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**DISCUSSION**

# ON SCHIFFER'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE FREGEAN MODEL OF 'THAT'-CLAUSES: A COMMENT ON VIGNOLO

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**Abstract**
In "Propositions: What They Could and What They Could Not Be", Massimiliano Vignolo counters the arguments put forward by Stephen Schiffer ("The Things We Mean") against the so-called *Fregean model of 'that'-clauses*. My purpose here is to show that some of Vignolo's objections to Schiffer's arguments do not hit the mark. I shall also present a new argument against the Fregean model, which takes its cue from two of Schiffer's arguments.

Call a *Fregean model of 'that'-clauses* the conjunction of the following theses:

> (A) 'That'-clauses are singular terms standing for propositions.
> (B) Propositions are structured entities determined by the referents of the expressions forming the 'that'-clauses and by their syntactic structure.
> (C) Expressions occurring in 'that'-clauses have concepts [i.e. Fregean senses] as referents.[1]

In his interesting article "Propositions: What They Could and What They Could Not Be" Massimiliano Vignolo argues that a group of arguments put forward by Stephen Schiffer (2003) against the Fregean model of 'that'-clauses are unsound.

The purpose of my paper is to discuss some of Vignolo's objections to those arguments. The *first section* will consider one of the main arguments by Schiffer. According to Vignolo, this argument can be read in two different ways and, on either reading, it is unsound. Regarding one of these readings, I shall claim that Vignolo is right, though further considerations will be added in order to make his objection entirely convincing. Regarding, on the other hand, Vignolo's objection to the other possible reading of the argument, I shall argue that it is problematic. Taking my cue from the argument by Schiffer considered in the first section, I shall construct in the *second section* a new argument against the Fregean model. I shall maintain that, no matter how

[1] Vignolo (2006: 129).

such a new argument is read, it is sound. Finally, the *third section* will consider two further arguments by Schiffer, showing that Vignolo's objections to them do not hit the mark.

## I

One of the main arguments put forward by Schiffer against the Fregean model of 'that'-clauses goes as follows:

> i) If the Fregean model is correct, then (a) 'Fido' occurs in "Ralph believes that Fido is a dog" as a singular term whose referent is a concept of Fido.
>
> ii) If (a), then the following inference (Inf) is valid:
>
> (Inf)
> Ralph believes that Fido is a dog.
> $\therefore \exists x$(*x* is a concept & Ralph believes that *x* is a dog).
>
> iii) But the inference is not valid; given the truth of the premise, the conclusion is also true only in the unlikely event that Ralph mistakes a concept for a dog.
>
> iv) $\therefore$ The Fregean model is not true.[2]

According to Vignolo, this argument (call it *Fido argument*) is unsound for the following reason:

> I take the premise of (Inf) to be ambiguous. It allows for a *de dicto* reading and for a *de re* reading. […] If we construe the premise of the inference (Inf) as a *de dicto* belief, then step iii) is false. If we construe the same premise as a *de re* belief, then step i) is false.[3]

Let us examine first the case in which the premise is read *de dicto.*

> If we construe the premise as a *de dicto* belief, then "Ralph believes that Fido is a dog" is true if and only if Ralph stands in the believing relation [(B)] to the proposition *that Fido is a dog*. According to the Fregean model, this proposition is formed by the concept of Fido [($C_{Fido}$)] and the concept of [the property of] *being a dog* [($C_{being\ a\ dog}$)]. The logical form of the premise of (Inf) is:
>
> B(Ralph, < $C_{Fido}$, $C_{being\ a\ dog}$>).
>
> The logical form of the conclusion of (Inf) is:

[2] Ibid., p. 130. This argument originates with Adam Pautz.
[3] Ibid., pp. 130-1.

> $\exists x$($x$ is a concept & B(Ralph, <$x$, $C_{\text{being a dog}}$>)).
>
> The conclusion is true if and only if there is a concept that, together with the concept of *being a dog*, constitutes the proposition that Ralph believes. In quantifying in 'that'-clauses of *de dicto* beliefs, variables range over concepts. Therefore, according to the Fregean model, if it is true that Ralph believes *de dicto* that Fido is a dog, it is true that there is a concept that, together with the concept of *being a dog*, constitutes the proposition that Ralph believes.[4]

I think that Vignolo is right in suggesting that the inference (Inf) is valid if its premise and conclusion are *de dicto* interpreted. Nonetheless, it is worth examining more carefully the justification provided by Schiffer in step iii) of the Fido argument for his claim that (Inf) is not valid (i.e.: "given the truth of the premise [of (Inf)], the conclusion is also true only in the unlikely event that Ralph mistakes a concept for a dog"). What exactly goes wrong in such a justification? Vignolo's explanation on this point is not entirely clear:

> To achieve his goal, Schiffer should require that in quantifying in 'that'-clauses of *de dicto* beliefs variables range over the ordinary referents of expressions. Only in this case the conclusion of (Inf) would be false unless Ralph mistakes a concept for a dog.[5]

I will try to suggest a different explanation. If, as Schiffer claims, the conclusion of (Inf) is true only if Ralph mistakes a concept for a dog, then the *de dicto* logical form of the conclusion should be:

> (1) $\exists x$($x$ is a concept & B(Ralph, <$x$, being a dog>)).

The linguistic construction (1) states that Ralph believes a proposition constituted of a concept and the property of *being a dog*, i.e. he believes that a concept exemplifies such a property. But this is incompatible with the Fregean model, assumed in step i), according to which only concepts can enter into propositions as their constituents. The *de dicto* logical form of the conclusion of (Inf) is indeed (2), which differs from (1) in that the property of *being a dog* is replaced by its concept.

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[4] Ibid., p. 131.
[5] Ibid., p. 132.

(2) $\exists x(x$ is a concept & B(Ralph, $<x, C_{\text{being a dog}}>))$

So, this is, I think, the reason why the justification provided by Schiffer in favour of the presumed invalidity of (Inf) is incorrect when the premise of this inference is read *de dicto*. Let us now examine the case in which the premise of (Inf) is read *de re*.

> Construed as a *de re* belief, the premise Ralph believes that Fido is a dog turns into:
>
> (3) Ralph believes of Fido that it is a dog.
>
> […] In (3) the proper name 'Fido' stands for Fido and not for the concept of Fido. In (4) the variable '*x*' must range over things that are ordinary referents of singular terms.
>
> (4) $\exists x$(Ralph believes of *x* that it is a dog).
>
> […] The advocate of the Fregean semantics is not committed to denying that in (3) 'Fido' stands for Fido. He has the resources to [formulate the truth-conditions of (3) within the Fregean model]: Ralph believes of Fido that it is a dog if and only if the proposition $<C_{\text{Fido}}, C_{\text{being a dog}}>$ is a mode of presentation (MP) of the state of affairs <Fido, being a dog> and Ralph believes [(B)] such proposition. The logical form of (3) is:
>
> (5) MP($<C_{\text{Fido}}, C_{\text{being a dog}}>$, <Fido, being a dog>) & B(Ralph, $<C_{\text{Fido}}, C_{\text{being a dog}}>$).
>
> The logical form of (4) is:
>
> (6) $\exists y \exists z$(MP($<z, C_{\text{being a dog}}>$, $<y$, being a dog>) & B(Ralph, $<z, C_{\text{being a dog}}>$)).[6]

So, in the Fido argument, according to Vignolo, step i) is false if the premise of (Inf) is read as (3) and the logical form of (3) is (5). Furthermore, if the conclusion of (Inf) is read as (4) – omitting in the latter the expression '*x* is a concept &' contained in the former – and the logical form of (4) is (6), then (Inf) will be valid, contrary to what step iii) states.

But can (5) and (6) really be logical forms of (3) and (4), as Vignolo claims? This is actually disputable, as I am going to show now. (I shall confine myself to showing that (6) can hardly be the logical form of (4). Using a similar strategy, the reader could show that (5) can hardly be the logical form of (3).)

Reconsider the construction (4), in which the occurrence of the pronoun 'it' clearly works as an anaphor linked to the variable '*x*'. Taking into account that, by

[6] Ibid., pp. 132-3. The logical constructions (5) and (6) originate with Kaplan (1969).

definition, anaphora keep the same referent as the expressions to which they are linked, the occurrence of 'it' in (4) could be replaced by an occurrence of '*x*', yielding:

(4*) $\exists x$(Ralph believes of *x* that *x* is a dog).

Consequently, if, as Vignolo claims, (6) is the logical form of (4), then it would also be the logical form of (4*). But, if so, the following question should be answered: what variable in (6) plays the role of '*x*' in (4*): '*y*' or '*z*'?

(4) $\exists x$(Ralph believes of *x* that it is a dog)
(6) $\exists y \exists z$(MP(<*z*, $C_{\text{being a dog}}$>, <*y*, being a dog>) & B(Ralph, <*z*, $C_{\text{being a dog}}$>))

No answer to this question is actually made available. In fact, '*y*' cannot play the role of '*x*' because, according to (4*), *x* occurs within the proposition believed by Ralph – since the variable '*x*' occurs within the 'that'-clause in (4*) – whereas this does not apply to *y*, as (6) reveals. On the other hand, even '*z*' cannot play the role of '*x*', because *x* has an occurrence outside the proposition believed by Ralph, while *z* only occurs within such a proposition. Hence, the conclusion that (6) cannot be the logical form of (4) follows.[7]

## II

Consider another argument by Schiffer against the Fregean model (call it *brother-in-love argument*):

> There are cases where it seems that some singular terms occurring in 'that'-clauses cannot but refer to their ordinary referents. Schiffer gives [this] example: your husband's brother says to you: "I believe I am falling in love with you". Schiffer holds that it is *obvious* that [both utterances of 'I'] refer to your husband's brother.[8]

[7] A possible reply to my criticism could be that although (6) is not the logical form of (4), the former presents the meaning of the latter (and the same would also apply to (5) and (3)); this could be sufficient for Vignolo to reach the conclusion that in the Fido argument, steps i) and iii) are false if the premise of (Inf) is read *de re*. But I think such a reply does not work, for the following reason: generally speaking, if a sentence expresses a structured proposition, then such a proposition is identified by the logical form of the sentence; if so, it is impossible that (6) presents the meaning of (4) without being its logical form, because, according to the Fregean model, the meaning of a sentence is a structured proposition.
[8] Vignolo (2006: 129).

Although – I think – Schiffer is right in claiming that both of these occurrences designate their ordinary referent, such a claim is not immediately obvious. In this section I would like to present a new argument against the Fregean model (call it *new brother-in-love argument*) which, in a sense, develops Schiffer's intuition contained in the original brother-in-love argument. My new argument will take pattern by the Fido argument examined in the first section, but, unlike the latter, it will be sound under any reading/interpretation.

> i*) If the Fregean model is correct then (b) the second occurrence of 'I' in the sentence "I believe that I am falling in love with you", asserted by your husband's brother and addressed to you, refers to the concept of your husband's brother.[9]
>
> ii*) The following inference (Inf*) is intuitively valid:
>
> > (Inf*)
> > (P*) I believe that I am falling in love with you.
> > ∴ (C*) There is someone who believes that he (himself) is falling in love with you.
>
> iii*) Taking into account that 'he' in (C*) is an anaphor linked to the pronoun 'someone' and anaphora, by definition, keep the same referent as the term they are linked to, if (C*) is true, then there is an individual satisfying both the following conditions:
>
> > (d) He/It has the belief described in (C*);
> > (e) He/It contributes to the proposition designed by the 'that'-clause in (C*).[10]
>
> iv*) Suppose that (P*) is true. Since (Inf*) is intuitively valid, then (C*) will be true as well. If so, the following question should be answered: who is the individual satisfying both of the aforesaid conditions (d) and (e)? Actually, no plausible answer to this question is possible if claim (b) in step i*) is true.
>
> v*) ∴ The Fregean model is not true.

In an attempt to refute this argument, the advocate of the Fregean model could look for a plausible answer to the question put forward in step iv*). Possibly, some aid towards

[9] Notice that the claim (b) is true even if the sentence at issue is read *de re*, i.e. as "I believe of myself that I am falling in love with you".
[10] Notice that the conditions (d) and (e) are satisfied even if (P*) is read *de re* (i.e. as "I believe of myself that I am falling in love with you") and (C*) is consequently read as: "There is someone who believes of himself that he is falling in love with you".

that end could come from the alleged *de dicto* and the *de re* interpretations of (C*), i.e. respectively ($C^*_{de\ dicto}$) and ($C^*_{de\ re}$), where *a* is you.[11] The linguistic construction ($C^*_{de\ dicto}$) says that there is an *x* such that, together with the relational concept of *falling in love with*, i.e. $C_{\text{falling in love with}}$, and the concept of you, i.e. $C_a$, constitutes the proposition that *x* believes. On the other hand, the linguistic construction ($C^*_{de\ re}$) says that there is a person *y* and there is a concept *z* such that the proposition $\langle\langle z, C_a\rangle, C_{\text{falling in love with}}\rangle$ is a mode of presentation (MP) of the state of affairs $\langle\langle y, a\rangle$, falling in love with$\rangle$ and *y* believes (B) such a proposition.

($C^*_{de\ dicto}$) $\exists x B(x, \langle\langle x, C_a\rangle, C_{\text{falling in love with}}\rangle)$
($C^*_{de\ re}$) $\exists y \exists z(MP(\langle\langle z, C_a\rangle, C_{\text{falling in love with}}\rangle, \langle\langle y, a\rangle$, falling in love with$\rangle$) & $B(y, \langle\langle z, C_a\rangle, C_{\text{falling in love with}}\rangle))$

Now, reconsider the question "Who is the individual satisfying both conditions (d) and (e)?" put forward in step iv*) and suppose first that (C*) is *de dicto* interpreted. Under such an interpretation, the obvious answer to the aforesaid question will be "the value of the bound variable '*x*' in ($C^*_{de\ dicto}$)". But who/what could such a value be? Taking into account that (C*) follows from (P*), asserted by your husband's brother, just two answers are *prima facie* available: either *x* is your husband's brother or it is a concept of him. Unfortunately for the advocate of the Fregean model, either of these answers is inadmissible. In fact, if the value of '*x*' were your husband's brother, then, on the basis of ($C^*_{de\ dicto}$), an occurrence of him would be contained in the believed proposition. But this would be incompatible with claim (b) in step i*), according to which the referent of the second occurrence of 'I' in (P*) is a concept and not a person. On the other hand, if the value of '*x*' were a concept of your husband's brother, then, on the basis of ($C^*_{de\ dicto}$), such a concept would also occur as first *relatum* of the belief relation B, i.e. it would have the belief described by (C*). But claiming that a concept has a belief is highly implausible or even senseless.

(P*) I believe that I am falling in love with you
(C*) There is someone who believes that he himself is falling in love with you

[11] I have used here the adjective 'alleged' since, as I argued on pp. 165-6, it is disputable that a construction like ($C^*_{de\ re}$) can be a logical form of (C*).

So, the question formulated in step iv*) has no admissible answer if (C*) is *de dicto* interpreted. Let us now see what happens if (C*) is interpreted as (C*$_{de\ re}$). In this case, who could be the individual satisfying both conditions (d) and (e)? Again, just two answers are *prima facie* available: either it is the value of '*y*', i.e. your husband's brother; or it is the value of '*z*', i.e. a concept of him. But neither of these answers is actually acceptable. In fact, *y* is not a good candidate for the wanted individual because, according to (C*$_{de\ re}$), *y* does not occur within the believed proposition, and this forbids the fulfilment of condition (e). Even *z* is not a good candidate for that role since, according to (C*$_{de\ re}$), *z* does not occur as first *relatum* of B, i.e. *z* does not have the belief described by (C*), differently from what condition (d) would require. So, if (C*) is *de re* interpreted, the crucial question put forward in step iv*) also has no answer.

(C*) There is someone who believes that he himself is falling in love with you
(C*$_{de\ re}$) $\exists y \exists z$(MP(<<*z*, $C_a$>, $C_{\text{falling in love with}}$>, <<*y*, *a*>, falling in love with>) & B(*y*, <<*z*, $C_a$>, $C_{\text{falling in love with}}$>))

Condition (d): He/It has the belief described in (C*)
Condition (e): He/It contributes to the proposition designed by the 'that'-clause in (C*)

As an extreme move, the advocate of the Fregean model could introduce, besides (C*$_{de\ dicto}$) and (C*$_{de\ re}$), a third interpretation of (C*), i.e. (7), which differs from (C*$_{de\ re}$) solely in that at its beginning there is only one quantifier, whose domain contains ordered pairs constituted of a person, *y*, and a concept, *z*.

(7) $\exists$<*y*,*z*>(MP(<<*z*, $C_a$>, $C_{\text{falling in love with}}$>, <<*y*, *a*>, falling in love with>) & B(*y*, <<*z*, $C_a$>, $C_{\text{falling in love with}}$>))

In light of (7), one could claim that the individual satisfying the conditions (d) and (e) is an ordered pair including your husband's brother and a concept of him. Actually, such a pair would be a very bad candidate for the wanted individual, because it neither has the belief described by (C*) – in fact, <*y*,*z*> does not occur as first *relatum* of B – nor does it occur within the believed proposition, which conditions (d) and (e) respectively require. So, none of the three considered interpretations of (C*) is able to refute the new brother-in-love argument, QED.

## III

Another argument put forward by Schiffer against the Fregean model is the following:

> If expressions occurring in 'that'-clauses have concepts as referents, then in (f) "John believes that Fido barks" the name 'Fido' refers to the concept of Fido. Hence, if Mary asserts (f), she refers to the concept of Fido, which is the concept by which John thinks of Fido. The Fregean model must explain by which concept Mary thinks of the concept by which John thinks of Fido. [Furthermore, given the possibility of iterating the structure of propositional attitude sentences,] we admit a hierarchy of concepts: concepts, concepts of concepts, concepts of concepts of concepts and so on. The Fregean model must explain what such concepts are and what it is to grasp all of them.[12]

Vignolo highlights that this argument (call it *Mary argument*) presupposes an endorsement, on the part of the Fregean model, of the principle (P):

> (P) Whenever we refer to something, we do it by grasping a concept under which that thing falls.
>
> My contention is that the problem arises because of a sort of ambiguity of 'refer'. There are at least two readings of 'refer' that should be distinguished:
>
> (i) To contribute to truth-conditions.
> (ii) To think/speak of.
>
> When Schiffer says that the speaker refers to the concept of Fido in asserting (f), he might mean two different things:
>
> (i*) The truth-condition of (f) involves the concept of Fido.
> (ii*) The speaker speaks of the concept of Fido.
>
> If Mary asserts (f), certainly the truth-condition of her assertion involves the concept of Fido. Her assertion is true if and only if John stands in the believing relation to the proposition $<C_{Fido}, C_{barking}>$. So, in the sense of (i), it is true that Mary refers to the concept of Fido. Yet, […] she speaks of Fido, not of the concept of Fido. In conclusion, Principle (P) should be constrained: if 'refer' is taken to mean thinking/speaking of, then principle (P) holds. If 'refer' is taken to mean contributing to truth-conditions, principle (P) does not hold.
>
> […] We do not need any concept of concept in order to specify the truth-condition of (f). But we do not need any concept of concept to construct the proposition expressed by (f) either. The proposition expressed by (f) is made of the concept of John, the concept of the believing relation and the proposition $<C_{Fido}, C_{barking}>$. We can represent such proposition as $<<C_{John}, <C_{Fido}, C_{barking}>>, C_B>$. […] We can form propositional attitude sentences more and more complicated without being forced to generate any hierarchy of concepts.[13]

[12] Vignolo (2006: 130).
[13] Ibid., pp. 135-6. (Incidentally, this quotation has been slightly modified: I have exchanged the example presented in Vignolo's article involving George Eliot for an example involving Fido barking.) It should be noted that Vignolo's use of the word 'refer' in (i) is rather unusual. It should also be noted that, unlike

So, taking for granted Vignolo's distinction between (i) and (ii) and his suggestion of confining the validity of (P) to the case in which 'refer' means (ii), Mary's competent assertion of (f) only requires her grasping of the first level concepts $C_{John}$, $C_{Fido}$, $C_{barking}$, $C_B$.

If, on one hand, Vignolo's proposal seems able to block the infinite regress described in Schiffer's Mary argument, on the other hand, another objection could be put forward to such a proposal. According to Vignolo, Mary has to master $C_{Fido}$, i.e. the concept by which John thinks of Fido, in order to assert competently (f). But this is absurd, because, intuitively, Mary should be able to make such an assertion even if she has no idea about what $C_{Fido}$ is. She could indeed have a concept of Fido which completely differs from John's.

As a reply, the advocate of the Fregean model could maintain that the logical form of (f) is not (8) but (9), the latter involving, instead of $C_{Fido}$, a quantification over it. In this way, Mary would not need to master $C_{Fido}$ in order to assert competently (f).

(f) John believes that Fido barks
(8) $B(John, < C_{Fido}, C_{barking}>)$
(9) $\exists x \exists y(x$ is the concept of Fido for John & $y$ is the concept of the property of barking for John & $B(John, <x, y>))$

It is worth noticing that this sort of reply also (apparently) works for another of Schiffer's arguments against the Fregean model, which goes as follows:

> Consider the […] sentence: (g) "Everyone who visits New York believes that New York is noisy". The second occurrence of 'New York' refers to the concept of New York. But it should be a concept shared by all people who visit New York and it is very unlikely that all those people share the same concept of it.[14]

The reply to this argument (call it *NY argument*) could be that the logical form of (g) is not the problematic construction (10) but (11), where the single concept of New York ($C_{NY}$) leaves room for a quantification over many concepts of this city.

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Vignolo, for Frege the proposition expressed by (f) is not $<<C_{John}, <C_{Fido}, C_{barking}>>, C_B>$ but rather $<<C_{John}, <C^*_{Fido}, C^*_{barking}>>, C_B>$, where $C^*_{Fido}$ and $C^*_{barking}$ are respectively *second level* concepts of Fido and the property of barking.

[14] Vignolo (2006: 130).

(g) Everyone who visits New York believes that New York is noisy
(10) $\forall x$ ($x$ visits NY $\rightarrow$ B($x$, < $C_{NY}$, $C_{\text{being noisy}}$>))
(11) $\forall x$ ($x$ visits NY $\rightarrow \exists y \exists z$ ($y$ is the concept of NY for $x$ & $z$ is the concept of the property of *being noisy* for $x$ & B($x$, <$y$, $z$>)))

Unluckily for the advocate of the Fregean model, these replies actually present some difficulties. Particularly, in Mary's case, the logical form of the sentence (f) – asserted, supposedly sincerely, by Mary – cannot even be (9). Otherwise, by asserting sincerely (f), Mary would assert sincerely that there *exists* a concept $x$ of Fido for John and there *exists* a concept $y$ of the property of barking for John such that John believes a proposition constituted of these concepts. As a result, Mary would commit herself to the existence of the concepts $x$ and $y$. But this is absurd because, intuitively, a speaker should be able to assert sincerely (f) even if she refuses the existence of concepts.

(f) John believes that Fido barks
(8) B(John, < $C_{Fido}$, $C_{barking}$>)
(9) $\exists x \exists y$($x$ is the concept of Fido for John & $y$ is the concept of the property of barking for John & B(John, <$x$, $y$>))

This sort of difficulty also affects the reply to the NY argument, which, in addition, presents another problem. Since, according to such a reply, different visitors of New York can have different concepts of this city, in a sentence like '*a* believes that New York is noisy', *a* being any visitor of New York, the referent and consequently the meaning of the name 'New York' could change according to whom *a* is. If so, 'New York' would have not just one meaning (or two: one for the direct linguistic contexts and another for the indirect contexts) but many. This plainly contrasts with the principle that the meanings of a word should not be multiplied unnecessarily.

How could these further difficulties be overcome? Vignolo puts forward a proposal, according to which the logical form of a sentence like (g) is really (10) and not (11), so that whoever visits New York grasps the very same and only concept of New York, $C_{NY}$. (Similarly, in Mary's case, the logical form of (f) is (8) rather than (9), so that Mary masters the very same concept by which John thinks of Fido, $C_{Fido}$.)

But how can such a proposal work if the visitors of New York have different views of this city, i.e. they associate different pieces of information with it? Vignolo's

answer to this question starts from a characterisation of the notion of concept, drawn from the so-called *use conception of meaning*:[15]

> The central idea of the use conception of meaning is to individuate concepts through regularities of referential and inferential uses of linguistic expressions. The claim is that the regularities of the use of a certain expression are constitutive of the property of expressing a certain concept.
>
> […] Individuating identity criteria for concepts: the concept W is identical to the concept Y if and only if [the locution] w [expressing the concept W] and [the locution] y [expressing the concept Y] have the same constitutive uses.
>
> […] In the light of a use theory of meaning, we can resist Schiffer's charge that there exists no single concept shared by all people who visit New York. Even if visitors will have different views of New York, this does not imply that there is no constitutive use of the proper name "New York". We can imagine a constitutive use with different levels of expertise. Although it is not necessary that all speakers master the constitutive use completely, that use constitutes the property of expressing the concept of New York. The division of the linguistic labour and the deference to experts enable us to attribute propositional attitudes towards propositions to speakers even though those propositions are made of concepts that they do not master completely.[16]

The characterisation of the notion of concept suggested here by Vignolo is noteworthy, but – I think – does not succeed in overcoming Schiffer's NY argument. To see why, let $\{NY_i\}$ and $\{T_j\}$ be respectively the sets of the constitutive uses of the names 'New York' and 'Toronto'. Suppose that some constitutive uses of 'New York' are identical to some constitutive uses of 'Toronto' and let $A$ be the set of such uses. In other words, $A=\{NY_i\}\cap\{T_j\}$.[17] For purposes of application, consider the following case. Tom is a visitor of New York who believes that New York is noisy (he has, in fact, the disposition to assert sincerely and competently the sentence "New York is noisy", referring to New York). Suppose that his only uses of 'New York' are those included in $A$. Since $A$ is a *proper* sub-set of $\{NY_i\}$, Tom's mastery of the constitutive uses of 'New

[15] Among the advocates of this conception, Vignolo mentions P. Horwich (1998) *Meaning*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

[16] Vignolo (2006: 142-3). Vignolo mentions C. Peacocke [(1992) *A Study of Concepts*, MIT Press, Cambridge Mass.] among the advocates of the thesis according to which it is possible to attribute attitudes towards propositions to thinkers who master partially the constitutive use of a proper name and defer in their use of it to the expert members of their community.

[17] What does it mean here to say that the use of a word is identical to the use of another (i.e. that two words share the same use)? In light of the fact that words are used within linguistic contexts, we could determine a given use of a word through a given linguistic context in which it is used. So, a use of the name 'New York' could be individuated by the linguistic context '… is noisy', within which the name is used. On the basis of the fact that the name 'Toronto' can also be used within the very same linguistic context, we could claim that 'New York' and 'Toronto' share a use.

York' will be partial. Nonetheless, according to Vignolo's proposal, such a partial mastery suffices for Tom's grasping of the concept of New York ($C_{NY}$). But we have supposed that the elements of *A* are constitutive uses of the name 'Toronto' as well, since by definition $A=\{NY_i\}\cap\{T_j\}$. So, how can we be sure that, by his uses of 'New York', Tom grasps $C_{NY}$ instead of the concept of Toronto ($C_T$)? Tom could indeed have grasped $C_T$ instead of $C_{NY}$, mistaking the former concept for the latter. In this case, the name 'New York' within the sentence "Tom believes that New York is noisy" would refer to $C_T$ instead of $C_{NY}$, so that the logical form of (g) could not be (10), contrary to what Vignolo claims.

Notice that this sort of difficulty becomes even more serious if we modify the aforesaid case in such a way that Tom's uses of 'New York', because of his ignorance, coincide with the constitutive uses of 'Toronto'. In this modified case, Tom's mistaking of $C_T$ for $C_{NY}$ would be highly probable, so that the name 'New York' within the sentence "Tom believes that New York is noisy" would end up referring to $C_T$ and the logical form of (g) could not consequently be (10). In this way, Vignolo's attempt of rescuing the Fregean model of 'that'-clauses from the arguments by Schiffer considered in this section would not hit the mark.[18]

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