

Piggybacking on a Pretense & Pivoting on a Presupposition

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A great puzzle of twentieth century philosophy of language was, how are finite beings like ourselves able to understand a potential infinity of sentences? The received answer is that understanding is recursive: infinitely many sentences can be constructed out of finitely many words combined according to finitely many rules, and we understand a sentence by understanding the words in it and knowing the relevant rules. If this is right, then meaning, defined as whatever you have to grasp to understand, had better be compositional. A sentence's meaning had better be determined by the meanings of the individual words in it and by how they are put together.

One of the great puzzles of twenty-first century philosophy of language is shaping up to be this: how do we reconcile the solution to the previous puzzle with what sentences actually strike us as saying? The reason there is a puzzle here is that meaning is not always a very good guide to what is said. What a sentence in context says is very often something that you would not have expected, or even thought possible, given just a grasp of its meaning. It is familiar of course that speakers say things you would not have expected from the meanings of the sentences they utter. (As "Could he be any denser?" is used to say that he is dense.) But I am talking about what sentences say. I am talking about contents lodged in the sequence of words, contents that remain even if the sequence of words is not asserted, as for instance if it forms the antecedent of a conditional. How are these unexpected contents determined?

To see what kind of problem this is, we need to think more about the kind of unexpectedness at issue. Is it just that meaning doesn't all by itself tell you what is being said – as, for instance, the meaning of "I am thirsty" doesn't tell you whether the one said to be thirsty on a particular occasion is Jones or Smith. This is a very weak form of unexpectedness because, in the first place, the meaning of "I am thirsty" can be seen in advance to generate *Jones is thirsty* and *Smith is thirsty* as possible readings in the appropriate context, and in the second place, it is the meaning itself that tells you how context singles out one of these readings as correct.¹

Perhaps the claim is that meaning doesn't all by itself tell you how context singles out a certain reading as correct – as, some would say, the meaning of "Sara's book is on the table" doesn't tell you whether it's a book she owns or a book she wrote, and "Leora cut the grass" doesn't tell you why its mowing the

¹ This is clearest if meaning is Kaplanian character. *Jones is thirsty* was there in the range of the sentence's character all along.

grass that's at issue as opposed to cutting individual blades of it with a scalpel.² This is a stronger sort of unexpectedness, because now what is said is underdetermined by meaning; the meaning doesn't give you a rule for working out which of two allowed readings is the right one. But it's not as strong as all that. A reading underdetermined by a sentence's meaning might still be fully consonant with that meaning; the meaning points in the right direction, it just doesn't take you all the way home.

I am talking about the more radical case where a sentence says something its meaning positively disallows. If we use "real content" for what the sentence is (rightly) taken to say, and "semantic content" for the reading its meaning delivers, then I am talking about the case where a sentence's real content is not a possible semantic content, or at least not a possible semantic content in context.

Everyone will have their own favorite examples, but here just to get us started is an example Saul Kripke gave at a lecture in Michigan in 1989:

I watched the raft drift away until she turned into a dot on the horizon.

"What," Kripke said, "she turned into a *dot*?" (The metaphysical horror of it.) His point, I take it, was that whatever exactly "dot" means, people never really turn into them. That the sentence nevertheless strikes us as true shows that we are not reading it in a way licensed by its ordinary meaning. (I wish I could remember why Kripke gave this example; it was a lecture on secondary qualities.)

The issue then is "unexpected readings" or "...contents." These raise two kinds of problem. First is a problem about the readings themselves. When you throw the door open to readings not generated in the ordinary compositional way, you've thrown the door open to everything. What makes these unexpected readings the right ones? Second, supposing the right readings or contents have somehow been singled out, there is the cognitive problem of saying how people are able to hit on them in actual speech situations. I am interested more in the first problem – what makes these the right readings? – but they will both figure to some extent in what follows.

A lot of philosophers postulate unexpected readings – Soames is a recent example – but they tend not to be very clear on the mechanism. I know of two main not entirely hand-wavey ways in which unexpected readings can be generated. One is the route via figurative speech and more particularly metaphor. An example of Ken Walton's, more or less:

² Searle, Bach, Recanati?

(1) The people of Crotona live in the arch of the Italian boot.

The sentence says something true, but taken literally it would seem to imply that a Crotonan is some kind of Mother Hubbard-like character who lives in a shoe. (Michigan as a hand; "what, you live on your hand?")

Here our judgment that we are dealing with an unexpected content is confirmed by the clash of truth-values. But the judgment can often stand on its own; it can be independently clear that one of the contents is unexpected, even if both of the contents are true (or both are false). Another of Walton's examples:

(2) It was Grand Central Station around here this morning.

Normally this is true at best on a metaphorical reading, but one can imagine it also literally true, say uttered in Grand Central Station on Xmas Eve. (The phenomenon of twice-true metaphor. "The rain beat down without mercy." "Singapore is an island of efficiency in the generally chaotic South China Sea.") The fact that both readings are true doesn't make it particularly difficult to tell them apart.

That was the striking and dramatic route to compositionally unexpected content. It has traditionally been discussed mainly by English professors and other experts in literary aesthetics. There is also a homely and undramatic route, discussed more by linguists and philosophers of language. Here is an example of Stalnaker's. Imagine that the so-called "King" is a usurper, but decide for safety's sake to talk as if he is indeed King. Then if the usurper is in the counting house,

(3) The King is in the counting house.

says something true. It says something true even if its semantic content is false, since the King properly so-called is in prison. (3) says something true because its real content concerns not the person who is King in the actual world, but the one who is King in the world we are treating as actual. Stalnaker:

If there is no one person who is presupposed to fit the description, then reference fails (even if some person does in fact fit the description uniquely). But if there is one, then it makes no difference whether that presupposition is true or false. The presupposition helps to determine the proposition expressed, but once the proposition is determined, it can stand alone. (CC, 43).

Example (3) resembles example (1) in that the difference in truth-value (remember, the real King is in prison) confirms our judgment of an unexpected content. But as before, this judgment can stand on its own. Consider another example of Stalnaker's:³

(4) My cousin is not a boy anymore.

This would normally be heard to say that my cousin is now a man. But that is because it is presumed that my cousin remains a male human being; as far as the conventional meaning is concerned he might have ceased to be a boy by some other route – a sex change, maybe, or by turning into a pillar of salt. Likewise "My neighbor is a bachelor" might be heard to say that my neighbor is unmarried, it being presumed and not asserted that my neighbor is an adult male. I will call that the presuppositional route to unexpected content, since we access the unexpected content by pivoting somehow on a background assumption that influences what is said without being part of what is said.

Two routes to compositionally unexpected content, then: one dramatic, by way of metaphor, studied by English professors and aestheticians, and the other relatively humdrum, studied by philosophers of language and linguists, by way of presupposition. You might have thought, from that description, that we had a better grip on the second route than the first – and you would have been right if you'd thought it in 1992. But in 1993 Ken's "Metaphor and Prop Oriented Make Believe" appeared. Now it's the dramatic route that we have had a better grip on. Here very briefly is what Ken says about metaphor.

He starts with make-believe games. Make-believe games are rules for the imagination. They specify that such and such is to be imagined – pretended, treated as true – and so and so isn't. A game's content is the to be imagined, or pretense-worthy, items all taken together, or if you prefer a single compendious item of which the others are parts.

How is the game's content specified? The simplest way would be to specify it outright: players are to imagine this, that, and the other – say, that they're in a gunfight, pinned in a corner, almost out of bullets – PERIOD, without letting their imagination be guided by where their fingers are pointing etc.. A game like that would be unimaginably boring, however. Normally I am to imagine my gun pointing at you in the game just if my finger is pointing at you outside the game, and how far I am to imagine I can see around corner depends on my head's position relative to this actual corner. The game specifies its content as a function of what is going on outside of the game.

³ This one taken from Terence Langendoen.

"Props" is the word Ken uses for the worldly things whose game-independent properties determine what is to be imagined. The game then is associated with a function γ from hypotheses X about the props, to elements Y of the game's content, where Y is what players are supposed to imagine to be the case when X really is the case.⁴

And now here is Ken's basic idea. Normally in our engagement with make-believe games, our primary interest is the content; we look to X (the state of the props) just for the light it sheds on $\gamma(X)$ (the game's content, the items to be imagined). That's content-oriented make believe. But it could in principle go the other way around: we could be interested in the game's content for the light that content sheds on the condition of the props. That's prop-oriented make believe, or since the props might be anything, world-oriented make believe.

Prop-oriented is the kind of make believe that is supposed to provide a model for metaphor. Suppose I say, in (a variant of) Ken's immortal example, "The Crotonians live in the heel of the Italian boot." That calls to mind a game in which Italy is a boot, or a picture of a boot. I say it to indicate that the Crotonians live in such and such a place. Which place? The place they would need to live to make it pretense-worthy in the game that they live in the arch of the Italian boot. To borrow a device from Kaplan, the Crotonians live in dthat(the place that makes it pretense-worthy that they live in the arch). No one needs to be playing the game, note, it's enough to know what would make my utterance correct, "construed as an act of verbal participation in the game."

Now Ken does not really mean to laying out a general theory of how metaphorical contents are generated. But suppose we were young and headstrong and wanted to do just that. Then I think we could do worse than to proceed as follows.

(M) S's real content, in the context of game γ , is the proposition R such that for all X, $\gamma(X)$ includes S iff X includes R.

(Another way to put it is that R is the condition the props need to satisfy to put S to into the game's content.⁵) Exploiting a make-believe game in the way (M) suggests, using sentence S to assert a content whose truth-conditions coincide with S's pretendability-conditions in the game, has been called piggybacking on the game (by Mark Richard in "Semantic Pretense") and I will borrow that terminology.

⁴ The content is not always propositions – no propositions about Bloom – but let's not bother about that.

⁵ If there were two such propositions, each would have to include the other, which makes them identical. So real contents if they exist are unique. I assume that in cases of interest they exist.

Let's try conceiving the theory in graphical terms – see Figure 1. We start out with sentence S , or rather its semantic content (we can afford to run these together), represented as a region in logical space; that's the yellow bar across the top. S invokes or calls to mind a game γ , which is the function on propositions represented by the blue arrow. S and γ together are supposed to induce a real content R . How do they do it? Well, as the rule says, we look for the least truth about the props that suffices to make S imaginable or pretense-worthy in the game. R in other words is the minimal input to function γ that gets us S in the output. We represent that by putting R at the input end of the blue game-arrow whose output end points to S . R emerges as something like the inverse image of S under γ . That's Figure 2.

Another Ken example to make clear how the graphical representation is supposed to work. Suppose "the Metropolitan Museum borrows a portrait of Napoleon from the Louvre for a special exhibit and has it shipped to New York on the Queen Mary...one might observe that Napoleon is a 'passenger' on the Queen Mary, thus invoking a possible game in which the presence of a portrait on a ship makes it fictional that the subject of the portrait is a passenger" (M&POMB, 41). Here the sentence uttered is "Napoleon is a passenger on the Queen Mary," and the yellow region is the semantic content of that sentence, viz., the set of worlds where Napoleon in the flesh is a passenger on the QM. The game γ is as Ken describes it; the presence of someone's portrait on the ship makes it pretendable that the portrayed individual is a passenger. The red region contains the R -worlds: the ones where it's legitimate to pretend that Napoleon is a passenger, because Napoleon is portrayed by some portrait on the ship. Each red square corresponds to a different possible portrait on the ship, all of them equally legitimating the pretense that Napoleon is on the ship. The red and yellow regions overlap because "Napoleon is a passenger" could be literally and figuratively true at the same time; he could be delivering the portrait to the Metropolitan Museum himself. (The region of overlap is the region of "twice-true" metaphor.)

That's enough for now on piggybacking on a game; let's turn to pivoting on a presupposition. Piggybacking and pivoting have a lot in common, actually. In both cases one is treating certain hypotheses as true, not because one really believes them but in pursuit of some other expressive goal. (One may really believe them, that is just not why one is treating them as true.) The goal is to draw a line through logical space, in order to characterize our world as lying on one side of that line. The strategy one adopts, in both cases, is to draw a different line from the one that's intended, or maybe I should say, to gesture at or lightly sketch a different line. One takes this indirect route, in both cases, because drawing the line directly is for some reason not an option – one doesn't

know how to draw it directly, or it is dangerous to do so, or drawing the intended line directly is sub-optimal for some other reason – while indicating it indirectly is an option because the intended line is somehow recoverable from the lightly sketched line.

The interesting thing of course is the recovery mechanism. We know more or less how it works when the speaker is piggybacking on a fiction, but how does it work when she is pivoting on a presupposition?

Imagine I say, "The King is in the counting house," presupposing the King is Harold. The semantic content S of my sentence, as uttered on this occasion, is the diagonal region in Figure 3, the region marked in yellow. The yellow worlds are the ones where the King whoever he may be is in the counting house. So the bottom right square might be the worlds where it's King Arthur in the counting house, the next square is the worlds with King James in the counting house. The presuppositional region π – the set of worlds where the King is Harold – is the vertical blue bar. The top-left square, the green region, is the worlds where the King in the counting house, the King being Harold – so, the worlds where Harold's in the counting house in his role as King.

Our problem is to determine the real content R on the basis of information about S and its presupposition π . Presumably we're to do this by extrapolating from the part of S that's in π – the green region – into the rest of logical space. Here is a line of reasoning about this that makes intuitive sense:

- 1) S 's real content is what it says as opposed to presupposing.
- 2) What it says is what S adds to π .
- 3) R is what S adds to π iff
 - R is what separates S -worlds from $\neg S$ -worlds in the π -region.
- 4) R separates S -worlds from $\neg S$ -worlds in the π -region iff
 - Agreement* within the π -region,
worlds are R ($\neg R$) for the same reasons they're $S \& \pi$ rather than $\neg S \& \pi$ (the reverse)
 - Orthogonality* outside the π -region,
worlds are R ($\neg R$) for the same reasons as within.

Looking back at the last lecture, this is exactly how we defined the remainder when π was subtracted from S . So

- 5) S 's real content is $S - \pi$.

Note that π acts here entirely as a catalyst; it pushes the transformation along without being any part of the end product. By "pivoting on a presupposition" I

will henceforth mean using the sentence S to assert what S add to π , to assert in other words $S-\pi$.

Try this on example (3). If we limit ourselves to worlds where Harold is King, what distinguishes King-in-counting-house worlds from the rest of them? Well, in those worlds and only them, Harold is in the counting house. The next question is: does the proposition that Harold is in the counting house hold on the same basis in worlds where Harold is not King as in worlds where Harold is King? Yes, the basis is Harold's whereabouts. Harold's whereabouts decide the truth-value quite independently of whether Harold is King. So the above looks as if it predicts the right real content for "The King is in the counting house," pivoting on the assumption that Harold is King, namely that Harold is in the counting house.

Some analogies between piggybacking on a game and pivoting on a presupposition have already been mentioned. A further analogy is this. A sentence's metaphorical content can shift with the implied game, since the facts that make it pretense-worthy will be different. There was an example on NPR the morning I wrote this. The newscaster started by saying in a metaphorical vein that a certain group of senators were all over the map on the new immigration bill, meaning, I think, that they had a wide range of views on that bill. He then said that the senators in question were also literally all over the map, in that they come from different parts of the country, a fact which was supposed to explain their differing views on immigration.

But of course the far-apart-spatially reading of "they are all over the map" is just as metaphorical as the far-apart-doctrinally reading. (None of the senators lives on a map, any more than Michiganders live on their hands.⁶) The one reading corresponds to a game in which your pretended map position is a function of what you think, the other to a game in which it is a function of where you are. A sentence's possible metaphorical contents are all over the map too, and the potential to shift between them is a huge boost to the language's expressive power. (Same used to be said about indexicals -- find Perry quote.)

A sentence's real content can shift too, as we pivot on different presuppositions. Take (4) "My cousin is not a boy any more"--this time uttered as we sit together on a park bench watching my still visibly eight year old cousin fooling around on the monkey bars. Where before it was assumed that my cousin is still male and the real content was to do with his age, now it is common ground that my cousin is still a child; how does the real content change when we pivot not on my cousin's gender but rather my cousin's age? The theory tells us

⁶ Unless, following a suggestion of Goodman, you think of the US as a very large and inconvenient map of itself.

to look for the R that distinguishes worlds where my eight-year-old human cousin is not a boy any more from worlds where my eight-year-old human cousin still is a boy. What marks the first set of worlds off from the second would seem to be that my cousin is now a girl in those worlds. So the real content is that my cousin is now a girl.

Piggybacking and pivoting have a fair bit in common, then. Is it possible they are the same phenomenon, or somehow minor variants of each other? It certainly wouldn't seem so. The real content S acquires through piggybacking on a game γ is, very roughly, the input that γ needs to be supplied with if it is to output S. The real content S acquires through pivoting on a presupposition π is the result of orthogonally extending the part of S in the π -region through the rest of logical space.

But there is a way of rethinking the pivoting operation that brings the two into closer contact. Bear with me as I bring in a seemingly unrelated topic from introductory logic. Beginning philosophy students are taught about valid arguments. They are taught that validity is a pretty demanding standard: the kinds of arguments that we take seriously are most often not strictly valid (the premises could in principle be true when the conclusion is false). They are taught not to despair, however, because invalid arguments can be made valid by sticking in additional premises. The technical term for an argument that's in need of that kind of completion is enthymeme, and the process of tossing in the needed additional premise is called completing the enthymeme. The form of the enthymeme is Q, ?R? therefore S, and the question is what to put in for R. It turns out that our judgments about what fits properly in are surprisingly principled. Just for definiteness let's use a single enthymeme throughout:

All firefighters are goalkeepers and vice versa.

??????R?????

No firefighters are horticulturalists.

The following seem like clearly bad things to put in for R, or at least clearly worse things than *No goalkeepers are horticulturalists*.

- a. No firefighters are beekeepers.
- b. No firefighters are horticulturalists or beekeepers.
- c. All firefighters are goalkeepers iff no Firefighters are horticulturalists.
- d. All firefighters are goalkeepers and no goalkeepers are horticulturalists.
- e. No firefighting goalkeepers are horticulturalists.

To keep it readable let's use the obvious abbreviations. The enthymeme is

Q: $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx)$

R: ??????????????should be $\forall x(Gx \supset \neg Hx)$
 S: $\forall x(Fx \supset \neg Hx)$

The candidate completers are

- a. $\forall x(Fx \supset \neg Bx)$
- b. $\forall x(Fx \supset (\neg Hx \& \neg Bx))$
- c. $\forall x(Fx \supset Gx) \& \forall x(Gx \supset \neg Hx)$
- d. $\forall x(Fx \supset Gx) \supset \forall x(Fx \supset \neg Hx)$
- e. $\forall x((Fx \& Gx) \supset \neg Hx)$

The problem with (a) is obvious; the conclusion doesn't follow, that is, $\forall x(Fx \supset \neg Bx)$ in combination with $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx)$ does not imply $\forall x(Fx \supset \neg Hx)$. Our first requirement then is

Sufficiency Given Q, R should suffice for S.

The problem with (b) is not sufficiency; $\forall x(Fx \supset (\neg Hx \& \neg Bx))$ does "bridge the gap" in the sense of combining with $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx)$ to imply $\forall x(Fx \supset \neg Hx)$. It's just that this bridge is a bridge too far, since the part about firefighters not being beekeepers is entirely unnecessary. Our second requirement is

Necessity Given Q, R should be necessary for S

Neither complaint applies to (c) $\forall x(Fx \supset Gx) \& \forall x(Gx \supset \neg Hx)$. It is necessary and sufficient, given our initial premise (its first conjunct) for our conclusion $\forall x(Fx \supset \neg Hx)$. The problem is it repeats material already present in the initial $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx)$. It thereby makes the first premise partly unnecessary. But what is it for Y to partly repeat X? It's for Y to have falsemakers that force X too to be false, as for example $p \& q$ has falsemakers forcing p to be false. Our third desideratum is:

Non-redundancy No falsemaker for R should force Q to be false.

Now let's look at (d), which says basically that the initial premise holds only if the conclusion holds. $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx) \supset \forall x(Fx \supset \neg Hx)$ is not redundant; its falsemakers do not prevent all and only Fs from being G. And it is necessary and sufficient for $\forall x(Fx \supset \neg Hx)$ given the initial premise $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx)$. $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx) \supset \forall x(Fx \supset \neg Hx)$ and $\forall x(Fx \supset \neg Hx)$ agree on worlds where $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx)$.

The problem is to do with the changing *reasons* for (d)'s truth. It is true in $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx)$ -worlds when and (partly) because no firefighters are horticulturalists.

But elsewhere the reason suddenly changes; elsewhere it is true when and (entirely) because the firefighters are no longer the goalkeepers. The problem is we want R to be *saying the same thing* when Q is false as when it's true; and that means its truth-grounds shouldn't change as we pass from the Q-region into the $\neg Q$ -region. Our fourth desideratum is

Integrity R should not acquire new truthmakers in $\neg Q$ -worlds.

The problem with (d) is that it lacks integrity. It acquires truthmakers in $\neg Q$ -worlds that one would not expect from its logical behavior in Q-worlds, indeed $\neg Q$ becomes all the truthmaker it needs in such worlds.

Consider finally (e) $\forall x((Fx \& Gx) \supset \neg Hx)$ (*No firefighterish goalkeepers are horticulturalists*). (e) is necessary and sufficient for our conclusion $\forall x(Fx \supset \neg Hx)$ given the initial premise $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx)$. It does not repeat information from the initial premise because its reasons for falsity turn on the properties of firefighterish goalkeepers, not firefighters that fail to be goalkeepers or vice versa. The problem is not that $\forall x((Fx \& Gx) \supset \neg Hx)$ is true in the wrong $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx)$ -worlds; it is true in those worlds but for the wrong reasons. It should be true in $\forall x(Fx \equiv Gx)$ -worlds—in premise-worlds—for whatever reason those worlds are additionally conclusion-worlds. And the reason no firefighters are horticulturalists, when it is given that all and only firefighters are goalkeepers, is that no *goalkeepers* are horticulturalists—it's not that no *firefighting* goalkeepers are horticulturalists because the *firefighting* in the antecedent is an unneeded detail in whose absence you'd still have a fact sufficient for the conclusion.⁷ This gives us our final requirement:

Moreover R's truthmakers (falsmakers) in a Q-world w should be that world's reasons for being moreover S ($\neg S$).

I want to suggest that these are the main conditions under which RB counts intuitively as completing the enthymeme, or if this is different, as filling the gap between Q and S. But, you will be wondering, or maybe you're not wondering, what does any of this have to do with real contents R arrived at by pivoting on a presupposition π ?

You can begin to see a connection if for Q you write π . Because then Necessity and Sufficiency combine to say that R and S are true in the same π -worlds, which was part of what we required for R to be S- π real content (the Equivalence condition). Non-redundancy and Integrity similarly add up to our old

⁷ Note to self: Relate this to the conditions on truthmakers. Robustness plays a role, since a reason to be S over and above Q is a Q-compatible truthmaker for $Q \supset S$. The whole thing needs clarification.

Orthogonality condition. And Moreover is equivalent to Reasons, if we assume, plausibly to my mind, that a π -world's reasons for being moreover S are the same as its reasons for being $S \& \pi$ rather than $\neg S \& \pi$.

All in all, then, our five conditions on enthymeme completers come to the same as our three conditions on $S-\pi$.

I conclude there is a very close correspondence between what we look for in a presuppositionally induced real content $S-\pi$ and what we look for in the missing premise that completes an enthymeme. Realizing this was for me a Moliere moment – like the Moliere character who was happily surprised to realize that he'd been speaking prose his whole life, I was happily surprised to learn I'd been doing orthogonal extrapolations my whole life, whenever I looked for the missing premise in an enthymeme

π
???
S.

The Moliere point lets us rewrite (P) above as

(P') S's real content, relative to π , is the premise one needs to add to π to obtain the conclusion that S.

If we now rewrite (M) very slightly as

(M') S's real content, in the context of game γ , is the condition the props have to be in to put S to into the game's content,

it appears that our two routes to real content are really quite similar. In both cases there's an end-point S, and a device (γ or π) that takes one from starting points to end points, and the real content is the starting point that gets you via that device to the given endpoint. The main difference that remains is that γ is a function from propositions to propositions while π is just one more proposition.

This is shall we say suggestive. But before considering the prospects for unification we should ask: who cares? why should it matter if the pivoting and piggybacking routes to unexpected content are intertranslatable?

One reason is that there are people, not me, who find the piggybacking account of unexpected content problematic. Jason Stanley complains about so-called "hermeneutic fictionalism" that it has all the advantages of theft over honest toil, because fictionalists can always dream up a game that delivers the contents they want. There aren't enough controls on the experiment, in other words.

He's particularly concerned about overeasiness reconstructions of statements with unwanted ontological commitments:

nothing appears to prevent the hermeneutic fictionalist from simply declaring, when faced with an ontologically loaded discourse, that its users, when engaged in it, employ principles of generation that link the discourse up with ontologically innocent truth-conditions...(HF, 43)

But, not to say I agree with that, there is plenty to prevent us from "simply declaring" that speakers are pivoting on this or that presupposition. Presupposition is too deeply entangled with the rest of linguistic theory for that; its theoretical embeddedness keeps us honest. There are tests after all.

One famous test is that presuppositions are preserved under negation; as Frege observed, someone who denies *The discoverer of the elliptical motions of the planets died in misery* is saying *The discoverer did not die in misery*, not that followed by *...or else nobody discovered the elliptical motions...* Compare: *It is not the case that the number of planets = 8* says that the number is not 8, not *The number is not 8 or else there is nothing that numbers the planets*. Another test grows out of the fact that "new information" should not in most cases be presented presuppositionally. This is why it sounds fine to say, *She came to think the gas tank was empty, and what's more, came to think it correctly*, but bad to say, *She came to think the gas tank was empty, and what's more, came to realize it was empty*. *There are eight planets, and there is a number 8 that encodes the fact* sounds a lot better to my ear than *There are eight planets, moreover the number of planets is 8*.

Another common objection to figurative reconstructions of applied mathematics is that the pretense hypothesis is psychologically implausible:

Competent users of theoretical discourse will certainly deny that they are pretending when they discuss arithmetic (HF, 46).

Be that as it may, competent users will not deny that they are presupposing the existence of the number system; indeed that captures the phenomenology pretty darned well.⁸

So, one reason it might matter if piggybacking is assimilable to pivoting is that the pivoter might be able to do some of the same work on a more economical basis. A second reason is this. Suppose that the piggybacking route is ultimately the more powerful. Then some interesting questions arise. Should we

⁸ Stanley's paper appears in French and Wettstein, ed., Midwest Studies in Philosophy XXV, Figurative Language.

just forget about presuppositions, redirecting all traffic down the metaphorical route, or should we keep it as preferable for some purposes, perhaps even reconstruing some of what has been considered metaphor as in fact involving no more than tactical presupposition?

I now want to argue that the metaphorical route to unexpected content is probably not in fact just a more scenic alternative to the presuppositional route, taking us to the same place in more style. This may not come as a big surprise but the reasons are interesting, because they tell us something about our theoretical options in particular cases

Nelson Goodman considered metaphor a kind of linguistic moonlighting. One is taking a word or phrase that was already fully employed and finding additional work for it – work it can do while still holding onto its old job, indeed often work that depends on its old job. What this means at the level of sentences is that a sentence already endowed with truth-conditions is being fitted out with new truth-conditions, informed by but different from the original ones.

"New" in what sense though? There are various possibilities. Just about all prop-oriented make-believe games are creative; a sentence can be true in the game even though its semantic or literal content is false. What about the other direction? Can a sentence be literally true without being true in the game? Normally, yes. Suppose that Napoleon takes the Queen Mary but forgets to bring his portrait. Then it is literally true that Napoleon is a passenger but it is not true in the game that Napoleon is a passenger. Or consider a clean, considerate boar, a porcine Sir Walter Raleigh; he is literally a pig but not figuratively one. It seems then that most games are not only creative – they add on new truths – they are also restrictive, in the sense of cancelling old ones.

Restrictiveness is fine in a game but bad in a real-content-inducing presupposition. Remember, R counts as S's real content only if R and S agree on the π -worlds; in particular R is necessary for S, given π . See what happens if we now plug in for π the conditional $R \supset S$. The condition requires that R be necessary for S in $(R \supset S)$ -worlds – worlds where R is false or S is true. And that's clearly not the case; there are plenty of $(\sim R \vee S)$ -worlds where S is true and R is false. Again, in the terms of the Napoleon example, there are plenty of worlds where Napoleon is a passenger but none of his portraits are on the ship. There is just no way then to conceive the real content – his portrait is on board – as extrapolating the semantic content – he himself is on board – from worlds where the game's principles of generation hold to other worlds; for the two propositions don't even agree on worlds where the principles hold. So restrictive games cannot easily be made over into pivotable presuppositions.

Well, what would a non-restrictive game look like? That would be a game that took S's literal truth-conditions and just relaxed them a little. Facts that would need to be in place to make S literally true, but may not suffice for S's literal truth, do suffice to make it true in the game. As a result there is no for literal truths of the relevant type to avoid being true in the game. I will call games like this expansive, because they bestow fictional truth on the literally true sentences and then some.

Above we saw that metaphorical contents obtained by piggybacking on a game can't always be recast as assertive contents obtained by pivoting on a presupposition. The argument was that if you can have S's metaphorical content R true when its literal content is false, then R is not necessary for S in the game-worlds, that is, the $(R \supset S)$ -worlds – a violation of the Agreement condition. But this argument applied only to restrictive games. If literal truth necessitates metaphorical truth, then R really is a necessary condition for S in the $(R \supset S)$ -worlds, simply because R is a necessary condition for S in all worlds. The π -region is automatically a region on which R and S agree.

So far as my argument here is concerned, then, whatever contents can be accessed with expansive make believe games can be accessed (more easily?) with presuppositions. The question then becomes, which games are we talking about here? *Conjecture*: Most if not all of the philosophically controversial games – the ones involved in fictionalism about numbers, sets, properties, mereological sums, etc., and perhaps also fictionalist treatments of negative existentials – are expansive, and so the work can be done with presuppositions. I will give exactly one example in support of this.

Consider the number game: the game that tells you to pretend, for any bunch of things the Xs, to pretend that there is such a thing as their number, subject to the condition that the number of Xs = the number of Ys iff there are exactly as many Xs as Ys. Or, in another version, the game that tells you, when there are no Fs, to pretend that there's a number 0 such that 0 = the number of Fs, and when there is an F such that there are no other Fs, to pretend that there is a number 1 such that 1 = the number of Fs, and so on. The numbers game is expansive in either of the two versions. For it's clear as a conceptual matter that the number of dogs can't be identical to the number of cats if there are more dogs than cats, or vice versa; which mean "the # of cats = the # of dogs" can't true outside the game unless it is true in the game. Again, it's clear as a conceptual matter that it can't be literally true that 0 = the number of Fs unless there are no Fs, and there can't be no Fs without that making it true in the game 0 = the number of Fs.

Where does this leave us? Our conclusion is that some of the more philosophically interesting forms of fictionalism can perhaps be replayed in the

key of presupposition. Would that make them sound any better? I think so, but it's a question would rather leave to you. People have tended to see fictionalism as desperation move with very little linguistic plausibility. Are the reasons they give for this also reasons for seeing presuppositionalism as a linguistically implausible desperation move? I suspect often not, but the whole matter needs further investigation.

The last Hempel lectures were on the philosophy of philosophy, which got me to wondering what the implications of this material might be for theory-building in philosophy. Blue-sky thinking here. Should we be willing to settle for a theory that is only partly true? Those of us raised in the David Lewis tradition of systematic theorizing answerable to every datum in sight will probably say NO. Lewis himself suggests this answer, when he says of a theoretical outlook that defies common sense that

Unless we are doubleplusgood doublethinkers, it will not last. And it should not last, for it is safe to say in such a case that we will believe a great deal that is false (PP I, xi).

That's in the Preface to the first volume of his philosophical papers; there he is unwilling to defy common sense precisely on the ground that our theory will then contain some falsity. In the Preface to the second volume he says the following:

What I uphold is not so much the truth of Humean supervenience as the tenability of it. If physics were to teach me that it is false, I wouldn't grieve...What I want to fight are *philosophical* arguments against Humean supervenience (PP II xi)

Now the goal seems to be a theory that if it's false, is at any rate *not false for philosophical reasons*. Falsity for scientific reasons can be tolerated until the physicists get their act together. ("I am not ready to take lessons in ontology from quantum physics as it is now" (xi))

That's one goal, the goal of a theory builder: false for physical reasons maybe but not philosophical reasons. But not all philosophers are theory-builders. Another kind of philosopher (the self-hating kind?) thinks we have made a mess of things by bringing inappropriate standards, dragged in from physics or geometry, to bear on ordinary ways of talking. The goal should be to sweep philosophical theory away and return to the plain truths that we all shared before being pulled into unnecessary debates. At that point we would face a choice: either give up philosophy, as Wittgenstein recommended, or depart from the plain truths only as necessary to clear up tempting confusions, as Wittgenstein actually did.

Either way, the first step is to identify the neutral truths that non-philosophically speaking we all understand the same way, though we may put a different construal on them. This turns out to be a difficult problem. It's the problem that led the positivists to despair of finding a neutral observational language in which to formulate protocol sentences. Should the language speak of experiences or of nearby middle-sized objects? Right from the start there's a theoretical choice to be made of the kind we were hoping to be done with. It seems the language doesn't exist any longer to state the agreed facts in a way that arouses no philosophical suspicions. Try as we might, we wind up saying more than we really meant to.

This looks like a job for partial truth. Recall that what Lewis wanted was a story that was at any rate not false for philosophical reasons. What we in our Wittgensteinian moments want is something like the opposite: a description of reality that is false, if it is, only for philosophical reasons. There's nothing else questionable about it, except what's philosophically questionable, and that we have found can't be avoided. Now clearly the partial truth framework we've been developing here sheds little light this idea of "not false for philosophical reasons." But it at least brings the idea into some kind of relief. It may be the idea is hopeless, because philosophical reasons are continuous with other sorts of reasons. It would be good to know either way.