

## What Quotations Refer To\*

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**Abstract:** When quotations are used with a purely referential purpose, they are mostly used with the purpose of referring to expressions, in the sense of rather abstract expression types. However, in many cases purely referential quotations are used with the purpose of referring to things other than very abstract expression types, such as boldface types, sounds, particular tokens, etc. The paper deals with the question of what mechanism underlies the possibility of successfully referring to different things and kinds of things with one and the same quotation. I defend the view that a quotation has as its semantic reference a certain very abstract expression type, and that the possibility of referring to other things by means of it is to be explained as a pragmatic phenomenon of felicitously conveyed speaker reference.

When quotations are used with a purely referential purpose, they are mostly used with the purpose of referring to expressions, in the sense of rather abstract expression types. In typical utterances of the following sentences, the quotations they contain will be used with a purely referential purpose, and the referential purpose in question will be the purpose of referring to rather abstract expression types:

- (1) Use “Velázquez”, not “Velásquez”.
- (2) Does “hiss” appear in Shakespeare’s plays?
- (3) “Batman” is a composite expression.

In utterances of (1), ‘ “Velázquez” ’ will typically be used with the purpose of directing the addressees to use generally the expression “Velázquez” instead of the expression “Velásquez”—not, e.g., to write a particular token of “Velázquez” or to write always “Velázquez” in Times New Roman type, etc. In utterances of (1), the question that will typically be asked is the question whether the expression “hiss” appears in Shakespeare’s plays—not, e.g., whether some particular token of “hiss”, or some token in Times New Roman type, etc., so appears (in some particular printed token of the plays). In utterances of (3), similarly, the intended reference will typically be to the expression “Batman”, not to

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particular tokens of it or to its shape in Times New Roman type, etc. However, as emphasized in a number of places in the recent literature on quotation (see especially García-Carpintero 1994 and Cappelen and Lepore 2007, ch. 7), in many cases quotations used with a purely referential purpose are used with the purpose of referring to things other than very abstract expression types, as will be the case with some utterances of the following sentences:

- (4) “Velázquez” is a Times New Roman type.
- (5) “Hiss” is a hissing sound.
- (6) Please paint “Batman” in black.

In utterances of (4), ‘ “Velázquez” ’ will typically be used with the purpose of referring to the Times New Roman type of “Velázquez”, which is certainly less abstract than the abstract type “Velázquez”; in utterances of (5), ‘ “Hiss” ’ will typically be used with the purpose of referring to a sound (or a sound type); in utterances of (6), ‘ “Batman” ’ will in some cases be used with the purpose of referring to a specific token of “Batman”, e.g. a token written in big wood letters above the entrance of a cinema theater. These referring purposes will typically be carried out successfully, in the sense that utterers of (4)-(6) will typically successfully convey to their audiences their intentions of referring to the appropriate things.

What mechanism underlies the possibility of successfully referring to different things and kinds of things with what is presumably one and the same quotation? In this paper I will defend the view that a quotation has as its semantic reference a certain very abstract expression type, and that the possibility of referring to other things by means of it is to be explained as a pragmatic phenomenon of felicitously conveyed speaker reference. The paper thus provides some considerations intended to answer the second of the three main semantic questions about pure quotation that I mentioned in earlier work (Gómez-Torrente 2001, following a similar threefold distinction in Washington 1992, 584): the first was the question of what part of a quotation has a referring role, the mentioned second question was the question of what is the reference of that referring part, and the third question was the question of how that reference is fixed. In that earlier work I considered mostly the third and (especially) the first of these questions. Let me begin here with a very brief account of what I take to be the right answers to the first and third questions (sections 1 and 2), so that

it can become eventually clear how the three answers defended here fit together. Section 3 will develop the favored answer to the second question, the question that gives its title to this paper.

### **1. What does the referring.**

The referring part of a quotation has been claimed to be the quotation itself (see e.g. Recanati 2001, Cappelen and Lepore 2007, Predelli 2008), the quoted expression (see e.g. Washington 1992—perhaps interpreting correctly Frege 1892—, Reimer 1996, Saka 1998), and the quotation marks (see e.g. Davidson 1979, Bennett 1988, García-Carpintero 1994, 2004). If we take seriously the disquotational character of quotation, it follows that only the quotation itself can be the referring part. It is normally taken for granted that things such as (7) are true:

(7) ‘ “Socrates” ’ refers to “Socrates”.

But the truth of (7) is not compatible with the referring part of a quotation being either the quoted expression or the quotation marks. On any view, (7) says that ‘ “Socrates” ’ is a referring expression whose reference is “Socrates”. But if the quoted expression did the referring, then ‘ “Socrates” ’, as it appears in ‘ “ “Socrates” ’ ’ (the apparent subject of (7)), must refer to itself, not to “Socrates”. And if the quotes did the referring, then ‘ “Socrates” ’, as it appears in ‘ “ “Socrates” ’ ’, does not refer at all, let alone to “Socrates”. On the other hand, the claim that the referring part of a quotation is the quotation itself is compatible with the truth of (7): being a quotation, ‘ “Socrates” ’, as it appears in ‘ “ “Socrates” ’ ’, refers to something, and what it refers to is presumably the expression inside its quotes, namely “Socrates”. (These points are developed in Gómez-Torrente 2001.)

### **2. How the referring is accomplished.**

While in earlier work I criticized some answers to this question, I gave only very sketchy consideration to the positive matter of what the right answer should be. A more extended discussion (both of negative and positive considerations) will again have to wait. However, my main views can be summarized as follows.

Quotations are not typical names, and do not get their referents in the way typical names get their referents. Typical names presumably get their referents via individual acts of baptism, accomplished with the help of individual acts of ostension or descriptive stipulation, and they presumably keep those referents under certain sorts of transmission from speaker to speaker even in the absence of knowledge of identificatory ostensive or descriptive material. But quotations don't get their referents via individual acts of baptism of any sort, or via transmissions of the mentioned sort. They obviously get their referents via some general convention or stipulation, explicit or implicit acquaintance with which puts someone in the position of using and understanding all quotations.

However, the fact that quotations don't get their referents by typical naming doesn't imply that quotations are not like typical names in other respects, and it doesn't imply that a quotation should get its referent via some particular equivalent description or demonstration. In rare cases, one can effect acts of wholesale reference fixing for large, and even infinite, classes of expressions that otherwise behave like typical names and which presumably are not equivalent with corresponding particular descriptions or demonstratives. For example, the convention once existed in some parts of Spain (and probably still exists somewhere) of naming the firstborn child of a couple with the name of the (first) saint for that day in the Catholic book of saints (plus the first last name of the father and the first last name of the mother, in that order). The Lagadonian scientists Gulliver finds in his travels adopt the cumbersome but otherwise conceivable convention of using every thing as a name of itself. The viability of these general rules doesn't imply that the names of the Spaniards named according to the mentioned convention, or the Lagadonian names, are really descriptions or demonstratives in disguise.

Quotations presumably get their reference via a general convention very similar to the Lagadonian convention, namely this:

(GCQ) Let the quotation of an expression name the expression itself.

Unlike the convention for naming firstborns and the Lagadonian convention, this convention was perhaps not made explicit before philosophical or linguistic reflection on it was conducted. But in being merely implicit in linguistic written practice, it's not different from other conventions about how the content of many words gets determined.

The use of quotation can be seen as essentially Lagadonian. But it is strictly speaking only quasi-Lagadonian, because the expression that is adopted as referring expression is the whole quotation, including the quotation marks.<sup>1</sup> This results, of course, from an interest in avoiding potential confusions between normal uses of expressions and what, were it not for the quotation marks, would be pure autonymic (Lagadonian) uses.

So quotations differ also from typical names in that they have discernible syntactic structure, derived from this clarificatory, or “punctuatory”, nature of the quotation marks. But again the fact that quotations are syntactically complex, unlike typical names,<sup>2</sup> doesn’t imply that they are more complex than typical names in any very interesting semantic sense. In particular, their reference need not be fixed by some compositional process that takes as inputs the referents of their components, or of components of descriptive or demonstrative phrases abbreviated by the quotation, etc. The reference of a quotation is presumably determined directly by a general convention such as (GCQ).

Some remarks on one view according to which the reference of quotations is fixed by individual equivalent demonstrative phrases will be given in the next section.

### **3. What quotations refer to.**

As I announced, I will defend the view, which I take to be the standard one, that a quotation has as its unique semantic reference a certain very abstract expression type of the quoted token. This traditional view has come under attack mainly in the Davidsonian account of García-Carpintero (1994, 2004), especially designed to deal with the possibility of referring to different things with quotations, and according to which a quotation (in fact, its quotation

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps a more strictly Lagadonian convention is often at work when the things named are mere expressions; after all, people often use as a name of an expression the expression itself (without quotation marks). It is perhaps only as restricted to expressions that the Lagadonian idea is not too cumbersome to implement.

<sup>2</sup> Though perhaps not unlike all names. Names like “Elizabeth II”, “Sammy Davis Jr”, “Washington DC”, etc., have discernible syntactic structure: they have been originally formed by the composition of some expression that already named something with some particle intended to distinguish the new intended bearer from the old one(s). But just as with quotations, it is doubtful that they are more complex than names without discernible syntactic structure in any very interesting semantic sense.

marks; see section 1 above) is a special kind of demonstrative phrase which can get very different semantic referents depending on the context. The standard view has also been rejected in the recent non-Davidsonian account of Cappelen and Lepore (2007). I will first offer some brief critical considerations on García-Carpintero's account. Then I will turn to criticisms of the Cappelen & Lepore account. I will end by explaining and defending my own view.

### **3.1. García-Carpintero's account.**

According to a Davidsonian account, a particular use of a quotation involves a demonstration of some sort in which the thing demonstrated is the token involved in that particular use of the quotation. In García-Carpintero's version, a quotation is what he calls an "ostensive sign", something that "consists of a demonstrative ('this'), a category term ('sound')—which may be merely implicit in the context—and a demonstration (the act of pointing, or directing one's glance) toward a certain token, a certain physical thing [in the case of quotation, this is the relevant token of the quoted expression]" (1994, 258). The referent of the quotation (strictly speaking, of the quotation marks) is obtained via a mechanism of deferred ostension with the help of the contextually provided category term and the demonstrated token. For example, with a typical written utterance of (5), the utterer semantically expresses the same content as he would with "This sound is a hissing sound" said pointing to the expression "hiss", and García-Carpintero takes the semantic referent of "this sound" in such a case to be the sound (type) by means of which the expression "hiss" is normally pronounced in English.

I have already expressed a number of worries about the implications of this proposal regarding the first and third questions about quotation above (see section 1 above and Gómez-Torrente 2001). But even leaving aside those worries for present purposes, I would have a complaint about its specific implications for the question of what is the reference of a quotation. The complaint is, essentially, that García-Carpintero's proposal seems to attribute excessive referential possibilities to quotations. The excessive nature of the proposal can be seen, I think, from the fact that it implies that, as a semantic matter of course, a quotation could be used to refer to anything appropriately related to its token by means of a (possibly implicit) category term, just as a phrase of the form "This X" could so

refer. However, it seems clear that quotations are not so versatile in this respect as phrases of the form “This X”.

One can point to this token:

Velázquez

and say “This man was a great painter”, easily managing to convey and conceivably semantically expressing the true proposition that this man Velázquez was a great painter.<sup>3</sup>

However, it seems one can’t utter the following token sentence:

“Velázquez” was a great painter

and successfully convey to one’s audience the intended true proposition that Velázquez was a great painter,<sup>4</sup> or at least one can’t do this without adding complicated peculiarities to the contextual setting.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A referee wonders if it’s so clear that such an utterance of “This man was a great painter” would be felicitous, on the grounds that the utterer is not pointing at a person but at a written expression. Neither I nor any of my informants sense any infelicity, however. In fact, such an utterance would straightforwardly exploit the uncontroversial and uncontroversially effective mechanism of deferred ostension that García-Carpintero’s account relies on.

<sup>4</sup> A referee suggests that such an utterance of “‘Velázquez’ was a great painter” sounds unacceptable, because the predicate “was a great painter” is usually applied to the unquoted expression. If the referee is right and the utterance is simply unacceptable, then so much the worse for García-Carpintero’s account, on which it should be just as acceptable as a suitable utterance of “This man was a great painter”. My own view is that the utterance is not unacceptable in any syntactic or semantic sense. Its oddness is due to the fact that it cannot be used to convey anything sensible except in complicated contextual settings.

<sup>5</sup> In some uncomplicated contextual settings (for example, we can imagine that it has just been discovered that the painter’s real name was not “Velázquez”), the quotation marks in “‘Velázquez’ was a great painter” could be used as “scare” quotes, and ‘ “Velázquez” ’ would refer to the painter (whatever his real name) in a moderately clear sense. But I take these contexts to be irrelevant for a defense of García-Carpintero’s account. In them, the quotation is not really purely referential. And in cases where the speaker wanted to refer to the painter by means of ‘ “Velázquez” ’, and do so by means of a purely referential use of the quotation marks, he could explicitly avoid the “scare” interpretation by openly explaining to the participants in the conversation that he did not mean the quotation marks to signal “distancing” of any sort.

Also, if I point to the same (normal type) token of “Velázquez” above and utter

This boldface type is a very dark boldface,

I think it’s clear that I can easily convey and perhaps semantically express the (let’s suppose, true) proposition that the boldface version of Times New Roman “Velázquez” is a very dark boldface. However, if I utter the following token:

(8) “Velázquez” is a very dark boldface,

I don’t think I can easily manage even to convey that proposition, as I probably require a fairly complicated contextual setting to do so.<sup>6</sup> One simple explanation for these differences and difficulties is that with an utterance of (8) one actually cannot semantically express that proposition. What an utterance of (8) semantically expresses is presumably false without qualification.

I take such examples to constitute strong indication that the quotation ‘ “Velázquez” ’ is not an ostensive sign in García-Carpintero’s sense. For if it were such a thing, we would at least have a feeling that in some unremarkable contextual setting it (or its quotation marks) could refer to Velázquez the man or to the boldface version of Times New Roman “Velázquez”. But I don’t think we do, so I surmise that García-Carpintero’s account attributes to quotations a semantic versatility that they don’t possess.

### **3.2. The Cappelen & Lepore account.**

Cappelen & Lepore (2007, ch. 12) propose a novel theory of the reference of quotations. This is based on a view on the first and third questions about quotation that is fairly congenial with my view summarized above. According to Cappelen & Lepore, referential quotation is essentially governed by the principle that all the instances of the following disquotational schema (which gives the abstract form of (7)) are true:

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My intuition is that in such a case the addressees will be unable to grasp the speaker’s purpose of conveying the proposition that Velázquez was a great painter.

<sup>6</sup> A referee describes one such contextual setting: a number of fonts are being discussed, and every font is represented by the written name of a different painter.



‘ “e” ’ refers to “e”

(where “e” is replaceable by any quotable item, for an undetermined set of “quotable items”).<sup>7</sup> This principle, together with the principle that “for any quotable item e, if a quotation expression Q refers to e, then e is contained in Q”,<sup>8</sup> provide all there is to the semantics of the marks, on Cappelen & Lepore’s view.

However, the Cappelen & Lepore apparatus for explaining the variability phenomena exemplified by the abovementioned utterances of (4)-(6) seems to me inadequate. On their view, typical utterances of (4) have a grammatical subject that refers to the Times New Roman type of “Velázquez” and hence are true, while other utterances of (4) have a grammatical subject that does not refer to a particular font type (some have a grammatical subject that refers to a more abstract type shared with normal type tokens of “Velázquez”), and hence are false. However, this doesn’t happen because all these utterances have one and the same grammatical subject that gets a different semantic reference as a function of variations in contextual determinants. It happens, according to Cappelen & Lepore, because the first type of utterances have one grammatical subject, *containing* the Times New Roman type of “Velázquez” (and presumably not containing a more abstract type), and the second type of utterances have *another* grammatical subject, *containing* a different, more abstract type of object, the *word* “Velázquez” (and perhaps not containing the Times New Roman type). To use also one of their examples (originally from García-Carpintero), consider:

(9) “Madrid” = “Madrid”

and

(10) “Madrid” ≠ “Madrid”

<sup>7</sup> The schema Cappelen & Lepore actually use substitutes “quotes” for “refers”, because they intend it to govern both pure (referential) and impure uses of quotations. The principle in the text presumably governs purely referential uses.

<sup>8</sup> Compare the notion of “interiority” in Gómez-Torrente (2001), where the principle is proposed that a quotation refers to something just in case that something constitutes the interior of the quotation.

Cappelen & Lepore say:

first, imagine [(9)] tokened in a context C where the speaker is typing a rather obvious identity, but mid-sentence some strange formatting key is unintentionally pressed on the computer and switches font from Times Roman to Verdana (and where the font makes no difference to the writer at all—she doesn't know what font she's writing in, doesn't know it changed mid-sentence, and wouldn't have cared if she did notice). Intuition is that the resulting utterance is true. Next imagine [(9)] tokened in a context C' where the writer is intending to bring to her audience's attention the differences between the Times Roman and Verdana. She might utter [(9)] as a test case to her audience. In this context it's easy to get the intuition that [(9)] is false and [(10)] true. (2007, 152).

Cappelen & Lepore's explanation of these intuitions is again that "the subject of [(10)] is not the same as the subject of [(9)]" (2007, 153). The subject of (typical utterances of) (10) contains, in Cappelen & Lepore's terminology, a mere sign (what I would rather call a mere expression), while the subject of (typical utterances of) (9) contains, again in their terminology, an expression (what I would rather call a word, or a meaningful expression). The relevant difference, unlike in García-Carpintero's proposal, is not relevantly semantic, but effectively syntactic.

While the main problem with García-Carpintero's proposal was that it is excessive, the main problem with the Cappelen & Lepore proposal is that, unless it's too eccentric, it's insufficient. The proposal gives no satisfactory explanation of the apparent possibility of referring to a sound with an utterance of (5), or to a token different from the uttered one with an utterance of (6). For the only reason we are given of why, say, (9) and (10) (typically) have different subjects is that on some occasions a mere expression will be syntactically contained in the quotation that is the grammatical subject, while on other occasions it will be a meaningful expression that will be syntactically contained in the quotation. Even if the idea of containment were correct in a sense in which both mere expressions and meaningful expressions can be contained in quotations, I don't see how the idea can be made sense of for sounds or for tokens different from the token contained in the uttered quotation. There is, for example, no literal sense in which a sound is syntactically contained in the grammatical subject of (5), or the big token of "Batman" is syntactically contained in the grammatical subject of (6). And if Cappelen & Lepore want to hold that a sound, or a token different from the uttered one, etc. are *contained* in the quotations that are

the grammatical subjects of (5), (6), etc., they will need a theory of how “contains” can get (as it comes out of their mouths) as many different meanings (or contextually variable extensions) as one would need in order to explain the possibility of referring to all the different kinds of things one seems to be able to refer to with utterances of (5), (6), etc. And then they will be essentially back where they began. They will just have reduced the explanation of the mystery of variable quotational reference to another analogous (but even more mysterious) mystery.

(It may also sound obscure at first sight to say that a quotation (even a quotation type) contains a meaningful expression (an object endowed with meaning), while it certainly doesn't sound odd at first sight to say that it contains a mere expression (type). How could a *meaning* be contained in an expression? However, I think that there is a perfectly literal sense of “containment” on which it stands for a relation which obtains between meaningful expressions and quotations, induced by the relation of containment which obtains between the corresponding expressions and their quotations. Nothing similar can be said of the relation between a sound and the quotation of an expression typically pronounced by means of that sound, or of the relation between a token and a quotation of a different token of the same expression.)

Note that, with a view to solving the variability problem posed by typical utterances of (4)-(6), Cappelen & Lepore cagily abstained from imposing any semantic constraint on the nature of the “quotable items”. But the idea that there is no such constraint provided by the semantics of the quotation marks is too eccentric. It seems clear that the meaning of the quotation marks does not contemplate the quotation of things that we do not take to be graphical items, such as tables, or elephants (or sounds), even if we can conceivably manage to put them between quotation marks. It seems natural to postulate that something about the semantics of the marks constrains the nature of the quotable items, and the refusal to introduce some such restriction (so as to get an explanation of the variability phenomena) makes the Cappelen & Lepore account markedly suspicious.

### **3.3. A syntactically stable, semantically uniform, pragmatically variable account.**

Let me then state what the basic ideas of my own proposal are. This will be followed by an explanation of how these ideas imply diagnoses and solutions to the problems we just saw for the García-Carpintero and Cappelen & Lepore proposals.

Against Cappelen & Lepore, I subscribe to the standard (and natural, I think) view that what appear to be different tokens of the same quotation expression type, used in different sentences, are indeed syntactically identical tokens—in a word, that there is syntactic stability across different uses of a quotation. I also adopt the standard thesis of semantic uniformity: (an utterance of) a quotation always semantically refers to a unique thing. But what thing is this?

I take a quotation to refer to the linguistically relevant graphical expression type to which the quoted expression token belongs, and consequently I think that when (GCQ) is implicitly grasped by a competent user of written language, the expressions that that user thinks about will be in typical cases linguistically relevant graphical expression types. The “linguistically relevant graphical expression type” of a written token is the type it has in common with all the tokens that have a shape sufficiently similar to be used for the same typical linguistic purpose (generally, the purpose of expressing some current or potential reference or meaning, by taking advantage of a particular linguistic convention which could be made explicit with the help of that token). Thus, the Times New Roman type of the tokens of “Velázquez” in this paper, their Verdana type, their type in Davidson’s handwriting, etc. are all less inclusive types than their linguistically relevant graphical expression type, which is the type they have in common with all the tokens of a shape that counts as sufficiently similar for the purpose of naming Velázquez taking advantage of the convention that originally gave the great painter his last name. (See Bennett 1988, 403, for a notion close to that of a linguistically relevant graphical expression type, though Bennett follows Davidson in thinking that it’s the quotes that do the referring.)

Note that there is a corresponding linguistically relevant graphical expression type even in cases where there is no typical linguistic purpose currently served by the quoted expression token, e.g. cases where a new expression is introduced, cases where a currently meaningless proper part of a currently meaningful expression is quoted, cases when plain nonsense is quoted, etc. In these cases I think that the reference will typically be to the type

of tokens with a shape sufficiently similar to that of the quoted token for them to be usable for the purpose of expressing one same potential reference or meaning (by taking advantage of a particular linguistic convention which could have been formulated with the help of the quoted token). For example, if someone utters the sentence token

Let's use “ $\mathcal{O}$ ” to refer to the back side of the earlobe,

there may be some vagueness involved as to what type ‘ “ $\mathcal{O}$ ” ’ refers to, but presumably we will take it to refer to the type under which fall the tokens that could be used by normal humans in normal communicative exchanges in such a way that they could successfully talk about the back side of the earlobe by taking advantage of the convention just introduced. (This is of course quite vague and anthropocentric, in that these purposes will be dictated by the typical perceptual, communicative and other abilities of humans, but I don't think any important objection to the current proposal will essentially depend on the fact that it appeals to vagueness and anthropocentricity.)

I think that linguistically relevant graphical expression types are in most cases the objects that language users intend to refer to with quotations, as perhaps already made plausible by examples such as (1)-(3), which would appear to be more standard than examples such as (4)-(6). I also think that, in the absence of prominent contextual indications, the user of a quotation will be taken to refer to the linguistically relevant graphical expression type of the quoted token. In order to test this idea, we should try to find some quotational sentences lacking “internal” indicators (provided by the standard meanings of their constituent expressions) about what specific sort of thing is meant by the quotation; and we should consider what would be their default interpretation when uttered out of the blue, with barely any contextual clues. For example, we cannot rely on a consideration of something like

Jones wrote “linguistically”,

for “wrote” suggests that what is being referred to is something of a graphical nature. Nor can we appeal to something like

“Linguistically” is an adverb,

for “is an adverb” suggests that what is being referred to is an object endowed with meaning. Nor can we appeal to something like

“Cuckoo” is onomatopoeic,

for “is onomatopoeic” suggests that what is being referred to is a sound (or an object that in some sense comprises a sound). Rather, we need something like

Jones likes “linguistically”

or

Jones likes “𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈”,

for presumably “likes” does not suggest that what is liked is either a graphical item or a meaningful entity or a sound, to the exclusion of the other possibilities. And I think that we would by default take out of the blue utterances of those last two sentences to mean that Jones likes the linguistically relevant graphical expression types of the quoted tokens, and not some token or sound. I take all this to provide evidence that the objects conventionally referred to in quotation are linguistically relevant graphical expression types.

As far as I can tell, if a quotation does have a unique semantic reference, then the only serious alternative to the idea that this reference is the linguistically relevant graphical expression type of the quoted expression is the idea that the reference is (in those cases in which it exists) the *word* or expression-cum-meaning of which the linguistically relevant graphical expression type of the quoted expression presumably constitutes a part. However, a consideration that goes against this alternative idea is that expressions that don’t codify, or are not known to codify words seem to be perfectly quotable (as in some of the examples just given). This suggests that the cases in which reference to words or meaningful expressions is successfully accomplished by use of quotations are secondary with respect to the uses in which quotations are used to refer to linguistically relevant graphical expression types.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The proposal advanced here would not be substantively altered if some convincing additional consideration suggested that quotation marks are *mildly* ambiguous (or polysemous), having a primary meaning on which the quotations formed with them refer to linguistically relevant graphical expression types, and a secondary

If different uses of what appears to be a single quotation expression type are indeed syntactically stable and semantically uniform, how are we to explain the apparent possibility of successfully referring to different kinds of things by means of utterances of the same quotation expression type? In my view (already hinted at, but just hinted at, in Gómez-Torrente 2001), this is to be explained by means of the pragmatic mechanism of *speaker reference*.

Speaker reference is to be contrasted with *semantic reference*. The semantic reference of a referring phrase (possibly taken with respect to a given occasion of use) is the object (if any) that is determined to be the referent (with respect to the given occasion of use) by general conventions of the language to which the phrase belongs (plus contextual determinants specific to the occasion of use). The semantic reference of a referring phrase is determined basically independently from the specific intentions of the user of the phrase (save for intentions which may be needed to determine the contextual content of items such as indexicals appearing in the phrase, and the like).

On the other hand, a speaker's reference for a referring phrase, on a given occasion of use of that phrase by that speaker, is an object the speaker wants to talk about by means of the phrase in that occasion of use, and that the speaker believes can be successfully talked about by means of that referring phrase in that occasion of use. (This notion is closely related to the notion of speaker reference introduced in Kripke 1977. It differs from this notion, however, in that Kripke stipulates that the speaker must believe, of an object that is a speaker's referent, that it fulfills the conditions for being the semantic reference of the

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meaning on which the quotations formed with them refer to the quoted word (when it exists). But of course, the proposal is in part designed so as to avoid postulating an implausible strong ambiguity of referential quotation marks, on which a referential quotation would have *many* different referents as a matter of semantic fact. On the other hand, I think that quotation marks quite generally, as opposed to purely referential quotation marks, *are* evidently ambiguous. Non-purely referential quotation marks are governed by semantic rules substantively different from those governing purely referential quotation marks; and among non-purely referential quotation marks, the marks as used in, say, so-called "mixed quotation" are clearly governed by semantic rules substantively different from those governing "scare" quotation marks. Some authors in the recent literature on quotation, however, have sought Procrustean semantically unified accounts of all types of uses of quotation marks. On this set of issues, and for an account of what all types of quotation *do* have in common, see Gómez-Torrente (2005).

referring phrase; cf. Kripke 1977, 264. Kripke himself, however, considers debilitating the notion so as to include cases in which the speaker does not believe of her speaker's reference that it is the semantic reference; cf. *ibid.*, p. 273, n. 22.)

Here are some illustrations of the distinction in cases in which semantic reference and relevant speaker reference differ. The examples are familiar from the literature. "Two people see Smith in the distance and mistake him for Jones. They have a brief colloquy: 'What is Jones doing?' 'Raking the leaves.'" (Kripke 1977, 263) The semantic reference of "Jones" is uncontroversially Jones, if any is. However, the two participants in the colloquy have (unbeknown to them) Smith as a speaker reference for "Jones". Next, the same two people visit the madhouse, where they see Peters dressed as Napoleon and shouting "I'm Napoleon!" (compare Kripke 1977, p. 273, n. 22). They have a new colloquy: "Napoleon is a loud shouter." "Yes, he is." Again the semantic reference of "Napoleon" is uncontroversially Napoleon, if any is. But the two colloquy participants have (now known to them) Peters as their speaker reference for "Napoleon". Finally, imagine that Peters flees the madhouse, and orders a ham sandwich at the first restaurant he comes across. A waiter takes the order but must go off duty soon. When the waiter is about to leave, the sandwich is still not out of the kitchen, so he passes the order on to a new waiter, saying "The ham sandwich is sitting at table 5." "OK", says the new waiter. Here the semantic reference of "The ham sandwich", if any, is uncontroversially the ham sandwich already prepared on the kitchen table. But the two participants in the conversation have once more (and well known to them) Peters as a speaker reference for "The ham sandwich" (compare Nunberg 1979, 149).

Note that we have here cases in which speakers manage successfully to talk about, and communicate thoughts concerning, objects that, on any reasonably natural view, are not the semantic referents of the referring phrases they use for those purposes. In the first case the speakers manage to talk about Smith, in the second case they manage to talk about the madman Peters, and in the third case they manage to talk about the madman turned restaurant customer Peters. In all these cases the success of communication seems to be straightforwardly explainable by the satisfaction of a couple of regulatory, pragmatically sufficient conditions for successful speaker reference. First, there is some connection prominently present in the speakers' thoughts between the semantic reference and the



relevant speaker reference: Smith just looks like Jones (and is thought to *be* Jones); Peters the madman is known to believe of himself that he is Napoleon; Peters the restaurant customer is known to have ordered the ham sandwich. Second, it's clear to the participants in the conversations that the connection in question is meant to be exploited by the speaker in order to communicate something about the relevant object. These two conditions seem to be pretty much all that is needed to explain the fact that the relevant speakers are able to refer successfully to the things they intuitively manage to refer to. Note also that in none of these cases is it necessary, or even natural, to postulate that a demonstration is effected or that the reference is obtained by a mechanism of deferred ostension involving the use of a demonstrative abbreviated by the used phrases, in the way García-Carpintero postulated for the quotational case.

I think it's fairly clear that, provided the semantic reference of a quotation is indeed its linguistically relevant graphical expression type, one can see typical utterances of (4)-(6) as cases where the relevant speaker reference differs from semantic reference but the communication of thoughts about the relevant speaker reference can be successfully accomplished by virtue of the satisfaction of the two mentioned pragmatic conditions. Consider first a typical utterance of (4) ('"Velázquez" is a Times New Roman type') in a written exchange, e.g. an office memo exchange or e-mail exchange. The fact that Times New Roman "Velázquez" and "Velázquez" are connected, and specifically that the uttered token of "Velázquez" is a token of Times New Roman "Velázquez", will certainly be prominently present in the conversational participants' thoughts. And it will be clear to them that the connection in question is meant to be exploited by the speaker in order to communicate something about Times New Roman "Velázquez", to a great extent precisely because what the speaker wants to communicate is in part that what he is talking about is a Times New Roman type. Or consider the case of a typical utterance of (5) ("Hiss" is a hissing sound') in a similar written exchange. The fact that the expression "hiss" is normally pronounced by means of a certain sound will certainly be prominent for the speakers. And it will be clear to them that the connection in question is meant to be exploited by the utterer in order to communicate something about that sound, to a great extent precisely because what the speaker wants to communicate is in part that what he is talking about is a sound. Or, finally, consider the case of the imagined utterance of (6)

(‘Please paint “Batman” in black’). The fact that the expression “Batman” has a nearby huge token will be salient in the conversational participants’ thoughts. And it will be clear to them that this connection is being exploited by the speaker in order to communicate something about that token, to some extent because what the speaker wants to communicate is in part that he wants something to be painted, something which necessarily will have to be a physical thing that he is reasonably interested in having painted, such as the token in question, etc.

Typical utterances of (10) provide other examples of how the mechanism of speaker reference can be invoked to explain variability phenomena. In a typical utterance of (10) (‘ “Madrid” ≠ “Madrid” ’) the fact that Times New Roman “Madrid” and the general expression “Madrid” are connected, and specifically the fact that the first uttered token of “Madrid” is also a token of Times New Roman “Madrid”, will be prominent in the conversational participants’ thoughts. It will similarly be obvious and salient to the speakers that Verdana “Madrid” and the general expression “Madrid” are connected, specifically because the second tokened token of “Madrid” is also a token of Verdana “Madrid”. And it will be clear to the participants that the connections in question are meant to be exploited by the speaker in order to communicate something about Times New Roman “Madrid” and Verdana “Madrid”, specifically that Times New Roman “Madrid” is not the same as Verdana “Madrid”, to a great extent precisely because what the speaker wants to communicate is in part that a certain couple of things are different. (9), on the other hand, semantically expresses the trivially true proposition that the linguistically relevant graphical expression type “Madrid” is self-identical, but it can be used, e.g. in the test context described by Cappelen & Lepore, in order to convey the false proposition that Times New Roman “Madrid” is the same as Verdana “Madrid”. That this falsehood can easily be conveyed in that context is again plausibly explained simply because in that utterance of (9) the facts that the first tokened token of “Madrid” is a token of Times New Roman “Madrid”, and that the second tokened token of “Madrid” is also a token of Verdana “Madrid”, will be prominent in the examinees’ thoughts. And it will be clear to them (or at least to those among them who are neither too dumb nor too clever) that these facts are being exploited by the speaker-tester in order to enunciate something (false) about

Times New Roman “Madrid” and Verdana “Madrid”, specifically that Times New Roman “Madrid” is the same as Verdana “Madrid”.

A great deal of the motivating force behind the present account comes from the apparently clear fact that it successfully passes the well-known test devised by Kripke for the decisiveness of alleged counterexamples against a linguistic proposal. Here the (arguably standard) linguistic proposal is the proposal that a quotation is syntactically stable and semantically uniform, and the alleged counterexamples are provided by (appropriate utterances of) (4)-(6), (9) and (10). Kripke’s test, let’s recall, is this:

If someone alleges that a certain linguistic phenomenon in English is a counterexample to a given analysis, consider a hypothetical language which (as much as possible) is like English except that the analysis is *stipulated* to be correct. Imagine such a hypothetical language introduced into a community and spoken by it. *If the phenomenon in question would still arise in a community that spoke such a hypothetical language (which may not be English), then the fact that it arises in English cannot disprove the hypothesis that the analysis is correct for English.* (1977, 265)

That the traditional account defended here passes this test with respect to the alleged counterexamples that concern us is clear because it is clear (I think) that, even if we decided to speak a new language which was exactly like English except for containing the explicit stipulation that its quotations are syntactically uniform and always semantically refer to linguistically relevant graphical expression types, the possibility of intuitively referring to different things with quotations would still arise. For example, we could still use (5) in a similar utterance and successfully convey the proposition that the sound “hiss” is a hissing sound. Further, the mechanism of speaker reference would roughly but satisfactorily explain how this success could be achieved even in the presence of an explicit stipulation that ‘ “hiss” ’ always semantically refers to a linguistically relevant graphical expression type.

Within the present account we can offer a plausible diagnosis of what’s going on in the examples that caused problems for García-Carpintero’s account, and also provide a reasonable way out of the dilemma facing the Cappelen & Lepore account.

Recall the difficulties involved in conveying by means of the token

“Velázquez” was a great painter

the true proposition that Velázquez was a great painter, and how they seemed to show that García-Carpintero's account implied for the quotation "Velázquez" a role it could not perform. Observe that while it will usually be clear and prominent to someone who reads such a token that there is a connection between the relevant token of "Velázquez" (and of ' "Velázquez" ') and Velázquez, there will be serious obstacles to the conversational transparency of the speaker's intention to exploit that connection in order to say something about Velázquez: we would not typically think of Velázquez if we saw the quotation ' "Velázquez" ', since, for one thing, we would tacitly assume that if the speaker had had the intention of referring to Velázquez, he would have just written "Velázquez", saving himself time and work. There is here a failure of the condition that it should be obvious to the conversational participants that the speaker means to exploit the prominent connection between semantic reference and relevant speaker reference in order to communicate something about the relevant speaker reference. On the present account, this is enough to explain where García-Carpintero's account goes excessive.

Consider also the case of the token of (8) ("Velázquez" is a very dark boldface') and the difficulties involved in conveying by means of it the true proposition that the boldface version of (Times New Roman) "Velázquez" is a very dark boldface. It will usually be clear to someone who reads such a token that there is a connection between (the relevant token of) "Velázquez" (and (of) ' "Velázquez" ') and the boldface version of "Velázquez". But first, this connection will presumably not be prominent, given that the relevant token is not boldface. (Note that if someone points to a preexisting token of normal type "Velázquez" by means of a demonstration coupled with an utterance of "This boldface type is a very dark boldface", the connection between the abstract type and the boldface type will of course be prominent, regardless of the exact mechanism by which "This boldface type" acquires a (semantic or speaker) reference.) And second, presumably largely because of the lack of prominence, there will be serious obstacles to the conversational transparency of the speaker's intention to exploit that connection in order to communicate something about the boldface version of "Velázquez": we would not typically think of the boldface "Velázquez" if we just saw the quotation ' "Velázquez" ' in normal type. (Also, we would tacitly assume that if the speaker had had the intention of referring to boldface "Velázquez", he would have just produced an appropriate utterance with a boldface token

such as “**Velázquez**”, making his intention clearer. Note that someone who points to a preexisting token of normal type “Velázquez” by means of “This boldface type” need not be assumed to have been the author of the inscription, and this will also help remove the obstacles to considering him as referring to boldface “Velázquez”.)

The main problem for the Cappelen & Lepore account was that it is either too eccentric or it is insufficient. By appealing to their idea of syntactic instability, one can explain the apparent possibility of reference to sounds, tokens other than the uttered one, etc., only through the assumption that sounds, tokens other than the uttered one, etc., are “contained” in some quotations. But this is either literally false or based on an eccentric sense of “contained” requiring further explanation. By contrast, the present proposal at no point is eccentric, in the sense that it doesn’t invoke the quotability of things other than expressions: the proposal is compatible with the possibility that just expressions are quotable, which is in fact the only possibility licensed by the postulated principle (GCQ) from section 2. However, this doesn’t make the proposal insufficient to explain the variability phenomena, as I hope to have shown in my discussion of how it explains the success for communicative purposes of the mechanism of speaker reference in the case of the relevant utterances of (4)-(6), (9) and (10). One must note, in particular, that the mechanism of successful speaker reference is a general mechanism based on pragmatic principles which plausibly apply frequently outside the restricted quarter of quotation (as shown by the examples of Smith-Jones, Peters-Napoleon, and Peters-the ham sandwich), and thus that the sufficiency of these principles for explaining cases where semantic reference and relevant speaker reference come apart presumably should come as no surprise when the principles are applied (under the assumption of semantic uniformity) to the case of quotation.

As far as I know, the one objection that has been explicitly made to pragmatic accounts of phenomena of variable quotational reference is the objection, made by Cappelen & Lepore, that there is no principled reason for choosing which thing a quotation refers to (from among all the things speakers seem to be able to refer to by means of quotations, but especially, I suppose, from among all the graphical types of which the quoted token is a token). However, their argument for this objection involves a puzzling gap. The argument is just the following:

Suppose we try to argue, for example, that one of [(9)] or [(10)] is false. If so, which one? And what could be the reason for choosing it and not its counterpart as the false one? Suppose we choose [(9)] as the false one on the basis of its quotable items being physically type-distinct. That could render every identity between quotational expressions false. Or, suppose we try to argue that, contrary to intuition, a spoken indirect disquotational report of [(10)] is as a matter of fact true. The extreme implausibility of this view makes such a position exceedingly unattractive. Similarly, suppose we try to argue that [(9)] is false. If this were so, should we conclude that [(11)] (with two quotation expressions in the same font but with one in normal print and the other in bold print) and infinitely many like identities are also false?

[(11)] “Madrid” = “**Madrid**”

And what about [(12)] (with two quotation expressions written in the same font but in different font sizes) and infinitely many like identities of different font sizes? Are they also all false?

[(12)] “Madrid” = “**Madrid**”.

Our inability to make a reasonable non-arbitrary choice here indicates how the pragmatic strategies fail in explaining this part of the variability data. (Cappelen and Lepore 2007, 79)

Well, of course I agree that it seems somewhat absurd to think that any difference between tokens of an expression is going to make all identities of the sort mentioned by Cappelen & Lepore false—though I myself don’t think that this consideration is fully decisive. However, even if the fact that this is absurd at first sight is conceded and taken to be decisive for the intended purpose, I fail to see how we are supposed to become convinced that it’s also arbitrary or equally intuitively absurd or unprincipled to think that it’s (10) that should be false (and that (9), (11) and (12) should all be true). As far as I can tell, Cappelen & Lepore say nothing to justify the idea that nothing principled favors this option, which is obviously left open by what they say explicitly. Perhaps they would just add that it seems somewhat absurd to think that no difference between tokens of an expression is going to make any identities of the sort mentioned by them false; but I myself don’t see much of an absurdity in this.

In fact, there is at least one powerful positive argument that the option of taking (9) as true and (10) as false is the more principled one. The argument is this. It is fairly widely agreed that, *ceteris paribus*, an account of a linguistic phenomenon that postulates multiple syntactic or semantic senses for an expression is less satisfactory than an account of the same phenomenon that does not postulate a multiplicity of this sort and explains the

phenomenon on the basis of a single syntactic or semantic sense for the expression plus general linguistic principles that are known or widely believed to apply elsewhere. As I have attempted to argue, I think that an extremely good case can be made that phenomena of apparent variable quotational reference can be explained without remainder under the assumption of a single reference for a quotation, by appealing to general principles that are (I also think) widely believed to apply in other instances of use of referring expressions. Assuming this is conceded, it follows that an account that postulates a single reference and syntax for a given quotation is to be preferred to an account that accepts multiple syntactic or semantic senses,<sup>10</sup> and hence that the option of taking (9) to express semantically a true proposition is more principled than the option of taking (10) to express semantically a true proposition.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, we also saw how one can independently motivate the particular proposal made above as to what this single reference probably is.

<sup>11</sup> I think that considerable general but indirect support for the present proposal is also provided by the fact that, being arguably the standard idea about quotational reference, it passes Kripke's demanding test for the decisiveness of alleged counterexamples to a linguistic theory (see above).

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