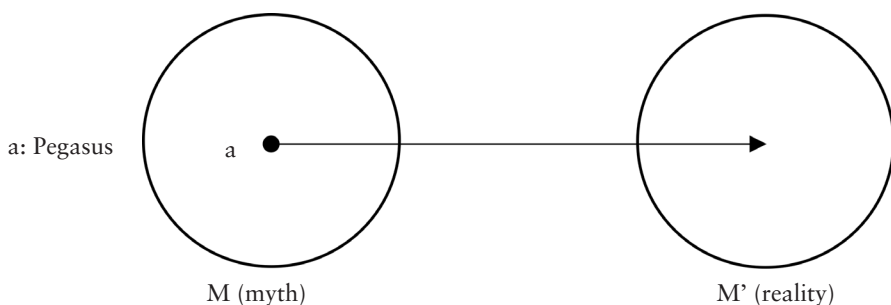
Likewise, the object of contemporary linguistics is the nature of knowledge of language, rather than what it ought to be. Throughout this chapter, we will therefore follow the view held by contemporary philosophers and linguists, assuming that what strikes us as proper names, really are proper names.

## 2.2. The Frege-Fauconnier solution

Once descriptivism is abandoned, there remain at least two more solutions to the problem raised by existential statements. The first solution (Solution 1) consists of viewing existentials as expressing propositions about names rather than objects. This view was once suggested by Frege: “People certainly say that Odysseus is not a historical person [= (4b)], and mean by this contradictory expression that the name ‘Odysseus’ designates nothing, has no meaning [= reference]” (Frege, 1969, p. 208/1979, p. 191).<sup>8</sup> On this view, (7) expresses a proposition about the name ‘Pegasus’ rather than what the name denotes, meaning that the name ‘Pegasus’ has reference.

Another solution (Solution 2) to the puzzle comes from an entirely different discipline. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, Fauconnier (1985/1994) puts forward the view that existentials allude to objects found in domains—or, in his terminology, ‘(mental) spaces’—other than the speaker’s reality. On this view, “to say [(7)] is to set up a counterpart of the mythical Pegasus in space M’, ‘in reality \_\_\_\_’ (the speaker’s ‘reality’)” (Fauconnier, 1985/1994, p. 149).

Even though these two solutions might appear to be quite different, in reality, the first solution is subsumed by the second. Adopting Fauconnier’s (1985/1994) notation, we can illustrate the interpretation of (7), as outlined in Figure 9.1.



**Figure 9.1.** Pegasus exists (in reality).

According to Solution 2, defended by Fauconnier (1985/1994), (7) says that element *a* in M(myth) has a counterpart *a'* in M'(speaker’s reality). According to Solution 1, suggested by Frege, (7) says that the name ‘Pegasus’ has reference. What should be noticed here is that ‘reference’ as defined by Frege can only be found in M’ (reality).<sup>9</sup> The principle

of compositionality dictates that the reference of a sentence must be a function of those of its constituents and the way they are put together. Since, in the Fregean semantics, the reference of a sentence is a truth-value and that of a proper name is an object, it follows that the sentence must be either true or false if all its constituents have references and they are correctly put together. Moreover, Frege says that sentences containing fictitious names are neither true nor false:

The sentence ‘Scylla has six heads’ is not true, but the sentence ‘Scylla does not have six heads’ is not true either; for it to be true the proper name ‘Scylla’ would have to designate something. [...] Names that fail to fulfill the usual role of a proper name, which is to name something, may be called mock proper names. [...] Instead of speaking of ‘fiction’, we could speak of ‘mock thoughts’. Thus if the sense of an assertoric sentence is not true, it is either false or fictitious, and it will generally be the latter if it contains a mock proper name. [...] Assertions in fiction are not to be taken seriously: they are only mock assertions. Even the thoughts are not to be taken seriously as in the science: they are only mock thoughts.

(Frege, 1969, pp. 141–142/1979, pp. 129–130)<sup>10</sup>

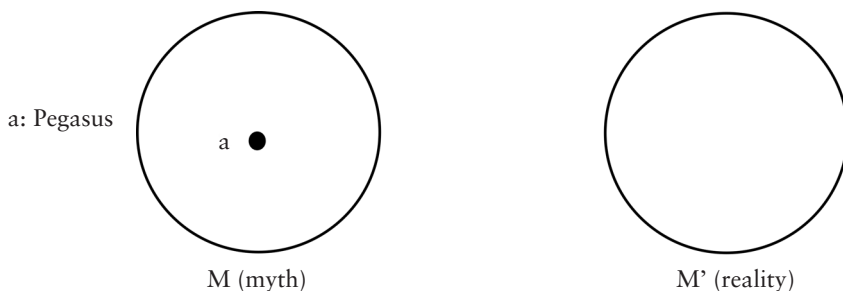
This remark entails that fictitious names (mock proper names) have no reference. As a consequence, nothing in *M* counts as reference in Figure 9.1, and reference, if any, can only be found in *M'*. Thus, element *a* in *M*(myth) has a counterpart *a'* in *M'*(speaker's reality) only if the name ‘Pegasus’ has reference in Frege's sense. In this way, Solution 1 is subsumed by Solution 2.

This relation equally holds when the statement in (7) is negated as in (9).

(9) Pegasus does not exist (in reality).

Under Fauconnier's analysis, (9) would construct a configuration in which element *a* in *M* has no counterpart in *M'*, as illustrated in Figure 9.2.

Given the state of affairs represented by Figure 9.2, Frege would say that the name ‘Pegasus’ has no reference. Again, Fauconnier's analysis subsumes Frege's. It is worth noting that the way Frege employs the terms ‘truth/true’ and ‘reference/refer’ is widely—if not universally—accepted in the literature. This is evidenced by the remark Burge (1973; p. 436) makes quite independently from the Fregean view of proper names: “the failure of ‘Pegasus’ to designate in my utterance of [‘It is not the case that Pegasus exists’] follows from the fact that I referred to nothing that the proper name is true of”. It is only in the space in which the utterer/thinker believes corresponds to reality that reference and truth can be fully grounded<sup>11</sup>.



**Figure 9.2.** Pegasus does not exist (in reality).

### 2.3. Generalisation on existential statements

From the observations above, we obtain the generalisations given in (10).

- (10) a. Affirmative existentials are ontology-preserving.  
 b. Negative existentials are ontology-impoverishing.

An affirmative existential constructs a configuration in which  $a$  in  $M(\text{myth})$  has a counterpart  $a'$  in  $M'(\text{speaker's reality})$ . As a result, the ontology in  $M$  is preserved in  $M'$ . A negative existential, on the other hand, constructs a configuration in which  $a$  in  $M$  has no counterpart in  $M'$ . In this case, we can say that  $M'$  has a poorer ontology than  $M$ . So, if you approve the negative existential in (9), then you cannot employ 'Pegasus' to talk or think about  $M'$ , hence to make any true or false assertions. Even if you accept (9), you can still employ 'Pegasus' to talk or think about  $M(\text{myth})$ , but if truth or falsity is defined in terms of the Fregean semantics, your utterance or thought about  $M$  is neither true nor false.<sup>12</sup> Alternatively, in Frege's (1969, p. 142/1979, p. 130) and Austin's (1962, p. 22) terminology, the acceptance of (9) makes it impossible to use 'Pegasus' "seriously". As will be discussed in Section 3, this apparently trivial observation provides insight into the semantics and pragmatics of identity statements in their affirmative and negative forms.

## 3. Identity statements

### 3.1. The morning star/evening star problem

Identity statements raise the classical Morning Star/Evening Star problem (Frege, 1892a; 1997). The problem can be formulated as follows: "how could someone possess knowledge sufficient to understand a sentence like 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' without thereby knowing, already, that the sentence is true?" (McDowell, 1977, p. 163) Suppose that the

name ‘Émile Ajar’ denotes an individual *a*. Then the meaning of (11) might be represented as in (12).

(11) Émile Ajar is (identical with) Émile Ajar.

(12)  $a = a$

The formula in (12) can accommodate the fact that (11) is *a priori*, in contrast to (13), which is *a posteriori* and can extend our knowledge.

(13) Émile Ajar is (identical with) Romain Gary.

How are we to account for the difference in cognitive value between (12) and (13)? The meaning of (13) can hardly be represented as in (14), where *b* purports to represent the individual denoted by the name ‘Romain Gary’.

(14)  $a = b$

Since Émile Ajar is identical with Romain Gary, *a* and *b* represent one and the same individual, making (14) equivalent to (12). Accordingly, (14) fails to account for the cognitive significance exhibited by (13). It would be useless to contend that (12) and (14) are not equivalent on the ground that (12) and (14) are of different forms, because this claim would imply that *a* and *b* represent different objects<sup>13</sup>. By definition, different objects cannot be identical with each other, as Russell and Wittgenstein remark:

Identity is a rather puzzling thing at first sight. When you say “Scott is the author of *Waverley*”, you are half-tempted to think there are two people, one of whom is Scott and the other the author of *Waverley*, and they happen to be the same. That is obviously absurd, but that is the sort of way one is always tempted to deal with identity. (Russell, 1918/2010, p. 84)

Roughly speaking, to say of *two* things that they are identical is nonsense, and to say of *one* thing that it is identical with itself is to say nothing at all. (Wittgenstein, 1922, para. 5.5303, emphases in the original)<sup>14</sup>

This fact is so fundamental that it is equally assumed by more recent frameworks not necessarily inspired by analytic philosophy. Thus, within a cognitive linguistic framework, Fauconnier (1985/1994; pp. 154–155) maintains that “[i]n a single space, the identity relation expressed by *be* can never been satisfied by two distinct elements”, or equivalently, that “one never establishes identity between two elements of a space”. If the meaning of (13) cannot be properly represented



by (14), the negative statement in (15) cannot be properly represented by (16) for exactly the same reason.

(15) Émile Ajar is not (identical with) Romain Gary.

(16)  $a \neq b$

(16) would not make any sense if  $a$  and  $b$  represent one and the same individual, and it would be uninformative if  $a$  and  $b$  represent different individuals. Nevertheless, it may in principle be possible for someone to understand (15) without knowing it to be true or false; such is the gist of the classical Morning Star/Evening Star problem.

### 3.2. Solution based on sense and reference

Various attempts have been made to deal with the puzzle raised in Section 3.1. Arguably the best-known solution is the one Frege (1892a; 1997) proposes, drawing on the distinction between sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung). This solution attributes the difference in cognitive value between (11) and (13) to their differing senses, traceable to the difference in sense between ‘Émile Ajar’ and ‘Romain Gary’. These names have the same reference but have different senses, making it the case that, due to the principle of compositionality, the sentences in which they occur have different senses.

The problem with this conception is that the notion of sense as used here has a strongly descriptivist impression. The Fregean solution at issue seems to force us to equate the cognitive significance of (13) with that of, say, the proposition that there is a man who wrote *La vie devant soi* and *Les racines du ciel*, where ‘Émile Ajar’ and ‘Romain Gary’ are considered respectively equivalent to the descriptions ‘man who wrote *La vie devant soi*’ and ‘man who wrote *Les racines du ciel*’. Construed in this way, Frege’s ‘sense’ is indistinguishable from Russell’s ‘description’, as far as identity statements are concerned. Indeed, Russell (1918/2010) says:

When I say “Scott is the author of *Waverley*” and that “is” expresses identity, the reason that identity can be asserted there truly and without tautology is just the fact that the one is a name and the other a description. Or they might both be descriptions. (Russell, 1918/2010, p. 84)

Since, as in Section 2.1 above, we are not committed to descriptivism, we will not pursue this solution any further.

### 3.3. Solution based on concepts

Another solution suggested by Frege (1969, p. 131/1979, p. 120) says that “an object *a* is equal to an object *b* (in the sense of completely coinciding with it) if *a* falls under every concept under which *b* falls, and conversely”.<sup>15</sup> Given the identity between Émile Ajar and Romain Gary, for any predicate *P*, if Émile Ajar is *P*, then Romain Gary is also *P*, and vice versa. For instance, Émile Ajar was born in the Russian Empire just as Romain Gary was; Émile Ajar committed suicide in 1980 just as Romain Gary did; and so on and so forth. It is important to note that, for Frege, a concept (Begriff) is the referent of a predicate, not its sense (Morscher, 2001, pp. 236–237). This gives the solution based on concepts the advantage of not having to appeal to the sense of any expression occurring in the sentence.

Frege’s condition, however, is too strict. Even when you accept (13) and (17), you do not have to accept (18a)–(18b).

- (17) Romain Gary won the Prix Goncourt earlier than Émile Ajar.
- (18) a. #Émile Ajar won the Prix Goncourt earlier than Émile Ajar.  
b. #Romain Gary won the Prix Goncourt earlier than Romain Gary.

The identity statement in (13) can be true even though *Romain Gary* falls under the concept “won the Prix Goncourt earlier than Émile Ajar”, but *Émile Ajar* does not.

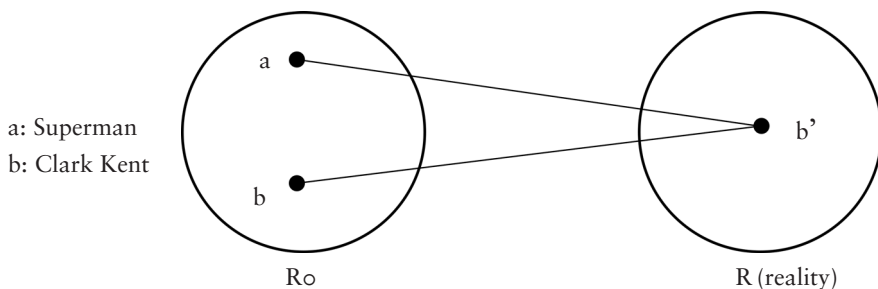
### 3.4. The fauconnier-recanati analysis

Fauconnier (1985/1994) proposes a substantially different analysis, which rests on neither ‘sense’ nor ‘concept’. Under this analysis, “the final effect of [an identity statement] is to replace two elements in the origin space  $R_o$  by a single one in the target space  $R$ ” (Fauconnier, 1985/1994, p. 154). Applied to (19), it gives the configuration illustrated in Figure 9.3.<sup>16</sup>

- (19) Clark Kent is (identical with) Superman.

In  $R_o$ , *a* and *b* are distinct elements. Those who endorse the ontology represented by  $R_o$  believe the negative proposition in (20).

- (20) Clark Kent is not (identical with) Superman.



**Figure 9.3.** Clark Kent is (identical with) Superman. (tentative)

In  $R$ , by contrast,  $a$  and  $b$  are merged into a single element  $b'$ . Those who endorse the ontology represented by  $R$  believe the affirmative proposition in (19). In Fauconnier's (1985/1994) framework, "negatives set up corresponding counterfactual spaces in which the positive version of the sentence is satisfied" (Fauconnier 1985/1994: 96). Since  $R_o$  is the negation of  $R$ , and vice versa,  $R_o$  is a counterfactual space if you endorse  $R$ , while  $R$  is a counterfactual space if you endorse  $R_o$ . Figure 9.3 illustrates the case where  $R$  is construed as the reality space and  $R_o$  as a counterfactual space.<sup>17</sup>

A similar analysis is proposed by Recanati (2012), who maintains that "[t]o accept the identity 'A = B' is to link the two [mental] files corresponding to the terms on each side of the equals sign" (ibid., p. 44), and that "their [= encyclopedia entries = mental files associated with proper names] multiplicity could only reflect the mistake of thinking that there are two objects where there is one" (ibid., p. 47). In this scenario,  $R_o$  in Figure 9.3 represents the mistake which the speaker or thinker once committed. At this stage, the speaker/thinker assents to the negative proposition in (20). When she recognises her mistake, she comes to entertain the ontology represented by  $R$ , dismissing  $R_o$  as a misrepresentation (cf. Bergson, 1907/1941, p. 287).

Although intuitively adequate, the Fauconnier-Recanati analysis as such is question-begging, because it presupposes the notion of identity. The replacement of  $a$  and  $b$  in  $R_o$  by  $b'$  in  $R$  is a result of our understanding the identity between  $a$  and  $b$ , rather than what constitutes the identity. Why do we not construct a configuration analogous to Figure 9.3 for, say, (21)?

(21) Donald Trump is (identical with) Emmanuel Macron.

The answer is obvious: we know (19) to be true and (21) to be false. But there is nothing in Figure 9.3 that prevents the configuration from applying to (21). The question to be asked here is what constitutes the notion of identity. Answering this question by appealing to the notion of replacement is, at best, question-begging.

Besides the theoretical difficulty just mentioned, the Fauconnier-Recanati analysis also raises an empirical problem. On their view, the negative identity statement in (20) holds in  $R_{\circ}$ , while the affirmative identity statement in (19) holds in  $R$ . By assenting to (19),  $a$  and  $b$ , distinct elements in  $R_{\circ}$ , are replaced by a single element in  $R$ . This observation would lead us to the generalisation in (22).

- (22) [Tentative generalisation] Affirmative identity statements are ontology-impooverishing.

As noted previously in (10a), affirmative existentials are ontology-preserving. Comparison of (22) and (10a) suggests that, on the Fauconnier-Recanati view, existential statements and identity statements are different with respect to the ontology which accepting them allows us to embrace. Their view predicts that accepting the existential statement in (7) (= ‘Pegasus exists (in reality)’) allows us to talk about ‘Pegasus in reality’, whereas accepting the identity statement in (19) prevents us from talking truthfully about Superman and Clark Kent at the same time. As said above,  $R_{\circ}$  is a counterfactual space if you endorse  $R$ , while  $R$  is a counterfactual space if you endorse  $R_{\circ}$ . Those who assent to (19) should then only be able to talk about Superman and Clark Kent counterfactually. This prediction is not borne out, however. Even if you accept (19), hence the alleged impoverished ontology represented by  $R$ , you can still hold (23) to be true.

- (23) Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent. (Braun and Saul, 2002, p. 1)

Lois Lane does not have to discard the belief expressed by (23) when she becomes aware of the identity between Clark Kent and Superman. Put briefly, (23) can remain true regardless of whether the identity holds or not. Nevertheless, the configuration illustrated in Figure 9.3 does not allow us to talk truthfully about Superman leaping more

tall buildings than Clark Kent, or about Superman being more popular among women than Clark Kent, since  $R$ , the only space in which the question of truth or falsity arises, contains only one element. All that the configuration allows us to assert is (24a) and (24b).

- (24) a. Lois Lane once mistakenly believed that {Superman leaped more tall buildings than Clark Kent/Superman was more popular among women than Clark Kent}.
- b. It is not true that {Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent/Superman is more popular among women than Clark Kent} (, because they are one and the same person).

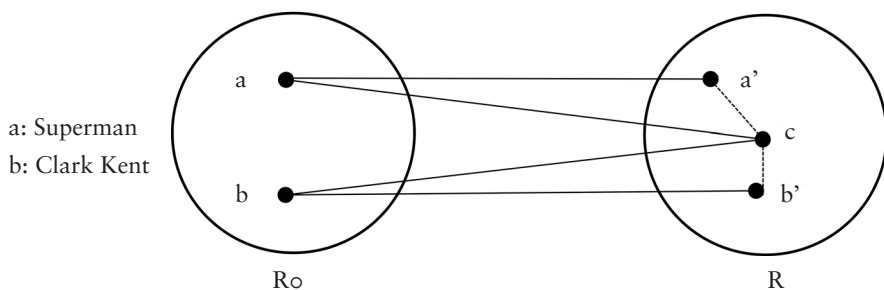
This runs counter to our intuition that (23) can remain true even after the truth of (19) is recognised. The compatibility between (19) and (23) is therefore at odds with the view that affirmative identity statements are ontology-impooverishing.

### 3.5. Identity statements as covert existentials

Given the apparent compatibility between (19) and (23), the truth condition of identity statements in (25) suggests itself.

- (25) The identity statement ‘a is (identical with) b’ is true if and only if there is an individual  $c$  such that the entities denoted by ‘a’ and ‘b’ are (different) aspects of  $c$ .

(25) says that the entities denoted by ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ are preserved even if (19) is embraced as true. What (19) contributes to the configuration is a new element  $c$ , which has those entities as aspects, as illustrated in Figure 9.4.



**Figure 9.4.** Clark Kent is (identical with) Superman. (revised)

Under the revised analysis, as well as under the original Fauconnier-Recanati analysis, the negative identity statement in (20) (= ‘Clark Kent is not (identical with) Superman’) holds in  $R_o$ , while the affirmative identity statement in (19) (= ‘Clark Kent is (identical with) Superman’) holds in  $R$ . Under the revised analysis, however,  $R$  has a richer ontology than  $R_o$ . Instead of having a single element as in Figure 9.3,  $R$  has a new element  $c$  in addition to  $a'$  and  $b'$ , inherited from  $R_o$ . The dashed lines linking  $c$ ,  $a'$  and  $b'$  represent individual-aspect relations such that  $a'$  is an aspect of  $c$  and that  $b'$  is another aspect of  $c$ . Identity statements can now be viewed as covert existentials, in that accepting (19) amounts to claiming the existence of  $c$ , in addition to  $a'$  and  $b'$ .

If you endorse  $R_o$  as opposed to  $R$ , you can talk about  $a$  and  $b$ , but not about  $c$ . If, on the other hand, you endorse  $R$ , you can talk about  $c$  as well as  $a'$  and  $b'$ . This enables us to obtain the generalisation in (26).

- (26) a. Affirmative identity statements are ontology-enriching.  
 b. Negative identity statements are ontology-impoverishing.

This generalisation captures the fact that there exists an element which affirmative identity statements, but not negative identity statements, allow us to talk truthfully about. Otherwise, both can commit us to the same ontology. For this reason, while both allow us to talk truthfully about Clark Kent and Superman, it is only when we approve the affirmative identity statement in (19) that we can truthfully talk about that individual who is sometimes Clark Kent, and sometimes Superman.

It is important to note that (26) is subsumed by (10) above. On one hand, as we claim here, identity statements are covert existentials. Affirmative and negative identity statements are a particular kind of affirmative and negative existentials, respectively. On the other hand, being ontology-enriching is a special case of being ontology-preserving. In general, the ontology of space  $M_x$  is preserved in space  $M_y$  only if (i) every element of  $M_x$  has a counterpart in  $M_y$ ; and (ii)  $M_y$  contains at least as many elements as  $M_x$ . The conjunction of (i) and (ii) allows for the possibility that  $M_y$  has a richer ontology than  $M_x$ . There is thus no obstacle to saying that, in Figure 9.4, the ontology of  $R_o$  is preserved in  $R$ . This confirms that the generalisation in (10) applies to all existentials, whether they be overt or covert.

The analysis proposed here has several advantages. First, it accounts for the cognitive value of identity statements without being question-begging, as was the case with the original Fauconnier-Recanati analysis

discussed in Section 3.4. In Figure 9.4, the discovery of an individual  $c$  such that  $a$  and  $b$  are different aspects of  $c$  does not require a prior understanding of  $a = b$ . To posit  $c$  is merely to suppose the identity between  $a$  and  $b$ , the former not being the result of the latter in any sense.

Second, the present analysis enables us to understand why Fauconnier (1985/1994, Ch. 5) treats both ‘be’ and ‘exist’ as trans-spatial operators. The trans-spatial character of these verbs is a consequence of them being existential predicates. In general, when  $P$  is an existential predicate,  $P$  introduces a new element into a space. This new element must be in a different space from the space in which the element denoted by the subject of  $P$  is found. If they were in the same space, predicating  $P$  of the element denoted by the subject would be either tautological or contradictory. If, on one hand,  $P$  reintroduced into the original space the element denoted by the subject, the predication would not contribute anything new. If, on the other hand,  $P$  introduced into the original space another element identical to the element denoted by the subject, the predication would amount to saying, in a contradictory manner, that there are two distinct elements which are identical with each other. It then follows that existential predicates are necessarily trans-spatial operators.

Third, the analysis proposed here allows us to account for the fact that the construal of (23) varies with the ontology one embraces. Those who believe (20) construe (23) as saying that individual  $X$  leaps more tall buildings than individual  $Y$ , while those who believe (19) construe it as saying that individual  $Z$  leaps more tall buildings when  $Z$  is  $X$  than  $Z$  does when  $Z$  is  $Y$  (Sakai, 2018, p. 216). Put differently, those who deny the identity between Clark Kent and Superman construe (20) as a singular proposition about two distinct individuals, whereas those who accept the identity at issue construe it as a proposition about two different aspects of one and the same individual. This difference in construal can be accommodated by Figure 9.4, but not by Figure 9.3.

Finally, this proposal captures the generalisation that ‘ $a$  is identical with  $b$ ’ is true if and only if, in the singular construal of ‘ $a$ ’ and ‘ $b$ ’, ‘ $b$ ’ can be substituted for ‘ $a$ ’ and vice versa *salva veritate* (Wittgenstein, 1922, para. 6.24; Sakai, 2017, p. 21). Suppose Lois Lane believes (27).

(27) Superman wears a cape and leaps tall buildings.

When she becomes aware of the identity between Clark Kent and Superman, she utters (28).

- (28) Wow, so sometimes Clark Kent wears a cape and leaps tall buildings!  
(Braun and Saul, 2002, p. 6)

As is clearly seen here, accepting (19) enables her to replace ‘Superman’ in (27) by ‘Clark Kent’, resulting in the utterance in (28). This relation between (27) and (28) stems from the possibility for both ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ to identify *c* in Figure 9.4. ‘Superman’ denotes *a*’, and, by metonymy, serves to identify *c*. ‘Clark Kent’ denotes *b*’, and, by metonymy, serves to identify *c*. Consequently, the proposition that Superman is *P* is equivalent to the proposition that Clark Kent is *P*, insofar as both names are employed to identify the same individual *c*. This equivalence would not arise if you assented to the negative proposition in (20), hence disbelieved in the existence of *c*. We may note in this connection that the equivalence between (27) and (28) only holds when the subject nominals are interpreted as referring to an individual rather than aspects of an individual, i.e., the sentences are interpreted as expressing a singular proposition. (28) is obviously false if ‘Clark Kent’ is meant to refer to *b*’ in Figure 9.4. By the same token, Lois Lane, who believed (23) above, would not utter (29) or (30), even after recognising the identity between Clark Kent and Superman.

- (29) #Clark Kent leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent.  
(30) #Superman leaps more tall buildings than Superman.

Since the singular construal of (23) leads to the contradictory proposition “*c* leaps more tall buildings than *c*”, (23) can only be interpreted as a proposition about aspects, namely as saying that *a*’ leaps more tall buildings than *b*’. This is the reason why the substitution fails in (29)–(30).

In summary, unlike the original Fauconnier-Recanati analysis, the analysis defended here can account, among others, for the following three facts at the same time:

- (i) Lois Lane continues to accept (23) as true even after recognising the identity between Clark Kent and Superman;
- (ii) Lois Lane, who believes (27), comes to entertain (28) when she recognises the identity at issue; and
- (iii) Lois Lane never infers (29)–(30) from (23), even when she is aware of the double lives in question.



## 4. The pragmatics of negation

### 4.1. The nature of terms occurring in existential statements

To summarise the argument so far: existential statements such as (31a) and (31b) exhibit the properties shown in (32).

- (31) a. Pegasus exists (in reality).
- b. Pegasus does not exist (in reality).
- (32) a. Affirmative existentials are ontology-preserving.
- b. Negative existentials are ontology-impoverishing.

(31a) introduces into the reality space  $R$  a counterpart of mythical Pegasus, the ontology of the myth space  $R_o$  being preserved in the reality space. In contrast, (31b) denies the existence of such a counterpart element in the reality space  $R$ , so that the real world has a poorer ontology than the mythical world. In a nutshell, (31a) commits us to a richer ontology than (31b). This is what is meant by the generalisation in (32).

Also argued was that identity statements such as (33)–(34) are covert existentials, and no less exhibit the properties in (32) than overt ones.

- (33) a. Émile Ajar is (identical with) Romain Gary.
- b. Émile Ajar is not (identical with) Romain Gary.
- (34) a. Clark Kent is (identical with) Superman.
- b. Clark Kent is not (identical with) Superman.

(33a) introduces into the reality space  $R$  counterparts of Émile Ajar and Romain Gary, and in addition, an individual which has Émile Ajar and Romain Gary as aspects. In this case, the reality space  $R$  preserves the ontology of the past space  $R_o$  and adds another element. By contrast, (33b) denies the existence of such an individual in the reality space. Accordingly, (33a) commits us to a richer ontology than (33b). While both (33a) and (33b) allow us to talk truthfully about Émile Ajar and Romain Gary, it is only when we accept (33a) that we can truthfully talk about that individual whose name is Romain Gary and who sometimes writes under the pseudonym ‘Émile Ajar’. The same holds for (34). (34a) claims that there is an individual  $c$  such that  $c$  has Clark Kent and Superman as different aspects. That individual is sometimes Clark Kent and sometimes Superman. (34b) denies the existence of such an individual and claims that Clark Kent and Superman are two distinct individuals.

These observations are unsurprising, since affirmative existentials can naturally be considered to serve to introduce a new element into reality,

while negative existentials can plausibly be considered to prevent any new element from coming up. However, when regarding the status of the entity whose existence is asserted or denied, there is a crucial difference between overt and covert existentials. In overt existentials, this entity is explicitly named by a term occurring in the statements. For example, (31a) asserts the existence of an element named by the subject nominal ‘Pegasus’, while (31b) denies its existence. Accepting (31b) rather than (31a) would then make it impossible to talk truthfully about the entity named by ‘Pegasus’. This is indeed the case, as confirmed by the fact that those who believe (31b) cannot judge (35) to be true.

(35) Pegasus leaps more tall buildings than Bucephalus.

For them, Bucephalus is the horse of Alexander the Great—hence a real horse—whereas Pegasus is not a genuine object. A statement like (35) can only be made by those who embrace the ontology expressed by (31a)<sup>18</sup>. One can say that the difference between the ontology represented by (31a) and that represented by (31b) is semantic in nature, in that (31b) serves to deprive ‘Pegasus’ of its reference. The negative existential of the form ‘N does not exist’ affects the semantic potential of N; if one assents to the negative existential, one cannot use N to make serious assertions. This observation is accommodated by Figure 9.2 above, where there is no element corresponding to N in M’.

The same is not true of covert existentials. In covert existentials, the entity whose existence is in question is not explicitly named by any term occurring in the statements. For example, (33a) asserts the existence of an element which is not named by any expression in the sentence, while (33b) denies its existence. Explicitly named by the terms in (33a)–(33b) are only Émile Ajar and Romain Gary. That individual that is supposed to have Émile Ajar and Romain Gary as aspects is not named by any term in (33a)–(33b). Accordingly, whether you believe (33a) or (33b), you can make serious assertions about Émile Ajar and Romain Gary, as in (36).

(36) [= (17)] Romain Gary won the Prix Goncourt earlier than Émile Ajar.

The same holds for (34). Whether you believe (34a) or (34b), you can talk truthfully about Clark Kent and Superman, as in (37).

(37) [= (23)] Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent.

In this sense, the negative existential of the form ‘N<sub>1</sub> is not N<sub>2</sub>’ has no effect on the semantic potential of N<sub>1</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>; even if one assents to the

negative existential, one can continue to use  $N_1$  and  $N_2$  to make serious assertions. This observation is captured by Figure 9.4 above. In both  $R$ , which has a richer ontology, and  $R_o$ , which has a poorer ontology, there are elements corresponding to  $N_1$  ( $a$ ) and  $N_2$  ( $b$ ). The negation of a covert existential of the form ‘ $N_1$  is not  $N_2$ ’ only affects element  $c$ , which is named neither by  $N_1$  nor by  $N_2$ . Thus, there is a sense in which the difference between the ontology represented by (33a) and that represented by (33b) is pragmatic in nature.

One potential objection here is that the analysis developed in this section entails that pairs of terms such as Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde or Lenin (Ленин)/Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Владимир Ильич Ульянов) will serve merely to refer to aspects of individuals, who cannot be named at all as such, but only as conceived from a particular perspective. This is counterintuitive, and we might want to say that, unlike ‘Superman’, ‘Dr. Jekyll’ and ‘Lenin’ are names for individuals. It is important to note, however, that the argument put forward here does not entail that individuals can never be named as such. The gist of the argument is that we have equipped with the ability to think about the same object (taken in the widest sense of the term, as Frege (1892a, p. 27; 1997, p. 153) puts it) either under an ‘individual-mode’ or under an ‘aspect-mode’, to employ Crimmins’s (1998) terminology. The availability of these two modes accounts for the possibility of communication between what Braun and Saul (2002) call ‘enlightened’ and ‘unenlightened’ subjects, namely between those who are aware that Dr. Jekyll is Mr. Hyde and those who are not. For example, no one would have difficulty taking (38) to be a statement about an individual.

(38) Dr. Jekyll lives in a well-appointed house in London.

This remains the case even when it turns out that Dr. Jekyll is Mr. Hyde. Therefore, ‘Dr. Jekyll’ in (38) can plausibly be considered to name an individual. In contrast to (38), (39) is interpreted differently for enlightened and unenlightened subjects.

(39) Dr. Jekyll is more attractive than Mr. Hyde.

Enlightened subjects can interpret (39) in a coherent manner only by activating the ‘aspect-mode’ and taking ‘Dr. Jekyll’ to name an aspect of one and the same individual. These observations establish that a name can name either an individual or an aspect, depending on the context<sup>19</sup>.

Another objection that might be raised is that the analysis developed here only applies to utterances which are objectively truth-evaluable,

insofar as it rests on such notions as reference or truth/falsity – notions that play little part in contemporary pragmatics launched by Austin (1962). What has been said so far, however, can be extended to cover utterances which are not objectively truth-evaluable, such as (40).

(40) France is hexagonal.

Austin (1962, p. 142) maintains that (40) is a rough description rather than a true or false one. Particularly relevant to our discussion is an utterance like (41).

(41) Superman is more popular among women than Clark Kent.

‘Popularity’ is so subjective a notion as to be rigorously estimated. The definition of ‘woman’ is even more complicated and dependent upon the political, social or religious background against which it is placed. What is essential here is the fact that, regardless of whether (41) may be objectively truth-evaluable or not, one can believe/assert it on some occasion or other. In general, the act of asserting that P is not intrinsically tied to any felicity condition that refers to the verifiability of P, all that can be said being that the assertion that P implies the belief that P (Grant, 1958; Austin, 1962, p. 49). It is certainly obvious that our beliefs include ones that are hardly truth-evaluable, such as (40)–(41), but it is still the case that those who utter (40)–(41) are deemed to believe the propositions expressed by these sentences. Provided that these points are conceded, our argument raises no difficulty; whether or not Superman is identical with Clark Kent has no bearing upon the belief or assertion expressed by (41). The truth-evaluability of (41) is orthogonal to the pragmatic character of the negation in (34b) (= ‘Clark Kent is not (identical with) Superman’).

#### 4.2. Modes of presentation of objects

We have said that the negation of a covert existential of the form ‘ $N_1$  is not  $N_2$ ’ only affects element  $c$ , which is named neither by  $N_1$  nor by  $N_2$ . There is more to the effect of the negation, however. As Figure 9.4 indicates, in  $R_o$ ,  $a$  and  $b$  are individuals, whereas in  $R$ ,  $a'$  and  $b'$  are aspects of  $c$ . Following Braun and Saul (2002), let us call those who believe (33a) (= ‘Émile Ajar is (identical with) Roman Gary’) and (34a) (= ‘Clark Kent is (identical with) Superman’) ‘enlightened’ subjects, and those who believe (33b) (= ‘Émile Ajar is not (identical with) Roman Gary’) and (34b) (= ‘Clark Kent is not (identical with) Superman’)

‘unenlightened’ subjects. The contrast between  $R_o$  and  $R$  in Figure 9.4 accommodates the fact that unenlightened subjects construe  $N_1$  and  $N_2$  as naming two distinct individuals, whereas enlightened ones construe the same terms as naming two distinct aspects of one and the same individual (Sakai, 2018). Following this, we must grant that the negation in ‘ $N_1$  is not  $N_2$ ’ not only denies the existence of  $c$ , but also affects the ontological status of  $a/a'$  and  $b/b'$ , elements explicitly named by  $N_1$  and  $N_2$ . This ontological change caused by the negation in ‘ $N_1$  is not  $N_2$ ’ might appear to conflict with the generalisation given in (32). Unenlightened subjects are committed to the existence of two individuals, while enlightened ones are committed to the existence of only one individual. In other words, if one accepts the affirmative identity statement, the ontology of individuals in the new space is impoverished by comparison to the original space. Conversely, if one accepts the negative identity statement, the ontology of individuals in the new space is thereby enriched.

At first blush, this difference between  $a/b$  (*qua* individuals) and  $a'/b'$  (*qua* aspects) may appear to threaten the generalisation in (32). The nature of the difference, however, deserves more careful examination. In fact, there is evidence that the ontology remains the same whether  $a/b$  and  $a'/b'$  may be individuals or aspects, and that the difference lies in the construal of the same ontology, not in the ontology *per se*. How many objects are in a space defines the ontology of that space, but whether those objects are individuals or aspects does not; rather, it constitutes the mode of presentation of the same ontology.

The first point to be noted is that enlightened subjects can talk about Superman and Clark Kent with unenlightened ones. For example, they both can fully agree that (37) is a true statement, without there being any misunderstanding between them. Their commitment to different ontologies does not hinder communication. It is often assumed that, when communication is successful, some thought (or proposition) must be shared between speaker and hearer, as illustrated by the fact that if John successfully communicates to Mary the thought expressed by the utterance ‘It is raining in Stockholm’, Mary comes to entertain the thought expressed by that utterance. Even if it is conceded that some thought (or proposition) must be shared between speaker and hearer in successful communication, it does not follow that the very thought expressed by the speaker must be shared by the hearer. Suppose that John says to Mary, “I am hungry”. It is obvious that communication fails if Mary comes to entertain, on her part, the thought expressed by

the utterance ‘I am hungry’, because this would make it the case that Mary now thinks that she rather than John is hungry (Recanati, 2016, p. 111). In that case, the shared belief must be ‘John is hungry’, not ‘I am hungry’. In John’s thought, John is presented as ‘I’, namely in the first-person. But this mode of presentation must not be shared by Mary, who is expected to understand John’s first-person utterance ‘I am hungry’ as expressing the third-person thought that John (or he) is hungry. ‘I am hungry’ is a different thought from ‘He is hungry’ if thoughts contain modes of presentation of objects, as Frege (1892a/1960) extensively argues. Even in that case, however, something must be shared between speaker and hearer in order for communication to be successful. For some philosophers, this something is a singular proposition, namely a proposition about one or several individuals. Thus, Perry (1988, p. 5; 1993, p. 231) contends that “[o]ne reason we need singular propositions is to get at what we seek to preserve when we communicate with those who are in different contexts”. This idea accounts for the fact that, when Mary understands John’s utterance ‘I am hungry’, she entertains the singular thought that John is hungry, in which no mode of presentation of John figures.

In light of the possibility of communication between enlightened and unenlightened subjects, however, Perry’s idea is too stringent. It is not simply the case that there is any singular thought that both enlightened and unenlightened subjects come to entertain when they understand (36)–(37). Whereas these utterances express singular thoughts for unenlightened subjects, they express aspectual thoughts for enlightened subjects. As Wittgenstein (1922, para. 4.126) puts it, “[t]he name shows that it designates an object”<sup>20</sup>. But the name does not linguistically encode whether the object designated is an individual or an aspect. If it did, there would always be misunderstanding between enlightened and unenlightened subjects when they talk about *Émile Ajar* or *Superman*. Intuitively, however, a proper understanding of (36), for example, only requires that one entertain the ‘objectual’ thought that the object referred to by ‘Romain Gary’ won the Prix Goncourt earlier than the object referred to by ‘*Émile Ajar*’. This is consonant with the view, advanced by Bezuidenhout (1997, p. 217), that “[t]he conception the speaker has of the name-bearer doesn’t have to be shared by the audience to any great degree”. As another example, someone who takes ‘*Émile Ajar*’ to be the name of a rock, or ‘*Superman*’ to be the name of an aspect of a planet, for instance, would not be deemed to have correctly understood (36)–(37). There is a minimum level of understanding, which the

linguistic community expects competent speakers to have (Putnam, 1975, p. 168). This does not entail, however, that there needs be such a thing as *the* thought that all subjects, enlightened or not, must entertain in order to properly understand an utterance:

[I]t is not necessary in addition to the speaker-relative content and the listener-relative content to posit some non-relative notion of utterance content in order to account for successful communication. Successful communication requires only a contextually determined degree of similarity between speaker-relative and listener-relative content. (Bezuidenhout, 1997, p. 222; see also Recanati, 2016, p. 119)

Enlightened and unenlightened subjects stand in different epistemic relations (in a broad sense) to the objects, giving rise to their different construals of the objects, i.e., objects *qua* aspects and objects *qua* individuals, respectively. But this difference can safely be relegated to the sphere of modes of presentation, rather than the ontology *per se*. It is also worth noting that the modes of presentation at issue here are not Fregean descriptions, namely object-independent senses, as in Section 3.2 above, but rather what Recanati (2012; 2016) calls non-descriptive modes of presentation, based on the subject's contextual or epistemically rewarding relations (ER relations) to the reference – namely “relations to entities which make information flow possible between the subject and these entities” (Recanati, 2016, p. 71).

In conclusion, we can maintain the generalisation that affirmative existentials are ontology-preserving while negative existentials ontology-impoverishing. The negation in ‘ $N_1$  is not  $N_2$ ’ leaves the references of the terms  $N_1$  and  $N_2$  intact, but alters the way their references are presented or thought about. Again, the pragmatics of negation comes into picture.

## 5. Conclusion

Identity statements such as ‘Émile Ajar is (identical with) Romain Gary’ are covert existentials in that—just like overt existentials such as ‘Pegasus exists (in reality)’—they bring a new element into the representation of the real world. In the representation thus obtained, there is an element which only affirmative existentials, overt or covert, allow us to seriously consider. It is only through the acceptance of ‘Pegasus exists (in reality)’ that we can make serious assertions about Pegasus. The sentence ‘Pegasus leaps more tall buildings than



Bucephalus' is judged to be true only by those who accept 'Pegasus exists (in reality)'. Similarly, it is only through the acceptance of 'Émile Ajar is (identical with) Romain Gary' that we can talk seriously about that individual whose name is Romain Gary and who sometimes writes under the pseudonym 'Émile Ajar'. The sentence 'Romain Gary is the only person to have won the Prix Goncourt twice (under two names)' is judged to be true only by those who accept 'Émile Ajar is (identical with) Romain Gary'.

Although affirmative existentials, overt or covert, commit us to the existence of an element that negative existentials fail to refer to, there are two senses in which the opposition between affirmative and negative existentials is pragmatic in character when they are covert ones. First of all, in the case of overt existentials, the opposition between affirmative and negative statements concerns the existence of an entity named by a term occurring in the statements. Thus, the debate between 'Pegasus exists (in reality)' and 'Pegasus does not exist (in reality)' centres around the existence of Pegasus, an entity named by the subject nominal of each statement. This is not the case with covert existentials, where the opposition between affirmative and negative statements concerns the existence of an entity that is not named by any terms occurring in the statements. Thus, the debate between 'Émile Ajar is (identical with) Romain Gary' and 'Émile Ajar is not (identical with) Romain Gary' centres around the existence of the individual who wrote under these two names. Such an individual, if any, is not named by any terms occurring in the statements. Both sides agree that there is an entity named 'Émile Ajar' and that there is another entity named 'Romain Gary'. These two entities are explicitly named by the terms in both 'Émile Ajar is (identical with) Romain Gary' and 'Émile Ajar is not (identical with) Romain Gary'. The divergence resides in whether there is, in addition, an entity that subsumes Émile Ajar and Romain Gary. That entity falls outside what is said by, or the explicature of, both affirmative and negative statements.

There is another sense in which the opposition between affirmative and negative existentials is pragmatic when they are covert ones. Negation in overt existentials 'N does not exist (in reality)' deprives N of its reference. For this reason, if one accepts 'Pegasus does not exist (in reality)', one cannot use 'Pegasus' to make true assertions, insofar as truth is defined as in the Fregean framework. Such utterances as 'Pegasus flies' are viewed at most as fictitious.<sup>21</sup> Negation in covert existentials in 'N<sub>1</sub> is (not identical) with N<sub>2</sub>', on the other hand, has no



effect on the references of  $N_1$  and  $N_2$ , merely affecting their modes of presentation. Those who approve “Émile Ajar is not (identical with) Romain Gary” can nevertheless use ‘Émile Ajar’ and ‘Romain Gary’ to make true assertions such as ‘Romain Gary won the Prix Goncourt earlier than Émile Ajar’. The way one thinks about the references, however, is different than when one embraces the ontology represented by ‘Émile Ajar is (identical with) Romain Gary’. In the negative, the references of the terms are presented as two distinct individuals, while in the affirmative, they are presented as two distinct aspects of one and the same individual. Whether one may assent to the affirmative or the negative, the truth-conditional content of ‘Romain Gary won the Prix Goncourt earlier than Émile Ajar’ remains the same – but the same content is presented in different manners, depending on the ontology one endorses.

## Endnotes

1. My work on this chapter was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 22K00540.

2. „Dass der Name „Kepler“ etwas bezeichne, ist vielmehr Voraussetzung ebenso für die Behauptung „Kepler starb im Elend“ wie für die entgegengesetzte.“ (Frege, 1892a, p. 40)

3. In current philosophical logic, it is more common to make use of the formulas in (ia) and (ib), instead of (5a) and (5b), respectively (Morscher, 2001, pp. 240–242).

(i) a.  $\exists x (x = o)$  b.  $\neg \exists x (x = o)$

This move does not amend the situation, however. Insofar as ‘o’ is an individual constant, (ia) is always true, while (ib) is always false, given the standard semantics of predicate logic.

4. „Der Satz “es gibt Julius Cäsar” ist weder wahr noch falsch, sondern sinnlos, wiewohl der Satz “es gibt einen Mann mit Namen Julius Cäsar” einen Sinn hat; aber hier haben wir [...] einen Begriff [...].“ (Frege, 1892b, p. 200)

5. Bach (2010, p. 60) sees no fundamental difference between Frege’s sense and Russell’s description when he says: “[Some philosophers] suppose that we can think of things only under descriptions, only by entertaining general propositions, or via something like Fregean senses, which though object-determining are object-independent.”

6. <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Odysseus> (Last accessed 20/01/2023) <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Pegasus> (Last accessed 20/01/2023)

7. Another worry is that, philosophically, descriptivism seems to entail a highly qualitative view of the world. If what we take to be proper names

were not really proper names, “we would never be related in thought to anything in particular” (Bach, 2010, p. 39).

8. „Man sagt wohl, Odysseus sei keine geschichtliche Person, und meint mit diesem widerspruchsvollen Ausdruck, dass der Name „Odysseus“ nichts bezeichnende, keine Bedeutung habe.“ (Frege, 1969, p. 208)

9. Fauconnier (1985/1994), *qua* linguist, talks about speaker’s reality, whereas Frege, *qua* logician, talks about reality *tout court*. We will set aside this difference here.

10. „Der Satz „Die Skylla hat sechs Rachen“ ist nicht wahr; aber auch der Satz „Die Skylla hat nicht sechs Rachen“ ist nicht wahr; denn dazu wäre nötig, dass der Eigenname „Skylla“ etwas bezeichnende. [...] Namen, die den Zweck verfehlen, den ein Eigenname zu haben pflegt, nämlich etwas zu benennen, mögen Scheineigenamen heißen. [...] Statt „Dichtung“ könnten wir auch „Scheingedanke“ sagen. Wenn der Sinn eines Behauptungssatzes also nicht wahr ist, so ist er entweder falsch oder Dichtung, und dies letzte ist er im Allgemeinen, wenn ein Scheineigenname darin vorkommt. [...] Die Behauptungen sind in der Dichtung nicht ernst zu nehmen: es sind nur Scheinbehauptungen. Auch die Gedanken sind nicht ernst zu nehmen wie in der Wissenschaft: es sind nur Scheingedanken.“ (Frege, 1969, pp. 141–142)

11. We are not claiming here that truth and falsity are meaningless concepts in fiction. The concepts of truth and falsity obviously play a part in accounting for the difference between (i), which sounds true, and (ii), which seems to be false even in the Greek mythology.

(i) Pegasus can fly because it has wings.

(ii) Pegasus can fly because it has propellers and an engine.

It is important, however, to keep apart ‘truth *tout court*’ and ‘truth in fiction’ (Lewis 1978). (i) is certainly true in fiction, but not true in the strict sense of the word. (ii) seems to be false because the world it depicts is less similar to the real world than the one (i) depicts. Being a horse and having wings are both properties of an animal, while having propellers and an engine is not. This makes it more difficult to construe ‘Pegasus’ in (ii) as a fictitious horse.

12. Frege (1969, p. 211/1979, p. 194) says: “Thoughts in myth and fiction do not need to have truth-values. A sentence containing a meaningless proper name is neither true nor false; if it expresses a thought after all, then that thought belongs to fiction. In that case the sentence has no meaning [= reference].” [„Die Gedanken in Sage und Dichtung brauchen keinen Wahrheitswert zu haben. Ein Satz, der einen bedeutungslosen Eigennamen enthält, ist weder wahr noch falsch; der Gedanke, den er etwa ausdrückt, gehört der Dichtung an. Der Satz hat dann keine Bedeutung.“] This classic conception of truth is challenged, among others, by Lewis (1978), an early

attempt to define ‘truth in fiction’. Even if we accept Lewis’s conception of truth, it is still the case that those who accept (9) cannot talk about ‘Pegasus in reality’, unlike those who assent to (7). In this respect, (9) can be viewed as ontology-impooverishing.

13. One might say that ‘Superman is Clark Kent’ means that ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ are two different referential processes and that the identity statement concerns the reference of signs rather than the ontology of objects. But this idea does not work for sentence (23), ‘Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent’, which will be discussed below. This sentence is presented as talking about two different entities, rather than two different referential processes. It would not make sense to say that ‘referential process *a* leaps more tall buildings than referential process *b*’. What is crucial is that, for unenlightened speakers, who are not aware of the identity between Superman and Clark Kent, (23) is indistinguishable (in the relevant sense here) from sentences like ‘Superman leaps more tall buildings than Emmanuel Macron’. When uttering (23), unenlightened speakers believe that there are two different individuals, just as when enlightened speakers utter ‘Superman leaps more tall buildings than Emmanuel Macron’. For unenlightened speakers, it is not only that ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ are two different signs, but it is also that Superman and Clark Kent are two different individuals. Mental space configurations given in the text should therefore be interpreted as representing objects, and not linguistic signs. This is not to say that the notion of referential processes is irrelevant to the discussion. In Section 4.2, it will be argued that Superman *qua* individual and Superman *qua* aspect correspond to different referential processes or modes of presentation.

14. „Beiläufig gesprochen: Von *zwei* Dingen zu sagen, sie seien identisch, ist ein Unsinn, und von *Einem* zu sagen, es sei identisch mit sich selbst, sagt gar nichts.“ (Wittgenstein, 1922, para. 5.5303)

15. „Wir sagen, ein Gegenstand *a* sei gleich einem Gegenstand *b* (im Sinne des völligen Zusammenfallens), wenn *a* unter jeden Begriff fällt, unter den *b* fällt, und umgekehrt.“ (Frege 1969, p. 131)

16. The following discussion proceeds as if Clark Kent and Superman were real people. We will assume that R is not an imaginary world, but the reality.

17. On the most natural interpretation, (19) asserts what is supposed to hold only in the Superman story. On this interpretation, (19) is taken to be equivalent to the ‘paratextual’ or ‘parafictional’ statement in (i) (García-Carpintero, 2014, p. 17; Recanati, 2018).

(i) In the Superman story, Clark Kent is (identical with) Superman. R is thereby included in a larger fiction space, together with R<sub>0</sub>. Even in that case, however, the assertion of (19) presents R, but not R<sub>0</sub>, as real, which

makes it adequate to distinguish ‘truth in fiction’ and ‘falsity in fiction’ (Lewis 1978). The structure of language by itself does not tell us whether a sentence talks about truth *tout court* or truth in fiction, or equivalently, whether a name occurring in a sentence is a genuine proper name or a fictitious name. This is, in our opinion, part of the reason why Frege (1969, pp. 141–142/1979, pp. 129–130) called fictitious names ‘mock proper names’, as we have seen in 2.2 above. As Perry (1977, p. 477/1993, p. 6) points out, Frege took the structure of language to be suggestive but not sure guide to the structure of thought. In this chapter, we will ignore the larger fiction space in which both R and R<sub>0</sub> may be included, because its possible existence has no bearing upon the discussion. As Kripke (2013, p. 23) cautions, “[t]he existence of fiction is a powerful argument for absolutely nothing”.

18. One might wonder how one can meaningfully utter a sentence like (i).

(i) Among famous horses, I prefer Pegasus to Bucephalus, because it leaps more tall buildings.

Two remarks can be made here. On the one hand, it is fictitiously true, but not true *tout court*, that Pegasus leaps more tall buildings than Bucephalus. On the other hand, such verbs as ‘prefer’ or ‘like’ are intensional verbs whose arguments may have no extensions in the real world. Thus, there may be as many fans of Sherlock Holmes as there are fans of Napoleon Bonaparte. These points suggest that the utterer of (i) is not truthfully talking about Pegasus leaping more tall buildings than Bucephalus.

19. One might say, following Crimmins (1998), that enlightened subjects are merely pretending that there are two distinct individuals, when they utter or interpret (ii). Further research is called for, however, in order to determine whether there is any substantial difference between the analysis developed here and the ‘pretense’ account offered by Crimmins (1998).

20. „Der Name zeigt, dass er einen Gegenstand bezeichnet [...]“ (Wittgenstein, 1922, para. 4.126)

21. We set aside here statements called ‘metatextual’ (García-Carpintero, 2014, p. 17) or ‘metafictional’ (Recanati, 2018), illustrated by (i).

(i) Pegasus is a mythical horse.

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