

This article was downloaded by: [New York University]

On: 08 November 2012, At: 09:06

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954  
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH,  
UK



## Australasian Journal of Philosophy

Publication details, including instructions for authors  
and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rajp20>

Review of Fine, Kit, *Semantic  
Relationism*, Malden, MA:  
Blackwell Publishing, 2007, pp.  
vii + 160, US\$74.95 (hardback)

Gary Ostertag <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Nassau Community College/University of  
Massachusetts-Amherst,

Version of record first published: 06 Jun 2009.

To cite this article: Gary Ostertag (2009): Review of Fine, Kit, *Semantic Relationism*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, pp. vii + 160, US\$74.95 (hardback), *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 87:2, 345-349

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00048400902938352>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages

whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Fine, Kit, *Semantic Relationism*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, pp. vii + 160, US\$74.95 (hardback).

*Semantic Relationism* presents a unified treatment of three related puzzles: Russell's antinomy of the variable, Frege's Puzzle and Kripke's Puzzle. On Fine's view, these puzzles are each generated by a false picture—Intrinsicalism. According to Intrinsicalism, whether two utterances 'say the same thing' is fully determined by features intrinsic to the individual utterances. Fine's relationist alternative holds that 'the fact that two utterances say the same thing is not entirely a matter of their intrinsic semantic features; it may also turn on semantic relationships among the utterances or their parts which are not reducible to those features' [3]. Once these relationships are identified and incorporated into semantic theorizing, a treatment of the puzzles becomes available—one, moreover, that is fully consistent with what Fine calls 'referentialism'. I'll begin with Fine's discussion of Frege's Puzzle and then turn to his discussion of Kripke's Puzzle, neglecting, for reasons of space, the antinomy of the variable.

On a referentialist analysis, understanding (1a) requires merely that one 'assign' it the Russellian proposition that the individual, Cicero, bears the appropriate relation to the individual, Tully. But this is puzzling, since the referentialist seems forced to say precisely the same thing about (1b):<sup>1</sup>

- 1a. Cicero nominated Tully.
- 1b. Cicero nominated Cicero.

Intuitively, understanding (1b) requires something additional—namely, grasping that the respective singular-term occurrences co-refer (and thus that someone nominated himself). It's unclear how the referentialist can explain this.

The problem is not with referentialism, but with the implicitly assumed Intrinsicalism, which fails to recognize 'relational' aspects of the content of the displayed sentences—in particular, *co-ordination*, a phenomenon exemplified in both. In (1b) the names are *positively* co-ordinated,

<sup>1</sup>A related puzzle involves a contrast between (1b) and (1c) 'Cicero nominated himself'. According to Nathan Salmon, (1c) should be analyzed as a monadic predication, involving Cicero and the property, *self-nominates* (in contrast to (1b), which is analyzed as a dyadic predication involving Cicero (twice over) and the *nominates* relation). While it's possible to extend this analysis to non-reflexive constructions, thereby assimilating (1b) to (1c), Fine rejects this move [69–70]. His arguments here, although persuasive, don't tell against Salmon's analysis of explicitly reflexive constructions, such as (1c).

representing their common referent ‘as the same’; co-reference is here ‘semantically determined’, or ‘strict’. In (1a) they are *negatively* co-ordinated. In Fine’s terminology, the fact that the names in (1a) co-refer is ‘semantic *in the broad sense*’, whereas the fact that the separate occurrences of ‘Cicero’ in (1b) co-refer is ‘semantic *in [the] narrow sense*’ [46]. While a competent speaker may be ignorant of semantic facts in the broad sense, she cannot be ignorant of semantic facts in the narrow sense—what Fine calls ‘semantic requirements’. These are facts a speaker knows in virtue of her semantic competence. It is Fine’s contention that semantics should be in the business of characterizing speakers’ competence. A central concern of his book is to show how the resulting conception of semantics can be made compatible with referentialism.

One immediate worry is that strict co-reference is simply a consequence of co-reference, threatening Fine’s distinction between semantic facts broadly construed and semantic requirements. Suppose I know that ‘Cicero’ refers to Cicero and that ‘Tully’ refers to Tully. Since Cicero = Tully, it follows (given referentialism) that I know that ‘Cicero’ refers to Tully. From which it follows that I know that someone is the common referent of ‘Cicero’ and ‘Tully’. But then we are no longer able to distinguish (1b) from (1a) (although, this time because both involve strict co-reference).

The above argument relies on a principle of Closure, according to which ‘Logical consequences of semantic facts are semantic facts’ [45]. Fine opts to reject Closure, replacing it with a weaker principle, according to which semantic facts are closed under ‘manifest consequence’—a relation modelled on the inferences that an ideal but non-omniscient speaker would be able to draw. While  $\exists x(x \text{ is famous} \ \& \ x \text{ is an orator})$  is a logical consequence of the propositions that Cicero is famous and that Tully is an orator, it is not a *manifest* consequence, since a speaker may not recognize that the two properties are predicated of the same person. Similarly, the fact that ‘Cicero’ and ‘Tully’ have a common referent is not a manifest consequence of the referential facts pertaining to the individual names.

Co-ordination also occurs across speakers. Attending to inter-speaker co-ordination casts new light on Kripke’s Puzzle. Kripke presents a scenario at which Peter, mistakenly believing that Paderewski the Polish statesman is not the same person as Paderewski the pianist, assents to both ‘Paderewski is musical’ and ‘Paderewski is not musical’. Relative to the scenario, we seem to have equally compelling evidence for each of the following:

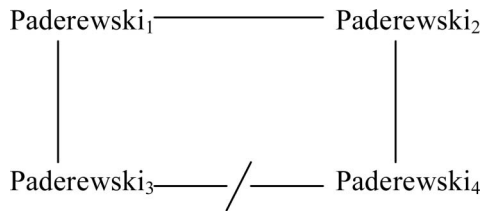
2. Peter believes that Paderewski is musical.
3. Peter believes that Paderewski is not musical.

Yet, if both are true, then Peter—who is by assumption fully rational—has contradictory beliefs.

Fine notes that each sentence, considered in isolation, is true. It is only the composite report—the conjunction of (2) and (3)—that gives us pause. The composite report represents the respective referents of ‘Paderewski’ as the same, indicating not merely that Peter believes the unco-ordinated content of the individual reports, but the co-ordinated content as well. The

report is thus not a faithful accounting of the facts. As Fine notes, when asked whether (2) is true, we respond affirmatively; then, when asked whether (3) is true, we hesitate. ‘Whether we say “yes” or not depends upon whether we think of the two answers together as constituting two separate reports or as constituting a single composite report’ [101]. The moral: There really only is a puzzle if the conjunction of (2) and (3) is true. But, if Fine is correct, the conjunction is false, even assuming the individual conjuncts to be true.

As Fine is quick to note, the ‘solution’ raises a deeper puzzle—how could Peter’s beliefs fail to be positively co-ordinated? Suppose that Peter’s fractured use of ‘Paderewski’ derives from my unfractured use: I utter both ‘Paderewski<sub>1</sub> is musical’ and ‘Paderewski<sub>2</sub> is a statesman’ (using subscripts to distinguish ‘Paderewski’ tokenings). The respective tokenings of ‘Paderewski’ represent their referents as the same—they are ‘internally linked’. Peter overhears me and believes what I say. He thus utters ‘Paderewski<sub>3</sub> is musical’ and ‘Paderewski<sub>4</sub> is a statesman’, creating an ‘external link’ between his ‘Paderewski<sub>3</sub>’ and my ‘Paderewski<sub>1</sub>’ and his ‘Paderewski<sub>4</sub>’ and my ‘Paderewski<sub>2</sub>’, respectively. (We needn’t suppose that he derives ‘Paderewski<sub>4</sub> is unmusical.’) However, he fails to recognize that ‘Paderewski<sub>1</sub>’ and ‘Paderewski<sub>2</sub>’ are internally linked and, consequently, fails to link his ‘Paderewski<sub>3</sub>’ with his ‘Paderewski<sub>4</sub>’. The situation can be represented as follows:



Yet, it’s unclear how the situation can be possible, given the following intuitive principles:

Tokens of  $N_1$  and  $N_2$  (uttered by  $S$ ) are co-ordinated just in case they are internally linked;

Tokens of  $M_1$  and  $M_2$  (uttered by  $S$  and  $R$ , respectively) are co-ordinated if they are externally linked.

If we assume that co-ordination is transitive, Peter’s separate uses must be internally linked and thus co-ordinated; but they are not.

The solution is to give up the transitivity assumption. This may appear *ad hoc*, but it is thoroughly in keeping with Fine’s general approach to semantic theorizing. In his discussion of Frege’s Puzzle, Fine noted that the requirements that ‘Cicero’ refers to Cicero and that ‘Tully’ refers to Tully do not jointly entail the requirement that ‘Cicero’ and ‘Tully’ co-refer. This moral about occurrences of names in discourse can be extended to *uses* of names (for example, Peter’s use of ‘Paderewski’

to refer to Paderewski-the-statesman, as opposed to Paderewski-the-pianist):

[M]ight it not be semantically required that the individual use  $N_1$  be coreferential with  $N_2$  and semantically required that  $N_2$  be coreferential with  $N_3$  and yet not semantically required that  $N_1$  be coreferential with  $N_3$ , on the grounds that it may not be manifest that the individual use  $N_2$  in the two requirements is the same?

[108]

This can't be the full story: in certain cases transitivity is clearly required, as a slight variation on the above scenario reveals. If we assume that 'Paderewski<sub>3</sub>' and 'Paderewski<sub>4</sub>' are used by *different* speakers—Peter and Charles, say—then the uses must be externally linked. Fine's solution requires viewing Peter and Charles as, in effect, a single speaker, allowing us to raise the question: when do we internally link, and thus co-ordinate, externally linked uses? If *never*, then we fail to reflect the co-ordination in the Peter/Charles case. If *always*, then we get things wrong if Peter has two fractured uses of 'Paderewski' that, as it happens, are both externally linked to Charles's unfractured use—we will be forced to co-ordinate Peter's uses. Fine adopts what he calls the 'inter-subjective approach', which agrees with the latter 'objective perspective to the extent that it is compatible with the subjective perspective of each individual' [112]. On this view, we treat two externally linked uses as internally linked just in case the subjective perspective of each individual permits this. This resolves otherwise puzzling questions. Suppose Peter derives his first use of 'Paderewski'—'Paderewski<sub>1</sub>'—from my unfractured use. Then we are obliged to treat his and Charles's (similarly derived) use ('Paderewski<sub>2</sub>') as internally linked—nothing in the objective perspective tells against it. What then do we say when Peter derives a second use—'Paderewski<sub>3</sub>'—from me? On the view in question, we insert a new link between 'Paderewski<sub>2</sub>' and 'Paderewski<sub>3</sub>' but keep (in conformity with Peter's subjective perspective) 'Paderewski<sub>1</sub>' and 'Paderewski<sub>3</sub>' separate.

A more fundamental concern is that the proposal doesn't apply to the monadic form of Frege's Puzzle. Intuitively, 'Cicero is an orator' and 'Tully is an orator' say different things. However, appeal to co-ordination does nothing to distinguish these readings. Fine acknowledges that the referentialist must deny that there is an 'intrinsic semantic difference' between these sentences, but remarks that 'it is not so clear' that this gets things wrong. He suggests the possibility that there is merely a 'relative' difference between the two sentences—a difference in the semantic relations they bear to other sentences. (For example, it is semantically required that the former sentence, but not the latter, is strictly equivalent to 'Cicero is an orator'.) Perhaps. But there is also a powerful intuition that the above pair and <(1a), (1b)> contrast in the same way. If so, a common explanation is to be preferred.

Surprisingly, little is said about what it means for two things to be co-ordinated. Fine represents positive co-ordination by means of 'telegraph

wires' linking propositional constituents and negative co-ordination by means of severed wires. This, of course, is mere notation—any number of alternative conventions would suffice. The question is: how are we to understand the notation? Here, it seems, we must revert to the notions already introduced, of *semantic requirements* and *representing as the same*. Indeed, as Fine writes, what the semantic difference between (1a) and (1b) 'comes down to, in the end, is a difference in the content of semantic requirements' [59]. To say, then, that the occurrences of 'Cicero' in (1b) are positively co-ordinated is simply to say that it is a semantic requirement that these occurrences co-refer—that understanding (1b) involves grasping that someone nominated himself. This, however, contrasts markedly with the semantic requirement that 'Cicero' refers to Cicero. We would rightly object to an explication of this proposition in terms of facts about speaker understanding; *prima facie*, this gets things the wrong way round. But then it is unclear why we should be any happier with an analysis of strict co-reference in these same terms.

*Semantic Relationism* provides a novel and impressive defence of referentialism; it will be required reading for anyone seriously engaged with the issues it addresses. It is not for the dabbler, however. The discussion is conducted at a very abstract level. Moreover, allusions to moves in the literature are not always flagged; even when they are, the relevant views often receive cursory treatment. This is unfortunate. Articulating a theory is often not enough—it is also important to locate it within the space of other, similar proposals. To be fair, the book is based on Fine's John Locke Lectures and is by his own admission a 'bare bones account'—presumably intended as the first instalment of a larger project. While that makes the austerity of the present treatment understandable, it does not take away from the desirability of a more thorough exploration of this important new approach.<sup>2</sup>

Gary Ostertag

*Nassau Community College/University of Massachusetts–Amherst*

Evnine, Simon J., *Epistemic Dimensions of Personhood*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. viii + 176, £32.50 (cloth).

*Epistemic Dimensions of Personhood* is very original and very well-written. Although deeply embedded in the vast literature on personhood and epistemic rationality, it reaches novel and interesting conclusions.

In chapter one, Simon Evnine argues that there are certain necessary conditions for personhood: (1) persons are finite; (2) they are the subjects of belief; (3) they are agents; and (4) they can have beliefs about beliefs. Although the choice of conditions may appear arbitrary, each condition is justified, and objections to the list are considered in some detail. In chapter two, Evnine proceeds to argue that, in virtue of satisfying conditions (1) to

<sup>2</sup>Thanks to Ray Buchanan for comments on an earlier draft.