

Predict the Behavior. Propositional Attitudes and Philosophy of Action*

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Dialettica e filosofia - ISSN 1974-417X [online]

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Keywords: Propositional Attitudes; Philosophy of Action; Cognitive Sciences; Frege and Russell.

Abstract The *folk Psychology* frames propositional attitudes as fundamental theoretical entities for the construction of a model designed to predict the behavior of a subject. A trivial, such as grasping a pen and writing reveals - something complex - about the behavior. When I take a pen and start writing I do, trivially, because I believe that a certain object in front of me is a pen and who performs a specific function that is, in fact, that of writing. When I believe that the object that stands before me is a pen, I am in relation to "believe" with the propositional content: that in front of me is a pen. Philosophers of the proposition, from Frege onwards, have dedicated their studies to the analysis of what kinds of entities are the propositional attitudes. Jerry Fodor¹ says that now, the proper prediction of the psychology of common sense, can not be questioned and that the propositional attitudes represent the most effective way to describe our behavior. What Fodor says, however, is that propositional attitudes function, but not how they work. Most philosophers interested in the issue, we are dedicated to the search for a theory that can account consistently both a semantics for propositional attitudes, both of these entities that seem to cause the behavior of a rational subject. There are two main paradigms in

*An earlier version of this paper is published in Italian magazine *S&F: Science and Philosophy* (4).

¹Cfr. Fodor, 1987.

the theory of the proposition that contributed to the discussion of the propositional attitudes. One is the one that begins with Gottlob Frege, the other with Bertrand Russell. Defenders of Frege argue that the paradigm scrub objects and properties can not be constituents of the propositional content which have a purely conceptual. In other words, the philosophers belonging to the paradigm of Frege, but not all, mean that you can test in a rigorous way the truth conditions of propositional attitudes. Who defends the russellian's paradigm argues that the propositional content are made by the objects and properties on which propositional attitudes relate. The purpose of this article is not to rebuild - in detail - both paradigms, nor to reconstruct one but, in a sense, my work will be a completely partial objective is to demonstrate how the paradigm is more profitable russell not only to make a coherent semantic theory for propositional attitudes² but also to predict the behavior of a rational subject thing, completely innovative, given the repeated objections in contemporary literature³. At the end of this paper will be drafted a proposal to build a consistent model to predict the behavior, of a rational agent, based on a referential theory of propositional attitudes.

1. The Problem

Imagine a case where a person does not know that Mark Twain is the pseudonym of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, and consider the sentences:

- (6) Salvo believes that Twain is dead,
- (7) Salvo believes that Clemens is dead;

The common intuition is that (6) is true, but if Salvo do not know that unless Twain is Clemens, (7) is false. In fact, take into account what the speaker knows in relation to individuals on which they are oriented beliefs, it seems important to discriminate true beliefs or false, the speaker in question. The fregeanesim that modes of presentation took account of proper names, would not consider (6) and (7) is not equal because the reference to what we seek but the truth within the system of beliefs of the speaker. The russellianesim, often seen as counter-intuitive theory, see (6) and (7) in the same real situations (equal) because they have the same semantic content and citing Richard, «strictly and literally say».⁴ The reference of proper names "Twain" and "Clemens" is in fact identical. Kripke, in the same direction also moves Richard, proposes a strategy to go against the common insights of the speakers, seeing sentences like (6) and (7) different in their pragmatic implications⁵ and not in their truth value. This idea is a sort of extension to other cases such as⁶:

- (6') Tonto jumped on his horse and rode towards the horizon,

²Cfr. McKay e Nelson 2008.

³*ibidem*.

⁴Richard 1990, p. 119.

⁵See Stalnaker 1970 for a short introduction.

⁶Richard 1990, p. 120.

(7') Tonto rode into the horizon and jumped on his horse;

From a semantic point of view the sentences (6') and (7') we are literally saying the same thing, the difference would seem pragmatic and concerns, for example, the order of events on <jump on the horse, ride to the horizon>.

Contemporary theorists of russellianism have proposed different ways of dealing with the pragmatic ⁷ discrepancies of statements that I have taken into account. In a russellianesim prospective (6') and (7') are set out several expressing the same proposition.

The basic thesis is that we want to support: you can have a belief about a proposition in different ways.

For example, Leo could have as a set of beliefs that:

(8) Twain is dead,

but do not believe,

(9) Clemens is dead;

Flavio could, contrary to Leo, he believes in (9) but do not believe (8). In this case, both believe that Flavio Leo, the Russellian proposition:

<properties to be dead, Twain>

and the two median this belief in different ways but russellianesimo identifies the conditions of an assertion of truth [about the propositional attitudes] but not in how the thing. This does not mean to underestimate the way in which it expresses a belief, but simply focus its semantic analysis on the subject at issue in this belief⁸.

The fact remains that the beliefs of a subject are somewhat ignorant to the semantic content of his beliefs. Let us consider such a case,

Anyone who has read the Superman comics (or seen the movie which he stars) surely knows that Lois Lane believes that Superman can fly, but Clark Kent, his colleague, is certainly not able to fly.

We know that Superman is Clark Kent are the same person even if Lois Lane is unaware of this fact, on the basis of this short preamble let's consider the following statement:

(b) Lois Lane believes that Superman can fly;

In a Russellian view of the that-clause believes that Superman can fly expresses the proposition given by the ordered pair <Superman, volare> be able to just be the name "Superman" from the property and be able to fly, whereas, in the wake of Russell, proper names as abbreviations of definite descriptions, "Superman"

⁷See, in particular, Kaplan 1977 e Salmon 1986.

⁸Note that here lies one of the key points of comparison between Russellian and Fregean. While Fregean contemporaries, such as Forbes and McGinn prefer to focus the analysis of truth conditions on ways of thinking about something the Russellian, in contrast, focus the evaluation on the object semantics of belief without ignoring the pragmatic implications of the different ways of expressing the same proposition.

and "Clark Kent" will refer to the same individual. In a vision referentiality, names, demonstrative and indexical to refer to the same thing, give the same contribution to the proposition that, if (b) is true, the statement that follows,

(c) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent can fly,

will be true! This seems unacceptable because cognitive content of Lois is somehow violated.

If russellianesim want to give an account of the differences in pragmatic sentences like (6) Subject believes that Twain is dead and (7) Subject to believe that Clemens is dead, they must clearly identify the pragmatic principles that make these statements different from this point of view.

Paul Grice gave a famous pragmatic theory of conversational implicatures⁹ but, as pointed out McKay and Nelson¹⁰, is at least unlikely that the theory of Grice will help the russellianism in this regard. Information on how the believer believes in what he believes can not, apparently, be obtained through conversational as un'implicatura, this information shall not be deducted from the participants in a conversation. MckKay e Nelson¹¹ argue that, although a supporter of russellianesimo can not employ Grice's theory to account for our intuitions about the difference in sentences like (6) and (7), this does not mean, however, that they can not identify the additional pragmatic principles in support of russellianesimo. What the russellianesimo needs is a notion of pragmatic implicature that is not based, as in Grice, calculability and on the psychological role that does not require the parties to the conversation. I will begin now to submit a proposal to that effect.

2. Belief and rules of belief

Two concepts are often confused, as if they were a single concept, is the belief and the rule of belief. This, according to Nelson and MckKay happen, because people can not distinguish the two concepts¹² and so the use of propositional attitudes becomes erroneously dual role: to deliver a report with the contents of the beliefs and disseminate information on states of belief of the subject of the report. Not distinguish between the information conveyed by a propositional attitude from the way in which a person believes that information is a serious misunderstanding.

Reconsider, quickly, the case of Superman and the following equation used in a russelian paradigm.

Asymmetrical _relationship: If the names are really coextensional (and therefore interreplaceable) and, if (1) is true,

(1) Lois Lane believes that Superman is stronger than Clark Kent,

⁹Cfr. Grice 1975, 1978, 1981.

¹⁰Cfr. McKay and Nelson 2008.

¹¹*ibidem*.

¹²*ibidem*.

then also (2) and (3) will be true,

- (2) Lois Lane believes that Superman is stronger than Superman,
 (3) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is stronger than Superman.

The russellianism argues that common sense sees that (2) and (3) as intuitively different from (1) is based on a misunderstanding of pragmatic origin. (2) arises, however, a problem: Lois must also believe that Superman is stronger than himself, or we can isolate this belief from the previous claims?

Some critics have argued in response paradigm russell positively to this question, since the second term "Superman" would be replaced¹³, with "himself" to attribute this belief to Lois on the basis of certain pragmatic considerations would seem, however, unacceptable.

This latter issue is discussed by Salmon¹⁴ working within a russelian paradigm and believe that Superman is stronger than Superman is different from believing that Superman is stronger than himself, because - the proposition that Superman is stronger than Superman - is different from the proposition that Superman is stronger of himself as a sentence has a different structure than the other: the first is a report in two places <Superman, Superman>, the second is a report to one place. Salmon's argument is a response to any fregean efforts¹⁵ to undermine the russelianism foundations of bringing some of the implications of exasperation anti - intuitive theory.

In the wake of these problems for the russellianesimo further issues arise, for example, such arguments are relevant to the rational behavior of an individual. Given the statement:

- (4) Lois believes that Superman is strong,

The Russellianism will argue that if (4) is true then also,

- (5) Lois believes that Clark Kent is strong,

is true.

SBut it seems that (4) preaching behavior very different from (5). Accepting these two statements as true - in exactly the same circumstances - could make it be expected that when Lois, for example, is busy moving heavy boxes in his office, if you see Clark Kent standing while not knowing that Superman is expected to ask for help, etc..This, of course, is an incorrect prediction. Lois, probably would not do anything like that. Of course, within the paradigm set out as a russell (4) is true at exactly the same condition as (5) is true. You might think, is the focus of an objection perspicuous discussed, for example, Richard¹⁶, it is difficult to support a theory that sees the same set that has so many potential predictors.

¹³See, for example, "Problems for the Naive Russellian theory" in McKay and Nelson 2008.

¹⁴Cfr. Salmon 1992.

¹⁵Cfr. McKay 1991.

¹⁶Cfr. Richard 1997.

This objection is in part a corollary of the problem on the pragmatic implications. If we stipulate that the difference in sentences like (4) and (5) does not reside in the value of truth but on the practicalities of how, for example, Lois has to think about certain things we should also stipulate the principles such that (4) and (5) can predict the different situations. Richard is convinced, however, I believe reasonably expect from a semantic theory that a proper criterion to predict the behavior of a person is wrong and that, in this way, we are mixing different fields¹⁷ for the benefit of an objection that bases its premises on the discrepancies of behavior of a subject which, however, seems irrelevant for a theory of semantics. But if we find a prediction model of correct behavior on the basis of a theory of propositional attitudes?

3. My Proposal

Recently Richard descends on the basis of a paper by Soames¹⁸, this problem¹⁹ focusing on the concept of *realization*.

We, on the basis of what Richard says, reconsider the previous cases as,

4) Lois believes that Superman is strong,

and

(5) Lois believes that Clark Kent is strong,

adding a new statement,

(6) Lois dont realizes that Superman is Clark Kent.

This strategy, or add (6) a supposed model of principles designed to isolate predictors of behavior suggested by (4) and (5), a strategy is not final and is still discussed in literature, but I think it would be a good point starting to realize that I have discussed the objections to the russellianism paradigm.

If you really want to achieve a semantic theory of theoretical principles to predict the different situations that, intuitively, are implied by statements such as (4) and (5) groped to incorporate into our model as set out in (6) would seem to clarify certain situations such as the one I described earlier about the heavy boxes in the office of Lois.

I think it is normal not to expect from Lois, if he has not realized the identity of Superman with Clark, who applies to college to help move boxes.

But imagine that Lois realizes that Superman is Clark Kent, then the facts would change radically, and probably the situation that saw Loise ask for help from Clark seems anything but paradoxical.

MY PROPOSAL - to respond to objections that concern the inadequacy of the predictive of russellianism - is to see this theory as a predictor of how the situation would be if the subject had made the action described the identity

¹⁷Richard 1997, p. 208.

¹⁸Cfr. Soames 2002.

¹⁹Cfr. Richard 2006, pp 202 - 208.

of the individuals who constitute the content of its beliefs. The model, which here I will simply outline for future research would be perfectly consistent to predict situations in which agents act rational ideals, capable of exhausting all the different modes of presentation of objects, individuals, properties and relations to which they apply their beliefs.

Adding sentences like (6) which explain the non-realization of the identity of Superman is Clark can work around incorrect predictions than the current state of affairs, however, would be correct if the realization occurred.

Such a model should be constructed by isolating all the variables of a term with the same reference, adding the notion of realization as a link between these variables.

We can assume, I think rightly, that a person of belief persuaded to make the identity of terms having the same extent it would mean, exactly, within the parameters imposed by a model derived from pragmatic referentiality.

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